

Amazon's first 'help wanted' signs

By RORY SCHULER

Can you operate with "significant autonomy and discretion," "work all shifts, including nights, weekends, and holidays" and "some overnight shifts as necessary"?

If so, you may be a candidate for Loss Prevention Manager (LPM) at Johnston's Amazon facility. The company publicly posted four open positions in the last week, looking to hire the building's first managers. Town officials are hoping the other 1,496 hirings will follow soon after.

"Progress at our Amazon Robotics fulfillment center in Johnston continues," Amazon Spokesman Steve

Kelly wrote via email Friday, April 12. "We have started the initial hiring process for operations-based leadership positions at the facility — which remains on track to launch in time for the 2024 holiday season."

Help Wanted

By Wednesday, April 17, four Amazon positions in Johnston were listed and live on Indeed.com (a searchable job posting website). The four management positions included Area Manager II, Operations Manager, Senior Human Resources (Sr HR) Manager, and the most recent listing, LPM. The listings provided no pay information but identified all four jobs as full-time.

"We are excited to see Amazon begin their hiring

process," said Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena Jr. "They are starting to post management positions now. I'm told non-management positions will be posted at some point in the summer or fall, prior to opening."

Amazon representatives attended a public hearing last week to renegotiate the company's tax deal with the town following construction delays at their Hartford Avenue facility. Polisena and his administration worked out a deal with Amazon (subsequently approved by Town Council), agreeing to a reduction in payments of more than \$618,000 after the online megaretailer invoked a construction clause in its contract with the town.

JOBS - PAGE 8



When it rains, they pour

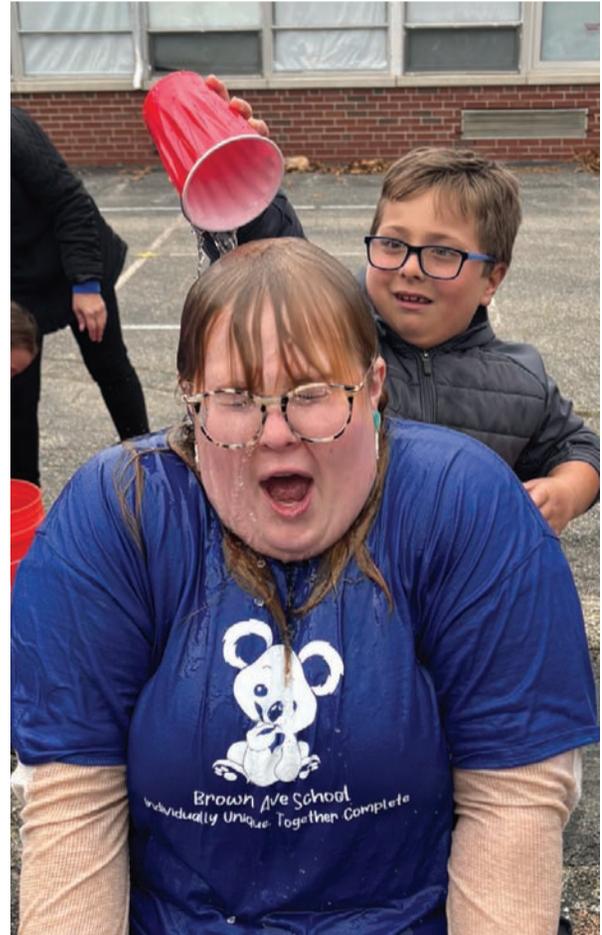
Sun Rise Staff Reports

Brown Avenue Elementary School has been officially recognized as a Unified Champion School through a partnership with the Special Olympics of Rhode Island.

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

"This is a distinction very few elementary schools have!" According to Amanda Sloan, Brown Avenue's Health and Physical Education Teacher.

POUR - PAGE 11



SKIP SOAKED: At left, third grade students lined up behind Ferri Middle School Assistant Principal Fredo Skipworth to dump water on his head. At right, first grade student Kade Wilson poured a cup over the head of his first grade teacher Ms. Kirsten Sabia. (Photos courtesy Amanda Sloan)

Feds deliver \$485K for public safety in Johnston

U.S. Rep. Seth Magaziner announces major funding boost for town's Police Department

By RAYMOND BACCARI
Special to the Sun Rise

Johnston's Police Department received \$485,000 in federal funding last Monday that will be used for emergency services equipment. This funding comes from one of U.S. Rep. Seth Magaziner's 15 grants across Rhode Island's Second District, part of the fiscal year 2024 federal budget.

"Supporting local law enforcement is crucial to keeping Rhode Islanders safe, and we must ensure they have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs effectively," Magaziner said during re-

marks at the Monday press conference. "I am pleased to secure this federal funding to update and modernize the Johnston Police Department's emergency services equipment, which is key to responding to critical situations quickly and reducing accidents on the road."

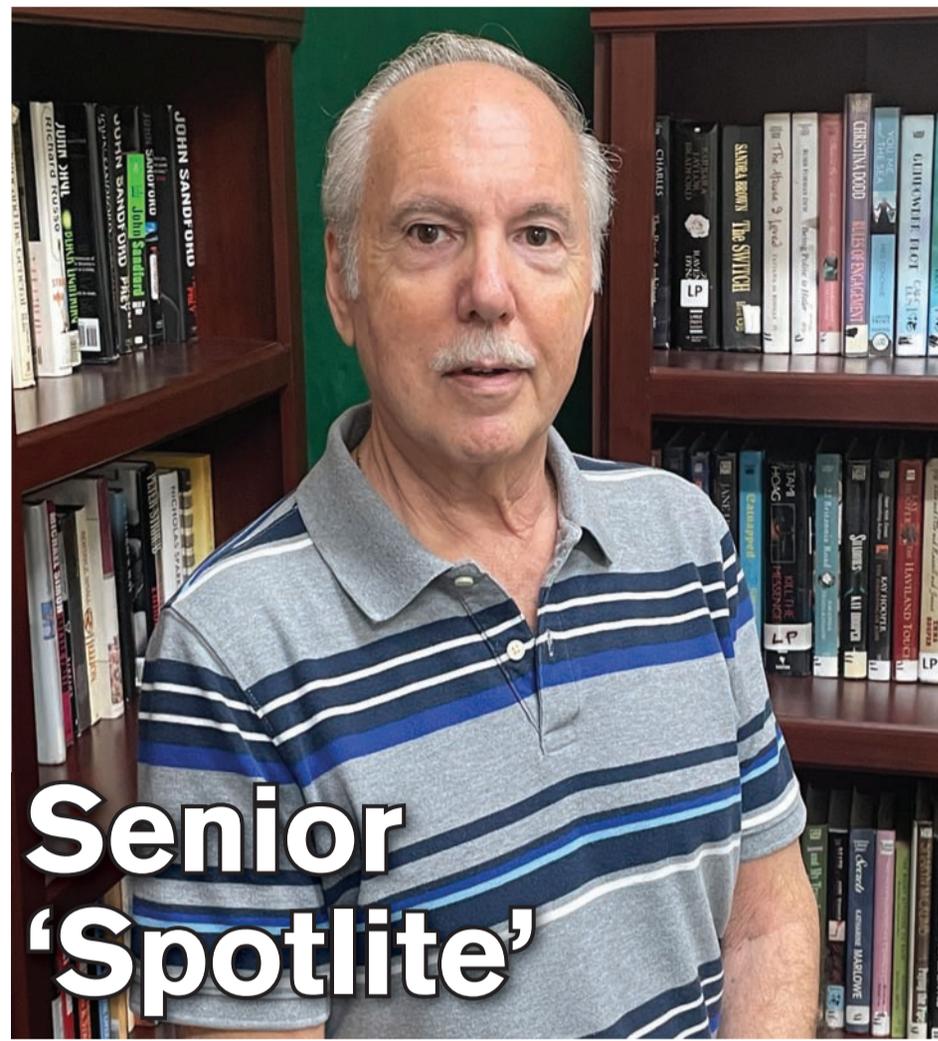
Joining Magaziner to celebrate this funding was Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr.

"Keeping residents safe is a top priority in Johnston," Polisena said. "This funding will further improve radio communication between officers, enhance

POLICE - PAGE 9



JPD GRATEFUL: Johnston Police Chief Mark Vieira welcomed the funding, which will help the department 'purchase new equipment to improve emergency preparedness and response times.' He was joined by U.S. Rep. Seth Magaziner, at left, and Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr., at right, to announce the receipt of \$485,000 in federal funds. (Photo by Raymond Baccari)



Senior 'Spotlite'

SIX DEGREES OF RONALD DIPIETRO: This week's Johnston Senior Center Spotlite shines on Ronald DiPietro, who belongs to seven different senior centers so he can dance every night of the week. (Photo courtesy Richard J. Delfino Jr.)

His loose feet sizzle better than Bacon's

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

The Johnston Senior Center Spotlite this week shines on Ronald DiPietro, a regular here at the Center for about the last eight years.

Ron, who may appear very unassuming, participates in numerous activities here at the Center, including the popular "Mystery Lunch," exercise programs, but most notably, the JSC dance group.

Various times throughout the month, Ron can be seen participating in a group of members eager to learn the likes of the Waltz, Foxtrot, Rumba, Tango, Cha Cha, and line dancing.

This former IT executive, who spent 47 years with Blue Cross, is now a member of seven Senior Centers, where he is able to enjoy dancing on a very regular basis.

He certainly believes dancing provides great exercise, enjoyment, and a chance to meet new people. He believes once you take that first step toward trying something new, you will catch on and love the experience (although, no experience is necessary). Come to the JSC and give dancing a try. You'll be glad you did.

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 Spotlite," submitted by the senior center.

JHS Panthers of the Week



POTW: This week's Panther of the Week is actually two! On Friday, we had our Unified Basketball game and senior Michael Carlino helped freshman Carljon'n Volcy. With Michael's help, Carljon'n went on to score points during the game, and help Johnston secure a win over Rhode Island School of the Deaf. (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.

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THE ARTS



LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES: Sophomore Isabella Ricci worked on her acrylic painting about war-related events in the news.



LEADERSHIP ROLE: Olivia Forgetta, a sophomore, serves as the Johnston High School CRI student liaison, has been tasked with promoting the contest around the school and on social media in order to increase participation. She posed for a photo with the contest flyer.

'When people don't listen, you need to show them instead'

Sun Rise Staff Reports

A check has been delivered, helping to support arts education in Johnston. Johnston state Rep. Deb Fellela delivered a grant check to Kerry Murphy, Art Teacher and Fine Arts co-chair at Johnston Senior High School. The funds will purchase a new display for art exhibitions as well as supplementary art materials. Fellela sponsored the \$1,000 grant to support the Johnston High Art Department, and their "current focus on providing students with greater opportunity to voice their ideas about contemporary issues," according to Murphy. Young artists are having courageous conversations sparked by Murphy's work as part of the University of

Rhode Island's Courageous RI Cohort. Murphy met weekly with educators and other professionals to discuss issues that are often avoided in the workplace. The goal of this professional development is to teach Media Literacy and encourage storytelling. "Through careful scrutiny of news articles and memes, students begin to realize how sources and algorithms might manipulate their views," Murphy explained. "In addition, classroom practices that allow for students to speak and listen to others on a variety of current event topics, increases our understanding and tolerance. This all occurs in the interest of reducing hate and violence, especially important in our increasingly polarized society."



LEGISLATIVE GRANT: Johnston state Rep. Deb Fellela delivered a \$1,000 grant check to Kerry Murphy, Art Teacher and Fine Arts co-chair at Johnston High. (Submitted photos)

ARTS - PAGE 4



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LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES: Sophomore Isabella Ricci worked on her acrylic painting about war-related events in the news. 'Making art about an issue allows you to show something important,' Ricci said. 'When people don't listen, you need to show them instead.'

■ **Arts**

(Continued from page 3)

Some students have also competed in a CRI Youth Media Contest. Others have voiced their concerns through art, to be displayed in the annual Johnston High Art Show on May 1, in the school library.

"Our students are caring Global Citizens," Murphy said. "They have a lot to say when discussions are encouraged. Cohort members and teachers from around the state are empowering students to engage in courageous conversation by teaching students to question news and social media, conduct their own research using primary sources, and listen to others with kindness

and compassion."

Olivia Forgetta, a sophomore, serves as the Johnston High School CRI student liaison. She has been tasked with promoting the contest around the school and on social media in order to increase participation.

"Olivia is a friendly person and a talented artist," Murphy said. "She was the perfect choice to help promote this important work."

Forgetta reflected on her leadership task.

"I'm really excited to take on a leadership role and promote this contest," she said.

Sophomore Isabella Ricci worked on an acrylic painting about war-related events in the news.

"Making art about an issue allows you to show something important," Ricci said. "When people don't listen, you need to show them instead."

Not taken for granted



SCOUT SUPPORT: Johnston state Rep. Deb Fellela recently delivered a \$1,000 state grant to the St. Robert Bellarmine Troop 20 for their upcoming Florida trip. (Submitted photo)

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SUN RISE SCOOPS



April 24 'Secrets from the Stack'

The Johnston Historical Society invites the public to a presentation at the JHS Museum (101 Putnam Pike) at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 24. The Society will host Rhonda J. Chadwick, who wrote the book "Secrets from the Stack," in which an archivist reveals how to store, digitize, and preserve documents to create a family archive and leave a personal legacy.

For more information, go to Chadwick's website, www.lenasalina.com. The event is free and open to the public.

April 20 Fishing Derby

The Johnston Parks & Recreation Department will hold its 2024 Fishing Derby for children ages 4-12 on Saturday, April 20, from 9 a.m. to noon, at Johnston Memorial Park. The derby will include awards for individual achievement and will be free to enter. Johnston Rec reminds participants: "Please remember this derby is meant for the kids ... let the kids do all the fishing. You can help cast and release the fish if necessary."

Derby organizers ask that participants bring bait and fishing poles, and "most of all, have fun!"

April 20 Cemetery Cleanup

On Saturday, April 20, the Johnston Historical Society will be hosting a cemetery clean-up as part of the statewide "Historical Cemetery Awareness Event." This event is sponsored by the State Historical Cemetery Commission in collaboration with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. The Society will be cleaning Johnston Historical Cemetery #21, the Governor King / Borden Lot. The cemetery is located at the corner of Hartford Avenue and Winfield Road, in the vicinity of Winsor Hill School. The event will run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Volunteers should take rakes and gloves. For any further information, please contact the Society at 231-3380.

April 23 Photographic Society of RI

The Photographic Society of RI will hold its next meeting on Tues., Apr. 23rd, at 6:30 p.m., as a social time and the meeting will start at 7 p.m. It will be held at Lakewood Baptist Church, 255 Atlantic Ave., Warwick. It will be the 4th Open Competition of the new year. The competition will include black & white

prints, color prints, digital images, and slides. It will give you a chance to see some great work being judged. Future meetings will include live demos, competitions, set-ups for photo ops, image studies and presentations from experts on a vast array of topics for a wide range of skill levels. Whether a member or not, please come and enjoy the program and to see what the club is all about.

April 27 & 28 Spring Quilt Fest

The Narragansett Bay Quilters' Association is sponsoring a Spring Quilt Fest to be held on Saturday, April 27 and Sunday, Apr. 28, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the West Warwick Civic Center, 100 Factory Street, West Warwick. Quilts galore, Quilt and Basket Raffles. Special Exhibits: Barbara Barber, Quilting Education. Admission: \$10 (Children under 12 free). www.nbqa.org

May 1 Cranston Hall of Fame

Applications are now being accepted for nominations for the Class of 2024. Deadline is Wed., May 1. Please find details and application criteria at: www.cpsd.net, under the "culture" tab. Any questions, please email the President: scoccio@cox.net.

