

Committee accepts plan to bring students back for RICAS

By JACOB MARROCCO

The Johnston School Committee has voted to accept a plan proposed by Superintendent of Schools Bernard DiLullo to bring distance-learning students back on alternating Mondays for state testing this spring.

DiLullo said the last Monday in March and three Mondays in April would be reserved for Rhode Island Common Assessment System, or RICAS, testing among

middle and high school students attending class virtually. He said blocking out those days for distance learners would prevent crossover with pods of students who are in school on a semi-daily basis. He told the committee that state testing is mandatory, and students who fail to comply will receive a zero.

"We need those Mondays to bring in students who are distance learning," DiLullo said. "We would spend the after-

"We need those Mondays to bring in students who are distance learning. We would spend the afternoon cleaning the school thoroughly to prepare for other students, and they would be tested the rest of the week."

Superintendent Bernard DiLullo

noon cleaning the school thoroughly to prepare for other students, and they would be tested the rest of

the week."

DiLullo proposed a hybrid model, bringing in students with the last

name A-L on every other Monday, to prevent any overlap with group M-Z. Transportation will be provided.

"The challenges that remain in place, although we're hearing the state saying this may change, [are] bus capacity at 50 percent, one student is supposed to be sitting on a seat," DiLullo said. "There's still the challenge in the classroom where students have to be 3 to 6 feet apart. We're not proposing to bring ev-

eryone back to the middle and high school. We're hearing some guidelines may be reduced over the next couple of weeks, but as recently as today [the state] is saying that probably won't happen before the first week of May."

While DiLullo noted that the town has been among the highest positivity rates in the state since the start of the pandemic – 14 percent – school case numbers have

■ SCHOOL - PAGE 11



Going green at Barnes

School spirit is stronger than ever for the students at Sarah Dyer Barnes Elementary. This year's fifth-grade class will be the first kindergarten class to graduate from Barnes. They appreciate all of the hard work and daily efforts all of the teachers, staff and the principal, Ms. Jill Souza, have made, not only during these trying times of this pandemic, but throughout each and every year. COVID can't touch the school spirit of this fifth-grader, Jaelyn Jordan. Happy St Patrick's Day! (Photo courtesy of Shannon Gray)

Fellela supports vaccine rollout, considering marijuana legalization

By JACOB MARROCCO

Dist. 43 State Rep. Deborah Fellela of Johnston expressed satisfaction with Gov. Dan McKee's vaccine rollout and offered her support for marijuana legalization during a wide-ranging interview for Beacon Communications' Radio Beacon podcast on Wednesday morning.

Fellela was pleased to see McKee "ramp up" distribution, and she lauded Mayor Joseph Polisena's Johnston recreation pod, which is set to inoculate the town's teachers on Friday. As someone who worked in the school department as a principal's administrative assistant, Fellela said she has seen how school staff is "right in the thick of it."

"I was glad that Gov. McKee made that a priority. I agree with him and President Biden that the teachers should definitely be vaccinated, the whole school staff should be. I believe that wholeheartedly," she said. "Teachers' assistants, lunch ladies, the bus monitors, they really all should be vaccinated."

Fellela received her first Pfizer shot at Walgreens after the next age group opened up, but it wasn't her first attempting at getting a job. She said she initially



DEBORAH FELLELA

signed up for a vaccination at the Dunkin' Donuts Center, even having a confirmation on her phone, but staff couldn't find her name so she was unable to go through with her appointment.

She wasn't too disappointed, though, as she said the process of registering at Walgreens went "very smoothly."

"It was so easy, I have to give [Walgreens] credit. Everything was easy to do. I was able to print out my confirmation, went there that day, you didn't feel like you were rushed or there were a lot of people," Fellela said, adding that she didn't experience a reaction to the shot. "A little bit of soreness in my arm, but that was about it. I'm looking forward to getting the

■ FELLELA - PAGE 11

Dr. Murphy encourages screening, breaking stigma of colon cancer

By ARDEN BASTIA

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, a rallying point for the colon cancer community where thousands of patients, survivors, caregivers and advocates throughout the country join together to spread awareness.

For Dr. Melissa Murphy, March is a very important month.

The chief of surgery at Kent Hospital, she has been a colorectal surgeon for the past eight years. She is passionate about breaking the stigma

around colon cancer and encouraging patients to get screen regularly.

"Cancers detected early have a 90 percent survival rate," Dr. Murphy said in an interview on Monday. "And colon cancer is largely a preventable one."

Dr. Murphy works with a team of medial and radiation oncologists so patients are offered a multidisciplinary approach to necessary cancer care. In addition to being a part of the surgical program at Kent, she is also on the surgical staff at Women and Infants Hospital and

Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

According to Dr. Murphy, 4 percent of men and women will develop colon cancer. It is the third most common cancer and cause of mortality in the country, and the second for both men and women. For Black patients, the risk of colon cancer and mortality rate is higher. Black patients are 20 percent more likely to get colon cancer and 40 percent more like to die from it than other racial and ethnic groups.

Dr. Murphy urges people to get screened regu-

larly, particularly if they have a family history of, or genetic disposition to, colon cancer. The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT) put forth the "80% in Every Community" initiative to emphasize the importance of screening 80 percent of the population nationally.

According to the NCCRT website, not everyone is screened equally. "There are still too many communities with lower colorectal cancer screening rates – rural communities, certain racial and

■ MURPHY - PAGE 11



DR. MELISSA MURPHY



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Arnold selected for U.S. Senate Youth Program

The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) announces that high school students Mr. Cooper James Arnold of Johnston and Ms. Victoria Gail Richard of Smithfield joined Sens. Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse in representing Rhode Island during the 59th annual USSYP Washington Week that was held March 14-17.

Arnold and Richard were selected from among the state's top student leaders to be part of the 104-member national student delegation who will each also receive a \$10,000 college scholarship for undergraduate study. Due to the pandemic, the 2021 program broke ground as the first-ever fully virtual Washington Week, and it was designed to be a highly interactive and exciting education and leadership forum for the nation's most outstanding student leaders.

