

Hospital construction begins on Hartford Avenue

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston's healthcare sector is booming. Although construction is clogging one of the town's central arteries, the temporary pain may be worth it down the road, according to local elected officials.

A Johnston police cruiser was parked in the center of Hartford Avenue Tuesday afternoon. Police kept an eye on traffic flow as heavy equipment wove its way between traffic cones and orange barrels.

Four lanes of traffic were condensed to two, running head-to-head down the center of the road. Construction pushed in from both sides.

This stretch of Johnston has a lot going on.

Road improvements aimed at boosting traffic safety, in anticipation of the eventual opening of the Amazon robotic fulfillment center, have tied up sev-

eral portions from the Interstate 295 overpass, westward up the Hartford Avenue hill. On the south side of Hartford, the giant Amazon building has been erected and construction buzzes at the site.

Directly across the street, Encompass Health has started clearing land for construction of a 50-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital.

"I think it is a good use for the area," Town Council President Robert V. Russo said Tuesday. "It will be a state-of-the-art medical facility centrally located that will bring in good paying jobs, generate property and tangible taxes for the town and most importantly provide convenience to Johnston residents that may require in-patient rehabilitation."

Johnston has seen a recent surge in healthcare providers locating in town.



NEW HOSPITAL: Encompass Health has started clearing land for construction of a 50-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital at 2109 Hartford Ave. in Johnston. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler)

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St. Rocco's bespectacled ambassadors



BESTIES: The photo booth at Sunday's Rhode Island Families for School Choice fair held at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick was one of many attractions. St. Rocco's School was well represented at the event by a contingent of staff and student "ambassadors" from each grade level. Pictured here, but not necessarily in order, not that they would be recognizable with their glasses are St. Rocco students: Malakai Moan, Kate Gorgierski, Brianna Moosey, Talia Moosey, Leilani Delgado and Mikaela Mercier. Not wearing glasses are Arielle Ainabe, vice principal Marcia Montecalvo, Samantha Tripp, Megan Reitz and Robin Okolowitz. (Sun Rise photo)

From 8 to 89 Looking back on Local 1950

By PETE FONTAINE

Back on March 16, 1970, eight men founded and signed Local 1950's first-ever contract with the Town of Johnston.

Since then, the Johnston Association of Firefighters Local 1950, which is under the International Association of Firefighters, has grown from eight charter members into a union representing 89 men and women.

"Johnston Fire is not a place where these members just head to work but a brotherhood that grows stronger each day," said Local 1950 Secretary Treasurer David Pingitore.



FOUNDING FATHERS: Signing Local 1950's first Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Town of Johnston were, from left, Secretary-Treasurer William Almeida, Vice President Stanley Heywood, Town Administrator and later Mayor Ralph aRusso, President Clayton Quick and Richard DiBenedeto. (Submitted photo)

■ LOCAL - PAGE 10

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JHS Panther of the Week



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POTW: This week's Panther of the Week is Matt Penafiel. He is a sophomore who made 3rd Honors. Matt was nominated by Ms. Hanna Awwad. Ms. Awwad said "Matt is an incredibly respectful and hardworking student. At the start of each class, Ms. Awwad and Matt greet every student at the door as they walk in. He is consistently prepared and always participates in class. He sets a positive example for other students in the class. He is a leader in kindness and patience and ELA II is lucky to have him!" (Photos submitted by Matt Velino, Johnston High School Assistant Principal)

Editor's Note: This is the newest installment of an ongoing weekly series highlighting Johnston's amazing students. Staff at Johnston High School will be nominating students and submitting a caption and a photo for publication. You'll find each week's winning Panther on Page 2 of the Johnston Sun Rise.

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JHS hosts blood drive

By **GIANNA FERRANTI**
Special to the Star

Johnston Senior High School is once again pairing up with the Rhode Island Blood Drive to donate to those in need. This event is organized by the Rhode Island Blood Drive, and sponsored by Greg Russo, advisor and the members of the JHS Student Council. Every few months, Johnston High School students have the opportunity to sign up and give back to the wonderful cause that is donating blood. During school, there will be a mandatory assembly on Jan. 25. This assembly is to teach the students about the importance of giving blood and the lives it can save. At the assembly, students may sign up to donate by making an appointment with one of the student council volunteers. On Jan. 31, these students will head to the gymnasium and donate their blood giving back to an imperative cause that helps over 60 hospitals across New England every single day.

Editor's Note: Gianna Ferranti serves as Johnston High School Student Council's Freshmen Representative. The Johnston Sun Rise regularly publishes stories submitted by members of the JHS Student Council.

JHS students catch glimpse of life as a scientist

By **LYNDA CURTIS**
Special to the Sun Rise

Early on a Tuesday morning in a third-floor laboratory in Brown University's geochemistry building, small groups of Providence-area high school students were met with an odd set of tools to solve a tricky biomedical engineering challenge.

The task centered around pieces of rigatoni with spray cheese stuffed inside. The whimsical combination replicates a real and scary medical situation that patients face — a clogged artery. The challenge for the students was to turn simple materials like pipe cleaners, cocktail umbrellas and wire into a surgical tool prototype that could remove the cheese.

Following a brief introduction, the teams got to work showing off their engineering prowess — and, even more importantly, getting some lighthearted exposure to what it's like to solve problems like a scientist.

"One of the things I want to do in the future is either study medicine or make medical tools for people so this [experience] fits in nicely," said David Barrientos-Pineda, a 10th grader at Mount Pleasant High School in Providence. "In chemistry and engineering, when I do hands-on things, it kind of gives me the idea of what it would be like to work with real tools."

In nearby Brown classrooms and laboratories, about a dozen other creative science sessions were happening at the same time. Topics ranged from making cold packs using chemical reactions, to examining integrated circuits that make cell phones and DNA sequencing machines work, designing video games, and exploring gravity and black holes.

All were part of the return of STEM Day at Brown, an annual event led by the Department of Chemistry where local high schoolers come to College Hill for a day of hands-on STEM workshops and experiments.

This year, almost 200 students from Mount Pleasant High School, Central High School, 360 High School and TIMES2 Academy in Providence, as well as Johnston Senior High School, flooded out from a fleet of yellow school buses onto campus on Tuesday, Jan. 24, for the first STEM Day since 2020.

The day was marked by laughs and shouts of excitement as the high schoolers explored campus buildings and learned about careers in engineering, public health, chemistry, physics and mathematics. The students also connected with Brown undergraduates and graduate students concentrating in STEM fields to learn about the college search process, admissions, academics and campus life.

"So many of [our students] have this abstract idea of what a college looks like and what being in a college lab or being in a college room is like," said Mark Fontaine, a biology and chemistry teacher at TIMES2 Academy who has brought students to STEM Day since it started in 2017. "[Coming to this event] lets them see possibilities. It lets them see opportunities."

Helping students see what's possible is the precise reason that Brown chemistry faculty members Jerome Robinson, Brenda Rubenstein and Ou Chen helped get STEM Day off the ground in the first place, they said.

"We were thinking about how we could make a bigger impact in our community," Robinson said. "The idea was to reach out to students from public schools in Rhode Island, especially in Providence, and provide opportunities to engage them with STEM."

Ultimately, the faculty wanted the young students to see scientists as approachable people and build an appreciation for the fact that they could become scientists as well, Rubenstein added.

"I grew up in an area that, in some sense, was a STEM desert," she said. "I'm very much committed to showing people these opportunities, because I recognize how valuable it is to be exposed to these ideas and how it could change their lives."

The experience has also been valuable for high school teachers, who have often connected with Brown faculty members and students to form partnerships that extend well beyond the initial event and can lead to mentoring opportunities, small grants and even donations of equipment. Last year, for instance, Robinson and other colleagues sent surplus materials from their labs to Central High School after connecting with a chemistry teacher at a previous STEM Day.

Engaging with STEM

This year's STEM Day kicked off with the high school students hearing from Brown faculty, undergraduates and graduate students covering topics like how to choose concentrations and what career paths can look like during college and after graduation.

A number of Brown students spoke during a panel discussion about their own personal paths into STEM. Graduate students Lacie Connelli, Alexander Del Toro, Kimberly Meza and Andres Zambrano talked about being first-generation college students from low-income backgrounds, and shared their experiences with navigating financial aid and being part of historically underrepresented groups in STEM.

"I knew that if I wanted to go college, I was going to have to pay for it on my own," said Connelli, who was among the first in her family to go to college. "It's possible to go to college, stay on campus and have that entire experience without any help from your family... A lot of that was actually due to going into STEM, which has a lot of good scholarships."

Many of the accounts resonated with the local students, who said they could see themselves in the panelists.

"Seeing where they are today, that was very inspiring," said Tatiana Nyanti, an 11th grader at TIMES2 who will also be a first-generation college student when it comes time for her to enroll.

Students spent the bulk of STEM Day participating in dem-



STEM THE TIDE: A group of 36 Johnston Senior High School students visited Brown University on Tuesday, January 24, for STEM Day 2023. (Photos courtesy Lynda Curtis)

onstrations and workshops on a variety of science subjects.

At the session simulating the clogged artery, for instance, students immediately started discussing ideas and strategies before deciding on their course of action. Some decided to wrap the pipe cleaner around the umbrella, while others tried to tie it on as a tail to get any last bits of cheese left behind.

Barrientos-Pineda, a member of the group that designed the winning surgical prototype, said the key to their strategy was opening the umbrella before putting it into the rigatoni.

"If you push it through slightly expanded, it will close in and push around the edges," Barrientos-Pineda said.

Three Brown graduate students overseeing the challenge led a follow-up discussion about the overall design process in biomedical engineering.

In another session, a group of students from Johnston learned how certain chemical reactions can turn liquids into solids. They mixed together fruit flavors, cold water, a powder-like substance called sodium alginate and a type of salt known as calcium chloride. The reaction produces tiny little gelatin balls called fruit caviar. Students in the session largely mixed traditional fruit flavors, like strawberry and banana, but some of the bolder students mixed in flavors like vanilla

Frappuccino and root beer.

In a Tesla coil demonstration, students watched as Brown graduate student Donovan Davino manipulated 2-foot-long sparks of lightning to produce music. The sounds from the electric currents played contemporary hits like "Lucid Dreams" by Juice WRLD and widely recognized classics like "The Imperial March" from "Star Wars." During the "Star Wars" song, Davino held an unconnected tube light in his hand like a lightsaber. The nearby electric currents from the coil turned it on. Students watched eagerly as some nodded along and even whipped out their phones to record the show.

During a break in the music, Davino explained how the device operates in relation to the fundamental physics of electronic circuits.

Throughout the day, the students buzzed with high levels of excitement and engagement around the science buildings, even as the event wound down.

When asked how the trip went, for example, one student from 360 Academy, who was clad in newly acquired Brown swag, loudly shouted: "It was lit!"

Editor's Note: Lynda Curtis serves as Media Relations Manager in Brown University's Office of University Communications.

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WARM WELCOME: Michael Mangasarian (center) issues his usual personality plus greeting to some of the NetView members who attended last Thursday morning's "Breakfast at the Bridge." (Submitted photos)

NetView members sample Breakfast at The Bridge

By **PETE FONTAINE**

It was called "Breakfast at The Bridge" and featured nearly 40 members from NetView, a professional referral organization made up of people from assisted living communities, senior centers, nursing homes and other professionals in the important local industry.