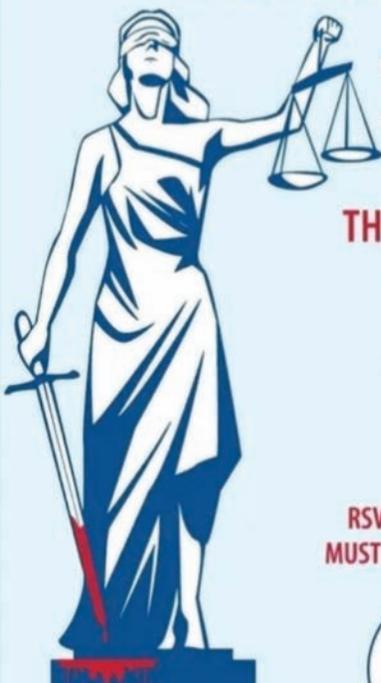
May 4 St. Rocco 60th

St. Rocco School, 931 Atwood Ave, will host a 60th Anniversary celebration on Saturday, May 4. Mass will be celebrated at 5 p.m. A reception will follow in Café Rocco after Mass. Looking for alumni, family and friends to join us in celebrating 60 years! For more information, call St. Rocco school office at 401-944-2993. Tickets are \$5 at the door.

SCOOP OF THE WEEK

MURDER IN THE COURT

MURDER MYSTERY DINNER THEATER



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JRTC fundraiser

The Johnston Republican Town Committee will host a "Murder in the Court" Murder Mystery Dinner Theater fundraiser at 6 p.m., on Saturday, April 27, at the Kelley Gazzero VFW Post 2812, 1418 Plainfield Pike, Cranston. Tickets must be ordered by April 20 at www.johnstonri.gop.

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P	I	X	A	R	E	C	O	A					
F	R	A	N	C	R	A	D	A	S	H	E	R	
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May 5 Defenders of Animals

The Defenders of Animals is sponsoring its annual May breakfast on Sunday, May 5 at the Governor Sprague Mansion, 1351 Cranston St., Cranston, at 10 a.m. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased in advance at www.defendersofanimals.org. All net proceeds are used for the group's low-cost spay/neuter and animal emergency medical care for cats and dogs. For more information contact: Dennis at 401-461-1922.

May 11 Historic Yard Sale

On Saturday, May 11, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m., the Johnston Historical Society will host a Yard Sale at the JHS Museum, 101 Putnam Pike, Johnston. Please, no early birds. The Historical Society offers tables to the public for a donation. Those who would like to set up a six-foot table (they must bring their own), can do so for \$25 donation to the JHS. If anyone has questions, they can contact Anthony Ursillo at aursillo401@gmail.com or 401-764-5901.

May 18 Apple Blossom Sale

The Apple Blossom Garden Club will hold its annual plant sale on Saturday, May 18, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Blackbird Farm, 660 Douglas Pike, Smithfield. Free samples of Organic Fertilizer Tea from "Let It Grow" from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Great selection and pricing on perennials, annuals, herbs and Vegetables. Over 50+ varieties of tomato plants.

ONGOING SCOOPS

Spring Cleaning Drive Through April 30

One Johnston teenager's trying to lend a little sparkle to local families in need. Derek La Fazia Jr., 16, "a lifelong resident of Johnston and a sophomore at La Salle Academy in Providence" has launched the La Fazia Spring Cleaning Product Drive, benefiting Crossroads Rhode Island.

This year, La Fazia entered into a partnership with Crossroads Rhode Island, and throughout the month of April, he'll host a spring cleaning product drive, that he hopes will become a yearly event. All proceeds will benefit Crossroads Rhode Island. Throughout the month of April he's asking the community to donate household cleaning items or give a contribution to Crossroads in name of the La Fazia Spring Cleaning Drive.

La Fazia's asking for "general household cleaning items," including: all purpose cleaning items, toilet cleaner/brushes, glass cleaner, dish soap, scrub brushes, furniture polish, paper towels, dust pans, brooms, mops." Anyone interested in contributing items to the event, can drop items off throughout the month of April at La Fazia Auto Body, 920 Plainfield St., Johnston. Business hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to

noon. If you have no time to buy items and drop them off, you can help by mailing checks to Derek at La Fazia Auto Body. (Please make checks out to Crossroads Rhode Island and write "La Fazia Spring Cleaning Drive" on the memo line.

Shoe the Love Through April 27

Shoe the Love Fundraiser is being provided by St. David on-the-Hill Episcopal Church at 200 Meshanticut Valley Parkway, Cranston, is collecting new & used shoes as a fundraiser to support our ministries. There are plastic bins by our doors for drop off until April 27th.

Help OSDRI restock their pantry! Operation Stand Down Rhode Island needs your help. Their food pantry needs a major restocking. See a list of needed nonperishable items in the photo.

Like many people, OSDRI's clients have been faced with some real obstacles these past couple of years. With your help, they pledge to always be there to give a hand up for veterans and their families in need.

Items can be dropped off Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at OSDRI's main office, 1010 Hartford Ave., Johnston. If you have any questions or would like more information, call the OSDRI office at 401-383-4730.

NAMI-RI: Free Virtual Family-To-Family course on Mental Health NAMI-RI Spring Registration

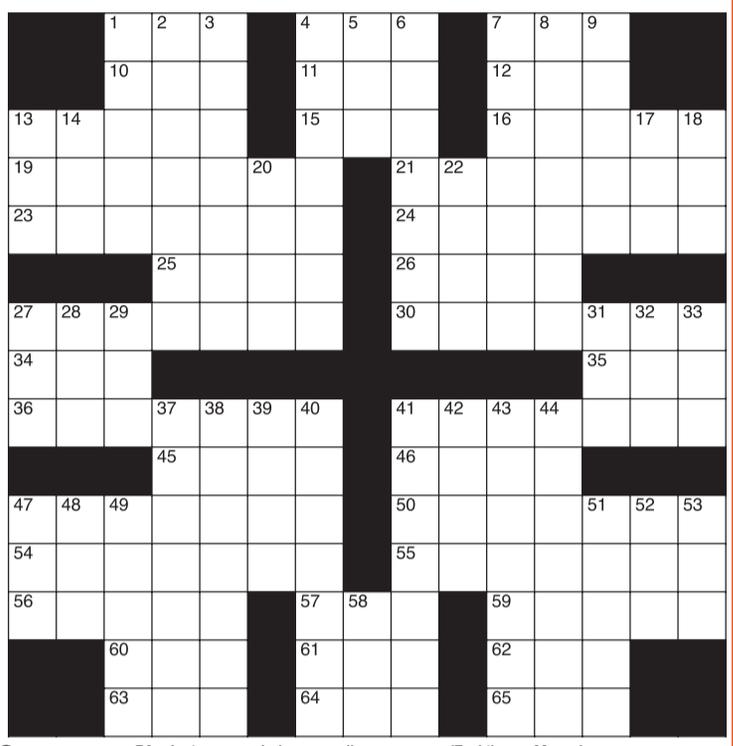
The Rhode Island chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is now accepting registration for our Spring 2024 virtual Family-to-Family course. This is a free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program, which means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition. NAMI-Rhode Island's Family-to-Family course is taught by trained family members who have lived experience with a loved one, and includes presentations, discussions and interactive exercises. For more information on the Family-to-Family curriculum and registration requirements, visit namirhodeisland.org or call 401-331-3060 or email beth@namirhodeisland.org.

Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund

In 2021, the Johnston High School Class of 1971 established The Soul of 1971 Scholarship Fund at The Rhode Island Foundation. The Class of '71 is the first class in the history of the Johnston School System to establish a permanent Fund. The Fund currently stands at \$23,031. Scholarships have been awarded in 2022 and 2023 to deserving JHS seniors. For additional information or to donate, contact Harold J. Hemberger at hembergerharold@gmail.com. All funds on deposit are managed by The Rhode Island Foundation.

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Midway between south and southeast
- 4. For each
- 7. Airborne (abbr.)
- 10. Photographs
- 11. They ___
- 12. It's important in respiration (abbr.)
- 13. Monetary unit
- 15. Cool!
- 16. A son of Jacob
- 19. Cut off
- 21. Devour
- 23. Agent of one's downfall
- 24. Best
- 25. Network of nerves
- 26. Partner to "oohs"
- 27. Origins
- 30. Sewing utensil
- 34. Alias
- 35. Swiss river
- 36. Greek mythological figure
- 41. Type of whiskey
- 45. Lay to rest
- 46. "Rule, Britannia" composer
- 47. Select jury
- 50. Feeling

- 54. Action regarded as morally wrong
- 55. Makes angry
- 56. Act incorrectly
- 57. Defensive nuclear weapon
- 59. Class of escort aircraft carrier
- 60. To what degree
- 61. Buzzing insect
- 62. The human foot
- 63. "The Leftovers" actress Dowd
- 64. A place to stay
- 65. Sun up in New York

CLUES DOWN

- 1. An involuntary muscular contraction
- 2. Earnest
- 3. Cuts out surgically
- 4. Can't move
- 5. Baseball stat
- 6. British soldier
- 7. Traditional medicine plants
- 8. Political party controlled by managers
- 9. Hebrew prophet
- 13. Supporter
- 14. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 17. Liberty Mutual mascot
- 18. Georgia rockers
- 20. A place where building is done
- 22. Large, deep-bodied fish
- 27. Clothing retailer
- 28. Supplement with difficulty
- 29. Annoy constantly
- 31. Founder of Babism
- 32. Indigenous person in parts of Asia
- 33. Sea eagle
- 37. Leave behind
- 38. Time of day
- 39. Colorless crystalline compound
- 40. They lay out course requirements
- 41. A diamond has three
- 42. Algerian coastal city
- 43. Remove cover
- 44. Rechristened
- 47. Distinctive practice
- 48. Defunct phone company
- 49. Turkish officer of high rank
- 51. Eliminate from the body
- 52. Witness
- 53. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 58. Founding Father Franklin

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Opinion

RI BUDGET CHALLENGES, Part 1

Home prices surging beyond the reach of most Rhode Islanders

By MICHAEL DIBIASE

Housing affordability has become one of Rhode Island's most serious challenges. Home prices are so high that ownership is out of reach for many Rhode Islanders. Nearly half of all renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. It's been estimated that the state needs 24,000 more affordable units to meet demand. Unfortunately, the problem appears to be worsening. In the last year, home prices in Rhode Island have increased 7.5 percent, and rents have jumped dramatically, with Providence reportedly having the highest rent increases nationwide.

Rhode Island's housing affordability problem has resulted primarily from a lack of housing production over a long period of time. The Ocean State ranked 38th among states in per capita housing production between 2012 and 2021, and in 2021—the most recent year for which data are available — we ranked last in the nation. In terms of affordable housing production, Building Homes Rhode Island, the state's primary affordable housing program, built or maintained an average of only 215 affordable units per year from 2006 to 2020.

Historically, Rhode Island has invested relatively little state funding toward affordable housing compared to other New England states. The Building Homes Rhode Island program has been exclusively funded through four separate general obligation bonds, issued

beginning in 2006, and collectively totaling \$190 million, or roughly \$9.5 million a year. Along with a modest second Housing Production Fund, the bonds have amounted to an investment of \$145 per capita per annum. This puts Rhode Island next to last in New England (ahead of only New Hampshire) and well behind its neighbors Connecticut (\$607 per capita) and Massachusetts (\$858 per capita).

Rhode Island's restrictive land use regulatory environment has also hindered development. Over the last 10 years, we had the lowest rate of total housing permits issued per 1,000 residents in the country, and we're ranked 9th worst in terms of land use regulations. The problem appears to be getting worse. Building permits for multifamily homes have declined 66.9% since 2018. Some communities appear committed to slowing housing production. Tiverton recently passed a six-month moratorium on the approval of multifamily homes and Narragansett passed a series of land-use changes to preempt modest land use reforms passed by the General Assembly last session.

Despite these challenges, to its credit, the General Assembly made a historic investment in affordable housing starting in 2021. Capitalizing largely on one-time federal pandemic relief funds, the Assembly allocated \$361.2 million to help produce affordable housing. This amount is nearly double the \$190 million in affordable housing bonds issued by

the state over the last 20 years. The state also made increases to the Housing Production Fund, created a new state low-income housing tax credit, and provided funding for a separate Department of Housing with 21 new full-time equivalent positions. The Assembly also instituted some land use reforms, mostly around streamlining the permitting and appeals processes for developments.

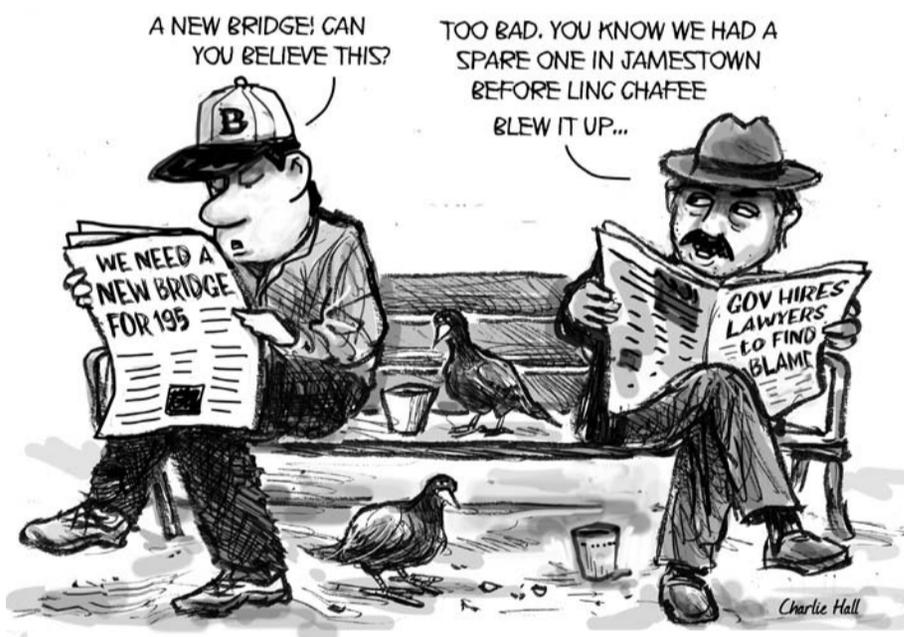
While these initial steps are moving us in the right direction, they won't be enough to make up for decades of underfunding and over-regulation. One-time federal funds will be exhausted soon, and there is no robust plan to replace them. Governor McKee has proposed a \$100 million housing bond, which if approved by the voters, would be the largest housing bond in Rhode Island's history. However not all of those funds are proposed to be used for affordable housing production. Rhode Island is in danger of returning to the same pattern of underinvestment that produced very few units over the last 20 years.

Without greater state investment, Rhode Island is unlikely to see much progress. Increasing costs of construction, complicated mechanisms for financing projects, and local land use restrictions have led to declining returns on the state's investment. The total cost of developing one unit of affordable housing is approaching \$500,000. According to our recent analysis, once the one-time federal funds have been ex-

hausted, the state will have produced only 2,340 net new units of affordable housing — less than 10 percent of our estimated need. If the state pursues the same strategies with the newly proposed bond, even if the entire allotment was dedicated to production, RIPEC estimates an output of only 832 additional units.

We can do better. The state needs to make larger investments in affordable housing, which will likely require a permanent, consistent source of funding outside of additional borrowing. At the same time, the state should explore alternatives to the current model for constructing affordable housing, including direct subsidies to private developers. The state should pursue more aggressive land-use reform to stimulate the production of market-rate housing to stabilize rents and to increase supply to make home prices more affordable. Finally, given the limitations of using capital to subsidize rents, the state should consider a rental assistance program. If Rhode Island is going to continue to be a place where people live, work, and raise a family, we need a collective effort to make sure that all Rhode Islanders have an affordable place to live.

Michael DiBiase is the president and CEO of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy research organization. This is the first in a series on Gov. Dan McKee's proposed fiscal 2025 state budget.



Insurers should be required to pay a fair share of dental care

By Rep. JOSEPH McNAMARA

A neighbor recently approached me and said, "I don't think it's right that I have to pay \$6,000 to just chew my food when I have dental insurance."

