

Hearing for major distribution facility delayed until Feb. 16

By JACOB MARROCCO

The master plan review for a major retail distribution facility in Johnston was rescheduled for the Planning Board's Feb. 16 meeting after a "technical defect" relaying knowledge to an abutter.

John Bolton – the attorney representing Bluewater Property Group, a company associated with several proposed Amazon distribution facilities – requested the continuance, urging members of the community to reach out to him and Bluewater with questions and concerns ahead of the hearing. He said comments may be emailed to schooner@bluewater.org or people may call 401-648-7762.

"We want this to be a

completely transparent process," Bolton said. "I know the mayor [Joseph Polisenia], [Town Planner] Mr. [Thom] Deller and the city team demands that ... I want to caution people receiving anonymous fliers. There are substantial falsehoods regarding the project. Quite honestly, in our opinion, this is reckless and irresponsible by the persons putting forth these materials."

The public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday to review the master plan for a six-story retail distribution facility spanning more than 80 acres of land at 2120 Hartford Ave. The ground floor area of the center is proposed to be 823,522 square feet, with a total area of 3.86 million square feet.

"The applicant is seeking

approval of the major land development Master Plan and the granting of dimensional variances from cer-

da. "The applicant is also requesting waivers from certain requirements of the Land Development & Sub-

"We want this to be a completely transparent process. ... I want to caution people receiving anonymous fliers. There are substantial falsehoods regarding the project. Quite honestly, in our opinion, this is reckless and irresponsible by the persons putting forth these materials."

Attorney John Bolton

tain provisions of the Zoning Ordinance pursuant to Unified Development Review," read Tuesday's agen-

divisions Review Regulations."

Elsewhere during Tuesday's meeting, the Planning

Board approved the preliminary plan for a proposed medical rehabilitation center set for 2113 Hartford Ave. Attorney K. Joseph Shekarchi, representing the applicant Stillwell Park LLC, said there will be access easements drafted by Stillwell's corporate counsel. He said they would be recorded as part of the final subdivision. The development would include five buildings for retail and office space as well as the main rehab facility.

"We are ready to go forward," Shekarchi said, referencing a continuance requested from last meeting. "I believe [co-counsel] Beth Noonan prepared a memo and submitted it to Mr. Deller ... our request is that we asked for a zone change with different standards for

setbacks as part of our applications ... Easiest way to affirm that would be for this board approves it with setbacks as approved and requested."

During the public comment portion, Shekarchi cleared up a concern from Domenic Argenti about whether the project had anything to do with another rumored development.

"This is for nothing like Amazon," Shekarchi said. "[It is] a rehabilitation hospital for people who have severe medical issues."

Shekarchi said the project will head to the Department of Environmental Management next, where the agency will conduct studies on water and soils. He said traffic studies will also take

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Fellela hopes for expanded vaccine rollout as new administration takes over

By JACOB MARROCCO

New Senior Deputy Majority Leader Deborah Fellela (D-Dist. 43, Johnston) spoke with the Sun Rise this week about vaccine rollout, future legislation, evaluating Gov. Gina Raimondo's tenure and the impending Dan McKee administration.

Fellela said she has fielded plenty of emails and phone calls from elderly residents of Johnston asking when it will be their turn to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. She had she hopes incoming Gov. McKee will work closely with the federal delegation to secure more doses, while WPRI reported Wednesday that CVS and Walgreen's will begin inoculating people in stores next week.

She said she supports extending the age requirement to residents 65 or older instead of 75, a CDC recommendation that McKee has signaled he intends to follow.

"I've gotten so many calls from the elderly community in Johnston," Fellela said. "I know Amie Forand and Pell Manor were vaccinated, but we have elderly affordable units that haven't been vaccinated. We hope to see it get better. I think between the House and Senate and all of us working together, it would be wonderful to get that accomplished."

Fellela took a call the other day from a resident at Cedar Spring Terrace who was upset about a lack of new information. She said the town hopes to begin vaccinating residents 75 and older by mid-February, but Fellela harbors concerns for those



DEBORAH FELLELA

who are not technologically savvy or don't have access to the Internet. "What about people who don't have a computer?" Fellela said. "I know a lot of people at Cherry Hill Apartments who don't have computers. ... They don't have a son or daughter who can help them if they're alone."

Fellela said she had heard about Mayor Joseph Polisenia's intentions of using the recreation center as a vaccination pod, adding that the Johnston Senior Center has been floated as well. She said she hopes that some locations would be able to provide transportation to seniors who don't own a car.

"If we could work out something with the Senior Center, I know they used to have that bus, there's going to be a lot of folks who don't have transportation and maybe they would think Walgreen's or CVS would go into [these places]," Fellela said. "Cedar Spring has a community center, Cherry Hill has a community center

■ FELLELA - PAGE 11



FULFILLING THE PROMISE: House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi and Senate President Dominick Ruggiero have introduced legislation to make Gov. Gina Raimondo's Rhode Island Promise program permanent. (File photo)

Law would enshrine 2 free years at CCRI

By JOHN HOWELL

Hardly three months ago, Community College of Rhode Island President Meghan Hughes feared legislators would scuttle the Rhode Island Promise Program. Now, with the introduction of legislation by the House and Senate leadership, the program is being viewed as a means of turning around the state's economy and building a strong Rhode Island future.

Last week, House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi and Senate President Dominick Ruggiero intro-

duced legislation to permanently enact the Rhode Island Promise program. An initiative of Gov. Gina Raimondo, the program provides up to two years of free tuition for eligible Rhode Islanders at CCRI.

The program is currently set to expire with the class entering CCRI in September 2021. The bill from Ruggiero and Shekarchi would remove the sunset provision altogether, making the program permanent.

"This is the greatest thing they could do for Rhode Island citizens, the economy and for families," said an excited Tim DelGudice, chair of

the Postsecondary Education Council, in an interview. He called the Promise program a "game changer" that has already positively impacted the state's active workforce.

Relating his own experience, DelGudice underscored the importance of education and providing the means to access it.

He didn't complete his associate degree until he was 30 years old, and it was another 10 years before he graduated from Providence College.

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DiLullo, union prez support increased vaccine priority for teachers

By JACOB MARROCCO

Superintendent of Schools Bernard DiLullo said teachers should be "put at the front of the line at this point" for COVID-19 vaccinations so school operations can return to normal at a quicker pace.

Incoming Gov. Dan McKee has made headlines recently for his sug-

gestion that the timeline for inoculating teachers should be accelerated into the next phase. While workers in other industries have questioned that approach, DiLullo and Johnston Federation of Teachers President Kathleen Kandzierski have issued their support.

In a letter to the editor that appears in this week's edition of the Sun

Rise, Kandzierski wrote that "all members of the school community should be considered high priority."

"We understand how important it is to work towards the safe return of all our students, teachers, and staff to in-person learning," she wrote. "We all recognize that education is most effective when students and teach-

ers are face to face in the classroom. The social and emotional needs of everyone involved in the school department is equally important as day-to-day academic instruction particularly during a pandemic."

DiLullo concurred, saying that "learning loss" could be the result of de-

■ SCHOOLS - PAGE 11

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Some business rules eased, but new COVID strains loom

By DANIEL KITTREDGE

State officials on Thursday announced the easing of a handful of pandemic-related business restrictions – although they cautioned that as new, more transmissible variants of the coronavirus loom, the moves may prove temporary.

Department of Health Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott said positive trends seen in Rhode Island's COVID-19 data have created a "small window" in which restrictions can be eased.

"We understand how challenging this year has been for the business community, and for everyone in Rhode Island ... because of the new strains, while we might make some improvements in terms of restrictions, they may have to be temporary because we're moving in the direction in the future of dealing with the new strains that may be coming," she said.

Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor said officials reviewed various industries to identify ways to "release businesses from some of the restrictions" and "incrementally improve conditions and open up for business activity."

In specific terms, the new guidelines – which were to take effect Friday – involve catered events, indoor dining, office settings, gyms and indoor recreation facilities.

The attendance cap for indoor catered events is increasing from 15 to 30 people, while outdoor events will have a 50-person limit with testing requirements.

"For weddings in particular, we're going to provide additional flexibility," he said, allowing up to 50 people if a set of safety protocols are met.

A 50-percent capacity limit remains for indoor service at dining establishments, but the new rules will allow up to two households and a maximum of eight people at each table. Pryor said state officials continue to explore ways to "relax restrictions modestly" in terms of bar areas at bars and restaurants, which remain closed at present.

Offices will be permitted to bring up to 33 percent of their employees back to work in-person, although remote learning remains "preferred" when possible, Pryor said.

For gyms and indoor sports and recreation facilities, the new rules relate to capacity and spacing requirements. One person will be allowed for every 125 square feet of space rather than every 150 square feet of space, while the spacing requirement between patrons has been lowered from 14 feet to 6 feet.

Pryor said the state will provide "additional flexibility" for the smallest establishments falling under the gym or recreation designations, such as yoga studios. Some of those businesses, he noted, would not gain significant, if any, relief through the capacity limit change.

"There will be an appeals process, if you will," he said, allowing those small businesses to seek further relief through the state.

During her remarks Thursday, Alexander-Scott said health officials are focused on the new coronavirus strains that have been identified globally. They are known largely by the places in which they were first detected, such as the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil.

"We have not definitively seen them here yet in Rhode Island," she said, but there is a "systematic process in place to monitor for them."

Given that new strains have been identified in neighboring states, she said: "It's only a matter of time before they are here in Rhode Island." At one point, she said: "There's a sense that we may have another month or so before it really begins to pick up."

While current indications are that the available COVID-19 vaccines are effective against the new strains, Alexander-Scott said further study is needed on that front. In the meantime, she said, the concern of health officials is that the arrival of new strains that transmit from person to person more quickly and easily than what has circulated locally to date poses a risk of sending Rhode Island back up the curve – mounting case counts, more hospitalizations and deaths, and a resulting strain on the health care system.

"We cannot predict how they will affect our state," she said of the new strains.

Alexander-Scott said additional guidance from health officials about how to best prepare for these new strains is forthcoming. That will include a focus on "high-quality" face masks and improved air ventilation for indoor settings. Additionally, she said, Rhode Islanders are advised to limit the amount of time they spend in any indoor public place – no longer than an hour "as a general time-frame," she said, unless it is a person's home or place of employment.

Lt. Gov. Dan McKee, who is poised to succeed Gov. Gina Raimondo in short order, took part in Tuesday's briefing. He echoed Pryor and Alexander-Scott on the current situation, saying the state will continue to explore ways to provide "incremental flexibility" in terms of business restrictions – with the caveat that public health will be the primary concern.

"The strains that are out there are real," he said.

Elsewhere during Thursday's briefing:

* The latest COVID-19 data from the Department of Health indicate the state's situation has improved significantly since late last year.

Thursday's update showed 496 positive cases identified among 17,850 tests, a positivity rate of 2.8 percent. For last week, the state's positivity rate was 3.3 percent, down from 4 percent the week prior. That marks two consecutive weeks below the 5 percent threshold, which officials have long pointed to as a key indicator governing public health decision-making.

Alexander-Scott noted, however, that the state continues to identify hundreds of new cases on any given day.

"It's important to recognize that there is still a lot of virus circulating in the community," she said.

As of Thursday, 290 Rhode Islanders were hospitalized due to the coronavirus – the first time that figure has been below 300 since early November, Alexander-Scott said. On a week-to-week basis, new hospital admissions fell to 295 last week from 386 the week prior.

Despite the improvements, the state's death toll from COVID-19 continues to mount. Eleven more deaths were announced Thursday, bringing the total since the onset of the crisis to 2,209.

Alexander-Scott also said health officials are "seeing virtually no flu" in the state at present, which she said provides evidence that "infection prevention measures" such as mask wearing and social distancing are proving effective in curbing the spread of viruses.

* A week after announcing the broad contours of the next phases in the state's COVID-19 vaccine rollout, Alexander-Scott on Thursday provided additional details.

Most imminently, CVS and Walgreens are scheduled to begin administering vaccinations to Rhode Islanders age 75 and older at select stores in the next several days. CVS will provide the shots at five of its Rhode Island stores, including its location at 26 Putnam Pike in Johnston, starting next week. Alexander-Scott said Walgreens will be administering vaccinations at 14 of its local stores starting Tuesday.

Registration for the CVS rollout begins Saturday, and can be done by visiting cvs.com or calling 800-746-7287. Walgreens registration opens Sunday morning and can be completed at walgreens.com.

Alexander-Scott said moving forward, state officials expect "multiple additional pharmacies to come aboard as well."

The pharmacies vaccination sites are part of what Alexander-Scott described as a three-pronged approach to distributing the shots going forward.

In addition to pharmacies, there will be state-run clinics and local or regional sites, the latter of which have already begun distributing roughly 5,000 doses to those 75 and older through the state's cities and towns. She likened the setup to the model that has been used for COVID-19 testing.

Alexander-Scott acknowledged the rollout of those initial doses for the broader 75-plus population was "bumpy" and "frustrating," and she praised municipal leaders for their efforts in the hurried start-up of that initiative.

Starting the week of Feb. 14, cities and towns will begin receiving a combined 7,000 doses each week to administer through the local and regional clinics. Alexander-Scott said the larger-scale, state-run clinics – between five and 10 – are expected to open "later this month as more vaccines come into Rhode Island." Registration for those clinics, she said, will open "closer to the middle of the month" and will include both phone and online options.

Alexander-Scott said Rhode Island is currently receiving a bit more than 16,000 vaccine doses each week, up from the roughly 14,000 it had been receiving until recently. She said this coming week will be the first in which roughly half of the weekly allotment will not immediately go to pharmacies as part of a federally contracted program focused on inoculating residents of congregate care facilities.

JDTC elects officers as group looks forward to 2022

By PETE FONTAINE

The Johnston Democratic Town Committee recently held its biannual organizational meeting – live at its new meeting place and on Zoom – and began laying the groundwork for what promises to be an interesting 2022 local and state election.

On a night when enthusiasm was running high, the famed DiFesa Club, which is located at 15 Lafayette St. in Johnston, rolled out the red carpet for the JDTC and offered its ageless two-floor facility free of charge.

Many of the five-district JDTC’s 56 members practiced social distancing during a lively, yet time-shortened meeting, which was highlighted by the election of 10 officers, a welcome to three new members and a special salute to Ben Zanni.

The entire JDTC – driven by a string of victories at the town and state levels – unanimously reelected its long-time list of volunteer officials, beginning with Chairman Richard J. DelFino Jr.

DelFino Jr., who was once a member of the Johnston School Committee and now serves as administrator for the Johnston Municipal Court, was reelected for what will be his seventh two-year term as the JDTC chairman.

