

Mayor: Tap reserves to cover new school costs

By RORY SCHULER

Hoping to counterbalance soaring interest rates and construction costs, Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. said the town will tap its rainy day fund to avoid a property tax increase. "No, there will be no tax increase," Polisena said Tuesday night. "Instead of cutting \$20 million in construction costs to cover this massive increase in interest rates, my team and I have decided to propose incrementally drawing down

from the \$41 million surplus to cover the difference. It doesn't make sense to support a tax increase or massive cuts to the project when the town is sitting on this amount of money in reserve." Earlier Tuesday, Feb. 7, Polisena issued a press release announcing the appointment of unsuccessful gubernatorial candidate Helena Buonanno Foulkes to Johnston's School Building Committee. "Helena brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in matters of financial and project man-

agement," Polisena said in the release, which warned of dire financial circumstances for the town's massive school building project. Polisena championed the school building project as vice-president of Johnston Town Council prior to his mayoral election. His father, former mayor Joseph M. Polisena, credited Polisena Jr. with the idea to launch the town's most ambitious, and expensive, school building project ever.

SCHOOLS - PAGE 5

Food insecurity: A statewide issue



FIRST OF TWO PARTS

By G. Wayne Miller

The line was long this recent Tuesday at Westbay Community Action's Marketplace food pantry as people of diverse ages and backgrounds filled shopping carts with fresh eggs, dairy products, frozen foods, cereals, grains, canned goods and pretty much anything else one would need for nutritious meals. Having met income eligibility criteria, everyone was getting their food for free. And there to help was volunteer John Johnson, 82, a retired factory worker. "It's satisfying because I'm giving something back," said Johnson, who goes by the nickname "Papa John." Like the people he was assisting, Papa John is also a Marketplace patron. He and his wife live on Social Security and without Westbay, he said, they would face difficulties. "Everything we get here is something we don't have to buy and that helps pay the electric bill, it helps pay the gas bill," he said. "I've got critters, too, and you know, they have to eat, too. I've got cats and I've got chickens and it all helps." Those who rely on Westbay would agree, according to Johnson.

FOOD - PAGE 14



MISSION TO FEED: Fueled by more than 40 volunteers, Westbay Marketplace is one of the state's many food pantries trying to feed the Ocean State's food insecure. (Sun Rise photo)



Hanging violent relationships out to dry

By PETE FONTAINE

Greg Russo, who chairs the Johnston High School Science Department and serves as faculty advisor for two important student groups, last week launched one of the most important programs in his long-standing tenure on Cherry Hill. It's called the Clothesline Project and is being coordinated by Students Against Dangerous Decisions (SADD). The project kicked off last week with Teen Dating Violence Month.

CREATIVE CREW:

Above, JHS students who designed and painted T-shirts for Teen Dating Violence Month are Jiana Mitsoulis, Gianna Ricci, Alexia DiLorenzo, Michelina Irons, Emily Klein, Charles Curci, Fallon Provoyeur, Jason Troxwell and Lillian Garcia. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

SADD - PAGE 8



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JHS Panther of the Week



POTW: This weeks Panther of the Week is Alexia DiLorenzo. Alexia is a junior at JHS and a High Honors student. She also excels on the soccer field and was named Division 4 All State. She was nominated by Ms. Debbie Smyth and Mr. Greg Russo. Ms. Smyth, who was her Personal Financial Literacy teacher, said "Alexia goes above and beyond in everything she does." Mr. Russo, who is also her Anatomy and Physiology Honors teacher as well as her student council advisor, said, "Alexia is an all around excellent student. She is a top soccer player and softball player. She does well academically while in honors classes and is active in student government as the Vice President of Student Council. She is always extremely respectful and polite to all." (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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Say you saw it in the

Johnston SunRise

Salzillo Memorial Game Dinner sells out

By PETE FONTAINE

An extraordinary event featuring unique and unmatched traditions, was again the epitome of the man for whom it's named. The decades-old tradition continued Sunday inside the jam-packed Santa Maria DiPrata Society on Walnut Grove Avenue in Cranston.

"Ricky is looking down smiling from ear-to-ear," many people said during the Richard D. Salzillo Memorial Game Dinner. "Today — as always — is a tribute and excellent example of a man whose most enduring qualities was his huge heart and kindness to others."

Almost five days shy of Feb. 10, 1976, when the late Salzillo was just 24-years old, the one-time talented athlete and musician was killed in an automobile accident on Interstate 295 in his hometown of Johnston.

Since then, his many friends and relatives have enjoyed the memorial game dinner that each year raises money for college scholarships for graduating seniors at JHS, the Hematology/Oncology Units Hasbro Children's Hospital, RI ALS Chapter, Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance and the Race for Matt & Grace, just to name a few important non-profits.

Sunday's sold-out dinner for 220 paying guests continued its unmatched tradition of fantastic food prepared and served by Ralph's Catering, and in some cases began many new traditions that were all shining examples of caring and sharing.

For example, Manson DeChristofaro captured the hearts when he assisted his grandfather and chairman Steven M. "Steve" Placella announcing the winning tickets numbers for the mega-prize raffle Johnston natives Frank and Nick Fede have coordinated since 1998.

The Fedes, who own and operate Kingstown Liquors in North Kingstown, lined up prizes ranging from high-priced snow boards, portable grills, camping coolers overflowing with liquor, dart boards, pro golf bags and other valuable prizes. The event sold out of every available ticket.

"There's (no) other raffle like this anywhere," said Derek LaFazia, a Johnston firefighter who won a snowboard, and whose family headed by School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia, purchased one of the 22 tables. "This raffle is more than special."

The same held true for the super servers of Ralph's Kitchen who people said helped make the dinner much more special.

Likewise, the food received rave reviews, from diners like Harry Edwards, a member of the Tri-City Elks Shields American Legion Post who declared: "I've been to many game dinners during my years, but the food — as well as the raffle — is the best I've ever eaten or seen. I'm stuffed!"

That's because Ralph put out a game dinner beginning with antipasti and calzones, game soup, pasta with venison meatballs and sausage, wild boar and peas, venison Marsala, game hen and venison meatloaf with oven roasted potatoes.

"After this feast, there's no need to eat for the rest of the day," said Robert Civetti, a Johnston Town Councilman who along with his friends from the Johnston Little League purchased a table.

Just ask Scituate resident David Bedford, who took home a three-tier liquor rack filled with 36 different name brand bottles and needed help taking it to his car.

Likewise, the close-knit groups of friends like Vin LaFazia, Frank and Nick Fede, John Graham, Ken Felella, Jessica Fede, John LaFazia and Nicole DeChristofaro continued a tradition that is unmatched anywhere.

By the time the bills are paid organizers expect the event generated around \$10,000 to help a number of non-profits in memory of the late Ricky Salzillo.

Salzillo was a big muscular, beloved and popular man who could melt sadness with eyes and smile and was the first person to offer his hand and heart before his tragic passing at age 24.



BOB'S BUNCH: Bob LaFazia, chairman of the Johnston School Committee, is all smiles is table that includes Mike Placella Steve LaFazia, Ed Eramian and Dereck LaFazia.



PRISTINE PRIZES: This is only a portion of the valuable prizes people won during Sunday's Salzillo Memorial Game Dinner.



HEAVY HAUL: David Bedford of Scituate shows off the three-tier liquor rack with 36 bottles he won at Sunday's Salzillo Memorial Game Dinner.



GRAMP'S GUY: Steve Placella embraces his grandson Mason DeChristofaro who helped read numbers of the winning tickets during Sunday's mega-affle.

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Mass set in remembrance of Station Fire 20 years ago

By JOHN HOWELL

Monday, Feb. 20 will mark the anniversary of one of the nation's worst nightclub fires, The Station fire, that killed 100 and injured scores more.

The Station Fire Memorial Foundation chaired by Gina Russo plans to mark the 20th anniversary with a remembrance service on Sunday, Feb. 19 at St. Kevin Church in Warwick and then in the spring hold an event at the Station Fire Memorial Park on Cowesett Road in West Warwick on Sunday, May 21.

Sue Stenhouse, who was working in the office of Governor Donald Carcieri at the time of the fire and has remained in touch with many of the victims' families as well as the foundation, said in an interview concerns were raised over holding a 20th remembrance at the memorial given the uncertainty of the weather.

"Don't forget we're all 20 years older," she said. Stenhouse is a first responder. On the night of the fire and for the days following she fielded calls from relatives and friends of the victims and those injured in the blaze. She worked at the family resource center that operated out of the Crowne Plaza in the weeks after the fire.

She helped plan the early remembrance ceremonies held at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. A feature of the first ceremony was 25,000 butterflies made by school students, many of which were strung with fishing line from the ceiling. By the second year, organizers recognized not only key first responders at the scene of the fire but also those in hospitals and performing the triage that lead to saving many lives with awards.

As Stenhouse and Gina Russo, a fire survivor who lost her finance that night, started planning the 20th, Stenhouse reached out to Father Robert Marciano, president of Bishop Hendricken High School and pastor of St. Kevin Church. As chaplain of the Warwick Police and Fire Departments, Father Marciano was awakened by his pager about 11 p.m. on the 20th. When paged he thought he might be responding to an accident or house fire. When he arrived, people were still being pulled from the burning building.

"It was the greatest tragedy with the greatest heroes," he said. The heroes, he said, were the first responders.

Citing how firefighter pay has captured recent headlines, Fr. Marciano said, "They just earned their pay for their entire career." He observed how some first responders can never escape from the horror they have witnessed.

How does Father Marciano cope with responding to horrific scenes like that of The Station fire?

He said it seems to be a part of his memory that doesn't haunt him.

"I think when working to relieve suffering, it help mine...it is making good from bad," he said.

Father Marciano hugged and wept with the families of victims and held services at the family center. On the night of the fire he learned that those who without second thought ran from the nightclub while many of those who thought the flames were part of the show were burned or lost their lives. He recalls how the Cowesett Inn across from the nightclub became the triage center with tables being pushed together as places to provide first treatment with rescues responding from multiple communities to transport them to hospitals.

While Father Marciano will assist The Coadjutor Bishop of Providence, Bishop Richard Henning, DD, at the Feb. 19 mass at St. Kevin, which will include communion, he aims for the service to be inclusive of all denominations and faiths.

"This is a good option to reach out to the community," he said. All churches within the Diocese of Providence have been asked to join in ringing their bells at noon on Feb. 19. The mass will begin at 10 a.m. A reception hosted by the Ladies of St. Kevin will follow in Father O'Hara Hall.

Stenhouse said she and Russo, president of the Station Fire Memorial Foundation concurred that a church would be the best location to conduct the remembrance. She said it is a safe place where people feel comfortable coming together.

As for inclusion of elected officials including Gov. Dan McKee and of those who played significant roles 20 years ago including former Gov. Carcieri and General Reginald Centracchio, "I don't see it as political," she said. "It's universal that brings key players together."

"The time has gone by but I know for so many the loss never fades" said Father Marciano.

Russo agrees. She said nothing will heal the pain of those who lost loved ones in the fire. She said she feels "grateful and blessed to have been given 20 more years."

"So much good has come out of so much bad," she said of friendships built and what has come from the evil of that night.

"If you give back and do good it brings peace."

While remembrances will always focus on those who perished, she sees the event as a time for life.

"I should be able to celebrate my life and the lives of other survivors."



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20 YEARS REMEMBERED: There will be a mass on Sunday, May 21 at the Station Fire Memorial in West Warwick (pictured above). On Feb. 19, a mass will be held at St. Kevin's Church in Warwick to remember those who lost their lives in the Station Fire. (Sun Rise file photo)

Johnston Elementary School



NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: As part of the massive Johnston school buildings overhaul, planners hope to construct a new elementary school for all of the town's students (grades 1-4), on a plot of land behind the Johnston High School. (Sun Rise FILE photo)

Schools

(Continued from page 1)

Johnston plans to close the town's four elementary schools, sell or raze the empty buildings, and construct a single Elementary School for all Johnston first through fourth-graders. The plan also calls for a new Johnston Early Childhood Center (ECC), and major renovations at the Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School and Johnston High School.

Voters overwhelmingly approved a \$215 million bond via referendum last year. Both mayors Polisena promised taxpayers would not pay a penny more in taxes to cover the school building project.

