



TOP TIER: Brown Avenue Elementary School recently held its Pay to Pour event, as the student body works toward becoming a Unified Champion School through a partnership with the Special Olympics of Rhode Island. The school's highest Pay to Pour donator, third grade student Liam Arriaza, empties the grand prize ice bucket on his classroom teacher, Ms. Tiffany Luja's head, with the help of school counselor Deana Lavoie. For more photos from the event, turn to Page 11. (Photo courtesy Amanda Sloan)

FARMERS WELCOME: Bami Farm, located in Johnston, may be one of the first growers to help populate a proposed new town farmer's market at War Memorial Park. Members of the African Alliance of Rhode Island (AARI) can often be spotted tending to the fields at 2321 Hartford Ave. (Photo courtesy Bami Farm)



Farm to tables? New market proposed for Memorial Park

By RORY SCHULER

Imagine fresh fruits and vegetables, straight from the farm, laid out for residents to sniff, tap, squeeze and buy regularly in downtown Johnston.

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. intends to make good on a campaign promise to further transform the park at the town's heart into a vital community hub.

"As I said while campaigning I am trying to better utilize Johnston Memorial Park for residents," Polisena said earlier this week. "Farmers markets allow individuals to enjoy a summer day and help support our local farmers by purchasing their fresh produce."

Johnston Town Council was expected to discuss and likely approve a resolution "authorizing the Mayor and/or the Director of Parks and Recreation to allow the use of Town public property for the purpose of holding a farmer's market."

Council was also slated to consider "awarding a bid and authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement for engineering services at the Johnston War Memorial Park for renovations and improvements."

Monday night's meeting, however, was canceled for lack of quorum.

MARKET - PAGE 5

'Off-road' means stay off the damn road!

Police warn riders not to take 'all terrain' literally

By RORY SCHULER

In August 2021, a woman was dragged from her car and beaten by a gang of around 10 dirt bike and ATV riders after she honked her horn at a Providence intersection. Her young child and dog were inside the car.

Providence Police asked for tips to identify the suspects. Police eventually made one arrest.

Motorists across the Ocean State offered a collective shudder.

"Members of the public should never provoke or confront these riders but remain vigilant and report this illegal activity to police," said Johnston Police Chief Mark A. Vieira.

Spring's warm weather is welcomed in New England, but it also means the beginning of illegal off-road season on Rhode Island's streets and highways.

Johnston, Cranston and Providence police have all pledged to crackdown on the illicit operation of recreational vehicles on town and city roads.

"I am in full support of the crackdown on these ATV/dirt bike gangs," said Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr.

"These bikes and ATVs are not street legal and they present a clear and immediate danger to legal vehicles and motorists on the street."

Roving groups of off-road vehicles aren't a rare sight in Rhode Island. The riders, and sometimes affected motorists, often record the incidents and post them online.

In August 2020, Rhode Island State Police (RISP) responded to reports that a group of more than 40 riders were blocking highways throughout Providence, and near the Cranston city limits. At least two crashes resulted. Once again, police made a single arrest.

"This illegal activity poses a significant danger to the public and has a negative impact on the quality of life for our residents and businesses," said Cranston Police Chief Col. Michael J. Winquist. "We have experienced isolated incidents where groups of ... adults operating ATVs and dirt bikes have entered Cranston. Some of these incidents have resulted in arrests and the seizure of the vehicles."

ATV - PAGE 7

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JHS Panther of the Week



POTW: This week's Panther of the Week is James Guilmette. James is a senior who is on National Honor Society, SADD, and Student Council. James was Johnston High School's only swimmer and came in 4th place in the Breast Stroke and 7th place in the IM. James was also a member of the Championship Volleyball team last year, and has helped lead the team this year to start the season 2-0. After high school, James plans to pursue Criminal Justice in college. *(Photos submitted by Matt Velino, Johnston High School 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.

Say you saw it in the Johnston SunRise

EASTER CELEBRATION

Eggceptional hunt

By PETE FONTAINE

Festival Field, located off Lafayette Street in Johnston, again played host to yet another special Our Lady of Grace celebration.

It was Holy Saturday and the day featured "hunting for candy and prizes" as students in the Roman Catholic Church placed into Easter Treat Bags for what Rev. Peter J. Gower said was "all part of a day of for all the people in our parish."

A host of generous parishioners ensured there was enough candy and prizes to enjoy during and after the Easter Egg Hunt, which was highlighted by raffles for a girls' and a boys' bicycle.

When the raffles were held, Mason Loffredo won the boys' bike and Arianna Pagano staked claim to the girls' bike.

"Many, many thanks and Easter blessing for Don Parsons of Anytime Realty who so generously donated both bicycles," Gower said. "Thank you, Don, for all you do."



PRIZE PEDALS: Mason Loffredo and Arianna Pagano try out the bicycles they won during Saturday's OLG Easter Egg Hunt in Johnston.

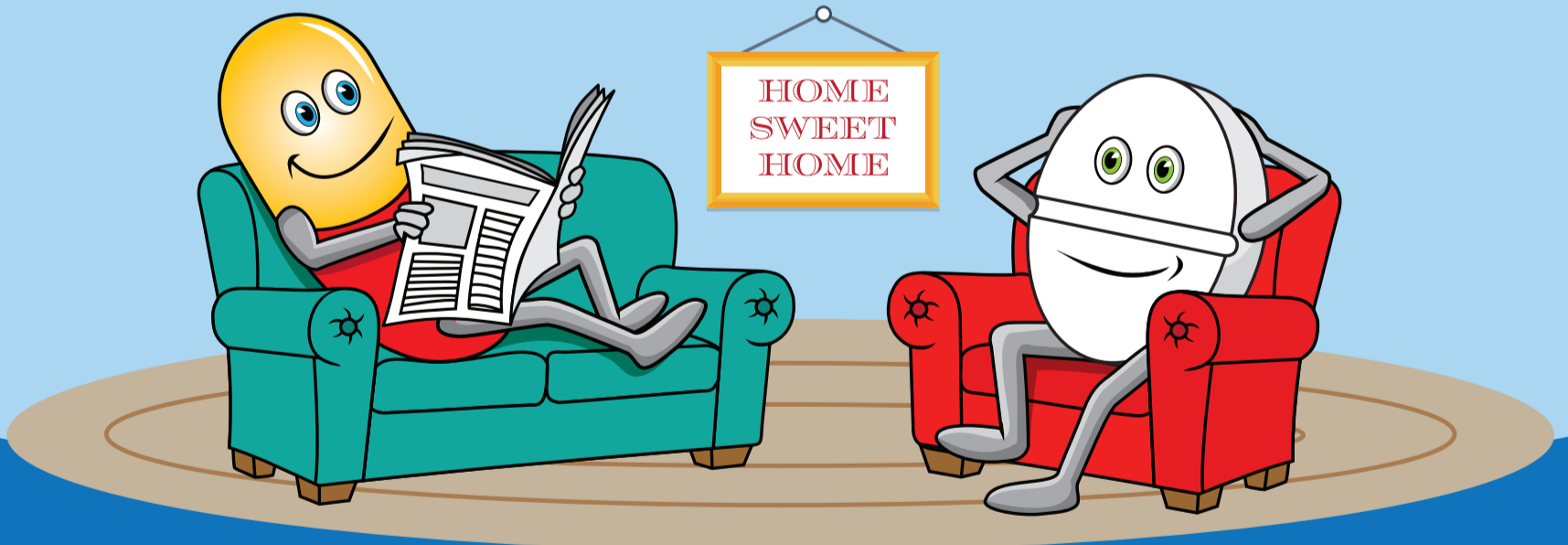
PADRE'S PAL:

Rev. Peter J. Gower, the pastor at Our Lady of Grace Church, is joined by the Easter Bunny during Saturday's annual Easter Egg Hunt. (Submitted photos)



HAPPY HUNT: Festival Field was filled with proud parishioners of all ages during Saturday's annual OLG Easter Egg Hunt.

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Easter Bunny visits Johnston Senior Center

By PETE FONTAINE

There was a flurry of activity Saturday morning inside the Johnston Senior Center's spacious multi-purpose room.

Children of all ages enjoyed a host of activities, as well as a variety of snacks during the annual visit from the Easter Bunny.

"What's going on in that corner?" several visitors asked as they watched about a dozen or so kids tossing colored plastic eggs into buckets. "Just look at all the pastries and juice drinks."

In keeping with the tradition of hosting the Easter Bunny, Saturday's will long be remembered as perhaps the biggest and best event in recent memory, courtesy of host Johnston Recreation Department, which received a valuable sponsorship from Citizens Bank and the Johnston Community Center Association.

At one end of the room, people of all ages enjoyed muffins, Danish, cinnamon buns, brownies, cupcakes and scones while other folks enjoined a variety of juices and hot chocolate.

In the middle of it all was the Easter Bunny, a.k.a. Johnston High School student/athlete Chris Civetti, son of Councilman Robert Civetti and Carol Civetti, who Cournoyer said "is really doing a great job most especially making all the kids feel comfortable."

There was a waiting line during most of the two-hour event that provided proud parents — and in many instances grandparents — an opportunity to add more memorable photos to their family albums and scrapbooks.

Even Recreation Director Michael Bedrosian, who is also the successful head coach of Johnston High school's state champion basketball Panthers, was all smiles as he visited the event and chatted with visitors.

Likewise, Richard DeFino Jr., the new Executive Director of the Senior Center, brought his grandsons Richard and Luca DeFino. Their father Richard DeFino III, was overjoyed with what he called "an exceptional turnout and great day of fun for all the kids."



MANY MEMORIES: Above, Emilia and Valentina Merlino were among the countless children who visited with the Easter Bunny while their mother Jen (not shown) snapped pictures. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)



COLOFUL CREATIONS:

At right, Nicky and Giovanni DiLorenzo show off the sheets they colored while visiting the Easter Bunny.



GLITTER GARB:

At left, sisters Juliana and Sailor-Hope came decked out in dazzling dresses for Saturday's visit with the Easter Bunny.

BUNNY BUDDIES:

Below right, Kamden Beaumier and Kyla Hurley are smiles as they joined the Easter Bunny Saturday at the JSC.



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SUN RISE SCOOPS

SCOOP OF THE WEEK

Fishing Derby

The Johnston Recreation Department will host the 2023 Fishing Derby, for ages 4-12, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, April 22.

The derby will offer rewards for individual achievements in the derby. The derby is free to enter.

"Please remember this derby is meant for the kids," reminded derby organizers. "Please let the kids do all the fishing. You can help cast and release the fish if necessary. Most of all, have fun!"

Organizers say that participants can arrive anytime between 9 a.m. and noon. They put out a special thanks to The Johnston Community Center Association and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM).

For more information, go to johnstonrec.com.

JOHNSTON RECREATION DEPARTMENT

FISHING
2023 Derby



For children ages 4-12

Arrive anytime between 9am-12pm

Saturday, April 22, 2023

at Johnston Memorial Park

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The Johnston Community Center Association & RI DEM

Awards for individual achievements. Free to enter!

Please remember this derby is meant for the kids. Please let the kids do all the fishing. You can help cast and release the fish if necessary. Most of all, have fun!



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Sun Rise Staff Reports

Coed Middle School Volleyball

Johnston students currently in sixth, seventh and eighth grade are eligible to play Coed Middle School Volleyball in this year's spring season. Students can register now. Space is limited. The fee is \$70 per individual (\$35 for each additional sibling). Checks and money orders should be made payable to JYSA. (Refunds will not be issued without a doctor's note and are subject to a partial refund.)

The dates for 10 more sessions of volleyball: April 17, 18, 24, 25, 26, and May 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 (from 2:15-3:45 p.m. at the Johnston Indoor Recreation Center).

Students can register at the Johnston Recreation Office, 1583 Hartford Ave., Johnston, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information call 401-272-3460 or email johnstonrec.com

NAMI-RI: Family-to Family

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 at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 26. This is a free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based pro-

gram, 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 activities.

AARP Day Trips

Bronx Zoo Trip, Tuesday, May 16. Bus pickup from the Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 7 a.m., return time is approximately 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$114/person. For more information call Maureen at 828-5188. Final payment is due by Tuesday, April 18.

Essex Steam Train & Riverboat Trip for Thursday, June 22. Bus pickup from Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 9 a.m., return time is approximately 5 p.m. Cost is \$119/person. For more information call Maureen at 828-5188. Final payment is due by Thursday, May 25.

Celebrate Earth Day

The Central RI Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a free, community recycling event on Friday, April 14, from 12 - 4 p.m. at the Warwick Mall parking lot (near Firestone Tires). Rain or shine.

Paper shredding will be available

SCOOPS - PAGE 10

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2. Homeowners that have replaced sections of their roof over the years, piece by piece
3. Homeowners with roofs that are less than 10 years old
4. Homeowners that have a roof in absolutely terrible condition that probably needed to be replaced many, many years ago

**Call the Hotline at
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for your free roof assessment or go to
www.roofassistancehotline.com**

Market

(Continued from page 1)

"I am currently in discussions with Julius Kolawole from Bami Farm, located here in Johnston, on setting up a few dates," Polisen said of the proposed new town market.

Kolawole is the Director and Cofounder of the African Alliance of Rhode Island (AARI), and can often be found in the fields off Hartford Avenue, brushing up against the edges of Snake Den State Park.

"I will look for and welcome any other farmers as well," Polisen said. "This is only open to licensed farmers in Rhode Island. Their license from the state already allows for them to legally sell their fresh produce, so it is overly duplicative to make them get an additional license from the Town."

The farmer's market dates have not yet been set. Polisen said he's awaiting approval from Town Council.

"The purpose is to streamline the process so any interested parties can contact either myself or our Director of Buildings and Grounds, Chris Correia, to set up a date," Polisen said.

Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti said he'll wait for an official proposal before deciding whether to vote for the resolution.

"Although, I will say that in the past the town has held a farmer's market down at Johnston Memorial Park so this is not a new concept or idea," Civetti said Wednesday. "I am all in favor of providing a location where, on a peri-

odic basis, the local farmers in Johnston can set shop and sell some of their home-grown/homemade produce and products."