The USSYP was created by Senate Resolution 324 in 1962 and has been sponsored by the Senate and fully funded by The Hearst Foundations since inception. Originally proposed by Sens. Kuchel, Mansfield, Dirksen and Humphrey, the Senate leadership of the day, the impetus for the program as stated in Senate testimony is "to increase young Americans' understanding of the interrelationships of the three branches of government, learn the caliber and responsibilities of federally elected and appointed officials, and emphasize the vital importance of democratic decision making not only for America but for people around the world."

Each year, this extremely competitive merit-based program brings the most outstanding high school students - two from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity - to Washington, D.C., for an intensive week-long study of the federal government and the people who lead it. However, this year, the program was held online. The overall mission of the program is to help instill within each class of USSYP student delegates more profound knowledge of the American political process and a lifelong commitment to public service. In addition to the program week, The Hearst Foundations provide each student with a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to continue coursework in government, history and public affairs. All expenses for Washington Week are also provided by The



COOPER ARNOLD

Hearst Foundations; as stipulated in S.Res.324, no government funds are utilized.

Arnold, a senior at Saint Raphael Academy, serves as the vice president of the senior class. He is a member of the Mock Trial Team, a student ambassador for all four years, and a participant in the Drama Council. Academically he is top of his class, and due to his leadership skills, commitment, and community service through high school has earned six distinguished awards including the State of Rhode Island Civic Leadership Award, given by Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea. Cooper aspires to attend law school, become a judge, and conscientiously and justly serve the people of this nation.

Richard, a senior at Smithfield High School, serves as the secretary of the senior class, is a member of the National Honor Society and co-captain of the varsity tennis team. Her passion for the performing arts and volunteer work is so strong that it led her to co-create a drama program for over 50 elementary students. She is committed to bettering Rhode Island through outreach and activism by using her leadership skills to tackle societal challenges, and was selected by Gov. Gina Raimondo to be a working group member for gun safety. She has been awarded the Pell Medal for Excellence in U.S. History and the Rhode Island Civic Leadership Award by Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea. Victoria aims to earn a Master's degree in political science, represent Rhode Island in the Senate, and continue her passion to make positive change.

Chosen as alternates to the 2021 program were Mr. Michael Garman, a resident of Wakefield who attends The Prout School, and Ms. Gloriana Crichlow, a resident of Johnston who attends Johnston Senior High School.

Delegates and alternates are selected by the state departments of edu-

cation nationwide and the District of Columbia and Department of Defense Education Activity, after nomination by teachers and principals. The chief state school officer for each jurisdiction confirms the final selection. This year's

Rhode Island delegates and alternates were designated by Mrs. Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner of Education.

During the program week, the student delegates attended online meetings and briefings with senators, the president, a justice of the Supreme Court, leaders of cabinet agencies and senior members of the national media, among others.

In addition to outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to volunteer work, the student delegates rank academically in the top 1 percent of their states among high school juniors and seniors. Now more than 5,800 strong, alumni of the program continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. Among the many distinguished alumni are Sen. Susan Collins, the first alumna to be elected U.S. senator; Secretary of Transportation and former Mayor of South Bend Indiana, Pete Buttigieg; former Sen. Cory Gardner, the second alumna to be elected U.S. senator and the first to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, the first alumna to be elected governor; former Chief Judge Robert Henry, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit; former Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt, and former presidential advisors Thomas "Mack" McLarty and Karl Rove. Additional notables include former Lt. Gov. of Idaho David Leroy, Provost of Wake Forest University Rogan Kersh, military officers, members of state legislatures, Foreign Service officers, top congressional staff, health care providers and other university educators.

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POLICE LOG

The Police Log is a digest of reports provided by the Johnston Police, Rhode Island State Police and other departments.

FRAUD SCHEME

A Johnston man, the real estate firm he founded, and another man from North Providence have been indicted in connection with a scheme that defrauded financially distressed homeowners as well as lending institutions, according to the office of Acting U.S. Attorney Richard Myrus.

Gregory F. Alosio, 60, of Johnston faces charges of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and wire fraud, bank fraud, wire fraud, and money laundering, prosecutors say. His firm, Johnston-based Alosio Group LLC – which authorities say also did business under the name Quietstorm Professional Services – faces the same charges.

Also indicted was 68-year-old John DiFruscio Jr. of North Providence, who prosecutors describe as “associated with Quietstorm Professional Services.” He faces the same charges as Alosio and the firm.

According to the U.S. Attorney’s office, Alosio, his company and DiFruscio “held themselves out as negotiators who, for a fee, could assist in keeping properties from being foreclosed upon.”

Instead, they are alleged to have “conspired to fraudulently obtain

properties from financially distressed homeowners; fraudulently obtained fees, commissions, and other income associated with the rental, use and short sale of homeowners’ properties; fraudulently purchased properties in short sales and illegally ‘flipped’ them for significant personal gain; and defrauded several financial institutions.”

SHOPLIFTING

Patrolman Richard Varan responded to 100 Stone Hill Road for a report of two shoplifters fleeing from Home Depot on the afternoon of Jan. 25.

Upon arrival, Varan met with the loss prevention officer, who said that he saw the two suspects – one male and one female – flee on foot southwesterly into a wooded area behind the store. The officer ran on foot into the wooded area, observing the two suspects fleeing through the brush. He identified himself to both parties as a Johnston Police officer and yelled for them to stop, which they ignored. He said he continued to track both parties toward BJ’s Wholesale Club. Both suspects attempted to exit the wooded area behind BJ’s when they were taken into custody by Detective Anthony Sasso.

The suspects were identified as Jose Gomes, 35, 160 Broad St., Providence, and Stephanie Napolitano, 39, 17 Parker St., Central Falls. Sasso advised

that Napolitano had two Google Nest Minis in her possession when she was taken into custody.