He is currently the first vice president for the Rhode Island Association of Democratic City and Town Chairs and is expected to assume the president’s post sometime soon. As JDTC chair, DelFino Jr. has never had a member lose an election and has been an unopposed, unanimous selec-



OUTSTANDING OFFICERS: Among the reelected officers of the Johnston Democratic Town Committee who took in last week’s Biannual Organizational Meeting were, seated from left, Carlo Jacavone, Jennifer Russo, Vilma Zanni and Lois Marandola. Standing: Douglas Jeffrey, Anthony Pilozzi, Christen Ciarlo, Fred Iafrate and Richard J. DelFino Jr. (*Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine*)

tion in his previous six terms. “Thank you,” DelFino Jr. offered after his swift confirmation. “We’ve got a great committee that has always worked hard, and our results for mayor, the Town Council, School Committee and state senators and representatives is indicative of that. However, we’ve got a lot of hard work ahead for what will be a highly important 2022 election at all levels.”

One seat, in the mayor’s office, will no doubt highlight the 2022 election, as Mayor Joseph Polisena has reached his term limit and Johnston

voters will have to elect his successor.

Nonetheless, Polisena continues his economic development agenda. Meanwhile, he took in the meeting via Zoom and told the JDTC he will not be seeking the office of lieutenant governor and will concentrate on making Johnston a better place to live.

“The next two years will be extremely important because our members will choose a Democratic candidate for the mayor’s office,” DelFino Jr. said. “Moreover, we will also help choose and support candidates for all state offices

from the governor on down.”

The JDTC also welcome three new committee members – retired firefighter John Woolley of District 5, Kevin P. Millonzi, a noted Rhode Island restaurateur who lives in District 4, and Richard J. DelFino III, the former councilman in District 1.

Last week’s meeting also featured some fun-filled moments, especially during the nominations for chairman when Douglas Jeffrey, Polisena’s chief of staff and the JDTC’s first-ever executive director, mused: “Which DelFino are we talking about for the

chair?”

There was praise for all members who either serve as officers or on the highly important and well-organized district committees.

While DelFino Jr. will serve as JDTC chairman, Jennifer Russo was unanimously reelected first vice chair, while the same held true for second vice chair Anthony Pilozzi and third vice chair Vilma Zanni. District 1 Councilwoman Linda Folcarelli was reelected secretary, and Christen Ciarlo was again installed as recording secretary with Lois Marandola again serving

as corresponding secretary.

Richard Civetti, a long-time Johnston Democrat and father of Councilman Robert J. Civetti, will be back as treasurer. Lauren Garzone, who is her first term as a District 2 councilwoman, assumes the post of assistant treasurer. Carlo Jacavone will again man the sergeant at arms position.

The entire JDTC list of district members includes:

District 1: Dennis Cardillo, Christen Ciarlo, Richard J. DelFino Jr., Richard J. DelFino III, John Dick, Linda Folcarelli, Derek LaFazia, Robert LaFazia, Robert Piscione, Alfred Russo and Jennifer A. Russo.

District 2: Joseph Acciardo, Dawn Alosio, David Brien, Marlaina Colardo, Patricia Colardo, Lauren Garzone, John Laurito, Stephen Mallane, Anthony Rampone, Scott J. Scungio and Ronald Webster.

District 3: Mary-Sue Andreozzi, Robert S. Andreozzi, Alfred Carnevale, Joseph Grasso, Douglas Jeffrey, David Pingitore, Joseph Polisena Jr., David J. Santilli, Sr., Bendetto Zanni, Bennie J. Zanni and Wilma Zanni.

District 4: David aRusso, Richard P. Civetti, Deborah Fellela, Fred Iafrate, Cheryl Jackson, Rita Marsella, Kevin P. Millonzi, Joseph Quartino, Joseph W. Rotella, Greg C. Russo, Robert V. Russo and Arnold Vecchione.

District 5: Vincent P. Baccari Jr., Robert P. Civetti, David Iannuccilli, Carlo J. Jacavone, Lois Mazzulla Marandola, John Paris, Michael Parrillo, Anthony Pilozzi, Joseph Polisena, Mohamad Y. Sasa, Rhonda Sasa and John Woolley.



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Following his vaccination, Diamante urges confidence in safety, efficacy

By PETE FONTAINE

The day's blistering cold didn't bother Dr. Giulio Diamante nearly as much as the staggering statistics that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Diamante – who owns and operates his award-winning eye care practice, OPTX Rhode Island, on Hartford Avenue in Johnston with his wife and CEO, Lynne – shook off the bone-chilling temperatures and kept walking across the campus at Rhode Island Hospital.

His morning mission was taking an important step toward keeping his valued patients, staff and family safe from COVID-19.

"This is something everyone need to do," Diamante said about his walk to a building where COVID vaccines are administered to physicians and front-line health workers. "This process was quick and virtually painless other than a sore arm ... so far I don't have other issues or side effects."

He added: "Please remember, a sore arm is a small price to pay for significantly protecting those around you, especially the elderly or those with compromised immune system and pre-existing conditions that could exacerbate the strength of a COVID infection."

Likewise, Diamante believes the future will be brighter as more people re-



SAFETY SHOT: Dr. Giulio Diamante, who along with his wife owns and operates OPTX Rhode Island at 1277 Hartford Ave. in Johnston, receives the vaccine shot that he says will help keep his patients, staff and family safe from COVID-19. (Submitted photo)

ceive the vaccine.

"We all have paid a great price during this pandemic," he said. "We all miss our family gatherings and special events, vacation trips and especially socializing with those close to us. I truly hope this vaccine can give us a head start to strongly reducing the infection rate."

Additionally, he said that experts and scientists have verified the safety of the vaccine and he has no reservations in promoting it to anyone, including his family.

Diamante is committed to being a positive voice for the vaccine and based on his own personal vaccine expe-

rience is confident to recommend it to others.

He also related that providers will ask a series of screening questions at the vaccination site to make sure each individual is a good candidate to receive it before administering the injection.

"It seems as though there are still some people who are hesitant about the vaccine," Diamante said. "I hope this fear dissipates as more and more individuals get the vaccine and do well with it. Physicians and scientists have worked diligently to ensure the efficacy and safety of this vaccine."

He also announced that staff at OPTX Rhode Island are currently in the process of getting vaccinated as front-line health care workers, and they are happy to have the opportunity to receive it.

Diamante, his associates Dr. Teresa Head and Dr. Kevin Patrizio and the dedicated staff at OPTX Rhode Island are proud of the local Johnston community and committed to continuing to provide COVID-safe, sanitary, excellent eye care, exams and surgery to what he called "our wonderful patients from the town and throughout Rhode Island."

Watch Your MOUTH



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

A BETTER WAY TO HEAL AFTER TOOTH EXTRACTIONS

Thanks to modern anesthesia, the process of extracting a bad tooth is completely painless—it is now recovery that can sometimes cause discomfort. However, thanks to platelet rich plasma (or "PRP" therapy), healing times for tooth extractions are much shorter than they used to be. During the unassisted healing process, the body sends blood platelets to the wounded area to initiate healing. PRP therapy takes the patient's blood and puts it through a centrifuge machine, creating a concentration of platelets that are then applied to the extraction site. This has been proven to speed up healing by a factor of six, allowing for an easier recovery and a more limited use of pain medications.

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Income tax filing season starts Feb. 12

The Internal Revenue Service has announced that it will launch the federal tax-filing season on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021. For the benefit and convenience of taxpayers and tax preparers, the Rhode Island tax-filing season will begin on the same date.

Thus, on Feb. 12, the Rhode Island Division of Taxation will officially begin accepting and processing electronically filed personal income tax returns as well as paper returns on Form RI-1040 and Form RI-1040NR.

However, for the benefit of low-income taxpayers, the Division has already begun accepting and processing stand-alone Form RI-1040H ("Rhode Island Property Tax Relief Claim") returns filed on paper. This applies only to Form RI-1040H filed on paper. The Division will not accept electronically filed returns with Form RI-1040H until Feb. 12. Although the Division is now accepting the standalone Form RI-1040H filed on paper, the Division reminds filers that paper returns take time to process. Therefore, filers of stand-alone paper returns on Form RI-1040H should allow at least two weeks for their returns to be processed and refunds issued (assuming a complete and accurate form is filed, and the taxpayer qualifies for a

refund).

The official start of filing season typically occurs in late January in any given year. This year, the official start is Feb. 12 to allow the IRS time to do additional programming and testing of IRS systems following changes in federal tax law, enacted on Dec. 27, 2020, that provided a second round of economic impact payments and other provisions. For more information, visit go.usa.gov/xAVxt. Preparers and taxpayers typically prepare one's federal return before preparing one's Rhode Island return and file both at the same time.

As in prior years, some providers of tax-preparation software may allow tax preparers and taxpayers to file returns in advance. In such instances, the providers may hold the electronically filed returns until the filing season's official launch date.

Form RI-1040H is available for download at tax.ri.gov/forms/2020/Income/2020%20RI-1040H_w.pdf.

The Division will begin accepting and processing electronically filed personal income tax returns, including e-filed returns that include Form RI-1040H, on Friday, Feb. 12.

"We urge everyone to file electronically. E-filing is faster, results in fewer

errors, and generates refunds more quickly," Rhode Island Tax Administrator Neena Savage said. "Furthermore, e-filing is the only way a taxpayer can receive a Rhode Island personal income tax refund by direct deposit." (Paper filers must receive refunds by check.)

E-filing also saves Division of Taxation processing costs, which, in turn, saves money for all taxpayers, Savage said. It is also important to note that paid preparers are subject to Rhode Island's e-file mandate under Rhode Island General Laws § 44-1-31.1 ("Returns to be filed by paid tax return preparers electronically") and Regulation 280-RICR-20-30-2 ("Electronic Filing for Paid Preparers").

BUSINESS RETURNS, FIDUCIARY RETURNS: The Division has already begun accepting and processing business returns on Form RI-1065 ("Partnership Income Return"), Form RI-1120S ("Subchapter S Business Corporation Tax Return"), and Form RI-1120C ("Business Corporation Tax Return"), whether filed electronically or on paper. In addition, the Division has already begun accepting and processing returns on Form RI-1041 ("Fiduciary Income Tax Return"), whether e-filed or paper-filed. The Division encour-

ages e-filing of business and fiduciary income tax returns because e-filing is faster, results in fewer errors, and generates refunds more quickly. Paid preparers also are subject to the requirements of mandatory e-filing by statute and by regulation.

FILING DEADLINE IS APRIL 15, 2021: The usual deadline for Rhode Island personal income tax filings and payments each year is April 15. In some years, the deadline has been moved to other days because April 15 fell on a weekend or on the Emancipation Day holiday in Washington, D.C. (which the IRS observes). This season, the deadline for filings and payments is Thursday, April 15, 2021.

All resident and nonresident Rhode Island personal income tax returns and related payments for tax year 2020 must be e-filed or postmarked on or before April 15, 2021. (Six-month extensions are allowed, but they are extensions of the time to file, not of the time to pay.)

Overall, the Division expects this year to receive and process more than 650,000 resident and nonresident personal income tax returns covering the 2020 tax year. April 15 is also the deadline for first-quarter payments of quarterly estimated personal income tax for the 2021 tax year.

Raimondo on the cusp of a new stage

TALKING POLITICS



by
IAN
DONNIS

Gina Raimondo's upward trajectory was evident during her confirmation hearing in the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. She was politely peppered with questions on subjects ranging from salmon preservation in the Northwest to regulating the internet and policing trade with China.

It was a whole different universe from Raimondo's almost year-long focus on leading Rhode Island's response to the pandemic. Barring a big surprise, it shows how she's about to take a giant stride onto a national platform, with her final political destination still to be determined in future years. VP? Something else? We'll have to wait and see.

Raimondo's skill as a schmoozer/ace networker was evident in how many of the committee members referenced their pre-hearing conversations with her. The hearing itself was largely devoid of tough questions. Raimondo came across as well-prepped and knowledgeable, although Sen. Ted Cruz pressed her on topics like RI's business climate and the XL Pipeline. (Karl Rove later sounded off in the Wall Street Journal, pointing to how Raimondo didn't pledge to keep Huawei on banned entities list, and U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas called for the Senate to block the governor's nomination.)

Yet the welcome mat put out by Committee Chairman Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi) – who closed the hearing by saying Raimondo would not be governor for long – seemed indicative of where things are headed. (The committee was still under GOP control, since a power-sharing agreement had not yet been worked out in the Senate.)

Raimondo's on the precipice of the next rocket boost in her evolution, soon to be take over an agency with more than 46,000 employees, and impact on important topics encompassing jobs, foreign trade, the weather, oceans, and the counting of Americans in the decennial Census.

Got Census?

Census watch: with high stakes for Rhode Island, given the expected loss of one of the state's two congressional seats, the details are not now expected until April 30.

Domestic troubles

With U.S. Homeland Security warning about a growing threat from violent domestic extremists, Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha said he is not overly concerned about fallout in the Ocean State. While vigilance is required, "The good news is that in this part of the country we really haven't seen much of that," Neronha said on Political Roundtable on The Public's Radio last week.

Safeguarding democracy

Asked about how to strengthen the guardrails of democracy that critics say were weakened during President Trump's time in office, Neronha said: "Look, I think we just have to go back to a more rational conversation in the country that is anchored in truth. If we've lost anything in the four years, [it's] that people can say anything without being tethered to the truth at all. And when you're in government ... it doesn't matter whether you're the president, the attorney general, in Congress, or in a local General Assembly – if what we say to the public can't be taken as fact, that puts us in a very difficult place. When that guardrail of truth goes away, anything goes and I think that's the place we've been for four years ... When the president speaks something, Americans have to be able to take it as truth. They can disagree with it, obviously, but we've got to restore that confidence in government."

Regunberg's gambit

Back in 2018, Aaron Regunberg lost the Democratic primary for lieutenant governor to Dan McKee by just 2,466 votes. Now, the waters are muddied for 2022 since McKee is about to become governor and he'll choose his own LG.

Meanwhile, the progressive movement that made significant legislative gains last year can be expected to rally around Regunberg. What's more, the former Providence state rep said he raised \$52,797 in the weeks after announcing in December that he was exploring another run for LG (bringing his campaign balance to almost \$80,000).

"Of course, the dynamics of the 2022 election are all up in the air right now," Regunberg said in a statement. "For now, I look forward to continuing this exploratory process – talking to neighbors, gathering ideas from communities across the state, and fighting for the changes we need to make Rhode Island a fair, healthy, and just home for all of us."