Monday's canceled Town Council meeting may be rescheduled for April 24, but Town Clerk Vincent P. Baccari Jr. is awaiting confirmation from council members.

"This will give the residents in town a chance to see some of the great working farms that still exist in the town of Johnston and throughout the state of Rhode Island," Civetti said. "If we can support our local farmers then perhaps they will be able to continue to maintain their land as open space rather than selling out to large corporations and developers or property."

Civetti said he looks "forward to hearing the proposal being presented by the Mayor and his staff."

Town Council President Robert V. Russo visits farmer's markets in other towns. He looks forward to a revitalized market in Johnston.

"I think hosting a Farmers' Market in town allows citizens to have a place to socialize while at the same time purchasing products from local farmers / vendors that are made in Rhode Island and may not appear in local stores," Russo said Wednesday. "I often go to farmer's markets to get fresh produce. If the market is big enough with a variety of goods it will draw people from other communities which will benefit other local businesses. Most importantly, farmer's markets provide a venue for people still courageous enough to farm to display and sell their products."



Watch Your MOUTH

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

BRUSHING BABIES' TEETH

As soon as baby's first tooth appears, usually around six to eight months of age, it's time to start brushing. You can brush baby's first teeth using water and a soft wet cloth or child's toothbrush to clean all surfaces of the teeth. Brush or wipe gently in circles along the gumline. Doing this twice a day will create good habits for your child who will come to expect teeth brushing as part of their morning and bedtime routines. Use only water until eighteen months of age and then switch to a children's toothpaste. Start with a small amount, about the size of a grain of rice. Around age six you can begin using a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.

The importance of baby teeth cannot be overstated, just as conscientious dental care should not be overlooked. Taking care of these little pearls as soon as they appear paves the way to a future healthy dental profile. Let us help promote your children's healthy mouth and brilliant smile. Taught early enough about the importance of taking care of their teeth, children can learn to make a habit of daily brushing and flossing. We have convenient office hours at DENTAL ARTS GROUP, 1136 Hartford Ave., Johnston; please call 401-521-3661.

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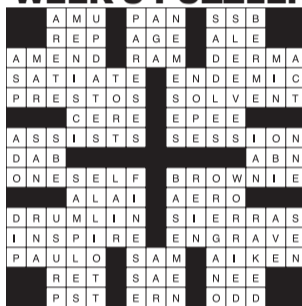
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SEIZED: The following items were seized during the warrant searches at three separate locations (20 Metcalf Ave. in North Providence, 113 Sisson St. in Providence, and 716 Central Ave. in Johnston): kilogram presses, stamps, and molds; digital scales and packaging material for redistribution; 908 grams of Heroin; 229 grams of Fentanyl; and \$82,550 in US Currency.

Johnston man one of three arrested for drug trafficking and failing to report a death

State Police seize 908G of Heroin, 229G of Fentanyl

By RORY SCHULER

The Rhode Island State Police (RISP) have arrested three suspects and discovered a dead body following a task force raid in North Providence.

A Johnston man was one of three suspects taken into custody and charged following a series of court-authorized searches by the RISP's High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force. The raids and arrests followed a month-long investigation, according to state police.

Johnston Police are not currently a member of the Task Force. However, following last week's arrest, the department link up with the regional effort to curb drug dealers.

"The Johnston Police Department is exploring assigning an officer to HIDTA in the future," said Johnston Police Chief Mark A. Vieira. "Police departments do not need a drug problem in their community in order to assign an officer to HIDTA."

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. will leave the decision up to the department's new chief. Polisena Jr. and Vieira both took their oaths of office in January.

"HIDTA is administered by the state police," Polisena said Wednesday morning. "I will leave any police personnel and allocation decisions to the Chief Vieira. The Johnston Police Department is one of the best police departments in the state and when called upon, they always have and will continue to work in conjunction with any other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies."

The three suspects, a pair from Providence and a Johnston man, were taken into custody last Wednesday. While searching a North Providence residence, the task force also discovered the body of a woman they believe died from an overdose.

The HIDTA Task Force executed court-authorized search warrants at three separate locations: 20 Metcalf Ave. in North Providence, 113 Sisson St. in Providence, and 716 Central Ave. in Johnston.

After gaining entry to the 20 Metcalf Ave. home in North Providence, "members of HIDTA found a deceased female within the residence," according to State Police.

"Members also located a significant heroin and fentanyl processing operation at this address," according to a RISP press release. "Members of the Department of the Attorney General's Office, the RISP Major Crimes Unit and Forensic Service Unit responded to assist with the processing and collection of evidence on scene."

"I want to applaud our HIDTA task force and our partners at the Attorney General's office for their work in this investigation," said Col. Darnell S. Weaver, RISP Superintendent



ARRESTED: The RISP HIDTA Task Force took three suspects into custody and charged them with drug crimes and failing to report a death: Noel Ignacio Moronta, 41, of 113 Sisson St., Providence; Nelson A. Reyes, 38, of 716 Central Ave., Johnston (mugshot above); and Marien Solano, 36, of 113 Sisson St., Providence. (Photos courtesy Rhode Island State Police)

and Director of the state's Department of Public Safety. "They work hard every day to take deadly drugs off the street and these arrests make our communities safer."

The following items were seized during the warrant searches: kilogram presses, stamps, and molds; digital scales and packaging material for redistribution; 908 grams of Heroin; 229 grams of Fentanyl; and \$82,550 in US Currency.

"It was determined that Noel Ignacio Moronta, 41, of 113 Sisson St., Providence; Nelson A. Reyes, 38, of 716 Central Ave., Johnston; and Marien Solano, 36, of 113 Sisson St., Providence all failed to report the death of the decedent, who is suspected to have died of an overdose," according to state police. "All three subjects were also identified to be involved in the manufacture, and/or possession with the intent to deliver significant amounts of illegal narcotics as outlined above. All were charged as co-conspirators with possession with intent to deliver (fentanyl, heroin), controlled substance conspiracy and failure to report a death with the intention to conceal a crime."

Moronta, Reyes and Solano were transported to the Lincoln Woods Barracks and processed. The defendants were formally arraigned on Wednesday, April 5, at 6th Division District Court, where they were held without bail, according to state police.

The HIDTA Task Force currently includes state troopers, DEA Providence District Office, Rhode Island National Guard Counterdrug Program participants, and members of the following municipal police departments: Providence, North Providence, Lincoln, Middletown, Bristol and Narragansett.

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BEATING INCIDENT:



In August 2021, a woman was dragged from her car and beaten by a gang of around 10 dirt bike and ATV riders after she honked her horn at a Providence intersection, while her young child and dog were inside the car. Providence Police asked for tips to identify the suspects and eventually made one arrest. These images were taken from screenshots of video footage from the incident. Johnston, Cranston and Providence police have all pledged to crackdown on the illicit operation of recreational vehicles on town and city roads as warm weather approaches in the Ocean State. (YouTube screenshot)

ATV
(Continued from page 1)

The nature of the crime — alleged offenders often disperse before police are able to initiate traffic stops — makes it difficult for citizens to report incidents on-time, and tricky for law enforcement to tackle the problem in real-time and make arrests.

“The Johnston Police Department is committed to combating large groups of illegal ATV/ dirt bike riders who dangerously swarm public roadways,” Vieira said. “We will work in conjunction with neighboring jurisdictions such as Providence and Cranston to address this issue which puts the motoring public at risk.”

Johnston, like most municipalities, has specific laws on the books restricting non-street-legal bikes from operating on town streets.

“The town of Johnston has an ordinance that strictly prohibits recreational motor vehicles from public streets, public parks, or any area within the town where motor vehicles are not allowed,” Vieira said. “Violators of the ordinance are subject to a fine of \$100 for a first offense, \$200 for a second offense, and \$300 for each offense thereafter. Recreational vehicles used in violation of the town ordinance are impounded at the owner’s expense and are not released until all court action is completed.”

Cranston Police say they’re serious about enforcing the rules of the road.

“The City of Cranston (and) Cranston Police Department (have) always been proactive in enforcing the laws relating to illegal and reckless operation of ATVs and dirt bikes,” Winqvist said. “We will continue to work with our neighboring police departments to address this safety concern. We will be especially vigilant now that the warmer weather is here.”

Last week, Providence Mayor Brett P. Smiley and Providence Police Chief Col. Oscar L. Perez announced the state capital’s new Providence Police Community Response Team “to combat illegal ATV and dirt bike riding throughout the City.”

Smiley circulated a press release, insisting his administration and city police “want to send a clear message to individuals who operate these vehicles, that law enforcement officials will be working to prevent this illegal activity and reckless behavior on our roadways will not be tolerated by police.”

“We want people to know we are serious about stopping the use of these illegal vehicles that put everyone at risk and make our streets unsafe,” said Mayor Brett Smiley. “By creating the Community Response Team, we will be using more resources than in the past to detect activity before it occurs, and we will be pursuing the appropriate criminal charges. No one should be using these vehicles and if they are caught doing so, they will face serious consequences.”

The city plans to seize more vehicles and use undercover detective work, surveillance technology and social media to track down and charge offenders.

“Through these means, PPD will be able to identify illegal activity within the city, proactively seize vehicles, pursue additional and higher criminal charges as it may relate to a case, and ultimately

ensure the safety of our residents and visitors,” according to a press release from Smiley’s office.

“I am proud to be unveiling this new, proactive strategy to address what has been a problem in our community for years,” Perez said. “Every Providence Police officer knows the real dangers and impacts the use of illegal ATVs and motorcycles has had in our neighborhoods. Beginning today, the officers of the Providence Police Department will be working with the community, stakeholders and surrounding cities to investigate and fully pursue all illegal activity associated with the operation and storage of these vehicles now through the summer months.”

Following Smiley’s announcement, Black Lives Matter RI PAC and the American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island released a joint-statement, raising concerns with the newly announced crackdown plans.

“Our organizations share the city’s goal of creating a safe environment for all residents, but seeking ways to criminalize ATV and dirt bike use — and utilizing expansive surveillance techniques to do so — are deeply troubling methods to pursue this laudable goal,” according to BLM RI PAC and the ACLU of RI. “We know that turning civil traffic offenses into criminal ones in this context will disproportionately affect young people and Black and Brown neighborhoods, have a severely discriminatory impact, and undermine the critical need for greater equity in the criminal justice system.”

Besides the racial component, the organizations also expressed privacy worries:

“These concerns are compounded by the City’s stated intention of using ‘video technology’ to track down ATV and dirt bike users. Given the objections that we and others have raised about the intrusive installation of Flock Safety surveillance technology in Providence and the severely limited protections that residents have from this technology, the potential use of these cameras to track and target ATV users should be extremely troubling to anybody concerned about privacy. That Providence is promoting the use of an anonymous tip line to report any ATV or dirt bike possession, even on a private residence or in a private garage, only enhances these surveillance concerns.”

In Johnston, report illegal vehicle incidents by calling 401-231-8100; in Cranston, call 401-942-2211; and in Providence, call the city’s new dedicated ATV Tip Line 401-680-TATV (8288) and email ATVTips@providenceri.gov to “anonymously report any non-emergency information they have about ATVs being illegally driven or stored.”

Polisena promised Johnston would be a dedicated partner to neighboring communities in the effort to keep off-road vehicles off the region’s roads.

“I will provide our police department, Mayor Smiley and (Cranston) Mayor (Ken) Hopkins whatever tools are needed to help keep these individuals off our streets,” Polisena said. “There is absolutely no sanctuary for them in Johnston and there will never be under my administration.”

Warwick Police Chief Col. Bradford Connor did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

Johnston Republican Town Committee Fundraiser



Sunday, May 7th 6:00 pm
Kelley Gazzero VFW 2812
1418 Plainfield Pike
Cranston, RI

Join us for laughs, silent auction, cash bar and a good time. You can order food from Iconic Eats at the show. Tickets must be purchase online in advance: \$35 each



<https://secure.winred.com/johnston-republican-town-committee/funny4funds>

Silent auction winners must pay with a credit card. Tickets are non-refundable Show is for 18 and over. info@johnstonri.gop



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COPAYS AND DEDUCTIBLES MAY APPLY

Big bunny spotted at The Bridge

By PETE FONTAINE

Whether you're a tiny tot or 101, it seems as though you're never too old to enjoy a visit with the Easter Bunny.

For example, Ginny Holt — who at 101 may be The Bridge at Cherry Hill's oldest resident — enjoyed Saturday's Family Day, and had as much fun as and the sisters King, Grace (5) and Natalie (3) and their friend Aspen LaForge (3), during the award-winning assisted living nursing home's Family Day and Easter Celebration.

In the middle of it all, of course, was the Easter Bunny — a.k.a. Connor Brayton — who was the most popular of all visitors, and son of Amy Brayton, who is Resident Care Director at the Johnston-based facility.

Brayton and Kristen King, a nurse at The Bridge, welcomed residents like Donna Lussier who was thrilled to have her grandson Lorenzo at the Family Day event. Likewise, there was a special air of family all afternoon throughout the Century Park property.

There was lots of fun of fun inside and outside The Bridge, highlighted by an Easter Egg Hunt for plastic-colored eggs placed all around the building, as well as a special visit from Sue Greco, an Ambassador from The Bubbly, which is a unique digital magazine, by and for Creative Kids.

Greco sat at an umbrella covered table on The Bridge's patio hand-painting a variety of designs on children's faces and forearms, just to name a few.

Meanwhile, there were other children's games and chocolate candy during the sun-splashed event that was coordinated by Joan Stanzione, the Lifestyle Director at The Bridge, who even had her picture taken with the Easter Bunny.



GRAM'S GUY: Donna Lussier, resident at The Bridge in Johnston, sits alongside the Easter Bunny who was a huge hit among all children in attendance, like her grandson Lorenzo. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)



BUNNY SHOTS:

At left, Joan Stanzione (left), Lifestyles Director at The Bridge, and Resident Care Director Amy Brayton, join her son Connor — a.k.a. the Easter Bunny — during Saturday's family celebration.

GRAND GUEST:

At right, Ginny Holt (center), who is 101 years old, is joined by Karen Bodden, Hudson Boddon and Jen Czajkorvski at The Bridge's Easter Family Day in Johnston.



