

Add 4 appointments to the school committee?

By RORY SCHULER

Is your school committee big enough? Johnston voters will likely decide whether to nearly double the current school committee, from 5 to 9 members, should that question make the ballot in November with a long list of other Town Charter revisions. And the four new members would be appointed, not elected, to the school district's governing

board.

Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisen's appointment to the Johnston Charter Review Commission (JCRC), Taylor Russo, introduced the idea at the Feb. 8 meeting.

"I think having five members elected is a good thing," Russo told her fellow CRC members. "... With everything going on, to avoid conflict between the town and the school committee ... I

would propose to have four appointed members in addition to the five elected members. It would still be an odd number. It would still be a majority elected members. I just think you'd be getting a broader opinion and more voices on the school committee."

In Their Defense

Susan Mansolillo, the Johnston School Committee's appointment to the JCRC,

pushed back a little.

"So they weren't elected by the people?" Mansolillo asked. "My question is this. You're saying four. You have five districts. Who gets to select who those appointees are?"

"The town," Russo replied. "How the other boards are formed. Voted on by Town Council."

CHARTER - PAGE 8

School Committee removes student sexuality questions from risk survey

By RORY SCHULER

Tasked with approving the latest annual student risk survey, the Johnston School Committee unanimously decided to remove two questions that ask about student sexual identity.

"We went through the whole survey ... the very first page, I just have a problem," said School Committee Vice-Chairman Joseph Rotella. "They're asking all these questions. I know that this is a voluntary survey. But honestly, if you're looking for results from students, why do you need to know about how they identify, what their gender is?"

Patricia Sweet, Director of the Southern Providence County Regional Prevention Coalition, attended the meeting to field ques-

tions prior to the scheduled vote.

She told the committee members that the survey results would help the coalition to "develop programs and interventions for at-risk behaviors by minimizing the risky behaviors of the youth and the community."

"Without the RI student survey being administered, would not be able to continue with the DFC (Department of Children, Youth & Families) grant, specifically for Johnston, that we've had for the last 4 years, which allows us to have \$125,000 each year, to implement initiatives in both the middle and high school, which we've been doing, right along as both principals and administration can tell you," explained

SURVEY - PAGE 15

4. Some people describe themselves as transgender when their sex at birth does not match the way they think or feel about their gender. Are you transgender?
 - No, I am not transgender
 - Yes, I am transgender
 - I am not sure if I am transgender
 - I do not know what this question is asking
5. Which of the following best describes you?
 - Heterosexual (straight)
 - Gay or lesbian
 - Bisexual
 - Not sure

RISKY Q'S: The Johnston School Committee voted to remove these two questions regarding student sexuality from the 2024 Rhode Island Student Survey. (Screenshot)

Taking Gold



MEDAL TESTED: Johnston's Gianna Desmarais was the town's lone representative at last week's gymnastics state championships and put on a show, as the freshman took home first place in the vault competition and wrapped up a top-10 finish in the all-around rankings. See story on Page 11.

\$40M 'flood bond' possible

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston voters may decide on a \$40 million flood bond to fund stormwater management and sewer upgrades in the wake of four major flood events over the past year.

On Feb. 12, Johnston Town Council passed a resolution asking the "Rhode Island General Assembly to enact legislation authorizing the town to issue, not to exceed \$40,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Notes and other evidences of indebtedness to finance construction, addition, renovation, improvement, alteration, repair, furnishing and equipping of stormwater management and sewer facilities throughout the Town."

Johnston's Director of Development and Public Services Thomas Deller addressed the meeting, sketching in some of the details.

"This year we've had four major rain storms: July, September, December, and January," Deller said. "One of the things we've learned is that our stormwater system is ... under-designed."

Wetter & Wetter

Residents along Belfield Drive were forced to leave their homes; the street evacuated. An emergency access road was constructed, with begged federal permission, off Interstate 295 South.

A Park Street apartment complex flooded; residents and pets were rescued by first-responders in boats.

Atwood Avenue (also known as state Route 5) has periodically slipped below the surface of rising flood waters, disrupting businesses and cutting

BOND - PAGE 19

Feds scold state over undocumented immigrant's ACI Cranston release

By RORY SCHULER

A Guatemalan national was arrested last year in Providence for alleged sexual assault of a child. He was incarcerated briefly and then released last spring despite a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) order to keep him in custody.

He enjoyed 10 months of freedom.

Last week, federal officials announced the man's re-arrest via press release. And the press release headline contained a stinging rebuke for Ocean State prison and court officials: "Local jurisdiction ignored ICE detainer and released the Guatemalan national."

Gov. Dan McKee's office deferred comment on the case to the Rhode Island De-

INMATE - PAGE 20



BACK IN CUSTODY:

U.S. Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Boston announced the Feb. 6 arrest of a Guatemalan national charged with child sexual assault in Rhode Island. The suspect was released from custody last year and remained on the lam, despite an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer. (Photo courtesy ERO Boston)

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JHS Panther of the Week



POTW: This week's Panther of the Week is NeAri Vasquez. NeAri was nominated by his basketball coach, Coach Mike Bedrosian. Coach Bedrosian said, "On Saturday NeAri was named to first team all league. He has helped the team become the 4 seed in the D2 playoffs. We will look for him to be a leader on the court on February 27th when we play the winner of Rogers v Pilgrim." In addition to being a member of the basketball team, NeAri was also a member of the football team, is on the Student Voice Committee, and an honor roll student-athlete. *(Photo 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 within the pages of the Johnston Sun Rise.

Say you saw it in the
Johnston Sun Rise

Senior 'Spotlite'



SENIOR IN TRAINING: The Johnston Senior Center Spotlight this week shines on Social Service Coordinator Megan Feeney. Megan, a life-long resident of Johnston, has been working at the JSC for the past six months. She's there to help. Stop her and say "hello" when you get a chance. (Photo courtesy Richard J. DelFino Jr.)

She's here to help

Meet the JSC's 'Senior in Training'

By RICHARD J. DELFINO JR.
Special to the Sun Rise

The Johnston Senior Center "Spotlite" this week shines on Megan Feeney, our Social Service Coordinator. Megan, who has been a life-long resident of Johnston, has been working at the JSC for the past six months.

She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree, with a concentration in Human Services, and "servicing" members of our senior community is what she does best. Megan has a very "open door policy" which translates into, if you have a problem, an issue, need a referral, or just someone to talk to, Megan is "our" person to assist you.

When her door is closed, she is hard at work helping and advocating for her clients. When her door's open, she welcomes members in, even if it means giving up lunch, staying past her scheduled hours, or meeting clients on weekends.

Her happy disposition and contagious energy has her fellow workers joining the effort on behalf of all who come to the JSC. Megan has also stepped up to fill any void in services, and can be called upon to assist in whatever capacity requires attention. Her many clients here at the Center describe Megan as kind, competent and helpful.

Megan, who lives with her husband, and two young daughters, says she loves her job and helping people, a mission she has certainly accomplished.

Editor's Note: Richard J. DelFino Jr. serves as Executive Director of the Johnston Senior Center, at 1291 Hartford Ave., Johnston. The Johnston Sun Rise regularly publishes a senior profile, called "Senior Spotlight," submitted by the senior center.



HEARTY PARTY: More than 200 seniors packed the Johnston Senior Center on Valentine's Day, which was also Ash Wednesday, last week. (Photos courtesy Richard J. DelFino Jr.)

I left my heart at the JSC

By RICHARD J. DELFINO JR.
Special to the Sun Rise

A capacity crowd, dressed in festive red, white, and hearts attire, filled the Johnston Senior Center, celebrating St. Valentine's Day last week.

Tables were decorated with candies wrapped in red and white cellophane bags, as well as Valentine cookies for each of the 200 members present. The Italian Baker donated their famous pizza rounds for guests to enjoy prior to lunch.

An unforgettable performance by Steve Anthony had guests dancing in the aisles, to all their favorite songs. Everyone was treated to a beautiful carnation, donated by Cherry Hill Florist.

Prior to the Valentine celebration, members and guests created a steady line seeking ashes from Our Lady of Grace Pastor Rev. Peter Gower, in recognition of the Ash Wednesday tradition (which fell on the same day as Valentine's Day this year).

A great time was had by all, thanks to the JSC staff, who worked tirelessly, on behalf of members. Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. delivered well wishes on behalf of the Town, and spent time visiting tables throughout the dining hall.

On their way out of the building, later in the afternoon, members were overheard saying "we can't wait for the St. Patrick and St. Josephs Day celebration," in March, where Steve Anthony is expected to return.



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'Live from Johnston, it's Friday Night!'

Panther Players shine in sketch comedy show

By PETE FONTAINE

If you missed the recent production of "Friday Night Live" at Johnston High School, the presentation will be back bigger and better in 2025 courtesy of the unique and multi-talented group of students who make up the Panther Players.

Moreover, as JHS Music Department chairman Ron Lamoureux - who coordinates the Friday Night Live show said - many students turned in performances that could rival the one on NBC's Saturday Night Live comedy sketch show that's now in its 49th year and was created by Lorne Michaels.

In short, the 2024 Friday Night Lights may have been the Panthers Players' all-time best and as Lamoureux emphasized featured "many talented students came up with many of the skits the group performed."

As the energetic Lamoureux, who recently announced a record number of All-State music students, said: "There's so much work to put the show together. First, we try to have the kids come up with their own ideas and this year there were so many, we had to scrap many of the projects we started because of logistics we couldn't figure out how to get the original idea into a pensionable script."

Nonetheless, the applause was special for each of the acts and that's why Lamoureux wanted it

known "I'm really proud of who we have on the stage and behind the scenes. There are so many kids in school that struggle socially under normal circumstances and add distance learning to that mix, and everyone is fighting to get 'normal' back into our daily routines. Social Emotional Learning is what we do every day with this group and in the music department in general - it's very rewarding to be a part of that."

From the start, Friday Night Live sparkled.

Ed Siravo, a JHS alum and highly respected science teacher served as guest host and as Lamoureux said, "he didn't disappoint."

The show opened with Siravo as the central character - a clerk in FableTowne Market who witnesses a good deal of mistreatment in his daily grind; three pigs not getting along bullying witches and Elsa, a not so nice friend to Rapunzel, and Jack and Jill chasing poor Humpty Dumpty until he had a massive fall.

The Three Blind Mice were an amazing distraction as they fan off to find free cheese samples. Thus, Stephanie Galasso, a high school staffer was the lead mouse who was joined by budding stars Katie Rodriguez and Alexis Rivera.

Then there was the Gingerbread man who keeps breaking his arm and Geppetto rails on Pinocchio for not doing his chores before Siravo stop all the antics to deliver an inspired speech amid sentimental piano accompaniment that preceded Siravo - who was joined by the cast - announcing: "Live from Johnston it's Friday Night" just as the way SNL begins on NBC-TV.

FNL included a video and two professionally done two-act shows



TALENTED TROUPE: This is the cast and crew and presented the recent Friday Night Lights that included songs and special themes as well as props made especially by members of the presenting Panther Players. (Submitted photos)

made up of alternating live and recorded skits. There were many songs and a special guest band entitled Velvet DayDream was a highlight during Act 2 using such prompts as a real old-fashioned car that Siravo arranged to have delivered for the performance and was part of a Bad Driving skit.

There were songs from different eras and DayDream performing "From the Start Laufey."

In keeping with tradition, the smooth-sounding JHS band improvised some bows music and the entire case and crew came out to energetic applause with Lamoureux thanking Jacob "our amazing sound engineer from the New England Live Audio, Siravo and everyone for joining us tonight; see you all next year!"



MIGHTY MICE: JHS staffer Stephanie Galasso, Katie Rodrigues and Alexis Rivera added glitz and glamour to the Panther Players' Friday Night Lights.

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

It really does take a Village

There are phases in life where we all need a little extra help.

Of course, babies and young children require constant attention, care, and support in order to grow up into healthy and happy adults. This is a difficult task, to say the least, and often takes the support of family and friends, and in certain cases, government resources to do in a way that doesn't completely overwhelm parental units.

But once we've grown up, completed careers, sent kids off into the world on their own journeys, and retire into the last chapters of our lives, that support we received all the way back at the beginning of life becomes important once again.

Many senior citizens rely on their families to provide them with routine, daily care.

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

Others have needs that surpass the abilities and available time of family members, and

wind up in assistive care facilities; with varying degrees of happiness as a result. While by and large, the folks who make it their career to care for the elderly do incredibly important, thankless work, and try their best, it is no secret that there is a shortage of people to perform this work compared to the need, and the cost for many families is a barrier that simply cannot be overcome.

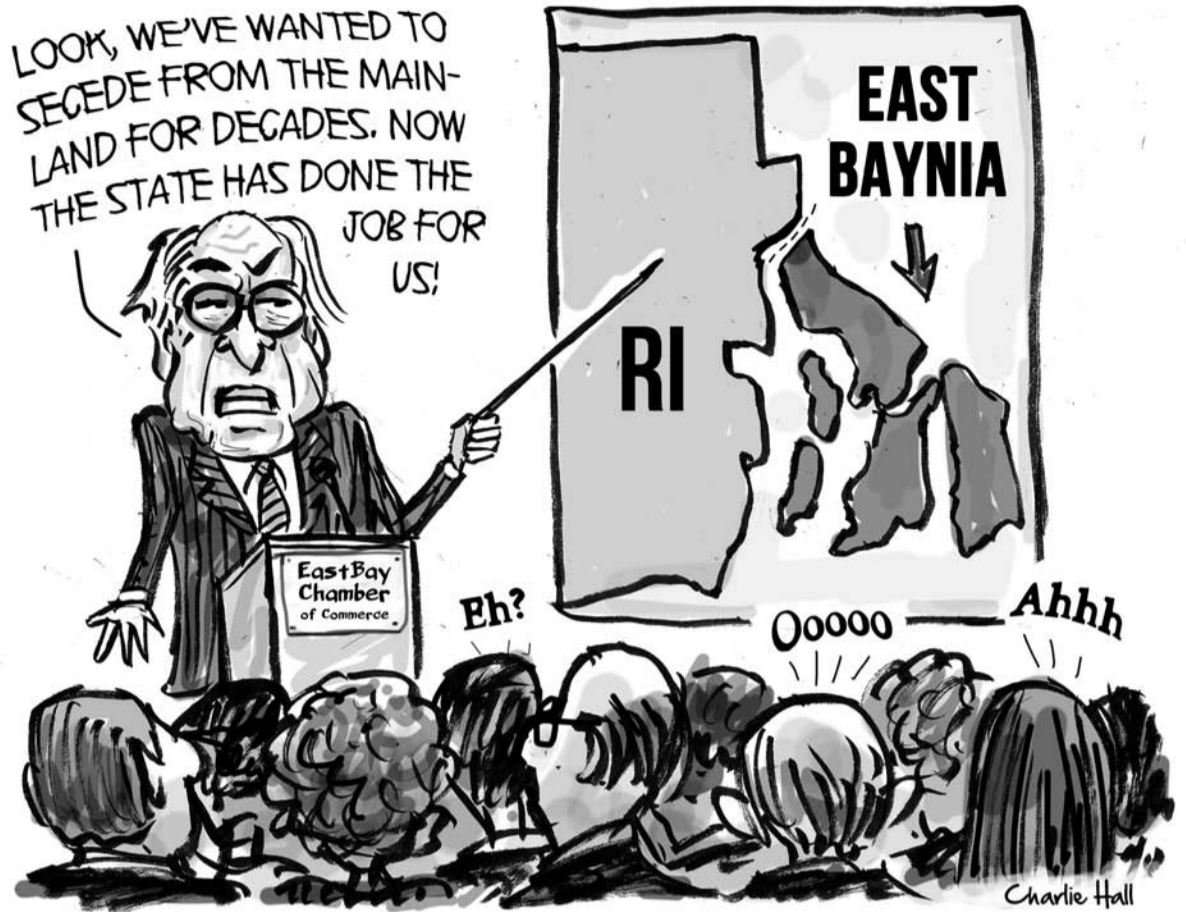
Many senior citizens want to remain independent, living lives in homes they have built in an environment that is comfortable and brings them happiness. But doing so, for some, can be dangerous or leave them at risk of being unable to access proper nutrition, medicine, or other needs.