Conservative Jonah Goldberg on how former President Trump is dividing the GOP, via an interview with NPR: "[T]he problem is that as it stands right now, demographically, at least across the country and in the sort of tipping point swing states like Arizona and Georgia, the Republican Party is – needs every conceivable Republican voter to stay to keep from being a minority party, a permanent minority party. And you shave off the 10 to 15 percent of Republicans who just are sick of the Trump stuff, you're not going to make up for that with rural voters and others who only turn out when Trump is on the ticket anyway. So the Republican Party's got a huge problem here. And it's a very depressing one because it's leading to the Republican Party making allowances for crazies – I mean, forget the racist arguments, just absolute crazy people – because they think they need them in their coalition."

The GOP in RI

A trip to the Middle of Nowhere Diner in Exeter – a town where voters split al-

most evenly between Donald Trump and Joe Biden last November – elicited a range of views toward the contemporary Republican Party. RI GOP Chair Sue Cienki, House GOP Leader Blake Filippi and state Republican National Committeeman Steve Frias each offered different reasons for why a significant percentage of Republicans question the outcome in November, although none of them pointed to President Trump's false narrative about a stolen election.

Frias said in part that Republicans need to keep the focus on local issues: "Because on state and local issues, we may find a majority of people will agree with us on one issue or another. So we have to focus on issues that we can get a majority of Rhode Islanders on, cause if you always focus on the national issues, Rhode Island is pretty much a liberal Democratic state and votes at the national level like a typical liberal Democratic state."

Schilling, now and then

Sean McAdam on Curt Schilling, who fell short this week of winning induction to baseball's Hall of Fame: "It's my view that Schilling gets some sort of pleasure out of playing the martyr here. Each time he falls short, he gets to say: 'See? I told you they were out to get me!' I find that sad, and it reminds me somewhat of Pete Rose, whom I'm convinced prefers being the outcast, because that feeds into his narrative and, in some ways, allows him to monetize his 'bad boy' status. Despite some of his ugly remarks and behavior, I hope Schilling is elected next year. I'll then hold my breath for his induction speech, and hope, perhaps against all evidence to the contrary, that the Curt Schilling I knew – boisterous, opinionated, caring – makes an unscheduled return."

Ian Donnis is the political reporter for The Public's Radio. He can be reached at idonnis@ripr.org. For more of his coverage, visit thepublicsradio.org and follow him on Twitter (@IanDon).

JHS blood drive gives the gift of life

By MELANIE CAPRARO

On Thursday, Jan. 28, and Friday, Jan. 29, Johnston Senior High School hosted a blood drive at the Johnston

Senior Center.

Volunteers from the Student Council helped out Rhode Island Blood Center employees on both days. The Student Council mem-

bers completed various tasks, such as greeting and tending to the donors.

On Thursday there were 33 donations and on Friday there were 40 donations.

Blood donations are extremely vital right now due to the current blood shortage in Rhode Island. All donations are very appreciated!

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Johnston Sun Rise

As redistricting approaches, Census delay makes RI's late primary a 'blessing in disguise'

By DANIEL KITTREDGE

Whether or not Rhode Island will lose one of its seats in the U.S. House of Representatives after the 2022 election remains to be seen.

But a delay in the reporting of results from the 2020 Census should have a limited effect as the state and its 39 cities and towns prepare for the process of drawing new district and ward maps, according to John Marion, executive director of Common Cause Rhode Island.

"Rhode Island doesn't have our [statewide] primary until September [2022], and so that gives us a big buffer," Marion during an appearance on the Herald's Radio Beacon podcast this week. "And so we will be the least affected state in the country by the delayed Census results, because we have the latest primary in the United States. Normally, [Common Cause does not] support a super-late primary. It makes it difficult to run elections. But for purposes of redistricting, it's a blessing in disguise, because now we don't have to rush."

Initial figures from last year's national population count – including state population numbers – were due to be released Dec. 31. But disruptions resulting from the pandemic, as well as issues that arose during the waning weeks of the Trump administration, led to the recent announcement that those figures will be delayed until April.

Rhode Island has long been considered at risk of losing one of its two seats in the U.S. House, which is capped at 435 members with seats apportioned among the states based on population. The reporting of the initial population numbers in the spring, he said, will reveal whether that expected development comes to pass.

"It looks like we'll know that initial number ... sometime in April," he said. "Until then, we're in

a state of suspense as to whether or not we did a good job."

Marion said as states in the South and West continue to grow, Rhode Island's population has been "treading water" at approximately one million people for many years.

"I don't think there's anything to suggest that trend has changed," he said.

He also noted there are "some idiosyncratic" states that have bucked the broader population trends. California, for example – thought of by many as "the growth state" – is on track to lose a congressional seat for the first time in its history. Minnesota, meanwhile, is gaining population, unlike many other states in the upper Midwest and Northeast. Alabama, in contrast to many of its neighbors in the South, is losing population.

For the first time, Rhode Island launched a Complete Count effort as part of the 2020 Census. Common Cause played a key role in the effort, organizing various stakeholders and planning a wide-ranging outreach effort in hopes of maximizing the state's count.

The pandemic, of course, created significant obstacles.

"All the community events were canceled, all the festivals, all the parades where we were going to have a presence," Marion said. "So it almost all shifted online."

Marion said the Complete Count effort did find success in one aspect of its outreach due to an unwelcome consequence of the coronavirus. With demand up at food distribution events due to the hardships created by the crisis, he said, those settings proved a valuable means of reaching members of "hard-to-count" communities – those which have been historically undercounted.

"I think it was successful in terms of reaching people that way," he said.

He added: "We did the best we could ... It's tough to measure, and it was the first time that Rhode Island's ever had a statewide effort to try to reach people. As I like to say, even if we just reach one more person than we did in 2010, it was worth it. And I'm optimistic we reached a lot more than one person."

In terms of Rhode Island's response rate to the Census – meaning the number of people who responded affirmatively before a Census worker came to knock on their door – Marion said Rhode Island was in the "middle of the pack" nationally.

"We were neither great nor terrible, but that isn't



JOHN MARION

necessarily an indicator of whether we grew or shrank," he said, noting that some states, like Minnesota, "always respond at high rates."

When it comes to the delayed reporting of Census data, Marion pointed to some key issues that arose at the federal level in the past several months.

After the Supreme Court in 2019 rejected the Trump administration's bid to add a citizenship question to the Census, he said, the administration moved to another plan – utilizing government databases in an attempt to provide the citizenship status of all the country's adults as part of the Census data, which could lead to the exclusion of undocumented people. The Biden administration has ended that effort, he said, "so when they [the Census Bureau] deliver the numbers to the states, there won't be any information about citizenship in there."

Marion also spoke of the Census count itself, which was "dramatically delayed" by the pandemic. A process that was initially scheduled to finish on July 31, he said, continued into October, when the Trump administration won a legal battle ordering it to stop.

The "huge undertaking" that the Census represents, Marion said, includes the need for professionals at the Census Bureau to sort through the hundreds of millions of responses to "make sure that the data file has integrity." That process was being rushed under the Trump administration, he said, but under the Biden administration, "they're going to have time to clean it up."

One concern for Rhode Island, Marion said, is that the Census figures "won't pick up some of the changes that were accelerated by the pandemic." On one hand, he said, the numbers – which are meant to provide a snapshot from April 1, 2020 – will not reflect people who have moved to the Ocean State from places like New York in the last several months. On the other, the area's large off-campus college population risks

being undercounted – particularly since questionnaires landed in mailboxes in March, just as the pandemic arrived and higher education institutions shut down or moved to remote learning.

While the state population counts are scheduled to arrive in the spring, Marion said the "redistricting file" – the granular data used to determine district and ward boundaries from the congressional level down to the local level – will not likely be completed until July. That will create significant issues for states like Virginia and New Jersey, which have elections this year, as well as those with earlier primaries in 2022.

"There are states that will be in a real pickle," he said. "There'll be a lot of litigation."

In Cranston, planning for the redistricting process – which will involve drawing new maps of the city's six wards – has already begun. An ordinance to create a redistricting committee was introduced during January's City Council meeting, and it is set to go before the Ordinance Committee and full council for hearings this month. The committee could be comprised of the three members of the city's Board of Canvassers.

The issue of "prison-based gerrymandering" has long been a source of debate in Cranston, which houses the Adult Correctional Institutions. For Census purposes, the inmates at the facility are included in population counts used to draw city ward maps and legislative district boundaries for the General Assembly.

Critics, including Marion, say the practice dilutes the power of voters in wards and districts that do not include the prison population. Marion said the issue is not unique to Cranston or Rhode Island, but the centralization of the state's prison complex compared with other states makes it more pronounced locally.

The ACLU of Rhode Island unsuccessfully pursued legislation a few years ago seeking to end the practice, while the state Senate for several years has approved legislation that would reallocate inmates to their home communities in the prison count. From there, however, the bill ran into a repeated obstacle – opposition from Nicholas Mattiello, the former speaker of the House of Representatives, whose District 15 includes the ACI.

The legislation has been introduced again in the current session, Marion said, and while its prospects remain unclear,

it is possible the "prison-based gerrymandering" practice could be eliminated in time for the upcoming redistricting process.

"[Mattiello is] no longer in power, so it remains to be seen whether his successor will let it have a vote," he said.

Marion also noted that Cranston voters, by a wide margin, adopted a charter amendment in November that adds new language aimed at curbing gerrymandering in the drawing of ward maps. Providence, he said, has adopted similar language.

"Hopefully it will take some of the gamesmanship out of it," he said, and "make the process a little blind to the partisanship."

He also hopes that citizens take a more active role in the redistricting process – even to the point of submitting their own maps for consideration, thanks to advancements in technology.

"We're hoping that people get involved in the redistricting process ... It should be in the voters' hands, not the politicians' hands," he said.

Back on the federal level, Rhode Island will soon have a very prominent connection to the Census Bureau. Marion said it is the second-largest agency under the umbrella of the U.S. Department of Commerce – the same department Gov. Gina Raimondo has been chosen to lead under the Biden administration. Her confirmation by the U.S. Senate is expected within days.

While Raimondo will oversee the completion of the 2020 Census in her new role, it is the next population count in 2030 over which she will have the most influence.

"During her tenure as commerce secretary, they'll be making big decisions about how operationally the 2030 Census will be conducted," Marion said – reviewing the move to online responses in 2020, for example, and deciding whether to continue with that approach.

Marion said Raimondo's role in the creation and oversight of the Complete Count effort positions her well to understand the "impact" of the Census. He also said she will have an opportunity to rebuild morale and trust at the Census Bureau, where professional demographers have of late been "ordered to do things for political reasons, not for scientific reasons."

"The Census Bureau needs some help right now. The last four years have been extremely difficult ... If she's able to restore trust in that, hopefully that'll bring the Census back a little bit in terms of credibility," he said.

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Narragansett Beer has big plans in store for 2021

By ROB DUGUAY

There isn't a local brand that's as synonymous with Rhode Island culture as Narragansett Beer.

Before the pandemic, the company would usually sponsor any social event people were at, with restaurants and bars all over the state having its brews either on tap or in cans. But 2020 was a rough year for almost every industry worldwide, including craft beer.

With 2021 in its infancy, things are looking brighter. Narragansett Beer CEO Mark Hellenprung plans on riding that feeling into the warmer months and beyond into a year of transition.

We recently had a talk about getting ready for a busy season last year before it all came to a halt, a certain obstacle breweries are currently facing, a giveaway series Narragansett Beer is currently doing and plans to move the brewery from downtown Pawtucket to Providence's waterfront.

ROB DUGUAY: Before COVID-19 came last March and disrupted everything, what was the big thing you were working on as CEO of Narragansett Beer and what was the first thing that got derailed because of the pandemic?

MARK HELLENDRUNG: The biggest thing we were working on, aside from building the brewery in Providence, was really ramping up for our seasonal push. Obviously, we sell a lot of beer for the Super Bowl, St. Patrick's Day and all that other stuff, but it really spikes in the summertime on every level. You've got your seasonal bars and restaurants, you've got beer festivals, you've got events, and when you roll into the summertime it's a lot of fun and it's a lot of work. In our business, Christmas is the Fourth of July and everything sort of revolves around that. We were in the cannon ready to be shot out and then we were told not to fire the cannon so we had to climb out, it's kind of funny.

RD: That's a good way to put that feeling. You were getting ready for the big season of your industry and all of a sudden it's a dud.

MH: Yeah.

RD: One big obstacle that a lot of breweries have been dealing with is this aluminum can shortage that's been going on. Has this had a major effect on Narragansett Beer when it comes to vending and packaging?

MH: Knock on wood, so far so good. I think a lot of the problems that you read about come from layers of brokers or unique packages. For example, Coors Light had a tough time last summer because they have this 12-ounce proprietary can. We're buying them direct, and it's either the standard 12-, 16- or 24-ounce cans, so we've survived pretty good so far.

RD: That's good to hear.

MH: Yeah, we've gotten lucky.

RD: For the past few weeks, Narragansett Beer has been doing this Hi Neighbor Hideaway Giveaway, and this week a Narragansett Beer branded kegerator with a tap handle will be the prize. Who came up with the idea for this and where do you get the items

to make this happen? Do you do it in house or do you order from a company?

MH: Last summer, you could really feel this energy building where people were getting fatigued. We were all kind of getting fed up with this thing. We all want to do the right thing but we all wanted a little bit of freedom, and at the same time you could see this coming again where it's going to get cold and people are going to be indoors. Outdoor dining is going to stop and all of that stuff, but that's the negative side and we were trying to figure out how to have some fun. We wanted to turn this around and we know the Super Bowl is still going to happen, there's still going to be college basketball and we're still going to want to drink beer. What's better than having your own hideaway and trying to make the best of a bad situation?

We came up with this program and everyone loves it. We have over 20,000 entries in this campaign, so we kind of hit it right and as far as getting the stuff. Some of it is what we already have. We give away gift packs with pint glasses, coasters and neon signs and stuff you would put in a bar anyway, that you'd want in your hideaway. With the recliner that we gave away or the TV, depending on who wins we'll partner with a local furniture store or Best Buy or some place like that and have it shipped direct. It's been pretty fun. We've had a winner in Pawtucket, a winner in Ohio and a winner in South Carolina.

RD: Wow, that's pretty cool. Before you became CEO of Narragansett Beer and led a group to take the brand over in 2005, you were involved in the juice industry, right?

MH: Yeah, Nantucket Nectars.

RD: Going from Nantucket Nectars to make this shift in your career to Narragansett Beer, what are you most proud of since you became the head of the company?

MH: It's just keeping it alive is the thing I'm most proud of. That's the reason why I did this in the first place. I remember knowing the history of Narragansett Beer when I was leaving Nantucket Nectars and trying to figure out what to do next. I love beer a hell of a lot more than juice and I was with Magic Hat in between these two. While I was in a bar one time I discovered that it was still around and it was kind of dying out but everyone had these great stories about it. I knew that it shouldn't happen to this beer and it shouldn't die the way it was dying. I love driving down the road and seeing a "Hi Neighbor!" bumper sticker on somebody's car. It's just a little thing but it means something. You look around and Benny's is gone or whatever, and to be able to preserve 130 years of history is just really great.