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Opinion

EDITORIAL

Too many competing interests hamper housing

The path to hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. In Rhode Island, it appears the path to a failed affordable housing strategy is paved with an overabundance of competing interests, all of which have valid arguments for why they have been implemented, but inherently clash with one another all the same. There's a lot to unpack in this premise, but the basic situation looks like this.

The state's new plan to boost the stock of affordable housing is already precariously balanced on the premise that unshackling private developers from overly strenuous local regulation will result in an increased production of affordable housing. (As an aside, it should be stated that this approach conveniently omits that the current legal framework only requires private developers to include a small fraction of rental units at rates 80% below the market value, which translates to monthly rent costs that remain wholly unaffordable for all low-income earners in the state.)

Private developers, naturally, seek to make profits from their investments. Charging less for an apartment unit than could feasibly be marketed to someone for a lot more is bad business. So the government chips in publicly-funded financial tax credits with strings attached as a means to incentivize them to do so and help make up for some of the disparity in that cost. It's not perfect, but it has resulted in at least some moderately affordable housing developments getting off the ground. And to their credit, some private developers have even gone beyond the minimal requirements set by state law and are in the midst of trying to build apartment complexes where a majority of the rental units are priced at 60% of the market value, making them more truly affordable for people on lower incomes.

However, the construction unions then make a point to rightly advocate for their members because Rhode Island had not been enforcing federal wage requirements passed during the Great Depression for projects that utilize these tax incentives. What legislator interested in keeping their seat would oppose a bill advocating to pay skilled tradesmen and women a wage that is federally guaranteed? That measure passed nearly unanimously through the general assembly, and went into effect this year.

And now? It's private development's turn to gripe about how paying that prevailing wage would render those tax incentives completely null, or even surpass their value, adding costs to developments that are already skyrocketing due to inflation and the increased price of building materials. The scramble is now to determine which projects got in quick enough to be exempt from those requirements, but what about the future?

It's hard to imagine a solution where everyone will be happy. Outside of sizable private investment from ultra-wealthy trusts, foundations, or private individuals, the cost of producing affordable housing will seemingly continue to deter private developers from taking the financial risk required to build such projects — and that is bad for everybody, the trade unions included.

So what has to give? Amidst a period of economic uncertainty and downturn, it is understandable that developers don't want to be saddled with additional expenses up front, and that skilled trades members want to be guaranteed more money for the labor they invest to make those conceived projects a physical reality.

Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be an answer at this time where both of those desires can be satisfied.

It's a never-ending whammy of Catch 22s, and make no mistake — the victims will always be the people who barely make enough money to scrape by, and remain unable to afford a safe and reasonably priced place to call home.

LETTERS

'Speak your minds and stop being afraid'

I have lived in Johnston my entire life 68 years, and I have some thoughts on a couple of the letters sent to the Johnston Sun Rise.

First, I will start with the letter written by Edward Collins ("\$80,000 for a glorified assistant is outrageous," March 2 edition of the Johnston Sun Rise). He is correct, there are many of us who feel the same way as he does regarding hiring a full-time assistant Chief of Staff. Many of us are wondering why we need two people to handle this position. Get rid of the part-time Chief of staff. We all know why he is still there, and don't get me started on the Planning board or Our Town Council Members (excluding Robert Civetti).

We had an opportunity to relieve all of them of their duties in November. Hopefully we will make some changes in the next election.

In regards to the letter Harriet Sukaskas wrote this past issue ("Is Johnston becoming cringe-worthy?" March 30 edition), she put into words so beautifully what so many of us who grew up in Johnston are feeling.

We have lost the beauty and simplicity of the great Town we grew up in, just driving on Atwood Avenue, Hartford Avenue, and Killingly Street is a total nightmare. I felt Harriet's pain in her letter and believe me there are many more of us who grew up here and chose to raise our families here that feel exactly like she does.

Enough is enough. I asked myself after the last election: Can it be that the people in Johnston are that stupid that we keep electing the same people over and over again?

The answer is no, we just need to wake up, people of Johnston. Take our Town back and end this constant state of development and vote them all out. I realize that a lot of people are afraid of retaliation. Get over it. Speak your minds and stop being afraid.

Karen Paquin, of Johnston

To the men standing under Route 6 on Atwood

Upon approaching these two men. I asked them how they were doing and why they were out there. They said they needed the money to eat. I also asked if they would like me to do a story on them and get a picture. They both said yes.

Their names are Dennis and Richard. I handed them a Spirit of Hope Homeless Kit and a donation. They were very excited. But, they were counting the money and I guess were going to split it up. Each guy was on one corner.

These guys were the real thing; they were not fakers. I asked them some questions and they had the answers of where to go and sleep and eat. One was on disability and the other was working on it. They both have been homeless for over two years.

So, you tell me how can we help them? This is not normal out here, but with some counseling, a job, and a place to stay they may change their ways.

Please if you stop and see them, just say hello and ask them how they are. They want to be treated just like you and me.

Well, this was my Holy Moment for the day!

Louis Spremulli, of Johnston
Spirit of Hope Founder



'Sick & tired of watching communities lose'

It got me thinking. I like this idea.

Coastal invests in community. Restores building for the community. Opportunity to steam roll into

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

community awareness.

Bowling fundraisers. Black tie and bowling? Too much. Bowling alleys are the middle ground between church and a bar for social gathering.

Coastal ready to roll the dice, spend fat marketing budget. Why not?

If not, a failed marketing cam-

paign. Not the first. Won't be the last.

I'd like to know how much is their marketing budget.

If you're smirking right now send a reply. Otherwise, thanks for reading.

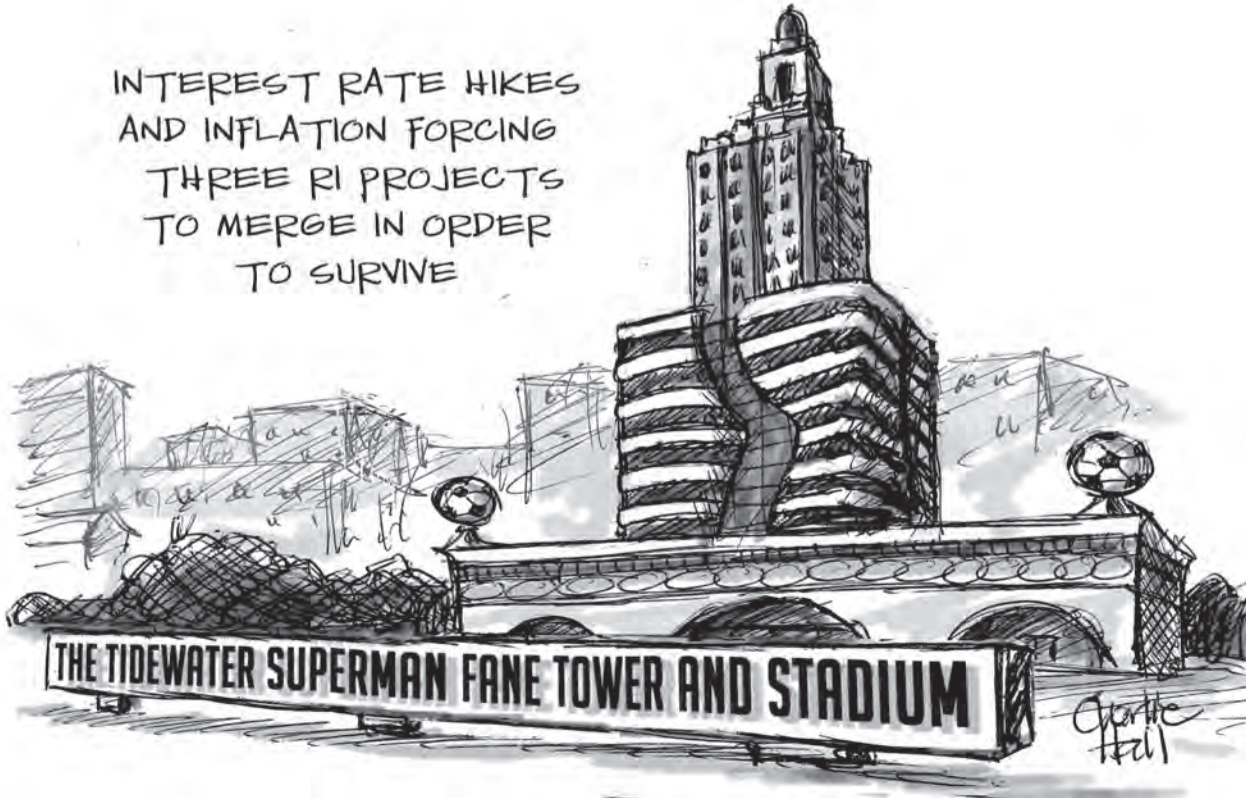
Sick and tired of watching communities lose.

Deb Cartier, of Johnston

JOHNSTON Sun Rise

Publisher John I. Howell Jr. - JohnH@rhodybeat.com	Credit Manager Lynne Taylor
Advertising Director Donna Zarrella - Donna Z@rhodybeat.com	Bookkeeping Leslie Paz
Editor Rory Schuler - RoryS@rhodybeat.com	Production Manager Lisa Bourque Yuetner - LisaB@rhodybeat.com
Sports Editor Alex Sponseller - AlexS@rhodybeat.com	Production Staff Monique Rice - MoR@rhodybeat.com
Journalists Pete Fontaine	Advertising Representative Natalie Payette - NatalieP@rhodybeat.com Christine Peabody - ChrisP@rhodybeat.com
Classified Advertising Ida Zecco - Classifieds@rhodybeat.com	Spotlight Profile Writer Jennifer Coates - JenniferC@rhodybeat.com
Circulation Leslie Paz	Tel. 401-732-3100 Fax: 401-732-3110

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Word
(Continued from page 5)

thanks to our sponsor, Coastal Credit Union. It's time to clean out and recycle your E-waste too! ORS (Office Recycling Solutions) will have trucks available to take away your old E-waste so it does not end up in the landfill and DEM will be available to collect your expired marine flares. Need to make room in your closets? Curbside Textile Recycling will be onsite to collect your gently used clothing, shoes and handbags. No household goods will be accepted.

All collection trucks will be set up so that you can easily drive through and no need to get out of your car! Any questions can be directed to events@centralrichamber.com or by calling 401-732-1100

Steps for Vets

Operation Stand Down Rhode Island will help host the Steps for Vets Walk-a-Thon in Warwick.

Join them for a walk full of fun, food trucks and music to support our local homeless veterans and their families from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 15 (rain date April 22).

Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Warwick City Park Beachfront. All are invited to attend. Walkers can register at osdri.charityproud.org/EventRegistration. Register by March 23 to secure a T-shirt.

Reach out to beley@friars.providence.edu with any questions. The cost is \$25 per person, and includes drinks/snacks and a T-shirt. Children under 10 are free.

JPD Drug Takeback

Do you have old pills, prescriptions, or medications, of which Johnston Police can help you dispose?

Join the JPD for the upcoming National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on April 22, at the Johnston Police Department headquarters.

"The National Prescription Drug Take Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also informing the public about the potential for abuse of medications," according to JPD. "Please visit us for proper disposal of old prescriptions."

Youth Track & Field

It's time to register for Johnston Youth Track & Field.

The Johnston Recreation Department is also looking for volunteer coaches and sponsors. Register your child and get involved in the community.

Anyone interested in signing up can stop by the Johnston Recreation Office from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The program costs \$65 per individual, and \$40 for each additional sibling. Checks and money orders are accepted (checks should be made payable to JYSA). The program is available to boys and girls currently in grades 1-8. For more

information (including schedules, registration forms, and more) go to johnstonrec.com.

The season will run from Thursday, April 27 through Thursday, June 15.

JRTC Fundraiser

The Johnston Republican Town Committee (JRTC) will hold a fundraiser at 6 p.m. on Sunday, May 7, at the Kelley Gazzo VFW Post 2812, 1418 Plainfield Pike, Cranston.

"Join us for laughs, silent auction, cash bar and a good time," according to the JRTC. "Please bring your own food/snacks."

Tickets must be purchased online in advance (\$35 each). Silent auction winners must pay with a credit card. Tickets are non-refundable. The show is for adults 18 and over. For more information email info@johnstonri.gop.

OSDRI Boots on the Ground

Operation Stand Down Rhode Island (OSDRI) is requesting volunteers to help for the 2023 Boots on the Ground for Heroes Memorial. Volunteers are needed for set up, weekend-of help, and breakdown. Set up days are as follows: Tuesday, May 23, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Wednesday, May 24, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Thursday, May 25, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Friday, May 26, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Their number one priority is to get the memorial up with success and in the safest and most efficient way. Please be advised that the need for volunteers and volunteering duties may be subject to change at any given moment. OSDRI will be sending any updates about the volunteering needs to the email that was registered with the volunteer online registration.

If you are a corporate office or company who is interested in volunteering- EACH person volunteering needs to sign up through the OSDRI online registration. If your company sends out an internal volunteering portal, you will still need to sign up with OSDRI at our online portal as well. This helps us correctly account for how many people are attending to help.

Set up will be at Fort Adams in Newport. Set up duties consist of setting the boots out, cleaning up / shining boots, lacing boots, lining up boots on a pre-designed grid, attaching name placards, stuffing boots, and placing out American flags. Volunteers should be physically able to bend down/walk.

We will also need volunteers for the actual event itself. Volunteers to assist with band setup/breakdown, parking in the main lot, assisting at both the entrance and at the exit of the fort, and other miscellaneous duties. We are looking for 2-4 people to fill each volunteer shift.

The following shifts are available: Saturday, May 27, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, May 28, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Monday, May 29, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Break down will be at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, May 30. Break down duties consist of picking up boots,

storing boots, picking up tags, picking up American Flags, and other miscellaneous duties. This is also a labor-intensive activity which needs volunteer assistance.

If anyone is interested in volunteering, they must sign up through the link: osdri.charityproud.org/VolunteerRegistration/Index/4506. Please move the calendar to May (if it is a different month) and click on the shift desired to sign up.

Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Amanda Dean at adean@osdri.org or 401-383-4730

Johnston Historical Society Event

On Wednesday, May 31, the Johnston Historical Society will host an event exploring the Johnston connection to the "Band of Brothers," a group of World War II veterans who fought their way across Europe and were immortalized in a book by Stephen Ambrose and an HBO series.

George Luz Jr., was blessed by an early introduction to the men of Company E, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, in 1965 at the 101st Airborne Reunion. Luz was nine years old at the time, and that started a journey that his father, George Luz, began in August 1942 at Toccoa, Georgia.

Although George Sr. was killed in a tragic accident in 1998, George Jr. made a promise to his father's memory that he would move forward and do everything as if he had survived. He reconnected with all his father's buddies and in true Easy Company form, they embraced him with the same esprit de corps that had brought these men together so many years ago.

George took a trip to Hershey, Pennsylvania, to visit with Maj. Richard D. Winters, the mainstay of the HBO series "Band of Brothers." Listening to Winters (as well as Wild Bill Guarnere, Babe Heffron, Don Malarkey, Frank Perconte, Shifty Powers, Earl McClung, Johnny Martin, Buck Compton and others) and the other men of Easy Company seeing the closeness they had was comforting.

Luz Jr. flew to the HBO set of "Band of Brothers" in Hatfield England; met Rick Gomez who played his dad; attended the World Premiere on Utah Beach on June 6, 2001; and went to the 54th Annual Emmys Awards in Los Angeles, when the show won for "Outstanding Miniseries" in 2002.

George Luz Sr. would have been so proud and happy about his son's tribute to his memory especially spending the time with the men that he so dearly loved.

George Luz Jr. will be delivering a presentation on his father on May 31

The event will begin at 7 p.m. at the Johnston Historical Society Museum at 101 Putnam Pike in Johnston. Call the museum at 401-231-3380, and read future editions of the Johnston Sun Rise, for more details.

JHS 50th Year Reunion

The Inspiration of '73 will celebrate its 50th year reunion on June

23. It will be held at the Valley Country Club in Warwick. If you are in contact with any classmates, spread the word. For more information, check out the JHS Class of 1973 Facebook page or call Donna at 401-497-9292.

Amenity Aid Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers that would like to help us plan and staff community events, organize hygiene product collection drives and raise funds for Amenity Aid. If you are interested in doing any of the above or would like to be a member of our Community Outreach Committee, please contact Stacey Silva, Community Outreach Chair at Stacey@AmenityAid.org.

Amenity Aid's mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations by creating access to essential hygiene products. Serving all of Rhode Island, we distribute toiletry necessities to those most vulnerable through our network of direct service agencies.

More at Mohr Library

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. Regular hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday. We offer free Notary service weeknights and Saturday mornings. Copy, print and fax services, computer help, reference and reading recommendations

Sign language classes cancelled April 19, but continuing each 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Wednesday at 1 pm, brought to us by Westbay.

Art-Smart classes starting in May, for ages 5 to 8, Saturdays at 2 p.m. and for ages 8 to 12, Wednesdays at 4 p.m. Sign up on our website or call.

Regular storytime for preschoolers will be offered Wednesdays at 10:30, now extended through May 24th.

"Read Across Rhode Island" programming to read and discuss True Biz, a bestselling book which the publisher calls "an unforgettable journey into the deaf community and a universal celebration of human connection." June 20 at 6:30 p.m. Register by calling Meg at 231-4980, and press 6 for the reference desk.

Yoga is now open to all ages. Call the library to register. Sponsored by Tri-County HEZ, this class is taught by a certified professional and is free. Mondays at 2 p.m.

Beginner's How to Draw, for Adults, Thursdays at 3 p.m.

Crocheting for Adults continues to meet on Friday at 10 a.m.

After School Activities offered nearly every day, including varied programs for middle and high-school age kids and crafts for younger kids.

Book discussion of Prince Harry's memoir, "Spare," has been rescheduled. We will poll participants for a new date. Please register.

St. Francis Xavier Academy Scholarship Applications

The St. Francis Xavier Academy

Alumnae Association is accepting scholarship applications from Jan. 1, until July 31. Forms are available on their two Facebook pages, by mail at SXA. P.O. Box 20452, Cranston, 02920, or contact a board member.

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 Madeline 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.

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.

Editor's Note: Send submissions to Sun Rise Editor Rory Schuler at rorys@rhodybeat.com or Front Desk Coordinator Ida Zecco at idez@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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PAY TO POUR



DELIBERATELY DOUSED: PE/Health teacher Ms. Amanda Sloan has a cold cup of water poured on her head by a first grade student and his fifth grade buddy.

PAID TO POUR: Art teacher Mrs. Kimberly Marshall and 1st grade student participated in Brown Avenue Elementary School's Pay to Pour event for Special Olympics of Rhode Island. Turn to Page 12 for more photos from the event.

'Individually Unique, Together Complete'

By **AMANDA SLOAN**
Special to the Sun Rise

Brown Avenue is working toward becoming a Unified Champion School through a partnership with the Special Olympics of Rhode Island.

"In becoming a Unified Champion School, faculty and students are promoting social inclusion by bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities through sports and other activities." (SORI)

This is a distinction very FEW elementary schools have! The faculty and students are working hard to create a culture of inclusion: Where everyone feels loved, accepted, and valued! Where differences are celebrated! To accomplish this, we've created a Brown Ave Unified Student Leadership Team, a Partner-Buddy Program during recess and physical education classes, as well as lessons that teach, encourage and celebrate everyone's individual uniqueness.

A handful of the fifth grade students use their recess time to partner with our life skills students to help encourage and work on basic sport skills. And, the students and staff worked on celebrating each other's uniqueness by highlighting everyone's strengths, interests, and character traits through a puzzle piece displayed on the school bulletin board. Students and Staff are learning the value of celebrating everyone's differences and by doing so, together, we make everyone stronger.

On March 29, Brown Ave held their own version of "The Polar Plunge" called "Pay to Pour."

Due to the age of the students we modified the Special Olympics event and created the "Pay to Pour" event. The students who donated to the fundraiser were given a cup of water to pour over faculty/staff volunteers of their choosing.

We had six brave volunteers. Staff from the school included Ms. Amanda Sloan, Ms. Kimberly Marshall, Ms. Tiffany Lujan, Mr. Matt Mancuso and Ms. Theresa Rusillo. Other volunteers included Mr. Matt Velino and Mr. Lou Cotoia from Johnston Senior High School.

Students who donated \$50 were able to also pour a large pitcher of water over a staff member's head. The student who donated the largest amount of money to the fundraiser was able to pour a large bucket of ice water over a faculty/staff volunteer of their choosing. The entire event was emceed by a few of our fifth graders and they did an outstanding job!

We are so proud of our Brown Avenue Students and families. These kids are beyond generous, full of love, and want to raise awareness for Special Olympics RI and more importantly, want their school to be known for its inclusive culture. Through Brown Avenue's Pay to Pour event, we have helped to not only raise awareness for Special Olympics RI but we also surpassed our goal of \$1,000 ... We, the Brown Avenue Family, have raised more than \$2,500.



RESPECT ALL: A fifth grade student holds a sign summing up the meaning of the event.



MASS DRENCHING: Fifth grade students pouring cups over four of the six brave volunteers.

Editor's Note: Amanda Sloan is a Johnston Public Schools Health and Physical Education Teacher.

PAY TO POUR



GOOD DAY: The Brown Avenue Koala Mrs. Kathy Kelly looks for some eucalyptus from the school's second grade students in the audience.



SPECIAL SOAK: Mr. Matt Mancuso gets soaked by a first grade student with her fifth grade buddy.

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Stop by the Project Undercover table, with your donations of new unopened packages of diapers, underwear and socks, to help RI children living in poverty.

For more information Contact Donna Zarrella 401.732.3100 donnaz@rhodybeat.com



ALL WET: School Resource Officer Lou Cotoia gets doused by a first grade student.



'BOARD' GUESTS: Iain Wilson (left) and his sister Melissa Wilson (right), whose family owns Grapes and Gourmet in Jamestown, enjoy a lighter moment with Johnston Sun Rise Sales Executives Chris Peabody and Natalie Payette during the recent Charcuterie Board Building event in Johnston. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)

No one got bored, but everyone got a board

By PETE FONTAINE

The soft sounds from pianist Joan Sherlock created a special atmosphere in the sitting room of The Bridge at Cherry Hill in Johnston.

As they entered the room, people were abuzz about the 24-foot-long table, which featured a beautiful floral centerpiece and what some folks called "an awesome array of nuts, dairy, meats and gluten which were part of yet another special social success at The Bridge. The event was named: "Build A Charcuterie Board."

People began sitting in comfortable chairs around the room.

"Our goal is to improve on every event we host," offered Michael Mangasarian, the sales/community relations director at The Bridge.

The night was highlighted by Iain Wilson, a wine connoisseur, and his sister Amelia Wilson, who together own Grape and Gourmet, a wine and cheese shop that's also a full liquor store, selling wine and beer and located at the picturesque wharf in Jamestown. Grape and Gourmet presented the program.

Likewise, each seat featured a mini-board like plate and beautiful paint-by-numbers sheet, courtesy of Amelia Wilson, for guests to follow or change if they saw fit while building their own Charcuterie Board. The boards included everything from grapes to four specialty cheeses, thinly sliced salami, olives, nuts and more.

One of the most talked about offerings was a small, personalized jar of Dalmatia fig spread many guests put on their gluten free crackers, which were inside a small box at their seat.

In keeping with tradition, the event was also hosted by Maryann Grace, the long-serving executive director at The Bridge, who welcomed guests and enjoyed tasty treats and sampled wines from all over the world that Iain Wilson hand-picked for the night.

"Michael, this was an incredible event," said John Stefanik from Concord Home Care.

Ronald Mut of Beacon Hospice told Mangasarian: "The events here are always nice. This setting is beautiful."

To which Iain Wilson, whose family opened shop in 2012, said: "We were so happy when Cherry Hill came to us with an idea to partner for tonight. The staff here, especially Michael Mangasarian, were so welcoming and supportive. We were so happy to have exposure for our brand and excited to show it the Johnston community."



WARM WELCOME: Maryann Grace, The Bridge at Cherry Hill's Executive Director, welcomes Jen Burns from Anchor Bay Pocasset, John Stefanik of Concord Home Care and Ronald Mut of Beacon Hospice to the food-filled Charcuterie Board event she co-hosted for people in the elder care community.

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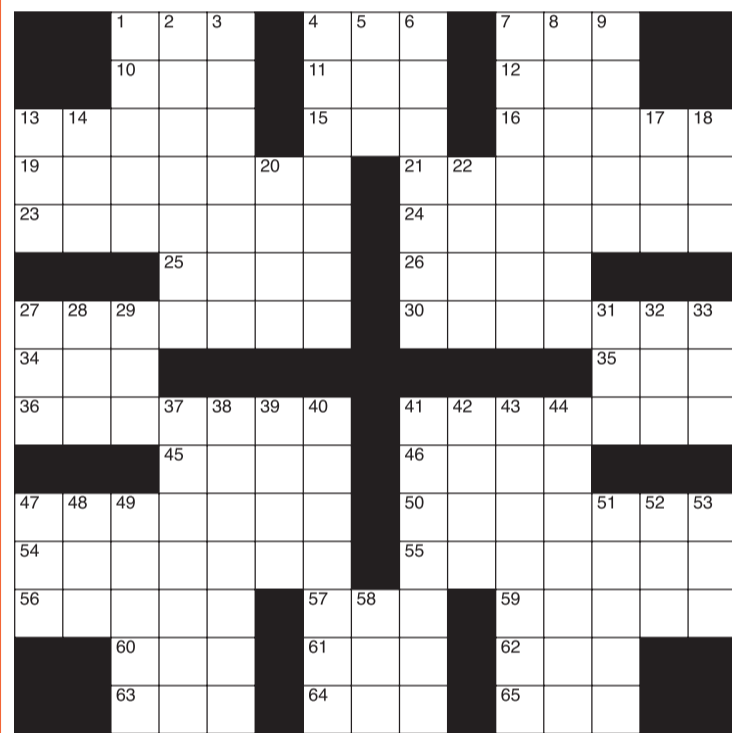


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CLUES ACROSS

- Atomic mass unit
- Criticize mightily
- Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- Stand in for
- Everyone has one
- Brew
- Rectify
- Popular Dodge truck model
- Beef or chicken intestine
- Satisfy
- Of a particular people or localized region
- Movements in quick tempos
- Able to pay one's debts
- Fleshy bird beak covering
- Dueling sword
- Helps
- Court is in it
- Touch lightly
- Airborne (abbr.)
- Of one
- Baked good
- Jai ____, sport
- About aviation
- Low oval mound

CLUES DOWN

- Sharp mountain ridge
- Thin, fibrous cartilages
- Provides new details
- Muscular weaknesses
- Ottoman military title
- Banes
- Horse-riding seats
- Arms of a shirt
- Narrow path along a road edge
- Viper
- Disfigure
- Variety of Chinese language

- Portray in a show
- Wrongful act
- No (slang)
- State of agitation
- __ Diego
- One point east of due south
- 007's creator
- The NBA's Toppin
- Midway between north and northeast
- Examples
- __ Gould, actor
- The habitat of wild animals
- Artful subtlety
- Infielders
- Keep under control
- Herb
- Distressed
- A way to go down
- Type of acid
- Take by force
- Collected fallen leaves
- Shout of welcome or farewell
- Monetary unit
- Swiss river

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By JENNIFER COATES

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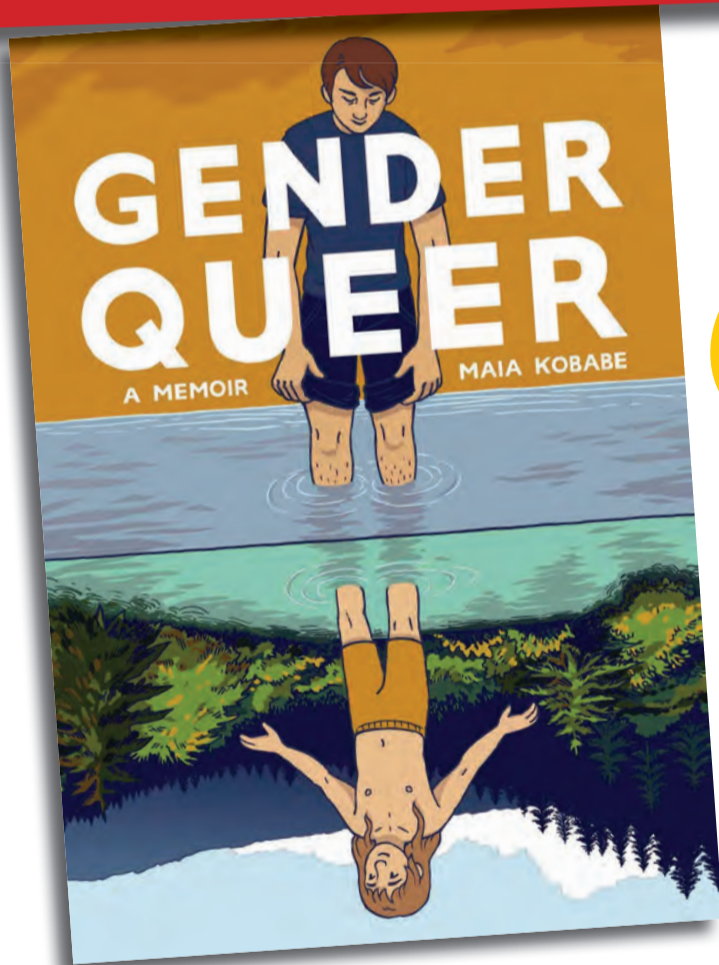
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Libraries, organizations respond to efforts to censor books



BOOK BAN



By G. WAYNE MILLER

The rising book censorship movement has reached Rhode Island, although so far it lacks the intensity seen in many regions of America. Still, libraries and organizations around the state are responding with a range of efforts to protect access to controversial titles and book events such as story hours -- and to shield librarians from lawsuits.