With this reality in mind, we are pleased to learn that The Village Commons of RI is seeking input from Warwick residents about establishing a presence in our city, in order to better support seniors who need a little extra help to get by, but still want to live independently.

The Village Commons is a group of community volunteers who join forces to provide various services to senior citizens living independently. Whether it's going to the store to pick up some groceries, or a prescription, doing some work around their home, or giving them a lift to the senior center to partake in activities, these little acts of kindness and assistance can make a big difference in the lives of many elderly residents.

Outside of providing assistance for these various needs, this type of work can also provide something equally vital as helping getting a task done – companionship. Isolation and loneliness plagues the senior citizen community, so having a group of civic-minded volunteers around at the ready to provide a kind presence in the life of our local elders seems like a tremendously beneficial idea.

We encourage Warwick residents to respond to an upcoming survey to share ideas about how this group could best operate locally. Check out <https://www.providencevillageri.org/> for more information.



LETTERS

JRTC: Our sincere condolences

The Johnston Republican Town Committee was saddened to hear the passing of Senator Frank Lombardo III. We offer our sincere condolences to the Senator's family, friends, and constituents. Senator Lombardo has served Johnston Senate District 25 well with his sponsorship of the small business friendliness omnibus package, increased transparency and accountability in the state's tax credit programs, and was very pro-life and pro 2A.

Thank you Senator for your service.
Rest in peace.
Sincerely,

The Johnston Republican Town Committee



DONALD TRUMP REFUSES TO CALL OUT HIS BUDDY PUTIN ON THE "DEATH" OF ALEXEY NAVALNY.

HE HAS 91 CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST HIM. HE'S OLD, HE'S FORGETFUL, AND HE GETS EASILY CONFUSED ALL THE TIME.

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THAT'S A LIE! I'M AS SHARP AS EVER! ARE YOU GONNA BELIEVE ME OR NANGY PELOSI OVER HERE?



JOHNSTON Sun Rise

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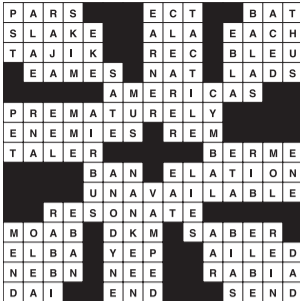
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ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:



DRUG BUSTS

Rhode Island State Police High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force (HIDTA) Task Force raided Johnston, Providence and Warwick addresses last Friday morning, making several arrests.

Between 5:15 and 6:15 a.m., Feb. 16, members of the task force searched several addresses in different cities and towns across the Ocean State, taking several men into custody.

The HIDTA Task Force linked up with Pawtucket Police to arrest Nelson Castro, 25, of 190 Putnam Pike Apt. A, Johnston. Castro faces three charges: Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), and Possession of a Firearm while Committing a Controlled Substance Violation.

"This arrest was the result of a narcotics investigation conducted by members of the HIDTA Task Force and Pawtucket Police Department," according to a Rhode Island State Police (RISP) press release. "Mr. Castro was transported to the Lincoln Barracks for processing, then was

turned over to 3rd Division District Court for his arraignment."

State Police also announced an arrest by members of the HIDTA Task Force, Intelligence Unit, Auto Theft Unit, ACI Investigations Unit, Financial Crimes Unit and the DEA Providence District Office of a Warwick man on Friday, Feb. 16.

According to RISP, Fredy Montilla, 41, of 27 Forrest St., Apt. B, Warwick, was arrested and charged with Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Heroin 2), Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession of Heroin (1oz-1kg) and Possession of Fentanyl (1oz-1kg).

"This arrest was the result of a narcotics investigation conducted by members of the HIDTA Task Force," according to the RISP press release. "Mr. Montilla was transported to the Lincoln Barracks for processing, then was turned over to 6th Division District Court for his arraignment."

That same morning, HIDTA Task Force members also arrested Jhogel Florentino, 30, of 59 Thackeray St., Apt. 4, Providence. Florentino was charged with Possession of a Firearm while Committing a Controlled Substance Violation (three counts), Alteration of Marks of Identification of Firearms, Large Capacity Feeding Devices Prohibited (two counts), Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Fentanyl), Possession of Fentanyl In Excess of 1KG, Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Cocaine), Possession of Cocaine In Excess of 1KG, Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Methamphetamine), Possession of Methamphetamine In Excess of 1KG, Possession with Intent to Deliver of a Schedule I/II Controlled Substance (Marijuana), Possession of Marijuana in Excess of 5KGs.

"This arrest was the result of a narcotics investi-

gation conducted by members of the HIDTA Task Force," according to RISP. "Mr. Florentino was transported to the Lincoln Barracks for processing, then was turned over to 6th Division District Court for his arraignment."

ASSAULT W/ DANGEROUS WEAPON

Around 8:30 a.m., Friday, Feb. 16, members of the Rhode Island Violent Fugitive Task Force arrested William T. Ruhle, 64, of 2020 Elmwood Ave., Warwick, on an Affidavit and Arrest Warrant from the Cranston Police Department, for the following charges: Felony Assault with a Dangerous Weapon, Assault on a Person over 60 Causing Bodily Injury, and Larceny from the Person. The arrest was the result of an investigation by the Violent Fugitive Task Force. According to Rhode Island State Police, Ruhle was taken into custody without incident and turned over to the Cranston Police Department.

TAMPERING W/ VEHICLES

Around 2:30 a.m., Jan. 13, Johnston Police responded to an address in town (redacted from the police report) to investigate a report of "suspicious activity."

A caller told police that they spotted an individual outside of his room, "actively damaging his vehicle," according to the police incident report. The caller told police the suspect was armed with a "firearm, but did not know if it was real or a BB gun."

The suspect allegedly struck the parked vehicle out front, attempting to pop the front passenger tire and access the truck.

The suspect was identified as Daylon Grandin, 33, of 635 Park Ave., Apt. 3, Woonsocket.

Video surveillance was captured, and the suspect fled in what appeared to be a white Nissan that fled the scene before police arrived.

Police noted damage to the vehicle, on the passenger side panel and hood.

The caller told police he wanted to pursue formal charges. Police issued a warrant for Grandin's arrest on charges of Tampering with a Motor Vehicle and Vandalism.

On Jan. 19, Johnston Police responded to Providence Police Department to take custody of Grandin on the outstanding warrants. He was taken into custody and transported to the Johnston Police Department where he was fingerprinted and photographed. He was released with a Third District Court summons.

LARCENY

On Feb. 1, Johnston Police Patrolman Matthew V. Leveillee spotted a black SUV traveling west on Plainfield Street with dark window tint and an expired inspection sticker. He initiated a traffic stop, and the driver pulled over in the vicinity of Plainfield and Calef streets.

Police identified the driver as John M. DeLeon, 31, of 282 Webster Ave., Cranston. Procedural checks revealed the vehicle had an expired registration and DeLeon had an expired driver's license.

Background checks also revealed an active Johnston Police arrest warrant for Larceny under \$1,500.

DeLeon was taken into custody without incident and transported to Johnston Police Headquarters. He was also cited for Driving with an Expired License (first offense) and Violation of Inspection Laws. His vehicle was driven from the scene by another party.

According to police, the larceny charges were connected to a Nov. 2, 2023 incident at Wicked Fresh, 1345 Hartford Ave. DeLeon allegedly entered the store around 4 p.m. and stole a plastic tip jar container that was on the counter, which "contained unknown denominations of U.S. currency." According to police, DeLeon allegedly placed the plastic container under his jacket and left the store on foot. The witness provided police with photographs and video surveillance from the incident.

Legal Notice Town of Johnston Adopted Ordinances

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

Ordinance 2023-17
An Ordinance Amending Article V, supplementary regulations of Chapter 340 of the Town of Johnston Code of Ordinances to regulate the size of commercial buildings.

Ordinance 2024-1
An Ordinance in amendment of the Town of Johnston Zoning Ordinance and accompanying map. Said Ordinance changes the Zone Map for Assessor's Plat 5, Lots 231, 232, 234, 238, 262 & 263 from R-20 to Industrial-L

Said Ordinances are file and available for review in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Johnston Town Council
Robert V. Russo
President

Attest:
Vincent P. Baccari, Jr.
Town Clerk

2/22/24

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ATTENTION VOTERS-PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION

TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2024
SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024 IS THE LAST DATE TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE APRIL 2, 2024 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

VOTER REGISTRATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE JOHNSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT ENTRY-WAY LOCATED AT 1651 ATWOOD AVENUE ON MARCH 3, 2024 DURING THE HOURS OF 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. ONLY

Before March 3rd, 2024 registrations can be filed from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office or by visiting <https://vote.ri.gov> you can download a voter registration form and also access additional information such as your precinct and voter history. Existing voters should ensure that their voter registration is up to date if you have had a change in address or a name change.

VOTER REGISTRATION/PARTY AFFILIATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT
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Sen. Frank Lombardo III dies overnight after battle with cancer

Sun Rise Staff Reports

Sen. Frank Lombardo III dropped from helicopters to ski inaccessible moguls. Somehow, he balanced business, community service, law-making and family.

"Our Senate family is heartbroken with the news that our friend and colleague Frank Lombardo passed away overnight," said Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio, of North Providence. "Frank was one of the kindest and most generous people I have ever had the good fortune to know."

Sen. Lombardo, a Democrat representing District 25 (Johnston) in the Rhode Island State Senate, was first elected to the seat in November 2010. According to his Senate biography, "his time in the legislature has included action on a range of issues."

"He was the Senate sponsor of the Small Business Friendliness Omnibus package signed into law in 2018, which eliminated or consolidated numerous business licensing and fee requirements," according to the Senate. "He has sponsored legislation to increase transparency and accountability in the state's tax credit programs; require state agencies to develop a plan for electric vehicle charging station infrastructure; provide for the licensing of three-wheeled motorcycles through the DMV; mandate insurance reimbursement for chiropractic and osteopathic non-opioid treatment for pain; extend the life of the Central Landfill as part of the Grow Green Jobs RI plan; and ban the use or sale of powdered alcohol."

Sen. Lombardo, 65, was born July 12, 1958. He and his wife, Patricia, have two children, Frank and Victoria. A graduate of Smithfield High School, Sen. Lombardo also attended Rhode Island College. According to the Senate, he passed away early Wednesday morning, Feb. 21, "after a battle with bladder cancer."

"He was a passionate and effective representative of his constituents, and he embodied the spirit of collegi-

ality and service to which every member of the Senate aspires," Ruggerio said. "Frank's dignity and courage in the face of illness was an inspiration to us all. He was full of energy and adventure, living every moment of life to the fullest, from helicopter skiing to cross country motorcycle trips with his father. We are grateful to have shared part of that adventure with him. First and foremost, Frank was devoted to his family. Our prayers are with his wife, Patricia, their children, Frank and Victoria, their grandchildren and their entire family."

Sen. Lombardo was the owner of Lombardo and Sons of Providence. He was also a member of the Associated Builders and Contractors; a member of Rhode Island Builders; and a member of the Refrigeration Service and Engineering Society.

Senate Majority Leader Ryan W. Pearson released a statement on Lombardo's passing: "Frank was not only a well-respected colleague but a dear friend. He never shied from giving tough feedback or challenging your thinking. That same spirit also extended to his adventurous hobbies where he challenged and beat me down every ski mountain he could complete with a lot of commentary about it."

While serving in the Rhode Island state Senate, Sen. Lombardo held several committee seats and a chairmanship: Chairman, Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government; Member, Senate Committee on Commerce; Member, Senate Committee on Labor; and Member, Senate Committee on Rules, Government Ethics & Oversight.

"Sen. Lombardo's passing is a devastating loss for the town," Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena Jr. said Wednesday morning. "His impact on Johnston went far beyond the senate. Frank was a devoted husband, father, son, grandfather and friend to many. He will be missed by so many throughout Johnston and Rhode Island. My thoughts and prayers go out to Patty, Frankie, Victoria and Frank's entire family during this time."

LEGISLATOR LOST: Sen. Frank Lombardo III, 65, passed away early Wednesday morning, Feb. 21. The Democrat representing District 25 (Johnston) in the Rhode Island State Senate, was first elected to the seat in November 2010. (Photo courtesy RI State Senate)

Obituaries

Mark Duncan Barnes

Mark Duncan Barnes, 64, a lifelong resident of Johnston, RI with one inevitable and fateful pit stop in Auburn, AL, died suddenly and peacefully at home on February 13, 2024, thus ensuring that he never had to slow down despite everyone's advice to the contrary.



He was born on April 6, 1959, to his wonderful parents Porter Ingram Barnes, Jr. and Lois Mar-

tha Thompson Barnes, both of whom predeceased him and whose influence shaped him into the extraordinary person he became. For 36 years, he was the husband of Laura DiMillo Barnes, about whom his mom once famously said: "you had to go to the South to fall in love with an Italian Yankee?" He also leaves behind his three children who utterly adored him: Kathrine Lois Barnes, of Johnston and Atlanta; Matthew Porter Barnes, of Johnston and Los Angeles; and Lauren Mary Barnes Schirmer and her husband Jacob Schirmer, of Johnston. He is also survived by his beloved older siblings and their families: Robert and Jeanna Barnes of Cumming, GA; Tonya and Scott Dobslaw of Chesnee, SC; and Rodney Barnes of Dahlonga, GA, along with many cousins, nieces, nephews, and godchildren.

He made incredible friends growing up in Rhode Island, many of whom remained like family to him to this day. After his education in Johnston schools, he attended Auburn University, a rite of passage for many members of many generations in the Barnes family. He graduated with a degree in Building Science and used those skills, along with the engineering and architectural lessons he learned from his dad, every day for the rest of his life. His career in construction, project management, and business ownership spanned decades, but he was happiest working for the State of Rhode Island for the past 11 years, most recently as the Chief Engineer for the Department of Administration, Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance. He truly loved his job and his colleagues, and he counted many of them among his dearest friends. He still owned and treasured the lake house he grew up in on Slack's Reservoir, and he was a past president of the Slack's Reservoir Association.

Mark was extremely capable, innovative, confident, decisive, gregarious, and absolutely selfless. He could construct and fix just about anything, and, if he couldn't, his curiosity and drive guaranteed he would learn how. He could make friends with anyone he encountered, and he never met a person in need he wouldn't drop everything to help. He was effortlessly hysterical and burst into his infectious, boisterous laughter freely and often. His unwavering love, devotion, and care for his friends and family taught his children how to cherish, support, and be of service to their loved ones. He was everyone's dad. He was larger than life. We will all miss him forever, and he will live on in everyone who knew him.

Visitation was held at Anderson Winfield Funeral Home in Greenville, RI on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, from 2-5pm with a service held afterward at the same location. His family would love to see anyone and everyone who loved him. To honor Mark, please plant a garden, adopt a pet, build something with your hands, enjoy a delicious meal, or give your loved ones a big, gentle bear hug.