"Our meetings take place once a month at area facilities," offered Michael Mangasarian, the Sales/Marketing Director at The Bridge at Cherry Hill, which is an award-winning retirement/assisted living and

nursing home facility owned and operated by the Century Park Community. "Everyone seemed to really enjoy the event."

However, the "Breakfast at The Bridge" was much more than your ordinary food and networking meeting.

Attendees were treated to The Bridge's near unmatched hospitality and what people rated as "one of the best breakfasts we've had at meetings."

That was the result of Mangasarian and MaryAnn Grace, long-time Executive Director of The Bridge and Executive Chef Marvin Carter's skilled kitchen crew once again

rolling out their famous red-carpet hospitality.

"What a bountiful breakfast," was among the many kudos from the morning's NewView guests. "This is what (you) could call an extraordinary food fest; a special way to start the day."

The menu began with assorted coffees and juices and included home fries scrambled eggs, Cherry Hill cheese omelets, bacon, sausage, breakfast sandwiches, assorted muffins and fresh fruit prepared and served from Carter's kitchen.

The two-hour plus highly informative

networking session also featured a guest speaker from Surv – which is a local company founded by a recent college graduate to assist people with daily tasks that may require additional help to perform such as moving furniture in their apartment, mowing the grass and anything in between.

Grace, who has hosted many memorable professional social successes at The Bridge, was thrilled with the morning's turnout and offered "everything went incredibly well. This was one of our largest attended professional events we've had in recent years; we look forward to what comes next!"



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CRISIS INTERVENTION: U.S. Senator Jack Reed joined Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha; Chief Sidney Wordell of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association; and leading experts and researchers at the Brown University School of Public Health, including deputy dean Dr. Megan L. Ranney, to discuss efforts to combat the crisis and urge strategic, coordinated, urgent action at every level of government to help save lives and prevent these illicit drugs from plaguing communities. (Submitted photo)

Reed, Neronha: Fentanyl crisis demands evolving solutions

Sun Rise Staff Reports

Last year, at least 435 Rhode Island residents died following overdoses and drug poisonings. According to the federal government, "about two-thirds of those deaths involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl."

Rhode Island's elected officials gathered last week to look at "evolving solutions" to a growing crisis.

In 2010, federal data reported 21,089 overdose deaths nationwide. Just over a decade later, the total has increased about five times higher to over 107,000 Americans a year killed by drug overdoses.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention attributes about three quarters of the overdose deaths to opioids, and largely attributes the soaring total to the increase of fentanyl, an especially potent and addictive synthetic opioid.

On Jan. 19, U.S. Senator Jack Reed joined Rhode Island's top law enforcement official, Chief Sidney Wordell of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association (RIPCA); and leading experts and researchers at the Brown University School of Public Health, to discuss efforts to combat the crisis and urge strategic, coordinated, urgent action at every level of government to help save lives and prevent these illicit drugs from plaguing communities, according to a press release.

During the discussion, Brown researchers pointed out that a drug used to put animals to sleep is being linked to deadly overdoses in Rhode Island and other states. New research from the Brown University School of Public Health's testRI (Toxicological and Ethnographic Drug Surveillance Testing in Rhode Island) found 44 percent of its samples tested contained xylazine — commonly known by the street names "tranq" or "tranq dope." It's an animal tranquilizer most often used in horses and cattle, and it's being mixed into street drugs.

Medications like naloxone, designed to reverse drug overdoses from opioids, don't work against xylazine. Preliminary results, published in December, covered 90 different samples to analyze Rhode Island's local drug supply. The study also found high amounts of illicit fentanyl in many of the samples, showing more signs of concern for those who use stimulants like crystal meth and cocaine.

As illicit drug manufacturers and traffickers develop evolving methods to flood communities with poison, Reed says the federal government needs to step up and evolve its response, education, outreach, and enforcement strategies.

Reed, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, helped include several provisions in the newly signed 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) an omnibus appropriations law to keep fentanyl off our streets, crack down on drug traffickers, and help prevent fentanyl-related overdoses.

"This is a crisis that is trending in the wrong direction and the federal government needs to step up and be a reliable partner," Reed said, noting a pair of provisions in the NDAA law designed to help crack down on fentanyl traffickers:

The Fighting Emerging Narcotics Through Additional Nations to Yield Lasting (FENTANYL) Results Act, which directs the U.S. State Department to build foreign law enforcement capacity to detect synthetic drugs and carry out an international exchange program for drug demand reduction experts.

The Protecting America's Borders Against Fentanyl Act, which requires that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) work with other agencies to research additional technologies to target and detect illicit fentanyl, including the chemicals used to make it. The provision

also requires the Office of National Drug Control Policy to develop strategies to effectively evaluate region-specific goals to interdict drug trafficking.

Additionally, the omnibus appropriations law Reed supported will boost funding for the CDC to support community-based overdose prevention activities. Overall, the law provides \$4.9 billion to address opioid abuse, an increase of over \$345 million above fiscal year 2022 levels. This funding includes: nearly \$1.6 billion to states to address the opioid epidemic through the State Opioid Response Grant program; a \$100 million increase for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant; \$111 million for medication assisted treatment; \$505 million for opioid overdose surveillance and prevention at CDC; and \$80 million to address the needs of children affected by the opioid crisis.

The law also extends the emergency scheduling of fentanyl analogues through December 31, 2024. This extension of the classification of fentanyl as a Schedule 1 substance enables law enforcement to prosecute criminals who make and distribute the drug.

"The Biden Administration is surging more resources to help combat the fentanyl crisis and prevent overdoses," Reed said. "We've got to be smart and strategic. We can't just hand out naloxone kits and call it a day. We've got to get at the root causes of this crisis, strengthen education, outreach, and enforcement, and go hard after the people who are profiting from poisoning our communities."

"Combatting the ongoing opioid epidemic requires a multi-faceted strategy across all branches and levels of government," said Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha. "We must target illegal distributors of dangerous drugs, including fentanyl, wherever they are. And we must provide the necessary resources to help those who suffer from substance abuse disorder. Much work has been done in this area here in Rhode Island. We have aggressively targeted dealers in illegal drugs, and returned more than \$250 million in cash and live-saving medicine to Rhode Island by holding opioid manufacturers and distributors accountable for their role in this crisis. I thank Senator Reed and the state's federal delegation for their continued support in this important matter and so many others."

"This challenge is clear and urgent," said Dr. Megan L. Ranney, Deputy Dean of Brown University School of Public Health. "Here at the Brown University School of Public Health, our faculty and researchers are forging new paths with new thinking and new approaches to reduce overdoses, reduce stigma, save lives, and promote recovery."

According to the CDC, illicitly manufactured fentanyl is available on the drug market in different forms, including liquid and powder. Fentanyl is hard to detect as users can't tell if a drug has fentanyl in it by smelling, tasting, or looking at it. If ingested, a tiny amount — as little as two grains of salt — is enough to kill someone, according to a press release from Reed's office.

Wordell spoke of increasing overdose data and the deaths caused by substances that are used knowingly or unknowingly in combination with other drugs, according to a press release from the RIPCA.

"The focus of today's conversation makes us recognize that we have an increasing population with substance use illnesses putting them at risk," Wordell said. "More often than not, it isn't the known substance they are using but the 'hidden killer' added to it."

The CDC reports that 107,375 people in the United States died of drug overdoses and drug poisonings in the 12-month period ending in January 2022, including 435 Rhode Island residents. According to the CDC, about two-thirds of those deaths involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

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 by Rochelle Rhodes, D.M.D. and David McFarland, D.D.S.
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AG charges construction firm with illegally dumping contaminated fill

Sun Rise Staff Reports

Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha announced last week that his office has charged a Massachusetts-based construction firm and a former employee with illegally dumping thousands of tons of contaminated fill at project sites in Providence during the construction of the Route 6/10 Interchange construction project, according to a press release from his office.

The charges, announced Jan. 18, were filed in Providence County Superior Court, and stem from an investigation led by the Neronha's office, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Rhode Island, the federal Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM).

The Attorney General has charged Barletta Heavy Division, Inc. (Barletta), with two counts of illegal disposal of solid waste, one count of operating a solid waste management facility without a license, and one count of providing a false document to a public official, according to Neronha's office.

Barletta is a Canton, Massachusetts based construction firm, overseeing the ongoing \$247 million Route 6/10 Interchange highway construction project that began in 2018.

The state has also charged Dennis Ferreira, 62, of Holliston, Mass., a former senior employee of Barletta, with two counts of illegal disposal of solid waste, one count of operating a solid waste management facility without a license, and one count of providing a false document to a public official, according to prosecutors.

The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned on Feb. 1, in Providence County Superior Court. Ferreira and a representative in a position of authority from Barletta will be in court for arraignment, according to Neronha's office.

"As alleged in the Information, Mr. Ferreira and Barletta used the 6/10 site as an environmental dumping ground, and not only for Rhode Island waste," Neronha said. "Worse yet, they made Rhode Island a dumping ground for Massachusetts waste. Their actions come at the expense of Rhode Islander's public health and their environment. Rhode Island's environmental and public health laws exist for a reason. To keep Rhode Islanders safe, and to preserve our environment. We will continue to aggressively enforce those laws. Because Rhode Islanders deserve nothing less."

The AG's office alleges that in July 2020, the

defendants authorized the disposal of more than 4,500 tons of stone and soil contaminated with hazardous materials at the Route 6/10 Interchange construction project.

In 2020, Ferreira was the Superintendent of the Route 6/10 Interchange construction project and as alleged in the information, possessed broad authority over the project, including the acquisition of material to be used on site, according to Neronha's press release.

"As alleged in the information, Barletta is required to analyze any fill brought to the 6/10 project site for contaminants and must certify any fill be suitable for use at the site," according to the press release. "It is alleged that the defendants sourced known contaminated fill from the site of the Pawtucket/Central Falls Commuter Rail Station on the border of Pawtucket and Central Falls, and from a Barletta materials stockpile in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston, Mass. The site of the Pawtucket/Central Falls Commuter Rail Station has been used as a rail yard for nearly 150 years and the presence of soil contaminants, including arsenic and PAH's, have been previously confirmed. At the Jamaica Plain site, Barletta stockpiled contaminated stone generated from railbed replacement work they conducted on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) B and C Green lines."

The prosecution also alleges the "defendants authorized the transport of approximately 1,114 tons of contaminated soil from the Pawtucket/Central Falls site and approximately 3,460 tons of contaminated stone from the Jamaica Plain site to the 6/10 project site."

According to prosecutors, in late July 2020, state DEM and Department of Transportation (DOT) officials asked Ferreira for an environmental certification for the transported stone, and he provided an environmental testing report with analysis from another site, to hide the fact that the 6/10 site stone was contaminated.

Separately, on Dec. 14, 2022, Ferreira pleaded guilty in federal court to three counts of making a false statement in connection with a federally funded highway project, according to Neronha's office.

Ferreira is scheduled to be sentenced on March 16. U.S. Attorney Zachary Cunha recently announced Barletta has agreed to pay a total of \$1.5 million to the federal government.