MH: That's a great thing to be proud of, and thank you for sustaining it. How do you see 2021 going for the beer industry, and what are Narragansett Beer's plans to make this year a successful one while managing the transitional hurdles that will come into play?

RD: I think we're going to

come out of this dark winter while still having the masks and social distancing, but we're going to be ready to roll. Last year restrictions got eased up at the end of May and early June with everyone trying to figure out where to get the proper things to put in place to run things safely. Maybe that'll continue, but everyone is going to be ready for it, they're going to know how to do it and they're going to be looking forward to it after the winter. I think there's going to be a lot of excitement, a lot of energy, and I'm psyched for it with our new brewery opening up on the waterfront of Providence. We're going to be open in April with a huge patio deck, overhead doors so the inside is going to feel like the outside, and there's a lot of space around the building.

I think the brewery is going to be awesome. It's going to be a great experience and I think people are going to be ready for it. We're going to be ready to rock and roll.



MARK HELLENDRUNG

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* Based on construction job-support formulas provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

Relief for seniors as vaccine rollout continues

By ARDEN BASTIA

Robert Jungels, 84, of Providence, was "very happy" to receive his first dose of the Pfizer vaccine during Care New England's vaccine clinic at Kent Hospital on Monday, Feb. 1.

"I can see where the state was and was really surprised when my doctor called to say I could get the vaccine. I thought I'd be waiting another two or three months," he said in an interview.

Care New England began vaccinating patients this week, working alongside primary care offices to coordinate appointments for patients aged 75 and older. Up until Monday, clinics were reserved for first responders and health care workers.

Jungels received his vaccination alongside his wife, Dorothy, and accompanied by their daughter Manette. She is relieved to see that her parents receive the vaccination, although she doubts it will change the family routine that kept them apart for Christmas.

While he waited the suggested 15 minutes for observation after receiving the vaccine, Jungels said everything was "so far, so good," and his only reaction is a slightly sore arm.

"The pandemic has been tedious," he said. "It has definitely affected me negatively, but I should-

n't complain. We're some of the lucky ones."

According to Sherri Sprague, Emergency Department nurse director, the clinic canceled some appointments due to the winter storm but still vaccinated 32 patients on Monday. Sprague also mentioned that there were three clinics happening simultaneously at Kent - one for community physicians, one for Kent employees and one for patients. She said 700 doses of the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine were allotted across the three clinics.

"We'll be here Monday through Friday until we're done," Sprague said.

While the appointments are currently only being made for those over 75 and through primary care providers, Sprague says the clinic will follow state regulations.

"When the Department of Health alters their guidelines, we'll follow suit," she said.

In a press release from Care New England, Raymond Powrie, MD, executive chief of medicine, said there are plans to "open additional locations, including in Pawtucket, in the coming week. Our team is already reaching out by phone and email to those who qualify to schedule one of the initial appointments. Rest assured we are making every effort to expand access quickly, but calling your doctor's office will not lead to getting a vaccine faster."



'SO FAR, SO GOOD': Accompanied by their daughter Manette, Robert and Dorothy Jungels wait under observation after getting the Pfizer vaccine. (Sun Rise photos)

ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local Adoptable Loveable



Photo credit: Erin McGinn Photography

Sally

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ONE DOSE DOWN: Theresa Saltibus of Providence receives her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine on Monday during the Care New England clinic.

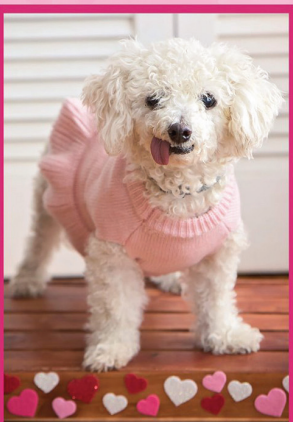


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Opinion

EDITORIAL

Finding a winning vaccine strategy

We have written in this space that the issue of vaccinating Rhode Islanders – much the same as it appears to be everywhere else in the country – has been less about logistics and more about supply and demand.

The demand has been consistent, and supply seems to finally be catching up. The recent news that the Biden administration has successfully ordered 200 million additional doses of vaccine has many health experts more openly optimistic about the possibility of 300 million Americans being vaccinated by late summer or early fall.

Of course, that now means that leaders from the national level down to state governors and individual city and town administrators must tackle the ever-lingering issue of logistics – and figure out how to organize and execute massive vaccination campaigns involving the coordination of many thousands of people within their communities.

In leading the charge for Rhode Island, soon-to-be Gov. Dan McKee will face his first of many tests during an abbreviated first term in office that is starting squarely in the deep end. Earlier this week, he met virtually with state health experts and municipal leaders to discuss how best to carry out the inoculation campaign locally.

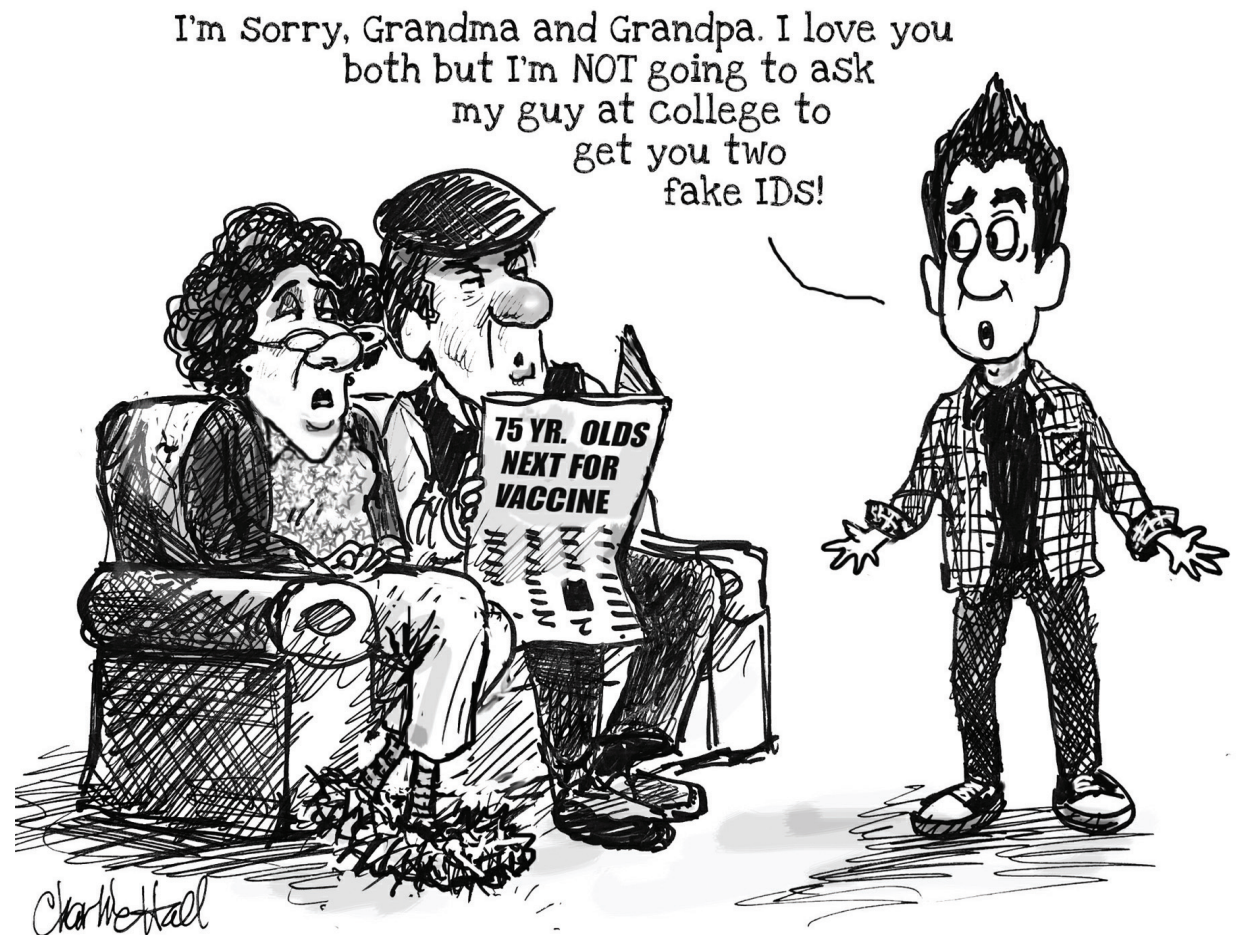
The state has established regional vaccination “pods” – five in total to service Rhode Island’s 39 cities and towns – which has caused some municipal leaders to pause and question whether this is the best, most practical approach. We share their trepidation and concern and believe there may be a solid middle ground to be found in this endeavor. The pods were successful in delivering the vaccine to first responders and health care workers.

Regional centers are of great benefit to smaller communities that lack the human capital to carry out a comprehensive vaccination campaign on their own. However, larger communities – like Cranston and Warwick – may be better served taking on at least a fair share of the responsibility themselves.

For example, it may not be problematic for an otherwise healthy young adult to travel from Warwick to East Greenwich to visit a vaccination site. However, things may become much trickier if an independent senior citizen without a driver’s license must make the same journey to receive their vaccine. Adults over 55 years of age make up essentially one third of the state – and 25 percent of the state will be 65 years or older by 2030, according to the U.S. Census.

President Biden has described the fight against COVID-19 as a sort of “wartime undertaking” in which an all-hands-on deck approach is needed to win. We think this mentality could be put to good use with regard to our state’s vaccination campaign. There are existing resources in place to administer vaccines throughout larger cities like Warwick and Cranston. Places like fire and police stations, senior centers, health clinics and pharmacies could all be utilized to provide safe and convenient access to vaccinations, without the need for those most at risk to travel far to receive it.

It is incredibly important to utilize all resources available to ensure a smooth vaccination process and give access to as many people as easily as possible. It seems that a combination of state-operated, regional vaccination centers and more localized, locally-operated vaccination sites throughout the state – with a strong public-private partnership between our large-chain pharmacies – would be a winning strategy to ensure this vital battle in our war against COVID is victorious.



LETTERS

Teachers, school staff need vaccine priority

To the Editor:

The first page of the Jan. 29, 2021, edition of Johnston Sun Rise contains an article stating that the “town has inoculated its first responders” and Mayor Joseph Polisenia has received his second shot of the vaccine. Although it is wonderful that vaccines are becoming available, all members of the school community should be considered high priority.

Since the schools closed in March, the teachers in Johnston have gone above and beyond to provide quality education to their students. All students were engaged in distance learning until June. Since returning to school in September, the challenges of teaching the distance learning and in-person students at the same time have increased dramatically and required tremendous dedication, creativity, and long hours.

The health and safety of all teachers, staff and students has been a priority since the onset of COVID-19. Therefore, many have not returned to school in-person due to medical conditions that prevent them from doing so. Instead, they continue to participate in

education from a distance.

We understand how important it is to work towards the safe return of all our students, teachers, and staff to in-person learning. We all recognize that education is most effective when students and teachers are face to face in the classroom. The social and emotional needs of everyone involved in the school department is equally important as day-to-day academic instruction particularly during a pandemic.

The teachers in Johnston are an incredible, adaptable, and professional group that are dedicated to the students in all our schools. Although all members of the Johnston Federation of Teachers have been working without a contract since August 2019, they have continued to provide quality education in an exceptional manner. I am proud to represent them and they all need to be commended.

It appears that our state is determined to keep schools open even as positive COVID cases continue to rise. The purchase of air purifiers for all classrooms has provided some sense of safety. However, classes need to be closed every week for quarantine pur-

poses. If our goal is to create a safe educational environment so that everyone can return to in-person learning, it is critical that educators become eligible for vaccinations as soon as possible. They should be considered essential workers since they serve a vital role for all the students in Johnston.

If we are being asked to fully open our schools, there is an obligation to ensure that educators are safe from contracting COVID-19. In turn, they can give all students the best education without disruption from illness or quarantine.

Teachers and school personnel need to be vaccinated in the first round. We are imploring Mayor Polisenia to treat all educational employees as the essential workers they are and to use his executive influence to prioritize them in the vaccination distribution schedule for the Town of Johnston. Vaccinating school personnel should be an utmost priority and the entire school community should be given the respect they so well deserve.

Kathleen P. Kandzierski
JFT President

Let's get kids back to school

To the Editor:

Patience is not a virtue when it threatens the well being of our children. Prolonged school shutdowns are harmful. We know that distance learning doesn't work.

Lt. Gov. Dan McKee gets it. That is why he wants to prioritize vaccinating teachers in order to get

them back in the classroom with their students.

Mr. McKee understands that our kids need to be in school. Vaccinating teachers will achieve that goal. He is right and we should support his efforts to get it done.

A. H. Liddle
Warwick

Once a republic

To the Editor:

“Virtual teacher, you mean the states certified the votes, the courts upheld the outcome, and the Electoral College confirmed the election ... but 140 U.S. representatives, 12 senators, and a

sitting president refused to concede? What year was this?”

“Yes, Mary, that is correct. And the year was 2020. Before that time, our nation was known as a democratic republic.”

Loss is the wound that humbles, inspires and reconciles us in our common humanity.

Those who cannot accept defeat, covet reward but reap dishonor and lose again in the pages of history.

As this dreadful election farce stumbles to a painful conclusion, our founders weep, tyrants snicker, and our children are diminished.

Stephen Andolfo
Warwick

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SUN RISE SCOOPS

By MERI R. KENNEDY

Applications open for PrepareRI college internship program

The PrepareRI college internship program provides first-generation college students, sophomores to seniors, who are enrolled at a Rhode Island college or university with a paid, work-based summer internship, connecting higher education learning to career opportunities in their college major.

The Application Deadline is this week on Feb. 5 with orientation in January or February.

Work-readiness training will be May 24-28, and internship dates are June 1 to Aug. 27.

Please contact Christopher Abreu at collegeinternships@skillrforri.com with any questions.

NAMI-RI Family-to-Family course

The local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness is now accepting registration for its virtual Family-to-Family course, which begins Feb. 24.

This is a free, eight-session educational program for family members, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program, which means that research shows 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, and includes presentations, discussions

and interactive exercises.

For more information on the Family-to-Family curriculum and registration requirements, visit namirhodeisland.org or call 331-3060., visit namirhodeisland.org or call 331-3060.

Craft and arts kits available for pickup

The Mohr Library now has winter and Groundhog Day craft and art kits available for children that may be picked up. Email Ms. Meri at Meri@mohrlibrary.org to reserve one.

Johnston Senior Center offers services

If you need any help with heating, housing etc. during this cold winter or any other time, contact the Johnston Senior Center Social Services Department by calling 944-3343. Madeline or Amy will be happy to help you.