After securing a Tax Stabilization Agreement with Amazon, tied to the massive robotic fulfillment center under construction on Hartford Avenue, Johnston expects to rake in enough in annual tax revenue over the next 20 years to cover the bond payments.

With record high state reimbursements for school building projects, the Polisenas argued the time was right to overhaul all of the town's school buildings at once, with phased construction plans staggered over the next five years.

"When we began this process nearly two years ago, interest rates were at less than 2.5%," Polisena Jr. said in the press release. "Now, we are facing interest rates approximately double that amount. To make matters worse, shifting money away from construction costs to pay for historically high rates significantly affects our reimbursement from the state, which puts us at an even further financial loss to construction costs funded by the state."

Foulkes, a fellow Democrat, ran against Gov. Dan McKee in 2022, but lost. Polisena Jr., a former employee of McKee's, withdrew his support for McKee (who was a close political ally of his father's) and instead publicly supported Foulkes, despite McKee's endorsement by the Johnston Democratic Town Committee.

On Polisena Jr.'s Inauguration Night, Foulkes sat with the local, state and federal elected office-holders and McKee did not attend.

Foulkes worked as CEO of Hudson's Bay Company from February 2018 to March 2020, and spent 25 years at CVS Health, most recently as President of CVS Pharmacy (from January 2014 to January 2018), according to her website (www.helenafoulkes.com).

Advocate of education

"Helena is a strong advocate for investing in high-quality public education and believes that great public schools are the key to a strong, equitable economy," according to her website biography. "During her campaign for governor, fixing Rhode Island's struggling public school system was her top issue."

The Johnston School Building Committee was scheduled to meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday evening, Feb. 7. Several hours before the meeting was scheduled to begin it was canceled, and Polisena Jr. issued the press release about Foulkes joining the committee.

"I am confident that Helena, along with the rest of my team, will find a solution that still provides Johnston residents the most significant school construction project the Town has ever seen," Polisena Jr. said in the press release. "I am committed to building and upgrading all school facilities so that every school-age child in our Town, from early childhood to high school, will have the opportunity to learn in state-of-the-art schools."

The Johnston School Committee still met at 7 p.m. Tuesday. The committee tabled a discussion on the Johnston School Building Committee's expected "recommendation to institute a pre-hire PLA (Project Labor Agreement) relative to the school construction project."

Johnston Schools Superintendent Bernard DiLullo Jr. said Tuesday night that the meeting was postponed and a date for the rescheduled meeting had not yet been set.

District 5 Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti, one of the Building Committee's many members, had planned to attend Tuesday's meeting. He was reluctant to answer questions on the school building projects' increasingly bleak financial outlook.

"I honestly do not have enough information at this time," Civetti said Tuesday night. "The last meeting we had was more than a month ago I believe. I have seen nothing relative to the financing of the project or any changes to the projected scope of the project."

Exactly how dire is the school building project's financial situation?

Will the project scope be reduced or will taxpayers face increased levies to pay for additional bond funding?

Can the town's reserve fund cover the difference? "All valid questions," Civetti said on Tuesday. "I am sorry that I do not have the answers."

Chairman of the School Building Committee Joseph Rotella (School Committee vice-president) responded to a request for comment on the press release early Wednesday morning.

Help welcomed

"I think it speaks for itself," Rotella said. "We are honored to have so many professionals take time out of their personal and professional lives to serve on our building committee. As you know the cost of everything has risen dramatically. This project is no different."

According to Rotella, the superintendent is working closely with the school-hired architectural and engineering firms to address rising construction costs and dipping reimbursements.

"Dr. DiLullo, SLAM, and Colliers are looking at ways to keep this project on track and maximize our construction budget," Rotella said. "Our children deserve the best schools, and we will deliver on that commitment."

Rotella explained Tuesday night's committee meeting was postponed following a request by William J. Conley Jr.'s office (the town and school department's solicitor).

"We were informed yesterday by Attorney Conley's office that they needed additional time to finalize the Project Labor Agreement (PLA)," Rotella said Wednesday morning. "Approving that was the main reason for the meeting, so it made sense to postpone the meeting until the document was completed."

The administration remained optimistic the building project will be fully realized, and fully funded.

"This is the most consequential project Johnston will ever undertake," Polisena Jr. said Tuesday night. "We have children in schools anywhere from 50 to 100 years old with little to no renovation since original construction. I will do everything in my power to put our students and teachers in a position to succeed. And to those without children in the school system, I would say look around other communities throughout the state to see the link between property values and school systems. This project affects everyone."

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

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SUN RISE SCOOPS

Sun Rise Staff Reports

Johnston Senior Center highlights

The Johnston Senior Center is better than ever. Offering more exercise programs and trips every week; Hi Lo Jack, Monday & Wednesday and Poker on Wednesday. Arts & Crafts, on Monday, Mar Jong on Thursday & Quilting on Wednesday, Tia Chi on Tuesday. The Senior Center also has a book Club the last Tuesday once a month.

There is no charge for Senior Center activities. They offer Bingo on Thursday and Friday. Lunch is served daily at 12 p.m. (with a suggested donation of \$3).

A Social worker/Medicare Counselor is also provided 5 days a week. Contact Madeleine Ravenelle at 944-3343.

Feel free to come in for a tour of the facility at 1291 Hartford Ave.

Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund

The Johnston High School Class of 1971 is raising donations for The Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation. A generous donor has offered a \$4,000 challenge! The donor will match all gifts to the Fund up to a total of \$4,000. The Class of 1971 initiated the fund on the occasion of its 50th reunion in 2021. Each year a scholarship will be awarded to a Johnston High School Senior planning to attend a college, university, trade or technical school. Donations are tax according to your filing status. To donate, go to the following website: www.rifoundation.org/funds/soul-of-1971-scholarship-fund.

RIDE accepting Summer Meals Program applications

The Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) is now accepting applications for organizations interested in participating in the 2023 Summer Food Service Program for children. The program, financed through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service, provides free meals to children from targeted communities and is designed to maintain and expand nonprofit food programs for children during the summer months.

To participate in the summer program, sponsors must be public or private nonprofit school food authorities, organizations, residential summer camps, nonresidential day camps, or units of local or state governments. To be approved, a site must serve an area with at least 50 percent of the children eligible for free or reduced-price meals, or qualify as a residential camp or a nonresidential day camp. Meals must be made available to all children enrolled in the program without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age.

For more information on the program, call the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Statewide Efficiencies, at 401-222-8701. Applications for participation during the 2023 summer season must be completed and approved prior to June 15, 2023; interested organizations should reach out to RIDE no later than May 1, 2023 to start the application process.

Tri-County Employees Honored by the RI Community Action Association

Two Tri-County staff members were recognized last week by the Rhode Island Community Action Association (RICAA). Suzanne Carson, Assistant Director of Tri-County's Senior & Disabled Adult Services Program, and Ehren Hunt, Housing Navigator for the Tri-County Family Care Community Partnership Program both were recognized for their dedication to community action, and for going above and beyond in serving community members throughout 2022.

Also recognized during the RICAA's annual meeting on Jan. 24 was the Tri-County Health Mobile! The Health Mobile will increase access to primary care and other health services for countless Rhode Islanders.

Dave Banno, Director of Special Projects for Tri-County, presented the Community Needs Assessment to representatives of community action organizations, and community partner organizations.

Head Start

The Tri-County Head Start and Early Head Start early childhood education classrooms are recruiting for children ages 18 months to 5 years old. Classrooms are available in Johnston, North Providence, Burrillville, Charlestown, North Kingstown, and Wakefield. To submit an application for any of our Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms, go to Tri-County's website.

Accepting New Patients

Tri-County Health Centers, located at 1126 Hartford Ave., Johnston and at 33 Maple Ave. in North Providence are both accepting new patients. Tri-County Health Centers provide comprehensive primary care services, behavioral health counseling and treatment, and substance use treatment for people of all ages. Contact them today at 401-519-1940 for an appointment.

GED Preparation Classes

The Tri-County Employment & Training Program offers GED Preparation Classes at 3 Career Center locations. The GED prep classes offer personalized instruction for students in a classroom setting. Individual tutoring is available to help students learn in their own style, leading to successful completion of the class, and a high rate of passing the GED exam on the first try.

Day and evening classes are available at Career Center locations: 33 Maple Avenue, North Providence; 415 Tower Hill Road, North Kingstown; 23 Friendship Street, Westerly (located in the Westerly Education Center). Contact them for more information, at 401-519-1929.

United Against Hate

Tri-County Family Care Community Partnership Program (FCCP) is partnering up with the Chariho Basic Needs and Support Network to sponsor United Against Hate, a community event to provide education about hate crimes and risk factors, and what we can do to report suspected hate crimes or incidents.

The United Against Hate event is scheduled for March 2, from 9-12 a.m. at the University of RI Memorial Ballroom. Speakers include representatives from the FBI, the RI Attorney General's Office, and the Richmond Town Police Department. Following the speaking program, there will be a panel discussion, and Q&A session.

The Chariho Basic Needs and Support Network organizes community partners and resources to address child abuse and neglect in the Chariho region.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance

More than 1 in 4 US households struggle with their home energy bills. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help keep the heat on. The Tri-County LIHEAP Program helps to cover the cost of home heating bills for those that qualify.

Visit www.tricountyri.com for more information about the LIHEAP program, and other weatherization programs that can help to reduce your home energy bills.

To submit an application for LIHEAP, or to see if you qualify, contact them at 401-519-1913. The Tri-County LIHEAP program has locations in North Providence and North Kingstown.

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Johnston SunRise Advertising Deadlines:

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Monday noon

RI Newspaper Group
Thursday 10am

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Monday 10am

SUN RISE SCOOPS

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. The date has yet to be decided. Let the Library know you're interested.

Storytime for preschoolers is offered Wednesdays at 10:30. There are after-school 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 a.m.

Mohr Library is open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Fridays 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. 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 founded 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.

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' Team!

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 beauti-

ful 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.

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ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:

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iii RISLA College Planning Center

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 Or call us at 401-247-3585
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National accreditation team invites public comment on Johnston Police

A team of assessors from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) seeks the public's feedback regarding the Johnston Police Department during their reaccreditation process.

Verification by CALEA that the Johnston Police Department meets the commission's state-of-the-art standards is part of a voluntary process to gain and retain accreditation—a highly prized recognition of public safety professional excellence. During the reaccreditation process, CALEA examines all aspects of the Johnston Police Department's policy and procedures, management, operations, and support services, amongst others.

As part of the assessment, agency personnel and members of the community are invited to offer comments that address the department's ability to comply with CALEA standards. A copy of the standards is available at Johnston Police headquarters via local contact, Civilian Tim Forsberg, Accreditation Manager, at 401-757-3137, or by email at tforsberg@johnstonpd.com.

CALEA maintains an online access portal which allows for comment and feedback regarding candidate agencies seeking initial accreditation or reaccreditation status. The link for this portal can be found on the CALEA corporate website, <https://cimrs2.calea.org/583>. This link is provided as an opportunity for public comments, commendations, and other information regarding the Johnston Police Department's quality of service or other information relevant to the accreditation process.

Persons wishing to offer written comments about the Johnston Police Department's ability to meet the standards for accreditation are requested to write to: CALEA, 13575 Heathcote Boulevard, Suite 320, Gainesville, Virginia, 20155.

Accreditation is for four years, during which the agency must participate in annual remote web-based assessments attesting continued compliance with those standards under which it was initially accredited.

For more information regarding CALEA, please write the commission at 13575 Heathcote Boulevard, Suite 320, Gainesville, Virginia 20155; call (703) 352-4225 or email calea@calea.org

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ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local  Adoptable  Loveable



Photo credit: Briana's DogVacay

RICKY

Attention Husky lovers, meet Ricky! He is a young, active boy who is looking for an experienced Husky owner. Ricky is super handsome and he tends to like female dogs more, he loves the ladies! His best home would be adults with a fenced in yard as Ricky loves to run and play! If you'd like to meet Ricky please contact Paws New England via their website at www.pawsnewengland.com There will be more information and photos of Ricky on their website as well.

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



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PROJECT PAINTERS: Among the JHS students who painted T-shirts with special slogans in honor of Teen Dating Violence Month are Sierra Jeeten, Derek Salvatore, Josh Philbrick, Mackayla Scuncio, Jaylen Molina, Matt Clements, Jacob Muller, Ava Melo, Mayliin McAteer, Isabella Ricci, Dylan Robbins and Ariana Medeiros. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

SADD

(Continued from page 1)

"Students designed and painted T-shirts depicting various forms of abuse and violence," Russo explained. "They hung up the T-shirts on a clothesline in the (Janice D. Mele Memorial) Library for all students, faculty and staff to see as they would through."