Assistant Attorneys General John Moreira and Peter Roklan, and Sheila Paquette of DEM, will handle the prosecution of this case.

Neronha thanked Cunha, the federal DOT, Office of Inspector General and Department of Labor "for their partnership in the overall investigation of this matter."



SMART & STRATEGIC: U.S. Senator Jack Reed called for "smart and strategic" responses to the overdose crisis in America. He met with Rhode Island law enforcement officials and academics to discuss the federal response to the worsening situation. (Submitted photo)

Drugs

(Continued from page 6)

"Over the last few years, Sen. Reed has helped Rhode Island obtain federal funds through many initiatives, like the Hope Initiative and community outreach programs, which complement the work of the Governor's Overdose Prevention and

Intervention Task Force and RI law enforcement efforts," Wordell said last Thursday. "The most recent funding announced by the Senator will help us to build on those efforts. Without these types of additional funds, we are unable to work with practitioners and researchers like the Brown University School of Public Health to help us educate our first responders and community stakeholders to find manageable solutions."

Opinion

EDITORIAL

Mayors owe public judicial appointment transparency

Judging by recent news reports, Rhode Island has a few issues with appointing judges as most vividly illustrated by the retirement of Providence Judge Frank Caprio of Caught in Providence. Judge Caprio was eventually named Chief Judge Emeritus of the Providence Municipal Court.

State law, town and city charters have clearly defined the process for appointing municipal judges. When the process is followed, with openness and transparency, it works. When the process is circumvented for political gain, the fallout further erodes the public's trust in our judicial system.

In Warwick, the mayor nominates municipal court justices and City Council ratifies.

Years ago, late mayor Joe Solomon named Kelly McElroy, daughter of James McElroy, a Ward 4 councilman, to the bench.

• WHERE TO WRITE:
1944 Warwick Avenue
Warwick, RI 02889
RoryS@RhodyBeat.com

This caused a mild uproar, but the council ultimately voted to approve the appointment. McElroy abstained. The sausage was made,

though the process was ugly.

In Johnston, Town Council alone is tasked with appointing local judges.

Judge candidates traditionally pen letters to council members, seeking their votes.

After serving as Johnston's Chief Municipal Court Judge for a decade, attorney Jacqueline M. Grasso followed tradition. However, she alleges the mayor-elect controlled the process, chose a candidate and worked behind the scenes to arrange the votes.

No discussion occurred in public session. No reasons for change were given. It was only following persistent questioning that the newly inaugurated mayor and Town Council president offered any rationale behind the change. And they offered only positive endorsements of the chosen candidate — the town's former Housing Authority executive director and son of another former mayor.

The process was opaque. Discussion was nil. Hard feelings linger.

Elected officials — mayors and councils — would likely chafe at changing the appointment process to an elective event.

Judge elections would benefit no defendant. Rhode Island justice would suffer if judge candidates were transformed into politicking politicians running for another term.

In Cranston, the city's former Probate Judge has questioned the process behind his replacement. Cranston, at least, formed a Probate Advisory Commission, which held a public hearing in late December. The composition of that commission and the substance of the hearing, however, beg clarification.

The entire judicial appointment process in the Ocean State would greatly benefit from a sanitizing dose of sunlight.

Judge appointments should be the subject of public discourse, not backroom political arm-wrestling.

A judge's performance should be measured in equal parts fairness and objectivity. We are a nation that believes in separate, but equal branches of government. Rhode Island needs to beef up the firewalls between the judicial and political realms.

New mayors will always want to reward their loyal supporters. The public must demand the executive branch explains its motivations, and answer publicly for changes in judicial consistency.

There may be many good reasons to appoint a new judge. Sunlight will only illuminate those reasons and disperse the dark shadows cast by secrecy.



GUEST OPINION

JRTC: "Johnston Town Council has failed us"

Is anyone in Johnston surprised by the lack of a Second from the Johnston Town Council on Robert Civetti's (District 5) motion to approve an ordinance that was designed to temporarily halt solar development in Johnston's residential neighborhoods? His fellow council members, Linda Folcarelli (District 1), Lauren A. Garzone (District 2), Alfred T. Carnevale (District 3) and President Robert V. Russo (District 4), were silent.

Yes, they understood the question and it goes back to selling Johnston to the highest bidder. How have the Johnston tax payers benefited from all of these big businesses moving here such as the infamous Johnston Landfill, the Amazon Distribution Center, and the Citizens Campus to name a few?

Johnston will now receive more than \$170 million in tax dollars and additional benefits over two decades from the Amazon facility. The town approved a 20-year property tax deal under which Citizens will pay \$250,000 per year in property taxes. Meanwhile, the landfill pays the town more than \$3 million annually for hosting the Central Landfill. There hasn't been a tax increase for the town residents' but that doesn't mean we had a tax break either. Johnston is still the 9th highest paying town in Rhode Island when it comes to taxes.

Johnston used to be all farm land. Few working farms are left such as Pezza Farm and Garden Center on Plainfield Pike, the Salisbury Farm on Peck Hill Road, Baffoni's Poultry Farm and Stamp Egg Farms on Greenville Ave, and the Jacavone Garden Center on Atwood Ave. What would happen to their land if their families don't take over? Will the town break it up and use it for commercial solar fields? Very likely and with little to no benefit to the tax payer.

Remember when Louis Vinargo died in 2018 and his

Hog Farm turned into the giant Wind Turbines from Green Development of North Kingstown that could be seen from 295. An eyesore and headache for many residents.

Johnston residents had to fight the good fight against solar in their neighborhoods and won the first round. It isn't looking too good for the future of Johnston, especially with this latest lack of support for Mr. Civetti's motion.

Here is what we'd like to know. If you're a Johnston resident and are so upset and against the solar fields coming to Johnston, where are you and why aren't you involved with the Johnston Republican Town Committee (JRTC)? What has Johnston left for you? Failing schools, high taxes, and selling property to anyone without review or regard for the residents.

We are looking for people to change this. As the late, great Tip O'Neal said, "All politics is local." It is time to start getting involved and put different people in office. 80 + Years of Democratic rule here hasn't helped us but made it impossible to have a difference of opinion which is needed to make a positive impact for our community. We need a balanced Government.

The Johnston Republican Town Committee believes in lower taxes, less government involvement, and a better future for all Johnston's residents. We need people in office to be held accountable.

If you are interested in joining the JRTC, please visit our website www.johnstonri.gop or email us at info@johnstonri.gop.

Johnston Republican Town Committee

Editor's Note: This Guest Opinion piece was submitted by the leadership of the Johnston Republican Town Committee.

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SUN RISE SCOOPS



Johnston Historical Society Open House

The Johnston Historical Society, at 101 Putnam Pike, Johnston, will be hosting an Open House from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 29, at the JHS Museum and the Elijah Angel House. Also that day, Sandra Achille will be displaying her beautiful collection of blankets from the Esmond Mills (above photo). Attendance is free of charge; pastry and coffee will be served.

LEGAL NOTICES

JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, January 26th, 2023
at 6:30 PM
Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Avenue

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Review will hold a meeting on January 26th, 2023 at 6:30 pm, at Johnston Senior Center, 1291 Hartford Avenue. All persons interested in the following proposals are requested to be present at this time. The assembly facilities are accessible to the handicapped. Persons requiring special accommodations shall call the Zoning Office at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting (401) 231-4000 ext. 4117. Persons utilizing TDD equipment may contact the Town through "Relay Rhode Island" at 1-800-745-6675. The agenda for the evening will be as follows, subject to change:

New Business

Petition of C & T Motors, c/o Juan Castillo, Applicant, Xavier Investments, LLC, Owner, for 577 Killingly Street, AP 13 Lot 170, zoned B-2. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit for automotive repair in accordance with subsection 9 use code 7 of the Table of Uses and a Special Use Permit for automotive sales in accordance with subsection 10 use code 10 of the Table of Uses.

Petition of Paul Giarusso, Owner/Applicant for 41 Tartaglia Street, AP 27 Lots 60, zoned R-20. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit 340-75, Dimensional Variance 340-74 and 340-63 for relief from merger.

Petition of Karen L. Esposito, Owner/Applicant for 42 Tartaglia Street, AP 27 Lot 94, zoned R-20. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit 340-75, Dimensional Variance 340-74 and 340-63 for relief from merger.

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 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

1/12, 1/19, 1/26/23

Planning Board Regularly Scheduled Meeting

Tuesday, February 7th, 2023
6:00 P.M.

Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave., Johnston, RI 02919

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

III. OLD BUSINESS

PB 21-47 – Central Avenue Solar/Residential – A Public Hearing on a Preliminary Plan application to create seven road frontage lots for residential development and one larger lot for a solar field. The property is located at 1252 – 1262 Central Avenue AP 43 Lots 70 & 95 - Zoned: R-40. Applicant: Revity Energy LLC.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

PB 22-61 – Atwood Avenue Condominiums – Public Meeting on a Master Plan submission for a Major Land Development creating 28 dwelling units. Located at 1765 Atwood Avenue AP 47 lot 38. Property is Zoned R-7. Applicant Churchill & Banks, LLC.

PB 22-56 – Hang 10 Car Wash – Public Hearing on the Master Plan Submission for a Minor Land Development with Unified Development Review. Zoned B-2 and R-15. Located at 8 Putnam Avenue AP 38 Lots 158, 159 & 164. The applicant is seeking to develop a car wash. A special use permit is required in accordance with use table Subsection 9. Number 11 for a car wash in a B-2 zone and a use variance is required to operate in the R-15 Zone. Other variances may be required.

PB 23-02 – Advisory Opinion on a request to rezone 369 Greenville Avenue from R-40 and R20 to R-15. A Public Meeting.

V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PB 22- 57-The Johnston Comprehensive Plan – Presentation and discussion.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT & SPECIAL ITEMS

VII. ADJOURNMENT

1/19, 1/26, 2/2/23

Sun Rise Staff Reports

More at Mohr Library

Mohr Library will host a book discussion of Prince Harry's phenomenally popular memoir, "Spare," led by Denese Carpenter, a British-born Johnston resident who is knowledgeable about the Royal Family. Date to be decided. Let the Library know you're interested.

Storytime for preschoolers is offered Wednesdays at 10:30. There are afterschool activities nearly every day, including varied programs for middle and high-school age kids and crafts for younger kids.

For adults, the crochet group continues to meet Fridays at 10 pm.

Mohr Library is open Saturdays from 9 to 5, Fridays 9 to 6, and Monday through Thursday from 9 to 8. The Library is located at 1 Memorial Ave. in Johnston. Call 401-231-4980, email info@mohrlibrary.org, or visit their website at mohrlibrary.org.

Call for Nature Poetry

Notable Works Publication and Distribution Co. Inc. has sounded a 'Call for Nature Poetry. The submissions deadline is Feb. 15.

"We're reaching out to key educators, writers and libraries in Rhode Island as a reminder of our call for nature poems, which will end in less than four weeks!" according to a press release from Notable Works. "We've stopped in personally at several RI schools and libraries and appreciated the warm welcome received. We'd be grateful for any added help in spreading the word about our call for poetry, or to send in your own poems."