ARTS Scholarships available

Applications are now available at ppacri.org/artsscholarships for the 2021 ARTS Scholarships Program. This year marks the program's 25th anniversary! Since 1996, the program has awarded 700 arts scholarships.

The ARTS Scholarships 2021 program, sponsored by The Textron Charitable Trust and the PPAC Annual Fund Donors with support from WPRI 12, awards up to \$500 in financial assistance to each of the 30 talented Rhode Island students selected as recipients. Qualified students must be age 11-14 by June 1, 2021, and reside in and attend school in Rhode Island.

These scholarships offer young artists an opportunity to participate in local summer arts education programs that will broaden each student's experience in their chosen area of study.

Careers at the zoo

CCAP's "Jump Start" Real Jobs training program will host a workshop on Tuesday, Feb. 9, from 3:15 to 4 p.m. The career industry for the month is Roger Williams Park Zoo, and guest speakers will be presenting to youth about the industry and upcoming free training programs.

Gift cards given to all participants upon completion of the workshop. It will be hosted remotely via Zoom.

Sign up today by calling the Cranston Skills & Youth Center at 525-0869.

Support the Johnston Historical Society

The Johnston Historical Society has T-shirts available for sale in sizes small through extra large in slate blue, sand and a few in light green.

The JHS is an all-volunteer organization. Its museum is not staffed, but they are happy to open up by appointment for a tour of the museum, the house, and to purchase T-shirts and copies of books.

Call 231-3380 and leave a message with the color and size you would like.

Need help with your mortgage?

RI Housing's Hardest Hit Fund Rhode Island (HH-FRI) program is offering zero-interest, forgivable loans to eligible Rhode Island homeowners who became unemployed or underem-

ployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are struggling to make their mortgage payments. Loan proceeds may provide eligible homeowners with up to six months of mortgage payment assistance and a mortgage will be recorded on the homeowner's property.

Learn more about the loan program and eligibility at rihousing.com/hhfri.

News from the Mohr Memorial Library

The fine free period for all Rhode Island public libraries has been extended to March 1, 2021. However, if you have overdue books, please bring them back, so other patrons can enjoy them.

Zoom-ba program

The MS Dream Center will offer a virtual Chair Zoom-ba Program sponsored by Maguire Disability Law, with the class being instructed by Michelle Calise.

Classes will be offered nationally on Mondays at 1 p.m. and Saturdays at 11 a.m. for people with MS and their loved ones. There is no fee to participate and classes can accommodate up to 100 on a first come, first serve basis.

Please contact Anne at anne@msdreamcenter.org to register for the classes and to complete a signed liability waiver, which is required of all participants.

The MS Dream Center provides a dedicated resource and support facility in which people living with multiple sclerosis, and their care partners, may engage in a wide variety of interactive social and educational activities, workshops and therapies. The MS Dream Center's goal is to bring awareness to the disease and reach out to those living with it, empowering them and offering important respite opportunities for care partners.

Mohr Library extended hours

The Mohr Library has extended its in-library hours to Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., as well as Tuesday and Thursday from 4 to 8 p.m. Mohr Library is now open to the public more hours - Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 to 8 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The library is putting some of books and videos for kids upstairs in the teen room, and staff will retrieve whatever people want, offer readers advice, and order materials if they aren't there.

Curbside service is still available during normal hours: Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Mask wearing is required and people are asked to maintain physical distance. Members of the public will be admitted as capacity allows.

Troop 22 looking for Scouts

Boy Scout Troop 22 Cranston is looking for new Scouts. Following all the BSA and state of Rhode Island safety protocols, the troop is meeting, hiking and camping. It has a full schedule of activities planned for the 2020-21 program year. Troop 22 is affiliated with girls' Troop 13-G, which is also looking for new members. Both units meet at the Edgewood Congregational Church, 1788 Broad St., at 7 p.m. on most Thursdays.

The program is for youth ages 11 to 18. For younger children, Troop 22 also has a relationship with Cub Scout Pack 2 Cranston. Anyone interested is invited to call Paul Kelley at 401-595-6726 for more information.

Teen virtual programming during COVID-19

The Mohr Library is currently offering virtual versions of some of its teen programs as well as drop-in chats. They are all invite-only programs, so please contact the teen librarian at marissa@mohrlibrary.org to register or if you have any questions.

Art Club meets every Tuesday at 3 p.m. History Club meets monthly on the first Wednesday at 3 p.m. Drop-in chat days differ weekly, so please ask when registering.

Help make a house a home

The Furniture Bank of RI, a nonprofit corporation, needs bureaus, complete twin or double beds, kitchen sets, mattresses, and other household furniture that you no longer need.

To help a less fortunate family through your charitable donation of good used furniture, call 831-5511 to arrange for pick up. All donated articles must be in good condition.

Did you know?

The oldest record of a valentine being sent, according to History.com, was a poem written by a French medieval duke named Charles to his wife in 1415. Charles penned this sweet note to his lover while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London at just 21 years old. (*Valentine Fun Facts*)

SunriseScoops@aol.com. Photos in .jpg format are accepted and news can include community events, promotions, academic news and non-profit 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.

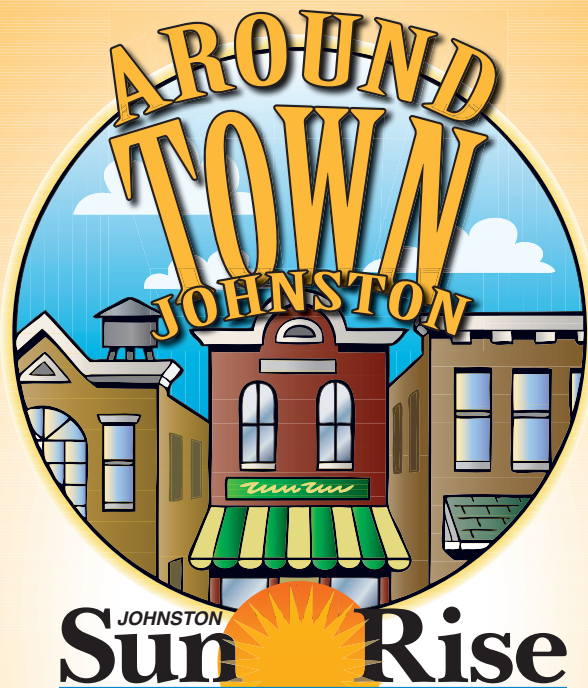
Gas 14 cents cheaper than this time last year

Rhode Island's average gas price is up two cents from last week, averaging \$2.39 per gallon. Monday's price is 18 cents higher than a month ago and 14 cents cheaper than February 1, 2020. Rhode Island's average gas price is 3 cents lower than the national average.

"For nearly a year, motorists have been saving, compared to the previous year, when filling up their gas tanks," said Lloyd Albert, Senior Vice President of Public and Government Affairs for AAA Northeast.

AAA Northeast's February

1 survey of fuel prices found the current national average to be 2 cents higher than last week, averaging \$2.42 a gallon. Today's national average price is 17 cents higher than a month ago, and 5 cents cheaper than this day last year.



We want to hear from you

Johnston has lots of stories and we want to help you share them!

Send your stories and photos to

Jacob Marrocco, Editor

JacobM@rhodybeat.com

johnstonsunrise.net



submissions are not guaranteed to be published

LEGAL NOTICES

PLANNING BOARD MEETING CONTINUED FROM FEBRUARY 2ND

Tuesday February 16th, 2021; 6:00 P.M.
Via Video Conference

Via Computer:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85387804288>
Passcode: 487319

iPhone one-tap:
+16465588656 or 85387804288

Via Telephone:
+1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592

Meeting ID: 853 8780 4288
Passcode: 487319

NOTE: Please check out the "ACCESS INSTRUCTIONS for e-meetings held via Zoom" on the Town's

web page under Meetings & Events. <https://www.townofjohnstonri.com/>

I. CONTINUED BUSINESS
PB 21-03 - Proposed Retail Distribution Facility - Master Plan Review of a Major Land Development with Unified Development Review - Located at 2120 Hartford Avenue AP 54 Lots 39, 40, 42, 54, 61, 75, 89, 90 and 93 - Zoned B-3 - Applicant: Bluewater Property Group - Engineer: DiPrete Engineering.

A public hearing on the Major Land Development and Unified Development Review application to develop a six-story retail distribution facility with a ground floor area of approximately 823,522 square feet, and a total area of approximately 3,864,972 square feet. The applicant is seeking approval of the major land development Master Plan and the granting of dimensional variances from certain provisions of

the Zoning Ordinance pursuant to Unified Development Review. The applicant is also requesting waivers from certain requirements of the Land Development & Subdivision Review Regulations.

NOTE - The Full Plan set is available for review in the Planning Office 100 Irons Avenue Monday through Friday, 8AM to noon and 1PM to 3PM.

Planning Board documents are available for review and/or purchase 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 1st floor, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston. New items not heard by 9:30 p.m. may be rescheduled for a subsequent special meeting at the discretion of the Board. Facilities are handicap accessible. Inter-preter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

2/3, 2/10/21

Schools

(Continued from page 1)

depriving students of normal classroom time for too long.

"Once we can get our educators vaccinated, particularly the vulnerable educators who need to stay out of the classroom at this time, [we can] get them back in classrooms," DiLullo said during a phone interview on Wednesday. "It's critical we get people back in the school buildings where kids can make the progress that they make. We're not seeing the same level of progress we see when kids are in school. It's concerning for years to come."

DiLullo predicted that it is going to take at least another year to "catch up on what's missing" and get students acclimated to their usual setting once again.

"The level of importance in school has dropped because the COVID crisis has overshadowed the importance of

school," DiLullo said. "We need to raise that importance back up – students need to attend school regularly unless there's a serious illness, being in school every day and not missing out on instruction is critical to the success of our students."

Perhaps that's why DiLullo said he takes canceling school "very seriously" when it comes to snow days and distance learning days, like with this week's nor'easter. Mondays are for distance learning already, but DiLullo opted to keep students at home Tuesday as well.

The state has granted districts flexibility to deem whether operations proceed as normal from home, or kids get a chance to enjoy the snow. However, DiLullo pointed out that students will have a chance to bask in the winter weather during their upcoming February break.

"I think it's a very serious discussion because as we all know, it's better to have kids in the classroom than at home learning, and

the sooner we get everyone in the classroom, the better," DiLullo said. "I feel it's best to have the kids learning those days. There are plenty of vacations throughout the course of the year ... I think it's important to have kids in the classroom and if we're not able to be in the classroom than be able to do school work when they're not able to come to school."

For that winter break, DiLullo urged students to remain cautious and practice social distancing and mask wearing. He said that, despite improved coronavirus numbers across the state, students should continue to avoid large gatherings, especially indoors.

He said the district did not see a surge in cases after the holidays, though some positive results did "pop up."

"So far it's going well," DiLullo said of the district's return to school. "The biggest hurdle this week was the weather."

DiLullo also noted during the interview that the district

is not expected to see any cuts to its state aid, saying the funding will likely be at the same rate as it was last year. He said that if a district sees a substantial drop in enrollment there could be a loss of state aid, but Johnston hasn't experienced such an issue.

He said Johnston is on track to receive the funds owed to the district within a month or so, and that timeline remains "on target." If there was a significant reduction, though, DiLullo said it would be a "difficult challenge."

"Because we planned our budget based on what we were told we were going to receive from the state, that would be a big hit for us because you're almost in March and you'd have to make substantial cuts in your spending," DiLullo said. "Basically all your staff are hired and you can't lay people off this year, and you start cutting costs in terms of curriculum, because you're already in the process."

CCRI

(Continued from page 1)

"The best investment we can make to help individuals achieve their goals is to give them the access to a college education, which is the pathway to a brighter future," Shekarchi (D-Dist. 23, Warwick) said in a statement.

Last year, Hughes, fearing the General Assembly would end the program, appealed for at least another year of funding. The program is presently costing about \$7 million a year. Now, should the leadership's bill be approved – perhaps in time for Gov. Gina Raimondo to sign it before leaving for Washington – two years of free CCRI tuition is enshrined in law.

"We know that the promise of free college tuition is a powerful message, one that resonates with high school

students and their families, many of whom doubted college could be part of their future. By making Rhode Island Promise permanent, current high school students, and even today's middle schoolers, will see a path to a postsecondary degree. With this degree, Rhode Islanders will have the opportunity to build a better life for their families and Rhode Island employers will have a more robust and well-prepared workforce," Hughes said in a statement.

CCRI spokeswoman Amy Kempe said that as of fall 2019, 2,599 students were enrolled through the program. That number dropped to 2,271 in the fall of 2020, which she attributed to the pandemic and the college's transition to distance learning. She pointed out that the Promise is "a last dollar scholarship," meaning that

state funding doesn't come into play until federal funding such as Pell grants have been applied.

She believes the word "free" has been a powerful message to individuals and families who previously dismissed the thought of higher education. Many of these people are eligible for Pell grants.

DelGiudice said that the mere Promise application process, requiring completion of FAFSA forms, "opens the flood gates to aid and grants." DelGiudice is hopeful the program could eventually be expanded to Rhode Island College and that someday it might encompass the tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders who have earned some college credits but not enough to complete degree requirements.

Noting that the program has improved graduation rates, Ruggerio said in a

statement: "Removing barriers to higher education, particularly its high cost, supports families, helps Rhode Islanders land better jobs, makes our workforce more attractive to employers and strengthens our economy. Rhode Island Promise is a great program that has proven itself effective, and we strongly support making it a permanent resource for students."

Hughes said the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship Program works.

"It provides our students with the opportunity to succeed. It is a powerful, effective policy for our state and our economy. I believe now, more than ever, Rhode Island families need the security of knowing that, no matter their economic situation, their children have a path forward to a quality degree and, with it, a brighter future," she said.

Hearing

(Continued from page 1)

place. Sean Connor asked Shekarchi whether the dump that used to be on the property would be removed or capped and built over, to which Shekarchi said the applicant will follow DEM's guidance on the matter.

Some concerns were raised over a nearby

crushed culvert as well, which has led to flooding problems on Belfield Drive for years. While the town is addressing that matter separately, Shekarchi repeatedly noted that the culvert is not on his client's property and the onus is not on them to solve the issue.

Deller said that "new detention areas will address and alleviate the problem of flooding."

The Planning Board later approved a master plan review for an eight-lot major subdivision proposed for an area north of 3 and 5 Granite Street. Ron Cataldo, a civil engineer from R.A. Cataldo, said that 5½-acre site would have a 700-foot public road leading into the cul-de-sac, and the client is requesting waivers for the requirements of sidewalks and granite curbing.