I said, "Mario, you are not alone in your frustration. More than half of all Americans delay or avoid medical care due to cost. Dental care leads the list of deferred medical attention."

The American Dental Association says that 45.1% of all dental care comes from out-of-pocket expenses. The same figure for total health spending is 16.6%. While medical insurers are required by federal law to dedicate a specific percentage of their premiums to patient care, there is no similar consumer protection for dental insurance carriers.

This is why Sen. Hanna Gallo and I have introduced the "Rhode Island Fair Share for Dental Care

Act." This act requires that 85% of the premiums collected by dental insurers be spent on actual dental care, not on administrative costs. Under this legislation, dental insurers would be provided with an incentive to expand care so individuals like Mario won't have to pay \$6,000 just to chew his food.

The Affordable Care Act mandates that 85% of medical insurance premium revenue be spent on medical care. Rhode Island residents who purchase dental insurance would benefit from this legislation that mandates that the premiums they pay be invested in the dental care they receive. This legislation would also make dental plans more transparent and reduce out-of-pocket costs for patients, which will make access to dental care more affordable for all Rhode Islanders.

In 2022, Massachusetts voters approved a referendum requiring dental insurers to spend at least

83% of their premiums on patient dental care. This referendum was passed by 72% of the voters in that state, demonstrating broad bipartisan support. The implementation of this law in Massachusetts, combined with the difficulty that Rhode Island is having in attracting new dentists, could create the perfect storm for dental care in our state.

The Rhode Island Dental Association has stated that about 45% of our dentists are 55 or older. With the retirement of many dentists nearing, our state could be facing a major crisis in oral health care.

Our legislation will improve the health care for all Rhode Islanders and ensure that revenue for premiums is spent on dental care and not on higher profits for dental insurance executives.

The author, Joseph McNamara, is a state representative, representing District 19 in Warwick and Cranston. He resides in Warwick.

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Jobs

(Continued from page 1)

"The initial hiring of management I do not think is a good or bad sign but rather part of the process of ramping up to get operational," said Johnston Town Council President Robert V. Russo.

A Start

Amazon has promised to bring 1,500 jobs to Johnston. They were initially forecast to open last year, but the ribbon-cutting has been delayed several times. When it signed a Community Partnership Agreement (CPA) with Johnston, Amazon promised to host job fairs locally, and the town's local politicians hoped Johnston residents would get first crack at submitting applications.

"Implementation of managerial positions is a sign that the structure for hiring general personnel is on the horizon," Russo said. "This is a large-scale project and process and in spite of some delays I am confident a larger-scale hiring process will start in the summer or fall."

Last week's Town Council vote frees up the initial \$5.7 million payment from Amazon, covering the first annual payment of the 20-year Tax Stabilization Agreement (TSA).

"Amazon issued their initial payment to the town in spite of some naysayer doomsday statements over social media," Russo said earlier this week. "I try to think positive and hope the momentum to door-opening continues. Once again, Johnston will be leading the way to jobs and economic prosperity in the state."

Like Pulling Teeth

Updates on the impending Amazon opening have been rare. Amazon has only publicly addressed town residents once, at the inking of the CPA. Company

representatives attended last week's public hearing on the renegotiated tax deal but did not speak during public session.

"As of this date I still have received no word from the Mayor or his administration on the status of Amazon and their opening," said Ward 5 Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti. "I guess the fact that they are beginning the hiring process is a sign that they are moving closer towards opening the facility. I would like to stay optimistic that Amazon will still be employing about 1,500 people and that a job fair will be held for Johnston residents as was promised to the taxpayers of Johnston."

Once the facility opens, \$9 million in Route 6 (Hartford Avenue) road improvements outside the facility will be put to the test, as those 1,500 projected employees commute to work and merchandise ultimately starts arriving and departing from the \$290 million five-story 3.8 million-square-foot "robotic fulfillment center."

"I did not see the four job postings you referenced, but once again I am hoping that Amazon gives Johnston residents the first opportunity to fill these positions," Civetti said. "I understand that these positions are important management-type positions. However, if Amazon has qualified Johnston residents competing for these positions I would hope that Amazon takes the town residency into consideration."

Past Promises

In September 2021, Amazon estimated it would likely hire around "1,350 full-time associates, starting at \$18 hourly wages, plus healthcare, dental and 401K benefits." Amazon also projected hiring 10 managerial, technical and operational oversight jobs with estimated \$60,000 annual managerial salaries.

Overall, the facility's new employees' compensation may total as much as \$57,000,000 in "new annual payroll created," once it the facility is open and "operational." Former Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena (the current mayor's father) championed the project, concluding his 16-years in office with what town and state officials labeled a major economic victory for the region. The tax agreement with Johnston should ulti-

mately yield 20 annual payments, each averaging more than \$7.2 million.

How much did Johnston leave on the table by signing the 2021 tax agreement?

Then Town Council Vice-President (and now Mayor) Polisena Jr. discussed that point with legal counsel and told the Johnston Sun Rise, based on "rough estimates (Amazon will) be paying around 60% of their total obligation."

Once the facility finally opens, Amazon also agreed to a long list of payments to community organizations, state and local departments.

The company pledged to spend up to \$90,000 annually on Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) bus passes for facility employees during the first 10 years of operation, to commute from the state's urban centers: Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket.

Within 1-3 years after facility opening, Amazon promised "up to \$100,000 for a traffic mitigation study" at the site; and a year after completion of the traffic study, up to \$1,000,000 for "post-construction traffic mitigation equipment and improvements."

Amazon pledged \$582,500 annually toward funding a Johnston High School Pathway Program, \$1,250,000 toward Rhode Island Municipal Education and Training Initiatives, \$2,750,000 to Rhode Island's Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP), 10 annual \$538,000 payments to the Johnston's "public safety operations," \$50,000 to "Johnston youth sports," \$100,000 to the Johnston Senior Center, \$250,000 to Johnston Municipal Land Trust, and \$100,000 for Johnston Memorial Park.

Civetti asked for updates on those payments at last week's public hearing, but he has yet to receive the details. The community partnership agreement also stipulates Johnston will be the first community to host a job fair, one of at least three promised hiring events.

"I look forward to seeing Amazon hold a Job Fair in Johnston over the next several months," Civetti said. "I would imagine that the job fair could be held at their facility or perhaps at the Johnston High School to provide adequate parking for all those interested in attending."

LEGAL NOTICES

Public Auction Legal Notice

To: Credit Acceptance 25505 N 12 Mile Rd Southfield MI, Renee Wilkinson 528 Park Ave Cranston RI. A public auction will be held at 775 Hartford Ave Johnston RI on April 27, 2024 at 9:00 am. The vehicle a 2015 Toyota 2T1BURHE9FC459642 belonging to the above. the auction being held is to satisfy towing and storage fees.

4/18/24

JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW REGULAR MEETING AGENDA Thursday, April 25 2024 at 6:30 PM Johnston Senior Center 1291 Hartford Avenue

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Review will hold its regular meeting on April 25, 2024 at 6:30 pm, at Johnston Senior Center, 1291 Hartford Avenue. All persons interested in the following proposals are requested to be present at this time. The assembly facilities are accessible to the handicapped. Persons requiring special accommodations shall call the Zoning Office at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting (401) 231-4000 ext. 4117. Persons utilizing TDD equipment may contact the Town through "Relay Rhode Island" at 1-800-745-6675. The agenda for the evening will be as follows, subject to change:

I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

II. Minutes from Previous Meetings

III. Old Business: None.

IV. New Business:

Petition of David Petrucci Owner/Applicant for 61 Lookout Ave, AP 9 Lot 238, Zoned R15. Applicant is proposing construct a detached two car garage with new driveway.

Petition of Robert and Karen Tedeschi Owner/Applicant for 17 Jenckes Street, Ap39 Lot108, Zoned R15. Applicants is proposing special use permit for free standing 2 car garage on a plot zoned B2

V. Adjournment

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

• The Zoning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at <https://clerkshq.com/johnston-ri> or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Department of Development and Public Services, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.

• Items not heard by 10:30 p.m. may be

continued to the next Regular Meeting or special meeting at the discretion of Board.

• Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

4/11, 4/18/24

Town of Johnston Planning Board REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, May 7th, 2024 6:00 P.M.
Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

III. NEW BUSINESS

PB 24-13 – Willy Reyes – 138 Scituate Avenue. AP 25 Lot 4. A Public Hearing on a Minor Land Development with Unified Development Review to establish two lots where both lots require frontage variance.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

PB 23-01- 1725 Plainfield Pike. AP 26 lots 77, 85, 111 and 149. A Public Hearing on a Major Land Development consisting of 12 buildings containing 24 units of housing. development. The property is located in an R-7 zone.

PB 23- 12 – Zoning Update. Discussion and review of draft zoning ordinance. Major restructuring of the ordinance was required because of the changes and the failure to update the ordinance over the past years when changes were made to state law.

V. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT & SPECIAL ITEMS
Presentation. Overview and discussion of state law changes to RIGL 45-23. Land Development and Subdivision Review and RIGL 45-24. Zoning Enabling. Note – revised Land Development Regulations were adopted at the February 6, 2024 meeting

VII. ADJOURNMENT

• The Planning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at <https://clerkshq.com/johnston-ri> or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.

• Items not heard by 9:00 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.

• Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

4/18, 4/25/24

Johnston Senior Center Highlights

From the Staff

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. 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.; Yoga & Pilates w/Fran, 6 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

- Saturday, April 20, The Follies w/Fran, 12-4 p.m., Lunch & Show (\$25 per person)
- Monday, April 22, Phantom Farms, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 23, Foxwoods Resort Casino, \$5
- Tuesday, April 30, Book club w/Mary, 10 a.m., Convent of Water by Abraham Verges

More at Mohr Library

Yoga for Children ages 5 to 12, is Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. and Thursday, April 18 at 10:30 a.m. Ms. Pauline will guide participants into gentle movements and simple breathing techniques. Yoga programs are sponsored by The Tri-County Community Action Agency, Health Equity Zone. Please register at mohrlibrary.org

Mohr Library is the one and only public library of Johnston, and is structured and staffed to help connect people with books, media, and other resources for information, culture, and enjoyment.

Kids can gather to play with Legos, Friday, April 19, between 12:30 and 4:30 p.m. For ages 3 and up.

STEAM Challenge, Thursday, April 18 at 5 p.m.—bring your curiosity and join Ms Melyssa for a hands-on project that mixes art and science. Ages 5 and up.

See more programs at mohrlibrary.org, where you can also sign up for our email list, or call 401-231-4980. The Library is at 1 Memorial Ave. in Johnston.

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Johnston Sun Rise



SOAKED: The event's highest donator, fourth grade student Liam Arriaza dumping the ice bucket over Life Skills classroom staff member Derek Lepre. (Submitted photos)

There's still time
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 at Chelo's Restaurant, Post Rd. Warwick

\$50 could win you a brand new
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Warwick Rotary Club

Car & Cash Raffle

1ST PRIZE: 2024 Chevy TrailBlazer

2ND PRIZE: \$1,500⁰⁰ Cash **4TH PRIZE: \$500⁰⁰ Cash**

3RD PRIZE: \$1,000⁰⁰ Cash **5TH PRIZE: \$250⁰⁰ Cash**

TICKETS ARE \$50 EACH OR 3 FOR \$100
 AVAILABLE AT GREENWOOD CREDIT UNION, THE WARWICK BEACON
 AND REVOLUTION AMERICAN BISTRO

Proceeds to benefit Warwick Rotary Charities



WET REVENGE: First grade student Norah Dubois poured a cup over her first grade teacher Ms. Taylor Duclos.

■ Pour
(Continued from page 1)

The faculty, staff, and students at Brown Avenue pride themselves on the school's culture of inclusion. Sloan said they strive to ensure "everyone feels accepted and valued" and the school is a place "where differences are celebrated."

"To accomplish this, we've created a Brown Ave Unified Student Leadership Team, a Partner-Buddy Program during recess and physical education classes, as well as lessons that teach, encourage and celebrate everyone's individual uniqueness," Sloan said. "A handful of the fifth grade students use their recess time to partner with our life skills students to help encourage and work on basic sport skills. Additionally, the students and staff worked on celebrating each other's uniqueness by highlighting everyone's strengths, interests, and character traits by designing and creating their own crayon that represents them."

Brown Avenue Elementary utilized the story titled "The Crayon Box That Talked" by Shane DeRolf, which includes the quote: "We are a box of crayons, each of us unique, but when we get together: the picture is complete."

Sloan said this story, and particularly this quote, "resonated with our staff and students."

"Students and staff are learning the value of celebrating everyone's differences and by doing so, together, we make everyone stronger," she added.

On March 20, Brown Avenue School held its third annual Pay to Pour Event.

The students who donated to the fundraiser were given a cup of water to pour over the heads of faculty, staff and volunteers of their choosing.

"We had seven brave volunteers," Sloan reported (including herself in the count). Besides Sloan, the school's other "soakees" included Kimberly Marshall, Taylor Duclos, Kirsten Sabia, Derek Lepre and Anthony Drazek.

"We had one surprise special guest, the Assistant Principal of Ferri Middle School, Mr. Freddie Skipworth," Sloan said. "Students who donated \$50 were able to also pour a large pitcher of water over a staff member's head. The student who donated the largest amount of money to the fundraiser was able to pour a large bucket of ice water over a faculty/staff volunteer of their choosing."

A few of fifth grade student leaders ran the entire event. Sloan said they did "an outstanding job."

"The faculty and students also showed off their inclusive spirit and Brown Avenue pride during a week-long school spirit with each day representing ways to be inclusive," Sloan wrote to the Johnston Sun Rise. "We are so proud of our Brown Avenue Students and families. These kids are beyond generous, full of love, and want to raise awareness for Special Olympics RI and more importantly, want their school to be known for its inclusive culture. The students are always so excited to donate their own money they have saved in order to contribute to this great cause and fun event!"

Sloan reports that through Brown Avenue's Pay to Pour event, the school not only raised awareness for Special Olympics RI, but we also tripled their \$1,000 fundraising goal.

"We, the Brown Avenue Family, have raised over \$3,000," Sloan said.



PEERS TO LOOK UP TO: First grade student Wyatt Santiago posed for a photo with his fifth grade buddies Anthony Achilli and Emma Splendorio.



TAKE THAT: Fourth grade student Charliese Mooney poured a cup over art teacher Mrs. Kimberly Marshall.



SLOAN SOAKED: Fourth grade student Luke Celeste poured a cup of water over Health and PE teacher Amanda Sloan. (Submitted photos)



SIGNS OF INCLUSION: Fifth grade student leaders led the school while taking the Brown Avenue Pledge in sign language.

OLDER BUDDY:

Second grade student Brooke Aldaco posed for a photo with her fifth grade buddy Valentina Deleon Jerez.



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Scrawled in red, white and blue ink

'America inspires me to be who I am'

By **SETH FONTENAULT**
Special to the Sun Rise

America inspires me to be who I am. It is a country where I can worship the God I believe in and other people are free to make their own choice of what they believe. America inspires me to accept people as they are and allows me to be who I am.

America has its faults but I love this country and I would not want to have been born anywhere else. I want to make it even better for my kids and grandkids so they can enjoy the same freedoms I enjoy today. America inspires me to fight for what I believe is right and to respect other people's beliefs. I want to help this nation and protect it.

I thank everyone who has fought or died so that I am able to be here in this nation, living free. They inspire me to do the same for future generations so other people can keep living here and enjoy the freedom America offers. These people who fought for what we have here are part of America's history and I want to help preserve that.

America also inspires me to help other people and to make a difference in my nation. It is a country where I can actually help make a change and be heard. When I am older I can vote to decide who gets elected as the president and other elected positions. I'm thankful I do not have to wait until I get older to make a difference though. I have the right of free speech so I can share my beliefs with others and try to help my nation.