In collaboration with Crosswinds Poetry Journal, Notable Works will be publishing a large number of poets in "Voices of the Earth, the Future of our Planet III," planned for release in late spring of 2023. Poets accepted for publication will receive a complimentary copy, as will public libraries in Rhode Island. The publication will include poet biographies and a resource guide of Rhode Island environmental agencies, along with contact information for those wishing to volunteer and take the next step.

For guidelines and to submit your poems, visit: notableworks.org or e-mail Noreen Inglesi at noreeninglesi@cox.net. Funding provided in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and private funders.

Audubon Summer Camp Scholarships

Audubon summer camps engage children in nature - all summer long. Kids get outside exploring fields, forests, ponds, streams, and the coast of Narragansett Bay. Campers enjoy hikes, live animal visits, ponding excursions, netting at the shore, messy crafts, games, and more! Friendships are made as kids discover the natural world together and are engaged with creative camp themes and hands-on science. It's what summer should be: tons of

outdoor fun!

Audubon believes that EVERY child should have the opportunity to attend summer camp, so the organization offers generous scholarships for camps in Bristol, RI and Seekonk, MA.

For more information and to apply for Audubon camp scholarships, visit audubonsummercamp.com or call 401-949-5454 (ext. 3014).

Camp registration opens to the public on Feb. 11.

Audubon camps are located in Bristol, RI, and Seekonk, Mass.

The Audubon Caratunk Wildlife Refuge, Seekonk: From the big white barn to the meandering trails and crystal-clear brooks, Caratunk Wildlife Refuge in Seekonk, MA is a perfect destination for outdoor exploration, ponding, and nature discovery. With nearly 200 acres of natural habitat, the location provides a safe and inviting environment for hikes, hands-on science, and plenty of outdoor fun! Caratunk is located just minutes from Providence, Central Falls, and Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium, Bristol: A gateway to Narragansett Bay, the Audubon Nature Center and Aquarium in Bristol is a popular camp destination for families in the East Bay area. Campers have opportunities to explore the 28-acre McIntosh Wildlife Refuge, the Audubon Palmieri Pollinator Garden, fresh and saltwater wetlands, fields, forest, and the shore of Narragansett Bay. The location provides a safe and inviting natural environment for hands-on science, marine life discoveries, field explorations, and plenty of outdoor fun!

NAMI-RI: Registration open for Family-to-Family course

The Rhode Island chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is now accepting registration for our next virtual Family-to-Family course which begins Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023. This is a free, 8-session educational program for families, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program, which means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition. NAMI-Rhode Island's Family-to-Family course is taught by trained family members who have lived experience with a loved one, and includes presentations, discussions and interactive exercises. For more information on the Family-to-Family curriculum and registration requirements, visit namirhodeisland.org or call 401-331-3060 or email beth@namirhodeisland.org.

Explore the 'Woony'

You can "Join the Woony Team!" "Please donate to the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council to help us continue to restore the Woonasquatucket River and Greenway," the organization asks. "Your donations also provide cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities for youth, adults, and families. Thank you!"

Pre-registration is required for Woony hikes. The Explore the Woonasquatucket Recreation Series is made possible with support from REI Co-op.

More hikes have been planned for future dates: Hike Steere Hill Conservation Area at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 18. Join them on this a casual 3-mile hike through the woods and meadows of the Steere Hill Farm Conservation Area in Glocester.

Hike Fort Wildlife Refuge in North Smithfield at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 4. Located near Primrose Pond, this 3 mile hike is very near the northernmost part of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed. This loop trail is part of an Audubon site, so wildlife abounds.

Hike Heritage Park Conservation Area at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 18: This is a lovely, wide path with rolling hills. On the walk through this section of the Glocester Land Trust's 447 acre property, the group will amble through beautiful forest land, pass majestic rock ledges and loop up and around Steere Hill before heading back.

Hike Connors Farm Conservation Area at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 1. Located in Smithfield, Connors Farm is a 2.9 mile loop trail that passes by cranberry bogs, small brooks and ponds and features a picnic area at the top of a look-out spot. It's a beautiful rocky terrain, with ups and downs — there will be some uphill traversing on rocks.

For more details and to register, visit WRWC.ORG/EVENTS.

Neighborhood Watch

The 2022 season of Johnston's Neighborhood Watch has officially kicked off. This Neighborhood Watch brings together residents who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together with members of the police department. The program pairs residents with Johnston Police officers in an effort to open up communication, meet other neighbors and create partnerships that help build community resiliency.

Editor's Note: Send submissions to rorys@rhodybeat.com. Photos in jpg format are accepted and news can include community events, promotions, academic news and nonprofit events. Email today and see your news in our column in the Johnston Sun Rise. Please include a daytime telephone number in case we require any further information.



SEIZED: Rhode Island State Police HIDTA Task Force and DEA investigators seized this table full of evidence after executing search warrants in Pawtucket, East Providence and Scituate. (Photos courtesy RISP)

HIDTA Task Force & DEA arrest 2; serve search warrant in Scituate

Rhode Island State Police (RISP) announced that on Thursday, Jan. 19, members of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force and Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Providence District Office, arrested two individuals for narcotics and weapons offenses, according to a press release.

"The Rhode Island State Police HIDTA Task Force and DEA Providence Office initiated an investigation regarding two individuals who were allegedly involved in the distribution and sales of narcotics in the greater Providence Area," according to RISP. "Several court authorized search warrants were ultimately executed in the communities of Pawtucket, East Providence, and Scituate."

"As a result of these search warrants," investigators seized the following items: 672 grams of cocaine, 60 grams of crack cocaine, 416 grams of fentanyl, 262 grams of marijuana, \$50,900 U.S. currency, a stolen Smith and Wesson .38 cal. loaded revolver, a Glock Model 22 .40 cal. Pistol, a 16-round large capacity magazine containing ammunition, a 29-round large capacity magazine containing ammunition, three vehicles, scales and packaging material.

Police arrested Odell Lora, 31, of 430 Dover Ave., East Providence and Kevon Lassiter, 31, of 183 Mineral Spring Ave., Pawtucket.

They were both charged with "possession of crack cocaine, cocaine, fentanyl and marijuana with intent to deliver; possession of a firearm by certain persons prohibited; possession of a firearm when committing a controlled substance violation; possession of large capacity feeding device; possession of a stolen firearm; and, conspiracy to violate the Uniform Controlled Substances Act," according to RISP.

Lassiter was on probation, "stemming from previous narcotics distribution and firearms offenses," according to state police. Lassiter and Lora were arraigned at Sixth Division District Court and held without bail pending further court dates.

The HIDTA Task Force is managed by RISP, and comprised of state troopers, members of the Rhode Island National Guard and local police officers from Providence, North Providence, Lincoln, Middletown, Bristol and Narra-gansett.



ARRESTED & CHARGED: Kevon Lassiter



ARRESTED & CHARGED: Odell Lora

Obituaries

Robert D. Vita

Robert D. Vita, 91, passed away unexpectedly Sunday, January 22, 2023 at RI Hospital surrounded by his loving family. He was the beloved husband of Elaine H. (Perry) Vita for 61 years. Robert was the loving father of Joseph C. Vita and Philip A. Vita (Donna); loving grandfather of Jodi, Dante, Michael and the late Maryann Vita. Robert is also survived by his beloved nephews Richard and Robert Gliottonne, as well as his former daughter-in-law Debra Nappa. He is predeceased by his sisters Lydia Vita, Lucy Vita and Eda Gliottonne. An employee of the US Postal service for over 40 years, Robert was very active in his community where he was a lectern and CCD teacher at St. Benedict Church. He was a lifetime member of the Warwick Council Knights of Columbus 2295, as well as a Pack Leader for the Rhode Island Cub Scouts. Robert was involved with Warwick PAL for many years where he coached both baseball and basketball. In lieu of flowers, donations to Our Lady of Grace Memorial Fund would greatly be appreciated.



His funeral will be held on Monday, January 30, 2023 at 10am from the Thomas & Walter Quinn Funeral Home, 2435 Warwick Ave., Warwick followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 11:30am in Our Lady of Grace Church, 4 Lafayette St #2717 Johnston, RI 02919. Burial will be in St. Ann Cemetery, Cranston. Visiting hours, Sunday from 1-4pm.

For information and condolences visit www.thequinnfuneralhome.com.

JOHNSTON POLICE LOG

VANDALISM

Around 5:30 p.m., Oct. 17, 2022, Johnston Police Patrolman Steven Letterle investigated a reported vandalism to a black 2006 Lexus. The vehicle's owner told police that she parked her car on Saturday night, Oct. 15, until that morning, around 7:30 a.m.

When she tried to go to work, she realized the vehicle had two flat tires on the passenger's side. She checked a neighbor's security cameras and after reviewing the footage from around 6 p.m. Oct. 16, a man can be seen exiting a nearby Warren Avenue residence, walking into the driveway, crouching next to the vehicle near the tires and walking off into the tree line.

She identified the man to police.

Police went to the home at 12 Warren Ave. and spoke to the homeowner, who told him that a man named Spencer Marlow (identified by police as living at the same address) was inside the home just prior to the incident, and left around 6 p.m., matching the video timeline, according to the incident report.

The homeowner told police that Marlow has been staying at a North Providence address, and is "not currently residing" at 12 Warren Ave., according to police.

Letterle noted that Marlow has a no trespass order in place against the alleged victim. The case was forwarded to the Johnston Police Detectives Division for further investigation.

Johnston Police issued an arrest warrant for Marlow on a Vandalism/Malicious Injury to Property charge.

Around 10 a.m., Jan. 14, Johnston Police Patrol-

man Nicholas A. Crowe met with a Rhode Island State Police (RISP) trooper who was transferring custody of Marlow to Johnston Police.

SHOPLIFTING

Around 5:10 p.m., Dec. 26, Warwick Police responded to Macy's at 400 Bald Hill Road, following the report of a shoplifting that had just occurred.

Macy's loss prevention had detained the suspect, and reported that she was cooperative.

Loss prevention told police that around 5 p.m. he witnessed a woman carrying a large empty bag through the store. She was later identified as Geraldine G. Fraga, 68, of 15 Manuel Ave., Johnston.

According to store security, Fraga allegedly selected five jewelry items (valued at a combined \$148) and concealed them in her purse.

Fraga allegedly passed all points of sale, exiting the store with the items in her bag, making no attempt to purchase them, according to the arrest report.

After a loss prevention employee approached Fraga, and identified himself, she allegedly handed him the items. He escorted her to a "Macy's holding cell," according to the arrest report.

The store provided video surveillance of the incident as evidence.

"Upon checking Fraga's prior convictions, it was observed she had been convicted of Misdemeanor Shoplifting on Dec. 11, 2014," according to the narrative support submitted by Warwick Police Officer Frank P. Matarese.

Fraga was charged with Shoplifting (greater than \$100; second offense).

Obituaries

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

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

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AWESOME ALUMS: Retired Local 1950 members Ken Feella, Tom Ricci and Arthur Moretti reminisced about their days with the Johnston Fire Department. (Submitted photos)

■ **Local**
 (Continued from page 1)

Local 1950, in fact, is recognized as perhaps one of the most giving and generous Locals in Rhode Island and prides itself in giving back to the community by sponsoring many John-

ston youth sports and civic organizations as well as its annual and ongoing record-breaking Toys for Tots program with the United States Marine Corps.