Varan returned to Home Depot to take a statement from the loss prevention officer, who said that saw Napolitano select three Minis and put them inside her coat pocket. Both then loaded a flat cart with two Ryobi pressure washers and both walked out of the rear lumber door with all items. The reporting party said that at no point did either party attempt to pay for said items. Once outside the store, he approached both parties who then fled on foot toward BJ’s. The items were valued upwards of \$1,000.

Varan said the two pressure washers could not be located and had been taken from the rear of the Home Depot by unknown parties. He said that after speaking with the arrested parties, information was conveyed that there was a third party in a vehicle on scene who may have picked up the pressure washers from the rear of the building prior to the officers arriving.

In a supplementary report, Sasso said he responded to 200 Stone Hill Road, and Varan told him upon his arrival that he was in active pursuit of the suspects. Sasso drove off the road with his unmarked SUV, at the top ridge, which connects to the dirt access road. He said he drove a few hundred yards vertically along the top of the ridge in hope the suspects

would come out of the brush.

He exited the SUV and began to trek down the steep terrain, which was littered with dense spiny thickets, small brush and thick grasses. He said it was difficult to see through and maneuver around. As he made his way across the ridge, he could hear voices and brush rustling coming from a westerly direction.

He rerouted his pursuit, and began to run diagonal across the landscape, when he observed the suspects traveling up the embankment in a low crawl to conceal themselves. He quickly made his way across the rocky slope and as he looked up to the top of the ridge, he saw three other officers on the access road up above to the south. He signaled to them to flank him as he pursued the suspects.

Sasso sprinted towards the suspects and was able to get a clear visual on both of them. When he was about 25 yards away, he shouted multiple times, “Stop, police, let me see your hands.” As he moved closer, he saw a black object in Gomes’ hands, which later turned out to be a cell phone.

Patrolman Nicholas Manocchio later wrote that upon searching Gomes, a knife with a three-inch blade was located in his front jacket pocket.

Gomes was arrested on counts of shoplifting, conspiracy, shoplifting as a habitual offender and

possession of prohibited weapons other than firearms. Napolitano was charged with shoplifting, shoplifting as a habitual offender and conspiracy.

Three days later, Patrolmen Matthew Leveille and Robert Cardoza responded to the Rhode Island State Police Lincoln Barracks to take custody of Ralph Quinones, 43, 259 Thurbers Ave., Providence, on an active JPD arrest warrant on charges of conspiracy and receiving stolen goods. He was transferred without incident.

DUI

Patrolman Nicholas Manocchio and several other officers responded to 2128 Hartford Ave. on the evening of Feb. 19 in response to a report of a motor vehicle accident with unknown injuries.

Upon arrival, he saw Johnston Fire Department personnel attempting to remove a woman from the passenger seat of one vehicle. Manocchio overheard the male driver of the vehicle yell an expletive at JFD personnel. The officer spoke with the operator, identified as Brian Domenici, 52, 31 Alpine Way, North Smithfield.

While speaking with Domenici, whom Manocchio said was not wearing a facemask, the officer detected a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage emanating from his breath. Manocchio said Domenici’s face was

red, his eyes were bloodshot and his speech was slurred.

Manocchio said he asked Domenici how the accident occurred, to which he said, “Where the [expletive] is my daughter going?” The officer told him his daughter was being transferred to Rhode Island Hospital. Domenici continued to ask where his daughter was, and each time Manocchio responded, Domenici became more aggressive and agitated. He advised Domenici to calm down, at which time he began to move aggressively in Manocchio’s direction, attempting to put his face closer to the officer’s.

After a brief struggle, Domenici was placed under arrest for disorderly conduct. Due to the adverse weather conditions and Domenici’s combative behavior, Manocchio chose not to conduct field sobriety tests on the roadway. While being read his rights, Domenici continued to swear at Manocchio.

Domenici would consent to field sobriety tests at the Johnston Police headquarters. Manocchio said Domenici lost his balance during the first and second tests. The officer then ended the tests for Domenici’s safety.

Domenici was subsequently charged with driving under the influence. He was later released with a summons to appear in Third Division District Court.

Opponents continue push against medical waste disposal facility

By JOHN HOWELL

For nearly four hours Monday, area residents told the Department of Environmental Management they won’t want, nor do they think Rhode Island should be the “guinea pig” for, a medical waste disposal operation that its proponents say is safe, will prolong the life of the landfill and generate electricity.

MedRecycler-RI of Manalapan, New Jersey, is seeking to operate a facility at 1600 Division Road in West Warwick that uses pyrolysis, a system akin to incineration but without using oxygen. It would have the ability to render 70 tons of medical waste into ash and gases daily.

The operation, where equipment is being assembled on the expectation of approval, would occupy 48,167 square feet (more than an acre) of a 549,607-square-foot industrial building abutting Interstate 95 to the north and the New England Institute of Technology and residences in East Greenwich to the south.

Nicholas Campanella, CEO of MedRecycler-RI,

said in an interview prior to the hearing that the company has already entered into a 20-year lease for the site and installed six turbines capable of producing 1.4 megawatts daily. The turbines would be powered by syngas, a byproduct of pyrolysis.

Campanella termed the operation a “small facility” that would be tested and monitored. Over the life of the lease, he projected MedRecycler-RI would pay West Warwick \$4 million in taxes. He also said it would produce 30 to 40 jobs and provide a needed service to the Rhode Island medical community.

Those benefits were not enough to convince the scores of people participating in Monday’s hearing, who cited fears over the health and environmental impacts of the operation and called on DEM to fulfill its role as a steward of Rhode Island.

“What kind of world do we want to leave our children?” asked Mary Madden, an East Greenwich resident and retired teacher. Madden said even though pyrolysis can break

down compounds, it will leave mercury, lead, arsenic and other proven carcinogenic elements.

Wendy Greene, who lives on the Warwick/East Greenwich line, said Techotherm operates three pyrolysis plants – two in South Africa and a third in Britain – but none are used for the disposal of medical waste. She also questioned the advisability of storing medical waste on the site for up to two weeks.