The "unique works of art" as someone suggested, each told a story about the T-shirts that were especially designed by students in a special color and slogan associated with a particular type of abuse. For instance, the color to represent domestic violence is purple, while orange is used to depict animal harm, etc.

"The Clothesline Project originated with the Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund, a nonprofit

corporation ... founded in honor of Burke who was a 23-year-old Rhode Island College graduate trying to break the cycle of a violent relationship when she was murdered (by) her ex-boyfriend," Russo explained.

As a result, Russo related the fund was established in her memory by her family to help break the silence associated with such relationships.

"We had a joint effort of SADD offices and members," said Russo, the student group's long-time advisor. President Emily Klein also gains valuable help and assistance from SADD vice president Hailey Brown and secretary Micheline Irons.

Russo emphasized "the T-shirts will be on display for the entire month of February and the hope that anyone ... involved in such a toxic relationship will seek the help necessary to extricate themselves from it before it's too late."



HONORED: The Johnston School Committee took time to honor students during their meeting on Tuesday night. Members of the Johnston High School Girls Soccer Team, who finished their season with a record of 14-1 (scoring 44 goals and only giving up 4), received official commendations from the School Committee. Although the team "did not prevail in the semi-finals, they had an amazing season and are commended for their efforts," according to the School Committee agenda. Coach Toni Scavitti, won "Coach of the Year" for the division. The JHS Boys Volleyball Team "won the State Championship last spring, the first ever Johnston Boys Volleyball team to take home this honor!" The School Committee wished both teams a hearty "Congratulations!" Both teams packed the Ferris Middle School library to accept their honors. JHS Unified Athlete Cam Vanstone, a former "Panther of the Week," was also recently named a hometown hero by local news station WPRI. Vanstone also plays on the boys' basketball team (which has a 14-0 record as of Tuesday). Vanstone attended the meeting and proudly accepted his official School Committee commendation. He received a standing ovation. (Sun Rise photos by Rory Schuler)



Opinion

EDITORIAL

AI will test journalism like nothing before

Chances are likely that you've at least heard about ChatGPT — the artificial intelligence chatbot that has whipped the world into a frenzy of extreme reactions; from advocates promising it to be the first step towards a technological utopia of knowledge and work efficiency, to detractors warning that it heralds the beginning of the end of truth and knowledge as we experience it today.

The boring truth, as always, is that there's no way to know yet what exactly this technology means going forward, but we can certainly see points of merit along both ends of that reactionary spectrum.

If implemented properly, intuitive AI — the kind that has the ability to generate prose that will pass the merit of entrance exams required to be taken by doctors and lawyers, as ChatGPT has done — has the potential to revolutionize our world, assist in groundbreaking research, and cut down on required working hours for many professions.

Conversely, if implemented without enough thought or attention to the possible dangers, it could lead to widespread misinformation through an unprecedented scale of propaganda, lead to millions of displaced jobs, and forever blur the lines between what is real, and what is not.

From the perspective of a journalistic entity, we find the potential for actual fake news — not the kind that certain people in power deem as such because they don't like the truth reported back to them, but actual, authentic-looking journalism that was generated from an algorithm rather than actual reporting and research — to be of real concern.

To illustrate this point, we asked ChatGPT to write a form of this editorial, exploring the potential pitfalls of artificial intelligence in the journalism industry. Here's what it had to say.

Prompt:

Write an editorial explaining why artificial intelligence is potentially problematic for journalism.

Answer:

"The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has promised to revolutionize many aspects of our lives, including the way we consume and create news stories. AI can be used to generate news stories more quickly and efficiently than ever before. But while the potential gains in speed and efficiency are undeniable, there are also potential drawbacks to using AI in journalism.

First, AI-generated news stories lack the depth and accuracy of stories generated by experienced journalists. AI algorithms are unable to generate nuanced, insightful stories that require a human touch. AI-generated stories are prone to introducing errors and bias into the news, which can lead to misinformation.

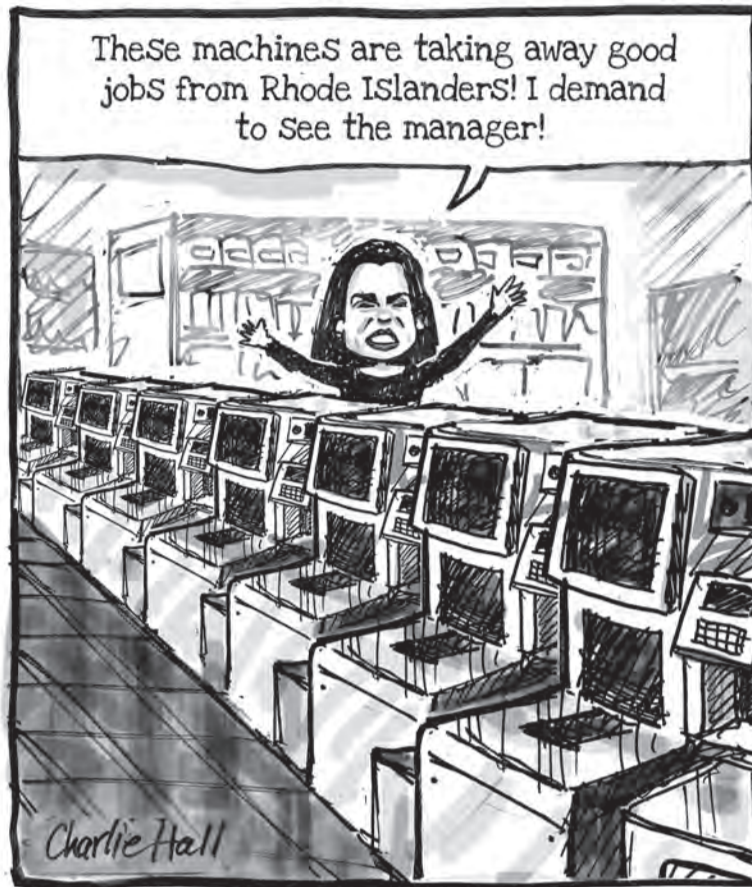
Second, AI-generated news stories may inadvertently reproduce existing biases and power dynamics. AI algorithms are trained on existing data sets, which can include biased sources. This can lead to stories that perpetuate existing stereotypes and power dynamics, instead of challenging them.

Third, AI-generated news stories can lead to a decrease in jobs in the journalism industry. AI algorithms can generate news stories faster and more cheaply than humans, which can lead to job losses in the journalism industry.

Ultimately, the use of AI in journalism has the potential to revolutionize the industry, but it also has the potential to create problems."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. And we have to admit, that's a little concerning.

A RI LAWMAKER WANTS A BILL PASSED THAT WOULD LIMIT SELF-CHECKOUTS AT STORES



LETTER

'We are at a difficult crossroad'

The Town of Johnston is in a very precarious position. We are at a difficult crossroad, wherein the residents are fighting for their neighborhoods and the Town is pushing for extensive economic development which will encroach on these residential areas.

The west end has been fortunate enough to enjoy a little bit of green space. The residents moved here because the Town Comprehensive Plan suggested that it remain rural west of Interstate 295.

That plan expired and it was like a hall pass whenever someone wanted a "special use permit" to

construct something that didn't fit the guidelines or the neighborhood.

Now we are faced with a choice. In District 5 we are fortunate enough to have a councilman who understands the needs of our communities. Robert Civetti definitely understands the meaning of public service and tried to introduce an ordinance that would protect some of the residential space left.

The remaining council members stood silent. We should be asking questions about Open Space, and the town's Land Trust. We have a building that says "Land Trust" on

it, but have yet to ever see anyone there.

We have been told there is a Land Trust Committee. Should they not be looking into any state or federal funding to help save this space?

These funds are available, and it is a way to help save the habitat, giving all of us a little space to breathe. If we, all the residents to not start to take action, we will soon be living in the City of Johnston.

Thomas K. Chadwick Sr.
Johnston

JOHNSTON Sun Rise

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Rhody's own VIOLA DAVIS becomes one of the few performers to win an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony!



Connections or experience?

Incumbent candidate with the most votes passed over for former city councilwoman

By RORY SCHULER

The City of Cranston's five-member Probate Judge Advisory Commission (PJAC) interviewed three candidates and voted 4-1 to recommend reappointing George M. Cappello.

The City Council, however, voted to appoint a different candidate, former city councilor and mayoral candidate Cynthia M. Fogarty.

Fogarty received just two votes after appearing at the PJAC's three-hour meeting.

'Up the river'
"I find it absolutely disgusting," said Fred White Jr., the advisory commission's newest member. "It's just a bunch of froth; just a waste of time. Something's wrong. Something's radically wrong. Government doesn't function the way it ought to."

White said he was recruited to serve on the commission just days before the Dec. 20 meeting. He insists he was asked to join the commission by his longtime neighbor, Cynthia "Cindy" Fogarty, the city's new probate judge.

White said no one told him how to vote; not exactly.

"Why else would she want me on?" White asked earlier this week. "I said to my son after, I feel that Cindy sold me up the river here."

White voted for Fogarty during the PJAC meeting, but he insists he only cast the vote in her favor because he was convinced Cappello was the only rational appointment.

"When I saw he was going to get it, I said, 'Good, I can vote for Cindy,'" White said Monday. "A few days later I find out that Cindy got the damn job. It all seems very strange to me."

Fogarty served on Cranston City Council from 2003 to 2007. In 2008, she unsuccessfully ran as a Democrat against Republican Allan Fung. And in 2022, she was elected to serve on the District 17 Representative District and State committees.

'A fresh start'

Fogarty's appointment was championed by fellow Democrat and newly installed president of Cranston City Council Jessica M. Marino. Marino was the lone city councilor to attend the Dec. 20 PJAC meeting. She watched the proceedings but did not participate.

"I actually attended the meeting," Marino said this week. "I know firsthand what they heard; what they said. And that Commission itself is advisory. It is not the ultimate decider of who is to sit in the seat of the probate judge."

Marino said she was "in support of placing a different lawyer" on the bench in Cranston Probate Court.

"I take very seriously the commission," she said Monday. "I was the only council member who took the time to sit through the whole (PJAC meeting) ... I didn't interject. I respect the commission. I'm a lawyer; I'm not someone who's unfamiliar. I respect their contributions. But it is advisory."

Marino said she took the commission's advice under consideration, but decided the city's Probate Court needed "a fresh start."

The "seat is temporary," she said, and not a "lifetime appointment."

Cappello, who has served as Cranston's Probate Judge for the past four years, said he was expecting an appointment to a third term on the

bench.

"I was hopeful and confident that I would be appointed for another term," Cappello said. "I had attended to the judicial duties of the Probate Judge in the City of Cranston conscientiously and devoted substantial time, on a daily basis, for the last four years and have brought the Cranston Probate Court to a level of excellence in my opinion. I have decided more than 2,500 cases during that time. I was indeed surprised that I was not reappointed."

Block vote

On Inauguration Night, Jan. 2, Fogarty and six other judges were appointed by City Council via block vote. The vote broke on party lines: the five Democrats on City Council voted for the slate of new judges, while the four Republicans voted against.

Prior to the vote, Republican council members tried to split up the vote, and take the candidates for judgeships in Cranston individually. They were unsuccessful.

Democratic Majority Leader and Ward 3 Councilman John P. Donegan made the motion to approve the judge appointments as a block.

Ward 5 Councilman Christopher G. Paplauskas, however, argued for considering the judge appointments one-by-one.

"I feel that every person that is up for appointment for a municipal court position brings different aspects of their resume and background to the table and I do think that each one should be voted on separately," Paplauskas said. "That's the way it's been done in the past ... It's been done in the past that way, it's not always the right way to do it ... It's not a business license we're taking as a block. It's a position for municipal court."

Republican Minority Leader and citywide Councilwoman Nicole Renzulli made a motion to continue the discussion on judge appointments to the full City Council's meeting in January.

"My caucus has recently learned of some concerning issues with regard to some nominees," Renzulli said on Jan. 2. "And we just have questions. I think this is such an important position. And I want the public's confidence in the integrity of our court ... to be full. I would like us to maybe talk about some of these issues, where we have an opportunity to go into executive session rather than this ceremonious meeting."