For messages of condolence, please visit www.andersonwinfield.net



'ONE OF THE KINDEST'

Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio shared this photo of late Sen. Frank Lombardo III, who passed away early Wednesday morning, Feb. 21 at the age of 65. (Photo courtesy Sen. Ruggerio)

Obituaries

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

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

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Charter
 (Continued from page 1)

"Two by the mayor and two by the council?" asked JCRC Vice-Chairman Fred Iafrate. Russo agreed. It all went very smoothly at first. There have been several strong hints that big changes were coming to the Johnston School Committee. The mayor attempted a financial takeover of the schools last year. That led to a series of audits and the hiring of attorneys to represent the town and the school district, should litigation follow. Then the JCRC was formed, to examine, article by article, the Johnston Town Charter. So far, the board has considered a resolution to increase the mayor's pay (from \$75,000 to anywhere between \$100,000 and \$130,000) and town councilors', a delay in the town's budgetary schedule, and now four new appointed members to the School Committee. "I'd like to add to that proposal that two be appointed by the mayor, two by town council, with the same rights as the (elected) school committee (members)," Iafrate added to Russo's proposal.

"The same rights?" Mansolillo asked. "Voting rights? I don't think they should have the same voting rights as the elected. I think they could serve as counsel to the elected." "That's not my proposal," Iafrate objected. "I think there would be better relations, with the town seeing the everyday duties of the school committee and school department." Mansolillo suggested an advisory committee, or "more of a liaison." "It doesn't work though," Iafrate said.

Mayors & School Committees
 JCRC attorney and co-spokesperson Allan Fung, former mayor of Cranston and counsel for the town as it attempts to take over school finances, interjected to mention a short list other Rhode Island school districts that have tried this "hybrid" style of school committee, or have an appointed school committee. Fung mentioned Providence, Central Falls and Woonsocket. "These districts are also under the control of the state," Mansolillo said. "They're not under the control ... they're not run by their respective municipality. They're under the control of the state because they were not capable of running it themselves. Remember that." JCRC member Joseph Andriole entered the conversation. He said the Providence school board was all appointed before the state took over.

"It's like apples and oranges — state control versus composition of the school board," Andriole said. "That's all that I want to put on the record so we're on the same page." Mansolillo asked for permission to speak. "The whole purpose of this is the mayor feels like he can't get along with the school department," she told the rest of the commission. Only one member of the public attended the meeting — School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia. He silently waited for his turn to speak. For the moment, Mansolillo was speaking for herself and the rest of the school committee. JCRC Chairman and co-spokesperson Richard DelFino Jr. interrupted Mansolillo's argument against the proposal. "No one suggested the mayor suggested that," DelFino argued. "I'm speaking," she said. "Can I please finish?" Members spoke over each other for a few seconds. DelFino and Mansolillo were both straining to stay polite. "Mr. Iafrate said 'it's not working,'" Mansolillo said. Iafrate chimed in: "It isn't. Go ahead. Speak." "This whole recommendation is being made because the mayor thinks this isn't working; what we have," Mansolillo continued. "The whole issue we have right now is over money. It's not over how the schools are being run. They're being run fine. The whole issue is over money. The mayor can't run the schools ... through the business side. If the schools had been funded over the past years with just a maintenance of effort, there would have been ample funds to fund the school department through today and there would be no shortfalls and there would be no financial issues."

Elephant Not In The Room
 Mansolillo referenced the mayor repeatedly, though he was not present at the meeting. Polisena has not attended any of the JCRC meetings. "He's doing studies," Mansolillo argued. "He's doing audits. I don't think they're finding what they're looking for. There's nothing awry. There's nothing wrong. There has just been some under-funding. Once the funding is level and where it should be, it will be fine. And there won't be an issue. The school department isn't looking to fight ... We just want to be able to fund our budget and work cohesively and cooperatively with the town." Andriole interrupted with a rhetorical question. "Are you trying to say ... that the funding hasn't been adequate?" He asked. "But that's not just the mayor."

It's the council that adopts the budget. So if there is a problem, if there is one that exists, I don't know if it's just from the mayor's office, or it sounds like there's a funding problem, that's a mayor and legislative body council versus the school department or vice versa." "And we don't want it to be versus," Mansolillo argued. "We are trying to work through this." Mansolillo admitted the School Committee asked for a lot more money this year, over past years. "We asked for \$4.5 million more than we got last year," she said. "Which is a significant sum of money. It is. But for many years, over 10, we were level funded. No maintenance of effort. Nothing. That's a lot of years Joe." "If people think we couldn't manage a budget, that's managing a budget ... we managed our budget without going into deficit for most of those 10 years without any increases," Mansolillo argued. "I think that speaks volumes to what the School Committee is capable of. So, the mayor and the town council this year gave us half of that, but we really needed all of it to meet our budgetary needs. We said we'd work cooperatively with them. They've sent people in. We're still waiting for the final reports." "You can put out there whatever you want," Mansolillo said to conclude her argument. "You want to put out that you want appointed people, put it ..." "Just finish your comments so that we can continue," DelFino said, raising his voice over the end of Mansolillo's explanation of the current fractured situation between the mayor and the school department. "Let me say one thing." **Co-Spokesman Speaks**
 DelFino took the floor. "So you jumped in and you had to get your point across," DelFino argued. "No one suggested that the mayor said anything at all about any of this. Taylor made a motion ..." Russo is the mayor's direct appointment to the JCRC. If anyone at the meeting was to speak for the mayor, it would likely be his lone appointment to the board. "It's happening because she said it," DelFino boomed. "No conversations took place with the mayor who said I want to do this, I want ... He's not here tonight. You use this opportunity to make this suggestion that there's a problem, that there's a problem." "Fred Iafrate said there was a problem," Mansolillo replied. "He said there was a problem, or it's not working," DelFino clapped back. "The only thing on the floor"

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Charter
(Continued from page 8)

right now is there is a recommendation to maybe increase the size of the school committee."

DelFino said he wanted to ask Mansolillo some questions.

"You seem to be opposed to ... what she's suggesting, more members," he argued. "The other communities that have suggested a hybrid have also suggested that more members bring out more constituency representation."

He shouted his first question at Mansolillo: "What percentage of this town, school children, identify as black or brown?"

"I didn't want to go down this road, but now I'm going to ask these questions," DelFino argued. "Because what he said and what she said only should have drawn a discussion on the topic of why should we include more people on the school committee. It had nothing to do with Mayor Polisenia; with a fight between the parties; with money issues; with under-funding ... you've used every opportunity at these meetings to talk about whatever the issue is between the school committee and the mayor."

DelFino denied any collusion between members of the JCRC and the mayor's office.

"There has never been a conversation between the mayor and myself relative to this issue," he insisted. "But now that it's on the table, I want to take it to the next step."

He shouted his question at Mansolillo again. "What is the percentage of children in the town that identify as black or brown? I want the answer. I don't want a guess. I want an answer."

"I don't know the exact number," she answered.

"What percentage of students in this town, of families in this town, send their children to private or parochial school?"

"I don't know the exact number," Mansolillo answered again.

"What percentage of kids ... in the schools ... identify as second language learners? What percentage?" He asked. "I want the answer! Not a guess. I want the answer!"

DelFino shook the room for an answer.

"Do you know?" he yelled. "Do you have a guess?"

"What percentage of people in the town of Johnston have no children at all — taxpayers with no chil-

dren in the school system?" He asked, rounding out the four categories of what DelFino called the un-represented minorities of Johnston.

"Maybe, black and brown students need a representative on the school committee," DelFino argued. "Maybe special ed services, kids who are receiving special ed services, need a representative on the school committee. Maybe parents of parochial school kids, who pay a lot of money in taxes, have a right to have a representative on the school committee ... there's no down-side to suggesting more people on the school committee, that could be appointed by the mayor."

Then DelFino got personal.

"Who's the financial expert on the school committee?" He asked Mansolillo. "It hasn't worked out very well. Has it?" He answered his own question and then continued arguing for broader representation on the school committee.

"This is a way to achieve that," DelFino told the JCRC. "If that's what Taylor had in mind. I have no idea. Because we got into a discussion of defending the school committee in its fight against the mayor."

DelFino, the town's former Democratic Town Committee chairman and current executive director of the Johnston Senior Center, spent years on a previous iteration of the Johnston School Committee. He eventually resigned following a disagreement over a superintendent search committee.

"Back when I was on the school committee I heard it all the time," DelFino recalled. "Tell me why that's a bad thing. Tell me why more representation is a bad thing. It's doing nothing with regards to you representing your district ... I think more representation of marginalized groups in this town, is good for the school department."

Mansolillo took a moment to defend herself.

"I didn't say that I was against what she (Russo) said," Mansolillo explained. "I didn't say that ... I agree that we need better representation. And we've talked about that, even about our administrators."

The JCRC will eventually agree on a final set list of proposals to present to the Town Council. Town Council, however, ultimately has full control over what proposals they take to the voting public during the fall election. According to DelFino, the decision has yet to be made whether voters will vote on each proposal separately, or together. Changes to the charter that involve elected office-holders will not take effect until the next term of office begins, following the referendum vote.

Lafazia lightened the mood to conclude the discussion. He assured the JCRC that members of the current Johnston School Committee would not be seeking a raise from taxpayers.

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Johnston Sun Rise

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By JENNIFER COATES

When the plans were being drafted for Briarcliffe Gardens, a memory care assisted living residence tucked in the shady woods of Johnston, owner Akshay Talwar, and his team poured over every detail. Every design decision was based on thorough research conducted throughout the country on similar residences. Every detail, from the amount of light that bathes their common rooms to the patterns on the floor to the placement of furniture, was carefully calculated, all with the intent of enhancing the quality of life and the safety of the residents of this busy center.

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

To start, Briarcliffe Gardens is built entirely on one floor with dining and living spaces in the center, forming the social core,

much like one's own kitchen. On any given day, this warmly-lit common room is filled with residents who are being guided through crafts, games or socialization exercises. In adjoining rooms, it is not uncommon to see residents engaged in therapeutic activities such as seated yoga, tai chi, pet and music therapy.

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

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

From the time when the first ground was broken on Briarcliffe Gardens, this state-of-the-art memory care assisted living residence's primary mission has been to provide a secure, nurturing and vibrant community for its many residents.

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

To schedule your personal tour of Briarcliffe Gardens, located on Old Pocasset Road in Johnston, call 401-944-2450. For more information, you can also visit them at www.briarcliffegardens.com.

Johnston Senior Center Highlights

From the Staff

Our Valentine's Day Event was a huge success!

Our Senior Center gives our all, to make our members feel welcome and enjoy the time they spend here.

Along with the activities, lunch is served daily. Bingo is every Thursday and Friday at 2 p.m.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Together we will bring our Center back to life and make it better than ever. Thank you to all our members.

Weekly Fun

- Monday — Arts and Crafts
- Monday & Wednesday — Hi Lo Jack
- Tuesday — Quilting
- Wednesday — Poker
- Thursday — Mar Jong
- Thursday & Friday — Bingo

Upcoming Activities

Mondays — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Arts & Crafts, 10:30 a.m.; Hi Lo Jack, 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.

Wednesday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Quilting, 9:30 a.m.; Zumba, 10 a.m.; Fit & Strong — Chair, 11 a.m.

Thursday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Mahjong, 9:30 a.m.; Chair Yoga, 10 a.m.; Bone Builders, 11 a.m.

Friday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Line Dancing, 10 a.m.; Fit & Strong-Chair, 11 a.m.

Trips & Events

- Monday, Feb. 26, Newport, Lunch & Shopping, 10:30 a.m. (\$5 per person)
- Tuesday, Feb. 27, Book Club with Mary
- Wednesday, Feb. 28, 11:30 a.m., Mystery Lunch (\$10 per person)
- Tuesday, March 5, 1 p.m., Painting with Lorraine (\$20 per person)
- Tuesday, March 5, The Knotty Oak Room for Breakfast, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 12, Ballroom Dancing, from 1-3 p.m. (Come join the fun!)
- Monday, March 18, Biomes Marine Biology Center, 10 a.m. (\$5 per person)
- Tuesday, March 26, Book Club with Mary, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 26, Lunch & Movie (\$10 per person)
- Wednesday, March 27, Mystery Lunch (\$10 per person)
- Wednesday, March 27, Paint with Sue, 6 p.m. (\$20 per person)

More at Mohr Library

Kids Vacation Week Programs at Mohr Library continue through Friday, Feb. 23.

Yoga: Thursday, Feb. 22 at 10:30 a.m.

Ms Pauline will guide participants into gentle movements and simple breathing techniques. Ages 5 and up. This program is sponsored by TriCounty HEZ.

Magic Show: Thursday, Feb. 22 at 6:30 p.m.

The Great Baldini will entertain families with a show full of non-stop comedy and magic. Registration is required and will open on Feb. 20 at 9:30 a.m. The registration link will appear at <https://mohrlibrary.org/forchildren.php>. This program is sponsored by the Friends of Mohr Library

STEM Challenge: Friday, Feb. 23 from 2 to 3 p.m.

Bring your curiosity and join Ms. Melyssa for a fun STEAM project. Ages 5 and up.

See mohrlibrary.org or call 401-231-4980 to register.

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Sports

Desmarais wins state title

Freshman takes 1st in vault, qualifies for regionals

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League held its Gymnastics State Championships last weekend at Rhode Island College, and Johnston freshman Gianna Desmarais was the school's lone representative.

She made a stunning debut, going on to win the vault title with a score of 9.45.

Although Desmarais felt that a strong performance was in the cards, she did not expect a first-place finish, especially after a tough start to the day.

"Practice has been going well, so it was kind of expected. I was pretty happy, I didn't think (my score) was going to be that high because warmups (didn't go) very well, but I just came out and did what I know how to do," said Desmarais.

Desmarais went on to finish 10th in



TITLE - PAGE 12 STATE CHAMP: Johnston's Gianna Desmarais competes in the vault last weekend. (Photo by Alex Sponseller)



HEALTHY HELPERS: Among those JHS students who helped make Hoops for Heart another overwhelming success are standing behind a table that was filled with snacks for all participants. The group includes: Sydney Raposo, Dariana Munoz, Chris Civetti, Jiana Mitsoulis, Alessandra Pesare, Neari Vasquez, Raylin Santos, Cameron Walker, James Pastore, Kaylee Poole and Elise Connors. (Submitted photos)

Hoops for Heart raises \$1,400

By PETE FONTAINE

Ya gotta have heart! Many Johnston High School students had that and much, much, much more for one of the many annual

storiéd traditions that are held on Cherry Hill. First off, it's a Rite of February unlike any other, as countless proud Panthers raise money to participate in

HEART - PAGE 12

JHS girls hoops beats Davies to clinch top seed

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston girls basketball team rolled in its rematch against Davies, winning 61-39 and officially clinching the top seed in Division IV. The team will also enjoy a first-round bye in the opening round.

The two teams squared off on opening night and the host Patriots would get a fourth quarter comeback win against a shorthanded Panthers team, which was without starting guard Jayannah Rollins.

Rollins made her presence felt early and often in the rematch and led the way with a game-high 27 points, while Bella Gesualdi finished with 18.

Davies was dropped to second place with the loss while Hope finished third in Division IV. The Panthers will get the rest of the week off as they await to see who they host in the semifinals. Johnston will take on the winner of Providence Country Day and Block Island, while Davies and Hope will play on the other side of the bracket.

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■ Title
(Continued from page 11)

the all-around category, thanks to a second-place finish in the bars as well. Desmarais qualified for each event at the upcoming New England championships. Looking toward the future, Desmarais feels that she will only grow in both confidence and performance with the show she put on last weekend.

"I'm very proud. I definitely think I can be much better, especially after coming back from injuries, I think I can be much better than my freshman year," Desmarais said.