Campanella questioned those statements Tuesday. He said pyrolysis is being used in California and New Mexico but was vague on whether those sites were used to dispose of medical waste.

“The more I’ve learned, the more concerned I am,” said Denise Lopez, one of those who have organized opposition to the proposal. Also organizing opposition is Katherine Silberman, who said that as of Monday they had collected 1,484 signatures in opposition to the license. As was experienced by this reporter, she also noted that the 300-attendance limit to the Zoom hearing was quickly met and people were shut

out. Ninety minutes after it started, this reporter was able to join the meeting.

Nicki Armstrong questioned the economic viability of the company, noting that its annual report shows a \$2 million debt, doesn’t have a track record of making money yet is looking to borrow \$7.2 million in state bonds. She likened the “razzle dazzle” of the technology and prospect of reducing the carbon footprint of landfill disposal to the unmet promises of 38 Studios, suggesting the taxpayers would get left holding the bill.

On Tuesday, Campanella said the company would use “tax free and taxable bonds” amounting to \$10 million to finance the project. He said private equity, not the taxpayers, would hold the bonds.

Andrew Kaplan said that customarily, new technologies go through beta testing, but in this case this is version 1.0. He said pyrolysis is not being used in this country and there is no knowing what might be the adverse effects.

“I get the impression the blind are leading the blind,” he said.

The proposal advanced in 2019 has gained master plan approval from West Warwick. Last November, DEM granted an air quality permit, and in January of this year it issued a notice of intent to approve an operating permit.

The town of East Greenwich and the New England Institute of Technology appealed issuance of the air quality permit in Superior Court. At the direction of the court, the parties, including West Warwick, are in mediation.

West Warwick Town Planner Mark Carruolo said in an interview Monday that zoning of the site allows for the use. The next step in the process, he explained, is preliminary plan approval, which requires specifics of the project and required state permits. Final plan approval would be required before MedRecycler-RI could start operating.

Assuming those approvals are granted and there is an arbitrated agreement, Campanella said the facility could be operational in two to three months. He put the cost of the operation at \$20 million.

Campanella was asked about the 70 tons of medical waste that, according to the MedRecycler-RI application, would be shredded before incineration. He said it would come from Rhode Island and out of state. He could not say what proportion of the waste would be generated by Rhode Island medical facilities, but that it would be a majority. During the hearing, one of the opponents observed that the state landfill does not accept out-of-state waste, so in effect the state would be opening it borders to out of state medical waste.

Lopez was pleased by the turnout Monday, although disappointed that DEM did not heed the group’s warning that the 300 limit for Zoom attendees would close out untold numbers.

“This is just the beginning,” she said. “It validates the efforts to make this more public.” She said the MedRecycler-RI proposal “came in under the radar.”

Campanella counters claims the plan is being rushed through. He notes it has been the subject of DEM review since 2019.

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Johnston High School announces second quarter honor roll

The following students achieved honors for the second quarter at Johnston Senior High School.

High Honors

Grade 12

Kayla Aquilante, Joyce Armstrong, Gabriella Athaide, Elias Badway, Ian Michael Cabrera, Isabella Carbone, Alex Cavanaugh, Grace Centracchio, Patricia China, Trista Clark, Jessica Council, Nicholas Cronan, Maxwell El Hage, Adam Klein, Audry Mahony, Vanessa Melgar, Bailey Morin, Olaitan Olagundoye, Ava Pastore, Nicholas Petrillo, Melanie Privitera, Hannah Reedy, Sean Reth, Rafael Rivera, Brynn Roche, Justin Salvatore, Katelyn Simeone, Skyler Stone, Grace Thomas, James Ward, Caitlynn Zinni

Grade 11

Mohammed Abaherah, Joseph Acciaro, Benjamin Annicelli, Ashlyn Banno, Janet Clements, Glorianna Crichlow, Kelly Dargy, Alyson DelaRoca, Jullia Droukas, Gezzelle Fernandez, Dominique Ferrazzao, Victor Fragos, Mackenzie Hanna, Emily Iannuccilli, Isabella Johnson-Viola, Cassie Mangone, Ava Palma, Emily Patenaude, Shannon Pistocco, Candace Raposo, Denise Robinson, Joseph Thomas, Cameron Tum, Jacqueline Urizar

Grade 10

Allison Benoit, Gianna Brodeur, Melanie Carraro, Dariana Carrascoza, Vincent Chan, Charles Curci, Willson El Hage,

ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:

S	C	I	A	R	C	T	W	A					
C	A	N	C	E	O	H	I	S					
S	C	A	B	S	C	P	M	E	N	T	E	R	
T	U	R	B	I	N	E	P	E	R	S	O	N	A
P	L	E	A	D	E	D	A	R	M	O	R	E	D
P	A	R	E	S	E	S	S	E	L	E	C	T	S
U	P	I									A	H	A
P	E	G	A	S	U	S	B	A	S	E	M	E	N
C	A	N	D	L	E	D	G	A	N	T	L	E	T
S	C	O	R	I	A	E	A	N	C	H	O	V	E
C	E	D	E	D	C	A	B	T	U	B	E	R	
E	W	E	A	D	O	U	S	E					
S	S	R	R	H	O	M	E	D					

Emily Feinstein, Emma Homenick, Aliyah Hunt, Kyle Iannuccillo, Micheline Irons, Siera Jeetan, Emily Klein, Talia Laflamme, Maylin McAteer, Ariana Medeiros, Ava Melo, Jaylen Molina, Ayomide Olagundoye, Lilian Oliva Garcia, Preston Penn, Nicholas Rianna, Steffi Rotella, Derek Salvatore, Makayla Scuncio, Athena Sin, Cameron Vinstone, Nathen Zalisk, Catrina Zinni