America inspires me in all these ways and I try to live up to these ideals the best I can. In my scout troop, my job was chaplain's aide where I made sure our scouts were reverent and respectful to others' beliefs; I organized and held Scouts' Own Services and interfaith prayers. I recently was part of an Eagle Scout project documenting a list of Veteran names at a local cemetery so that they can be honored for their service. I serve local charities and volunteer for other service projects. I am thankful that America has helped shape who I am.



PATRIOTIC INK:

VFW Patriot Pen Chairman Scott Gould, a Past State Commissioner, and Commander Farrell Mc Fadden from VFW Post 6342, visited a Troop 20 Boy Scout Meeting on a recent Thursday evening to award Assistant Patrol Leader Seth Fontenault with the Patriot Pen Award for Rhode Island. Fontenault's patriotic essay won the Johnston scout \$500 in prize money to help him attend Sea Base High Adventure

Camp this summer.
(Photos courtesy Susan DeAthos)



WHAT IS THE PATRIOT'S PEN?

Conducted nationwide, this VFW-sponsored youth essay competition encourages students to use their minds and knowledge of America's history and their experience of today's American society to write essays expressing their views on an annual patriotic theme.

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| Atwood Grill | Harriet's Kitchen | Riccotti's |
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| Bank RI | Home Fries | Scungio's Liquors |
| BD Mart | Hometown Pizza | Seasons Corner Market |
| BMC mart | J & T's Grille | Shop and Go |
| Bread Boss | J. Palmieri's Pizza | Shore's Market |
| Brigido's Scituate IGA | Jacavone Garden Center | Speedway |
| Buono's Bakery | Jain's Laundry | Stop 'n' Go |
| Citgo Food Mart | Johnston Fine Wine | Stop & Shop |
| Confreda Farms | Johnston Laundromat | Strings Bar & Grill |
| Convenience Plus | Johnston Senior Center | Sundaes |
| D. Palmieri's Bakery | Johnston Town Hall | Tire Pros |
| Denny's Restaurant | Knights Liquor | Tita's Tailors |
| DePetrillo's Bakery | La Nuova | Tri Town Wine & Spirits |
| Dollar Store | Lighthouse Restaurant | Trinity Assembly of God |
| Emmily's Restaurant | Marian J Mohr Library | Tri-Town Health Center |
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The circus is coming! The circus is coming!



By **DON FOWLER**

The circus is coming! The circus is coming!
I still remember when I was a young boy hounding my parents with those words every year when the circus came to town.

I remember the circus train arriving in Providence and the elephants leading the parade down Weybosset and Washington St. I can still taste the cotton candy.

It was without a doubt, "The Greatest Show On Earth". Times have changed over the years. Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey combined to bring the greatest talents in the world together in one spectacular show, performed in arenas that could hold more spectators than the old circus tents.

And yes, as a boy I tried to sneak in under the canvas and got caught.

It has been a few years now since the decision was made to eliminate tigers, elephants and other circus animals from the show, but they have been replaced with some of the most amazing human performers in the world.

My favorite has always been the trapeze, with men and women flying over my head, narrowly catching each other as they did somersaults high above.

Also unique is the Double Wheel of Destiny, and one of my favorites the teeterboards. Then there are the incredibly talented BMX riders (Don't try this at home).

Ringling has nine of them performing on their patented Criss Cross Trapeze that will have you holding your breath in amazement.

I remember the high wire, where the performer walked from one post to the other on a single wire, balancing with his pole, and, if he was really good, going down on one knee, and even turning around.

This circus has a triangular high wire that you must see to believe, and way more difficult to maneuver.

There are 75 performers from 18 countries in the show. Guinness Record Holder, Wesley Williams tries every performance to beat his record as the "One World Wonder" unicyclist rides a 34-foot bike.

To enhance the "incredible feats" there is music and dance and colorful costumes.

Nick Nack heads a bevy of clowns who entertain young and old with their antics in this completely reimagined show that ends with a bang. A big bang!

Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus is at the AMP Friday, April 26 at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, April 27 for three shows at 10:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and Sunday, April 28 at noon and 4:00 p.m.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RINGLING.COM

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NOW ENROLLING
6 Weeks - 12 Years Old

By JENNIFER COATES

room look comfortable and adapted to the needs of pint-sized early learners while shelves are filled with toys and walls are strewn with art projects. Centers are set up for imaginary play, arts & crafts, building, science, music and story time. The outside playgrounds provide the perfect place for youngsters to run off all that childhood energy. The after-school room is complete with long tables for summer school homework.

The curriculum and staff-to-child ratio requirements here meet the strict standards of the state while all staff are licensed, and CPR certified. The staff here work as a team with one goal in mind and that is to enrich the lives of the children over whom they have been given this special stewardship. In fact, the whole facility is Bright Star® rated for excellence.

Parents and children who come to this busy and nurturing learning center on Hartford Avenue will find that many of the changes that

were implemented to protect the health and safety of its students in the days of the pandemic are still in place. At the same time, the daily programming for the children who attend Dreamland is still packed with fun, activity, friendships, and play.

The center is open all year round! The staff works together to plan a fun-filled summer complete with field trips, outdoor water play and a balanced curriculum that continues to encourage your children to learn through play.

If you are looking for childcare this upcoming summer ~ be sure to register for before and after school care for children up to 12 years of age. For some school districts, transportation is provided to and from elementary school. Homework assistance and age-appropriate, supervised activities are always planned.

Dreamland Learning Center is now accepting enrollment for children ages 6 weeks through age 12. It is located at 1253 Hartford Avenue. For more information, call 401-280-1400 or visit their website at www.dreamlandlearningcenter.com.

Be sure to check out the other members of the Dreamland family of childcare centers in West Warwick (401-828-8200) and Pawtucket (401-655-1000).



One of the cozy and colorful learning centers at Dreamland Learning Center await your child ~ enrollments now open for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old.

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Sports

Girls on the gridiron

JHS hosts Welter camp, forms new girls team

By ALEX SPONSELLER

Johnston High hosted the Jennifer Welter All Girls Football Camp this past weekend at the school's field, teaching the game to local girl athletes looking to get into the sport.

The clinic hosted over 100 players that made the trip from surrounding communities and braved the weather for an afternoon of work.

Welter is a former player and was the first woman to ever secure a coaching job in the NFL when she joined the Arizona Cardinals as a coaching assistant in 2015. Along with Welter, local high school coaches also lent a hand as well as former New England Patriots running back Patrick Pass and current quarterback Nathan Rourke.

Johnston High School assistant football coach Randy Phillips was key in bringing Welter and her camp to the town and hoped that the girls were inspired by her teachings both on and off the field.

"She brought a lot of self confidence, a lot of motivation and an 'I can do this' mentality. It was good



BREAKING BARRIERS: Sophia Lafontant drops back to pass (left) while Isabella Costantino works on a rushing drill. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

■ GIRLS - PAGE 16



LEARNING THE BASICS: Jacob Spinella cradles the ball on Monday. (Photo by Alex Sponseller)

New-look lax co-op settling in

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Cranston East-Johnston boys lacrosse co-op is searching for its first win as it gets settled

into the 2024 spring season.

The Thundercat roster has undergone significant change from last year as North Providence left town to form its own team,

and this year's bunch is almost entirely new. With only two players that have logged real varsity minutes, the coaching

■ LAX - PAGE 17

JHS softball stays unbeaten

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston softball team remained undefeated when it beat Prout 1-0 on Monday. Pitcher Haley Boudreau was stellar again in the circle, allowing no runs, one hit and striking out 18 batters faced.

Arianna Velasquez knocked in Boudreau for the team's lone run.

The Panthers beat Barrington 9-1 the previous game as well. Velasquez and Kalyn Foster each knocked in a pair of runs while Bella Boudreau added another RBI. Haley Boudreau got the win in the circle allowing just one run on four hits while picking up 13 strikeouts.

Frezza nabs LEC honors

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Rhode Island College freshman Andrew Frezza (Johnston, R.I.) was named the Little East Men's Rookie Track Athlete of the Week for his performance at Southern New Hampshire's Penmen Relays on April 13.

Frezza finished first in the 5,000m (15:25.18) with a career-best effort.

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will compete at MIT's Sean Collier Invitational on Saturday, April 20 (11 a.m.).

Female sports continue to rise

Rhode Island continued to open doors for female athletes last weekend when Johnston High School hosted Jen Welter's all girls football camp. Welter was hired as the first-ever female coach in the NFL when she joined the Arizona Cardinals a few years back.

In the past few months, we have seen some developments in girls sports which is great to see and in many ways, long overdue. Prior to this past weekend, we saw the Rhode Island Interscholastic League also introduce its first-ever girls wrestling state championships. Johnston High is also hosting the state's first varsity flag football team.

At the camp, local girls got the chance to learn the game from Welter, coaches from the Johnston varsity club as well as representatives from the New England Patriots past and present. It was pretty cool to see the girls get coaching from such an impressive group of mentors.

As a sports nut myself, I am all for as much sports as possible. Football has always been a male-dominated game, but I am all for the introduction of girls leagues. There are female football leagues from the amateur to professional level (Welter was a professional player), so it is not unheard of the way it was, say 10 years ago. Either way, it looks like Rhode Island is getting prepared to expand the game further in the coming years which is great. Maybe it will one day be a varsity sport on the girls side.

Not only have women's sports been getting some shine locally, but nationally as well.

Earlier this week, the WNBA held its annual draft, and as expected, Iowa sensation Caitlin Clark was selected first overall by Indiana.

In the past few months, Clark's stardom has exploded and she has become one of the biggest names in basketball. She was the best offensive player at the college level and is considered to be one of the greatest shooters in the sport's history, regardless of level or league. Check out her highlight reel on YouTube, it will blow you away.

Again, 10 years ago, we probably would never have heard of her. In today's world, these women are finally getting their due. There is still plenty of progress to be made, but the past year or two has shone some real improvement in representing female athletes.

If you love sports, than you should be all in on whatever talent you can find. Providing platforms

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR

ALEXS@
RHODYBEAT.COM

for athletes to showcase their skills, such as introducing new sports and leagues, or paying attention to sensations like Clark is where it needs to begin.

Although the world has grown too dependent on social media in many ways, it has also helped propel the coverage of female athletes. It is easier than ever to connect and engage, so let's continue to encourage the practice of supporting our female athletes from the youth level on up, especially those right in our backyard.

It was Marathon Monday in Boston, continuing one of the greatest traditions in American sports. Each year I look forward to tipping my cap to those who participate.

People from all over the world travel to compete in this historic race. It never ceases to amaze me what human beings can accomplish on days like Marathon Monday, being able to run for 26-plus miles at a steady pace. It blows my mind.

There are certain sports that I will never be able to explain, I'll never be able to fully wrap my head around.

Those sports include: distance running, pole vault, balance beam, and figure skating just to name a few.

How can a human run for 26 miles? How can a human launch themselves 20 feet in the air using just a pole? How can a human do a back flip and land on a 4-inch beam? How can someone spin, twirl and leap on ice skates?

Those are the sports that make my jaw hit the floor.

Seeing the annual Boston Marathon winners compete and break records is astounding. It seems like each year the times continue to dip. I used to be a regular jogger, in my prime I could bang out a 5-mile run, no problem.

But to do that five times and then some? Holy cow.

So, this is your annual reminder that anything is possible if you set your mind to it. I'm not exactly sure how sports like the ones I mentioned are possible. They defy logic. That, though, is inspirational in itself.



RUNNING THE SHOW: Jennifer Welter runs through drills with players last weekend.

Girls

(Continued from page 15)

for our girls to see someone like her, a woman of power, that has broken down barriers. Hopefully that will give the girls in our communities that self confidence," Phillips said.

Phillips is also coaching a newly-formed all girls flag football team at the high school, which was the first such team that was assembled in Rhode Island. With 30 girls on the roster that have been practicing together since March, Phillips and company hope that it will help eventually establish girls flag football as a varsity sport in the state through the Rhode Island Interscholastic League.

Several other schools have followed suit and Johnston will be holding a groundbreaking tournament on May 11th, and will see teams make the trip from schools like Central Falls and Times2 Academy, among

others, to take part in this event. In order for the sport to be added to the RIIL, teams will need to showcase their procedures and systems to prove that there is enough interest to form a division.

Phillips hopes that this newly formed squad will not only give girls a chance to continue their careers past the youth level, but will also provide an opportunity at earning a potential college scholarship. There are currently 26 colleges that offer scholarships for flag football and the number is expected to rise in the coming years.

"The boys have 7 on 7 leagues, a league here, a league there, then they can transition to high school football and get a scholarship. The girls get cut off at the recreational level. That's why I wanted to bring it to high school," said Phillips.

The Diamonds on the Gridiron Tournament will be held at Johnston High School on Saturday, May 11th. Kick off is at 1:45 p.m., with all proceeds going toward a women's charity.



GOING THROUGH DRILLS: Madison Brodeur works on a running drill.



STICKING TOGETHER: Johnston's Connor Niles (left) and Alex Fedorchuk (right) take on Rogers on Monday afternoon in Cranston.

■ **Lax**

(Continued from page 15)

staff is simply looking for progress and for players to step up to fill roles. "It's a new roster, a small roster and most of them have never played. Guys have stepped up, Alex Fedorchuk has stepped up in goal and has been unbelievable," said East-Johnston coach

Matt Davis. Leading the way on offense so far has been Jayden Chagnon, who scored the team's lone two goals against Rogers on Monday. Chagnon also registered four goals against North Providence while Wilson Chavez Chingo found the back of the cage. Fedorchuk finished with 14 saves that game and has saved over 50 percent of shots on net.

Considering the circumstances, Davis and his staff are not concerned about the wins and losses as much as they're looking for the team to take a step forward. Davis has been proud of the players for giving the sport a shot, especially considering how challenging lacrosse is for novices. "I'm proud of these kids for stepping up and trying a new sport, it takes a lot of guts and a lot of courage.

Lacrosse is a tough, contact varsity sport, but they wanted to try it and they have been showing up every day," Davis said. "Every day there's been improvement. We just want to teach them the basics, the rules of the game." The co-op will next be taking on Scituate on the road on Thursday, then will turn around and host Tiverton the following Monday.

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2024 fishing regulations posted

By **CAPT. DAVE MONTI**

The RI Department of Environmental Management filed new regulations for the 2024 fishing season last week. Anglers should take note that we have a striped bass file law in place now that applies to all anglers, from shore, a private vessel or a charter/party boat. Also, we have a new larger summer flounder (fluke) size, 19 inches. See below regulation highlights or visit the RI State Attorney General's website for details on what has been posted at Finfish - Rhode Island Department of State (ri.gov).

Black sea bass. Private anglers, 16.5-inch minimum size, two fish/person/day May 21 through Aug. 26 and three fish/person/day Aug. 27 to Dec. 31. Party and charter boats would have a 16-inch minimum size with a season that starts later June 18 to Aug. 31 with two fish/person/day and from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 a six fish/person/day limit.

Scup. 11-inch minimum for boats and all shore fishing having a 9.5-inch minimum size. Private anglers, including shore fishers, from May 1 to Dec. 31 with a 30 fish/person/day limit. The party/charter season would run May 1 to Aug. 31 with a 30 fish/person/day limit and a bonus season from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31 with a 40 fish/person/day, and from Nov. 1 to Dec. 31 the limit goes back to 30 fish/person/day.

Bluefish. Status quo at three fish/person/day for private anglers, and five fish/angler/day for party and charter boats. No minimum sizes, allows for a snapper blue fishery, however, it is still three fish per angler.

Tautog. The new "trophy fish" slot limit is still in place as last year. Maximum of ten fish/vessel/day (does not apply to charter boats). Min size 16 inches, April 1 to May 31, three fish/person/day; June 1 to July 31, closed season during spawning in RI; Aug. 1 to Oct. 14, three fish/person/day; Oct. 15 to Dec. 31, five fish/person/day. Only one fish may be above 21 inches.