Ward 6 City Councilman Matthew R. Reilly used Marino's own words against her, while arguing for a continuance on the judge appointments.

"With your speech tonight about inclusivity and the importance of a position of a judge in our city, I do not think this is something that we should treat so cavalier as to put five people through who are going to maintain the laws of our city over the next two years," Reilly said. "I think it needs to be vetted. There are certainly questions that need to be answered to determine that we have the right people for that position."

Post-vote debate

Over the next few weeks, the city's Republicans and Democrats traded barbs via press release.

The Republican caucus took aim at two judge appointments, but concluded with an argument against Fogarty's placement as Probate Judge.

"We have a Probate Judge Adviso-



NEW PROBATE JUDGE: Cynthia Fogarty, right, and Councilman Robert Ferri, left, shake hands following the new judges' oath of office during Cranston's Inauguration Night ceremonies on Jan. 2 at Cranston West. Fogarty was named probate judge via block-vote at a City Council meeting held during the ceremonies. (Cranston Herald photo)

ry Commission who makes selections based on merit and qualifications," Paplauskas said in the press release. "On Dec. 20 ... they did not vote to recommend Attorney Fogarty ... While we are not bound by this recommendation, the report was not even read into the record."

"Probate matters are highly technical and the public deserves to know the most qualified person is handling these matters," said Reilly, who is also an attorney.

Cranston's Republicans and Democrats have sparred over judicial appointments in the past. The minority caucus tends to argue to take judicial appointments individually, while the majority tends to prefer block-voting.

"With Majority Leader, Councilman John Donegan, making a motion to take the slate of nominated judges 'as a block,' the new Democrat Majority veered from past tradition that allowed for individual votes on each judicial candidate, preventing any substantive discussion on any nominees to the Municipal and Probate Courts," Renzulli said in the press release. "Pushing through a block vote for these important positions of trust was disrespectful to the public and the judiciary. The new Democratic leadership treated these appointments like we were renewing mobile food truck licenses."

Ward 4 Councilman Richard D. Campopiano questioned Fogarty's appointment, "given her deep-rooted partisan activities as a former Democratic candidate for Mayor of Cranston and elected member of the State Democratic Committee from District 17.

"This stinks of political favoritism," Campopiano said.

The Democratic caucus issued a press release labeling the Republican press release "unnecessary and untruthful."

"This fictional tale accuses the Democratic majority of Council of 'suppressing any real vetting' and 'preventing any substantive discussion on any nominees to the Municipal and Probate Courts,'" according to a press release from the city's Democrats. "This is absolutely untrue."

Marino pointed out that no Republican members of City Council attended the PJAC meeting, and council members had the opportunity to raise concerns during the Inauguration Night meeting.

"Instead of taking the opportunity to express or vet any candidate that may have been of concern by the Republican Caucus, they did not do so,

and over a week later they put out a press release that reads like a tall tale," according to the Democrats' press release. "The Republican councilmembers chose not to vet the candidates at that time despite being given the opportunity to do so before any vote on the judicial nominees. The Republican council members cannot cry foul when the opportunity was in fact provided, and they opted not to vet any candidates."

Vetted or not

Joseph Manera Jr., chairman of the Probate Judge Advisory Commission (PJAC) and a former Probate Judge himself, said the Dec. 20 meeting was adequate and thorough.

"Everyone had a chance to speak and answer questions," Manera said, more than a month after the meeting. "At the end, George (Cappello), who has been probate judge for four years, did a credible job and got four votes."

Manera said the commission was impressed with Cappello's answers to their line of questioning, and his record throughout his last two terms.

"He was a very good probate judge," Manera said. "Very diligent. He was in there every single day. He reviewed all the files. He did the best he could and he was a very good judge."

Following the 4-1 vote to recommend Cappello for reappointment, the PJAC held a vote on Fogarty. Manera made a motion to recommend Fogarty; White seconded the motion.

The PJAC is composed of five members — three lawyers with expertise in probate law, Ann Marie Maccarone, Erica Laros and Manera; and two civilian members, White and Henry Palazzo.

According to the PJAC meeting's unofficial minutes, the "motion failed on a tie vote with one abstention (Palazzo) ... By majority vote of the Commission, it was the recommendation of the Commission to reappoint Judge George Cappello as Probate Judge for the term 2023-2025."

Manera said he's fully aware that the PJAC merely offers "an advisory opinion."

"City Council can accept it or deny it," he said. "They're not bound by this; it's an advisory opinion. The council is free to do what they wish. They do what they want to do ... It is what it is."

Cappello left the meeting confident he would be re-appointed to lead Cranston's Probate Court.

JUDGES SWORN:

Following the vote confirming their appointments, municipal judges were sworn in and individually thanked members of the City Council. Cranston's new Probate Judge Cynthia Fogarty, at far left, takes the oath.



Judge

(Continued from page 10)

"The Probate Judge Advisory Commission determined that I was the only candidate qualified to serve as Probate Judge and the only candidate to receive a majority of the votes," Cappello said this week. "The only negative vote I received was from Fred White, a neighbor of Cynthia Fogarty, put on the commission at the eleventh hour just before the hearing."

Cappello recalled that about 12 hours after he met with the commission, he was informed by Marino that Fogarty would be appointed Probate Judge.

"I was offered the position of Auxiliary Judge, a demotion," Cappello said. "I declined to accept this position. No explanation was provided for these decisions or for the rejection of the commission's findings. No information was given as to when the City Council met to make these decisions and when and how these decisions were arrived at. There were approximately only 12 hours from the commission's hearing conclusion for this decision to have been made."

No one has questioned Cappello's performance on the bench or record in the courtroom.

Only Marino said that she had some "hesitation ... with Mr. Cappello."

"During the time of COVID ... there were struggles," she said earlier this week. She said she heard of "a very long delay and reluctance to hear some matters" and possible "concerns of a backlog with the court."

"I'm sure COVID times were responsible as well," Marino explained,

but said she was short of time and had to end the interview on Monday. She said that her vote was just "one of nine."

"It's not for me alone to decide," Marino said. "Mr. Cappello's service was great that he gave it, but it was a temporary thing. And they're both qualified."

Cappello said that "unfortunately, a preconceived political decision by the City Council President and the majority members (and beyond to include some of our state elected officials serving the City of Cranston) outweighed qualifications."

"There are many complex issues coming before the Cranston Probate Court affecting the lives of our citizens forever," Cappello warned. "This is no place for an apprenticeship or for unqualified individuals determined by the commission to be making these important decisions in my opinion. This is a disservice to the Probate Court, its nominee, its clerks, the members of the bar and the citizens of our city."

While the decision has been made, and the city's new Probate Judge has taken the oath of office, Cappello's optimistic the community discussion has just begun.

"I am hopeful the members of the City Council take this a step further and schedule a public meeting to determine how this appointment happened as well as all the other judicial appointments in this city," Cappello said. "I am also hopeful that the mayor involves himself because this decision affects all residents of our city."

Cranston Mayor Ken Hopkins, a Republican, has not publicly weighed in on the Probate Judge appointment. Via Chief of Staff Anthony Moretti, Hopkins said he respects the process.

The mayor's office sees "no violation of the process; it was perfectly legal," Moretti said. "They operated within their authority."

Despite City Council's decision to appoint someone else to sit on the city's Probate Court bench, Moretti called Cappello "a superstar."

"We applaud Judge Cappello for doing a magnificent job over the years," Moretti said. "Both his skillset and humanity ... and the clerical dedication he had to that position ... we certainly would like that to be recognized."

The annual salary for Cranston's Probate Judge "has been fixed at \$17,500, and has remained the same for approximately 30 years or so," according to Cappello.

Allegations of 'sexism'

The Democrats' press release regarding judge appointments alleges sexism may be at the root of complaints with the process.

"The fact is that the Republicans are taking issue with two female judicial appointees; one of which, the Honorable Cynthia Fogarty, is now the first female probate judge in Cranston," according to the press release. "Both women individually have well over 20 years of experience as good standing lawyers in Rhode Island with the education, experience, and institutional knowledge to fulfill their judicial roles."

The Democrats insist that the "attempt by Republicans to diminish the education and experience of Judge Fogarty and reduce her appointment to mere 'political favoritism' is rather incredulous," according to the press release.

"Regarding the Probate Judge Ad-

visory Commission, the fact is that it is only that, advisory, and its findings were public at its hearing and distributed to all city council members by the clerk," Cranston's Democratic leadership argued. "The fact remains that the public was very much informed at the public hearing of the Probate Judge Advisory Commission in December. The truth is, all members of the Cranston City Council were provided the resumes of all judicial nominees days in advance of our inaugural meeting as distributed by the city clerk consistent with past procedure. Republican council members had the opportunity to vet all candidates, discuss their qualifications, and debate the issue on the night of the vote. Despite these opportunities, the Republican members chose not to. While the Cranston Republicans are busy weaving tall tales, and self-titling them as such, Cranston Democrats are focused on leading our City Council and working in the new term to address the myriad of issues facing Cranston residents."

Meanwhile, Cappello said he has asked Cranston's city solicitor "for an opinion as to whether the open meetings law was violated when the majority members of the council met and appointed the probate judge."

He has also offered to be of service to Fogarty during her transition into the role.

"I have offered my assistance to the new probate judge for pending cases I have been involved in and wished her well," Cappello said. "I will, however, stay with this issue until the behind-the-scenes facts, are fully disclosed."

Fogarty did not return calls for comment.

Obituaries

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1 Year Anniversary

11/28/20 02/12/2022

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LINKED LEADERS: Providence Mayor Bret Smiley issued the Oath of Office to Italo-American Club President George Lazzareschi, superintendent of police and fire public safety in the capital city during the Italo-American Club's inauguration. (Photos courtesy Ron Cece)

'All proud of our Italian heritage'

By PETE FONTAINE

The headline speakers – a.k.a. top-ranking elected officials – spoke volumes of just how much respect people have for the ageless Italo-American Club of Rhode Island.

For example, Gov. Daniel McKee, Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos to mayors from Providence, North Providence and Johnston issued the Oath of Office to officers/board members during last Wednesday night's inauguration of the Italo-American Club of Rhode Island at 477 Broadway in Providence.

"This is extra special," offered Richard J. DelFino Jr., a club member who is Executive Director of the Johnston Senior Center and was accompanied by his son/member Richard J. DelFino III, a former town councilman.

After which Linda Folcarelli, who replaced DelFino III when he decided not to seek a third, said with a smile on her face: "This is like a who's who in Rhode Island; we are all proud of our Italian heritage."

Moreover, six Johnston residents were elected to prestigious positions as either officers or members of the executive board.

Heading the list was George Lazzareschi Jr., who began his fifth successive term as President. The popular Johnston resident delivered an impressive keynote address after being sworn in by Providence Mayor Bret Smiley, who congratulated the long-serving Superintendent of Police and Fire Public Safety on his re-election and recently having a public building named in his honor.

Lazzareschi, who has been a club member for a quarter century, is also steeped in public service in Providence and Johnston especially, lending his football knowledge to children who play for the successful Johnston Youth Panthers.

North Providence Mayor Charles Lombardi swore in three residents who live in his town, beginning with Club Vice President Thomas Noratto, Treasurer Robert Vil-

lucci and board member Joseph Cinquegrana.

Joseph Polisenia Jr., who succeeded his father as mayor of Johnston, issued the oath to Donna M. Folcarelli, a long-time club member who will continue her service as secretary.

Polisenia Jr. followed in his dad's footsteps by delivering the oath to Stephen "Sheik" Mullane, yet another popular Johnston resident and business owner as well as Town Sergeant, to his seat on the club's Board of Directors, as well as Gina Sabitoni Arakelian who also sits on the board.

Board Member Ernest Almonte, formerly of Johnston and now lives in Smithfield, took his oath from Lt. Gov. Sabina Matos who performed her first-ever such duty for the Italo-American Club.

Gov. McKee made the night super special with a complimentary message, and then swore in board member Ronald DeSiderato Jr. of Providence.