Grade 9

Kevin Biscelli, Trinity Blondin, Macenzie Budenhagen, Kyomi Chiang Gonzalez, Sofia China, Alexia DiLorenzo, Ariana Iasimone, Lucio La Terra Bellina, Nina Lautieri, Peyton McClish, Elijahna Negron, Sebastian Orozco, Lana Salamone, Jacob Spinella, Branden Testa, Jayden Testa

First Honors

Grade 12

Ryan Allen, Kaylee Atkinson, Nicholas Carlino, Orlando Chavez, Abigail Clesas, Avah DeOliveira, Matthew Hassell, Justin Jackson, Caleb Lee, Stephanie Lindo, Kaitlyn Little, Isabella Marciano, Brooke Marcotte, Giuliana Melise, Jessica Mercado Anez, Lilli Mota, Michael Mousseau, Kylie Paliotta, Tara Paliotta, Derek Papa, Sofia Paris, Jonathan Pineda, Morgan Pouliot, Andrea Solorzano, Melanie Vessella, Thomas Zednik

Grade 11

Aliza Almonte, Victoria Butler, Morgan Carrier, Courtney Dias, Alexia Evangelista, Maya Ferreira, Nicholas Harrington, Charlene Hohlmaier, Rachel Ixcotoyac, Faith Khang, Milana Melvin, Manee Men, Allan Pineda, Jenna Poland, Sophia Ribezzo, Kasem Sasa, Ryan Schino, Lily Scuncio, Jared Trotter, Joseph Vento, Patrick Waldron, Danielle Warren

Grade 10

Michael Cepeda, Madison Dacosta, Valeria Gomez, James Guilmette, Lauren Hill, Aiden Lariviere, Elana Marfeo-Bellini, Jacob Muller, Natalia Munoz, Natalie Packer, Joshua Philbrick, Juliana Pires, Isabella Ragosta, Dylan Robbins, Justin Rogala, Phoenix Russell, Marlon Soto, Matthew Sou, Jackson Troxell, Kylie Viveiros

Grade 9

Santiago Aguilar, Emily Buddenhagen, Georgiana Cardullo, Elise Connors, Cameron Ferrera, Makaila Fosu, Serenity Gonzalez,

Gianna Halliwell, Chelsea Maranhao, Samantha Marcotte, Brendon Norris, Lexie Palma, Xavier Pol, Yandery Rodriguez, Diana Rosales, Raylin Santos, Christian Sonner, Carl Taglianetti

Second Honors

Grade 12

Tori Antunes, Sarah Bandoma, Robert Bellevue, Alisha Biswas, Sabastian Brooks, Sophie Cardullo, Talia Conti, Jeremy Council, Jazelyn Couture, Diana DeCosta, Raffaele Florio, Melissa Garofalo, Cody Giroux, Laila Harrington, Hao He, Jada Irons, Shahmeer Jamil, Jarred Lameiro, Gregory Manni, Victoria Marchesi, Bazal Masood, Ashley Mendoza, Joel Menezes, Sarah Monahan, Iyman Musa, Edward Natarano, Joyce Nsalambi, Gabrielle Nunez, Antonio Patrone, Mariela Quintanilla, Nicholas Reagan, Kevin Saker, Zachary Simonelli, Gabriella Thomas, Hailey Thomas, Olivia Tillson, Lawrence Vargas, Tori Viau, Landen Vincent

Grade 11

Amelia Akkaoui, Samantha Amaral, Abigail Andres, Alana Aucone, Brooklin Califano, Rebecca Clements, Elyssa Collins, Charley Davis, Kathleen DeLeon, Jenelle Fernandez, Sarah Gasbarro, Jose Gonzalez, Felix Guilloty, Shannon Hartley, Christopher LaPlante, Ayesha Laredo, Savannah Larivee, Cameron Mattson, Alicia McCoy, Carlos Monteiro, Jose Noriega, Edgar Pacheco-Ortiz, Alyssa Pascale, Iris Perez, Kelsey Phouthakoun, Rileigh Richard, Giana Ruotolo, Abigail Salas, Lexianna Santos, Ariel Shelly, Julia Sidoti, Joseph Silvia, Jake Souvannavong, Dariel Urena, Djocaelle Volcy, Hailey Weedon, Victoria Winsor

Grade 10

Ferlandi Aguilar Lopez, Emily Anderson, Mark Brouwer, Hailey Brown, Hannah Calabro, Samuel Cambranes, Kylie Caroselli, Haley Connors, Juliana Correia, Yohani Cortez, Enajah De La Cruz, Armando DeCosta, Antonio DeFalco, Samantha DiMaio, Briana Dominique, Linda Echeverria, Nicholas Flanagan, John Ford, Joshua Galeas, Stanley Garcia, Brandon Hall, Susana Huevo, Jada Irons, Hendria Konah, Gavin Lapan-Brayall, Thadeus Leomensah, Genesis Luna-Olivo, Mouhamadou Marone, Dylan Martins, Kelli-Lynn Miller, Dylan Moore, Elijah Odhiambo, McKayla Osinger, Emily

Pistocco, Kenneth Privitera, Tyler Renaud, Isabella Ribezzo, Anthony Rini, Janzel Roquez, Jaselle Santos, Sheyla Soto, Nicolas Viau, William Vizcaino

Grade 9

Lolaoluwa Alarapon, Willow Andrews, Jenna Aucone, Kalina Bonetti, Logan Brennan, Jael Cea, Michael Chavier, Raymond Cimino, Evan Correia, Julian Correia, Tru Crawl, Devin DeSanto, John DeRensis, Landon Faucher, Alex Fedorchuk, Steven Finegan, Owen Glushchenko, Riley Guenette, Jasmin Guerrero, Jonathan Guilmette, Angel Guzman, Logan Hemstreet, Syani Jimenez, Karen Lastor Rojas, Jethro Mensah, Gabriela Mercado, Jiana Mitsoulis, Jonathan Mota, Tyson O'Donnell, Abigail Patnaude, Sophia Pereira, Michael Perugino, Alessandra Pesare, Kaylee Poole, Hailee Quinn, Donavin Quinones, Michelle Recinos, Ariana Rivera, Shanna Scopelliti, Andrew Sia, Shylah Soto, Lena Torti, Arianna Velasquez