Striped bass. Status quo regulation for 2024, a slot of one fish/person/day between 28 to less than 31 inches. Additional provisions recommended include the use of circle hooks when fishing recreationally with bait, striped bass caught on any unapproved method must be re-

turned to the water immediately without unnecessary injury, and gaffs are prohibited when fishing for striped bass recreationally.

New this year is a striped bass recreational filleting law, here it is in detail:

General: Racks must be retained and must be kept whole, meaning the head, tail, and body remain intact; No striped bass shall be mutilated in a manner that prevents the accurate measurement of the fish; No more than two fillets taken from legal striped bass representing the equivalent of one fish per angler; and No possession of racks or fillets while actively fishing with lines in the water.

Private Recreational Vessels: Racks must be retained until the vessel is secured to a dock or removed from the water and all of the fillets have been offloaded from the vessel.

Party/Charter Vessels: Racks must be retained until the vessel is secured to a dock or removed from the water, all paying passengers have disembarked the vessel, and all fillets have been offloaded from the vessel.

Shore-based Anglers: No filleting of striped bass will be permitted while still actively fishing with fishing lines in the water.

Summer Flounder (fluke) are experiencing overfishing so coastwide states must reduce their recreational harvest limit by 28 percent. To meet this requirement, Rhode Island has opted to increase the minimum size to 19 inches for 2024 (from 18 inches). So, the summer flounder regulations in a nineteen inch minimum size with a season from April 1 to Dec. 31, however, the possession limit is now six fish per person per day (which is an increase from four fish).

Once again we have Special Shore Angling Sites for summer flounder where anglers are allowed to take smaller fish. Special shore angling site locations: India Point Park, Providence; Conimicut Park, Warwick; Rocky Point, Warwick; Stone Bridge, Tiverton; East and West Walls (Harbor of Refuge); Narragansett; Fort Wetherill, Jamestown; and Fort Adams, Newport. Minimum size: Seventeen inches. This applies to only two fish of the allowed total possession limit. The minimum size of two of the six fish may



SUCCESS AT GORDON'S POND: James Pascucci and Matteo Olivastro, both from Warwick, with the rainbow trout they caught Saturday at Gordon's Pond (a new stocking pond this year). (Submitted photo)

be seventeen inches. The minimum size for the remaining four fish shall be nineteen inches.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing. Anglers are encouraged to get out and fish in RI and MA as the seasons is open and many ponds have been stocked in the last week or two. Jeff Miller of Canal Bait & Tackle, Sagamore, said, "The large mouth and trout bite has been good for customers with Spectacle Pond in Sandwich producing well for customers."

Dave Henault of Ocean State Tackle, Providence, said, "Anglers have been catching largemouth bass and now they are catching trout. Trout waterways producing for customers include Carbuncle Pond, Coventry; Olney Pond, Lincoln Woods; and the upper reaches of the Wood River."

Saltwater. "Anglers continue to find holdover bass in the Narrow River, Narragansett and this weekend anglers at the Charlestown Breachway caught striped bass with lice on them which indicates they are migrating fish and not holdovers," said Henault of Ocean State Tackle.

Expert kayak angler Tom Houde of

West Warwick, said, "What a surprise I had Monday fishing for tautog with green crabs and a jig off Pt. Judith Light, Narragansett. I caught a plump 26-inch cod."

Anglers have been catching cod off Newport and Pt. Judith often for the past two to three years on a fairly regular basis when fishing for tautog in the spring and fall. Jeff Miller of Canal Bait & Tackle, Sagamore, said, "Customers are fishing for tautog on the West and East ends of the Canal using soft baits such as worms and clams. They are catching fish but they are mostly small fish. This should change in the next week or two. And, the striped bass this generally start to show up a couple of days after the Boston Marathon and that is this week so we are patiently waiting for them to arrive."

Dave Monti holds a master 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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3 Nicole Ln	Patenaude, Frank J and Patenaude, Maryann	Petteruti, Arthur A and Petteruti, Samantha A	3/29	\$529,900
6 Apple Tree Ln	Donfrancesco, Joseph and Donfrancesco, Sarah H	Pierce 3rd, Edmund and Pierce, Morgan	3/29	\$430,000
8 Falcon Crest Dr	Mazza Real Estate LLC	Patenaude, Frank J and Patenaude, Maryann	3/29	\$660,000
25 Riverside Ave	Rocheteau, Sannie E	Chicoine, Taylor A and Guevara, Brian A	3/28	\$405,000
31 Devereux Ave Lot 207	Lawton, Steven and Lawton, Jacquelyn	St Franc, Melanie K and St Franc Jr, Alix	4/1	\$280,000
103 Grand View Ave	Troxell, Paul C and Troxell, Erin C	Pesce, Jonathan	4/1	\$384,000
448 George Waterman Rd	Donna M Vacca T and Vacca, Donna M	Sousa, Derek S and Sousa, Shelby	3/28	\$365,000
993 Hartford Ave	Maldonado, Vanessa	Carcia, Juan R and Orsini, Gladys	3/27	\$555,000

Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
1 Palm Blvd	Burdi, Rachel A	Cahoon, Harold and Manning, James P	3/27	\$275,000
5 Sandro Dr	Louis R Rochira Irt and Wilkinson, Regina	Davis, Teresa	3/28	\$409,500
11 Commodore Ave	Tremblay Cynthia J Est and Cotnoir, Gary E	Sweet, Oaul and Sweet, Nancy L	3/28	\$210,000
14 Larochele Ave	Verrecchia, Stephen and Verrecchia, Gina	Vinas, Franklyn	3/25	\$399,900
16 Bucklin Ave	Figs Estates LLC	Torrens, Claudia	3/27	\$373,000
21 Baldwin Rd	Kendel, Laurel B and Kendel, Randy L	Pires, Nuno	3/27	\$421,000
24 Frontier Rd	Lowery, Stephen W	Lilly, Elizabeth	3/28	\$401,000
31 Verndale St Lot 94	Vrmtg Asset T and Us Bank TNa	Vrmtg Asset T and Us Bank TNa	3/29	\$243,559
31 Verndale St Lot 93	Vrmtg Asset T and Us Bank TNa	Vrmtg Asset T and Us Bank TNa	3/29	\$243,559
37 Byron Blvd	Mascis, Denise	Croteau, Jennifer	3/26	\$345,000
38 Ogden Ave	Murphy, Jennifer	Martin, Joshua and Barbeiros-Martin, Isabel	3/26	\$580,000
41 Farmland Rd	Toomey, William M and Toomey, Jessica E	Hayes, Kristen	3/29	\$440,505
45 Frawley St	Weber, Lauren E	Lin, James and Tang, Tammy	3/28	\$343,800
47 Marblehead St	Hernandez, Austin A and Hernandez, Alejandro	Gama, Dana and Gama, Taylor A	3/27	\$375,000
55 Remington St	Macedo, Carlos	Yohn, Susan A	3/28	\$499,900
56 Green River Ave	Carreau, Dennis P	Reyes, Yaneiro M and Tavarez, Jennifer E	3/25	\$430,000
66 Barton Ave	Crosson, David and Crosson, Emily	Aquino, Stephanie L	3/27	\$460,000
75 Clara Ave	Burnham, Maureen A	Ryan, Kathleen A	3/28	\$225,000
80 Preston Dr	Godfrey, Christopher A and Godfrey, Julie A	Paraliticci, Antonio and Forkin, Dagmara A	3/28	\$710,000
92 Shawomet Ave	Davies, Sandra	Gennari, Charles and Gennari, Lisa	3/28	\$975,000
125 Adrian St	Fitzpatrick Sr, Robert J and Turnbull, Eileen	Hart, Samuel	3/28	\$353,000
138 Bend St	Barriga, Angela	Rodger, Matthew D	3/28	\$338,000
140 Myrtle Ave	Dena M Jason RET and Diganfilippo, Stephen J	Reilly, Vincent and Musso, Nancy	3/26	\$420,000
163 Cottage St	Harrington Rity LLC	Scaramuzzi, Michael	3/27	\$370,000
165 Wellspring Dr	Scambio, David W and Scambio, Jean M	Scambio 2nd, David and Scambio, Kimberlee	3/25	\$415,000
176 Canfield Ave	New England Hm Buyers LLC	Cp Invest LLC	3/28	\$175,000
188 Fair St	Ann M Gigli RET and Angilly, Linda	Morris 2nd, William and Morris, Kelsey	3/29	\$395,000
267 Boulder View Dr	Lilly, Elizabeth	Bennett, Erik and Bennett, Heidi	3/28	\$640,000
322 Shawomet Ave	Goolgasian, Peter	Celani, David	3/28	\$705,000
348 Sea View Dr	Tracy, John P	Qayin Acquisition LLC	3/25	\$230,000
688 Church Ave	Mcgurrian, Joseph	Helwing, Joshua A and Helwing, Danielle	3/28	\$420,000
992 Main Ave	Dimezza, Alfred M and Dimezza, Susan L	Cosenza, Samantha A and Cosenza, Christopher J	3/28	\$399,900
1116 Toll Gate Rd	Lopes, Ana	Tom, Sophea	3/28	\$425,000
4162 Post Rd Lot 10	Casey, James R	Carter, Marie and Cannon, Ann N	3/25	\$235,000

West Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
Residences At West Vly Lot 11	Residences At West Vly In	Bertheau, Leonard R and Bertheau, Eun K	4/1	\$440,400
3-5 Oriole Ave	Bamford, Nicholas	Greene, Angela I	3/28	\$350,000
6 Terrace Ave	Brown Stephanie A Est and Ballou, Karen	Desilva, Derek K	4/1	\$320,000
9 Dairy Farm Dr Lot 9	John H Tavone RET and Tavone, John H	Davies, Sandra and Kay, Kristine	4/1	\$655,000
15 Brookdale Dr	Pennine, Rhonda M	Learn, Greg and Chapin, Katherine	4/1	\$400,000
25 Kent St	Billings, Megan and Billings, Ruth A	Benders, Dee	4/1	\$230,000
45 Roberts St	Archambault, Melissa and Archambault, Eric	Valencia, Carlos	3/28	\$477,500
60 Governors HI Lot 60	Paul, Hubert J	Celtic Roman Group LLC	4/1	\$220,555
60 Governors HI Lot 60	Celtic Roman Group LLC	Cammarata, Jack	4/1	\$304,900
99 3rd St	Ferreira, Peter E	Viall, Henry A and Viall, Katherine	3/27	\$395,000
108 Kimberly Ln	Nims, Joshua D and Nims, Bridget L	Rodina, Teresa M	3/27	\$500,000
120 E Greenwich Ave	3 Z Realty LLC	Elevator Pro Inc	4/2	\$292,500
155 Archambault Ave	Rancher, Sheena and Rancher, Derrick	Havighorst, Richard F	4/1	\$359,000
1910 New London Tpke	Kullberg, Gregory G	Andruchow, Stephen R	3/28	\$350,000



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A celebration of love and acceptance



Alyssa (Kathryn Kimble) & Emma (Kylie Chartier)
Background: Shelby (Angelina Manfredi), Kaylee (Alysha Melkoun), Nick (Michael Mercado), Kevin (Michael Viveiros)

Trent (Greg Gillis), Dee Dee (Jennifer Gillis), Mr. Hawkins (Michael Evora), Sheldon (Anthony DeRose), Barry (Mitchell Burns), Angie (Giana Manzi) (Photos by Bob Emerson)



The Community Players present 'The Prom'

Theatre Review by IDA ZECCO

This musical gem effortlessly blends toe-tapping tunes with a powerful message of love and inclusivity. The Community Players of Pawtucket wraps up its 102nd season with "The Prom" based on an original concept by Jack Viertel, with book by Chad Beguelin and Bob Martin, lyrics by Chad Beguelin, and music by Matthew Sklar. The production runs for a second weekend, Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, April 21, at 2 p.m.

Four Broadway stars are in desperate need of a new stage after the disastrous opening of their latest show. So when they hear that trouble is brewing around a small-town, Indiana prom—and the press is involved—they know that it's time to put a spotlight on the issue...and themselves. The town's parents want to keep the dance on the straight and narrow, but when one student wants to bring her girlfriend to prom, the entire town has a date with destiny.

The vibrant characters of "The Prom" are a testament to the magic of Broadway. As does Dee Dee Allen with her diva antics played to perfection by the very talented Jennifer Gillis. Move over Meryl Streep! Gillis sets the stage on fire in her 11th hour number "The Lady's Improving," uplifted by an all-male chorus.

Barry Glickman's unexpected vulnerability, in his "Barry is Going to the Prom," is a delight to witness. Barry is portrayed by the hysterical, vocally accomplished Mitchell Burns who wears his heart on his sleeve and his tiara slightly tipped to the side. Burns does a great job in holding back and allowing Barry Glickman to be a real person and not a caricature.

Michael Evora, as Michael Hawkins, the Principal of the Edgewater, Indiana high school where the prom is to take place gives an outstanding performance as the kind, empathetic voice of reason. Hawkins serves as a wise seer - not only for the students for whom he deeply cares but also for the Broadway stars who besieged his town. His vocal rendition of "We Look to You" is a beautiful, soulful reminder to all performing artists.

Nancy Kimble is point-on as Mrs. Greene, the straight-laced, unwavering mother of Alyssa Greene who has not yet come out-of-the closet. Kimble's portrayal of the fearful parent of those different from what is deemed acceptable or "normal" is a sorrowful mirror of a world still marred by bigotry. However, Ms. Kimble's curtain call t-shirt was not missed - separating an excellent character portrayal from the person/actor.

Giana-Manzi Hiniker as Angie adds shine and sparkle in her song and Fosse-style dance number, "Zazz."

As the story unfolds, we see the transformative power of empathy and understanding, reminding us that love knows no bounds. This is exquisitely demonstrated by Katherine Kimble as Alyssa Greene who has yet to "come-out" and is caught between her love for her mother and her love for her prom date, Emma

Nolan, played by Kylie Chartier. The two have marvelous voices and well-honed acting chops. The bond between them is palpable. Ms. Kimble displays an ambiguous frailty that is touchingly told in her vocal number, "Alyssa Greene."

The Greene/Nolan relationship is the crowning feature of this production. And Kylie Chartier is one of those rare actors with absolute authenticity, vocal and acting acuity displaying courage, determination, joy and energy on stage with every movement and every song. Chartier as Emma Nolan, the girl who just wants to attend the prom like every other kid, is the epi-center of this musical and sustains that position from curtain up to curtain call. Chartier's is a performance worth the price of the ticket particularly in her musical numbers, "Just Breathe" and "Unruly Heart."

However, I must emphasize that every character in this production is outstanding. Under the direction of Christopher Margadonna, not one actor on stage is a weak link. Margadonna provides a masterfully flowing production filled with solid performances and lots of heart. Teaming up with sensational musical direction by Maestro Joseph A. Carvalho, the multi-talented orchestra provided superb accompaniment to the vocal talent on stage. The choreography by Julie Gillis, was a breathtaking spectacle, seamlessly weaving together movement and emotion to create moments of pure magic on stage. From energetic ensemble numbers to intimate duets, every step tells a story which captivated the audience, leaving us in awe.

The production has a minimal set and lighting design by Andrew Lugo and Adam Ramsey which is genius. Nothing distracts from the characters. And Stage Manager Alyson Conroy commands an efficient and effective crew.

In this reviewer's opinion this is the best community theater production of the season (musical or non-musical) - hands down! "The Prom" will lift your spirits, touch your heart, and leave you with a smile that lasts long after the curtain falls. In a world that seems so divided, "The Prom" is a shining beacon of unity and acceptance; it's a celebration of diversity, friendship, and the universal need to love and be loved. Bravo to the cast, crew, and especially to Christopher Margadonna, Director, for delivering a truly unforgettable night of theater.