Winning the team state title was the Warwick co-op.

Leading the way were seniors Riley Bromage and Madison Long, who finished second and third all-around, respectively.

Long won the floor competition, took second on the beam and third on the vault. Bromage took fourth in the vault, sixth in bars, fifth on the beam and second on the floor.

"It felt good, especially both of us coming off serious injuries, it felt good to come back and win this for our team," said Bromage.

The senior leader believed that the key to the team's win was getting off to a fast start with a strong performance on the bars, which is an event that they've struggled with at times this season.

"We usually start slow on the first event but today we didn't and it was a really motivating feeling. We didn't even know if we'd be able to compete this year (due to our injuries), so it was a really good feeling to leave it all out there today," Bromage said.

Long added: "That really helped because it allowed us to take a breath and have fun the rest of the meet. That was important because when we have fun, that's when we do our best."

Playoff hoops are here

The basketball playoffs start this week in Rhode Island and are sure to bring some great matchups and fun brackets. The basketball postseason is without a doubt the best on the sports calendar and this season's is shaping up to be another fast-paced dogfight in each division.

Here is the outlook on our teams that have made it.

On the boys side, the Hendricken Hawks are in familiar, but unfamiliar, territory as they are not the favorite to win it all and repeat as champs.

Why is this familiar? Well, last season at this time most spectators had the rival La Salle Rams as the favorite and in a way, they were correct as La Salle won the Division I title. Obviously we know the Hawks came back two weeks later to win the state title, but point being, the Hawks know what it's like to not be considered the odds on favorite.

What's unfamiliar this

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPENSSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR

ALEXS@
RHODYBEAT.COM

time around though is how far off from being considered the favorites they are. This is my sixth winter season in Rhode Island and I can say that this is the lowest the general public has been on this team going into the playoffs.

Hendricken graduated all five of its seniors from last season. An up and down start to the season was easy to project, but Hendricken, led by Jamal Gomes, always saves its best for last. The Hawks have indeed improved as the season has worn on, but Classical has remained an unbeaten force, Barrington finished ahead in the standings as did La Salle.

Would I say Hendricken is an afterthought? No, but generally speaking, Classical is the favorite with

most people choosing the Rams as the second option. It's been awhile since the Hawks were considered to be more of a dark horse than a favorite.

I refuse to count the Hawks out, I just can't do it. James Caldarella has been the leader that they asked him to be and Jakob Reyes has emerged as a top-notch guard. Will Mascena and Devin Lynch have also progressed as young players. That's plenty for Gomes to work with.

The Johnston boys are in pretty much the identical spot in Division II. The Panthers are reigning champs, are fourth in the division, and have shown that they can compete with anyone. Yet, they are not grabbing many headlines.

Lincoln, like Classical, is unbeaten and seemingly untouchable. The Lions are the odds-on favorite, with Tolman and St. Ray's right behind them. Again, it's not like the Panthers are being counted out, but few see them as the favorite.

Broken record here, but I also refuse to count the Panthers out. Lincoln got the win in their matchup in the regular season and the Panthers have shown some cracks, but I still be-

lieve in experience, which the Panthers have more of than anyone. I'm expecting a Lions-Panthers rematch where anything can happen.

Headlining our girls teams is Johnston, who beat Davies last week to wrap up the top seed in Division IV. A Johnston championship seems inevitable at this point.

The Panthers' have dominated nearly every game it's played. It lost opening night to Davies but was shorthanded with injury, and was forced to complete a late comeback against third-place Hope a few weeks back. Other than those two blips, the Panthers have steamrolled everyone in their path, including Davies and Hope in the other times they met.

Jayanah Rollins is the best point guard in Division IV while Bella Gesualdi might be the best overall player. Aubree Allen and Ava Waterman provide veteran leadership and coach Jhamal Diggs continues to show that he is one of the state's best. There's no reason to pick against the Panthers at this point. The only way they will come up short is by a massive upset. Not impossible, but very improbable.

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Proceeds to benefit Warwick Rotary Charities



LINKED LEADERS: Long-time JHS faculty members Greg Russo, SADD President Raylin Santos and Head Football Coach Joe Acciaro enjoy a break from action in last week's annual Hoops for Heart event.

■ Heart
(Continued from page 11)

the annual "Hoops for Heart" that benefits the American Heart Association.

Likewise, February is American Heart Month throughout the country and locally JHS has been a leader when it comes to the actual program and raising money each year.

On Wednesday morning - which was Valentine's Day - JHS' valuable and well-organized Students against Dangerous Decisions (SADD) displayed countless heartfelt acts while participating in various games inside the Edward DeSimone Gymnasium and scooting all over the Robert A. Smith Memorial Court for inside of three hours.

"Today was filled with all sorts of healthy activities," said Greg Russo, a popular and longtime JHS faculty member who serves as SADD's advisor. "Our students raised at least \$20 per person to participate and once again displayed ex-

traordinary school spirit and unlimited Panther Pride."

JHS physical education teachers Ms. Quantemeyer, Mr. Acciaro, Mr. Battista and Mr. Leonard organized the games that included traditional basketball, jump rope, badminton and volleyball.

"We also had some group activities including musical chairs, hot potato and chicken in the hen house," Russo explained. "Prizes were awarded to the various winners in the different challenges and those awards were once again donated by the American Heart Association and Rhode Island Blood Center."

Russo also credited SADD officers President Raylin Santos, Vice President Alessandra Pesare and Secretary Jian Mitsoulis with directing all phases of the 2024 Hoops for Heart.

As has always been the case through the years, the day - as Russo related, "was a huge success with our students raising over \$1,400 to commemorate the American Heart Association on Valentines Day."

AWARD WINNER: Angler of the Year, Michael Tilelli of North Kingstown with the award he received from Scott Travers, Executive Director of the RI Saltwater Anglers Association, and Dawn Wood, President. (Submitted photo)



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Tilelli snags Angler of the Year Award

By **CAPT. DAVE MONTI**

how to get there with maps and more.

Michael Tilelli of North Kingstown, RI was awarded the Angler of the Year by the RI Saltwater Anglers Association Saturday, Feb. 17 at their Annual Banquet held at the Quonset O Club. Tilelli took the award that requires anglers to enter multiple species categories to accumulate enough points to take the top award.

"I fish both from shore and from party boats and this is the fourth year receiving the award. The most distinguishing factor this year were the abundant bluefish, all pretty good sized ones which we seem to catch consistently from shore," said Tilelli.

Flynn Jansen of Cohasset, MA received the Youth Angler of the Year award. He is the grandson of Rick Black, RISAA member from Narragansett, RI. Also at the awards banquet members received awards for placing top fish (by weight) for a number of species in youth, shore and boat categories. Hats off to Michael Tilelli, Flynn Jansen and all award winners.

Rhode Island announces outdoor programs for the public

The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) announced spring programs scheduled to connect Rhode Islanders with our state's beautiful natural resources. From vernal pool night to spring turkey hunting to birds, bees, and botany there is something for everyone. DFW's Aquatic Resource Education, Hunter Education, Wildlife Outreach and Volunteer programs have planned a schedule with plenty of opportunities to learn about Rhode Island's fish and wildlife resources or to try out a new outdoor skill.

Public Input Sought on Recreational Summer

Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is seeking public input on a range of options to manage the Commonwealth's 2024 recreational summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries. For options visit <https://www.mass.gov/doc/020924-update-on-recreational-bsb-scup-and-fl/download>.

The interstate fishery management plan for these species requires a 28% recreational harvest reduction for summer flounder, a 10% recreational harvest reduction for scup, and status quo recreational harvest for black sea bass to achieve their coastwide recreational harvest targets in 2024. Public input will be accepted on the range of options through 5 p.m. on March 7, 2024.

Fishing the San Juan River

Fly fishing expert Ed Lombardo will be the guest speaker at a Trout Unlimited RI Chapter 225, seminar on "Fishing the San Juan River, New Mexico" on Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, 6 p.m. The meeting will take place at the Coventry-West Greenwich Elks Lodge, 42 Nooseneck Hill Road, West Greenwich, RI.

Located in the northwest corner of New Mexico, the San Juan River is world renowned for providing some of the most rewarding trout fishing you will ever experience consistently producing both rainbows and browns averaging 16 to 18 inches, with many reaching much larger proportions.

Lombardo will speak on what files work best as well as equipment, rods, reels, fly lines, leaders as well as how to read water anatomy to find the bigger feeding trout,

Climate-Resilient Fisheries online seminar

Join the Lenfest Ocean Program for their next Climate-Resilient Fisheries online seminar on Wednesday, February 28 at 2pmET/11amPT. In this webinar, Dr. Malin Pinsky, University of California- Santa Cruz, and Brandon Muffley, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, will share results from the project Predicting Near-Term Fisheries Shifts Under Climate Change.

To register visit Webinar Registration - Zoom and for a fact sheet on the project visit New Study to Develop Short-Term Species Distribution Forecasts for Fisheries Management | Lenfest Ocean Program.

Project Background: As oceans warm, the distributions of many fish and invertebrate species are shifting, creating challenges for fisheries managers, stakeholders, and communities. Much of the current research on distribution shifts is focused on predicting where species will be over the rest of the century, but fisheries managers also need to know where and how fish are moving now. Using previous fisheries survey data, researchers worked with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to develop and adapt dynamic range models that can predict near-term (1-10 years) shifts of important fish species along the Mid-Atlantic coast and help inform future climate-resilient fisheries planning.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing in stocked ponds for trout and salmon continues to be good for anglers in Rhode Island in waterways that can be fished without ice. And, in Massachusetts, the largemouth bass bite had been good too. Connor Swartz of Red Top Sporting Goods, Buzzards Bay, said, "Once the snow and ice melt, we expect a good bite for trout and largemouth. Anglers are using shiners with success."

"Ponds that continue to produce in Rhode Island include Carbundle Pond, Coventry," said Mike Wade of Watch Hill Outfitters. Vincent Castaldi of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown, said, "Since the snowstorm on February 13 the local ponds are in an ice over condition."

We have ice but not thick enough to ice fish and you cannot fish from shore either. For a complete list of trout stocked ponds in Massachusetts visit Mass Wildlife at Trout stocking report | Mass.gov and in Rhode Island visit www.dem.ri.gov/fishing, or call 401-789-0281 or 401-539-0019 for more information on trout stocking.

Saltwater. Anglers continue to catch school striped bass but not as many compared to January. "Surprisingly, last week on the East End of the Cape Cod Canal anglers have been hooking up with 20 to 30 inch pollock. Many are using Diamond Jigs, some tipping the hook with clams," said Connor Swartz of Red Top Sporting Goods. You should call ahead to make a party boat reservation for cod fishing.

Visit www.islandcurrent.com and www.francesfleet.com. Full day rates for vessels are generally \$130 to \$135 per adult and around \$80 for those under 12 years old.

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

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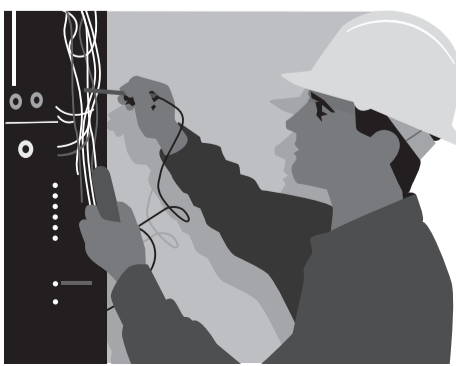
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KEEP IT 100

Local author explores the looming era of longer lifespans in new book

By HUGH MINOR

Reporter, editor, and foreign correspondent William J. Kole has long been fascinated with the prospect of people living past 100 years of age. His own grandmother lived to be 104. "Her life touched three centuries," Kole says with amazement of her 1899 to 2003 span. "In her younger years, she played the piano for silent movies. She was a fascinating individual."

What once was rare – living past 99 – has become more common due to ongoing advances in medicine and technology. "In the next 25 years, the number of people living into the triple digits will increase eightfold. Half of all five-year-olds alive today will live to at least 100."

In his new book, *The Big 100: The New World of Super-Aging*, the Warwick-resident raises the question of whether or not we are ready for the impact that this swell in aging adults will have on society. "Increasing our life expectancy is wonderful, but there are a number of realities that we have to consider," Kole posits. "How do we manage our long-term care? And what about our personal finances? How do we deal with a century worth of bills?"

According to Kole, research shows both positives and negatives. There are things that we need to consider to make certain that tomorrow is worth living for all of us, from addressing quality of life concerns to coping with diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. "Even for people with genetic tendencies toward these diseases, it's not inevitable that they will ultimately experience them," says Kole. "There are steps we can all take to keep [chronic illnesses] at bay, mainly leading a healthy and active life both physically and mentally. The potential is there for each of us living to 100 and beyond to continue to be creative and contribute to deeper, richer lives. These bonus years can be beautiful."

In the biggest little state, the outlook is promising. "Rhode Island is in pretty good shape in terms of people hitting the century mark. We're currently number four in the country with 360 centenarians," reports Kole. Nearby states are high on the scale as well, with Connecticut ranking number two and Massachusetts at number nine. "There is actual research that shows living near the ocean can extend life expectancy. It may be the soothing sounds of the water and access to open spaces where we can breathe fresh air."

Released in October, *The Big 100* continues to garner much buzz and acclaim. Dr. Jane Goodall, noted anthropologist, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute, and UN Messenger of Peace, calls it "stimulating and inspiring," and Kole has been a guest on many broadcasts, including WBUR's *On Point*. The author ends with this nugget of wisdom: "We're all aging, whether we're 18 or 81. But the question is what can we do to make sure that this time is meaningful, that it matters?" Learn more at BillKoleBooks.com; find *The Big 100* at your favorite indie bookseller by request or on the shelf.



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Survey

(Continued from page 1)

Sweet. "The survey is really crucial for us to understand where the kids are at and what the risks that they are anticipating or experiencing, so we can put interventions in place to minimize their risks in the community."

Risk Established

According to Sweet, the schools have been administering the survey since 2016, usually between the months of January and April. Johnston Schools Superintendent Bernard DiLullo Jr. said the district's middle and high school students take the survey. Tri-County Community Action Agency oversees the prevention coalition.

"As far as the age and the grade, that's fine," Rotella said. "As far as any of the other demographics, I don't think that's necessary ... I know that I've had a lot of parents who've talked to me in the past when you guys have done these surveys, and it's really aggravating. I've got to be honest with you."

Rotella said he understands asking questions like, "Have you been bullied?" "And things like that," Rotella argued. "I can understand that. And if you need

information about alcohol and tobacco use, I can get that too. But as far as this first part of the survey, I don't think it's necessary, and to be quite honest with you, if you insist on it, then I'm going to vote totally against it."

Sweet addressed Rotella's concerns. She assured the committee that the survey results are anonymous, and a certain set of questions is required by the state.

"So it's obviously not I who put those questions in there, it's the state that puts the questions in," Sweet told the committee. "And they found that it's necessary for us to find out what population of the students might identify as that, because the LGBTQ ... are at three times greater risk than their (straight) peers. Obviously you know it's anonymous. They don't have to answer those questions. If we take it out, we won't know if there's a population in your schools that need our extra help or intervention to help them."

Rotella, and the other four committee members, remained unconvinced.

"Quite frankly, honestly, anybody who's bullied needs their help," Rotella said. "So it doesn't make a difference how they identify. They can identify as anything they want to identify as. No child should be bullied. It doesn't make a difference what their race, creed or sexual orientation is. So if you truly want to help kids, then I don't feel that that's necessary."