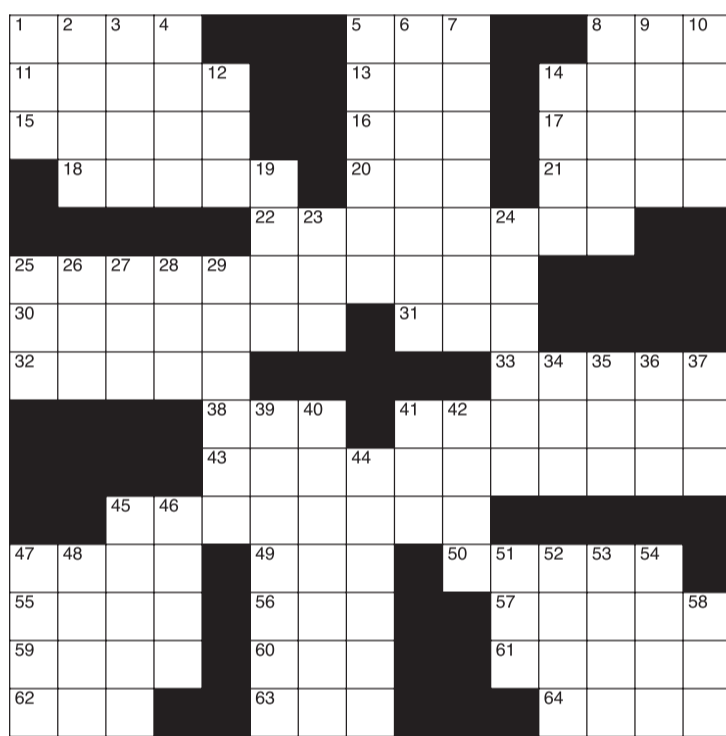
Two other Johnston residents — Board member Peter Montaquila Jr. and Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Fonsillo — were unable to attend.

The impressive ceremony closed with Lazzareschi issuing an impressive "thank you" message saying: "This has been an exceptional and extraordinary evening, especially when the Governor (McKee) and Lt. Governor (Matos) and mayors from Providence, Johnston and North Providence come here to help us celebrate our proud Italian-American heritage that began here back in 1896."

Lazzareschi paused before adding: "Now let's eat!"

That followed with handshakes and congratulations as people went to the upstairs dining room and enjoyed fantastic food (pasta, chicken Marsala, mashed potatoes, and string beans) prepared by the club's resident restaurant Maria's Cucina, owned by Chris Spertini and State Rep. Greg Costantino and open to the public.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

1. Functions
5. Records electric currents associated with contractions of the heart
8. Trigonometric function (abbr.)
11. Secret political clique
13. Type of gibbon
14. Nocturnal S. American rodent
15. Famed American playwright
16. Mesopotamian goddess
17. Abba __, Israeli politician
18. Long ridge of gravel and sediment
20. A place to stay
21. Actor Idris
22. One who behaves in a rebellious way
25. A way to measure movement
30. Distinguish oneself
31. Type of drug (abbr.)
32. Basketball great Baylor
33. Masses of salivary matter
38. Calls balls and strikes
41. Plant that grows along the ground
43. A recreational activity in the air
45. Consumes too much
47. Island nation

CLUES DOWN

1. Fiddler crabs
2. Discount
3. Partner to "flows"
4. Ethnic group of Laos
5. Beloved "Seinfeld" character
6. Book of tickets
7. The last name of "Hermione"
8. Type of TV package
9. Helps to heal a cut
10. Town in Galilee
12. Actor Horsley
14. "Hocus Pocus 2" actor Ed
19. Bird-loving group (abbr.)
23. They respond when someone is sick
24. Emerged
25. Midway between south and southeast
26. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
27. Unit of work or energy
28. Indicates near
29. Famed river
34. For each
35. News organization
36. CNN's founder
37. They __
39. Areas off to the side
40. Satisfies
41. A spare bed
42. Legendary singer Diana
44. Frothy mass of bubbles
45. A kind of sorcery
46. River in South Africa
47. Philippine Island
48. County in China
51. S. American plant
52. Beverage containers
53. Edge
54. Protein-rich liquids
58. Moved quickly on foot

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SPECIAL SUPPORTERS: Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisenia Jr. (center), Town Council members Al Carnevale, Linda Folcarelli and Lauren Garzone were on for the swearing-in of George Lazzareschi (second left) as president during the Italo-American Club's impressive inauguration in Providence. (Photos courtesy Ron Cece)



OUTSTANDING OFFICERS: These are the 2023 leaders of the Italo-American Club who were sworn in last Wednesday night in Providence. They are, in front from left: Richard Cinquegrana, Gina Sabitoni-Arakelian and Steve "Sheik" Mullane. Top: Ernest Almonte, Donna Folcarelli, George Lazzareschi, Tomas Norato, Robert Villucci and Ronald DeSiderato. (Photos courtesy Ron Cece)

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NEW SPONSOR: Frank DiMao of New Horizons Recovery presented Spirit of Hope with a check for a \$150 sponsorship. This business is owned by DiMao and his wife Jasmin, of Johnston. (Submitted photos)

Spirit of Hope announces successful weekend

By **LOUIS SPREMULLI**
 Special to the Sun Rise

A grant and a sponsorship have been received on the same day. Spirit of Hope received state grant funding from State Rep. Edward Cardillo Jr. for \$2,000. Then New Horizons Recovery brought in a check for a \$150 sponsorship. This business is owned by Jasmin and Frank DiMao of Johnston.

We knew Rep. Cardillo was coming over so we had a special presentation of coffee and cake setup for the occasion. Everyone enjoyed talking about Spirit of Hope, on where they are and how they have progressed. The cake and coffee made the occasion so exciting.

Our big focus is on an informational breakfast planned for Feb. 26 at Chelo's in Warwick. Spirit of Hope is also partnering with the Providence Veteran Hospital, presenting them with Rescue Kits for the homeless for the entire state.

The two men behind Spirit of Hope (founder Louis Spremulli and Paul Orlando) spend many hours a week promoting this non-profit. The only thing they ask is for people in the community to get more involved. Volunteers are hard to come by and we have so much to get done. One thing is for sure, we are so blessed to have our present sponsors, who always try to pitch in.

Please support our sponsors and give us a call to be a part of helping the community.
Editor's Note: Call 401-374-4590 to contact Spirit of Hope founder Louis Spremulli.

STATE GRANT: Spirit of Hope received state grant funding from State Rep. Edward Cardillo Jr. for \$2,000.



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Commissioner/Colonel Steven Pare (Ret)

Chaplains and members of the First Responders Communities

†

Reception to follow in Father O'Hara Hall

Food

(Continued from page 1)

"We have all kinds of people come here," he said. "We have people with five kids, six kids. I've got a couple of friends who are disabled and they're coming here now because they just went into [public] housing and they're having it rough, too."

Johnson pointed out a woman moving through the line.

"She's Russian," he said, and her English is limited.

But she always expresses her gratitude, Johnson said, telling him, "Thank you very much, thank you very much, you're a sweetheart."

And that, he said, "makes my day," as he has helped make hers.

Like other pantries and programs throughout Rhode Island, Westbay provides defense against food insecurity, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture defines as "the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways."

How pervasive is the problem?

Thirty-one percent of Rhode Island households "were food insecure and unable to afford adequate food" during a survey taken last spring by the Rhode Island Life Index, an initiative of Brown University's School of Public Health and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its historic losses of life, health and jobs, has exacerbated the situation, as have dramatic increases in the costs of rent, fuel and grocery-bought food.

"Westbay's food pantry provides food daily to over 80 households who are seeking emergency food," Westbay Community Action president and CEO Paul Salera told Ocean State Stories. "These people that are coming in are the 'under-employed' or 'low-wage earners' who rely on us to give them a hand up on stretching their monthly budgets."

Salera added: "Many people coming to our pantry are on fixed incomes, and more than 30% of households seeking food are over 60 years of age so the food we are providing is allowing these households to utilize money that would otherwise be spent on food to help pay other household bills to ensure that they can maintain independence in their homes."

Westbay succeeds with support from individual donors, local businesses, and financial institutions; and with food received from food drives and donations from chains including Dave's Fresh Marketplace, Target and BJ's Wholesale Club. The largest source for Westbay, as for many others, is the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, which operates a 77,000-square foot facility in Providence.

Food insecurity knows no geographic, age, or racial or ethnic bounds, although disparities exist, with Rhode Island residents of color significantly more likely than whites to experience difficulties in finding and purchasing adequate, healthy food, according to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank's 2022 Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island.

The Status Report, which drew some of its findings from the Rhode Island Life Index, depicts a statewide crisis. Among the conclusions:

- Food costs in Rhode Island increased

13% from July 2021 to July 2022.

• Statewide, 63,339 people were served at food pantries in August 2022, compared to 50,612 in August 2021.

• "Food pantries that are part of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank's statewide network of 140 member agencies are now serving, on average, 10,000 more people each month than in 2021," according to the report. "To meet the high need, the Food Bank is distributing 1.2 million pounds of food each month to its member agencies."

• More than 40% of Rhode Island households with children were rated food insecure in 2022, compared to 25% the year before.

"These households ran out of food and didn't have money to buy more, placing their children at risk of hunger," the report declares. "The rate of food insecurity is even higher among families at the lowest rungs of the income ladder. The inability of so many low-income families to meet

their basic food needs has serious consequences, since poor nutrition adversely impacts children's health, growth, and learning."

During a visit to the Food Bank's Providence headquarters, CEO Andrew Schiff brought Ocean State Stories through its massive warehouse, where food was being unloaded for sorting and delivery to pantries and programs. Twenty-four percent of its food is donated, with 32% purchased, and 44% coming from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Like Westbay and many programs, the Food Bank also receives support from individuals and organizations.

Schiff is intimately familiar with the grim choices facing many Rhode Islanders.

"When you don't have adequate money to buy the food you need, you look for ways to stretch the dollars that you have," he said. "And you can do that by buying less nutritious food that is low-cost. Families often tell us that they put the money they have in the household budget towards very, very basic items and they never have money for, for example, fresh produce. But fresh produce is the healthiest food you can eat."

"One of the misunderstandings that I think people have had is the idea that somehow low-income families don't know what to eat, that they need nutrition education. Education is a good thing, but low-income families are buying less expensive, less nutritionally good food because they just don't have the money" for pricier, more nutritional-sound food.

Faced with hunger or homelessness, Schiff said, families typically will sacrifice nutritious eating.

"You can't tell your landlord you're going to pay 80% of the rent," he said. "They'll just evict you. But you can pay 80% for the food that you were planning to buy for your family. And that's what happens, particularly in the last weeks of the month."

"We find—over and over again—that's when demand for food pantries in Rhode Island really peaks, because people are running out of food, they're running out of government benefits that they have, and they're running out of money."

In their research on food insecurity, Dr. Amy S. Nunn, executive director of the Rhode Island Public Health Institute and a professor at Brown University's School of Public Health, and her fellow scientists have demonstrated that a poor diet



THERE TO HELP: The Food on the Move staff poses for a group photo. (Sun Rise photo)



MARKETPLACE TEAM: Desarie Prestly and Jordan Hiatt are the two paid staff of the Westbay Marketplace run by Westbay Community Action. They are assisted by volunteers who help offload trucks, stock shelves and assist visitors with shopping.



MAJOR FOOD SUPPLIER: Andrew Schiff, CEO of the R.I. Community Food Bank as pictured in the food bank warehouse in Providence.

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VOLUNTEERING FOR 8 YEARS: Gail Hunold says she would be bored sitting at home if it wasn't for Westbay Marketplace where she is one of more than 40 volunteers. She logs in people who use the marketplace. Hunold is concerned what will happen when the \$190 in food stamps the government made available during the pandemic reverts to \$23 in stamps in March. "You can buy the hamburger buns but not the meat to go in it," she said. (Sun Rise photo)

Food
(Continued from page 14)

is a high risk factor for cancer, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease.

Where you live, they have established, is related to your ability to eat well.

Residents of "food deserts," areas where nutritious food is unavailable or expensive, must make do with what they can find. Residents of "food swamps," defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as "environments saturated with unhealthy foods because of the large numbers of corner stores and fast-food outlets in them," face similar dietary danger.

Transportation challenges abound. Not everyone owns a car or knows someone who can provide a ride. Taxis and Uber are costly. Bus routes do not reach every pantry and meal site. People with limited mobility may be unable to leave where they live.

"Geography matters," Nunn told Ocean State Stories. "Where you live affects whether you have access to healthy foods. Also, people's ability to get places transportation and cost. Those are the biggest determinants of whether or not people eat fruits and vegetables."