The units will be served by public water and sewer, with a drainage pond located on a property and a wetland set in the back. Sam Sasa, who owns land adjacent to the proposal, said he wanted to address potential access issues with the developers. However, he endorsed the "beautiful" project on a "piece of land [that] has been empty for a long time."

Fellela

(Continued from page 1)

where they could come to you."

Fellela said she was "honored" to be picked as senior deputy majority leader under House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi, whom she lauded as a "fair [and] genuine person." Fellela had a close relationship with former Speaker Nicholas Mattiello, but she said she's happy to be working with Shekarchi on legislation such as marijuana legalization.

"I'm sorry to see [Mattiello] go, but I'm looking forward to a fresh start," Fellela said during a phone interview Wednesday. "I love Speaker Shekarchi ... I think it'll be a great transition for all. We've heard from the speaker and different things that he's talked about ... my first leadership meeting is [Thursday] and we're going

to dive into the budget and what's coming up this year."

Fellela said she has a few legislative matters she would like to introduce in the upcoming session, leading off with a bill that is close to home for her that will focus on opioid addiction. She said her close friend, who lost her son to opioids, served as inspiration, and Fellela will work closely with Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) to get the issue heard.

She also has legislation centered on adoption, insurance and gun safes – some of which she has worked on in years prior – but mingling with co-sponsors isn't as easy as it was in a pre-shutdown world.

Instead of talking in close settings or on the House floor, legislators are using a program called DocuSign to attach their names to bills. Fellela said lawmakers

email their docket to others with a briefing, and they can sign it virtually rather than putting pen to paper. Fellela herself recently used the program to put her name on Rep. Grace Diaz's (D-Dist. 11, Providence) evictions moratorium bill.

"People who aren't up on the technology end of it, we can do it the old-fashioned way of seeing a member in the Vets Auditorium that would want to sign on to our legislation, but we can't elaborate like we used to," Fellela said. "When you used to sit with somebody at your desk and you could take and explain it. Everything is socially distanced, [so] that you can't have those conversations."

In assessing the tenure of outgoing Gov. Gina Raimondo, Fellela said she "really hurt" teachers and workers with her pension decisions.

"It stuck with so many people's minds," she said.

Salzillo Game Dinner canceled, set for Jan. 2022

Under normal conditions, the ageless Richard "Ricky" Salzillo Memorial Dinner is usually held the Sunday prior to the Super Bowl to afford all area sports fans an opportunity to partake in the multi-course food event.

However, COVID-19 – which has wiped out countless events for the last 10 months – forced organizers to postpone the lucrative event that has raised thousands of dollars through the years until next year.

Steve M. Placella, a prominent Johnston-based attorney who has been one of the tireless leaders for the game dinner, this week announced that the traditional food-fest will be held on Jan. 30, 2022, at a place yet to be determined.

In past years, the dinner has been held at Spirito's Italian Restaurant, located at the

Kelley-Gazzerro VFW Post 2812 on Plainfield Pike. But Spirito's has since closed its doors, forcing Salzillo Dinner officials to find a new location.

"At this point we do not have a venue for the dinner," Placella offered. "But we're looking and planning to make the 2022 dinner one of the biggest events ever."

In previous iterations, proceeds have supported college scholarships for Johnston High School graduating seniors and Hasbro Children's Hospital, just to name a few nonprofits.

Salzillo was a highly popular Johnston resident who was killed in a fatal automobile accident back in 1976. Yet, as Placella and others will tell you, his legacy lives on and the dinner has helped many people and organizations through the years.

Obituary

Sheila Ann Manney

Sheila Ann (Murray) Manney, 85, Johnston, RI on January 25, 2021, passed into eternity to be reunited with John, her loving husband of 57 years. Sheila transitioned peacefully, at home, surrounded by family, just as she had wanted.

Born in 1935 in Providence, she was the second oldest of 6 children born to the late Bernard and Meredith (Blackmar) Murray. Sheila lived most of her life in Johnston, working intermittently at part-time jobs while raising 8 kids before deciding later in life to return to school and become a nurse. A career she truly loved, Sheila worked as a nurse at St. Joseph, Fatima hospital in North Providence until her retirement in 2013. She stayed active until very recently, volunteering her time with the Friends of Mohr Library and Operation Stand Down, both in Johnston, as well as the Manton Bend community garden in Providence, and continuing to work part-time for an eye doctor. She also loved to spend time in her own backyard garden, nurturing a variety of fruit and vegetable plants, and for several years maintaining 2 honeybee hives.

Sheila produced and narrated a segment about volunteerism in Johnston for the PBS series "Our Town." She enjoyed traveling, boating, reading and almost anything related to nature. She lived her "dash" (read "The Dash" poem by Linda Ellis) on her own terms and as fully and completely as she could. She served a fruitful, productive and impactful life, leaving a positive impression on anyone that knew her.

She leaves behind her 8 adoring children, daughter Michaela Silvia (Michael), and sons J. Patrick (Terri), Matthew (Lisa), David, Terence, Stephen (Shirley), Jonathan (Dawn), and Joseph (Gina), as well as 7 grandchildren (Brian Mercer, Jeremy Greenberg, Leah Lasley, Kira Manney, Ryan Manney, Lauren Manney & Jason Manney) and numerous nieces and nephews. She is survived in this world by her brothers, David Murray of Woonsocket, RI and Michael Murray of Harrisburg, PA, and her sister, Jean Falter of Baltimore, MD. Sheila was preceded in death by her older brother Lawrence Murray and younger brother Peter Murray.

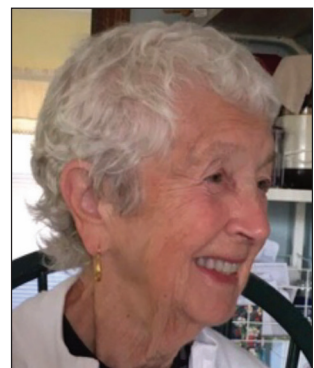
She always endeavored to leave the world a better place than she found it, and hated the thought of anything going to waste ("Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without"), so in lieu of flowers or cards to the family, she would ask that you offer to serve others in your community, in whatever capacity you are able. Otherwise, donations can be made in her memory to Operation Stand Down, the American Cancer Society or your local library.

Cremation services will be private, however, a memorial celebration of life will be held at a later date.

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By JENNIFER COATES

Even in the unusual times we are living in, we still need clean clothes. For many, the option of cleaning their clothes in their own homes is, indeed, not an option at all! This is when a business such as Jain's Laundry on Route 44 in Johnston is so important, and so necessary.

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That family business has been modernized over the years, but most importantly, customers who do their wash here know they can depend on the familiar faces and integrity of Kaushal and Sripal. The Jain's understand that in such a competitive environment as this, honesty and "keeping up with the times" really matter ~ and they really matter to them!

This winter ~ and every other season to come, bring your dirty clothes, bed linens, uniforms, (and whatever you need cleaned) to Jain's Laundry where Kaushal will wash, soften, dry, and even fold your laundry - all in one day. Besides the convenience of this great service, the .69 cents/pound price also covers the cost of the softener, bleach, soap, and hangers! The math is simple enough - ten pounds of dirty clothes, dropped off in the morning and ready to go by



Customers have come to rely on the wash-dry-fold service at Jain's Laundry in Johnston, all done by Kaushal Jain. She is the familiar and welcoming face of this longtime laundromat on Putnam Pike.

day's end - all for less than \$7.00. Fifteen pounds of dirty clothes dropped off on the way to work and ready to go by dinner - all for under \$11.00.

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compared to \$2.50 in most other places.

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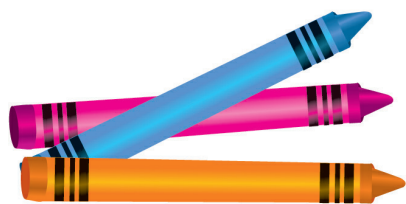
Embracing innovation

Through 'learning kits' and virtual internships, students and educators adapt to pandemic's challenges

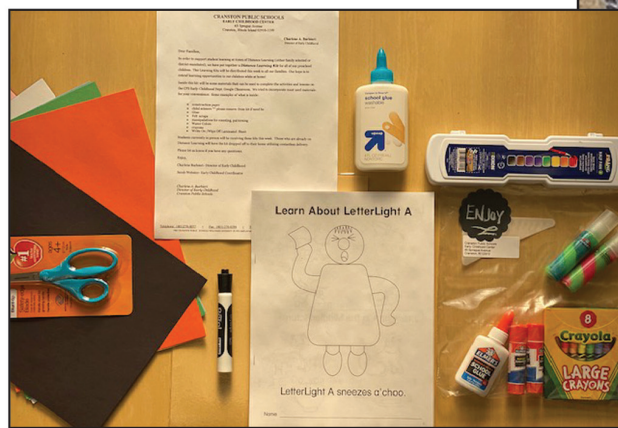
By DANIEL KITTREDGE and STEPHANIE BERNABA

Lindsey Bratter, a senior at Cranston High School West, has a clear vision for her professional life. She plans to become a child psychologist, with particular interest in working with young children and those with special needs. She intends to head to the Boston area this fall to study psychology – hopefully at Boston College, her top choice.

■ INNOVATION - PAGE 16

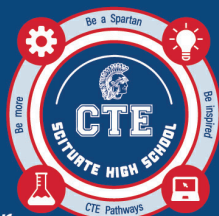


READY TO LEARN: Robert Furtado, a pre-school student at Cranston Public Schools Early Childhood Center, is all smiles as he holds one of the "learning kits." Charlene Barbieri, director of the Cranston Public Schools Early Childhood Center, said the "learning kits" developed for the district's youngest learners are meant to "make virtual learning creative and give the students the supplies that they would need." (Submitted photos)



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How to clean and sanitize a backpack

(Metro) - Backpacks are useful tools for students and adults alike. From hiking supplies to school books to sports equipment, backpacks can store just about anything. As veritable workhorses, they're bound to get dirty and can benefit from periodic cleaning.



or a gentle bristle brush. The outdoor retailer REI says you do not want to harm any protective coatings on the pack.

4. Zippers need occasional cleaning to remove dirt, sand or crumbs. Many zippers have water-resistant coatings so do not scrub them. Use a lubricant made for zippers to

help them slide smoothly.
5. Hang the bag to air dry upside down. It likely will dry more quickly outdoors, but avoid direct sunlight, which can compromise the integrity of the fabric or discolor the backpack.
6. Do not store or use the backpack until it is completely dry.
7. Sometimes a backpack may need to be disinfected to prevent the growth of fungus or bacteria. Athlete's foot fungus can easily transfer from socks and shoes to the backpack if gym clothes are left in the bag. The Spruce says to skip chlorine bleach and use a pine oil or phenolic disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe, such as Pine Sol or Spic-n-Span. Lysol brand disinfectant also can be used and is available in liquid formula or spray.

8. If the backpack is waterproof, only wash it once or twice per year; otherwise, you may reduce the pack's ability to repel water. Use cleansing wipes to spot clean when necessary.
9. Backpacks can get grimy quickly. Routine washing can freshen them right up.

10. While it may be tempting to simply throw a backpack into the washing machine, it is important to check the care instructions first. Some canvas, nylon and fabric backpacks can go in the wash, but those made of leather or those with intricate details should not. Backpack manufacturers also advise against putting backpacks in a dryer.

Here are steps to cleaning a backpack:
1. To get started, begin by removing any items from the backpack, including all of the pockets. If necessary, use a vacuum to get crumbs out of the backpack.
2. Check the care label to see if there are washing instructions. This will determine if you should wash it by hand or if it can be put in the machine.
3. If the bag can be machine-washed, turn it inside out first or place it in a pillowcase so that the straps and zippers will not be caught. Then wash it on a gentle setting with a mild detergent and lukewarm water. If the bag should be hand-washed, use lukewarm water and a soft sponge

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How parents can govern screen time

(Metro) - Technology has transformed nearly all facets of life, including education. While desks and blackboards can still be found in the classroom, technology has become more and more influential in regard to how students learn.

Many teachers now employ tablets and other devices to help students better understand their coursework. Devices can make for useful learning tools, but when does screen time cross over from useful learning tool to something that's potentially harmful to students' overall health? The American Academy of Pediatrics has produced age-specific guidelines that can help parents determine if their school-aged children are spending too much time staring at screens.

Children between two and five years of age

Parents should limit screen time for this age group to one hour per day of high-quality programs. The AAP advises parents to co-view with children in this age group so they can help kids understand what they're watching and how it applies to the world around them.

Children ages six and older

The AAP does not provide specific information regarding how many hours children ages six and older should use screen media. However, the AAP advises parents to make sure such media does not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health.

In addition to following AAP recommendations about screen time as closely as possible, parents can take steps to ensure their children are not spending too much time using their devices.

- Promote extracurricular activities. Urging children to participate in extracurricular activities that do not employ screen media, such as sports, music lessons and academic clubs, can be a great way to get kids to put down their devices and engage in in-person interactions with their peers.

- Establish no-device hours at home. The AAP recommends that parents designate certain times of the day as media-free times for the whole family, and not just children. Parents can put down their smartphones and tablets and engage with their children without the television on. In addition, make sure devices don't make it to the dinner table, as nightly, device-free dinners together can help families build strong bonds.

- Establish media-free zones. Designate certain areas of the home, such as the kitchen and dining room, as device-free zones. Keep devices out of bedrooms unless children need them to do their homework.

Devices in the classroom can help young students fulfill their academic potential. Parents can govern their use outside the classroom by adhering to some simple strategies.



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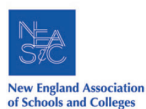
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■ Innovation

(Continued from page 13)

Lindsey's education in her chosen field, however, has already begun.

Since her sophomore year, she has been part of the Educational Pathways Program at the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, which is housed on the West campus. Her experience has included an internship last year at Meeting Street School in Providence – during which she worked with a teacher aide and a student with cerebral palsy – and time working one-on-one with students in the preschool at West.

For participants in the Educational Pathways Program, Lindsey said, senior year is an exciting time – a chance for the students to take more direct control over their studies through internships they research and pick for themselves.

"This year, which is like the big senior year thing that everybody gets excited for, you get to choose your own internship," she said.

But Lindsey's senior year has proven far from typical due to the pandemic. With social distancing protocols in place and most students taking part in virtual lessons for at least part of the week, the typical opportunities for in-person immersion in an internship have not been possible.

That's where Charlene Barbieri, Sarah Webster and Bethany Correia come in.

The new director of the Cranston Public Schools Early Childhood Center, or ECC, Charlene spent the previous 18 years as a teacher in the Educational Pathways program. Heading into this year, she saw

the challenges this year's circumstances would pose for educators, senior interns and the district's youngest learners – and she had some "innovative ideas" to do something about it.