The Questions

Rotella also suggested removing Question 7: "What is your race? (select all that apply)"

"Because anybody who needs help should get help," Rotella said. "It doesn't make a difference. Because it fits some little box; some checkbox. It doesn't mean some kids are more deserving than others. Like I said, if you go ahead with that, I'll tell you, I'm just not for it."

DiLullo gently interrupted the discussion to ask a question: "Can you administer the survey without those three questions?"

Sweet replied that the two questions dealing with sexual orientation could be removed, but not the race question.

"We could actually eliminate the two questions, which would be question 4 and question 5," she explained. "Those are the two questions that will keep the fidelity of the survey."

Question 4 asks, "Some people describe themselves as transgender when their sex at birth does not match the way they think or feel about their gender. Are you transgender?" The question provides the following multiple-choice answers: "No, I am not transgender," "Yes, I am transgender," "I am not sure if I am transgender," and "I do not know what this question is asking."

Question 5 asks, "Which of the following best describes you? Heterosexual

(straight), Gay or lesbian, Bisexual, Not sure."

Don't Ask?

Rotella was not fully appeased by the removal of just two of the questions. He suggested removing a third.

"Why does it matter if they're African American, Asian American, Alaskan, Native Hawaiian?" He asked. "If they need help they should get help. I would never deprive an Alaskan, a Native American, or an African American, a Caucasian, anybody, the help that they need."

Sweet tried to steer the question back to the point of the survey.

"It's not to deprive them, but yet to get the demographics of the population that we're dealing with," she answered Rotella.

"But how does that help?" Rotella asked. "You get more money for different demographics?"

"No," Sweet replied. "It just makes us fine-tune our interventions or our programming." She continued to explain that additional grant money could be available if the school's population meets certain criteria.

"If we kept those two questions it would help us to apply for additional grants for Johnston," she explained.

"So you do get more money!" Rotella shot back.

SURVEY - PAGE 19

ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local Adoptable Loveable



Photo credit: Jess Woody

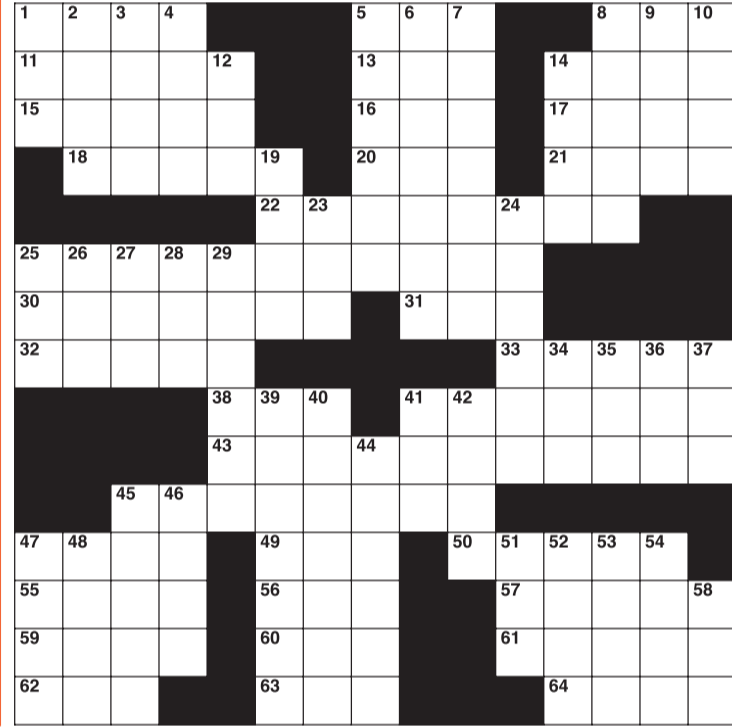
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- 5. Shock therapy
- 8. Ballplayer's tool
- 11. Quench one's thirst
- 13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)
- 14. Every one of two or more things
- 15. Member of Muslim people
- 16. Play
- 17. Type of cheese
- 18. Type of lounge chair
- 20. ___ King Cole, musician
- 21. Fellows
- 22. North, Central and South
- 25. In an early way
- 30. Foes
- 31. Georgia rockers
- 32. Cryptocurrency
- 33. Narrow path along a slope
- 38. Disallow
- 41. Joyousness
- 43. Inaccessible
- 45. Evoke emotions
- 47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 49. Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- 50. Sword
- 55. Actor Idris
- 56. Affirmative (slang)
- 57. Afflicted
- 59. One point north of northeast
- 60. Born of
- 61. Arabic name
- 62. Traumatic brain injury (abbr.)
- 63. Extremity
- 64. Post
- 24. Brass instrument
- 25. Domesticated animal
- 26. Ribonucleic acid
- 27. Snakelike fish
- 28. Woman (French)
- 29. Economically-minded aircraft
- 34. When you hope to get somewhere
- 35. Tease
- 36. Actress Gretchen
- 37. Midway between northeast and east
- 39. Inoffensive
- 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
- 41. Consume
- 42. Does not tell the truth
- 44. Improved something
- 45. Spiritual leader
- 46. Abba ___, Israeli politician
- 47. Fix
- 48. Evergreen tree genus
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Major C. European river
- 54. Long, narrow strap
- 58. Male parent

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22 Reservoir Rd	Elvator Properties Inc	Parsi, Carl and Parsi, Michelle	2/2	\$315,000
23 Princeton Ave	Lozier, Marie J	Lozier, Andrew	1/29	\$261,900
23 Trafford Park Dr	Driscott, Diane L	Oatley, Scott C	2/2	\$275,000
26 Poppin John Ln	Douglas A Aldrich T and Cookson, Kari	Tierney, Raymond and Tierney, Diane	1/30	\$293,000
45 Lear Dr	Tierney, Raymond and Tierney, Diane	Daniel, David	1/29	\$215,000
60 Arnold Rd	Moniz, Walter	Off Course Prop LLC	1/31	\$205,000
68 Read Ave	Mcgrath, Brandy	Reali, Joseph and Real, Corina	2/2	\$289,000
111 Reservoir Rd	Robertson Re Inc and Robertson, Kenneth W	M&i Homes LLC	1/26	\$136,000
115 Colvintown Rd	Silva Sr, Ronald J	Gervais, Tyler W and Giovanela, Jana	1/31	\$289,500
1429 Harkney Hill Rd	Arlene M Jean T and Jean, Robert J	Taylor, Bryan J and Taylor, Tanya C	1/29	\$708,935
1722 Nooseneck Hill Rd Lot 1722	Deorsey, Catherine L and Deorsey Jr, Joseph W	Paliotte, Elaine and Paliotte, John T	1/26	\$439,000

Cranston

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
33 Keller Ave Lot 370	Clemente, Rose M	Gautier, Marlene H	1/30	\$540,000
33 Keller Ave Lot 372	Clemente, Rose M	Gautier, Marlene H	1/30	\$540,000
33 Keller Ave Lot 371	Clemente, Rose M	Gautier, Marlene H	1/30	\$540,000
37 Tremont St Lot 39	Craftsmen Homes LLC	Ferla, Valentina V and Daou, Joana J	1/31	\$360,000
37 Tremont St Lot 40	Craftsmen Homes LLC	Ferla, Valentina V and Daou, Joana J	1/31	\$360,000
50 Meadow Lark Dr	Spicola, Ariana M	Lisi, Andrew and Trujillo, Xaremy	1/31	\$487,600
68 Arcadia Ave Lot 60	Integrity Invest Inc	D & M Home Improv LLC	1/30	\$299,000
68 Arcadia Ave Lot 18	Integrity Invest Inc	D & M Home Improv LLC	1/30	\$299,000
107 Calaman Rd	Ramos, Tyler J and Ramos, Christopher A	Kadow, Elizabeth	1/31	\$399,000
164 Thunder Trl	Robert P Catauro T and Catauro, Robert P	Petitpas, Kayla and Petitpas, John	1/31	\$565,000
180 Crescent Ave	Lovejoy, Sandra and Marschall, Debra A	Mccray, Kailah and Mccray, Naseef	1/31	\$325,000
249 Bay View Ave	Barboza, Joseph J	Oliveira, David J	1/29	\$275,000
263 Narragansett St Lot 669	Patton Soares, Elaine A	Mills, Bryan and Ruthven, Weston	1/29	\$270,000
263 Narragansett St Lot 668	Patton Soares, Elaine A	Mills, Bryan and Ruthven, Weston	1/29	\$270,000
302 Pontiac Ave	Fay, Kara M	Bakleh, Edward and Gabbour, Amal	1/30	\$532,000
499 7 Mile Rd Lot 61	Cross, Kimberly A	Grossguth, Lee B and Grossguth, Courtney N	1/31	\$697,500
499 7 Mile Rd Lot 143	Cross, Kimberly A	Grossguth, Lee B and Grossguth, Courtney N	1/31	\$697,500
1365 New London Ave	Real, Leonard A and Real, Carol	Universal Rlty LLC	1/31	\$230,000
1365 New London Ave	Pelli, Edward	Universal Rlty LLC	1/31	\$300,000

East Greenwich

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
36 Crestridge Dr	Arsenault, Kristen	Ramos, Tyler and Ramos, Christopher	1/31	\$650,000
63 Cindynn Dr	Rosemary B Miner T and Miner, Rosemary B	Wilks, Veenu G	1/31	\$880,000
116 Pine Glen Dr Lot 116	Charles F Moran Jr T and Rd-Tr, Charles F M	Nancy L Burke T and Burke, Nancy L	1/30	\$512,500

Johnston

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
15 Alexandria Way	Silvia, Kyle and Nicholson, Tyler	Cabral, Jordan and Cabral, Lisette	12/1	\$759,000
15 Oakland Ave	Ayala, Jesus	Reyes-Perez, Kevin R and Perez-Peralta, Christina E	2/1	\$286,000
23 Tartaglia St	Christina A Babcock RET and Babcock, Christina A	Giannetti 3rd, Louis M and Giannetti, Caitlin S	2/2	\$475,000
27 Highland Ave	Mann, Donna M	Wolf, Daniel and Wolf, Catherine	2/2	\$377,000
63 King St	Taylor, Tanya C	Bushlow, Shaun W and Bushlow, Megan A	1/31	\$342,500
120 Scenery Ln Lot 120	Ferreira, John	Perez, Miguelina	2/6	\$285,500
1285 Hartford Ave Lot 11	Michael, Richard P	Michael, Kim M	2/6	\$203,500

Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
15 Eastman St Lot 62	Vazquez, Jose G and Rivera, Yamilett	Luna, Juana K and Luna, Jesus R	1/31	\$440,000
15 Eastman St Lot 60	Vazquez, Jose G and Rivera, Yamilett	Luna, Juana K and Luna, Jesus R	1/31	\$440,000
15 Eastman St Lot 61	Vazquez, Jose G and Rivera, Yamilett	Luna, Juana K and Luna, Jesus R	1/31	\$440,000
15 Morning Glory Dr	Parker, Patricia F	Nucci, Gregory and Nucci, Donna	1/31	\$294,600
22 Alpine St Lot 29	Bennette, Joshua A and Bennette, Molly M	Bosco, Zachary and Murphy, Sarah	1/31	\$377,500
22 Alpine St Lot 30	Bennette, Joshua A and Bennette, Molly M	Bosco, Zachary and Murphy, Sarah	1/31	\$377,500
27 Logan St	Mcelaney, Kathleen A	Poulakis, Peter and Poulakis, Arthur	1/30	\$351,000
37 Deer Run Xing Lot 37	Stonebridge Crossing Dev	Camus, John and Camus, Susan	1/31	\$685,300
61 Merrymount Dr	Lawrence, Clayton P and Lawrence, Emily C	Bennett, Molly and Bennett, Joshua	1/31	\$570,000
77 Reed St Lot 77	Walter King Ent LLC	Kumar, Preity R	1/29	\$255,000
90 Tampa Ave	Anthony Jr, Matthew and Avedisian, Kristopher	Anjos, Peter	1/29	\$145,000
96 Tidewater Dr Lot 333	Taylor Jr, Raymond D and Kingma, Cheryl A	Nadeau, Kathy A	1/29	\$650,000
96 Tidewater Dr Lot 195	Taylor Jr, Raymond D and Kingma, Cheryl A	Nadeau, Kathy A	1/29	\$650,000
99 Inez Ave	Mcdermott, Shaun J and Mcdermott, Karyn D	Hicks, Matthew B and Hicks, Megan S	1/30	\$415,000
110 Pilgrim Pkwy Lot 2	Whalen Irt and Doliveira, Michelle G	Pope, Elizabeth	1/29	\$165,000
152 Audubon Rd	Jimenez, Jose M and Sossamon, James T	Bergeron, Thomas	1/31	\$472,000
163 George St Lot 1416	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1414	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1393,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1413,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1394,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1418,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1415,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1395,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1392,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1389,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1390,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1417,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1391,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000
163 George St Lot 1388,	Brown Harold Est and Brown, Sharon	Boyd, Meghan	1/30	\$410,000

West Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
25 Kulas Rd	Girchrist, Ian and Girchrist, Christine	Best Life Homes LLC	2/2	\$225,000
27 Lancelotta St Lot A	Rhode Is Custom Bldrs LLC	Darkolon, Janet A and Tubman, Abigail N	2/2	\$438,000
70 Highland St	Price, Catalina	Cruse, Christopher	1/31	\$323,900
85 Esmond St	Supreme Properties LLC	Mccusker, Mark J	1/31	\$450,000
105 Maple Ave	Mayo, Jesse R and Mayo, Sarah K	Saviano Jr, John P	2/1	\$561,000
113 Archambault Ave	Lawton, Steven and Lawton, Jacqueline	Rex Asset Management LLC	2/1	\$332,000

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The 2024 Las Vegas Antique Arms Show



By Joel Bohy
Historic Arms & Militaria
 Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers
 Cranston, RI



With the exception of one year and a gap during COVID, the Las Vegas Antique Arms Show falls in late January. For me, it's the first show after the holidays and a chance to be in warmer weather for a few days - although some years it has been pretty cold in Vegas! But weather aside, it's always a good opportunity to talk with old friends and meet folks who frequent our auctions. It's also an opportunity to see some very cool things on the show tables. My friends know I am not a fan of Las Vegas itself, and I rarely leave the Westgate hotel where the show is held. But that's not a bad thing as I can sit and talk with people who I don't get to see very often without the distraction of everything else going on in Vegas. Not my favorite city for sure!

While some shows are getting a lot smaller, this one still seems to have a fairly large group of dealers and customers who come from all over the country to shop. There is a huge room with every type of antique arm, another large room next to it with shotguns and sporting arms, Japanese swords, and gun engravers. There is also another large hall filled with western-themed material. I seldom get into the second or third room to look around as there is so much to see in the antique arms hall. This year was no different; I was so busy I didn't get a chance to wander very much.

There are also some pretty fantastic displays set up where you can see lots of things you normally would not. Rare arms, sometimes with vintage ammunition, in the original box and packaging. Some of them are in spectacular condition with amazing finishes. It's not just firearms either; swords or pretty much anything arms related are displayed. There are a group of judges who wander the show for a few days and get together to vote on what they feel was the best presentations based upon certain criteria.

In a time when shows seem to be withering a bit, this one still seems to bring in the crowds. If you're looking for something to do next January and you like Las Vegas, you should check it out!

If you'd like to attend something sooner, or prefer not to travel so far, check out the upcoming show in Maryland. The Baltimore Antique Arms Show the weekend of March 16-17, and I will be there representing Bruneau and Co. If you're on the east coast and want to go to a good show, this is the one!

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Bond

(Continued from page 1)

the town's central district off from commuters and customers.