Third Honors

Grade 12

Kevin Almeida, Kendall Bernier, Stefania Cogean, Haley Gaunt, Akram Hassan, Jamilyn Holburn, Theodore Leomensah, Oliver Littlefield, Jacob Maibey, Samir Melgar, Simeon Paquette, Madeline Reyes, Kalexa Roper, Jhonny Valdez, Danielle Valenti, William Vincent

Grade 11

Abdullah Alam, Courtney Beaulieu, Phillip Constantini, Carprece Daigle, Ava Khoury, Desiree Morales, Kaelyn Porter, Malakai Quinones, Joshua Ramos-Ortiz, Alexis Rattray, Hunter Remington, Katie Rodriguez, Jeremy Urena, Kaylee Vanstone, Michael Vita

Grade 10

Stephanie Bruno, Kyle D'Alessandro, Sophia DiBiase, Ashley Galeas, Sarah Karim, Caleb Maloney, Jianilda Perez Figueroa, Taylor Powell, Shane Simeone, Parker Sylvia, Jenna Whitman

Grade 9

Isabella Barrett, Jacob Carr, Christopher Civetti, Landon Costello, Hannah Kelly, Devyn Lacasse, Lizzeth Lopera, Santiago Luna, Dylan Lussier, Isabella Maggiacomo, Jayla Mainey, Gregory Panarello, Michael Proulx, Jahaziel Rodriguez, Kenneth Smith, NeAri Vasquez



Watch Your MOUTH

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

WHEN BRUSHING DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ENOUGH

It is understandably frustrating to find out you have a cavity even though you brush and floss your teeth diligently twice a day. Brushing, however, may not be the issue. Eating sugary, starchy foods creates enamel-eating acid in the plaque on our teeth. When enough time between these types of snacks is not allowed, a much more acidic environment is created. Brushing after every single snack or meal may not be convenient, but rinsing your mouth with water (tap water is best because it contains fluoride) can be helpful. If you are going to brush your teeth after eating, be sure to wait at least 30 minutes so the helpful minerals stored in your saliva can have time to work.

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How RI avoided painful budget cuts

TALKING POLITICS



by
IAN
DONNIS

Last spring, when the pandemic began ripping through Rhode Island's economy, painful budget cuts to social programs seemed not just possible, but likely. Progressives warned about the long-term fallout from an "austerity budget," even as joblessness soared and business activity plummeted.

But here we are a year later, and Gov. Dan McKee has unveiled an \$11.2 billion placeholder budget that continues the approach of former Gov. Gina Raimondo (no broad-based tax increases) and former House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello (maintaining the phase-out of the car tax, at a cost of about \$140 million).

"It certainly is not a budget without sacrifices, but the worst that we had feared early on has not come to pass," Jonathan Womer, head of the state Office of Management and Budget, told reporters last week.

The difference maker, of course, is multiple rounds of federal stimulus. And McKee's first budget, coming just nine days into his administration, does not include any money from the gargantuan \$1.9 billion relief package signed into law this week by President Biden.

This windfall, combined with positive trends on the pandemic, make it a good time for McKee to be governor. And it points to how Rhode Island's budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 will likely be very different by the time when state lawmakers vote on it in June.

Taxing matters

While McKee and Raimondo had a famously distanced relationship, they appear to share an aversion to raising the state income tax on more affluent Rhode Islanders.

Supporters of a tax hike call this a matter of equity, and they say the well-to-do aren't paying their fair share. State Senate leaders tacked to the left on the tax issue, with progressives storming the chamber, but House Speaker Joe Shekarchi has remained cool to the concept.

Georgia Hollister Isman of RI Working Families expressed disappointment in McKee's approach, and said RIWFP is looking for the General Assembly to respond. But with federal money flowing into Rhode Island, the legislature may be unlikely to tinker with the tax rate.

A brightening outlook

Dr. Megan Ranney, an ER physician at Rhode Island Hospital, said the state is faring better with the pandemic now than she thought it would six or nine months ago.

"This is a much better place than I thought we were going to be in, for a couple of different reasons," Ranney said on Political Roundtable at The Public's Radio. "The first is, I never anticipated that we would have three effective vaccines approved by the FDA and actively being distributed by this point in the pandemic. The second is that these new vaccines that got out, we were worried as to whether the novel variants were going to evade the vaccines. And so far, it looks like they're doing a good job, certainly against that B1-7 variant from the UK, and possibly also against some of the other new variants. And then the third thing is, I think that our country finally started to take this seriously. And we saw the result of that over the last couple months."

Looking ahead, Ranney said: "I'm expecting that within three months ... If we continue to vaccinate at the rate that we currently are, we're going to see schools more fully opened, we're going to see greater safety in dining, we're going to start to see more indoor activities start to open up. And I think that by the time we get to summer, assuming that everybody goes out and gets vaccinated, when they get their chance, we're going to be really close to what we all remember normal as being."

But this is concerning

The comedian John Oliver had a characteristically pointed segment on his HBO show recently: pandemics are probably here to stay.

Dr. Ranney doesn't disagree.

"I do, sadly, think that pandemics are going to be much more frequent," she said on Roundtable. "You look at the past decade, and we've had H1N1, Ebola, Zika. Now the SARS-Cov virus, SARS, Cov-2 virus. I think that we're going to see more and more as a combination of climate change and the ease of global travel. Stuff doesn't stay put in one spot. And that's been one of the challenges since day one with this pandemic - this is a virus that crosses borders, whether they're borders between states, or borders between countries. It's really one of the reasons that Dr. Jha and I have made such a commitment at the School of Public Health to developing pandemic preparedness as a core function of the School of Public Health. And it's why we're teaching that pandemic problem-solving course right now. Because although we may be vanquishing, fingers crossed, this virus, we'd be deluding

ourselves if we think we're not going to get another one in a couple of years."