First came a collaboration between the Educational Pathways students and ECC to create "learning kits" for the young learners in the two preschool classrooms at Cranston West and other pre-K classrooms across the district. Charlene said those kits – which include books, materials and learning activities – are designed to help children and their families adjust to virtual lessons whenever full distance learning is needed, as was the case from mid-December through early January.

As Charlene put it, the kits are meant to "make virtual learning creative and give the students the supplies that they would need." Sarah Webster, the educational coordinator for the Early Childhood Center, played a key role in developing the kits, organizing their contents and distributing them throughout the district.

Preschoolers are among the students who have typically done five-day in-person instruction under the district's hybrid approach to school reopening, although Charlene noted: "We have students here in preschool that are both doing distance learning and in-person learning, just like the rest of the district."

Bethany Correia, an educator in the Educational Pathways program, said her students also played a role in planning the contents of each kit. Among the items included were "file folder games" – materials that are laminated for easy cleaning

– and lesson plans for the virtual sessions. Scores of kits were created for distribution to all of the district's preschool students.

Then came the next step in the collaboration fostered by Charlene – new virtual internship opportunities for eight Educational Pathways program students, including Lindsey.

"These students were looking to help the community, they were looking to get experience themselves, because that's why they're in the program," Charlene said. "So [Sarah, Bethany and I] developed some virtual internships."

As part of her internship, Lindsey is working with a teacher in a special needs classroom. She receives assignments from the teacher, helping to plan lessons and activities for the students.

It's a different kind of experience than what she's done through the program in the past. During her junior year, for example, she led student activities, performed student observations and even took part in parent-teacher conferences.

Her senior year internship involves weekly virtual sessions with the teacher, followed by self-directed work carrying out the various assignments. While there are clear limitations to the arrangement, she said the experience has been valuable.

It's also one she has had a direct hand in shaping. As she put it: "I wanted something that was out of my comfort zone but something that would be very beneficial to me."

"It's still giving me exposure to the field," Lindsey said. "Even though it's not one-on-one interactions with the kids like I would have gotten ... it still is a really great experience."

She added: "I just love more exposure to the field and really seeing what a teacher does, because it's so much more behind the scenes than what you see in the classroom. And I feel like that's so important ... There's really so much effort and thought that goes into it."

Bethany reflected on the unique process that went into planning the virtual internships. There were a number of questions, and some concerns. Would the internships truly be valuable for the students? Would they be valuable for the professionals who took the interns on?

As part of the typical research process the students go through in choosing their internship, Bethany said she urged the students to think about the ways in which they have been well positioned to adapt to the challenges of virtual learning.

Professional email writing is typically part of the training for senior students in the Educational Pathways program, she said, and this year they used those messages to prospective mentors to highlight "how they have grown up utilizing virtual platforms for school work and their everyday life."

"[Sarah, Charlene and I were] thrilled that we were able to find enough professionals that could think outside the box and take them on," Bethany said. "It's always a job to take on an intern, but if you can do it in a way that's effective, it's a



FOLLOWING HER PATHWAY: Lindsey Bratter, a senior at Cranston High School West, is completing a virtual internship this year through the Educational Pathways Program at the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center.

benefit to you because you can get some extra help, and then it's a huge advantage to these kids because they're getting real-life experience."

Bethany said any concerns over how valuable the experience would be for this year's internships were quickly eased. In fact, the response has been even more positive than expected.

"I was concerned about how [the students] would feel about it, because they wait all this time to get to senior year, to be able to pick their internship. And I was really worried about the impact that would have on them," she said. "But they've been doing their reflections, and they are just ... I can't even tell you how much they're getting out of it – how much they're connecting with the children and the professionals, how valuable they feel the experience is."

She added: "As always, they're proving that they can handle just about any circumstance and make the best of it."

Bethany said almost all of the Educational Pathways students go on to four-year colleges and universities. The internship experience, she said, "gives them an advantage" as they prepare to make a major investment in their education – allowing them to gain a true sense of whether they are "heading in the right direction."

To Lindsey, the benefits of her internship go even deeper than validating a career path or providing a leg up educationally.

"I know that I have gained so many intangible skills," she said. "It's more than learning what a teacher does and being in a classroom. I've learned communication and time management and the importance of teamwork ... These are skills that I have improved so much since starting any internship, but especially this one. And I know that will help me for my whole life, whether it be in school, or at a job, or anywhere."

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Should women who are pregnant or breastfeeding get the vaccine?

When I learned I was pregnant last fall, I never could have imagined that I would work through a global pandemic, let alone be pregnant through one. This led to a series of unprecedented situations and unanswerable questions as I struggled to navigate my high-risk pregnant patients (and myself) through the experience of pregnancy, a challenging phase of life in the best of times, much less right now.

When the earliest glimmer of a vaccine was on the horizon, many of us who care for pregnant women were concerned that pregnant and breastfeeding women would not be included in the vaccine trials. Both the American College for Obstetrics and Gynecology (the premier national professional membership organization for obstetrician-gynecologists) and the Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine (the international society for high-risk obstetricians and scientists) released pleas for the inclusion of pregnant women in these trials, as pregnant women have a higher chance of getting severely ill from COVID-19.

Unfortunately, vaccine trials are simpler and faster when pregnant or breastfeeding women are not included, and so they were excluded. The results of these trials are extremely promising for those who are not pregnant or breastfeeding but do not

provide any insight into the potential risks or efficacy of the vaccine for me or for my patients. This leaves women and their care providers to make a challenging decision about vaccination during pregnancy or breastfeeding without all the facts.

This may seem overwhelming, so I wanted to share the thought process that led to my decision as a breastfeeding mom and health care worker to become vaccinated. Essentially, I focused on what we DO know, instead of what we don't.

First, while the structure of this vaccine (an mRNA vaccine) is new to the market, it has been being studied for decades in various settings and

Staying Healthy



by
NINA K.
AYALA, MD

studies of the safety of mRNA vaccines in pregnant animals are reassuring.

Second, vaccination in general is safe in pregnancy: only a very narrow category of vaccines – live virus vaccines

– are avoided in pregnancy. None of the vaccines currently approved or under investigation are live vaccines.

Third, women who develop COVID while pregnant are at a higher risk of having a severe illness that requires intensive care, and not all COVID exposures are predictable or preventable. While weighing my personal risks and benefits of becoming vaccinated, the clear benefits outweighed the potential for risks.

But my risk-benefit calculation may not apply to all my patients. When I counsel my patients on weighing the risks and the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for themselves, I encourage them to consider how much

exposure they have to people that could lead to an infection. In most locations, health care workers and other front line workers are among the first to get vaccinated because their exposure is so high. In these situations, the benefits of vaccination likely outweigh the risks, but for those whose households adhere to social distancing guidelines and have little-to-no contact with non-household members, this may not be the case. And that's OK.

Fortunately there is good news on the horizon. The World Health Organization estimates that 75 percent of health care workers are women, and many of them are currently pregnant or breastfeeding. Given their regular exposure to COVID-19 and experiencing firsthand the devastating effects of an infection, many have opted to receive vaccination in this first wave. This means that more safety information during pregnancy and breastfeeding is on the horizon. In the meantime, we all must continue to protect ourselves and others by masking, maintaining distance, practicing hand hygiene, and considering vaccination when available to us.

Nina K. Ayala, MD, is a maternal fetal medicine physician and director of antepartum care at Women and Infants Hospital.

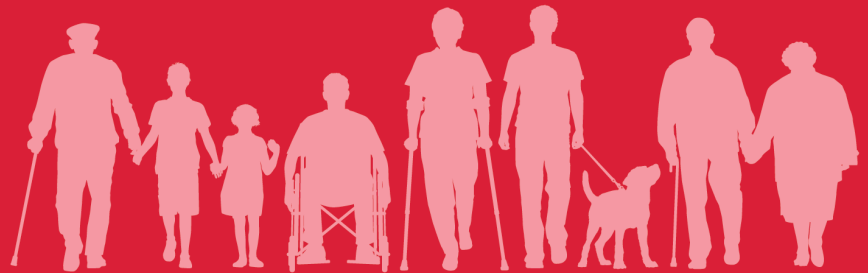


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Antiquing 101



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

The most important thing for any aspiring antiques dealer in today's auction world is education. But you don't necessarily need to go to college. Whether you want to learn about period American furniture, contemporary art, or thirteenth century Korean ceramics, there is a strong curriculum that can be built if you just use common sense and a little intuition. I say that because

in the twenty-first century there are a lot of "antique dealers" who received their degree on Channel 54 from 8:00 to 10:00 on Tuesdays and Channel 36 on Fridays. If your research stops in front of a TV screen, there is no hope for you.

Why they might seem archaic to some, books, just like every teacher in your life said, are the best resource.



ANYTHING can get posted on the internet, and especially in the auction world where things get misidentified and sold quickly in catalogs more frequent than not. Unless it is a published catalog from an established auction house, always be leery. Outside of online auctions, blogs and other informative sites should always be vetted. Flash back to high school, if it doesn't end with an ".org" from an established institution or ".edu" forget about it, no beuno, does not pass as a valid source. Obviously, don't be ridiculous. If you need to research 1960's matchbox cars a quick google search will do you fine. In example, this rule would apply to those wanting to divulge into the history of Swedish impressionism. Two very different levels of connoisseurship are required for each. The one thing through experience I have learned is that in most cases the older the book, the much more useful it will be. That may sound weird, but while history appears to remain complete throughout time, it is amazing how many crumbs fall along the way. One of my weird personal obsessions is eighteenth century English ceramics, and I have learned more about the items and their makers by reading early primary sources compared to anything else.

I would honestly say 40% of the information is not obtainable online, and that's compared to five years of research prior to me owning the five volume set published in 1840.

While being able to research, read, and learn the history of everything is great, one only gains a true grasp after seeing and handling numerous examples in person. If you are truly starting from ground zero never seeing a painting before in your life you need to go to museums. RISD in Providence is amazing, if you're feeling spunky take a trek out to the MFA in Boston or MET in New York, any museum is worth going to though. Going to a museum will expose you to the best of everything and train your eye on what to look for so you can identify it when you see it. Once you get your feet wet everyone eventually finds their focus, it just depends how well you want to master it. Get out there, use your brain and think a little. You could be the next person talking about the \$800.00 painting you bought from a yard sale.



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Sports



GETTING STARTED: Members of Johnston/North Providence/Tiverton watch the action. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

RIC tops UMD in Little East action

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Senior Sophia Guerrier (Waltham, Mass.) and sophomore Maci Dorantes (Bristol, Conn.) each recorded double-double performances of 12 points and 10 rebounds to lead Rhode Island College to a 57-47 Little East Conference women's basketball victory over UMass Dartmouth Wednesday evening at the Tripp Athletic Center.

The visiting Anchorwomen (2-0, 2-0 LEC) scored the first 10 points of the contest and held the host Corsairs (0-1, 0-1 LEC) without a field goal in the opening 6:35 of action, as Rhode Island College built a 30-21 advantage at the break. Junior Jessica Carroll (Deep River, Conn.) cut UMass Dartmouth's deficit to six on its opening possession after intermission with a three-pointer, but the Anchorwomen used seven unanswered points to gain a 37-24 edge on senior Brooke Young's (West Warwick) lay-in midway

through the frame. The visitors took a 10-point lead into the final 10 minutes of action, as the Corsairs climbed to within four (51-47) on senior Lauren Empey's (Middleboro, Mass.) lay-in with 1:29 remaining in the contest, but Rhode Island College used a Dorantes three-pointer to spark six unanswered points in the final 65 seconds of play that iced its triumph.

Young netted a team-high 13 points, five rebounds and three assists in the win for the Anchorwomen, who received nine points and a game-high 12 boards from junior Willcia McBorrough (Providence). Sophomore Izabelle Booth (Newport) chipped in with nine points and eight caroms off the bench for Rhode Island College, which shot 36 percent (23-63) from the field and held a 51-38 rebounding advantage on the evening.

Carroll collected a game-high 15 points and three rebounds in the setback for

RIC- PAGE 20

JNPT hockey settling into new division

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston/North Providence/Tiverton boys hockey team recently dropped the puck on its 2021 season and is looking to make some noise down the stretch.

The Panthers have gotten off to a slow start and are searching for their first win. Despite the early struggles, assistant coach Sam DaCosta feels that the team is ready to turn things around after moving up from Division III to Division II.

"We're off to a slow start as far as wins and losses but this year we've moved up from D3 to D2 so this is



MAKING AN IMPACT: JNPT freshman forward Zach Scheffler takes the puck up the ice last week.

JNPT- PAGE 22

Could shorter winters be better?

We are now a few weeks into the winter season and I have already seen a handful of our teams drop tough losses.

Obviously, this winter season got off to a late start and is being crammed in time for the third season to hopefully begin in March. Schedules are condensed and the season is going to be over in a blink of an eye.

It's never fun having to cover a team that comes up short. Well, as a sports fan, I have fun covering all games. But it is always a little sweeter when your team wins.

I have covered a handful

My pitch



by
ALEX SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR
ALEXS@
RHODYBEAT.COM

of losses to this point, most recently the Pilgrim girls basketball team and the Cranston West boys. Each game was competitive and

PITCH- PAGE 20

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Lady Panthers fall to St. Ray's

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston girls basketball team dropped a tough 55-28 decision to St. Raphael Academy last week. Senior Tori Viau continued to lead Johnston, scoring a team-leading six points.

Abby Clesas and freshman Ava Waterman each scored five points for the Panthers while Emily Iannuccilli added four.

St. Ray's had four girls score double digit points. Amaya Dowdy led the way with a game-high 15 points, while Chloe Rayko scored 14, and Elizabeth Bruno and Genesis McNeil 10 each.

The loss dropped the Panthers to 0-3 on the season, and they looked to get into the win column when they hit the road to take on Cranston West on Thursday night. The final results were not available at press time.

■ Pitch

(Continued from page 19)

each team had its moments, but unfortunately they just came up on the short end.

The question that I had to ask the coaches afterwards was, "How important will it be for your team to rebound considering how short the season is and how much each loss means now?"

I feel bad for the coaches and players from that perspective. Each game has even more pressure. The point is to have fun and we are all grateful to have a season at all, but these teams are competitive and they want to win and the sting of a loss in the shortened season must be heightened ... right? Regardless of play-off formats and seeding and whatnot, just simply losing when you only have a small number of games will burn, especially those seniors who are finishing their final seasons.

The more I thought about it though, maybe that will make it more exciting. Not only for fans, but for those teams. There are no fans in basketball and limited fans in hockey, but there still was a playoff atmosphere in those games. It just felt that way. Maybe the participants will disagree, but these games have been very competitive and the kids seem to be going all out to win.

It's a mix of things. The shortened season, being cooped up for much of the year and having energy to use, wanting to make the most of the season considering nothing is certain. You can tell that these teams are playing with a little more fire than the norm.