"It's not that people want to eat junk food all day. They may just not have access to or not be able to afford [healthy food]. And our research study has proved that people dramatically improve their eating behaviors if you make it cheap and easy."

Enter Food on the Move, a mobile produce market operated by the Rhode Island Public Health Institute that brings fresh, low-cost vegetable and fruits to sites in Central Falls, Pawtucket and Providence. Customers using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program dollars, SNAP, receive a 50% discount.

One recent morning, Nkese Edem, 48, dropped by Food on the Move's weekly market held at Charlesgate Senior Living Center on North Main Street, Providence. Program staff members had brought in food from

their refrigerated truck and arranged it in a lobby. Shoppers had their choice of a large and culturally diverse selection that included kale, pineapples, tomatoes, peppers, mangoes, melons, ginger, red grapes, broccoli, avocados, bananas and much more.

Edem selected her food and paid for it at the checkout counter, where purchases are entered into the program's database, a tool for reordering, refining offerings, and research.

"I don't drive," Edem said, "and you don't want to be going all around the city" on foot or by bus looking for food. "And then, with prices going up and everything, you want to make sure it's as easy as possible."

Edem said she appreciates the health benefits of nutritious food, what with stories she's heard of people "forty years old, 55 years old, having cardiac arrest, kidney problems, just all kinds of things and people dying young. You need as much good stuff as you can get."

Good-tasting, too, according to Edem.

"I like it," she said, smiling. She did have a suggestion for Food on the Move.

"They could even expand," she said. "They could do apple cider or apple juice. A lot of people would probably come in for that, too."

Learn more about Westbay Community Action at westbaycap.org; The Rhode Island Community Food Bank at rifoodbank.org; The Rhode Island Public Health Institute at riphi.org; and Food on the Move at riphi.org/food-on-the-move.

Ocean State Stories is a new media outlet based at Salve Regina University's Pell Center devoted to stories about issues of importance to Rhode Islanders. Story copyright 2023 Salve Regina University. Originally published at OceanStateStories.org

In the next edition, slated for publication on Feb. 15, we will be looking at food insecurity in Newport, northern Rhode Island, and Southside.

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By JENNIFER COATES

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There are large capacity machines available for all size loads, from 25 pounds to 65 pounds. The top loading machines are available here for only \$2.00 per

load compared to \$2.50 in most other places. Vending machines are also on-site if you need to re-stock your supply of detergent, softener, or laundry bags.

There is plenty of parking and a friendly, helpful staff here, ready to meet the needs of both residential and commercial customers.

Jain's Laundry is found in the Plaza 44 shopping plaza on 39 Putnam Pike. It is open seven days each week - from 8 am to 9 pm, Monday through Friday, and 7 am to 8 pm on Saturday and Sunday. For more information about their services, call 401-231-7019.

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Local filmmaker to debut new movie this March

By **EMMA BARTLETT**

Adam Carbone can pinpoint his interest in filmmaking to his mom's VHS recorder.

"She used to record us at family parties and all different events," said Carbone, who's a native Cranstonian.

He received his own camera when he was older and started making silly movies with friends in the backyard. His passion for film eventually turned into a career. Carbone, who has now produced several films, will release Poor Paul on March 5 at Lincoln Cinema for a red carpet premiere.

Poor Paul was entirely filmed in Rhode Island and tells the story of a socially-awkward college student named Paul who lives vicariously through his hero fantasies. After inheriting \$500,000 frequent flier miles, he takes his two roommates on a trip around the world where they find themselves hostages of a delusional Italian man who is hell-bent on his daughter marrying an American.

"Viewers can expect a wild ride of a film," Carbone said.

Carbone co-wrote the script with Sean Michael Beyer who he connected with 15 years earlier through MySpace. Carbone had reached out to Beyer expressing that he was a fan of his work and enjoyed his Poor Paul web series. The two eventually started collaborating and created cooking shows, comedy sketches, short films and music videos.

The Poor Paul script was written 10 years ago, though the filming process didn't come to fruition until March of 2021.

"We used as many Rhode Islanders as we could and Cranstonians as we could," said Carbone, who stars as Paul in the film.

The budget for the film was under \$1 million, and the cast and crew spent 13 18-hour days filming in various parts of the state. Sections of Knightsville pop for a Frankenstein scene and the Governor Sprague Mansion made an appearance as the Italian family's house.

■ MOVIE - PAGE 26

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Sports

Panthers remain unbeaten in DII

JHS hoops rolls past Pilgrim

By RYAN D. MURRAY

The undefeated Johnston Panthers went into Pilgrim High School and pounded the Patriots 80-54 on Saturday afternoon during a Boys Division II Basketball battle.

Anthony Corsinetti, a senior, topped Johnston with 19 points, while teammate and senior Derek Salvatore chipped in 17 points.

"Anthony's definitely one of our go-to scorers," Panthers head coach Mike Bedrosian said. "He pours in probably like 18 or 20 at least a night. And then, obviously we have Derek coming in and doing all of the little things - scrapping on the offensive boards and getting assists. And Derek averages almost a triple-double a game."

"Anthony is very smart when we get out in transition," Bedrosian explained. "We like to run and when the ball gets to Derek, he always does a nice job finding Anthony up at the sideline and Anthony gets going in transition and that's what kind of gets us going offensively."

Branden Testa, a junior, finished third in scoring on the Panthers with 13 points, while Camani Batista, a senior, finished fourth with 11 points.

Pilgrim was led by Tyler Fuller, a senior guard, who scored 11 points, and Isaiah Price, a senior, who tallied ten points.



STILL UNBEATEN: Johnston's Camani Batista handles the ball against Pilgrim. (Photos by Ryan D. Murray)

PANTHERS - PAGE 23

Super Supporters



Current and former coaches and officials of the Johnston Little League were among the 220-plus at the Ricky Salzillo Memorial Game Dinner that again raised big bucks to support youth programs and non-profits. The group includes: Richard Lofredo, Robert Civetti, Paul Buono, Brian Messier, Ernie Messier, David Civetti, Vito Georgio, Eric Georgio, David Joyal, Roger Anderson, and Anthony Mazza. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

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FLY FISHING: Anglers fishing the cinder worm hatch on Ninigret Pond. A course on fly tying and fishing the cinder worm hatch is being offered once again this year. Photo courtesy of Capt. Capt. Ray Stachelek. (Submitted photo)

Fly fishing the cinder worm hatch

By **CAPT. DAVE MONTI**

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Aquatic Resource Education Program, announced its annual Cinder Worm Workshop taking place on three days in May. This is the program's 14th year and it will include two weekday evening classes in fly tying instruction and one weekend evening of fly fishing. The program is free to registrants.

The cinder worm hatch is a spring time ritual as thousands of cinder worms wiggle their way from the mud to the surface to mate. Striped bass feed on the worms. Participants get to make their own flies in class then take them out on the water to experience this great fishery.

Instructors will be available to assist novice participants on rigging and casting. "We would prefer if all attended the fly tying workshops as well as the fly fishing day on the Grassy Point areas of Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge. We don't guarantee the weather or the fish," said Dave Pollack, "but past experiences have shown that this is prime time for the worm mating season." Pollack and Capt. Ray Stachelek have led a team of volunteer instructors to produce the workshop series for years.

The program is open to any adult or child over the age of 10, regardless of skill level - 40

person maximum so register early. Instruction and guidance will be provided by some of the area's most proficient and knowledgeable worm hatch fishers.

All fly tying materials will be provided. Participants are encouraged to bring their own tools and equipment, but all necessary fly tying tools and equipment will be loaned to registrants upon request. Salt-water fly fishing equipment, including rods, reel, lines and leaders, will be loaned to registrants who do not have their own gear and tackle upon request in advance.

The Fly Tying classes will be held Tuesday, May 2 and May 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center, Charlestown, RI. The Fly Fishing portion of the program will take place Saturday, May 20, 4 p.m. until dark at Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge, Charlestown, RI.

For information or to register for the program contact Marisa Podbros, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at marisa_podbros@fws.gov or call 401-213-4400.

Right whale closures and restrictions

It was unusual to have right whales feeding on the surface in Cape Cod Bay last month. They usually appear there in the spring. Warming water, a change in bait and forage fish profiles and other climate impacts are effecting where these and other whales traditionally



WORM HATCH: Worm hatch fly and the worm it tries to mimic. (Photo courtesy of Capt. Capt. Ray Stachelek)

appear and feed.

The whales are here, so in addition to speed zone restrictions imposed last month, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is reminding all commercial fishers of the various state and federal seasonal trap gear closures that went into effect on Feb. 1.

The purpose of these closures is to protect seasonal aggregations of right whales from potential entanglements in buoy lines. Compliance with these closures is critically important to state and federal right whale conservation strategies.

Permit holders who leave non-conforming trap gear in these closures may be subject to enforcement actions and administrative sanctions on their

permits. Permit holders who have non-conforming gear in these closures should develop a plan to remove the gear as immediately as possible.

Effective Feb. 1, 2023 closure and restricted areas include a Massachusetts Commercial Trap Gear Closure area, Restricted Areas, a Restricted Area Wedge, and a Southern Island Restricted Area.

For more information regarding the management of protected marine species in Massachusetts, please visit www.mass.gov/marinefisheries or call DMF at 617-626-1520.

Where's the bite?

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. Elisa Cahill of Snug Harbor Marina said, "Party boats are catching a nice mix of cod and very large bergalls (also known as cunner or choggies) so they are fishing."

Freshwater fishing in RI and MA is often a more angler friendly alternative as cold, high winds and seas often plague salt water fishers this time of year. "Anglers are targeting trout and salmon with shiners, spin baits and Power-Baits with some success. In North Kingstown Rhode Island Barber Pond and Silver Spring Lake are yielding fish for anglers," said Neil Hayes of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown." For licenses and trout/salmon waterway stocking information in Rhode Island visit www.dem.ri.gov/fishing, and in Massachusetts www.mass.gov/service-details/trout-stocking-report.

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@verison.net or visit www.noflue-fishing.com.



FAMILIAR FACE: Former Cranston Mayor Allan Fung, who has been a regular visitor at the Cranston Card and Collectibles Show is joined by promoter Mike Mango. (Submitted photos)



NATIVE NICHE: Former Cranston resident John Zolli set up three tables with his sons John Jr. (left), who coordinates social media for the show, and Michael (right).

Cranston Card Show enjoys record-setting event

By **PETE FONTAINE**

Not even last weekend's blistering cold could prevent the 47th annual and nationally recognized Cranston Card and Collector's Show from setting an all-time attendance record.

Saturday's temperature dipped to 10 degrees below zero yet upwards of 600 people were inside famed C. Arthur Flori Gymnasium at Coventry High School and enjoyed food from food trucks outside on both days.

Moreover, more than 800 people were back inside the spacious CHS gym and were part of the 2023's record setting show.

"Everyone is thrilled," said Mike "Mango" Mangasarian, the show promoter who continued the tradition founded by the late Thomas McDonough back in 1976 to support the St. Joseph Men's Guild at Immaculate Conception Church in Cranston. "We're ready for Feb. 4-5, 2024."

The 2023 edition featured 80 vendors who set up 147 tables and came from as far away as Seattle as well as all six New England states and other parts of the country to raise money for four important non-profits - namely the St. Vartanitz Youth Sports Federation Sports Program, Immaculate Conception Church in McDonough's memory, Sisters of the Poor in Pawtucket that was fur-

ther boosted by racing collectibles donated by John Marandola of Cranston.

"Hopefully the 2024 show will have warmer weather," Mango mused. "The food trucks struggled to get their generators to stay on to feed everyone; some dealers missed Saturday due to pipes bursting in their homes; yet were back on Sunday."

He also announced two other shows will be held on June 3-4 and Oct. 7-8, 2023 leading to the 2024 super show in Feb. 2024."

Any dealer who'd like to register for either of the three shows should contact him via mikemangomsn.com.

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LOCAL LINK: Cranston's Myron Bernstein and his wife Arlene were among the many dealers at last weekend's record-setting Cranston Card and Collector's Show.

Harping on a familiar topic, three teams making runs

I'll admit, I have hit on this topic a few times in the past and will probably not be bringing anything new or fresh to the table this time around, so I guess this column will serve as a reminder more than anything.

The topic of the week: Treat the officials better.

Last Thursday night I covered the Cranston West versus Coventry boys basketball game. It was a great game from start to finish. It was a packed gym, a big divisional battle between two clubs that were battling for play-off seeding.