RI's big healthcare merger

Dr. Ranney, who has connections to Lifespan and Brown University, is an enthusiastic supporter of the recently announced plan for Lifespan, Care New England and Brown to create a unified academic health system.

Asked about it by guest panelist Ted Nesi, Ranney said: "I actually think that it is not just exciting, but necessary. If we're going to maintain any sort of local health care system, we need to go through with this merger. Lifespan and Care New England need to be one entity. Otherwise, we're going to be taken over from the north and from the south. I also think it's going to be really great for our ability to deliver population health. I think that we're going to be able to do things like ... having, you know, the ability to deliver care to populations that often get left behind, to invest in community health resources and delivery that somehow always get forgotten about, when you've got two health institutions that are constantly competing. And I think that ultimately, it's going to result in lower costs and better care for most Rhode Islanders."

Marijuana legalization

Rhode Island appears poised to legalize recreational marijuana this year, an auspicious time since it's not an election year.

Gov. McKee's budget proposal includes a plan to award 25 retail licenses a year, for the next three years. A fifth of the licenses are meant for minority business enterprises, and the start date for sales is April 2022.

The Rhode Island Senate has its own plan to introduce what it dubs as "a competitive, inclusive and equitable regulatory structure." Under the Senate plan, a Cannabis Control Commission would establish rules and vet applicants. Communities that don't want marijuana shops could opt out through voter referendum, and each city or town would be eligible for at least three retail licenses.

Harry & Meghan & Oprah

Kristen Meinzer, a royal watcher, offers some insights to NPR on Oprah's block-rocking interview with Prince Harry and Meghan, like why this interview happened now: "Well, I know a lot of people are trying to report this, especially in the U.K., as if this is an opportunistic thing. But, you know, they let the one-year period pass, the agreed-upon period with

the queen, where they began to separate themselves from the family and they had time to, you know, reconsider stepping back from their senior roles. And now that that one-year period has passed, they're allowed to tell their own stories. Up until now, they haven't been allowed to. For the past five years, everything has been through the filter of the firm. And now they can set the record straight on certain things. They can make clear where they were coming from. And I think it was a really smart move for them, partly because there's a lot of curiosity, and people are thirsty for this kind of content. But now that they have to support themselves, it's important that they, you know, put themselves out there in the best way they can ..."

Ian Donnis covers politics for The Public's Radio and can be reached at idonnis@ripr.org. You can sign up here for his weekly politics newsletter and follow him on Twitter @IanDon

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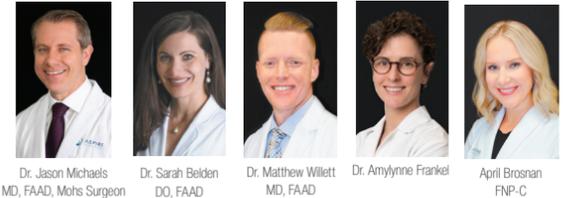


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'Now is the time'

Senators unveil 'entrepreneurial' plan to legalize recreational marijuana, governor includes own proposal in budget

By DANIEL KITTREDGE

In a significant step toward the legalization of recreational marijuana, two local lawmakers last week submitted legislation in the Rhode Island Senate that would establish a regulatory and tax structure for retail cannabis sales.

The bill – developed and cosponsored by Senate Majority Leader Michael McCaffrey (D-Dist. 29, Warwick) and Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Dist. 28, Cranston, Providence) at the request of Senate President Dominick Ruggerio – now heads to the Judiciary Committee for a hearing.

There are other considerations ahead, including finding agreement with new Gov. Dan McKee – who included his own legalization plan in his budget proposal for the coming year – and House lawmakers.

But if the process goes as hoped, Miller said, the first retail sales of recreational marijuana in Rhode Island could take place about a year from now.

"We now have a track record in other states of how to implement this responsibly ... The momentum in the majority on this legislation has only grown over the years on both the Senate and the House side," Miller told reporters during a conference call prior to the bill's formal introduction on March 9.

"Now is the time for it," McCaffrey added.

During the conference call, Miller and McCaffrey repeatedly described their approach to marijuana legalization as "entrepreneurial." They also cited the system in place in Massachusetts a model.

The bill would legalize the possession of up to one ounce of marijuana for Rhode Islanders 21 years of age and older. Homegrowing would be permitted, with a maximum of six actively growing plants and 12 plants total.

The legislation would establish a new five-member, full-time Cannabis Control



GREEN LIGHT?: Rows of marijuana plants fill large rooms, waiting to be harvested, at the Growth Industries warehouse off Jefferson Boulevard in Warwick last year. (Sun Rise photo)

Commission charged with overseeing a "regulatory structure similar to alcohol," according to a fact sheet provided by the Senate.

Recreational marijuana would be taxed at a rate of 20 percent, a figure that includes the state's 7 percent sales tax and a 3 percent local sales tax that would go to the community in which a retailer is located. The additional 10 percent would be a "special state sales tax."

Cities and towns would have the ability to opt out of the recreational sales system through voter referendum, according to a press release regarding the legislation. In doing so, however, communities "would forgo their opportunity to garner a three percent local tax collected at point of sale."

Miller and McCaffrey said cities and towns would retain the ability to regulate the location and hours of retail cannabis operations through local zoning ordinances, although they would not be able to impose additional fees or taxes.

"We want to provide cities and towns with the ability to opt-out, but we cannot allow an overly burdensome patchwork of regulation throughout our state," McCaffrey said in the release.

"We know from experiences in other states that less parochialism and lower fees leads

to greater transparency and a more competitive market. If a community wants to opt-out and forgo tax revenue that is one thing, but we also need to make sure the process is open and transparent."

The new regulatory system would provide for four separate kinds of licenses related to marijuana production and sales. A cultivator license would carry a fee ranging from a little as \$100 to \$20,000, while a manufacturer license would cost \$5,000. The retail license would be set at \$20,000, while a new classification, a testing license, would come with a \$5,000 fee.