These are among the findings of an Ocean State Stories investigation conducted this March.

"We've seen an uptick in attempts to disrupt drag story hours and events like that happening at various libraries around the state," Beatrice R. Pulliam, Vice President of the Rhode Island Library Association and Interim Co-executive Director of the Providence Public Library, said in an interview.

"There are lots of different reasons why people ban books but more and more it's been much more pervasive in really building an agenda or a space of saying 'this is the narrative that we want in our library, we don't want to hear anyone else's perspective,'" said Rachael Juskuv, Rhode Island Library Association president.



Beatrice Pulliam (Submitted photo)



Falsely claiming that these materials are subversive, immoral, or worse, these groups induce elected and non-elected officials to abandon Constitutional principles, ignore the rule of law, and disregard individual rights in order to promote government censorship of library collections

— Rhode Island Library Association



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By Karen Kalunian

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Books (Continued from page 15)

- One Rhode Island book-banning effort that generated widespread publicity involved Westerly, where resident Robert J. Chiaradio Jr. led a campaign to have "Gender Queer: A Memoir" removed from the high school library. Chiaradio and others maintained that the graphic book, by Maia Kobabe, who recounts an exploration into gender identity, was pornographic. "Gender Queer" is one of the most-banned books today in America.

According to The Westerly Sun in an article posted on May 15, 2021, Chiaradio created a private Facebook group, Westerly Residents Against Indoctrination, which has a membership of more than 1,100 and states that "we fight against the racialization, via aspects of Critical Race Theory, and radicalization, of our schools, as well as the normalization and obsession with pedophilia, pornography, and gender issues in our classrooms and school libraries. We march on every day to protect these kids, our many good teachers, and our great country. Please make your voices heard!"

The Westerly effort was supported by the Rev. Giacomo Capoverdi, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Westerly, and other clergy members who wrote a letter last fall to The Sun that stated: "While there may be other books in the Westerly High School library that we are unaware of, we know that there are two such books that are currently available: 'Gender Queer' and 'Fun Home.'"

"Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic," by Alison Bechdel, has also been banned elsewhere in the U.S.

"While the overall intention of the authors may not have been to peddle pornography," the letter by Capoverdi and others continued, "the truth is that these texts contain both pornographic images and descriptions that should not be accessible to adolescents in the library of a public high school..."

"We are not opposed to these materials because they are supported by groups whose beliefs run contrary to ours. We are opposed to any and all explicitly sexual, pornographic materials where children have access to them in public school libraries."

- "Gender Queer" chronicles the author's journey of discovery of sexuality and gender discovery from childhood to adulthood that ends with Kobabe identifying as gender nonbinary. The book includes a few sexually explicit images. "Fun Home," an exploration of gender identity and dysfunctional family life by cartoonist Bechdel, a lesbian, contains images of partial nudity. It was a national bestseller and was finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in memoir.

"Gender Queer" and "Fun Home" remain in the high school's collection. But a related banning effort last year in Pawtucket succeeded when a parent of a freshman at the public Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts objected to a planned performance of "Fun Home." Faced with the objection, the performance was canceled.

Although the specific objections have varied over time, with the current wave associated with the rise in attacks on the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, book banning has a long history in America. Among the classics that have been banned over the decades, according to the American Library Association (ALA) and other sources:

- "To Kill a Mockingbird," by Harper Lee;
- "1984," by George Orwell;
- "The Color Purple," by Alice Walker;
- "The Great Gatsby," by F. Scott Fitzgerald;



JOINING THE CAUSE: Kate Lentz, left, director of the Rhode Island Center for the Book as pictured with Jordan Seaberry and Angie Thomas. The organization has joined in efforts to prevent censor books. (Photo courtesy of The Rhode Island Center for the Book)

- "Of Mice and Men," by John Steinbeck;
- "Lord of the Flies," by William Golding;
- "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," by Maya Angelou;
- "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," by Ken Kesey;
- The "Harry Potter" series, by J.K. Rowling;
- "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," by Mark Twain;

"The American Library Association condemns censorship and works to ensure free access to information," the ALA declares on its website. "Every year, the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) compiles a list of the Top 10 Most Challenged Books in order to inform the public about censorship in libraries and schools. The lists are based on information from media stories and voluntary reports sent to OIF from communities across the U.S."

But the ALA adds, "the Top 10 lists are only a snapshot of book challenges. Surveys indicate that 82% to 97% of book challenges – documented requests to remove materials from schools or libraries – remain unreported and receive no media."

See the American Library Association's annual ranking of the Top Ten banned books, year-by-year from 2000 to today:



Steven Brown
Executive Director
ACLU of Rhode Island
(Submitted photo)

Steven Brown, Executive Director of ACLU of Rhode Island, is among those who have taken a strong stand against this form of censorship.

"The wave of book banning that is sweeping the country, while far from unprecedented, is deeply troubling," Brown declared. "A healthy democratic society requires a respect for freedom of speech and thought and the opportunity for all points of views to be heard."

"The focus of current censorship attempts -- aimed largely at books that deal with, and speak to, marginalized and vulnerable groups -- undermines core civil liberties values and especially needs to be

condemned in the strongest possible terms."

Brown noted an intrinsic irony in the activities of book banners, telling Ocean State Stories: "The only consolation from these disturbing attacks on the freedom to read is their likely counterproductive impact: generating a heightened interest among people in reading the 'forbidden' books. Mark Twain's response to the banning of 'Huckleberry Finn' from a Concord, Massachusetts, library and the consequent publicity surrounding it remains the best retort to these assaults on the First Amendment: 'That will sell 25,000 copies for us, sure.'"

The ACLU of Rhode Island participates in the annual Banned Books Week, sponsored by the ALA, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, Amnesty International USA, the Association of University Presses, PEN America, the Authors Guild and other prominent organizations. Banned Books Week, which receives support from HarperCollins Publishers and Penguin Random House, will be Oct. 1 to Oct. 7 this year.

"Why does the ACLU defend the freedom to read?" says the ACLU of Rhode Island on its website. Because "the ACLU is dedicated to free speech and free expression. When a small group of individuals tries to keep the rest of society from reading a book, viewing a painting, or voicing their opinions, they undermine the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights."

The Rhode Island Center for the Book, which declares its mission to be celebrating "the art and heritage of reading, writing, making, and sharing books," has joined the cause.

"We believe that every Rhode Islander should have access to a diverse array of reading selections and that the voices of the few should not limit the choices of the many," the center said in a statement that director Kate Lentz provided to Ocean State Stories.

"Public schools and libraries in our state have existing systems in place to handle concerns about an individual student's reading choices. When pro-censorship individuals and organizations seek to overwhelm these systems and pressure educators and administrators to pull long lists of books from their shelves, the result is soft censorship and an erosion of freedom for Rhode Islanders."

The center, she said, "is pleased to partner with the American Library Association in support of Unite Against Book Bans, a national grassroots campaign to engage the public in the fight against censorship. This non-partisan campaign leverages the reach of national organizations representing librarians; educators;

■ **Books**
(Continued from page 16)

parents; authors, publishers; distributors; champions for civil liberties, civil rights, and equality; and more. When we unite, we are stronger.”
An initiative of the ALA, Unite Against Book Bans cites statistics that it asserts demonstrate that “on both sides of the aisle, large majorities of voters and parents oppose book bans,” with 71% of voters opposing “efforts to remove books from public libraries” and 67% of voters opposing “efforts to remove books from school libraries.”



Aaron Coutu
(Submitted photo)

Speaking with Ocean State Stories, Aaron J. Coutu, director of the Warwick Public Library, described the mechanism in place at his system regarding books that someone might question. It is similar to the protocol at other libraries around the state.

“Every library has a collection management or collection development policy that helps set up categories and details about how we make selections of materials,” Coutu said. “The hope is to make sure we have well-developed collections that reflect everyone in our communities – both what they would like to do for entertainment and materials they might need to learn about different subjects for school or just for personal self-interest.”

“That policy also provides us with opportunities to continue to evaluate the material in the collection in order to let us know when a book should be removed if it’s too old or if it’s out of date, or also if there are some things that might have been purchased that may not reflect what we thought they were at the time of purchase.”

Library patrons with concerns, according to Coutu, are invited to communicate directly with a librarian.

“Usually that includes a staff member speaking with them, going over what they thought the book or the DVD might have as a difficult circumstance -- basically doing what you would want to do in any circumstance of good customer service, hear their problems and try to address them as much as possible.”

On all but one occasion, Coutu said, patrons have been satisfied.

The one unsatisfied person, he said, took the next step available to all: filling out a form that is then brought to the library’s review committee where “we can weigh both their views and opinions along with what we know about the item from reviews, from award lists, and kind of create a balance. Not every book is a good fit for every person, but that doesn’t mean that there isn’t a person for each particular item in the collection.”

The one occasion, according to Coutu, was an objection to the eBook “My Body Is Growing: A Guide for Children, Ages 4 to 8,” by Dagmar Geisler. That objection has been referred to Ocean State Libraries, the organization serving more than 50 library systems in the state. OSL provides a statewide catalog and research tools, among other features, and offers digital downloads.

An OSL committee decided to remove the book, though not because it was deemed obscene, according to Coutu. Rather, he said, it was deemed to have been translated poorly into English, was considered out of date, and had no professional reviews, “which violated the collection development policy.”

A bill to shield librarians against allegedly “pornographic” lawsuits, H 6066, was introduced into the General Assembly on March 3. It is sponsored by state Reps. David Morales, D-Providence; Enrique Sanchez, D-Providence; Brandon Potter, D-Cranston; Joshua J. Giraldo, D-Central Falls; and Leonela Felix, D-Pawtucket.

The bill would amend a law that allows criminal prosecution of individuals involved in “obscene and objectionable publications and shows” judged to be obscene and lacking “serious literary, artistic, political and scientific value.” The amendment would add “educational” and “governmental” to that list, providing school and public libraries and their employees an “affirmative defense” against lawsuits that would, in essence, render such lawsuits baseless.

“Libraries and educational institutions carry out the

essential purpose of making available to all citizens, a current, balanced collection of books, reference materials, periodicals, sound recordings and audiovisual materials that reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society,” the bill states.

“It is in the interest of the state to protect the financial resources of libraries and educational institutions from being expended in litigation and to permit these resources to be used to the greatest extent possible for fulfilling the essential purpose of libraries and educational institutions.

“In any prosecution arising under this section, it is an affirmative defense that the defendant was a bona fide school, museum, or public library, or was a person acting in the course of employment as an employee or official of such organization.”

Coutu and a representative of the ACLU of Rhode Island were among those who testified in favor of the bill last Thursday during a House Judiciary Committee hearing. Opponents of H 6066 also testified, including a man who in a written statement declared that “not only should this bill be rejected, but the five people who proposed/sponsored it should be censured for supporting the destruction of our youth.”

The Rhode Island Library Association’s Intellectual Freedom website page has a form for anyone who has experienced censorship to report the incident to RILA for investigation. The page also outlines the association’s policy on attempts to ban books and other library materials.

In recent months, the seven-paragraph policy begins, the association “has observed a few individuals and organizations advancing the proposition that the voices of the marginalized have no place on library shelves. They have launched campaigns demanding the censorship of books, resources, and instruction that provide information and depict the authentic experiences of marginalized individuals.

“Falsely claiming that these materials are subversive, immoral, or worse, these groups induce elected and non-elected officials to abandon Constitutional principles, ignore the rule of law, and disregard individual rights in order to promote government censorship of library collections.

“RILA is committed to upholding our core values, which include equitable access to knowledge, social justice, and intellectual freedom. We stand firm in opposing any effort to censor materials, suppress knowledge, label views as “controversial,” or dictate what is orthodox in history, politics, or belief. The unfettered exchange of ideas is essential to the preservation of a free and democratic society.”

In their interview with Ocean State Stories, RILA executives Juskuv and Pulliam brought the issue into

sharp focus.

Juskuv said: “Freedom of information and the ability to obtain information is something libraries hold very dear: That anyone can find what they’re looking for. The different perspectives that the world has is a really essential part of why libraries exist, and people can always trust that a library will have as many perspectives as the world holds itself.”

Said Pulliam: “We’re trying to be not just reactive but really a source for assistance and support, formulating responses and also of being able to direct specific questions to either someone at ALA or someone within the region. So we are really trying to take a proactive stance for some of these challenges that are coming because it just seems like this is, sadly, the new normal.”