Long story short, the Falcons got the win in a very tight battle; it was a lot of fun to watch.

With that intensity, though, came some inappropriate behavior. There were a couple of skirmishes that nearly turned into fights, a lot of trash talk for all four quarters between each team.

Neither team really crossed the line, my point is not at all to wag a finger and shame the clubs for what happened. It was a close game between two competitive squads, it happens all the time and I would be lying if I said that I was not entertained. Although things pushed the envelope and maybe even went too far at times, I thoroughly enjoyed the passion. That is what makes watching sports fun.

However, I did feel bad for the officials

who once again, had more on their plates than just calling the game in front of them.

I have been seeing ads everywhere trying to get people to step up and become an official. Even on the Rhode Island Interscholastic League website they have been trying to recruit locals.

As always, the numbers are not there and dropping, and I can't say I blame those uninterested prospects one bit. Being an official is one of the most thankless jobs in the world and it is only getting worse by the day.

Last Thursday, the officials had to calm kids down left and right, de-escalate confrontations and put an end to cussing and inappropriate language. Again, and I can't stress this enough, what happened was totally normal for a big game, but the officials had their hands full for a modest-at-best paycheck. No thank you.

Then there are the other typical problems. Coaches complaining at every turn, fans chirping, players questioning decisions. Even people with the thickest of skin have a breaking point, we are all humans made up of the same DNA.

From the youth level on up, the lack of available officials is a massive problem. These leagues wonder why they can't recruit people and why money is not incentive enough. Well, you are being paid a small check to be

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR
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criticized, mocked and hung out to dry each time you step out there. I can't tell you how many times at this point that I have had officials vent to me about this subject and how many guys have "retired" from wearing the zebra stripes due to the abuse. It needs to stop.

There is no easy way of solving this problem. The obvious solution is for better treatment at these events, but it takes all kinds to make a world and unfortunately, there will always be too many people that don't get it. The numbers are increasing by the day and it will be impossible to curb.

The other solution will be to increase official pay, which is what I am advocating for here. There are obviously limited funds to go around, especially in local sports. I get that these leagues don't have thousands of dollars laying around to dish out, but if they want to solve this problem, they're going to have to pay up because then alternative is impossible.

CCRI women's hoops closing in on history

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Community College of Rhode Island women's basketball team is on the brink of a major milestone following last night's rout at Bristol Community College.

With a 94-30 victory over the Bayhawks on Thursday, the No. 4-ranked Knights are one win away from reaching 20 victories in a season for the first time since 2012-13 with four games remaining on the schedule, the first of which is this Saturday at home at 1 pm against the University of Maine at Augusta.

Under the guidance of fifth-year head coach Doug Haynes, CCRI is 19-3 overall, 9-0 in Region XXI play, and 8-0 at home. The Knights have held steady at No. 4 in the NJCAA Division III rankings for six consecutive weeks and are ranked among the nation's best in several categories, including: 7th in points per game (76.5), 2nd in field-goal percentage (47.7), 7th in rebound margin per game (15.0), 8th in assists per game (17.8), and 4th in three-point field goals made per game (7.6).

Sophomore center Maggie Schwab (North Kingstown) is averaging a double-double in 2022-23 with 15.6 points per game and 10.0 rebounds. In her first 20 games, she reached double figures in scoring 19 times

and finished with 12 double-doubles. She's currently 2nd in the nation in field-goal percentage (59.0) and 11th in total rebounds (211).

Sophomore guard Michelle Moreno (Providence) is tied for 10th in the NJCAA at 54.3 percent from the field and sophomore guard Chloe Rayko (Coventry) is 4th in three-point field-goal percentage, connecting on 41.8 of her attempts from long range.

The Knights are in search of their second consecutive regional championship and second consecutive berth in the NJCAA D-III National Tournament, where they entered last season as the No. 10 seed and defeated Rock Valley College in the consolation round.

This year's team has already eclipsed the 2021-22 team's win total (17) and could become just the seventh team in school history to reach 20 victories in a season with one more win in their remaining four games.

Haynes has led a remarkable turnaround in just five seasons; the Knights won just six games in his second season at the helm in 2019-20 and had to start from scratch last year with 13 freshmen and only one sophomore after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of the 2020-21 season.

That does not mean that we should not try to do better, though. For everyone's sake, let's remember to treat these officials with respect. We need them and not enough people recognize this.

Next up is boys hoops. I think we are in for a great tournament season at Beacon Communications.

Bishop Hendricken continues to roll and is locked in as the favorite for the Division I title and the open championship. Nothing new to report there.

Johnston, though, continues to dominate Division II and is undefeated and virtually untested within the divi-

sion. Will the Panthers be able to compete with the Hawks, La Salle, Central when the open tournament starts? We'll find out, and I am totally stoked for it.

At this point, it seems unlikely that the Panthers are knocked off in Division II. They have been the best team all season long and just added another starting-caliber player in Camani Batista. I think anything less than a division title would be an upset at this point.

It goes so much further than just the division if you ask me. Sure, Johnston lost to La Salle in a rather lopsided defeat earlier this year and needed its

best shot to beat Smithfield. However, the Panthers have improved since then and added Batista. I really do believe this team could make a deep run in the open tournament, and I'm talking a potential showdown with Hendricken for all the marbles.

Then Cranston West. The Falcons have won seven of eight and five straight. Although they need a few more wins to qualify for the open tournament, things are looking up and I am rooting for that result.

Three of our teams in the open tournament? That would be tremendous to cover.

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Doss, Culhane earn LEC awards

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Rhode Island College junior Steven Doss (West Warwick, R.I.) and freshman Shamus Culhane (North Kingstown, R.I.) were recognized by the Little East for their respective performances at the NEICAAA Championship, held at The Track at New Balance on Feb. 2-3. The Anchoermen finished 14th (27 teams) with a team score of 23.0. The University of Rhode Island won the meet with a team score of 199.0. The event was comprised of mostly Div. I competition. Doss was named both the Little East Men's Track Athlete of the Week and Rookie Track Athlete of the Week. He finished first in the 200m (21.42; new program record) and 11th in the 4x400m relay (3:25.25). His time in the 200m ranks No. 2 in the nation and No. 1 in New England. The 4x400m relay is No. 6 in New England and No. 1 in the Little East. It is the third time this season that Doss has received the Athlete of the Week and the first time he was tabbed the league's top newcomer. Culhane was named the Little East's Rookie Field Athlete of the Week. He placed 13th in the weight throw (15.93m). It is the second time this season that he has received this award. In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will compete at Boston University's David Hemery Invitational on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 10-11.



UP THE COURT: Johnston's Branden Testa works his way past Pilgrim defenders.

■ Panthers

(Continued from page 18)

Pats sophomores Ian Laplume and Dylan Vale, added eight points apiece. Johnston and Pilgrim traded baskets to start the contest with Testa making a layup for the Panthers before Fuller responded with a jump shot for the Pats. But after that, it was all Johnston. The Panthers closed the first frame with a 10-0 run, where Salvatore scored six points and Testa had four points, and that gave Johnston a 12-2 advantage. Pilgrim received a layup from Vale at the beginning of the second quarter and it inched the Pats within 12-4. Johnston, however, answered with back-to-back 3-balls, from Salvatore and Mike Carlino, and that extended the Panthers buf-

fer to 18-4. Salvatore sank another trey, moments later, and then Corsinetti connected on a 3-pointer of his own, and that put the Panthers up 33-10. Johnston held a 34-14 edge at halftime. The Pats matched the Panthers with 40 second-half points until senior Cam Vanstone, an athlete on Johnston's unified basketball team, checked into the contest and buried a pair of 3-point shots, which helped the Panthers pull out the 80-54 win. "He was the hometown hero on CBS," Bedrosian said. "He's our spark in practice. He (has) a smile that's contagious when we're having a bad day. It's tough to have it when he's in the gym. And he just shoots for two hours straight and he gets in the drills with the guys, doesn't slow us down, and he's shooting drills like he's a part of the team,

and he's just a joy to have around in our program and we love him. It's awesome." Johnston improved its league-record to 15-0 with the victory. "We're second in the state right now, so we've just got to keep it going," Bedrosian said. "Get a bye in the division and hopefully we get a good seed in the open as well. I would say the ultimate goal is winning the D-II Championship. That's been our primary goal from the beginning of the year. So, we've just got to try to get that first. That's the big golden apple that we have wanted since November. And then, once we get that, then we'll worry about the open, but right now we're just focused on that Division II Title." Johnston hosted Mt. Hope on Wednesday night, but that score was unavailable at press time. The Panthers play next on Friday at St. Rays at 7 p.m.

HIP BOBSHA

looks to the present & future with new album

By **ROB DUGUAY**

Hip Bobsha is one of those local bands that seem they've been around forever. Rooted in North Kingstown during the early 2000s and now based in Providence, this act has been bringing their cohesive blend of alt-rock, folk and blues to various stages around Rhode Island for quite some time now.

Over the years, the quartet of Brian Recupero and Jason Sorensen both on guitar, keyboard & vocals along with bassist Seth Acton and drummer Colin Relly have become an integral part of the Ocean State's jam band scene.

With that being said, it's been

a bit since they've released any new recordings but now that's not the case. The band recently put out the full-length album "Close" on February 2 and it has a lot to offer the senses. The theme behind the record is somewhat reactionary to the past few years with the songs relaying thoughts about where we currently are as a society and where we might end up going. At the same time, the tracks within the album exhibit an essence with the arrangements and structures of the music providing a sound that flows in substantial fashion.

"The 12 songs on 'Close' represent observations of things that have happened within or-

dinary daily life during that time as well as larger events on the world stage," the band mentions in the liner notes. "They are concerned with where we are as a civilization as well as where we might be headed. For on that road, we end as stone or light." Along with performing on the album, both Recupero and Sorensen handled the production at the latter's home studio. Sorensen also took on the recording and mixing duties while John Mailloux at Bongo Beach Productions in Westport, Massachusetts did the mastering of "Close".

This results in a stellar quality that captures the amplification and instrumentation of

the songs in a clear and poignant way. Nothing sounds off or lacking, each element of the band has a presence that doesn't get overlooked. It makes for a great listening experience that's easy to get immersed in while wearing a pair of headphones. Leading off the album in acoustic fashion in a similar approach to the Dave Matthews Band, "Western Skies" has the guitars and drums creating an excellent foundation. While having an interesting name, "Trustafari" is a prime example of how the amplification and instrumentation of Hip Bobsha's music is being conveyed within "Close".

"Mindless Generation" has more of a grit and heaviness

to it than the other songs while conveying the messaging behind the album. Going back to the acoustic stylings, "Embers" reminds me of a lot of bluegrass tunes I've heard over the years. Other songs that are worth a listen include "Young American Beast", "After The Rest" and "Waves". To check out "Close" and perhaps purchase it for a digital download, log on to Hip Bobsha's website at hipbobsha.com. From there you can give it a listen via your favorite music streaming platform and enjoy. It's a really cool album with each song off of it bringing something different while fitting together like a perfect musical puzzle.



WARWICK SHOWCASE

'80 FOR BRADY

**

(Four Seniors and the GOAT)

There he was. On the large screen and a smaller one. The seats were filled at the first showing of "'80 For Brady."

Rita Moreno, Sally Field, Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, four excellent "mature" actors, were somehow convinced to play four silly senior citizens in this dumb movie.

The women are off to the Super Bowl to see their hero. Gronkowski gets in his pal's movie playing Gronkowski.

There are shots of the game and the ladies schmoozing in the locker room, but most of the movie has them dealing with ticket problems and ending up with good seats. The writers even throw in some poignancy with the "humor." And watch for those "guest stars."

If you rush out of the theatre, you'll miss Brady's reference to retirement.

The incredible truth is that this movie is going to make a lot of money.

KNOCK AT THE CABIN

(Shyamalan's Back)

M. Knight Shyamalan made one great movie - his first. The rest, including his latest, "Knock at the Cabin," have been too inconsistent and erratic.

He starts with an interesting premise: If you have a chance to save the world from Armageddon by killing one of your family members, would you do it? And whom would you choose?

It's sort of like the old Lifeboat question: If you had to kill one person on a lifeboat in order to survive, who gets thrown overboard, or worse, eaten. Four people knock on the door of a gay

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Movies



KNOCK AT THE CABIN (Photo courtesy of Universal Pictures)

couple and their adopted young daughter and present their proposition. They must decide which one of them they will kill, and kill them. Otherwise, one of the four will be killed.