According to Deller, town planners have "been spending a lot of time over the last few months studying the problem."

He presented maps showing flood issues throughout town — issues only reported since the January storm — to members of town council.

"This area was less than 21% developed 40 years ago, but ... today, it's close to 55-60% developed," Deller told town council. "And all that ... storm water is going into our systems, overflowing the systems we have today."

Belfield Drive has been drying out in the shadow of the unopened (and so far unused) Amazon robotic fulfillment center, constructed last year off Hartford Avenue. Across the street sits an unfinished rehabilitation hospital. The past few years have been booming for development in Johnston.

As Deller explained, development in town has multiplied three-fold over the past four decades. Thick development and soaking unprecedented storms have combined forces, making large swathes of town practically unlivable (and in some cases, unreachable).

What's the Plan?

Deller and Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisenia Jr. have been meeting with engineers and examining options that once might have been considered extreme, like widespread home buyouts and demolition projects.

"We've come to realize that there's not enough pipes or catch basins that we can build to solve this problem," Deller explained. "We need to think about buying land and creating detention areas that will hold the storm water so we can meter it out over time."

Polisenia has been foreshadowing the impending need for a hefty flood bond to remediate the ongoing, worsening water issues in town.

"If passed by the voters, the money from this bond will be used to address severe and non-severe but high volume (large number of people affected) areas that suffer from chronic flooding and drainage issues," Polisenia wrote via email last week. "The only way this bond works for everyone, as some people in the town may not have flooding issues, is if we use this bond to also

address Atwood Avenue and Johnston Memorial Park. Addressing those two problem areas allows everyone in the town to benefit, not only specific neighborhoods that will be addressed."

Deller briefed town council on the bond votes they will be asked to take.

"The way the process works ... You have to ask the legislature to pass the resolution," Deller explained. "We then have to come back to you for a detailed bonding resolution that you have to pass. And then that goes on the ballot for a November vote."

The Process?

Polisenia promises more details will quickly emerge over the next few months.

"Before residents vote on it in November, we will present each project, which will be a mix of piping improvements, home buyouts, detention pond creations and road upgrades, depending on the specific problem area," Polisenia explained. "We will also present how much we are using and how much this costs to the average property tax bill. Then the people can decide in November if it's worth the cost."

The number — \$40 million — may ultimately, hopefully, be higher than needed.

"Why is the number so big?" Deller asked, standing before town council. "We hope not to spend that much money. But if we're going to go forward, we wanted enough authorization to carry out the project as it developed. We didn't want to have to go back ... and ask for more."

The full scope of the projects (to be funded) has yet to be realized, and could even change depending on the forecast.

"We're still working on what the projects will be, but the legislative deadline to get this submitted to the General Assembly, which has to approve G.O. bonds for municipalities, is Thursday, Feb. 15," Polisenia said. "There won't be any ribbon cuttings or fanfare with these projects. However, after what happened this past fall and winter and with the increasing amount of storms we are getting as time goes on, we can't continue to live like this."

The mayor's looking to replace a Band-Aid with a tourniquet, but trying to save all of the town's limbs.

"Right now, we're responding to the symptoms as best we can deploying military vehicles, building temporary roads, pumping water out of basements, closing roads, paying for hotels, using overtime on police, fire and DPW," Polisenia said.

Survey

(Continued from page 15)

"No, no, no," Sweet replied. "If there are grants out there that are to service that population we would need to have the numbers as to who we would be servicing."

"So you could get more money," Rotella replied.

Sweet told the board that it was within their purview to eliminate the two questions on sexual identity.

"Four and five are the two that the state is allowing us to eliminate," Sweet said. "We can not give the survey ... if we eliminate the race question ... We need those basic demographics."

Shared Opinion

The rest of the board weighed in briefly.

Committee Member Susan Mansolillo asked Sweet if the coalition would alter its programming based on

the survey results.

"Is it the same program?" She asked. "Is it different?"

Sweet said that if the survey found a "substantial amount of that particular population" then the coalition "would go out to seek additional funding to help them."

"How do we make them more comfortable?" Sweet asked hypothetically. "As you know, that population is bullied more. They don't feel safe at school, three times more than their straight peers. They're bullied more and they use substances more. So if there was a substantial (population) ... we could try to find additional funding to help those students in particular, while we're still working with the general population."

Mansolillo said she had lingering concerns.

"At this age, students, they're at an age where they're very susceptible," she said. "They're learning. They're finding their way. They're figuring it out.

They might not know how to answer this. They might think this one day; they might not think this the next day ... And that concerns me."

Sweet told the committee that staff from the University of Rhode Island (URI) epidemiology department would administer the survey if approved. And before giving the survey, the staff would "receive proctor training." Students are informed they don't have to answer any questions that make them feel uncomfortable.

"I have concerns about (questions) 4 and 5," Mansolillo said.

"I do too Sue," Rotella replied.

Committee Chairman Robert Lafazia went around the table, asking each member how they felt.

"Dawn?" Lafazia asked committee member Dawn Aloisio.

"I think that 4 and five should be taken out," she answered.

"It's too expensive to do annually and once the water subsides, the problems are still there for the next time. Ultimately, we need to address the underlying disease. That's old infrastructure, which plagues much of New England, and the Pocasset River. That river and the brooks that run off it are a major cause of the problems we face."

Asked recently about over-development, and recent huge development projects, the mayor said he looks to the state's Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to advise planners when it comes to stormwater management and wetland evasion. Each of the recent and ongoing development projects in town ultimately earned DEM (and town) approval.

And All Its Tributaries

Deller shared discussions he's been having with Councilwoman Linda Folcarelli, "about the problems with the Pocasset River in her ward"

"The Pocasset Watershed virtually covers the whole town and that it starts on the north side of Brown Avenue, runs through Snake Den Park, down through Belfield Avenue, all the way through town," Deller explained to town council. "And as that water comes down, it grows in volume and speed and causes ... problems. What we need to do is we need to think about how we acquire land, set it aside and create it as an area to hold that storm water and meter it out slowly so we can reduce the flooding."

The approach to come will be varied and widespread.

"But that's not the only solution," Deller said. "We are going to have to buy houses. And we are going to have to demolish those properties and make that ... land open for storm water ... We are in the very early stages of developing a comprehensive storm water plan for the town."

Deller has been leading teams, assessing river channels throughout town.

"We've actually been cleaning out pipes, cleaning out river beds to make sure the water flows ... What Belfield Drive has taught us, is that even though we anticipate some of this stuff, the storms have been worse than we anticipated," Deller said. "Just on Belfield Drive, for example, the flood plain elevation is 253.4 feet above sea level. Everything has to be designed to that flood level. The new bridge on Belfield is ... two feet above flood level. And yet in the January storm it was three feet under water."

"Marysue?" He asked committee member Marysue Androzzio.

"Agreed," she answered.

"I'm going to ask that we take out (questions) four and five at this time," Lafazia said, as chairman. "Somebody make a motion when that time comes."

Sweet said that wasn't a problem.

"I would reach out to URI and ask them to please remove four and five; and when the surveys come out, four and five will be missing," she told the committee. "It will be renumbered."

After the meeting, upon request, DiLullo provided a copy of the survey. Asked to weigh in on the survey, and the removal of several questions, the superintendent replied: "I don't believe the survey will impact our services for all students. We have a very solid clinical team that works with all students and their families regarding any issues that they may be dealing with."

Inmate

(Continued from page 1)

partment of Corrections (DOC). The Rhode Island State Senate Minority Leader has called for an immediate hearing with sworn testimony.

And the Ocean State's Attorney General's Office says the inmate's 2023 release "should not have happened," and called for a review of the incident by the DOC and the Department of Public Safety.

On Feb. 15, U.S. Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Boston announced the arrest of a "Guatemalan national charged with child sexual assault in Rhode Island." ERO called out the Adult Correctional Institute (ACI) in Cranston, where the suspect had been detained, until the facility "ignored the ICE detainer and released him."

Calls to ACI Warden Sergio DeSousarosa were referred to J.R. Ventura, Chief of Information & Public Relations, and Public Information Officer for the DOC, who provided an "official statement" on the ERO's claims Monday afternoon.

"The inmate in question was discharged from court, not from the ACI," according to Ventura. "When inmates leave our custody to go to court, they are re-

manded to the custody of the Sheriff's Office for transport. We are exclusively responsible for custody at the ACI. The court decides what happens to inmates and their sentences."

ERO made the arrest on Feb. 6. The agency didn't release the man's name, age or residing address at the time of arrest. Federal officials said only that the defendant is facing pending child molestation charges in Providence.

Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha's office argued the case during a hearing, in an attempt to keep the defendant in custody. The AG's Office provided a statement Tuesday afternoon.

"The issue of bail in this very serious matter was the subject of a full evidentiary hearing before the district court last year," according to AG spokesman Brian Hodge. "At the conclusion of that hearing, this Office argued that the Court should order the defendant held without bail, on the grounds that the defendant posed a danger to the community and was a flight risk. The Court, notwithstanding that it found that the state's evidence established that the proof of guilt was evident and the presumption of guilt great, ordered that the defendant be released on surety bail of \$50,000, over the objection of this Office. The defendant apparently posted that

bail and was released directly from the courthouse notwithstanding the lodged federal immigration detainer. Plainly, that should not have happened and there should be a review by the Department of Corrections and the Department of Public Safety of why it did."

ERO Boston provided what little information it had on the suspect's entry into the country.

"The Guatemalan national unlawfully entered the United States on an unknown date at an unknown location without being inspected, admitted or paroled by an immigration official," according to the federal agency.

Providence Police arrested the man in March 2023. He was charged with felony child molestation and incarcerated at the ACI.

"Shortly after his arrest, ERO Boston lodged an immigration detainer against the Guatemalan citizen with the (ACI), where he was being detained," according to the ERO press release. "The facility ignored the ICE detainer and released him in April 2023 by order of the Sixth District Court of Providence."

The suspect's case in Rhode Island is pending.

"This Guatemalan national has disregarded U.S. immigration laws and has been charged with horrific crimes against a Rhode Island child," said ERO Boston

Field Office Director Todd M. Lyons. "We will continue to apprehend and remove egregious offenders who prey on the most vulnerable in our society. The men and women of ERO Boston remain dedicated to the safety of the residents of our New England communities."

According to ERO Boston, the suspect will "remain in ICE custody pending removal proceedings before a federal immigration judge with the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). EOIR is a separate entity from the Department of Homeland Security and ICE. Immigration judges in these courts make decisions based on the merits of each individual case, determining if a non-citizen is subject to a final order of removal or eligible for certain forms of relief from removal."

In 2014, Rhode Island Gov. Lincoln Chafee set a new policy for the Ocean State, directing the RIDOC to no longer honor federal immigration detainers without a warrant. McKee's office refused to clarify whether that policy remains in place eight years later.

Republican Rhode Island State Sen. Jessica de la Cruz (District 23, representing Burrillville, Gloucester and North Smithfield), the senate's Minority Leader, has been making inquiries in an effort to learn more details of this

particular case.

"I am appalled that a Guatemalan national was released from the ACI despite a lawfully lodged immigration detainer," de la Cruz responded via email Tuesday. "We know his release wasn't long after he was charged with a heinous crime against a child. At this point we do not know how this massive failure occurred. To that end, I have filed a public records request with the (RIDOC) as well as the RI Division of Sheriffs and I am conferring with the Senate Oversight Chairman about convening an immediate hearing with sworn testimony by the directors of both agencies."

She provided screenshots of her public record requests.

"When criminal non-citizens are released from local or state custody despite a detainer, they have the opportunity to reoffend and the public is at risk," argues de la Cruz. "ICE lodges detainers on individuals who have been arrested on serious criminal charges who ICE has probable cause to believe are removable non-citizens. Thankfully the suspect was arrested in Boston the other day by ICE Enforcement & Removal Officers but it remains to be seen if the suspect preyed upon more children in the 10 months he was at large. I will do everything in my power to get answers."



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Messages from a Friend

MEMOIRS

by SUSAN DEAN

I want to tell you about my friend, Donna. She passed away recently, and although not totally unexpected - she was diagnosed with metastatic colon cancer a little less than a year ago, it still feels shocking.

I met Donna in June, 2002. We had both been hired as tour guides at Rough Point, Doris Duke's summer home on Bellevue Avenue in Newport.

For Donna, it was her full-time job. For me, it was my fun summer job. We weren't volunteer docents, we've always been paid employees and it eventually morphed into my fun retirement job. Donna had previously worked as a tour guide at Hammersmith Farm until it closed as a museum, so she was experienced. For me, it was overwhelming at first. Remembering everything? Giving tours to groups of 15-20 people, all eyes on me? The very thought made my kneecaps quiver under the long summer skirts and dresses which are my summer wardrobe staple when working at Rough Point.

But Donna said, "Give yourself permission to not know everything at first. And if you forget something it's okay."

And sure enough, I did sometimes forget things. But Donna gave me permission to not fret over perfection.

In February, 2003, our collection of Rough Point tour guides was invited to New Jersey by the Doris Duke Foundation to visit the greenhouses at Duke Farms and to meet the folks still working on the property. We spent a fun-filled day with the staff, but as the afternoon wore on snow began to fall. Blizzard conditions were predicted, and we decided that it wasn't safe to drive home.

The Duke Farms staff handed us the keys to the house, the 60,000 square foot house with fifty rooms, built in 1893, and told us we could stay overnight alone, the nine of us. We had instructions to not cook or leave any trash, but beyond that we had free rein.

Oh, and to just remember to lock up when we left the next morning and to leave the keys in the mailbox!

The house was completely furnished, many of the items bearing tags from Christie's, the British auction house. There were sheets on the beds, soap in the soap dishes - it looked like Doris had simply left, but knew we were coming and wanted us to be comfortable.

We each picked a bedroom. I had the Green Room, Donna chose the Yellow Room. It felt like we were in a life-sized game of Clue and I almost expected to see Mrs. Peacock or Professor Plum to appear around a corner.

We got into our pajamas and explored the whole mansion. It was quite ghostly and eerie. Donna read Tarot cards for us that night - huddled cozily together in a mansion surrounded by 2,700 acres of woods, wind howling, in the middle of a raging blizzard. It was an experi-

ence to remember and we talked about it for years, telling new guides about our "field trip" and often sharing the story with visitors on our tours.

Donna and I became fast friends after that adventure. We had much in common and got to know each other's pasts, joys, and heartaches as good friends do and we made many more memories together through the years.

One evening we drove to the beach and sat in the car watching the ocean. Lost in conversation, we didn't notice the parking lot gates closing and locking behind us. We had to walk to Donna's house in the dark, which was several miles away laughing the whole way, and I had to sleep on her couch. In the morning when the beach opened again, we trekked back to retrieve the car. This amused us for years afterwards and when June rolled around again, we'd say, "Remember when...." and laugh all over again.

Donna and I saw each other every season, April - November, and eventually started getting together during the winter months too. One year we spent a weekend with another of our tour guide friends, Kate. The three of us drove to Stockbridge, MA to visit the Norman Rockwell Museum. Another time we went to Concord, MA and spent the weekend exploring its history and walking the trails.

When our tour guiding season started each year, we'd plan to share dinner together in Newport at the end of our workday, once each week. Donna and Kate both lived in Newport so sometimes we'd start out at either Donna's or Kate's and share a glass of wine first. Sometimes we'd eat by the water while watching the sailboats and yachts, or up on a rooftop - dining while the lights began to glow in the city below. Sometimes we'd order take-out instead and have dinner together on Donna's front porch. It was peaceful spot where Donna had strung tiny white fairy lights surrounding us like miniature stars. We talked, laughed, and shared as good friends do. Often we'd end the evening by taking a ride down Ocean Drive to watch the sunset in its blazing glory and witness the moon solemnly take its place, and we'd see who was the first to see a star appear.