Editor’s note: Miller was a member of the Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library Board of Trustees from 1995 to 2009, serving as chairman from 1997 to 2009. The Smith public library serves Burrillville, R.I. Miller has been a trustee emeritus since 2009.



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Sports

Panthers jump out to 2-1 start

The Johnston girls softball team has jumped out to a 2-1 start this spring season with hopes of returning to the Division II playoffs.

The Panthers got a 1-0 shutout win over Middletown in the season opener. Pitcher Haley Boudreau was electric in the circle, racking up 15 strikeouts and allowing only two hits in the seven-inning complete game gem. Boudreau also led the Panthers at the plate, getting the team's lone hit as Stephanie Bruno scored Johnston's run.

Johnston fell short in the second game in a 5-2 loss to East Greenwich. Boudreau continued to roll at the plate, going 2-for-3 and knocking in a pair of runs. She also pitched five innings, recording five strikeouts.

The Panthers would rebound to top North Providence 4-1 on Tuesday morning to improve to 2-1. Boudreau would earn the win in the circle for Johnston.

Next up for the Panthers is Westerly on Monday afternoon. Johnston will then stay on the road to face Narragansett.

For more photos of the action, check out page 21.



NICE START: Johnston shortstop Arianna Velasquez makes a play last week. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

FAMILIAR FACES: Like most of the 40-foursomes who teed it up in the 15th annual JMCE Memorial Golf Tournament, David Civetti, John Mello, and John Simao have played in the past 10 tournaments. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)



Annual JMCE golf outing sells out

By PETE FONTAINE

It's not Augusta National, but the Johnston Memorial Cancer Events 16th Annual Golf Tournament has a similar slogan as the famed Masters: "It's a tradition unlike any other."

Long before a field of 160 golfers tee off at Connecticut National Golf Club in Putnam, Ct. the fun-and-fantastic, food-filled memorial event sold out much sooner than perhaps any of the previous 15 tournaments.

First and foremost, the outing is, as long-time committee member Judi Graham declared quite a few years ago: "Trying to Cure Kids Cancer One Swing at a Time!"

To which Vin LaFazia, who is the JMCE Memorial Golf Tournament Chairman, said earlier last week: "We are SOLD OUT again this year! We are so fortunate to have so many people come out in support the Hasbro Kids."

JMCE - PAGE 19



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Young athletes invited to MLB training camp

BY ED KDONIAN

Aavah Wild (12), of Pawtucket, and Avery Bouvier(11), of Warwick, have been invited to the Major League Baseball(MLB) Trailblazer series for a four-day tournament and training camp for young girls from April 13 to 16 at the Jackie Robinson Training Complex in Vero Beach, Florida.

The training camp, which first began in 2017, was launched by USA Baseball and MLB in honor of Jackie Robinson day, a nod to "baseball's quintessential trailblazer."

According to their website, "the objective of the event is to provide playing, development and educational opportunities to girls who play baseball."

Bouvier, who is 11 years old and plays for the Babe Ruth Baseball League in Warwick and Rhode Island Hope Girls Baseball, has been playing the game since she was just four years old. Wild has been playing baseball for six years and met Bouvier during their time together on the Pawtucket Slaterettes travel team.

"She started screeching," Aavah's mother, Heather Wild, said with a smile. "I told her that I wrote her an essay, but that I didn't think it was that compelling. She was like 'really?.' Didn't think anything was gonna come of it, but



FLORIDA BOUND: Aavah Wild and Avery Bouvier.

then they called us and she was invited."

Bouvier's mother pointed out that she hadn't even told Avery that she had submitted her name for entry into the tournament.

"I don't even think I told her when I did it," Avery's mother, Sarah Bouvier, said. "I just didn't want it to be a disappointment if she didn't get picked."

Wild said that as far as she knows about 350 girls applied to attend the camp with less than a third being cho-

sen for the honor. Both players said they were thrilled with the idea of attending the camp, and that was clear in the broad grins that couldn't be wiped from their faces as they talked about the event. The 96 girls Wild said would be attending the tournament will be staying in the Jackie Robinson Complex, all expenses paid, for the entire week.

"Well for them it's all expenses paid," Wild's mother explained. "The parents have to pay for our own rooms, and it's spring break week so you know the prices were steep. They are paying for the girl's rooms, flights and even food the entire time. We're just out there with them for moral support."

During their time at the MLB Trailblazer event the girls will have the chance to train on the field with professional instruction, attend a panel discussion with members of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League, play against each other in tournament games and even meet Sonya Pankey, Jackie Robinson's first grandchild and the Vice President of Human Relations and Talent for West Elm, a chain retailer of furniture and home accessories.

While attendees to this year's Trailblazer Series have already been chosen, for the young girls interested in attending next year's event details about the camp and how to apply can be found on their website at mlb.com/trailblazer-series.



LADIES LINK: Laure Young, Valerie Money and Cathy Massemينو were among the many players who were dressed for cold weather garb to play in last year's 15th annual JMCE Memorial Golf Tournament at Connecticut National Golf Club in Putnam, Ct.

JMCE

(Continued from page 18)

Golfers who have played in the well-organized event, which will again feature a smorgasbord of food, will readily attest: "The donations over the last 16 years have totaled over \$300,000 to the Oncology and Hematology Units at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence."

Although the playing field is sold out, anyone who'd like to help the JMCE set another record to help children who are battling cancer at Hasbro Hospital, LaFazia and the close-knit group of friends who founded their extraordinary non-profit many moons ago by way of Campfires for Cancer, announced: "We are still looking for memorial and tee sign sponsors and raffle prizes."

The tee signs have become highly popular through the years, are priced at only \$50 per sign. Also, tee business signs which have also increased in sales, are priced at \$100.

Moreover, because all profits are donated annually to Hasbro Children's Hospital, major sponsors are also available for \$500 and are prominently displayed all over Connecticut National Club beginning near the spacious clubhouse putting green and all over the well-maintained and picturesque 18-hole layout.

"We are extremely dedicated to making this a very while event for everyone, especially the Hasbro kids," was the word at a recent meeting. "We thank EVERYONE for their ongoing support as we remember our dear friends who have succumbed to battles with cancer."

Which is why as the invitation explains: "In loving memory of Sal Gelsomino, Anna Mazzulla, Laura DeAngelis, Raymond Johnson, John Furia and Frances Grasso," whose families continue to play major roles in the tourney success.

So, golfers will tee it up on Saturday, May 6 at noon and enjoy the exceptional food that also sets the JMCE event apart from all others.

For example, there will be sausage and pepper sandwiches, saugy's, grilled chicken sandwiches, Ruth Furia's famed chowder, Phyllis Gelsomino's truly Italian Pasta Fagioli, clam cakes, pizza chips, wieners on the fly and drinks.

Anyone who'd like to become a sponsor and help the JMCE battle cancer that strikes children, should call Linda LaFazia at (401) 233-2564 (fazigilly54@gmail.com) or Judi Graham at (401) 497-2954 or (judi@gahambuilders.com).

Donations may also be sent to Linda LaFazia, 75 Orchard Meadows Drive, Smithfield RI 02917. The JMCE is 501 (c) (3) Organization. The Federal IZD Number is 84-2749622.

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Black sea bass fishing will soon heat up

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI

Black sea bass are fun to catch and great to eat. The Rhode Island state record for black sea bass is 26 inches, about 8 pounds, 7.25 ounces.

The minimum size for black sea bass will likely be 16.5 inches in RI if the RI Marine Fisheries Council recommendation is approved this month by Terrance Gray, Director of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). The season at two fish/person/day for private anglers would run from May 22 through Aug. 26 and increase to three fish/person/day Aug. 27 through Dec. 31. The party/charter sector will likely have a 16 inch minimum size with a season that starts later, June 18 to Aug. 31 with two fish/person/day and from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 a six fish/person/day limit.

How and where to catch black sea bass

Rigs often used to catch black sea bass have one or two hooks that are approximately 12-16 inches apart with a bank sinker to hold bottom. Squid or sea clams are most often used as bait. Anglers often catch them while fishing for summer flounder (fluke) or tautog because they are often on or close to the bottom. They can also be caught with jigs, and many prefer this method.

Any underwater structure... ledges, rocks, wrecks, piers and jetties will attract black sea bass. The larger males are generally found in deeper water.

Captain Mel Ture of Fishnet Charters is a black sea bass expert that prefers to fish with jigs in spring on the Cape.

"Finding schools of black sea bass is not difficult. Drift around the entrance to the Cape Cod Canal, Bird Island and Cleveland Ledge. I usually opt to avoid the crowd and find my own fish, looking for spots with similar depths and bottom structure. A broad generalization would be 25-40 feet of water with a rocky bottom," said Capt. True in a RI Saltwater Anglers Magazine article last year.

"I use conventional reels loaded with 60 pound test braided line on six foot custom rods rated for 20-40 pound test line. Terminal tackle generally includes three feet of 50 pound test fluorocarbon leader attached to a 3.5 ounce vertical jig that's rigged with assist hooks. Above that, using a dropper loop, there will be a soft plastic squid imitation with a 7/0 hook. The technique is simple: Send the rig to the bottom and jig it one to two feet up and down as the boat drifts. The assist hooks ride above the part of the jig that strikes bottom, and that helps to avoid snagging rocks or other debris," said Capt. True.

Council votes to take more Atlantic menhaden

The Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council voted Monday, April 3 to recommend circumventing the Narragansett Bay Atlantic Menhaden Management Area (MMA) program to harvest more fish disregarding a Marine Fisheries Division staff recommen-

ation for more study.

In a 4 to 3 vote, the Council voted to recommend allowing commercial fishermen to harvest 50,000 pounds of Atlantic menhaden/vessel/week even though the Bay may be closed to fishing because the biomass falls below Menhaden Management Area program threshold levels. When the Bay is open under the MMA program 120,000 pounds/vessel/day are allowed to be harvested.

The MMA model program uses eco-system based management approaches to ensure there are enough Atlantic menhaden left in the water to serve as food for striped bass, bluefish, tuna, dolphin, whales, osprey and other animals.

Greg Vespe, executive director of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association, said, "The Menhaden Management Area in Narragansett Bay has worked well for years. So why circumvent the program. When the biomass reaches 2 million pounds the Bay opens to commercial fishing and when it drops below the threshold of 1.5 million pounds the Bay is shut down."

The program uses aerial surveys to estimate the biomass of Atlantic menhaden in the Bay on a weekly, and sometimes daily basis.

Terrance Gray, DEM Director, makes the final ruling on regulations. Visit www.dem.ri.gov for regulations.

Kids Fly Fishing Day

The Division of Fish and Wildlife with Trout Unlimited, United Fly Tyers of Rhode Island, Rhody Fly Rodders, and other volunteer organizations will host their annual Kids Fly Fishing Day at Addieville East Farm, Mappleville, RI on Saturday, April 15, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event is open for children ages 10 and up and will teach them how to properly tie their own flies and knots and cast a fly rod. Participants will then have an opportunity to fish the stocked pond.

The program is free, lunch is provided, and children must be accompanied by an adult. Register at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeFCLISpb7mFSp-drxXFrL7oUGmGzg3DIQJ-pDjPJAJeCIKU1Q/viewform?usp=sf_link.

Fly fishing the cinder worm hatch, still some openings

The annual U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/DEM free Cinder Worm Fly Tying classes is 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.

The cinder worm hatch is a springtime ritual as thousands of cinder worms wiggle their way from the mud to the surface to mate. Striped bass feed on the worms. To register contact Marisa Podbros at marisa_podbros@fws.gov or call 401.213.4400.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater. "Things were a bit slower than usual on Opening Day due to cold tem-



BLACK SEA BASS: Black sea bass are fun to catch and eat, minimum size will likely be 16 1/2" this year. (Submitted photo)

peratures and high winds but those fishing caught a lot of trout at stocked ponds," said Dave Henault of Ocean State Tackle, Providence.

John Littlefield of Archie's Bait & Tackle, Riverside, said, "Things were jammed for trout fishing at Willet Avenue Pond, Riverside." For licenses and stocking information in RI visit www.dem.ri.gov/fishing and in MA www.mass.gov/service-details/trout-stocking-report.

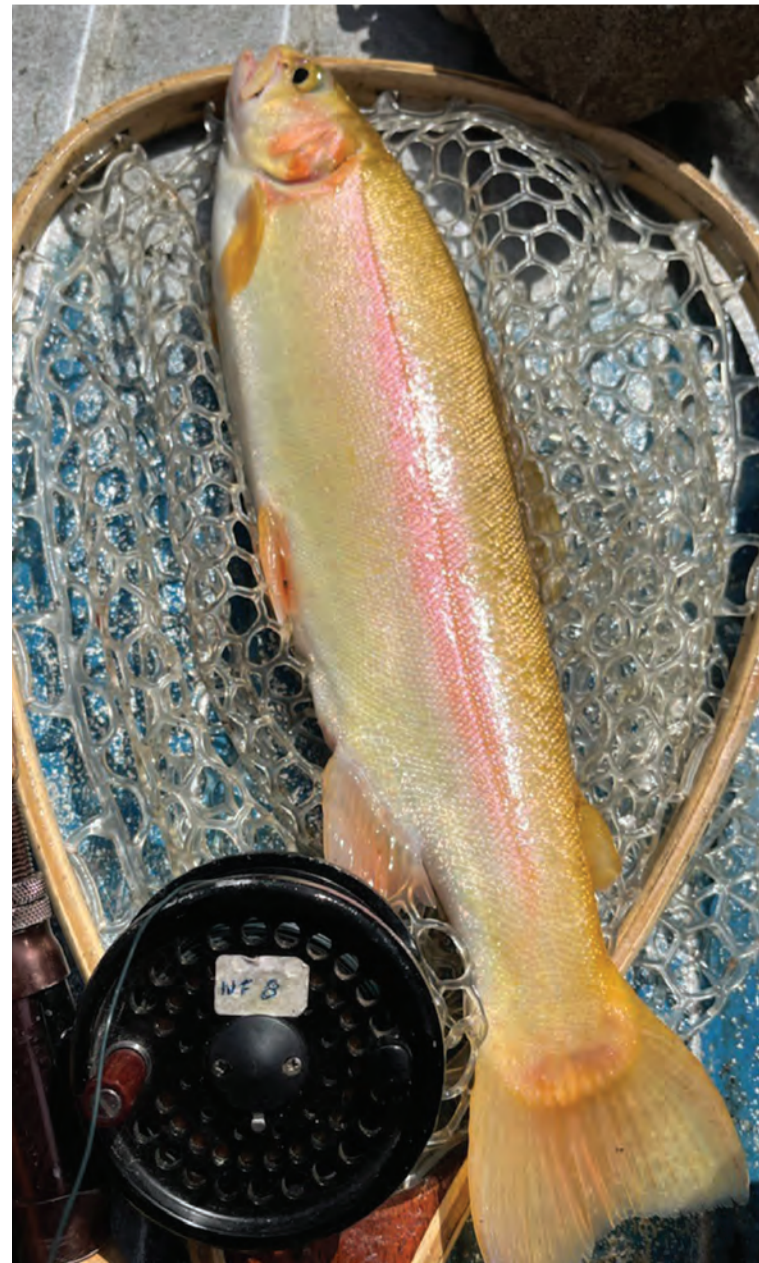
Tautog. "Anglers are catching keepers on the Warren River at the old Am. Tourister location," said Littlefield.