Although Local 1950 celebrated its 52nd year back in December, past and present members of the Johnston Association of Firefighters and their families celebrated the 50th anniversary of its first-ever contract signing during a gala party at famed Twin Oaks Restaurant in Cranston.

It was a historic happening filled with many memories from over the last half-century (the event was delayed during the past two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic). The night featured Johnston firefighters from all generations.

The party was coordi-

nated by current Local 1950 Board Member and Firefighter Chris DeFino, and included special presentations to charter members President Clayton Quick, Stanley Heywood, John Feeley, Leo Larkin, Alfred Masciarelli, Joseph Green, Rakhine Lemoi and Richard Zalabowski.

The party was not only to celebrate Local 1950's first contract, but also 50 years of securing competitive wages, benefits and safe working conditions for Johnston Firefighters, according to organizers.

Each Local 1950 charter member received a framed enlargement of the original charter with the Town of Johnston and were toasted repeatedly throughout the night as "the great founding fathers of Johnston Firefighters and Local 1950."

Likewise, retirees like

Ken Feella, Tom Ricci and Arthur Moretti, just to name a few, recanted special stories of yesteryear and posed for photographs.

"This was an extraordinary evening and event," declared many retired and current Local 1950 members. "It was a milestone for every Johnston Firefighter over the last 50 plus years."

Thus, the current Local 1950 officers — President Keith Calci, Vice President Jon Pistacchio, Secretary-Treasurer David Pingitore, Executive Board Chairman Sal Martira and Executive Board Members John Jaspardo, Pat Brockway, Don Roberts and Chris DeFino — related: "The Majority of the Johnston Fire Department today wasn't even born when these great men organized Local 1950."



Johnston Sun Rise

GRAND GIFTS: Local 1950 presented frame copies of the original IAFF Charter to first ever President Clayton Quick and Al Masciarelli during the recent 50th anniversary celebration.



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By JENNIFER COATES

When the plans were being drafted for Briarcliffe Gardens, a memory care assisted living residence tucked away on Old Pocasset Road, just off Central Avenue in the shady woods of Johnston, owner Akshay Talwar, and his team poured over every detail. Every design decision was based on thorough dementia research and experience. Every detail, from the amount of light that bathes the community rooms to the patterns on the floor to the placement of furniture, was carefully calculated, all with the intent of enhancing the quality of life and the safety of the residents of this busy center.

As soon as one walks through the doors of Briarcliffe Gardens, these research-based design features are immediately apparent. Nothing here looks haphazard or unplanned. Visitors and residents alike experience a "sensory journey" as they tour the residence. There is a feeling of spaciousness, light and openness here which appeals to all the senses and which dispels the feeling that one is in a secured environment.

To start, Briarcliffe Gardens is built entirely on one floor with dining and living spaces in the center, forming the social core, much like one's own kitchen. On any given day, this warmly-lit open space area is filled with residents who are being guided through crafts, games or socialization experiences. In adjoining rooms, it is not uncommon to see residents engaged in therapeutic activities such as seated yoga, tai chi, pet and music therapy.

The single-occupancy bedrooms all have outside windows and line the perimeter of this common center space. Numerous skylights provide diffuse sunshine during daytime and natural and artificial lighting are balanced to create a seamless transition between daylight and nightfall. The colors, light and air temperatures throughout are all coordinated in a concerted effort to comfort residents who might be prone to agitation or irritability.



Briarcliffe Gardens Memory Care Assisted Living Residence on Old Pocasset Road in Johnston (seen here on sunnier days) provides compassionate care and research-backed services to those with Alzheimer's Disease, dementia and other memory-loss conditions.

As the tour continues, one will find a 24-hour retro-design diner, a movie hall, specially adapted recumbent bikes, a Wii gaming center, a hair salon/barber, a sunroom for meditation and, in the spring/summer, a courtyard with fruit-producing trees, walking path and patio. The caregivers and administrators of this progressive memory care center have considered every aspect of their residents' lives and work diligently to anticipate their every need.

From the time when the first ground was broken on Briarcliffe Gardens, this state-of-the-art memory care assisted living residence's primary mission has been to provide a secure,

nurturing and vibrant community for its many residents.

When family members are considering a possible long-term stay for a loved one who suffers from health concerns like Alzheimer's Disease/Dementia, Briarcliffe Gardens offers so much more than exceptional care. It exemplifies everything that a memory-care residence should be ~and can be ~ in this modern age.

To schedule your personal tour of Briarcliffe Gardens, call 401-944-2450. For more information, you can also visit them at www.briarclifferi.com or visit their Facebook page, Briarcliffe Gardens Assisted Living.

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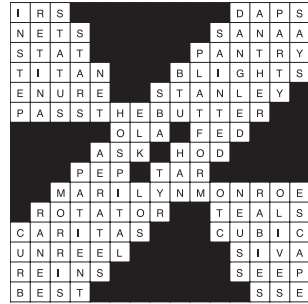
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CLOGGED ARTERY: Large construction vehicles working on road improvements, the Amazon project, and the new hospital project, all along Hartford Avenue in Johnston, have combined to make traffic patterns challenging. Police have been keeping an eye on traffic flow. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler)

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Hospital

(Continued from page 1)

"Johnston just got Lifespan Urgent care and we have a large medical community in the Atwood Medical complex as well as across the street at the Johnston Medical Center," Russo said. "This is good clean professional industry that brings service to our citizens as well as citizens from surrounding communities that will patronize our other local businesses."

On Jan. 13, Encompass Health Corp. announced its plans to build a freestanding, 50-bed inpatient rehabilitation hospital at 2109 Hartford Ave. in Johnston.

According to a press release from the company, the facility is "expected to begin serving patients in 2024." The announcement follows two years of litigation. Initially, the facility won state approval, then lost it, then won it back in court.

"We are excited to expand our rehabilitation services in the Northeast through this project, which will serve as Encompass Health's first hospital in the state of Rhode Island," said Pat Tuer, president of Encompass Health's Northeast region. "We look forward to improving access to high-quality, individualized rehabilitative care and allowing more residents to receive specialized care close to home."

Former Department of Health Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott approved the \$42 million project's initial application in 2020. Then, an argument ensued over whether the facility, and the services it promised, were "in need" in the state.

Competitors claimed the hospital would damage local nursing homes and similar healthcare providers. During the summer of 2021, Hearing Officer Catherine R. Warren released a 21-page decision finding that Encompass had not proven the need for the facility.

The argument went to Superior Court and Encompass ultimately prevailed.

Encompass says its Johnston hospital will complement "local acute care services," and "serve patients recovering from debilitating illnesses and injuries, including strokes and other neurological disorders, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, amputations and complex orthopedic conditions."

"In addition to 24-hour nursing care, this hospital will offer physical, occupational and speech therapies to restore functional ability and quality of life," according to the Encompass press release. "Care will be

provided by highly specialized nurses, therapists and physicians. The hospital will feature all private patient rooms, a spacious therapy gym with advanced rehabilitation technologies and an activities of daily living suite, cafeteria, pharmacy and therapy courtyard."

Alabama-based Encompass remained confident throughout the permitting process.

"Encompass Health looks forward to building a rehabilitation hospital in Johnston," according to a September 2021 statement provided by the company's Senior Manager of Public Relations Danielle Hall. "There is a significant need for inpatient rehabilitation services in Rhode Island."

The project pitch pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic. Johnston Town Council passed the plans through to Rhode Island's Health Services Council. The council held hearings and heard testimony looking at both sides of the argument over whether the Ocean State needed another rehab hospital.

The council voted 3-2 to send the application through to Alexander-Scott's desk.

Former Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena was a vocal proponent of the project. In his final public remarks delivered before Town Council as mayor, at their December 2022 meeting, Polisena praised the project. He previously estimated the for-profit hospital would bring around 100 additional jobs to Johnston.

Current Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. did not respond to a request for comment on this story.

The town's elected officials have all consistently welcomed the project.

"It's nice to see that property where there were some abandoned homes and former farm stands being cleaned up and developed," Town Council Member Robert J. Civetti said Tuesday. "I welcome the rehab hospital into our town as another taxpayer and a show of economic development in our community. The economic development in the zoned business areas in town is welcomed and enables the town to stabilize taxes for our residential taxpayers."

According to the company, "Encompass Health is the largest owner and operator of rehabilitation hospitals in the United States." Encompass owns 153 hospitals in 36 states and Puerto Rico.

Johnston's former mayor promised the hospital, once open and operating, would benefit the town's tax base.

"For-profit' means they pay taxes," Polisena said in 2021. "This would not be a free ride. The taxpayers would benefit from this."

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MEMORIAL MAN: The late Richard D. "Ricky" Salzillo was lost at age 24 in 1976. On Feb. 5, 200 will gather in his memory. (Submitted photos)

Ricky Salzillo game dinner slated for Feb. 5

By **PETE FONTAINE**

Richard D. "Ricky" Salzillo was a mighty man who was loved, as people will tell you, "by everyone he came in contact with."

He was a Johnston native and talented musician who played basketball at La Salle Academy with a personality that could melt sadness or anger with his eyes and smile. However, those who knew him will tell you his most enduring quality was his large heart and kindness to others.

That's why the Santa Maria DiPrata Society Hall is expected to be sold out on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 5, for the continuation of what has become a cherished

tradition that has raised lots and lots of money for college scholarships for JHS graduates and children battling cancer and people in need.

Ever since Feb. 10, 1976, when Salzillo was killed in an automobile accident on Route 295, his many friends have remembered the then 24-year-old who would always tell people, "The sky is the limit for you and your generation. Be bold! Don't let it slip through your fingers."

So, if you'd like to take part in one of Rhode Island's most respected non-profit fundraisers, plan on purchasing a table of 10 with your friends and neighbors when the Richard D. "Rickey" Salzillo Memorial Game Winner makes re-appearance after a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Chairpersons Steve Placella and Vin LaFazia, who have helped develop the dinner into an ongoing special success story, recently announced that "only 22 tables of 10 people each (\$40 per ticket) will be sold and all reservations must be made in advance. No tickets will be sold at the door."

The long-time volunteers who this week shared stories about some of the organizations that have benefited from dinner proceeds raging from the RI Chapter of ALS, Boston Children's Hospital

Heart Unit, Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance and various youth programs and recreation projects in Johnston.

"We are again proud to bring back the Ricky Memorial Game Dinner," Placella offered.

"It's a labor of love for everyone," LaFazia added, while another committee volunteer said, "so we can continue work that Ricky would have done if his life hadn't ended at the young and tender age of 24."

If you've never attended the dinner, it's like a huge family reunion and an event filled with unmatched camaraderie highlighted by perhaps the best game dinner in Rhode Island that will be prepared and served by Ralph's Catering — which is owned and operated by Ralph DeFusco — located inside the Santa Maria DiPrata Hall at 35 Walnut Grove Ave. in Cranston.

When asked for a preview of the menu, LaFazia and Placella offered: "We'll begin with Pheasant Soup, Antipasto and Venison Chili and the main course(s) will be Wild Boar Spitzatta, Pasta with Venison Meatballs and Sausage and wind up with Venison Meatloaf and mashed potatoes!"