Donna was into astrology and angels and all things spiritual and we had many discussions on these topics. I've experienced many signs and synchronicities that cemented my belief that we're surrounded by angels and spirit guides and that there is mystery and creative order in this universe. And I believe that we are immortal souls having a human experience and that there is life after death.

Donna and I shared these beliefs and Donna could actually see spirits and angel lights, etc. I used to lament regularly to her, "Why can't I see any of this??"

She'd give me an exasperated look and remind me once again, "That's MY gift - you have OTHER gifts - so stop with the complaining!"

■ DONNA - CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



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Adult Day Programs Support Seniors with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's

The long-term effects of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, as well as other related disorders, can have a devastating impact on individuals and families.

Actively engaging seniors in fulfilling activities can help slow the onset and advancement of both conditions. That's the goal of day programs designed to help older adults both before their diagnosis and once they're in the early stages of either disease.

"Research shows that early intervention can help slow the progression of both Alzheimer's and Parkinson's," explained Jessica Gosselin, Director of Adult Day Programs for Saint Elizabeth Community. "By participating in adult day programs, seniors are engaged physically, mentally and socially in ways that combat the development of these disorders."

At the Memory Care Center in Warwick Neck, Gosselin's staff work with participants to focus on developing skills that allow individuals to remain independent for as long as possible. Activities stimulate the brain and enhance memory often through the arts and other creative outlets.

On the other side of town, at the Adult Day Center in Apponaug, the Saint Elizabeth team take a similar approach for seniors with Parkinson's Disease and mobility and movement disorders. Participants join in exercise classes that focus on balance and fall prevention while

building strength and endurance.

As Linda Sinnott, Program Director at the Saint Elizabeth Memory Care Center clarified, "Programs focus on what a person CAN do, not what they can't do, and that empowers them to do more."

They also receive the attention of onsite nurses and caregivers who monitor and note any changes in their behavior. That approach allows staff to adapt each individual's care plan to meet their current needs.

Adult Day Centers provide transportation to and from the sites and, of course, nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day. Through a partnership with CareLink, they offer a range of physical and occupational therapy options when prescribed by a physician.

For caregivers of seniors living with Alzheimer's disease and aphasia, Saint Elizabeth Adult Day Care offers support groups open to everyone, even if they're not enrolled in the adult day program.

"It's an opportunity for family members from the community to come together and share their own experiences and provide encouragement," said Gosselin. "Our facilitators work with participants to find solutions to the challenges they're facing every day."



■ DONNA

Through the years we laughed together rehashing our many memories - things that happened both during our Rough Point workdays, and our fun times out of work, too. Eventually we were the "senior guides" having gained the status of "having been there the longest" and we had many stories to tell.

I had talked to Donna by phone this past December and she told me she was doing well, and was about to resume treatment for her cancer after taking a break to visit her brother in Florida. She sounded weak to me, short of breath, and wasn't able to hold much of a conversation. But she assured me she was just tired from traveling and she'd be in touch.

A few weeks later I received a text from our friend, Kate. Kate had moved to Connecticut in 2022, and hadn't been in touch with Donna recently. But Kate told me she had reached for a book on her bookshelf that day, and out of the book fell an article I had written in 2022 called "Porch Lights". It was about the post-workday dinners the three of us shared on Donna's porch and I had given Donna and Kate each a copy at the time. Kate took a picture of the title along with the first few paragraphs, which mentioned Donna's name a number of times, and texted it to me. Kate said that this article about the three of us practically "fell" into her lap, and so she felt compelled to contact me and wanted to know how I was doing and if I'd heard from Donna lately.

This, in turn, compelled me to text Donna. Donna's daughter responded immediately, telling me that Donna's health had taken a sudden sharp decline within the past two days, and that she had passed away.

I quickly called Kate, who was as shocked as I was, even though we knew she was sick. I think what bothered both of us so much was knowing that Donna had never wanted to have a colonoscopy, and so had never had one. This was Donna's choice and we knew we had to accept it, but Kate and I couldn't help talking through our sadness about the "what ifs". If Donna hadn't refused regular screenings, which might have detected early pre-cancer, could she have avoided getting metastatic colon cancer? By the time hers was discovered it had already spread to her liver. Donna would probably tell us that it was simply her time.

A week or so later I was looking through some of my papers and found an astrology reading Donna had done for me back in 2021. It was very informal, quite spur-of-the-moment. My birthday was coming up and Donna had offered to check on my future.

She had written it out on a piece of notebook paper, things like "Mercury will be in retrograde" and certain dates to pay attention to. In the middle of these notes there was one date standing alone, January 10.

January 10 was just stuck in the middle of the page, with empty space all around it, almost as if it was a random afterthought, and of course, it was in Donna's handwriting, as the whole page was. Then her notes continued on with advice connected to my reading.

January 10, this year, is the day that Donna died. Is it possible that three years earlier she somehow knew from somewhere deep in her soul, when her time would come? Maybe it truly was simply her time.

I was in Florida a few weeks ago and came across a wild animal rescue organization holding an informational booth in a nearby park. There was a Great Horned Owl sitting on a perch. While listening to the man telling us about the owl, a white owl feather gently drifted down in front of me and landed at my feet. I picked it up and immediately thought of Donna.

Great Horned Owls are associated with trusting that we are connected to "Source", however one chooses to interpret that, even when physical proof isn't there. They symbolize intuition, wisdom, and signal a time of great change and transition, as well as being messengers from the spirit world.

I could almost see Donna smiling as I tucked that owl feather away for safekeeping. We both believed that there is magic in finding feathers.

I will miss you, my friend, but I know that you are safely on your journey, having made the great change and transition. You will always be in my thoughts and in my heart of hearts. I will always be grateful for your friendship, and whenever a feather falls across my path, I'll know it's you....remembering me, too.



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Take My Technology Please! Chapter II



MY SIDE OF THINGS

by LARRY GRIMALDI

As my loyal readers (ten of them-all family members will testify), I am mystified by the machinations of I-clouds, Wi-Fi, and other manners of modern communications. As I testified in my first "Take My Technology-Please" column a couple of years ago, I am baffled by the mysteries of computer-generated conundrums. I believe that progress stopped in 1992 and my most recent foray into the Internet, cellphone, and fiberoptic arenas have done nothing to dispel my suspicions.

We moved down to spend the winter in Ft. Lauderdale winter this January. Not wanting to tackle the logistics of streaming or antennae installations, or go to the local coffee shop for internet, I made a default decision to install cable television and internet service at the condo. While I realize that streaming is inevitably in my future, I shudder to think about using several remote controls to tune into TV programming. I'm also launching a personal protest against having to pay for certain sporting events, like the recent Miami Dolphins vs. Kansas City Chiefs NFL playoff game!

Just before I left home, my cellphone started acting up. The Google connections kept failing, so I figured it was time to upgrade the equipment and service. My wife wanted to buy a new I-Phone to track her health regimen, so we went to the local fiberoptic provider. She bought her phone and I purchased an updated version of my phone. I thought my telecommunications tribulations were over. I was wrong.

While the programming and apps kicked in after the required "waiting period," I discovered that I could not access my e-mail. After running through the required User ID and password protocols, I was remanded to cloud hell when my password was not accepted (several my times). Schleppling back to the store I was told that a super-secret code had been sent to my old phone to reset my password. (I think we are all afflicted with password fatigue). Anyway, the problem was that I had already traded my old phone in for the newer model and the old one had already been "de-programmed"! A very patient customer service representative (this time it was actually true) helped me solve the

issue and my e-mail works now. Given the frustration associated with this venture, I may never change or "update" the phone again.

Next up across the parking lot was the TV and service provider. I signed up for cable TV and Internet and paid the installation fee. (I'm not good at "self-install"). My wife was home when the installer came, so I was not there to supervise the process. When I returned home, I noticed that the television service was working, but I didn't see a router for the Internet. I reasoned that there was a new technology that did not require a router. I was wrong again. The Internet was not operational. So, I trudged back to the provider's office to rectify the situation.

As I watched the technician tackle multiple connections, I congratulated myself on arranging for the installation. The numerous connections, band splitters, and wires to synchronize, would only have frustrated me. Of course, there was another User ID and password gauntlet to run so my laptop e-mail would be available. I succeeded in getting the e-mail function to work, but I don't know how I did it!

Being away from home for the winter, I suspended my cable TV and Internet service until I return. I'm not looking forward to the inevitable day when I must converse with the pre-recorded robot to get the services up and running again.

CORRECTION: In last month's column, "You Want Answers? Are You a True Rhode Islander?" a reader pointed out that one of the answers in Question Four was incorrect. City Hall Hardware was located on Washington Street in Providence, not Westminster Street.

Larry Grimaldi is a freelance writer from North Providence. Many of his previous PrimeTime columns have been re-issued in the anthology, "50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter." Columns published in this book are used with the permission of Beacon Communications. For more information about "50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter;" or any of his other books, e-mail lvgrimaldi49@gmail.com

AARP Rhode Island is Fighting for You



AARP - RHODE ISLAND

by CATHERINE TAYLOR

AARP's mission is to empower people to choose how they live as they age. That is AARP Rhode Island's guiding principle as we call on the 2024 Rhode Island General Assembly to pass legislation that would strengthen financial security for all.

Here are the issues AARP Rhode Island is advocating for in 2024.

All Rhode Islanders need access to a retirement savings vehicle. The General Assembly must pass the Secure Choice program, which would provide an optional, voluntary Roth-IRA plan to the 172,000 Rhode Island employees who do not have access to a plan through their employer. We are pleased that Governor McKee called for its passage during his January 16 State of the State Address.

Secure Choice has been enacted in 18 states to date. In Connecticut, the program led to over 21,000 workers saving over \$11 million dollars in the first year of operation. These savings would not have been realized without Secure Choice. We urge legislators to pass Secure Choice.

Rhode Island is one of only 11 states that tax hard-earned Social Security benefits. Our state tax on Social Security undermines the purpose of Social Security, which was designed to lift older adults out of poverty – not to fund state government. Whether it is raising the income thresholds under existing law or a complete exemption of Social Security benefits from taxation, AARP supports all efforts to keep more hard-earned money in the pockets of older Rhode Islanders.

AARP wants lawmakers to help older adults live safely and independently in their communities. Accessory Dwelling Units, or ADUs, have potential to improve the lives of older adults, family caregivers, and people of all ages. An ADU is a small residence that shares a single-family lot with a larger, primary dwelling. It is an independent living space with its own kitchen or kitchenette, bathroom and sleeping area. AARP Rhode Island's 2023 Vital Voices survey showed that 79% of Rhode Islanders support town ordinances that would make it easier for property owners to create an ADU.

Consumer fraud is soaring. This legislative session AARP Rhode Island will work with the Rhode Island Attorney General's office on a bill that will require owners of cryptocurrency ATMs to post warnings about the risk of scams. Over 100 cryptocurrency ATMs are located in convenience stores, laundromats, and liquor stores across the state. Unregulated, they are utilized as a payment method in a variety of scams.

We also encourage lawmakers to explore ways to provide property tax relief that is equitable, cost-effective, and targeted to homeowners with low and moderate incomes. Ways to achieve this may include homestead exemptions, property tax deferral programs, and circuit breaker tax program enhancements.

AARP calls on legislators to support family caregivers by expanding Rhode Island's Temporary Caregivers Insurance program so that it offers 12 weeks per year and expands the definition of whom one can care for to include siblings and grandparents.

Finally, AARP urges legislators to ensure prescription drug prices are reasonable, justified, and support improved consumer access and affordability. Rhode Islanders should not be paying 3 times more for the same drug and dosage as residents of other countries. We need to implement state-level policies that will ensure that Rhode Islanders are not having to choose between purchasing their medications, eating healthy, or paying utilities.

Our work is cut out for us. Rest assured that AARP Rhode Island and our State Advocacy Volunteers will be hard at work, fighting for what's right for older Rhode Islanders. You can join this fight by becoming a member of our Advocacy Volunteer Team. Learn more www.aarp.org/RIVolunteers.

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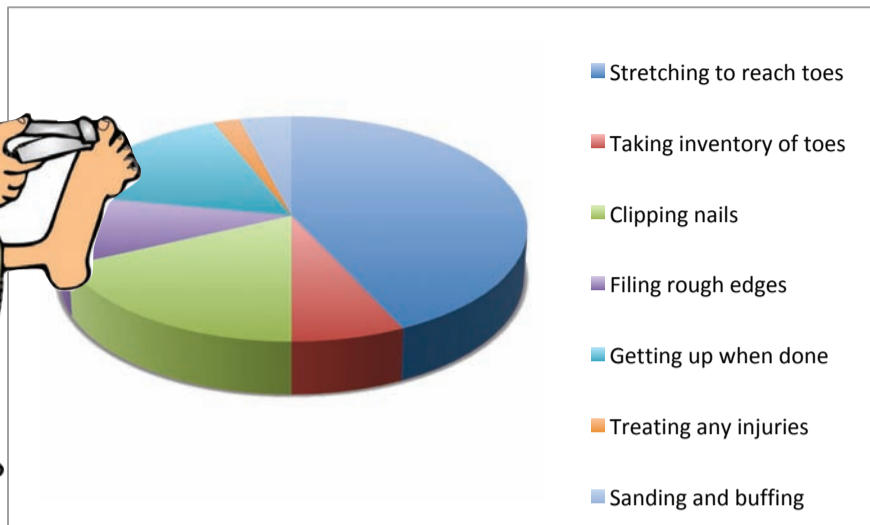
Pedicure Guidelines For Seniors



RETIREMENT SPARKS
by ELAINE M. DECKER



PEDICURE STEPS TIME TAKEN



As we get older, it becomes more and more difficult to do our own pedicures. I've put together some guidelines especially for seniors. I'm also including some information to help you allocate time for the job.

The first thing you'll want to do is to collect all the tools you'll need for your pedicure. You don't want to have to stop part way into the process to search for something essential. If you're a senior, here's what you should gather up.

- 3.5 or 4.0 magnifier reading glasses
- Nail clipper for arthritic hands
- Nail file or emery board
- Cotton balls
- Peroxide or antibiotic salve
- Extra-wide foot rasp or number 60 or 80-grit sand paper
- Miracle skin softener lotion

Once you have all of these items collected, you're ready to attack your feet.

The Basic Procedure

Getting started on your pedicure is one of the most difficult parts of the process for a senior. You'll probably want to sit down for this. Stretching to reach your feet may well be the most time-consuming step in the job. Once you can reach them, take inventory of your toes to be sure you can locate all ten.

If you happen to be one of the folks who have a hammer toe, be sure to include that odd little sucker in your count. I dated someone with a hammer toe in college, and it was strange to look at. His was the pinky toe and it rested on top of the piggy who didn't have any roast beef. Stranger still, he wound up marrying a woman who also had a hammer toe. Perhaps even stranger, I know this because I was one of her bridesmaids. You'll probably need to allow extra time to trim and file a hammer toenail.

Once you're sure that you've located ten toes, you can begin clipping your nails. The special clippers for arthritic hands are a blessing and worth the investment. Focus on the center of each toenail. Don't clip too close to the sides or you could wind up with ingrown nails down the line. Use the nail file or emery board to finish off the sides of the nail and smooth any rough edges. I usually start with my big toe and work my way down

to the pinky toe. You can do the reverse if you prefer. It doesn't really matter, as long as you proceed in sequence.