"Customers are catching keeper tautog all the way up the Providence River. This is earlier than usual," said Henault of Ocean State.

Striped bass. Expert fly fisherman and guide Ed Lombardo said, "We caught fish in the Narrow River last week."

As the water warms this week the bite should be enhanced. "We had striped bass arrive with the herring in the Providence River this year which is a bit early and unusual," said Dave Henault.

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



GOLD TROUT: Jeff Spicer of Scituate, RI landed this golden trout with his fly rod when fishing Opening Day.



IN THE CIRCLE: Johnston pitcher Janina Mazzulla deals.



BEHIND THE PLATE: Johnston catcher Hannah Calabro.



THE THROW TO FIRST: Johnston's Michelina Irons.



FIRST BASEMAN: Johnston's Stephanie Bruno last week.

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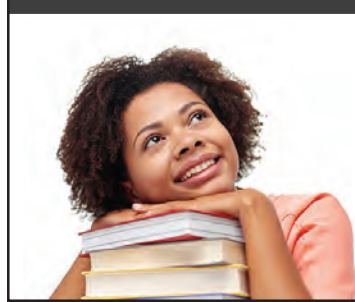
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MLB pitch clock has worked wonders

After years and years of discussion, Major League Baseball finally implemented a pitch clock for the season and the results have been wildly affective through the first two weeks.

It is no secret that America's pastime has been freefalling in the past decade plus in terms of popularity and viewership in the country. Even at the youth level, kids are just not as excited to hit the diamond as they used to be and you are seeing other sports emerge and take over.

I am not an umpire, so do not quote me on this, but from what I understand, the way the pitch clock works is that from the time the catcher receives the ball, the pitcher has 20 seconds to start his wind up on the next pitch. The batter must also be in the batter's box ready to go.

To this point, the average Major League Baseball game has decreased by nearly 30 minutes since last year. Although some traditionalists have been frustrated with the new system, and many of the players have expressed their dissatisfaction, I think it is a necessary step and we are already reaping the benefits.

I will admit, I am one of those collapsed baseball fans. 10 years ago, I used to watch at least a game or two a week but since, it has become more like a game or two a month. I just don't have the patience for it, especially at the professional level. There is no reason that a game should exceed three hours barring extra innings, of course.

With the pitch clock, games have been roughly 2 hours and 30 minutes. That is much more doable and sustainable as a viewer. I have already watched multiple Red Sox games this year and enjoyed them more than I have in the past decade.

I can understand why the players opposed this.

My pitch



by **ALEX SPONSELLER**
SPORTS EDITOR

ALEXS@RHODYBEAT.COM

It is a major adjustment for both the pitcher and the batter. Baseball is such a mental game, and needing to speed everything up while maintaining your focus is difficult to say the least. Especially at the highest level in the world.

But, at the same time, if these players want to continue to get paid millions of dollars, they are going to need to keep the fans engaged. This clock will allow them to do just that.

As a fan, I also love the dynamic that the clock creates. It adds an element of suspense wondering if the pitcher and batter will make it in time to beat the clock once you see it ticking down. I know that the effects are massive in terms of the game, but once again, this is a sport that desperately needed a shake up.

In my opinion, they should implement a pitch clock all the way down to the youth level. Obviously, the younger you go, the more time should be allowed. But at the end of the day, the pitch clock is refreshing and if it is becoming common practice at the professional level, we should probably introduce it to kids at a young age.

Even at the high school level, games seem to be going longer than when I first started covering sports 10 years ago. The days of getting a two-hour baseball game are long gone and although I still enjoy covering the sport, there are times when games do drag on. I can't wrap my head around

how seven inning games can sometimes last three hours.

I am surprised by the number of fans that are opposed to the pitch clock as well. I would say most people are for it, but it is pretty close to 50-50 from what I have gathered by simply talking to people and keeping up with the topic on social media.

Why not speed the game up? Why not take out the in-between that has dragged the game down? Do we really need to watch the pitchers walk around the mound in circles gathering themselves, do we need to see the batters take three, four looks down the third base line to their coach all while spending a minute readjusting their batting gloves? That is the type of dillydallying that has become painful to watch. The clock cuts that all out and I love it.

Beyond the pitch clock, I am actually for most of the proposed rules they have come to the table the last few years. Whether it is putting a runner on second base to start extra innings, putting an end to the shift in the infield, all of it. Baseball is a sport that has become stale and it is a shame to see considering the cultural significance it has in our country. Baseball has a beautiful history and it is disappointing to see things turning sideways. It is time to make some adjustments and revitalize the game.

So, let's embrace change. Let's recognize the importance of the sport of baseball and its place in our country.

Sure, implementing these changes does impact the game in ways that may be drastic. But, to be frank, the sport has lost the younger generation. If we continue to lose that demographic, the sport will eventually fold. In my opinion, the pitch clock, among other rule changes, is what will save America's pastime.

Doss breaks RIC track record

Junior Steven Doss (West Warwick) established a new program record in the 100m as the Rhode Island College men's outdoor track and field team finished fifth (10 teams) at the Coast Guard Spring Invitational on Saturday afternoon.

RIC placed fifth (10 team) with a team score of 70.50. UMass Dartmouth won the invitational with a score of 120.0.

Doss finished first in the 100m (10.77), which is a new program record for that event.

Sophomore Mahari Nayte (Providence) finished first in the 400m (50.57) and fifth in the 200m (22.61).

Freshman Shamus Culhane (North Kingstown) finished first in the hammer (50.84m). Senior Edward Garofalo (Newport) placed second in the triple jump (13.15m) and seventh in the long jump (6.12m).

Freshman Brandon Mota (West Warwick) placed second in the hammer

(50.31m) and 25th in the discus (28.71m). Freshman Jaden Saunders (Smithfield) finished tied for fourth in the high jump (1.80m) and finished 12th in the long jump (5.75m).

Freshman Ryan Hazard (Wakefield) placed fifth in the shot (14.88m), eighth in both the discus (38.65m) and hammer (44.70m) and 15th in the javelin (39.05m).

Junior Christopher McCarthy (Cranston) placed fifth in the hammer (47.19m). Senior Austin Michael (Swansea, Mass.) placed fifth in the 5,000m (16:22.93).

Freshman Juan Reyes (Providence) placed 16th in the 400m hurdles (1:06.26).

Sophomore Matthew Taylor (Smithfield) finished 17th in the 400m hurdles (1:06.53). Junior Benjamin Lockwood (Saunders-town) finished 18th in the 800m (2:07.54).

Freshman Isiah Briggs (Providence) finished 19th in the long jump (5.57m), 21st in the 100m (11.71) and 23rd in the 200m (23.94).

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The Love/Hate Relationship of GRADING COLLECTIBLES



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

In today's collecting world when it comes to comic books, trading cards, toys, and video games you typically now hear the word "graded" in the same sentence. It's been over twenty years since professional grading has entered the collectibles market, but more than ever over the past five years have we seen it become the forefront of people's interest in the space.

"Graded" means that a professional, third party company has taken your collectible and encapsulated it within a protective holder while also assigning a numeric value representing its condition. Higher the grade, better the example, making it rarer and ultimately increasing its value, and in some cases exponentially. I happen to focus on pop culture, but coins, paper money, sports cards, autographs, stamps and now even VHS tapes and posters are all gradable items.

Grading ensures the items are properly represented and gives collectors an added level of security if their item is real, has no restoration, and no issues that may not be immediately apparent. There is no question a graded example is always going to sell for more when it comes to high end collectibles. A collector is going to bid more confidently knowing the comic book is a true 9.4 compared to a raw copy appearing near mint.

Especially through COVID, collectors have bitten into

this system full throttle, accelerating the market. It has taken what was once a simple past time of collecting and making it a commoditized asset no different than your stock portfolio or trading on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. It's fast paced; demand and values can change overnight. While the majority have embraced the system and are okay with never actually reading their comic book or touching their toy, there is still a dedicated group who go against the grain and do not believe in

encapsulation.

Should a comic book be read, a poster displayed, or should all these things we love be sealed in acrylic to never be touched by human hands again? They are just playthings anyway, right? Some argue collectible toys, trading cards, and comics were meant to be handled in the first place, but in my opinion, grading is a necessary evil. I started collecting at nine years old with Transformers, and I still to this day prefer them displayed. I do not like loose toy grading, but if it's a good piece and it is factory sealed it has to go into acrylic - It is just the way the world works today.

The warning I have for you is that while grading is good - it is also very expensive. You can quickly spend too much money grading items that should not be graded because the quality or the collectability is so low. That's why when deciding to part with your collection, it is always best to seek help from a trusted expert. You never want to sell outright; working on consignment maximizes the potential value of your collection!

If you're into graded collectibles, Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers is hosting a Graded Showcase Auction consisting of comic books, toys, and video games all to be sold individually and in graded condition on Saturday May 6th in Cranston, Rhode Island - Come check it out!

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Tips to improve FINANCIAL LITERACY

Financial planning is a key component of successful money management. When financial plans are established and put in place, individuals are in much better position to achieve both short-term goals, like financing a dream vacation, and long-term aspirations, like retiring with enough money to live your golden years without worry.

No one is born knowing how to handle and manage money. Financial literacy is an acquired skill, which means anyone can learn how to manage money effectively. The following are a handful of ways individuals from all walks of life can improve their financial literacy.

• **Crack the books (and magazines).**

A wealth of resources are available to anyone looking to become better at managing money, and many of those resources are books and magazines. Printed works are available for people with varying levels of financial literacy, so it's unlikely that any single text or magazine will benefit everyone equally. Find a text that speaks to your level of literacy and build from there.

• **Pay attention to financial news.**

The days when financial news was limited to industry insiders or a handful of industry publications are long gone. Various online entities and cable television channels are now exclusively devoted to financial news. Anyone can benefit from paying attention to financial news, which can shed light on investments, real estate and financial industry trends that can help people better understand their portfolios and assets.

• **Read your emails.** Adults who already have retirement accounts and other investments may also have an



invaluable resource right inside their email inboxes. Investment management firms like The Vanguard Group, Inc., routinely host online information sessions and discussions for investors that are promoted through email and other lines of communication with account holders. When promotional emails announcing these sessions are announced, take note and resolve to participate. Many don't require active participation, but they often provide insight into

financial products, markets and strategies to successful investing.

• **Ask questions.** It seems simple, but one of the most effective ways to gain greater financial literacy is to ask questions. If you work with a financial planner or are interviewing professionals to help you manage your money, ask that person to explain their financial strategy and the strategy espoused by their firms. When a new short- or even long-term goal pops up on your radar,

ask your financial advisor to explain ways in which you can achieve that goal. Such discussions can reveal strategies that even well-informed individuals may be unaware of.

Financial literacy can help people achieve their life's goals. Various strategies can help people from all walks of life improve their financial knowledge and take greater control of their finances and futures. TF234861



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Words from a Union soldier

'It is no pleasant thought to contemplate death in such heartrending forms. We try to shake off the conviction by various ways. But the pale cheek tells the thoughts of the mind, and the quivering lip speak plainer than words.'



WAITE

Part two of two-part series

When Marcia Pollock Wysocky, a historian and author from Winneconne, Wisc. was given 13 handwritten letters by her mother's neighbor, Gayle Baylor of Friendship, Wisc., she was quick to notify the president of the Warwick and Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Commissions, Pegee Malcolm. The letters had been written by a 22-year-old man from Warwick, Albert Fenner Waite, who was serving in the Civil War. The recipient of those letters had been Baylor's great-grandmother, 18-year-old Clara Francis Carpenter, possibly an object of Waite's affection.

As a member of the 15th Mass. Volunteer Infantry, Company G, Waite penned a letter to Clara on Aug. 4, 1861. It read, in part; "Probably this letter will find you sick with the galloping consumption as you said your turn to be sick would come next... If we do not get shot, we will be starved to death. I could tell you many hard things but I will let it pass now... I suppose this will be the last letter I can write on northern soil. We had 113 horses come and 25 Army wagons. If you could see what a load we have to carry on our backs, you would pity us poor sinners... I expect next Tuesday will be the day we start for Baltimore or Harper's Ferry. I don't know which... When I read of the slaughter the RI boys met with, I scarcely spoke for the next day. Not because I felt in the least discouraged, but to think so many brave sons of RI should get killed when fighting so nobly for freedom... I feel proud of RI and would give everything if I could go under the gallant Gov. Sprague to the field of battle. When I read in the paper, all I look for is something concerning little Rhody. When I fight, it will be for R. Island and Mass. I can go to the old Harry. There is no place like home I tell you... I don't want you to tell my folks but I think my chances are rather slim for coming back alive... I sometimes think what shall become of me if I get killed... Tell my mother I am well and hope she is the same. I am sorry to think she takes so little comfort. It would not surprise me to hear she was dead within six months. When she is gone, I have lost my

best friend... I must bring my letter to a close as I have got to pack my clothes in my knapsack and get ready for tomorrow."