Anyone who'd like to purchase a table can order through Placella at 401-946-0404, or 255-3478, or LaFazia at 401-233-2564.

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NEW NETFLIX SERIES: Pressure Cooker dropped on Netflix on Jan. 6. The show made the streaming service's Top 10 shows list last week. (Submitted photo)



Cucina Rustica's chef, owner stirs up Netflix series

By EMMA BARTLETT

It's not everyday that someone from a casting company reaches out to you on social media looking for chefs to compete in a new cooking show. So, when a message just like this first slid into Brian Nadeau's Instagram DMs, he was a bit skeptical.

Nadeau is the executive chef and owner of Cranston's Cucina Rustica, an Italian restaurant that has been in business on Atwood Avenue for the past six years. He made his television debut on Jan. 6 in the new Netflix series "Pressure Cooker." In the show, 11 chefs live together and compete for \$100,000. There are no celebrity judges and – what makes the show cut throat – is that the contestants eliminate one another.

When Nadeau told his wife, Gina, about the casting company reaching out to him, she suggested he entertain the idea and see where it went.

"So the DMs turn into phone calls, the phone calls turn into emails, the emails turn into interviews," said Nadeau. "Apparently I just kept nailing every interview."

Nadeau was selected as one of the 11 chefs and flew to Los Angeles in March of 2021 for roughly four to five weeks of filming. Nadeau said his reason for going on the show was to step out of his comfort zone and elevate his game as a chef – though, of course, \$100,000 would be nice.

"I went out there and left a completely different person," Nadeau said.

Nadeau made a lot of best friends from the experience and still talks to the other chefs every day. He'll be going to a few of their weddings and said he enjoyed hearing the other contestants' stories during group meals.

Originally from Pawtucket, Nadeau has been cooking his whole life. He's worked every rank of the restaurant from dishwasher to executive chef – a title he took on around 2004.

"I never grew up wanting to be a chef," said Nadeau.

In junior high he took on a dishwasher role and ended up cooking in high school. His thought was, in order to make more money, you need more responsibility. He learned what the next person above him was doing and moved up the ranks within the industry. Nadeau attended the University of Rhode Island for business and was part of the Talent Development program which assisted students who didn't have the money to go to school. After two and a half years, the program's

funding was cut and Nadeau dropped out.

From there, Nadeau went back to what he knew: cooking.

Nadeau said Gina had the idea for opening Cucina Rustica. Back in the day, she and her partner ran a place in Narragansett and needed an executive chef. Nadeau was good friends with her at the time and circumstances eventually allowed him to work with her. One day, Pat Orlando, who owned La Rosa in Cranston, was visiting the restaurant and Nadeau – who knew him – jokingly said to let them know if he ever wanted to sell his Cranston site.

"Two weeks later he came back and we started talking about buying the place," Nadeau said.

Cucina Rustica is a 7,000 square foot facility that provides dinner service and food for weddings, baby showers, corporate meetings, funerals and more. Gina works the front of the house while Nadeau controls the back of the house; the two also live in Cranston with their 16-month-old toddler.

Nadeau has fresh seafood from Narragansett Bay delivered every day and gets bread daily from Superior Bakery. The business's popular dishes include the sole française, chicken and veal parmesan, salmon and risotto; he said the restaurant is comfort food forward.

"I try to take care of everybody like family"

The restaurant also offers customers a relaxing vibe.

"The whole idea was to open up a restaurant so that when you came in you didn't feel rushed to leave," Nadeau said, adding that he's trained the staff to read tables. Some people may order immediately but there are others who are catching up with friends and may not order for 45 minutes.

From his time on the show, Nadeau learned different cooking techniques – some of which he has implemented at Cucina Rustica. For instance, a hollandaise sauce is usually made from scratch by whisking it, but Nadeau learned to make the sauce in a blender in 30 seconds; the result is an airier and fluffier sauce.

Pressure Cooker has been trending on Netflix's Top 10 all week and received positive feedback. Since the show dropped, Nadeau has received messages from people across the country and beyond saying he's an inspiration to them and that they're rooted for him on the show.

The restaurant recently held a premiere party on Jan. 6 in conjunction with Cucina Rustica's employee/customer appreciation party.



EXEC CHEF AND OWNER: Brian Nadeau, owner and executive chef of Cucina Rustica, recently appeared on the new Netflix series called Pressure Cooker. Nadeau and his wife, Gina, started the restaurant six years ago. (Submitted photo)

"I didn't think it was going to be that big but I have such a great customer clientele that it kind of spiraled into 130 people," Nadeau said.

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Sports

Panthers snap skid with win over PCD

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston girls basketball team picked up much needed wins over Providence Country Day and Hope to snap a three-game losing streak and improve to 7-3 in league play this season. The Panthers rolled to a 58-28 win over PCD then a 50-30 decision over Hope.

After starting the season 5-0, the Panthers would fall against Central Falls, Davies and Lincoln School. The Panthers sit in fourth place and Division IV while those three clubs hold the top three seeds in the standings.

Johnston would get big outings from freshman Annabella Gesuladi and junior Ava Waterman against PCD. Gesuladi led the way with 26 points while Waterman added 12.

Johnston coach Meg Reall was happy to see her team snap the skid and move on from a tough loss against first-place Central Falls.

"It was definitely important for us to get back on track. Central Falls was a tough loss, we put a lot of emphasis on that game because we knew that they were one of the top teams in the division. We got a little deflated despite playing well. I was really happy with how we played against Central Falls, but it



BACK ON TRACK: Johnston's Talia LaFlamme battles off PCD defenders. (Photos by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com)

SNAP - PAGE 18

CCRI volleyball story an important one to tell

This week I had the pleasure of writing a feature on the formation of the CCRI women's volleyball team back in 1976. This was the first ever women's sports team at the school and paved the way for what is now one of the premier athletics schools in the country at the junior level.

I'll let you read the full feature but in short, a group of three East Providence volleyball players recruited a team in 1976 at CCRI, which at the time was Rhode Island Junior College, and were led by Toll Gate coach

Gail Davis. It was the first women's team at the school and the girls enjoyed immediate success. Four decades later, you see the progress made and it all started with that group.

My first thought on the story is that it blows my mind that even in 1976, women's sports in college were not common. Schools began offering women's sports in the 1950s and 60s, then in 1972 with Title IX they became even more prevalent, but in general, many schools were without female sports.

To think how long sports

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR

ALEXS@
RHODYBEAT.COM

have existed, it is unfathomable that as recent as the 1970's that they were not a regular thing

collegiately; it really is hard to wrap your head around it.

Then in terms of the big picture, it really is a tremendous story that has caused a ripple effect decades later. These girls were huge in bringing college sports to Rhode Island and without them, who knows how much longer women would have had to wait. They broke the mold and you see the development years later.

My last takeaway is that this story showed that if you want something, go get it. If not for these girls, the school would

have gone to at least another year without women's sports, and could have gone even longer. There was no guarantee that it would all work out, either. They needed to build a roster, coaching staff, and on top of all that, prove that it could be a competitive unit.

Now, 46-plus years later, that group still boasts some of the most successful campaigns the school has ever seen. Impressive.

Every once in a while, a story hits home and makes you look

PITCH - PAGE 18

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CCRI women win 12th of 13

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The good times continue to roll for the Community College of Rhode Island women's basketball team, which started a new win streak Saturday with an 88-50 home win over UConn Avery Point and remained No. 4 in the most recent NJCAA Division III national poll for the fifth consecutive week.

At 16-2, the Knights boast the third-best win percentage (.889) among the nation's ranked teams, trailing only No. 1 Rochester, No. 3 Minnesota West, and No. 5 Fulton-Montgomery. CCRI has won back-to-back games since a January 17 loss to D-II Union that snapped its season-best 10-game win streak.

Against UConn, four Knights reached double figures, led by sophomore guard Michelle Moreno (Providence, RI), who recorded a triple-double with 12 points, 11 rebounds, and 14 assists.

Sophomore guard Elizabeth Bruno (Providence, RI) continued her phenom-

enal 2022-23 season with a team-high 28 points on 10-of-13 shooting from the field, including a remarkable 8-of-9 from three-point range. Sophomore center Maggie Schwab (Narragansett, RI) connected on 11-of-15 shots and finished with 23 points and 10 rebounds for another double-double and sophomore guard Chloe Rayko (Coventry, RI) added 19 points.

The Knights have the week off before beginning a four-game road trip Saturday at 1 pm against Southern Maine Community College.

Newcomer Elvin Mbengi (Providence, RI) scored 20 points in his season debut Saturday as the Community College of Rhode Island men's basketball won for the third time in four games with a 102-57 home win over UConn Avery Point.

Mbengi, a 6-foot-5 freshman forward who joined the team in early January, shot 8-of-19 from the field, including three three-pointers, and also hauled in 11 rebounds in his CCRI debut.

The Knights won back-to-back games for the first time all season under first-year head coach Marcus Douthit and have won three of four overall to improve to 8-10.

Sophomore guard RJ Pina (Providence, RI) finished with 16 points in the win over the Pointers with five assists and four rebounds and sophomores Connor Warner (Westerly, RI) and Tyler Lima (Pawtucket, RI) each finished with 14 points off the bench.

Two weeks after making his season debut on January 6, freshman forward Bereket Janat (Westerly, RI) scored in double figures for the fourth time in six games with 13 points in addition to seven rebounds.

The Knights hit the road for five in a row, beginning tomorrow at 6 pm against Quinsigamond Community College.

CCRI offers seven varsity athletics programs competing in the National Ju-

nior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and boasts an academic support program for all student-athletes. For more information, visit ccri.edu/athl or follow CCRI Athletics on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook at @CCRIathletics.

About CCRI

The Community College of Rhode Island, New England's largest community college, enrolls nearly 20,000 students in credit-bearing programs and an additional 8,500 individuals in workforce development programs and adult education courses annually. CCRI also provides transportation education and certification to 14,000 Rhode Islanders each year. Classes and programs are offered at CCRI's full-service campuses in Warwick, Lincoln, Providence and Newport, online and in partnership with the Westerly Education Center. For more information, visit www.ccri.edu.

Doss, Oliver earn LEC awards

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Rhode Island College junior Steven Doss (West Warwick, R.I.) was named the Little East Men's Track Athlete of the Week for his performance at the University of Rhode Island Invitational on Saturday, Jan. 21.

Doss finished first in the 200m (22.18). His effort established a new program record. He is now ranked No. 8 in the nation and No. 1 in New England in that event. It was an individual event with no team scoring. The event was comprised of mostly Div. I competition.

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will compete at B.U.'s John Thomas Terrier Classic on Saturday, Jan. 28 (10 a.m.).

Rhode Island College freshman Haley Oliver (Coventry, R.I.) was named the Little East Women's Track Rookie of the Week for her performance at the Univer-

sity of Rhode Island Invitational on Saturday, Jan. 21. It is the third time this season that she has received this award.

Oliver finished 14th in the 800m (2:30.02) and 21st in the mile (5:28.22). It was an individual event with no team scoring. The event was comprised of mostly Div. I competition.