What: The Prom
Who: The Community Players
Where: Jenks Auditorium
Division Street, Pawtucket, RI (Across from McCoy Stadium)
When: April 19 & 20 at 7:30 p.m. and April 21 at 2 p.m.
Tickets: \$30.00 for adults and \$18.00 for Students (with valid ID)
Discount rates for reservations of 10 or more
Information/Box-Office: www.thecommunityplayers.org or 401-726-6860

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ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local  Adoptable  Loveable



BUDDY

Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

Have you been searching for a little buddy...well my name is Buddy! This young pup is only nine months old and is ready to join your family! He loves life and everything about it! He is playful, smart, lovable, likes other playful dogs and is ready to love you! He is a mixed breed with a gorgeous golden color coat and green eyes that will steal your heart! If you'd like to meet Buddy please contact Rhode Home Rescue. You can email kaitlin@rhodehomerescue.org or visit their website for more information at <http://www.rhodehomerescue.org> Once you meet Buddy you will fall in love!

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



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Magnificent creatures in our magnificent zoo

By DON FOWLER

I went for a walk in our magnificent Roger Williams Park Zoo. It was a bright sunny day and the marvelous elephants and monkeys were out, alongside magnificent dragons and mythical marvels from all over the world.

Following the pumpkins and Christmas displays, we are blessed with unicorns, mermaids, dragons and other colorful creatures, most of them roaring and moving realistically.

The Loch Ness monster is bathing right in one of the ponds. Another creature is hiding behind the bushes. Colorful creatures are everywhere.

School vacation week is bringing out families by the hundreds. Strollers, carriages and wheelchairs are moving easily along the wide pathways that take you to magical places, as the mythical creatures mingle with the real-life animals.

The great thing about this exhibit is that it is even better in the daylight, where you can examine the



Dragons & Mythical Creatures is an immersive experience featuring over 60 life-size animatronic wonders that will ignite your imagination.
 (Photos courtesy of RWPzoo.com)

detailed artwork that went into creating the "mythical monsters."

But please, don't touch. Docents are readily available to explain the creatures and warn the young ones to look, but not touch.

There is a large play area including rides, ice cream, and the zip line.

I have been to the zoo dozens of times, but never adventure the zip line which takes you over one of the lakes at 30 miles an hour (The at-

tendant told me it is actually 29.9). Wow! It's a good thing they strap you in tightly, because I lost my breath half-way up.

You need a zoo admission ticket if you are a non-member. Now is a good time to purchase a membership. Admission is \$7 for members and \$9 for non-members.

Magnificent Dragons and Mythical Creatures will be at Roger Williams Park Zoo through August 11. Don't miss it.



ROOTS OF CREATION

(Submitted photo courtesy of Boardz House Productions)

Reggae Fest brings a jammin' vibe to Wakefield

By ROB DUGUAY

The weather is warming up, which means that thoughts of going to the beach and basking in the sun are soon going to pop up in people's minds. With every environment there's often a soundtrack and reggae music goes with sunny days and positive vibes unlike any other genre. It also goes pretty well with the date of 4/20, and that's when the first annual "Reggae Fest" will be taking place within the village of South Kingstown known as Wakefield. A variety of local and regional acts are going to be performing behind Phil's Main Street Grill and the Contemporary Theater Company on 323-327 Main Street starting at 2pm. It also marks the first "RiverFire" of the season with contained fires being lit on the Saugatucket River as the pedestrian bridge becomes illuminated and the scent of wood smoke fills the air when the sun starts to set.

The headliners of the festival are Roots of Creation, who initially started out on the campus of Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, New Hampshire during the early 2000s. Led by guitarist and vocalist Brett Wilson, this dynamic act like to refer to their sound with the question "What if Bradley Newell & Jerry Garcia had a baby?". Their influences of Sublime, Grateful Dead and many others have garnered the band a huge following while sharing the stage with the likes of The Wailers, Fishbone, Slightly Stoopid and Michael Franti. Along with a set of original material, they're also going to be doing a full performance of music from their latest album "Grateful Dub" that came out last year. As folks could probably tell from the title, the full-length release consists of reggae-infused renditions of the Grateful Dead's most well-known songs along with a few of their deep cuts.

One of the local bands on the bill is Dudemanbro, who hail from Narragansett. Originally starting as a trio with

vocalist and guitarist Kyle Bell, bassist Keith Kosut and drummer Jim Plaziak, this act has expanded their sound over the years by bringing saxophonist Joey Ludwig, trumpet player Luca Simeone, trombonist Hogan Zinn, guitarist Matt Lombardi and organist and pianist Mike Danserea into the fold. This inclusion has brought their reggae-influenced approach to new heights by incorporating a variety of progressive elements. The best representation of this is their latest full-length album "Beach Bum In Rhode Island", which was released this past November. Along with performing with his own band, Bell is going to be showcasing his multi-instrumental talents with Roots of Creation as well.

The Connecticut based act Glaucoma Suspect are going to be playing renditions of tunes from Bob Marley & The Wailers while Soulshot and Clatta Bumboo will be rounding out the local presence at the festival. Soulshot has been a reggae staple throughout Rhode Island and beyond for over 20 years and they have a stellar resume that includes being the backing band for numerous reggae and ska legends such as Ernie Smith, Alton Ellis and Doreen Shafer on numerous occasions. They've also shared the stage with the likes of Lionel Richie and Chicago while being the closest thing to a musical institution you can get in "The Ocean State". Clatta Bumboo is a project that's the creative outlet of the prolific Negril, Jamaica native Sheldon Townsend while exuding an authentic brand of roots reggae that's simply excellent.

If you're a fan of reggae music and you're looking to celebrate April 20th in a very fun way, you should definitely consider "Reggae Fest" in Wakefield. Tickets can be purchased either at the Contemporary Theater Company's website at contemporarytheatercompany.com or via the Wakefield RI Festivals Facebook page at [facebook.com/WakefieldRIFestivals](https://www.facebook.com/WakefieldRIFestivals). This is a 21+ event so you should leave the kids at home and find a babysitter if needed if you plan on attending.

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A Trip to Fort Ticonderoga



By Joel Bohy
Historic Arms & Militaria
 Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers
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and cataloged by type and country. There are some great examples of British tools with broad arrow markings denoting government ownership.

The collection of gun parts was also staggering, all organized by country and gun type. I am lucky enough to see many original complete arms between work and my personal studies, but it was amazing to see the parts knowing these arms had been carried by soldiers serving at the fort.

The next day I was up early and adding the musket ball data to my spreadsheet for the British musket ball study. Then we met out on the earthworks at the site and walked them for most of the day. I had never walked in many of the areas we walked that day before and it was so cool to see how intact the works are. They had been built by the French during the French & Indian War and rebuilt and used by the Americans during their occupation of the area during the Revolution.

That night we went back to the hotel for dinner and a few cocktails. I reviewed some of my photos and thought about what we had seen over the past few days. It was an absolutely wonderful trip and if you get a chance, go up and see the fort, walk around, check out the museum, and soak it in. It's a great piece of our early history and well worth visiting!



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The Enduring Appeal of Stuffedies



The usual style of my columns is snarky sarcasm or social satire.

This month's essay is more whimsical. As with many of my others, it was inspired by items in the news and then acquired a life of its own.

Many local libraries are hosting fun events for children in their communities: sleepovers for their cherished stuffed animals. The child brings the stuffy to the library and leaves it overnight. The library takes pictures of all the toys together and when they're picked up by their owners the next day, they go home with a photo documenting their adventure. No word on whether they have to arrive with pajamas.

Most of us assume that sleeping with a favorite teddy bear must end once we become "grown ups." It turns out science has a different opinion about this. Recent studies suggest that adults would actually benefit by cuddling with a stuffed toy in bed at night. Apparently, this helps you relax. I'd try it, but I already have two cats that sleep with me. I doubt they'd move out of the way to make room for a stuffed animal. My husband has learned to give way to the cats. I think he'd draw the line at a stuffy.

This reminds me that I never had a teddy bear as a child.

Now I have a collection, and one of my cats steals them when she "hunts" at night. I had a few dolls, just no bears. I also had two large stuffed donkeys when I was in high school. I have no recollection of how they came into my possession. I do remember taking pictures of them to put in the school newspaper to promote a special event. Our faculty played our seniors in donkey basketball. You read that correctly: donkey basketball. I don't remember who won.

Some grade schools have students send stuffed mascots to family and friends, asking them to document the mascot's travels. The goal is to have it go around the world. My brother Rick's daughter Jennifer sent me the owl Pueo from her Punahou School in Hawaii. I took pictures of



RETIREMENT SPARKS

by ELAINE M. DECKER

it in front of the Rhode Island State House. My husband had one of his relatives bring it on a visit home to India. I'm quite sure that owl traveled farther than most stuffies. Recently a teddy bear was left on a plane. The pilot took him into the

cockpit until his owner was located. I doubt that bear made it beyond Europe.

A favorite childhood stuffed toy that I do remember was Zippy the Chimp. He was a live chimpanzee on the Howdy Doody Show in the 1950's. He even appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show several times. I received him from Santa Claus and I loved him. Zippy eventually found his way to live with my nephew Barry in Vermont. Barry had visited my parents' home in New Jersey and refused to part with the chimp when it was time to go home. I was in college by that then and was happy to have Zippy start a new life. It turned out to be quite an eventful one in Vermont.

Barry dragged Zippy everywhere, to the point where his clothes were in tatters. I remember my sister Barbara telling me that she finally took Zippy to a local department store to buy him new overalls in the toddlers department. She received some strange looks from other shoppers as she held each pair up to the worn out stuffed chimp to see if they would fit him. They were all too long; Zippy had stubby legs. But she just rolled the pants up a few times and pronounced the shopping trip a success. Barry was thrilled, because they were bright red, just like his original pants.

Barbara might have been tasked with Zippy's clothing replacement, but her husband Bob was required to handle his medical work. Bob was an ophthalmologist who often performed eye surgery. Poor Zippy was dragged around so much that one of his plastic hands eventually started to separate from his fabric arm. One day Barry brought him to his father to have surgery to repair him. Bob originally planned to use regular sewing thread but Barry would have none of that. Zippy's surgery had to be done with medical grade suture thread. And so it was. The things we do for love!

Indeed, love is what best explains the enduring appeal of stuffies. I hope this essay has stirred up some memories of your own favorite stuffed toys!

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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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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 Olc 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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A Feather, a Bird and a Caterpillar



MY MEMOIRS

by SUSAN DEAN

Writers and philosophers have long pondered the meaning of life. I believe that we are more than just an accident of nature developing into humans who then simply grow and die. The joys, the sad times, our successes as well as our tough times - the lessons we learn from it all - certainly our life experiences hold some kind of meaning in the grand scheme of things. And so I'm forever looking for meaning in the simplest happenings of the day.

It was late spring melting into early summer a few years ago, and I was walking on a path between two hedges to get across the lawn of the property where I work. The day was clear and bright and I was heading to the gardens to see what was in bloom and to spend a bit of time in the warm spring sunshine. I came across a large black feather lying perfectly horizontally across my path.

"Hmmm," I thought, "this must mean something."

So I picked it up and stuck it in my writing notebook. After much contemplation I decided that the feather was meant for my friend, who was also my coworker, and who was well-versed in spiritual matters and symbolism. And I knew that she considered the black crow to be one of her animal totems - a spirit guide from the animal kingdom.

I had already started work - we work a seasonal job - but my friend hadn't started yet and wasn't exactly looking forward to it. So after deep thought about the black feather I decided that the message was crystal clear and I relayed it to my friend.

"Your first day will run smoothly and easily and you will have an enjoyable and uplifting work experience this season."

My friend's first day back was disastrous - there were many more downs than ups and a multitude of glitches and difficulties came her way.

So much for my powers of interpretation when it came to "reading" feathers.

"Clearly," she told me, "the feather was meant for you. Think about what its message might be."

So I held the feather, and contemplated the feather, and stared at the feather, and talked to the feather with my eyes closed, but nothing meaningful presented itself. No message - no profound revelation as I stared at this single shiny black feather in my hand.

A few weeks later I was sitting in a park under a tree reading when I felt a rather heavy "thwump" on my head. My first thought was that a very large bird had let loose with a very large load of bird "doo doo" that landed in my hair. A terrible case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I let out a startled squeal and reached up. My squeal turned into a screeching shriek when my hand touched a plump collection of feathers.

An entire bird - all black - with shiny beady black eyes and an open squawking beak came tumbling down off my head and into my lap and then onto the grass in front of me as I toppled off my chair screaming wildly.

We stared at each other as I slowly regained my composure. The bird continued to eye me closely before waddling off, then took to the air and flew away - none the worse for its unusual landing choice.

Surely, I thought, this certainly must mean something. I didn't get the message from a single black feather, so maybe I needed to get hit over the head with a whole collection of black feathers. I continued to ponder the matter.

Several weeks later I was again at work, and on my lunch break wandered through the gardens again. As I was returning inside my friend pointed to my head and said, "You've got a caterpillar in your hair!"

I shook my head and a rather large green and fuzzy caterpillar dropped to the ground. After we finished laughing, my friend said, "Black feather, black bird, caterpillar - think about it - no, forget thinking - you're trying too hard - use your intuition. What's the first thing that pops into your head? The head that keeps getting plopped on?"

My first thought on this warm, sunny, picture-perfect summer day was that it was the 25th anniversary of my mother's death. And the caterpillar landed on my head right around the time of my mother's passing on that long-ago summer afternoon. Was my mother trying to tell me something?



Black feathers are all about hope and optimism and leaving old baggage behind. We can leave behind what no longer serves us. Fears and anxieties should start to fade away. Caterpillars are symbols of metamorphosis, growth, and change.

My mother grew up during the Great Depression. I know only snippets of her childhood experiences and her young adult years. She became a nurse but only worked until she married. Hers was the generation when married women - especially those with children - didn't work outside the home. But through the years I sometimes noticed a wistfulness in her.

She talked about possibly returning to nursing someday - especially when my brothers and I were in school and well beyond needing full-time care.

But my father wasn't supportive and my mother said that she'd need to take "refresher" classes anyway as the field had changed so much (and this was way before computers) and so it wasn't possible - just a silly pipe dream.

She talked about getting a bachelor's degree to add to her RN diploma and I remember her excitement as she headed off to night classes when I was still in elementary school. But this faded away, too, lasting only a semester - maybe two.

My mother volunteered at the hospital for many years and only after my father died did she work part-time doing some home health and visiting nurse work.

When I was returning to school for my masters degree my mother asked me,

"Don't you just want to be a housewife and a mother?"

Despite the fact that although I did own a house and was definitely a mother, I was no longer a wife. My mother always listed her occupation as "housewife".

My mother often expressed fears about my venturing out into the world during my growing up years, especially when I wanted to try something new or different. And she may have harbored self-doubts, too, resulting from her own up-bringing as well as from generational limitations that were in place during her lifetime.

Pondering this, I thought about some of what I had been feeling in the weeks prior to my experiences with feathers, birds, and caterpillars. One of the major changes I had made that spring was taking voice lessons. I had been singing for years in choruses but had never actually taken a lesson. I enjoyed my lessons immensely - amazed at how much I didn't know and fascinated with all that I was learning. But my excitement was laced with much self-doubt. I couldn't shake the questions of "Am I good enough? Am I kidding myself? I'm not a soloist so why am I doing this? Am I even a singer at all? Am I worth what it's costing?" and on and on.

Caterpillars symbolize growth and change and birds shed their feathers. Perhaps it was time to shed a well-ingrained habit of self-doubt about trying something new and adventurous - this time with my mother's blessing.

There are many mysteries involved in this business of living. Nature's variety alone is one of them. Perhaps we're meant to notice and learn. Maybe the feather, the bird, and the caterpillar were just that - a feather, a bird, and a caterpillar. Or maybe they were meant to teach me something. Either way, they connected me to my mother and opened my heart to myself - I can shed what no longer serves me.