When you've finished the basics, it's time to get back up. Don't forget that you have two feet to trim, so check them both before you consider the job done! If you're reasonably fit, it should take less time to get up than it did to stretch to reach your toes. Now it's time for your post-pedicure clean up and polishing.

How Long Each Step Will Take

- Stretching to reach your toes 40%
- Taking inventory of your toes 10%
- Clipping your nails 20%
- Filing the rough edges that remain 14%
- Getting back up when you're done 16%

Post-Pedicure Clean up and Polishing

If you have any bleeding from your efforts, treat the toe with the peroxide on a cotton ball or dab some antibiotic salve on it. When you've completed your basic pedicure and any post-pedicure treatment, you should really buff your heels with the foot rasp or sand paper that you have in your tools. Then cream your feet.

Your feet should now look so beautiful that you'll want to go out and buy some new sandals. But please don't take pictures of your feet to post on Facebook or Instagram, especially if you're planning to do before-and-after shots. Some of you might want to polish your toenails. I never do that. My hands are no longer agile enough for that. I'm also clueless as to what colors are trendy. I'm just happy to have the job in my rearview. If you want to polish yours go for it! You've earned it.

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Elaine M. Decker's books include *Retirement Downsizing—A Humorous Guide*, *Retirement Sparks*, *Retirement Sparks Again*, *Retirement Sparks Redux* and *CANCER: A Coping Guide*. Her essays appear in the anthologies: *80 Things To Do When You Turn 80* and *70 Things To Do When You Turn 70*. All are available on Amazon.com. Contact her at: emdecker@ix.netcom.com



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Relocation Stress Syndrome

Easing the Trauma of Moving the Elderly

Relocation Stress Syndrome, commonly referred to as 'transfer trauma,' is a condition that encompasses a wide range of symptoms that an individual may experience when they are forced to move from their familiar environment to a new one. These symptoms can manifest in several ways, affecting our mood, physical health, and psychological well-being. It's important to note that anyone, regardless of age, can be afflicted with this syndrome; however, it's especially concerning among older adults, as it can significantly impact their quality of life and lead to premature death. Because of this, we must take the necessary measures to mitigate the effects of Relocation Stress Syndrome, especially among our seniors.



"When it comes to older adults, this is an issue I see regularly when a property must be sold due to tax reasons, the death of a spouse, or a senior is moving into a nursing facility," said professional fiduciary and certified elder law Attorney RJ Connelly III. "Nothing is more disturbing than seeing a person's life reduced to cardboard boxes, plastic bags, and a dumpster full of property no one wants anymore. It's a sad reality that none of us who work with seniors like to witness, but it needs to be done in many cases as there are few options available."

Change is an inevitable part of life that can be challenging to navigate. Whether it's a significant life event like a divorce, a move to a new city, or starting a new job, changes can be difficult to adjust to, even when it's a choice within our control. However, the stress of change, especially when forced, can be particularly overwhelming for seniors.

With age, the body's health may begin to deteriorate, and loved ones and friends pass on, leaving seniors feeling vulnerable and alone. Then comes the harsh realization they can no longer live independently and require long-term care. The cumulative effect of these changes can be a signif-

LAW ADVICE

by DON DRAKE
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icant source of stress and anxiety for them, making it even more essential to provide the support and assistance they need to maintain their well-being.

Relocation Stress Syndrome

It is common for seniors to experience relocation stress syndrome when they move to a new location. This syndrome can manifest itself in numerous ways, and its symptoms may not be immediately apparent. Some seniors may exhibit subtle changes, while others may display more noticeable symptoms such as personality, health, or disposition changes.

"I have had the unfortunate opportunity to participate in various situations like this throughout my personal and professional life," stated Attorney Connelly. "In many of these interventions, I was tasked with informing seniors of their inability to remain in their homes due to medical or cognitive issues. Witnessing the seniors packing their belongings and leaving the home for the final time was a particularly poignant experience for me. Many were unsure of what to take and left frantically searching for little trinkets that may not seem significant to others but represented wonderful memories to that individual. Although I knew that moving into long-term care was the only viable option, I couldn't help but feel sorrowful at the sight of seniors leaving their homes for the last time."

It is vital for family members and those assisting with senior relocations to be aware of the signs of relocation stress syndrome. These signs may include feelings of anger, anxiety, apprehension, confusion, dependency, depression, insecurity, loneliness, and withdrawal. For some seniors, the feelings of confusion and anxiety can lead to an increased risk of falls, self-care deficits, and weight loss. It is essential to monitor seniors for these symptoms and provide appropriate support and care to help them adjust to their new surroundings.

It can also include physiological symptoms, including those that mimic dementia. Even more distressing, some may use alcohol or drugs to cope with their out-of-control emotions, leading to an entirely separate set of problems.

When a Move is Necessary

Keeping elders in their homes may seem like the ideal choice, but not always. The pandemic lockdown has shown that living alone can also have negative consequences, such as an increase in depression and substance abuse among this population. So, in cases where a move is necessary, he recommends considering these specific actions that could be helpful: **Involve Them in the Process**

When it comes to finding a long-term care facility for a senior family member, it is recommended to involve them in the search process if possible. This approach gives them a say in their future living arrangements and has resulted in more positive outcomes.

Meet With the Staff

When considering a new location for your loved one,

scheduling a meeting with the staff at the new destination is essential.

Make it Familiar

To create a comforting and familiar atmosphere in your loved one's new living space, it's recommended to incorporate as many personal belongings as possible. This can include old pictures, cherished figurines, and any other items that hold sentimental value.

Seek Support

If your loved one is required to move due to sudden and unforeseeable medical trauma or personal loss, it is highly recommended that family members seek the guidance of a social worker or therapist

"Leaving behind a home that holds countless memories can be an incredibly emotional experience, even if you have the best planning and support from family and friends," said Attorney Connelly. "To make the process a little easier, spend quality time with your loved one as they pack their belongings. Take the opportunity to reminisce about the good times and allow yourself to laugh and cry with them. It's also important to let your loved one decide who will receive some of their precious mementos and what items they would like to donate to those less fortunate. This can provide a sense of closure, accomplishment, and comfort during a difficult time."

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by DON FOWLER

Planning Your Funeral

I learned something new by watching "The Crown": Kings and Queens plan their own funerals. They sit on a special committee to work out all the fine details.

While I don't need a committee, I am following the advice of Rev. Bill Sterritt and leaving instructions for my Funeral/Memorial Arrangements and Service Details.

Rev. Sterritt of Edgewood Congregational Church has developed a form which can be filled out at any age, updated when you wish, filed with your personal papers, and given to the person who will be handling your affairs.

You are asked to check whether you opt for burial, cremation, or other specific instructions. (My wife and I have donated our bodies to the Brown University School of Medicine. Specific instructions on who to call are needed.)

Instructions for funeral service, wake or committal service are checked.

The form asks the name of the clergy person and church or synagogue and funeral home.

The form asks for personal Memorial Service/Funeral Details.

You may choose scripture passages, special readings, favorite poem or essay, and hymns/songs. You may wish to add instrumental or recorded songs before, during or after the service.

I have chosen sacred hymns (Finlandia, Just a Closer Walk With Thee) and popular songs (On a clear day).

Suggest whom you would like to serve as ushers.

Many people make up photo boards or more elaborate videos.

There is a line for Memorial Gifts, asking people in lieu of flowers to donate to your favorite charity.

It is the custom at most funerals or memorial services to have a collation/reception at home, the church, or a rented hall.

You may wish to add other items. Many people these days are writing their own obituaries (This was my first assignment in a college writing class), or list items you wish included.

If you would like a copy of the form Rev. Sterritt provides, you may call the Edgewood church office at 401-461-1344, and he will send you one.

Country Music Through The Years

I grew up on country music. Although we lived in New England, we lived in the country.

Woodbridge, Connecticut was the "sticks" back when I was a boy. The small country town was north of New Haven, like Foster's proximity to Providence.

Woodbridge had no High School back in the fifties, so we were bussed to the big city school, where we were labeled the hicks from the sticks.

We played the part, dressing in dungarees and cowboy boots, and listening to country music.

My love for the genre started with my father who listened to Eddie Arnold records for hours on end.

I followed Hank Williams. Knew the lyrics to every one of his songs, along with names like Ferlin Husky, Ernest Tubbs, and Loretta Lynn.

Here I am at age 86 with my car radio programmed for Cat Country and listening to Alan Jackson, George Strait, and Rebbba McIntyre.

Country music has changed over the years, influenced by rock and roll, hip hop, and even rap.

I brag about having sung on the stage of the Ryman Theatre, original stage of the Grand Ole Opry, admitting that it was on a tour to Nashville when we visited the site and were encouraged to go on stage and sing a couple of bars.

My children and grandchildren haven't inherited by love for the genre. They did not care about going to Garth Brook's concert at the Providence Civic Center (The AMP), preferring the rock concerts at the Strand.

Three chords and a story about lost love, love for a pickup truck, being drunk on a plane, or enjoying a chicken fry may seem corny to some, but when Alan Jackson and Jimmy Buffet sing "It's five o'clock somewhere, I'm right there singing along."

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This state-of-the-art Memory Care Assisted Living Residence in Johnston provides compassionate care to those with Alzheimer's Disease, dementia and other memory-loss conditions.

The Cottage at Briarcliffe Gardens

A State-of-the-Art Memory Care Assisted Living Residence

By JENNIFER COATES

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

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

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

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

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

From the time when the first ground was broken on Briarcliffe Gardens, this state-of-the-art memory care assisted living residence's primary mission has been to provide a secure, nurturing and vibrant community for its many residents.

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

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

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Reducing risk for heart disease could save your life



Heart disease doesn't discriminate, affecting men and women regardless of their age or where they live. In the United States, cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death, according to the American Heart Association. North of the border, one Canadian dies from heart disease or stroke every 7 minutes. So says the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada, a charity that annually spends millions of dollars researching heart disease and promoting healthier lifestyles.

For most men and women, the prevalence of heart disease is no great surprise. Nearly every adult can point to a loved one who has dealt with heart disease. Many men and women can even point to a friend or family member who lost their battle with heart disease. That familiarity should make people even more willing to adopt a heart-healthy lifestyle, something the AHA admits is the best defense against heart disease and stroke. Though not all risk factors for heart disease can be controlled, there are ways to reduce that risk considerably.

Control your blood pressure

High blood pressure is the number one risk factor for stroke and a major risk for heart disease. Blood pressure measures the pressure or force of blood against the walls of your blood vessels, also known as arteries. Having your blood pressure taken is a routine on most doctor visits, but many people are unaware what the number actually measures. The top number measures the pressure when the heart contracts and pushes blood out, while the bottom number is the lowest pressure when the heart relaxes and beats. Blood pressure that is consistently above 140/90 is considered high. A normal blood pressure is one between 120/80 and 129/84.

Because of the relation between blood pressure and heart disease and stroke, men and women must take steps to control their blood pressure. Having your blood pressure checked regularly is a good start. Once you get checked, reduce the amount of sodium in your diet, replacing high-sodium snacks with healthier fare and monitoring sodium

intake during the day. The Heart & Stroke Foundation recommends eating less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day, and that includes salt added when making meals or eating at the table.

Maintaining a healthy body weight and successfully managing stress are additional ways to control blood pressure.

Limit alcohol consumption

The AHA notes that excessive consumption of alcohol can contribute to high triglycerides, produce irregular heartbeats and eventually lead to heart failure or stroke. There is some evidence that people who drink moderately have a lower risk of heart disease than nondrinkers. But it's

also important to note that people who drink moderately also have a lower risk of heart disease than people who drink excessively. So when it comes to alcohol, moderation reigns supreme. One or two standard drinks per day is enough depending on gender. The Heart & Stroke Foundation suggests that women who drink should not drink more than nine drinks a week, while men should not exceed 14 drinks in a single week.

Of course, if there are extenuating circumstances then all bets are off. Men and women with liver disease, mental illness or a personal or family history of alcohol problems should avoid alcohol entirely. In addition, those taking certain medications should avoid alcohol consumption as well. For the latter group, discuss alcohol consumption with your physician.

Quit smoking

The decision to smoke tobacco is the decision to invite a host of potential physical ailments, not the least of which is heart disease. Smoking contributes to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, increases the risk of blood clots, reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood and increases blood pressure. As if that's not enough, smoking also harms those around you. According to the American Cancer Society, secondhand smoke is responsible for 3,400 lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers in the United States each year. In Canada, nearly 8,000 nonsmokers lose their lives each year from exposure to secondhand smoke.

What might surprise some people, however, is how quickly quitting smoking can reduce a person's risk for heart disease. According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, within 48 hours of quitting a person's chances of having heart disease have already started to go down. For those who successfully avoid smoking for one year, the risk of a suffering a smoking-related heart attack has been cut in half.

Laura M. Krohn

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Common tax return mistakes that can cost taxpayers

YOUR TAXES

by MEG CHEVALIER

Tax laws are complicated but the most common tax return errors are surprising simple. Many mistakes can be avoided by filing electronically. Tax software does the math, flags common errors and prompts taxpayers for missing information. It can also help taxpayers claim valuable credits and deductions. Using a reputable tax preparer – including Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), certified public accountants, enrolled agents, or other knowledgeable tax professionals – can also help avoid errors.

- **Filing too early.** While taxpayers should not file late, they also should not file prematurely. People who don't wait to file before they receive all the proper tax reporting documents risk making a mistake that may lead to a processing delay.
- **Missing or inaccurate Social Security numbers.** Each SSN on a tax return should appear exactly as printed on the Social Security card.
- **Misspelled names.** Likewise, a name listed on a tax return should match the name on that person's Social Security card.
- **Entering information inaccurately.** Wages, dividends, bank interest, and other income received and that was reported on an information return should be entered carefully. This includes any information needed to calculate credits and deductions. Using tax software should help prevent math errors, but individuals should always review their tax return for accuracy.
- **Incorrect filing status.** Some taxpayers choose the wrong filing status. The Interactive Tax Assistant on IRS.gov can help taxpayers choose the correct status especially if more than one filing status applies. Tax software also helps prevent mistakes with filing status.
- **Math mistakes.** Math errors are some of the most common mistakes. They range from simple addition and subtraction to more complex calculations. Taxpayers should always double check their math. Better yet, tax prep software does it automatically.
- **Figuring credits or deductions.** Taxpayers can make mistakes figuring things like their earned income tax credit, child and dependent care credit, child tax credit, and recovery rebate credit. The Interactive Tax Assistant can help determine if a taxpayer is eligible for tax credits or deductions. Tax software will calculate these credits and deductions and include any required forms and schedules. Taxpayers should Double check where items appear on the final return before clicking the submit button.
- **Incorrect bank account numbers.** Taxpayers who are due a refund should choose direct deposit. This is the fastest way for a taxpayer to get their money. However, taxpayers need to make sure they use the correct routing and account numbers on their tax return.
- **Unsigned forms.** An unsigned tax return isn't valid. In most cases, both spouses must sign a joint return. Exceptions may apply for members of the armed forces or other taxpayers who have a valid power of attorney. Taxpayers can avoid this error by filing their return electronically and digitally signing it before sending it to the IRS.

The IRS urges all taxpayers to file electronically and choose direct deposit to get their refund faster. IRS Free File offers online tax preparation, direct deposit of refunds and electronic filing, all for free. Some options are available in Spanish. Many taxpayers also qualify for free tax return preparation from IRS-certified volunteers. In Rhode Island you can call the United Way 211 to find the nearest FREE Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. Also, at IRS.gov – search the word "VITA" and then click on Free Tax Return preparation for you by Volunteers. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, visit aarp.org, or call 888-227-7669.



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