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will compete at B.U.'s John Thomas Terrier Classic on Saturday, Jan. 28 (10 a.m.).

Sophomore Samantha Sainristil (Providence, R.I.) placed ninth in the weight throw as the Rhode Island College women's track and field team competed at the URI Invitational on Saturday afternoon.

It was an individual event with no team scoring. The event was comprised of mostly Div. I competition.

Sainristil placed ninth in the weight throw (14.84m) and 18th in the shot (9.64m).

Freshman Amanda

Hebert (Coventry, R.I.) placed 12th in the 3,000m (11:55.64).

Graduate Melissa Mejia (Providence, R.I.) placed 17th in the weight throw (12.83m).

Freshman Milana Melvin (Johnston, R.I.) finished 27th in the shot (7.78m).

Sophomore Rachael Mongeau (Cumberland, R.I.) finished 33rd in the mile (6:00.48).

Doss (West Warwick, R.I.) won the 200m as the Rhode Island College men's track and field team competed at the University of Rhode Island Invitational on Saturday afternoon.

Sophomore Mahari Nayte (Providence, R.I.) placed second in the 800m (1:55.95).

Junior Michaelson Salomon (Providence, R.I.) finished third in the weight throw (17.22m).

Senior Edward Garofalo (Newport, R.I.) placed fourth in the triple jump (13.48m) and 13th in the long jump (6.00m).

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PASSING THE BALL: Hannah Calabro dishes a pass.

■ **Snap**

(Continued from page 16)

took us down into a rut. It was important for us to pick up wins against PCD then Hope and to get back on track to where we wanted to be," said Reall.

Reall added: "The good thing was that we got the win against PCD and carried it right over to get the win over Hope. It was nice to see them use that first win as a refresh going into the second half of the season which is exactly what we needed. We can now use these games as motivation and a way to get into that playoff mindset."

The team is getting geared up for the second half of its regular season slate and will be playing repeat games the rest of the way.

"It will be easier in that we know what to expect. I tell the girls that we've gotten better since the last time we've played these teams, but they have too. We need to stick to the game plan and be prepared the best we can every time we step on the floor," said Reall.

The Panthers were back in action on Tuesday against Times2 Academy, but the results were not available at press time.

As Johnston gets prepared to make a playoff push, Reall believes that if the Panthers give it their best, the results will follow.

"Our goal is to play at our best. Whether we win or we lose, I would just like to know that we gave it everything we had. Making sure the effort is there and when we walk off the floor, making sure we have nothing left to give."



THROUGH TRAFFIC: Idaizha Brown works past a PCD defender.

■ **Pitch**

(Continued from page 16)

at the world around you. I was not born in 1976 so I did not experience it first hand, but it does make me appreciate the world that I have been given, the opportunities, and puts things in perspective a little bit. Appreciate every opportunity that you have, because many people are not as fortunate and need to fight twice as hard to get half as far.

The Warwick boys hockey co-op team had another electric win last week when it beat Mount St. Charles in a 3-2 thriller. It was another big time regular season win for the co-op which is now referring to itself as the Militia, and it continues to prove that it is a force to be reckoned with in Division I.

Last year the team finished at the bottom of the standings with one win. It lost in the opening round of the playoffs and was only there because, well,

every team made it.

This year has been different, it has been a breakout year for it. It beat Hendricken for Warwick's first public school win over the Hawks in nearly 20 years. Now it has a win over the Mounties. The team then got a win over Barrington on Saturday to improve to 6-2 and claim third place overall.

Sure, Hendricken isn't going anywhere and La Salle has been hot and handed the Militia one of its losses. Cumberland has been hot as well, and the Mounties are always in the picture. Division I is loaded and any of those teams could pull off a championship run.

I will say though, and my ultimate point is that Warwick is in this thing. The win over the Hawks was no fluke, no over-achievement. This team is in this race and is a contender. What a difference a year makes.

By the way, I love the new nickname, the Militia. Although it is not offi-

cial on paper, it has been catching on with locals and it seems like it is only a matter of time before it happens.

I wish that all co-ops came up with unique names. What typically happens is either they don't come up with a name, or they go with whichever school has the most players and/or provides the uniforms. The Cranston co-op for example, is often referred to as "the Falcons," or just flat out "West". The Warwick girls co-op is referred to as the Lady Titans as well.

Not that this is a big issue, but I like the idea of all the schools involved coming up with a unique name. The Militia leans more toward the Patriots, but at least it is something new. Another example is the Cranston girls team which refers to itself as the Thunderbirds, blending the Thunderbolts and Falcons.

So, hopefully we can all help make the Militia nickname stick.

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FISHING SHOW: The New England Saltwater Fishing Show, March 10-12 at the Rhode Island Convention Center, will feature 300 booths and free seminars. (Submitted photos)

Fishing show gearing up

By **CAPT. DAVE MONTI**

The New England Saltwater Fishing Show will be held March 10-12 at the Rhode Island Convention Center. The show is the largest saltwater fishing show of its type in the Northeast, featuring tackle, rods, reels, lures, electronics, charter guides, boats, motors, accessories, clothes and much more.

"At press time we are about two months out and have over 75 percent of the booths sold, about 275 of them. Our large spaces for boats and large displays against the back wall of the exhibition hall were taken so we expanded things a bit. Boat manufacturers such as Everglades (shown by Oyster Harbor Marine) and a host of others will be on display at the Show," said Greg Vespe of Tiverton and Executive Director of the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (Show sponsors). "We still have booths available. Many of our exhibitors are offering exclusive Show Specials so anglers should take advance of these specials."

"We are keying in on 'How to' seminars focusing on strategies and tactics to target species we as anglers love to catch, eat or release -- striped bass, summer flounder, tautog and a host of others. We have a special focus on species that are in abundance in our area due to warming water. Seminars and gear on how to target black sea bass and new abundant species like mackerel, false albacore, and bluefin tuna that are closer to shore," said Vespe.

Visit www.nesaltwatershow.com or RISAA's Facebook page for show hours and updates on seminar topics and speakers as the schedule gets fleshed out.

Capt. Jack Sprengel... Making sense of fishing rods

The RI Saltwater Anglers Association will hold a seminar on

"Making sense of fishing rods" on Monday, Jan. 30, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. featuring Capt. Jack Sprengel of East Coast Charters, Warwick.

This seminar will help "crack the code" when it comes to understanding and choosing a fishing rod that has the performance characteristics best suited for each anglers skill level and fishing style. Terms like forgiveness, parabolic action, varying speed classifications, ratings and composite characteristics will be deciphered at this seminar.

This is an in person seminar at the West Warwick Elks Lodge, 60 Clyde Street, West Warwick, RI. Food available at 5:30 p.m. as in the past. Guests welcome with a \$10 donation to the RISAA scholarship fund, RISAA members attend free. For information contact Greg Vespe at 401.826.2121.

Early aggregation of right whales

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is alerting all mariners in Cape Cod Bay about the risk of vessel collision with a large aggregation of North Atlantic right whales recently observed in Cape Cod Bay.

On Jan. 18, 2023, the Center for Coastal Studies aerial survey team documented at least 27 right whales in lower and Eastern Cape Cod Bay, which were surface and subsurface feeding. A surface feeding aggregation of this size is typical in the spring but less commonly observed in the winter months. Due to the early presence, behavior, and size of the aggregation, DMF is urging mariners to use extreme caution when transiting Cape Cod Bay.

Although right whales will likely switch to feeding on zooplankton species closer to the seafloor, the current feeding behavior at the surface warrants

vigilance from mariners.

For the safety of both mariners and whales, vessel operators in this area are strongly urged to proceed with caution, reduce speed (less than 10 knots), and post lookouts to avoid colliding with these highly endangered whales.

Where's the bite

Saltwater and freshwater licenses. Anglers are reminded to renew their licenses for salt and fresh water for 2023. Saltwater licenses renew annually on Jan. 1 in coastal states, most coastal states have license reciprocity.

For example, if you have a RI license you can fish in New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Maine. For fresh water licensing information and a list of trout stocked ponds in Rhode Island visit www.dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/fish-wildlife/freshwater-fishing/freshwater-fishing-faqs; and in Massachusetts visit www.mass.gov/freshwater-fishing-information.

Cod, tautog and black sea bass. Tautog and black sea bass seasons have ended. However, cod fishing south of Cape Cod is still open. Party boats fishing for cod this winter include the Frances Fleet at www.francesfleet.com and the Island Current at www.islandcurrent.com. Rates vary but are about \$135 per adult for a full day of fishing, call to check schedules and make a reservation.

Dave Monti holds a captain's master license and charter fishing license. He serves on a variety of boards and commissions and has a consulting business focusing on clean oceans, habitat preservation, conservation, renewable energy, and fisheries related issues and clients. Forward fishing news and photos to dmontifish@verizon.net or visit www.noflukefishing.com.

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LIVING COLOR

On-Trend Hues Reflect Comforting Lifestyle Design

FAMILY FEATURES

Upgrading your home design is an opportunity to tap into new color schemes. Knowing what shades are trendy and how different hues can work together for a cohesive design is an important step in creating an attractive design aesthetic. While you might turn to family or friends for inspiration for your next DIY project, another resource for collecting concepts and options to upgrade your space is the internet. Consider the Valspar Color-verse, which allows visitors to explore colors in a unique way and offers paint color inspiration and decor trends they can envision within their own homes.

The interactive virtual home showcases the latest paint and design trends so you can get creative for your next project. After experiencing the Valspar 2023 Colors of the Year firsthand by painting walls and art from the collection to see the 3D virtual house come to life, you can find the perfect paint shade for your space.

“Through the Color-verse, visitors can experience the 12 Colors of the Year in a realistic virtual home,” said Gus Morales,

vice president of brand marketing for CBG Sherwin-Williams. “Aside from exploring the Colors of the Year, the home is an engaging space for visitors to create art, play games and order paint chips to see how their top color picks look and feel in their homes.”

Color Trends to Consider

Many of this year’s popular nature-inspired designs are all about finding comfort, embracing a flexible lifestyle, rediscovering joy and leaning into the growing DIY movement. The most trend-worthy, forward-thinking and livable colors reflect specific facets or emotions of life so you can update your well-used spaces with thoughtful colors that evoke positive energy and lasting change.

Comfort and Contentment: If your goal is to create a space that envelops you in a sense of comfort, consider a white with a yellow undertone that makes a space cozy like a soft blanket, like Cozy White from Valspar. Complement the softness with a muted clay that brings in brown undertones that suggest gentle contentment.



Calming Restoration: Tap into the calming tones of nature with a hazy green that has duality, which brings in both the calm and liveliness of the great outdoors. Another option is a deep midnight blue used as an elegant calming shade to restore mind, body and home.

Healthful, Mindful Living: Create an uplifting space where your wellness is a priority. Evoke a greater sense of health consciousness with a light blue that has a dose of softness used as a fresh neutral with uplifting qualities of a modern pastel, like Valspar’s Rising Tide. Reinforce the benefits of mindful living with a cool gray that is balanced by the warmth of the yellow undertone, a natural hue like a cotton muslin cloth.