As nature awakens this spring, what wonders will I see? There's a mourning dove sitting in a nest in the gutter at the corner of our house. This is the third April that she's nested there - if it's the same dove. I read that they often do return to the same nesting site year after year. I also read that they represent hope, renewal, transformation, and love. They assure us that our departed loved ones are still with us, offering love and support from the spiritual realm. They are symbols of feminine energies, motherhood, and nurturing.

Perhaps this mama is teaching me something, too. My voice lessons have continued. I'm learning steadily and having fun and I'm still enthralled with the whole process. I'm so glad that I put those doubts away and stuck with it. And I know that my mother is smiling with love, support, and approval - because it's never too late to spread our wings and fly.

Give back to the Ocean State with AARP Rhode Island.



AARP - RHODE ISLAND
by CATHERINE TAYLOR

“The human contribution is the essential ingredient; it is only in the giving of oneself to others that we truly live.”
– Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP Founder.

Put your time, knowledge, experience, and talent to good use by making life better for people 50 plus and their families and caregivers. As an AARP volunteer you will have opportunities to:

- Take on new challenges
- Be creative
- Learn new skills
- Enjoy flexible time commitments
- Volunteer from home or in your community
- Benefit from high quality training and education
- Meet new people and create connections.

I invite you to explore AARP Rhode Island’s many volunteer teams that are making a big impact in our state. There’s sure to be an opportunity or two that you would be the perfect fit for.

Join our committed advocacy team and fight for people 50-plus on Smith Hill. Our advocacy team pushes for state legislation to create affordable & accessible housing, support caregivers, improve long-term care, lower the cost of prescription medicines, set up new retirement savings options and more.

Miss the theater? Be center stage or backstage for our Speakers’ Bureau and be a part of the team that helps deliver community presentations (both in-person & virtually) on topics such as fraud protection, caregiving, understanding Social Security, and the six pillars of brain health.

Our volunteers are committed to making the communities we live in better for people of all ages and abilities, making them all more *livable*. The Livable Communities volunteer team works with local governments & community leaders to make Age-friendly improvements to cities and towns throughout the state. Learn about AARP’s Livable Communities work and contribute to the existing efforts in Bristol, Cranston, Newport, Providence, Westerly, and other communities.

If you’re extra comfortable with technology, check out our virtual program production team to help fellow volunteers learn about and use the Zoom platform to engage participants in our exciting online programming. Tech-savvy volunteers also support AARP Rhode Island staff in helping our volunteer teams manage their roles, communicate with each other, and more.

If you prefer a more personal touch, join our public engagement team, and represent AARP Rhode Island at community events, health and senior resource fairs, and partner agency conferences throughout the state to share AARP’s trusted information and resources with the public.

Finally, if you have a background or strong interest in writing and communications, our volunteer communications team writes social media posts, blog posts, web articles, and letters-to-the-editor for local newspapers and hyper-local websites that help tell AARP Rhode Island’s story in print and online.

Turn a lifetime of experience into the experience of a lifetime when you become an AARP Rhode Island volunteer. Find out more and contact us at aarp.org/rivolunteers.

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people to choose how they live as they age. We do a lot of great & meaningful work in the Ocean State, and you can be a part of it. Learn more and sign up to volunteer at www.aarp.org/Rivolunteers.



April Events

April 23- Tai Chi/ Qi Gong

April 23- Tuesdays at the Statehouse

April 18- Healthy Cooking

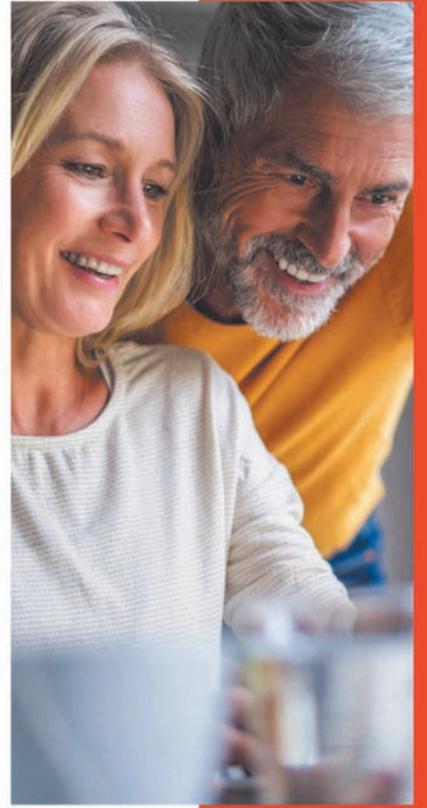
April 24- Laughter Yoga

Learn more & sign up at aarp.org/RIevents



Connect with AARP Rhode Island

Make plans to join us online for **Tai Chi/Gi Gong** on April 23 and May 14, **Laughter Yoga** on April 24, **Everybody Dance!** on May 8, and **RI Healthy Cooking** on May 16. Interested in having your group or organization host an in-person AARP Rhode Island presentation on Brain Health, Fraud, Caregiving or Social Security? **Call our Speakers Bureau at 401-248-2674.** Learn more at aarp.org/ri.





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New Study Suggests Cannabis Use Increases Heart Attack and Stroke Risk

LAW ADVICE

by DON DRAKE
CONNELLY LAW OFFICES, LTD.

“The use of cannabis products by older adults has been a topic of discussion in our blogs for the past few years, especially since the legalization of cannabis for medical and recreational purposes in most of New England,” stated professional fiduciary and certified elder law Attorney RJ Connelly III. “We’ve emphasized the importance of understanding that individuals can have different reactions to cannabis, and these reactions can vary each time they use it. The potency of THC (Tetrahydrocannabinol, the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis) in the plant has increased significantly over the years.”

This statement is indeed true. In 1994, variations of the plant contained about 4% THC, but today, these amounts have spiked. According to a National Library of Medicine study, the drug’s potency has tripled. This means that baby boomers who have used cannabis in the past may have a far different experience with it today. Additionally, older adults need to be particularly cautious, as age-related changes can make them more vulnerable to potential harm from cannabis use. They are a vulnerable group due to interactions with medications, impaired driving, adverse mental health effects, and an increased risk of falls and memory issues.

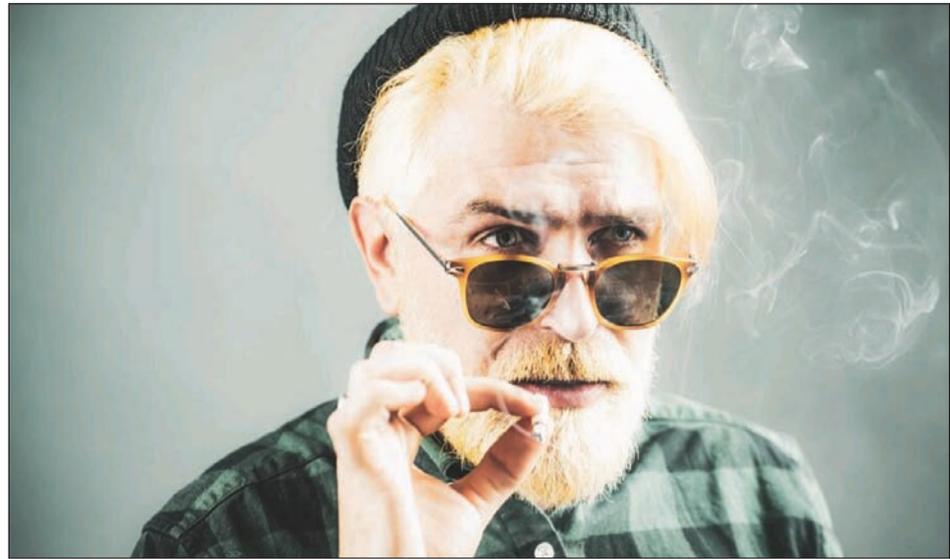
Heart Attack and Stroke Risk

A recent study suggests that daily cannabis users have a 25 percent increased risk of a heart attack and a 42 percent increased risk of a stroke. This new study, published recently in the Journal of the American Heart Association and funded by the National Institutes of Health, revealed that cannabis smoke raises the risk of heart attacks similarly to that of tobacco smoke.

Abra Jeffers, a data analyst at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and a former researcher at the Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education at the University of California, San Francisco, stated that cannabis use should be considered an increased risk factor for heart disease, along with other substances. “We know that toxins are released when cannabis is burned, similar to those found in tobacco smoke,” said Jeffers.

Researchers have long been aware of the association between smoking tobacco and heart disease, and this research provides evidence that smoking cannabis may also be a contributing factor to cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in the United States. This suggests that cannabis use could be a significant but often overlooked risk factor for heart disease.

Dr. Salomeh Keyhani, a professor of medicine at UCSF and the senior author of the study, also stated separately that as the use of cannabis surpasses that of tobacco, cannabis use could potentially surpass smoking as a leading cause of heart disease, meaning that cannabis use alone could become a more significant risk factor.



Other Concerns for Older Adults

The number of Americans aged over 65 who have reported using marijuana has nearly tripled over the past decade. According to a well-regarded federal survey on drug use, the percentage increased from 11 percent in 2009 to 32 percent in 2019.

Frequent use of cannabis on a daily or near-daily basis can pose significant risks to both physical and mental health. In addition to potentially increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes, long-term cannabis use has been associated with a heightened likelihood of experiencing psychosis and schizophrenia. It can also exacerbate symptoms of anxiety and depression and impair memory, focus, and decision-making abilities.

Regular smoking of cannabis can lead to various respiratory issues such as a sore throat, hoarse voice, persistent coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, and chronic bronchitis. Cannabis also has the potential to interact with a wide range of medications, which can have significant implications for a senior’s health. These medications include pain relievers, heart medications, blood thinners, sleeping aids, antidepressants, anti-anxiety drugs, antibiotics, antifungal medications, allergy medications, cold and flu remedies, heartburn medications, anti-seizure drugs, HIV/AIDS treatments, and ADHD medications. It’s important to be aware of these potential interactions and consult with a healthcare professional before using cannabis in conjunction with any of these medications.

To date, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s statistics indicate that up to 30% of individuals who use cannabis regularly in the United States may meet the criteria for marijuana use disorder.

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RJ Connelly III

Why it’s important to discuss cannabis with your healthcare providers

Cannabis and Older Adults Toolkit

Cannabis* use is increasing faster in older adults...



... than in any other age group in Canada.

Cannabis can interact with prescribed and over the counter medications and substances¹ that you might be taking.

Commonly used substances and prescription medications that may interact with cannabis include:

- Sleeping pills and other sedatives
- Antidepressants
- Pain killers
- Alcohol

Speak with your healthcare provider or pharmacist about any potential interactions.



Older adults using cannabis may have a higher risk of:²

(particularly with increasing dose and higher THC levels)

- Decreased short-term memory.
- Increased risk of complications for older adults with heart conditions.
- Increased risk of falls.
- When cannabis is inhaled, it may make breathing and existing lung issues worse.



Talk with your healthcare providers if you are taking or thinking about taking cannabis.³ Being aware of your medical history, including cannabis use, will help healthcare providers work with you to optimize your well-being.



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Where's My Refund

IRS tool makes it easy to track the status of a federal tax return

YOUR TAXES

by MEG CHEVALIER

Taxpayers can check the status of their refund easily and conveniently with the IRS Where's My Refund tool at [IRS.gov/refunds](https://www.irs.gov/refunds).

Refund status is available within 24 hours after the taxpayer e-filed their current year return. The tool also gives the taxpayer a personalized refund date after the IRS processes the return and approves the refund.

Where's My Refund tool updates

Recent updates to the tool mean fewer taxpayers will need to call the IRS. These include:

- Messages with detailed refund status in plain language.
- Notifications that tell taxpayers whether the IRS needs additional information.

How to get started with Where's My Refund

To use the tool, taxpayers need their:

- Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification number.
- Filing status.
- Exact amount of the refund claimed on their tax return.

Status of refunds

The tool shows three statuses:

- Return received.
- Refund approved.
- Refund sent.

When the status changes to «refund approved,» the IRS is preparing to send the refund, either as a direct deposit to the taxpayer's bank account or directly to the taxpayer by a check in the mail to the address on their tax return.

When to check for status changes

Taxpayers don't need to check their refund status more than once a day. The IRS updates Where's My Refund overnight in most cases. Calling the IRS won't speed up a tax refund. The information available on Where's My Refund is the same information available to IRS telephone assistants. Taxpayers should allow time for their bank or credit union to post the refund to their account or for it to arrive in the mail.

Timing of refunds

The IRS issues most refunds in fewer than 21 days. Some tax returns require more time to review, and this can delay a refund. It takes longer to process a return if:

- The tax return has errors, requires additional review or is incomplete.
- The return needs a correction to the Earned Income Tax Credit or Additional

Child Tax Credit

The IRS will contact taxpayers by mail if more information is needed to process a return.

Refund less than expected

If a taxpayer refund isn't what they expected, it may be due to changes made by the IRS. These changes could include corrections to Child Tax Credit or EITC amounts or an offset from all or part of the refund amount to pay past-due tax or debts. More information about reduced refunds is available on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).



Choosing the Long-Term Care That's Right for You

You have options when it comes to making decisions about your care.

When choosing long-term care, families sometimes wait until they experience a crisis and then are forced to make a decision during less than ideal circumstances. Although moving into a skilled nursing home is a wonderful option, it's not the only one, and it doesn't always need to be the first step.

You can decide what is best for you with the assistance of an Aging Life Care Specialist like Sheri Ferola with Saint Elizabeth Community, who explains,

"We work with our clients to find the best fit for them at this moment in time, while planning out their long-term options. We take a holistic approach in assessing their needs then we help guide them through the process. And we'll be there with them for the duration, adapting with them as changes occur."

Here are some options in the continuum of care that an Aging Life Care Specialist can evaluate with you.

Home Care

We hear a lot of talk about aging in place where we have the opportunity to grow older in the comfort of our own home. Home care is a great way to make that happen. Let caring qualified staff come to your home to provide services that include skilled nursing, rehabilitation, physical therapy, CNA care, personal assistance and more.

Adult Day

One of the key ingredients of aging well is remaining active, physically and mentally. Adult Day Centers provide engaging and supportive activities all day long under the

supervision of health care staff who offer assistance with everything from personal care to medication management. Many programs offer specialized care for elders affected by conditions like memory loss or motion and mobility disorders.

Senior Apartments

For older adults who live independently but wish to be in a community of their peers, senior apartments are a great alternative. Many housing complexes offer safe and affordable spaces that include resources like security and onsite resident services.

Assisted Living

Assisted living provides independent living much like senior apartments but with additional support and attention. Nursing and CNA staff help residents with their daily care. Dining, laundry and other personal services are available as well. And there are always fun social activities to keep everyone active and engaged.

Skilled Nursing Home

Whether for short-term rehabilitation or as a long-term resident, skilled nursing homes offer the ultimate in quality care. Staff build relationships with the members of the community and are able to monitor and assess their health on a daily basis. Specialized units may focus on memory care or physical activity, depending on the needs of each resident.

Before you decide on your long-term care, consider the wide range of options available to you.



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ACCORDING
TO DON
by DON FOWLER

Burbage's Collective Rage Pushes the Envelope



THEATRE REVIEW

Remember the controversy over "The Vagina Monologues"?

Burbage Theatre Company brings us the Rhode Island Premiere of Jen Silverman's "Collective Rage: A Play in 5 Betties", which uses the slang term for the female body part ad nauseum while carrying the conversation to extremes.

I sat among a young, mostly female, audience that laughed loudly and often in response to the plethora of one-liners and tall tales relating to sex and the female anatomy.

Beneath the bawdiness lies the common themes of loneliness and lack of self-worth experienced by five young ladies of various sexual persuasions.

When the five Betties get together to put on a play based on the play within a play in Shakespeare's "A Midsummers Nights Dream", their journeys to discover more about themselves spurt out in a variety of ways.

Betty 1 (Melissa Penick) responds to her unhappy marriage with rage.