However, back to the schedule, it does make me wonder if this could trigger things to come, or if it should, rather.

The winter sports season is long most years. It usually is about four months or so, and teams have plenty of games in the regular season and playoffs.

Again, the whole point of high school sports is to provide kids with an opportunity to socialize, have fun, learn a sport and build a college resume. I am not saying we slash the season in half just for my entertainment.

But what if we scaled back the games just a little bit? Basketball for example usually has 18 games. What if we scaled it back to say, 15? Or on the flip side, maybe even make the playoff picture more exclusive. Most teams qualify, but what if we once again scaled it back?

I also am not trying to deprive kids the chance to feel the playoff atmosphere. There is nothing like watching a game in a packed gym with the season on the line. I wish that every high school athlete had that opportunity.

So, I am not saying we go from, for ex-

ample, 10 teams to four. But maybe 10 teams to eight? Eight teams to six?

Don't get me wrong, either. I don't have any gripes with the winter season. I am not spitballing here because I feel like these are big issues. I am simply thinking out loud when examining the current landscape. Not that I would want this to be the norm moving forward, but I think that this could give the league a chance to take a step back and consider a few things for the future.

I love the winter sports season, I love seeing kids out there playing, and I am nothing but satisfied with the typical format. But, there's always room for improvement.

Surprise, surprise, Tom Brady will be playing in the Super Bowl this weekend.

You probably won't believe me when I tell you this, but since the summer, I have been calling this Super Bowl matchup. I never put it on paper unfortunately, but trust me when I tell you that any of my friends and family that watch the NFL with me will testify on my behalf.

My original prediction was that the Tampa Bay Bucs would go 12-4 and beat the Chiefs in the Super Bowl. Tampa went 11-5, so I was a game off in that regard, but I am sticking with that Super Bowl prediction just for the sake of being consistent. I am not backing off.

However, I don't think the Bucs will win. I look at this Kansas City team, especially the offense, and the efficiency is incredible ... unlike any offense I have ever watched.

The reason why I was so high on the Bucs going into the season was because of the sheer talent they have on their roster. I did a small breakdown last week, but on each side of the ball the talent is borderline ridiculous. Honestly, maybe I am a prisoner of the moment, but I'm not sure if I have seen so much collective talent on a 53-man roster.

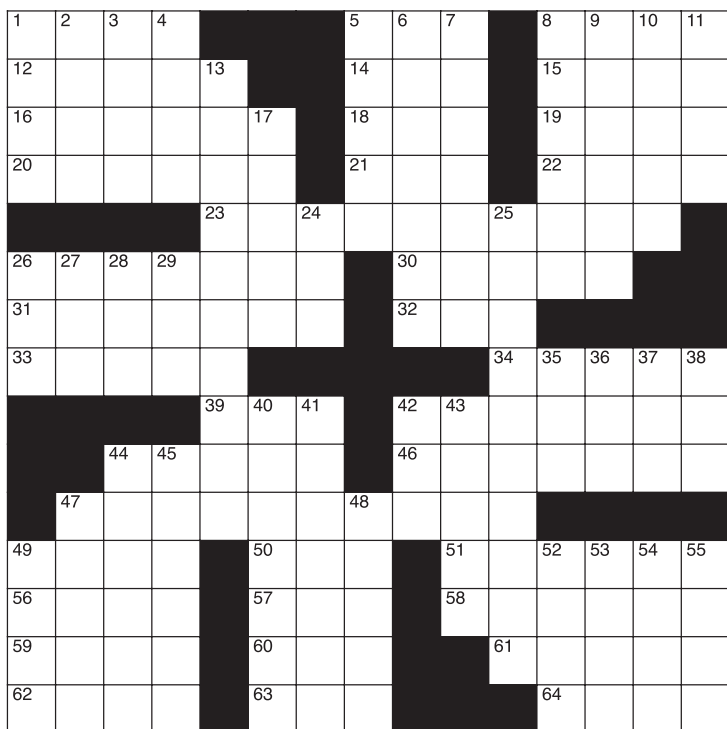
The one area that the Bucs are a little light on is the defensive secondary. Antoine Winfield has been stellar as a rookie and Sean Murphy Bunting and Jamel Dean are decent, but I have my doubts about how they will be able to consistently cover the likes of Tyreek Hill, Sammy Watkins, Mecole Hardman and Travis Kelce.

The Chiefs defense is solid but not great, either. I expect this to be a total shootout. It's hard to bet against Tom Brady and I am sticking with the Bucs just because I have to, but I do think the Chiefs will get it done.

Let me make myself very clear. I am not trying to steal credit by saying, "My original pick was Tampa so if they win I was right, but now I am choosing Kansas City so if they win I'm right."

Nope, I'm staying fair and consistent. My prediction: Bucs 34, Chiefs 31

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

1. Nuclear near reach weapon
5. Of she
8. Hyperbolic function
12. Rice dish
14. A team's best pitcher
15. Strong and healthy
16. Induces
18. Popular manga series
19. From a distance
20. Split
21. Consumed
22. Cushions
23. All over
26. One who provides food
30. St. ___ Girl, brand of beer
31. Walking slowly
32. Wood
33. Semitic gods
34. Bugle
39. 60-minute periods (abbr.)
42. Congressman
44. Plant of the heath family
46. Subdivision of an army
47. Having many different forms
49. Shellfish

CLUES DOWN

1. Prevents oil spills
2. Monetary unit
3. The color of the sky
4. Dough used to make tortillas
5. Popular comic strip character
6. Distinct form of a plant
7. Replenishment
8. Has its own altar
9. Expedition to see animals
10. Group of related organisms
11. His and ___
13. Frenetically

17. Small integer
24. Unit of energy
25. Studies of culture
26. Taxi
27. Doctors' group
28. Don't know when yet
29. Former measure of length
35. Popular CBS series
36. Skin condition
37. Christian creator and ruler of the universe
38. They ___
40. Caused severe damage
41. Work done under harsh conditions for no pay
42. One point east of due south
43. Sea eagles
44. Drenched
45. State capital
47. Italian city
48. Sweetheart (archaic)
49. Brief talk
52. Popular disco group: Bee ___
53. First Chinese dynasty
54. Military vehicle
55. Chinese Moslem

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■ RIC

(Continued from page 19)

UMass Dartmouth, which received a near triple-double effort of nine points, 10 assists, eight boards and five steals from junior Jordan Moretti (Johnston). Empey added six points and five caroms for the Corsairs, who received five points and

four rebounds from freshman Faye Veilleux (Wrentham, Mass.) and four points each from juniors Shaelyn Carriero (Fall River, Mass.) and Caroline Wilson (Forestdale, Mass.) as well as freshman Teja Andrews (Plymouth, Mass.). Senior Meagan Donovan (Abington, Mass.) grabbed six rebounds for the hosts, who shot 30 percent (18-61) from the floor and turned 23 Anchorwomen turnovers into 21 points.

BOEM's environment statement out for comment

It's time for the recreational fishing community to speak up and be counted in the planning of offshore wind farms. Throughout February public hearings on the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's (BOEM) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the South Fork Wind Farm will be held. All will get an opportunity to weigh in on BOEM's work ... what they missed, and what they got right on how the wind farm will impact the environment.

The South Fork Wind Farm, a fifteen turbine offshore wind farm being built by wind farm developer Ørsted (owner of the Block Island Wind Farm), will be built on Cox Ledge 20 to 25 miles southeast of Point Judith, Rhode Island.

Cox Ledge has long served as fertile fishing grounds for a small portion of the recreational fishing fleet for bottom fish such as cod and black sea bass as well as pelagic fish. Sharks and tuna are commonly targeted and caught on Cox Ledge. I said 'small portion' as according to NOAA most fishing trips occur within the three mile limit or just over it and this windfarm is 20 miles offshore.

Offshore wind and fishing can work together and coexist just as both have flourished at the Block Island Wind Farm. And, in the United Kingdom where wind farms have been built for years, science is telling us that fish abundance in wind farm areas is greater than in control areas outside of wind farms.

I am also a believer in the reef effort, as the science, my antidotal fishing experience and video footage at the base of the pylons at the Block Island Wind Farm tells us, new habitat and fish have been created, mussel growth has attracted scup, black sea bass and tautog and now recreational anglers are targeting large striped bass and

blue fish around the base of the pylons.

As a nation we should identify ways that fishing and offshore wind can work together to benefit each other looking at projects as multi-use and multi-purpose projects rather than looking at them as single purpose projects.

According to a Providence Journal article "Fishermen, developers hit impasse over offshore wind farm plan" published on Feb. 2, 2021, some in the fishing community have cried foul, using this DEIS to hold up the project for mitigation posturing. This deprives all of us of badly needed renewable energy to help combat the negative impacts of climate change on fish, habitat and sea level rise on our coastal shores.

I agree all need to be compensated for fishing time lost during construction. However, commercial, for-hire charter boats and private anglers have fished in the Block Island Wind Farm area after construction.

NOAA has related that commercial fishing records show \$ 2.3 million generated over the course of twelve years in the South Fork Wind Farm area. That's about \$197,000 on average per year so this is the number that should be used perhaps with a multiply for land based economic impacts.

We have solid commercial fishing numbers from NOAA, however, they have no recreational fishing impact numbers in this or any wind farm area.

There are ways to identify private anglers that fish in wind farm areas and what they catch. The New England Aquarium has done some great work on pelagic fishers and fish caught in wind farm areas, and electronic recording efforts in the nation have added insight and supplemental informational that gives fish mangers a better idea of

No Fluke



BY CAPTAIN
DAVE MONTI

who fishes in areas and what they catch. And, Ørsted has reached out to the angling community with recreational representatives, online Fishinars with hundreds of registrants and attendees as well as the development of an angler survey to try to identify who fishing in their wind farm areas and what the catch (a job that BOEM and/or NOAA should do, as they do for commercial fishing).

That said, let's not hold up the development of renewable energy for all the people of the United States of America as we need it badly to combat climate change. Let us reimburse commercial, for hire and recreational fishermen reasonably for any true loss of fishing. And look at this DEIS and other environment impact statements to come on there true scientific merits and not mitigation posturing.

BOEM is seeking public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the South Fork Wind Farm Construction and Operations Plan at three virtual public meetings being held on Feb. 9 at 1 p.m., Feb. 11 at 5 p.m., and Feb. 16 at 5 p.m. More information, including the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, instructions for providing comments, and more information on the public meetings is available at www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/south-fork-wind-farm-virtual-meetings.

meetings. Comments must be submitted by 11:59 PM on Feb. 22, 2021.

Registration for the virtual public meetings may be completed at <https://www.boem.gov/renewableenergy/south-fork-wind-farm-deisvirtual-meetings> or by calling (703) 787-1662.

Senator Whitehouse ends "Time to wake up" climate speeches

I am a supporter of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and his efforts over the years to spotlight climate change and its impacts on our oceans, habitat, fish and fishermen. He has been a champion bringing attention to the climate change impact issues of warming water, fish movement, rising sea level, habitat degradation, ocean acidification, plastics and all types of pollution.

Last week he gave his last weekly climate change address after nine years and 279 "Time to Wake up" speeches. I was honored to be mentioned in one of his speeches two years ago for bringing attention to fish movement in our region due to climate change with my fishing writing. Warming water has brought species into our area in greater abundance such as black sea bass, scup and summer flounder while cold water fish such as winter flounder and American lobster have moved out of the area to colder, deeper water.

The Senator has always been a champion of strong conservation measures in our national fishing law, the Magnuson Stevens Act, to rebuild fish stocks responsibly while allowing fishing communities to grow.

Senator Whitehouse, thank you for being a climate change champion on all these years. The fishing community supports your work and will continue to do so as our executive branch and congress move to implement badly needed climate



TIME TO WAKE UP: Last week Senator Sheldon Whitehouse ended his "Time to wake up" climate change speeches after nine years and 279 speeches. (Submitted photo)

change plans and policies to help preserve our oceans, nation and world.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater. For licensing information and a list of trout stocked ponds in Rhode Island visit <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/fish-wildlife/freshwater-fisheries>; and in Massachusetts visit www.mass.gov/freshwater-fishing-information.

Cod fishing. Party boats fishing for cod this winter (weather permitting include) the Frances Fleet at www.francesfleet.com, the Seven B's at www.sevenbs.com, and the Island Current at www.islandcurrent.com.

Dave Monti holds a captain's master license and a charter fishing license. He is a RISAA board member, a member of the RI Party & Charter Boat Association, the American Saltwater Guides Association and the RI Marine Fisheries Council. Forward fishing news and photos to Capt. Dave at dmontifish@verizon.net or visit www.noflukesfishing.com.

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LEADING THE WAY: JNPT captain Jeremy Gervais skates up the ice in a recent game.



GRINDING IT OUT: JNPT's Dante Vani (left) and captain Bailey Morin (right).



■ JNPT

(Continued from page 19)

definitely more of a developmental year for us," said DaCosta. "Right now we're a lot more focused on how we're playing from one play to the next, because how you react to those situations becomes your habits and your habits become your team identity. With that being said, we've gotten better each game and I think we're playing a lot better than the scoreboards have shown at this point. We're starting to get used to the new division and building better habits which has been great to see."

DaCosta added: "Our main goal since we've just moved up is to develop and compete for wins. The focus is on developing skills, building smart habits, playing together as a unit, and finding ways to improve every game and every practice. These players have made strides in every way which we love to see. Even if the scoreboard may not have shown it yet, the team is getting better and starting to play with more confidence as well. I'm happy to see how much they've improved so far and excited to see where we end up."

The coaching staff has relied on the senior leaders in the early going and will continue to lean on them as the team prepares to enter the meat of its schedule.

"As far as the seniors and leadership, they have been excellent at being positive, helping younger players along by giving them advice, and pouring their hearts into every shift. They've been setting a great example - not just with their words, but their actions and that's something that makes us proud to see. As the season goes on, we'll sure they'll keep that up," said DaCosta.

Overall, DaCosta has been pleased with the team's effort in this irregular season and hopes the Panthers will continue to make the most of it.

"As far as handling the unusual season, I think we're handling it pretty well. We're proud of how our players have

been able to go with the flow and adjust to the obvious changes and restrictions due to COVID and the shortened season," said DaCosta. "It takes everyone buying in and competing hard in games and in practices. With a short season, you have to treat every minute as a learning opportunity and that has been a major focus as well."

The members of the 2021 JNPT team are: Nick Rielly, Ryan Vukas, Jeremy Gervais, Zach Bernier, Allison Benoit, Zach Scheffler, Gianluca Albenese, Bailey Morin, Jacob Abbruzzese, Aidan Dorgan, Ben Deneault, Dante Vani, Sebastian Anicelli and Ethan Arruda. Coaches Manny DaCosta, Carl Morin and Sam DaCosta.

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