Connections and Joy: Establish spaces where you can celebrate relationships with others, the world around you and happiness in your

being. Consider hues like a white softened by a violet undertone, a harmonious shade promoted by digital connectivity. Evoke joy with a dependable classic tan that features a yellow undertone suggesting new life with uplifting qualities.

Natural Balance: Bringing hints of the outdoors into a well-loved living space creates a soothing ambiance. Consider a warm neutral brown tone inspired by the shades found in nature or a cooled down blue that strikes a beautiful balance between cool and warm shades in your design.

Inspirational Thought: A work-from-home or crafting space needs color to inspire great thinking. Try a faded natural terracotta that sparks individuality and warmth or a deep blackened olive, an on-trend neutral that embodies charm and sophistication.

Explore the tool and find more colorful ideas at Valspar.com.

Navigate New Colors

Exploring color options before you apply them to a home improvement or design project gives you the chance to experience and visualize different styles before you fully commit. Using a tool like Valspar’s Color-verse, a 3D virtual home, you can experience on-trend color palettes that inspire your next big project through resources like:

- An interactive feature that allows you to repaint walls of a living room, dining room, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, walls and cabinets using the 12 Colors of the Year then takes you directly to the site to order free paint chips to try at home
- An artistic element where you can create a 3D panorama nature scene, explore others’ artwork and share creations on social media
- A light-hearted game that inspires you to get on the road to gather your home improvement essentials



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TOWNIE TRIO: East Providence grads Dona Damian, Rita Damian and Sandy Sullivan, who were key pieces of the first team.

TEAM LEADERS: Team leaders Gail Davis, Dona Damian and Vin Cullen at a recent lunch outing in East Providence. (AT TOP) (Submitted photos)



HARDWARE: Here is the medal that Dona Damian received after competing at nationals.

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Community College of Rhode Island boasts some of the top women's athletic programs in the country and offers sports in all three seasons each year.

It is common practice for junior colleges to offer such programs in 2023, but even when Title IX was established in 1972, it was anything but.

Back in 1976, CCRI, which at the time was Rhode Island Junior College, had yet to offer any women's sports. That year, three East Providence grads would change that and become monumental pieces in the introduction of women's sports at not only RIJC, but for the entire state.

Sisters Dona and Rita Damian, as well as Sandy Sullivan, were standout players for the East Providence volleyball team. The trio was headed to RIJC that fall and wished to continue their careers on the court. Once they arrived, they promptly marched to Athletic Director Vin Cullen's office to express their interest in forming the first women's team on campus.

"Women's sports had not existed. One day, three girls came into my office from East Providence and asked if we had a women's volleyball team. I said, 'No,' and they asked, 'Why not?' I told them, 'Because no one has asked for one.' They said, 'Well, we're asking,'" said Cullen of his first meeting with the girls.

After a few conversations and batches of homemade cookies provided by the girls, Cullen allowed them to begin recruiting players to get the ball rolling.

Dona began handing out flyers to just about anyone she encountered on campus, especially girls with height. There was only one requirement to join the team, and it was "the desire to play." Dona was able to wrangle an eight-player roster. Check.

The next role to fill was the coaching position. Cullen and Dona knew exactly who they wanted.

"We needed a coach. I knew Gail Davis who coached at Toll Gate. I began bothering her, I'd go to Toll Gate, I would call her. She was not interested but I told her that the only way I'd leave her alone was if she coached the team. She agreed, part because I bothered the hell out of her," said Dona.

"I knew nothing about volleyball, but I knew Toll Gate down the street was winning a lot. I figured I would go down there and talk to their coach Gail Davis about it and I found out that she was the best volleyball coach in the state. She impressed me greatly," added Cullen.

■ TEAM - PAGE 24

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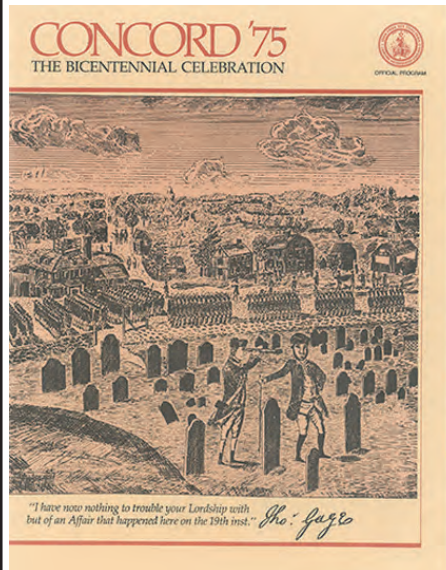


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The other night my father was scanning some old slides and sent me a picture of me on April 19, 1975, at the 200th anniversary of the battle at Lexington and Concord. I was nine years old at the time and was infatuated with April 19th, and my love of the history of the American Revolution had begun a few years earlier in 1973. I have to say that the picture brought back many memories, but it also made me feel really old that it was Fifty years ago! The image of the little kid in a tri-cornered hat and toy musket made me also think back to how that infatuation as a kid has never waned and has grown so much.

Elementary and middle school field trips to the Concord Museum and other local sites where there were historical objects turned me into a material culture fanatic. As a kid with learning disabilities, the objects that survived from the Revolution helped bring the importance of the event to life for me. I would sit in awe and stare at muskets carried during the war, or even simple everyday objects that had been owned by a veteran. As I got into middle and high school, I began to read about the Civil War, World War I and II, and began collecting. At the time, American Revolution and a lot of Civil War objects were a little too pricey, but World



By Joel Bohy
Historic Arms & Militaria
 Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers
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War I and II were somewhat affordable. My first musket was purchased in 1978, a reproduction British Pattern 1769 land musket, more commonly called today the "Brown Bess." After joining a local minute company, I began drumming and a few years later when I was old enough to carry my musket, reenacting. For me, reenacting became an opportunity

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to reproduce some of the clothing, equipment, and try to understand it in a different way than seeing it behind glass. I also started reenacting Civil War, and in 1992, was an extra in the film Gettysburg. Seeing that many people in uniform marching and drilling gave me more of an idea of the soldier's experience, although we were certainly not being shot at.

Collecting was also really fun. There was always another friend or two to hit every show, flea market, auction, or yard sale we could find, picking up bits of history to display and handle. It helped create not only a collection, but a group of friends and family I still see at shows all over the country.

Research and archaeology also became big passions of mine. I always felt that going through an archive was a form of archaeology in itself. Combining that with actual field work, I have learned some amazing things about our past that help weave history together.

I guess I should consider myself a lucky guy. I get to see and handle great pieces of history every day. After seeing that picture of little Joel the other night and reminiscing, I need to remember how cool my job and passions really are, and how that young kid helped form who I am today.

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Team
(Continued from page 22)

The team was set and ready to go.

For the 1976 season, the team would be a club program. Although many of the players had high school experience, a few of them did not, which led to some interesting days in practice in the early going. Between the different skill levels, having to play in basketball jerseys and even use basketballs at practice some days due to the lack of equipment, there was some uncertainty if things were going to work out.

"It was such a motley crew, but the desire to play was so high. We were pretty extraordinary. I remember the look on Gail's face, she would almost be rolling her eyes. She had so much patience with us and we ended up doing well. It was her patience, she did not do a lot of yelling, all she could do was shake her head, put down the paper and walk away. We practiced, though, we helped each other and showed each other what we had to do. She tried and she told us, 'I think you can do this.' She had great guidance and a great sense of humor," said Dona.

Davis knew she had a special team in the early going and was excited to teach it from the ground up.

"They had to learn, they had to learn from the beginning. It was a lot like coaching high school so I was prepared. They had to learn how to pass the ball, how to set the ball. Those three girls from East Providence were exceptional and set us up. There were some other girls that

came in from North Kingstown, Cranston. Our starting lineup was fantastic and the girls coming off the bench were helpful," said Davis.

As the season approached, the pressure began to set in for the girls. As the first women's team at the school, the players knew that the season in many ways was a test run for women's athletics.

"Gail would remind us, 'If you want to be a team, you have to show them. Right now, you are a club, so you have to show them that you are worthy. You can do this. If you want to be powerhouses, you have to show people. They aren't just going to give it to you. You don't represent just the school, you represent women,'" said Dona.

"We were intimidated for a while, but we got over it quickly," said Rita.

The club got off to a strong start, beating both the Brown and URI junior varsity teams. By years end, it had gone undefeated and it was clear that the group was capable of playing against college competition, which earned it the status of a true team for the 1977 season.

Just before the start of the season, Cullen presented the team with actual volleyball uniforms and that is when the girls knew that they had made it.

"Even from the first game, we played together and we clicked, we won. We shocked ourselves and we did it again, then we did it again. Then more people started watching. It was building up, this could happen. Then the day when Vinnie brought down the boxes with uniforms, knee pads. There were tears because we knew that this was a thing. This is now a team,"



CCRI's first volleyball team in 1976-77, along with CCRI's first volleyball All-American, Donna Damian. Front row (from left) are Donna Damian, Marie Beaugejour, mascot Virginia Papa, Gail Kittel and Rita Damian. Back row (from left) are Sandy Sullivan, Pat Gorton, coach Gail Davis, Diane Brochu and Monette Cardin.

MOTLEY CREW: A photo of the first-ever CCRI women's volleyball team.

Dona said.

The good times continued to roll for the team in its inaugural season as it went on to win its region and qualify for nationals. It finished the year as the 13th best team in the country.

That season, local female student-athletes began to take notice and the buzz around women's sports began to grow.

"We began winning and more people came out to watch us play. The sport was growing in Rhode Island. The kids were bringing the interest in and our coaching staff was trying to show the girls the importance of unity. There couldn't be fighting, arguing. There were different responsibilities for them playing in a junior college setting," Davis said.

From there, women's sports were a thing at RIJC, and more teams began to form and the numbers skyrocketed in the ensuing years.

The East Providence trio graduated after 1978 and Davis coached two more seasons. The team won the region championship again in 1978.

Dona went on to be one of

the top players to ever come out of CCRI. She was named the All-Tournament MVP in both 1977 and 1978, and was an All-American Honorable Mention. Sullivan was also named to the Tournament First Team in 1977, while Rita was named to the second team.

Cullen, Davis and Dona were eventually inducted to the CCRI Athletics Hall of Fame for their impact.

When looking back on that first team, Davis remembers the dedication of the players and the lessons learned both on and off the court.

"It was so important. Coaches wanted to come to (RIJC) because they knew these girls loved playing and they were responsible. Many of them had full-time jobs and other responsibilities. I had to plead to a few of the parents to let the girls play at nationals. This team was so important because that was where the girls became women. It helped tremendously," Davis said.

Cullen actually knew Dona before their first meeting in his office. Prior to her arrival on

campus, she wrote him a letter regarding her interest in creating a team in the fall. She explained that she and Rita had lost their mother in 1971 and volleyball was a big part in helping them cope.

"I still remember the letter Dona wrote to me a few months before arriving. It said that volleyball was a lifeline for her. There are players like that where sports are so important because it gives them purpose," said Cullen.

Forty-six years later, Dona is proud of what she and her teammates accomplished during those years and the difference they made for decades to come.

"It wasn't until the last few years that I began thinking about it. You start thinking about history, it's been 46 years. It makes you think about the change that you made in people's lives," said Dona. "Thinking back, you think, I did. I sure as hell did."



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