Betty 2 (Amie Lytle) is in a sexless marriage with no friends to share her unhappiness.

Betty 3 (Daria-Lyric Montaquila) is in a lesbian relationship and wants to be somebody.

Betty 4 (Nina Giselle) loves her truck and her girlfriend.

Betty 5 (Anna Basile) is the gender-neutral owner of a boxing gym.

Put them all together and you have a nuclear bomb to explode.

Act 1 of this 90 minute 2-act play sets the scene for the explosion. At times a bit too talky and striving for bawdy laughs (which they got), the dialogue cries out with their unhappiness and insecurity at every turn.

Act 2 brings it all together with the 5 Betties experiencing this "Queer and occasionally hazardous exploration" which is resolved in a powerful conclusion.

The acting is excellent and fast paced. The language is R rated, and this senior white heterosexual male, though feeling a bit uncomfortable among most of his audience members, got an education into how many young women view their roles in society today.

At Burbage Theatre Company, 59 Blackstone Ave., Pawtucket through April 21. Call 484-0565 for reservations.

Discovering Japanese Cuisine at Lemongrass

RESTAURANT REVIEW

We enjoy Chinese or Thai cuisine at Lemongrass at least once a week, dining or taking out their delicious food.

We sampled their Japanese sushi samples at the Food Bank's Empty Bowls fundraiser and were surprised at how much we enjoyed them.

Lemongrass has an open Japanese kitchen right in the middle of the restaurant. We decided to take the plunge-twice-and have now added Japanese to our list of must-have ethnic foods. Previously we had limited our choice to those touristy places where you sit around a grill while chefs cook shrimp and flip them into your shirt pocket.

We were ready for the real thing. First on our list was Seafood Miso Soup (Shrimp, octopus and crabmeat in soybean broth (\$5.50). Delicious, and a great way to start any meal.

Lemongrass's Yum Yum Salad is just that. Yummy. Crabmeat, cucumber, spicy mayo and masago make for a light and tasty start.

On one visit we decided to share a meal

out of four popular appetizers. Our table looked like a Japanese buffet, enhanced with a variety of flavorful sauces, and for me a Japanese beer.

Sashimi Appetizers (\$10.50) consist of a large plate of raw tuna, salmon, and yellowfish with interesting garnishes.

Gyoza (\$6.95) is pan fried shrimp dumplings with a sweet sauce. (I don't know if it is kosher, but we mixed our sauces).

The plate of Vegetable Tempura (\$5.95) was enough for a meal, with a huge variety of crispy mixed veggies with ginger.

Calamari Tempura completed the feast (\$9.50). The crispy, tender squid had a ginger sauce that added to its enjoyment. Sauce. Onion, string beans, mushrooms, broccoli, and four delicious patties of sweet potato made for a special treat.

Now we're ready to sample the plentiful array of classic and special rolls on the extensive menu. They even offer some that are gluten free. Lemongrass Asian Bistro is located at 1138 Post Rd., Warwick Closed Monday.

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Indulge Taste Buds with Better-for-You Snacks

The foundation of healthy eating may include nutritious breakfasts, lunches and dinners, but just as important are the snacks in-between meals. Regardless of when or where you snack, encourage better-for-you eating habits with nutritious nibbles to power through your day.

According to an online survey conducted among 1,000 Americans ages 18 and older across the U.S. by Wakefield Research on behalf of the American Pecan Promotion Board, Americans love snacks, and reach for them an average of three times a day.

However, where and when those snacks are eaten can vary from on the move to on the couch, from sunrise to after bedtime. Nearly a third (30%) of respondents are munching on snacks while in bed, calling it their favorite snacking spot. However, only 35% of their snack choices are considered healthy.

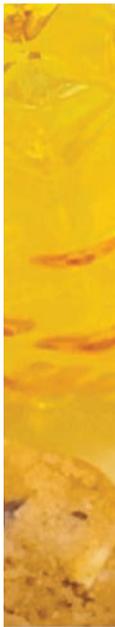
Fueling busy days can be easy with an option like pecans. According to the survey, 66% of snackers enjoy pecans on their own with 58% eating them as part of a trail mix. If you're among the 50% who reach for a snack in the late afternoon, you can turn to nutritious, satisfying solutions to indulge afternoon cravings without the guilt. With pleasing crunch, comforting creaminess and a satisfying chew, pecans are the "no sacrifice" nut that can punch up your routine with both delicious taste and plant-based nutrition.

Just a handful of pecans – about 19 halves – provides a good source of fiber, thiamin and zinc and an excellent source of copper and manganese, a mineral that's essential for metabolism and bone health. They also provide a mix of protein and good fats – 18 grams of unsaturated fat, including oleic acid, and only 2 grams of unsaturated fat – to help keep you full and energized throughout the day.

As an added bonus, their versatility and easy-to-pair profile makes them a perfect ingredient in recipes you can prepare in a cinch. For bite-sized treats that are packed with flavor and perfect for snack time, these Pecan Chickpea Cookie Dough Bites swap out flour and sugar in favor of blended pecans, chickpeas, vanilla extract, cinnamon and sea salt with dark chocolate chips folded in for a sweet finishing touch.

Or you can simply toss warm pecans with olive oil and sea salt in this Roasted Pecans recipe for a grab-and-go snack that can be prepared in advance without worrying about spoiling. Another benefit of pecans: They can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 9 months or frozen up to 2 years, giving them a longer shelf life than many pantry favorites. Plus, they can be thawed and refrozen without losing flavor or texture.

To find more surprisingly delicious nutritional facts or recipe inspiration, visit EatPecans.com.



Pecan Chickpea Cookie Dough Bites

Recipe courtesy of Dawn Jackson Blatner, RDN, on behalf of the American Pecan Promotion Board
Prep time: 10 minutes
Servings: 24

- 1 cup raw pecan pieces
- 1 can (15 ounces) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips

In blender or food processor, blend pecan pieces, chickpeas, vanilla extract, cinnamon and sea salt 3-5 minutes, scraping down sides occasionally, until smooth and creamy.

Fold in dark chocolate chips. Form into 24 cookie dough balls. Eat as-is; no baking required.



Roasted Pecans

Recipe courtesy of the American Pecan Promotion Board
Prep time: 40 minutes
Cook time: 35 minutes
Servings: 8

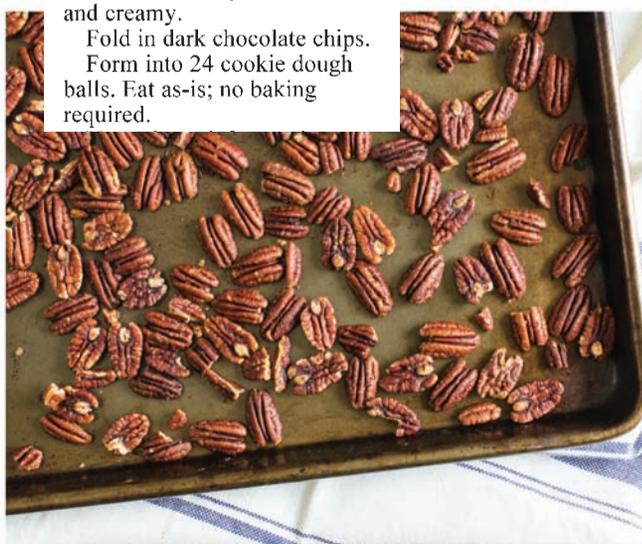
- 2 1/4 cups raw pecan halves
- 2 teaspoons olive oil or pecan oil
- 1 teaspoon flaky sea salt

Preheat oven to 300 F. Place pecans on baking sheet and bake 15 minutes.

In heat-proof bowl, toss warm pecans with olive oil and sea salt, crushing larger salt grains with fingers while sprinkling.

Return pecans to baking sheet in single layer and bake 20 minutes, or until slightly browned and dry. Remove from oven and cool on baking sheet.

Note: Store pecans in airtight container in refrigerator up to 9 months or freeze up to 2 years. Pecans can be thawed and frozen repeatedly without loss of flavor or texture.



Roasted Pecans

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Seventy-Five: A Retrospective



MY SIDE OF THINGS
by LARRY GRIMALDI

Surprise! And indeed, it was! Recently, my wife Kathy and my brothers and sisters-in-laws conspired to throw me a 75th birthday bash here in Florida. It was even more surprising since my birthday was more than a month ago on February 21st. And as the birthday banner and birthday cake proclaimed, it was time for a celebration of life.

Thankfully, I was spared the usual cards depicting negative references to aging. Although I need glasses, have hearing aids, thinning hair, and endured numerous life challenges, I have been blessed with the love and support of my family and friends to help me conquer life's inevitable road blocks. That is my real gift.

My birthday gifts also included bottles of my favorite wine and scotch, and a fascinating fake newspaper front page titled, "75 Years Ago Back in 1949." I'd like to share some of those "headlines" with you.

The minimum wage was .75 an hour (for an average annual income of \$2,950); a loaf of bread was .13; a gallon of milk was .84; and a dozen eggs was .49. (It would have been a lot cheaper in 1949 to deal with the Blizzard of 1978 Memorial Food Panic).

A postage stamp cost .03; and a movie ticket was .46. Imagine, if you can, a new house costing an average of \$7,450 and you could fill your car's gas tank at .27 a gallon! Using 1949 math, it would cost you \$4.50 to fill up your car with 15 gallons of gas, as opposed to approximately \$3.50 today for a 15-gallon total of \$52.50.

The NATO treaty was signed in 1949; the Republic of Ireland formally left the British Commonwealth; and the Cold War was just about to begin.

On the entertainment landscape, the Oscar for the best picture went to "Hamlet" and Laurence Olivier was named Best Actor in the film. Jane Wyman took home the Best Actress honor for her role in "Johnny Belinda" and John Huston was tabbed as Best Director for "The Treasure of Sierra Madre."

In sports, The Minneapolis Lakers were NBA champs; the Philadelphia Eagles ruled the NFL; the NY Yankees won the World Series (the first of five consecutive crowns); and the Toronto Maple Leafs hoisted Lord Stanley's NHL Cup.

Women's styles were defined by shoulder pads, tailored waists, skirts above the knee (a hint of fashions to come), and wrist-length gloves for shopping or those evenings out on the town. Men's fashions featured fedora hats, knit V-neck vests, gaberdine jack-

ets and the hilariously-named Zoot suit.

On a personal basis, I have been fortunate to live a rewarding life for three-quarters (yes, three-quarters) of a century. I grew up in a rented second-floor tenement in South Providence. I had jewelry manufacturing working class parents who stressed the value of education. Graduating from Classical High School was valuable preparation for pursuing a degree in Journalism and English. (I hope that I don't make any grammatical errors in this column). I had a chance to put those skills to use as a communications professional for nearly 40 years. Those same skills have also served me well in continuing my second career, a freelance writing hobby which has led to publishing a few books and this monthly column for more than seven years.

I have been married for 53 years. Kathy is my lifelong companion, cheerleader, best friend, proofreader, editor, and literary critic. My children Kate, Matthew, and Benjamin are self-reliant, compassionate, loving, and respectful persons. They grew up in homes we owned, with expansive yards to play in.

Kate and her husband, Ray, have blessed us with three grandchildren, twenty-year-old twins Katharine and Sophia and grandson, Nicholas, age 14. Benjamin and Renee are the proud parents of Benjamin, Jr., age five and Lorelai, age two. While Kate's family lives in Rhode Island, Matt lives in Nevada and Ben and Renee in New Jersey. We cherish the opportunities to get together from time to time during the year.

Kathy and I took a 35-day cross-country drive when we retired and we have been able to visit many countries in Europe and the Caribbean. We spend our winters in the Florida sunshine and away from the whims of a New England winter. We have been very fortunate.

Me? From time to time I remember the Chinese adage, "May you live in interesting times." I sure have and have been very lucky along the way.

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

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Volume 2

LARRY GRIMALDI

Larry Grimaldi of North Providence has released his new book, "50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter, Volume II", published by Stillwater Books of West Warwick.

As with Volume I, the book is a collection of monthly columns which have appeared in "PrimeTime" editions of regional newspapers published by Beacon Communications. Volume II also features some previously unreleased essays and poetry.

Grimaldi also co-authored "Wandering Across America," a chronicle of his cross-country drive with his wife, Kathy; and a cookbook titled, "Cooking With Mammie" with his wife, and grandchildren Katharine, Sophia, and Nicholas Bianchi.

All books are available on Amazon.com, or by e-mailing lvgrimaldi49@gmail.com.

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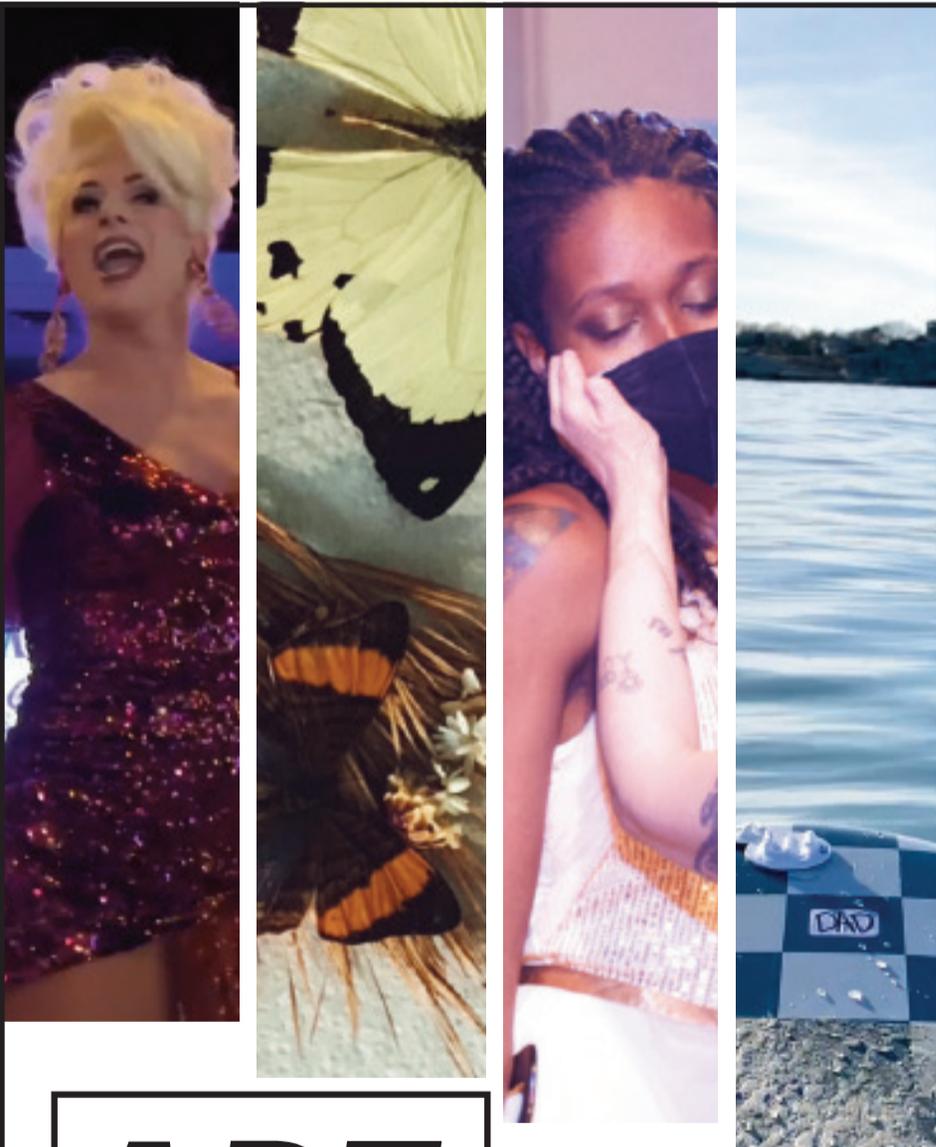


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