The leader of the group (Dave Bautista) is polite but terrifying - creating a somber, scary mood.

The gay couple loves each other and their child and cannot participate in the unthinkable decision.

When mass destruction takes place on their TV, they begin to question the reality of the situation. They also question whether they were chosen because of their sexuality.

Shyamalan pads the movie with flashbacks that break the tension and adds

hard-to-watch violence that could have been suggested rather than graphically shown.

The characters of the two men are pushed to the limit as the movie heads toward a disappointing ending.

It still will give you much to think about, as Shyamalan likes to do.

NETFLIX

NARVIK

(WW II Movie)

This Norwegian movie is about the German's attacking neutral Norway in 1940 to obtain their iron ore and ship it

from their port to use in World War II.

The story revolves around Gunnar, a young man who is fighting for Norway and his small town of Narvik.

He blows up a bridge and is captured by the Germans.

Gunnar's wife works for the Germans as a translator and assists the Germans by providing valuable information in order to save their dying son.

What happens to them and their small town is a tragedy.

PAMELA, A LOVE STORY

(Pamala Anderson Tells Her Story)

She is 55 years old now, still going strong after an incredible life that included posing nude for Playboy, starring in "Baywatch," marrying a half dozen times (or more?), surviving domestic abuse, raising big bucks for charity, raising three kids, and, most recently, starring as Roxie in "Chicago" on Broadway.

Pamela tells her story unashamed and unabashed, showing a multitude of tapes that she has kept in her attic over the years.

Her wildest years were spent with Tommy Lee, drummer for Mötley Crüe. Her life hit a low point when sex tapes with Tommy were allegedly stolen from her home and released on the internet.

Anderson tells it like it is, showing many tapes of her talk show appearances where she was ridiculed beyond belief and just laughed it off.

Pamela Anderson is a survivor. You may question her integrity, her choices and her morality, but you have to wonder at how she is still out there doing her thing.

Rhody TREASURES

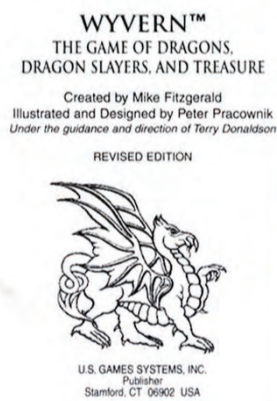
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What is (or was) WYVERN?



By Travis Landry
Auctioneer & Specialist
Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers
Cranston, RI



Technically, Wyverns are cool two legged dragons from European mythology, but that's not what I am here to write about. Instead, I want to discuss *Wyvern* the collectible card game, which enjoyed a brief existence from 1994 to 1997, so if you missed it and have no idea what I'm talking about, read on and learn about this little known relic of the 1990s trading card (TCG) boom.

Wyvern was published by U.S. Games Systems (USGS) out of Stamford, Connecticut in 1994. The company has been around for over 50 years and makes everything from tarot cards to motivational cards. This was just a year after *Magic: The Gathering* hit the market and interest in collectible card games was on the rise. Mike Fitzgerald, who later became known for his work with *Wizards of the Coast*, designed *Wyvern* and all the artwork was done by international fantasy artist Peter Pracownik.

The game was (or maybe still is?) played with two decks: one holds dragon and terrain cards and the other treasure and action cards. Billed as "The Game of Dragons, Dragon Slayers, and Treasure," it could be played quickly by two people within a half hour. Like other popular TCG games of the era, *Wyvern* was heavy on strategy and fantasy; one interesting aspect of this game is all characters and terrains

were based on actual elements from ancient mythology.

Unfortunately, the downside of coming into a market saturated with competition is not every game is going to make it, and *Wyvern* is an example of this. *Magic: The Gathering* and later *Pokémon* took the world by storm and after three short years *Wyvern* was pulled from production. Between 1995 and 1997, USGS put out only five editions: Premiere Limited, Limited, Phoenix, Chameleon, and Kingdom. Due to their narrow run, *Wyvern* trading cards are difficult to find today.

Believe it or not, some of the rarest *Wyvern* cards are errors; a misprint at the factory caused a few card backs to print with fronts from *Magic: The Gathering* - We actually sold one of these error cards at Bruneau and Co in February of 2022 for \$800! However, for the most part *Wyvern's*

collectible value is what most would consider low - But hey, that's great news for anyone interested in playing the game or beginning a collection!

If I've sparked your interest, make sure to check out our March 11th TCG auction, we've got three *Wyvern* booster packs looking for new homes!

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TO THE HIGHEST POINT ON EARTH: Paul and friends climb the top of Mount Everest – but not for long. From left: Nick Pasqual, Adam Carbone and Abhi Sinha.



Movie
(Continued from page 17)

“For what we pulled off for what little resources we had was pretty incredible,” Carbone said.

Paul handles stressful situations through fantasies that take him to different places all over the world – including Greece, Italy, France and Germany. The crew cleverly mimicked these countries without leaving Rhode Island. Carbone said Providence’s canals and gondolas helped with their Venice scene and they were able to use Newport Vineyards for their Germany and Italy shots. Meanwhile, the desert scene was filmed in East Greenwich’s sand dunes.



CHAOS AT THE WEDDING: Chaos ensues at a wedding in Italy at a very unexpected turn of events. From left: Sissy O’Hara, Courtney Danforth, Stephen Martin, Abhi Sinha, Nick Pasqual and Marc Critchett. (Submitted photos)

Carbone’s favorite part of the project was pulling in all the Rhode island resources – whether it be people or locations. He said people and businesses were eager to get involved.

“I always, as much as I can, try to bring my films back to Rhode Island because they’re [people] always so welcoming and excited to do it,” Carbone said.

TAKEN TO SAFETY: Paul and friends are taken to safety by Machmoud and wife Delilah in Iraq. From left, Nick Pasqual, Adam Carbone, Abhi Sinha, Courtney Danforth, Shira Price, Dan Marshall, Robbie Clark and Sean Michael Beyer.



Carbone is a lifelong Cranstonian and product of Cranston Public Schools. He started at George J. Peters Elementary, moved up to Hugh B. Bain Middle School and graduated from Cranston West in 2010 where he remembers taking media studies with Mr. Jones. Carbone attended New England Institute of Technology for video and audio production.



WILD, WILD WEST: Adam Carbone channels his inner Clint Eastwood as he prepares for one of Paul’s fantasies.

The red carpet premiere will take place March 5 at Lincoln Cinema (622 George Washington Hwy, Lincoln). Tickets are \$14 and can be purchased at EventBrite.com and will not be sold at the door. Arrivals begin at 3 p.m. with the film screening at 4 p.m. followed by a Q&A with the director and cast members. Carbone said half of the tickets have been sold and the event is expected to sell out. The film is rated PG-13 and is an hour and 45 minutes long. Visit poorpaul.com to view the trailer.



ADVENTURES IN ITALY: Paul and friends (Jason and Clyde) enjoy the view of Italy on their vacation around the world. This is the calm before the storm. From left: Abhi Sinha, Adam Carbone and Nick Pasqual.

Cranston residents in the film include Carbone, John Petrella, Matt Zuena, Kristen Falso, David Carbone. Rhode Island natives include Courtney Danforth, Stephen O’Neil Martin, Brian Vincent, Sissy O’Hara, Robert Marsella and Ana Rita Lopresti. Rhode Island-based band The Complaints (Dean Petrella, Anthony Moretti, Chris Cruz) made an appearance and provided music.

RhodyMoney

Saving strategies for young adults

METRO

When a person is young, saving money may be the furthest thing from his or her mind. After all, this may be a time to enroll in college or trade school, make a first big purchase, such as a car, or even get married. Thinking about establishing a solid financial footing for the future can take a back seat when life is filled with so many significant events.

But it's never too early to start saving — even when saving seems to be an impossible task. Young adults should keep saving in mind and look to various strategies that can set them up for long-term financial security.

Set long-term goals

It's easier to save when saving is attached to specific goals. While some may aspire to retire early, establish an emergency fund or to purchase a home, others may want to save for an overseas vacation. Motivation to save can make it that much easier to do so.

Determine where you spend the most

Saving money on smaller purchases will add up over time, but to really build a robust savings, figure out your biggest expenditures and how you can cut back to pad your savings. The Logic of Money reports that the average American spends more than 60 percent of their income on housing and transportation. Figuring out how to cut costs in these categories can be a great way to save.



Young adults should establish healthy spending habits as soon as possible.

Use cashback apps

Young adults are tied to their digital devices. Why not make them work for you? Free cashback apps give you money back for various purchases. Ibotta and Dosh are just two cashback apps available. Some can be linked directly to a credit or debit card to have passive income deposited directly. With others, you can cash out as a direct deposit or via a payment app like PayPal.

Set aside one-third of your income

Make it a point to put away \$1 for every \$3 earned into a savings account, advises U.S. News & World Report. That is a good measure for establishing a rainy day fund. If you don't trust yourself to transfer the money, have a set amount automatically deposited from your paycheck into a designated savings account.

Treat credit cards like using cash

The "buy now, pay later" option is an attractive trap to fall into. Using credit cards often is a safer way to pay merchants, because you're risking others' money rather than your own with a debit card. However, using credit can make it challenging to visualize what you're actually spending. Do not purchase more than you can pay off within each billing cycle. Set account alerts on your phone to let you know when you've hit your budgeted credit card spending limit. Resist the urge to open and use too many cards. Young adults can begin saving early with some conventional and highly effective strategies.



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Rising utility costs

METRO

Much like the cost of a loaf of bread or a carton of eggs now costs consumers considerably more than it did a couple of years ago, the price to heat and cool a home has risen considerably. Various factors, from climate-related events to supply chain issues to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have been cited as contributors to the rise in utility costs, which is not just a North American problem. Following pandemic-induced lows in 2020, natural gas prices have risen consistently, even during off-peak months, over the last year-plus. The cost of natural gas that's delivered through pipes was up 24 percent in February from the year prior. Electricity has gone up as well. According to Choose Energy, an energy reporting resource, electricity rates have risen across the 50 states in 2022 by anywhere from 1.7 percent over 2021 (Alaska) to 46.1 percent (Maine). The national average increase is 11.3 percent. CBS News reported in 2019 that Americans are paying up to 30 percent more on water and wastewater bills in less than a decade. Water and sewer bills are rising faster than inflation rates, having increased for an eighth consecutive year in a study of the country's 50 largest metropolitan regions. People concerned with the rising costs of utilities may have to be creative. Running appliances during off-peak hours; turning off lights and unplugging devices when not in use; investigating solar power; and investing in water-saving faucets, shower heads and toilets can help individuals curtail their energy consumption.



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WomensWork returns with witty 'The Oldest Profession'

Theatre Review
by DON FOWLER

Welcome back WomensWork, the theatre collaborative of "mature" Rhode Island actresses who search for and produce works that provide them with opportunities to practice their profession.

Following the pandemic break, they have partnered with Burbage Theatre Company to present Rhode Islander Paula Vogel's "The Oldest Profession" directed by Trinity's own Anne Scurria.

Jeff Church and Lynne Collinson are the producers.

Five aging prostitutes sitting on a bench.

Sounds like the beginning of a raunchy poem.

It is the beginning of the end for five practitioners of the world's oldest profession.

But they are not going out without a fight, or at least one last song and dance.

Rather than just talking about their aging clients, how things were in the good old days and how they are going to survive on \$20 a trick, Vogel has given each of them a song and a dance.

What a way to go!

It's the 1980s and much of the business has moved inside.

Mae, the "Madame" of the group, sets the rules, collects the money and keeps the peace.

Things have not been easy for the group. Should they move to New York City? Should they retire, as many of their "family friends" have?

Their profession opens the door for some funny one-liners... and some corny clichés. Beneath the humor is pathos.

The cast is terrific, with each character taking on a different personality and making the most of their "departures" to a better place. In addition to Paula Faber as Mae, Margaret Melozzi plays Ursula. Rae Mancini is Lillian, Jeannie Carson is Edna, and Juli Parker is Vera.

"The Oldest Profession" is at Burbage Theatre, 58 Blackstone Ave., Pawtucket, through Feb. 19. Call 484-0355 for reservations.

The play is an hour and 40 minutes without intermission.



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