On Aug. 13, 1861 Albert wrote to Clara from Camp Kalorama, Washington DC; "My Dear Dolly Dartton, We marched 6 miles with 70 lbs. on our backs. I must confess, as far as show is concerned, we looked splendid. Our band played excellent and, in the excitement of the hour, I forgot what our destiny might be in a short time... We took a ferry boat which was waiting and crossed the Delaware River a short distance above where Washington and his army crossed... I never suffered so much as when marching from Baltimore to take the cars for Washington. About a dozen fainted on the way. After reaching the depot, the boys was so dry that they drank the water which was given them by the people. The consequences was that they poisoned about ½ dozen of us, but they all recovered... You are not safe anywhere if you are known to be a Union man."

Albert told of how they were camped out at an old plantation and using the house as a hospital. He described the discomfort of riding and sleeping in cattle cars during the journey and how he heard the 2nd RI was fighting the direction of Fairfax Courthouse. "This is where Col. Ellsworth was shot and can be seen from here as it is only 5 miles off... We have more reports about fighting in the vicinity of Fairfax Courthouse and have been ordered to be ready for a moment's warning... Tell everybody that I am well at present but may have to sew up bullet holes before you get this letter... I need not tell you every time I should like to see you. You must take it for granted. The first night I slept in the Capitol, I had a dream about you."

Back in the Day



by
KELLY SULLIVAN

On Aug. 27, 1861, Albert wrote from Poolesville, Maryland. The boyish excitement roused by thoughts of adventure have given way to a grown man's realistic fears. His sense of humor temped down by scenes of suffering and death, is replaced by an understanding of how quickly an existence is extinguished. "I shall have to call you Dear Clara this time as I can't think of any more good names. Last Sunday we had orders to be ready to march at 5 p.m.... None of the men knew where we was going... I shant attempt to tell you how much I have suffered... I went ¾ of a mile through a corn field when I came to a log house. Went up to the door, asked the woman if she would sell me something to eat. I succeeded in getting 3 eggs, qt. milk and hoe cakes. While I was eating, the lady asked me more questions than you did. She said I was too young to come out there and get killed and told me to get away and run home. I told her it would be death. She asked me if I was married. I told her no. She said that was good thing, for I was going within 4 miles of the enemy, which I find is true, and that a great many of our men had been killed there. She then asked me if I expected to get killed. I told her I had thought for some days that I should never see my home again. She then asked me if I was prepared to die... We are only

4 miles from the Potomac River and can see the rebels drilling on the other side with a spy glass... While I am writing they say we have to go ten miles to some other place... In all probability, this regiment will be in the next battle... Gov. Sprague's 2nd Battery of Artillery is just passing here... we can see smoke from the rebel guns in the distance."

On Oct. 4, 1861, Albert wrote to Clara from Camp Foster in Maryland concerning the lack of food and a diet which sometimes consisted of meat, beans, rice and hominy but mostly only hard crackers and coffee. He wrote that there were 700 of his men guarding the river while 300 others guarded the camp. "I had crawled into my nest of straw covered with branches of trees, for we are not allowed tents here because the enemy could see them through the trees they are so white... Two of our men have died of this place and were buried here. It is quite a sad duty to lay a fellow soldier away in his long home and not a friend to drop a tear over his honored grave... There is some 25 in the hospital. Some of them will die before long... I pity the sick ones. I have seen them so they didn't want to live they was in such pain... I think the next time you hear from me, it will be from Old Virginia shore. Some of us must get killed before it is done... The col. gave the order to fire and spare no grey coats. They did not discover the mistake until 27 was killed... This makes twice our men have fired at each other... I hear the col. was drunk, which caused the mistake."

From Camp Winfield Scott, near Yorktown, Virginia., Albert wrote to Clara on April 24, 1862. "We are camped in what I should call the Dismal Swamp... we are aroused twice in the night by the

discharge of musketry. We jump from a sound seep when we hear the words 'fall in boys, fall in, the rebels have drove in their pickets'... I am frequently awoken in the night by the thunders of artillery... All eyes are now turned upon Yorktown where a bloody battle is expected to take place daily... When our artillery opens, it will be the grandest music we ever heard. The roar will be heard for miles and the ground will tremble with the awful concussion. I had rather be in Providence about this time. For many of us will be in our long home before many days. It is no pleasant thought to contemplate death in such heartrending forms. We try to shake off the conviction by various ways. But the pale cheek tells the thoughts of the mind, and the quivering lip speak plainer than words."

Albert died six months later, on Oct. 12, 1862 at the U.S. Hospital in Baltimore. He had been transported to the hospital in a dying condition from the effects of typhoid fever eighteen days earlier. On Oct. 13, he was buried there in Loudon Park Cemetery, a burial ground established that year with the interments of many deceased from Baltimore hospitals. A memorial stands to him in the Nichols-Waite lot in Warwick, bearing an engraved banner which reads "Our Albert" and the inscription "Rest weary soldier."

Clara married William Crapen Mason during the winter of 1864, the family tree eventually descending to Baylor, who brought the letters forth 162 years after a brave young man's pen was put to paper. They will now be preserved at the Warwick Historical Society. "I want everybody to experience how much has been sacrificed," Wysocky said.

Kelly Sullivan is a Rhode Island columnist, lecturer and author.



Clara's gravestone
(Photo by Marcia Wysocky)

His memorial stone in Warwick
(Photo by Pegee Malcolm)



Hypnotist Frank Santos Jr. presents his R-rated show at The Park Theatre

By ROB DUGUAY

Since the '90s, Frank Santos Jr. has been using hypnosis to entertain audiences while having them become part of his show. Along with performing in numerous theaters across the country, he's also done corporate gigs for the likes of Google, Nike, CVS and even that old company Blockbuster folks used to rent movies from. He's also been featured on ABC numerous times while doing clinical hypnosis as well. On April 15 at the Park Theatre on 848 Park Avenue in Cranston, Santos will be hypnotizing people to do some weird and crazy things. The show starts at 8pm and it's R-rated so leave the kids at home if you're a parent who's looking to attend.

We had a talk ahead of the gig about how he structures his show, switching things up on the fly, an unforgettable moment during a show in Maine and what people can expect when they show up.

Rob Duguay: As a hypnotist, there are two sides to your craft with one being your comedy show and the other more serious side being clinical hypnosis. For your comedy show, how do you go about forming the structure for it? Do you kind of have a skeleton for the show's structure and then you let the audience members kind of add to it during the show?

Frank Santos Jr.: You're exactly correct. I have a set thing in my head that I will do, and then those certain routines dictate the way the show goes. I get volunteers, hopefully more than I need, and then I'll do a series of little tests and it gets fun. You wouldn't be able to tell unless you're me, but those tests dictate the way the show will go. When I do my R-rated show, I'll do something more r-rated with a certain person so I can read them very well.

When I do clean shows, the people that I think are more hypnotized or more outgoing I'll use more. The bigger routines go to them while other people get easier ones.

RD: When it comes to the material you use for both the clean show and the R-



Hypnotist Frank Santos Jr. with a group of willing audience participants. (Submitted photo)

rated show, how do you go about curating it? It's kind of like a musician with a setlist where both shows are different, but how often do you change each show up?

FS: I do have set routines, but I can ad lib to them. I can change them up on the fly, but it depends on who is on stage with me and how well they're hypnotized. That's when it comes to the adult style shows, with the clean shows I pretty much do a set list because I have to be crystal clean. There's not much ad libbing, there's a little bit but not much. With an R-rated show, if someone says something or something happens that's funny I can really go with it.

There are set routines that I do, but I do change them up so I don't go back to the same place over and over again.

RD: That makes sense. For clinical hypnosis, it usually focuses on either quitting smoking or eating healthier. How successful would you say this therapy is? Do you ever get people coming back to you to get re-hypnotized because

they've fallen off from what they were aiming to accomplish?

FS: That side is great, I do it just to help people. I have an office and the people who do come in pretty much just pay the bills there, I don't do it to make any money. I don't usually have any repeats, I do sometimes with healthier eating because they go down a different path. People will come to me because they want to exercise more, they want to eat healthy and they want to make better decisions. I'll do what they need, I'll even make a recording of the hypnosis so they can listen to it whenever they want.

The people who come back to be hypnotized again come back because they went down a different path, like they never had a sweet tooth and now they have a sweet tooth. For quitting smoking, they come in for three sessions, they never come back and they stay a non-smoker. I have a 100% success rate with people who come in to quit smoking.

RD: That's great, congratulations on that. What would you say is your fa-

vorite moment of hypnotizing someone during your comedy show?

FS: For my R-rated show, I do a routine where I tell a person that his "manhood" sings to him and it sings the Billy Squier song "The Stroke". What happened was I did a show one time in Maine at this place with a round stage, it was this dance floor that was up high like a boxing ring and everyone sat around it. This guy was facing my backside and he proceeded to do that song in his pants, if you get what I'm trying to say.

RD: Yeah, I can see that being an unforgettable moment.

FS: The crowd was going crazy and I tried to ignore him and as they went crazier I turned around to see what was happening. Once I saw what was going on I was like "Oh no! You can't be doing that!". That never happened before, it hasn't happened since and that was around 15 years ago and I've been doing shows now for over 30 years.

RD: Wow.

FS: Every show is different, but the best thing about it is that I'll hear about a high school friend of someone I hypnotized being the quietest person. After being part of the show, they're very outgoing and very happy. They finally had the excuse to be the person they wanted to be and they ended up staying that way.

RD: It's cool that you get to bring people out of their shell. For anyone who hasn't seen you perform before and they're thinking of seeing you at the Park Theatre, what can they expect?

FS: It's a lot of fun. It's always better if you know who's on stage, so I suggest coming with a large group. It's always great when someone volunteers out of a group of people because it makes the show that much better. I never know what to expect on stage and you never know what to expect either, everyone's different and it's almost like it's improvising on the entire time. You never know what direction the show is gonna go in, what someone is gonna say or what someone is gonna do.

WARWICK SHOWCASE

AIR

**** 1/2

(Business and Basketball)

The business of basketball is examined in this fascinating movie based on Nike's landing Michael Jordan as their biggest client.

It is a tale based on a true story with some liberties taken in the process.

Those liberties make for a sharp, funny, engrossing two hours of top-notch moviemaking.

Matt Damon plays Sonny Vaccaro, a fast-talking, rule-breaking, passionate employee of Nike who rose from selling sneakers out of the trunk of his car to landing the biggest contract in basketball history.

It is 1964 and Nike is a distant third, behind Adidas and Converse, in landing NBA star endorsements.

Jason Bateman plays Sonny's volatile boss, while Ben Affleck plays Phil Knight, the esoteric CEO of Nike.

These three terrific actors get inside the heads of the three real-life characters with the aid of passionate and at times hilarious dialogue.

Sonny's quest to sign Jordan has you rooting for him as he breaks all the rules, drives his superiors bonkers, and as we already know, wins the big one.



It is OK that we know the ending because the story of how he gets there is the important thing.



Matt Damon in a scene from 'Air' with Viola Davis, who grew up in Rhode Island.

We learn that Sonny must deal with Michael's mother, and a gutsy wheeler dealer she is! Who could play her better than Rhode Island's own Viola Davis? Davis's real-life husband plays her husband in the movie. Along with Davis, he is cool and calm.

Except for a few TV shots, we don't see Michael Jordan, but we feel his presence as it is made very clear that Nike is not third on his list. It isn't on his list.

The movie is more intense than James Bond, Batman, and Psycho combined.

The constant panic among the decision makers will grab you and keep you glued to the scene. If you are expecting a basketball movie, what you get is the behind the scenes part of the game.

We see how a new shoe is created around a person and get the message that "A shoe is just a shoe until somebody steps in it."

Sonny's speech after Nike's leaders make a lame presentation to the Jordans and their agent is sure to become one of film's classics.

It took two Boston and one Rhode Island actors to show us that Hollywood can still make great movies.

As Phil Knight said, "The most you can do is all you can do."

The movie is rated R because of the overuse of that four-letter word.

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“Dinosaurs Among Us” at Roger Williams Zoo

By DON FOWLER

Over 60 life-size animatronic dinosaurs greeted me as I walked the wetlands trail at the Roger Williams Park Zoo on a foggy April morning.

The trail was filled with people of all ages taking photos of their kids standing next to the realistic creatures.

The trail is wide and easy to walk with a few benches along the way. It is wheelchair accessible.

I've followed the trail before, enjoying pumpkins, Christmas lights, Asian lanterns, and the natural beauty of the marshland.

This time I felt like I was back in the days of the dinosaurs, and they seemed to own the environment, towering above the park, hiding in the bushes, and flying over the three bridges on the trail.

As you enter the zoo, you are greeted by a giant brachiosaurus, and follow the trail of dinosaur footprints past the ani-



mals to the elephant exhibit and the beginning of the dinosaurs' magical world.

The eerie sounds of the ancient creatures greet you. Some swing their long necks toward you, but please, don't touch

them or, as the signs warn you, do not feed them.

Park Director Stacy Johnson reminds us that the exhibit is an integral part of the zoo's mission to both entertain and educate. He reminds us that dinosaurs

are still around today in the form of many birds. He encourages us to visit the special exhibit demonstrating that important fact.

I was impressed with the realism of the exhibits, with careful

attention given to the movement of their eyes and limbs. I caught one drooling. And those big teeth look so real.

The end of the exhibit features a giant Apatosaurus that leads you to a hands-on area where children can participate in a Dig Cite, and go on dinosaur rides.

Take your time enjoying the exhibit, taking photos, buying a snack, and of course exiting through the gift shop.

You can take it all in an hour, but a casual trip needs a couple of hours to real get into it.

The exhibit is a bargain at \$9 for adults and \$7 for children, however you must purchase a ticket to the zoo (\$20.95 and \$14.95).

Visit rwpzoo.org for all the details on groups rates and zoo memberships.

“Dinosaurs Among Us” continues at the Roger Williams Park Zoo through August 13.

Buy your tickets on line at rwpzoo.org/dinosaurs to avoid lines.



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