"As this opens up, we're going to need a lot more testing of the product that's coming into the state of Rhode Island," McCaffrey said.

The same business entity would not be able to hold multiple classifications of license, according to McCaffrey and Miller, although principals could be shared among different companies.

An initial maximum of three retail sales licenses would be permitted for each community. Additional licenses would be available on a population-bases basis.

The senators also said they envision the state's existing medical marijuana dispensaries – currently three, but with six more expected to be licensed by year's end – being able to participate in the recreational sales system.

Miller highlighted the "social justice components" of the legislation, which include a new process for the free expunging of criminal records for marijuana-related charges.

Additionally, the fact sheet states that application and license fees would be directed toward a new Cannabis Equity Fund, "which will be used to provide technical assistance and grants to applicants from disproportionately impacted areas."

In a press release regarding the legislation, Miller said: "Cannabis legalization is a monumental shift in public policy that effectively creates a new economy. We want to ensure as many Rhode Islanders as possible have the opportunity to participate in this new economy. That is why we set low, tiered licensing fees and we are also calling for the creation of a

Cannabis Equity Fund to help individuals who have been directly and indirectly impacted by our past policy of prohibition."

He added: "Over the years, I have sponsored legislation and led commissions, and we have all learned from the experiences in other states. The approach we are taking is not just about tax revenue. It's about rectifying past wrongs and opening new opportunities. And it's about smarter drug policy. Prohibition clearly didn't work, and is next to impossible with the availability legal cannabis just over the state border."

McCaffrey said in the release: "Cannabis legalization is as much about reconciliation as it is revenue. The Justice Reinvestment prison reform initiative showed that policies of prohibition have disproportionately impacted communities of color, and I believe we must ensure any effort to legalize cannabis recognizes and rectifies those wrongs. Low barriers to entry, expungement reform, and broad access to programs designed to increase access for individuals and communities impacted by the failed War on Drugs are an important and necessary component."

The proposal differs significantly from former Gov. Gina Raimondo's legalization proposal, which proposed a state-run system similar to New Hampshire's approach to liquor stores.

During last week's call, the senators said they anticipate McKee – who has also voiced support for a more privatized approach – to be receptive to their legislation.

"This is very entrepreneurial, and we expect it to be received well with those who have that priority," Miller said.

McCaffrey's legalization plan, outlined as part of his budget proposal released last week, would provide for a similar tax structure – an effective tax rate of roughly 20 percent – and provide for the issuance of 25 retail sales licenses a year over three years. That would include five licenses in each year reserved for minority and women-owned businesses.

The governor's proposal would keep oversight of the new recreational sales system within the purview of the Department of Business Regulation and maintain "local control" over marijuana activity in respective communities. It also seeks the "long-term investment of cannabis revenues" in several key areas, including affordable housing and health equity.

McCaffrey said he and Miller worked to take the concerns of legislative colleagues into consideration during the development of the legislation.

Asked if he believes the proposal would pass the Senate if it went for a vote immediately, he said: "I would think that we would, but we want to get the best product we can to the floor."

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JHS dresses down to help The Tomorrow Fund

By TRISTA CLARK

Twice a month, Johnston High School holds a dress-down day for the staff to raise money for several charities. On these days, the staff can dress more comfortably and has the opportunity to donate to a charity.

The Student Council hosts a complimentary breakfast for staff that

includes various pre-wrapped treats and beverages for their generous donations.

Frequently, the student council raises money for the Tomorrow Fund, a nonprofit organization that raises money for families of children with cancer at Hasbro Hospital. Every year, the council raises hundreds of dollars for the Tomorrow Fund

and hundreds for other charities.

In the past, they have fundraised for Pancreatic Cancer Awareness, Special Olympics, Rachel Carson Memorial Scholarship, American Heart Association, and recently Brain Injury Awareness.

In the future, the student council plans to fundraise for Autism Awareness in April.

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401 Gives returns April 1 with ambitious \$1.5M goal

Rhode Islanders will have the opportunity to support any of more than 300 local nonprofits when 401Gives, the state's largest single day of giving, returns on April 1.

After exceeding the \$1 million mark for the effort's first-ever year, United Way of Rhode Island has upped the ante, setting a goal to raise \$1.5 million for nonprofits across the Ocean State in a span of just 24 hours.

"When we launched this new statewide giving campaign one year ago, the pandemic had just begun and I don't know that anyone could have predicted the ways our nonprofit community would respond to the needs we've seen over the past 12 months – and so much of that need still exists," said Cortney Nicolato, United Way's president and CEO. "Rhode Islanders have been incredibly generous, and 401Gives is a chance to channel that energy into a single day and support the organiza-

tions whose work means the most to you."

Participating in 401Gives is easy, both for Rhode Islanders and local nonprofits alike. For donors, the effort is conducted entirely through the unified online site, 401Gives.org, and via social media. The site allows nonprofits to share their stories and work, and collect donations through the secure fundraising platform, GiveGab. Each participating nonprofit has its own customizable page, to which gifts can directly be made. Donors can also search by organization name, community or zip code, and by cause.

Nonprofits who would like to take part in the day to raise funds for their work can sign-up right from the homepage of 401Gives.org. The deadline to register is March 15.

In addition to making the site and fundraising platform available to nonprofits, United Way

is also providing digital training and networking opportunities designed to help organizations make the most of their 401Gives campaign.

"This is all about our commitment to building nonprofit resiliency in our state to ensure they have the resources they need to grow, achieve, and sustain their missions," Nicolato added. "These are organizations doing great work right in our backyards, and when you support them, you're helping your neighbors and your community."

401Gives is powered by United Way and supported by lead sponsors Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI and FM Global. Additionally, The Rhode Island Foundation has stepped in to match \$50,000 in gifts to help accelerate donations. To learn more about 401Gives, visit 401Gives.org or email 401Gives@unitedwayri.org.



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ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

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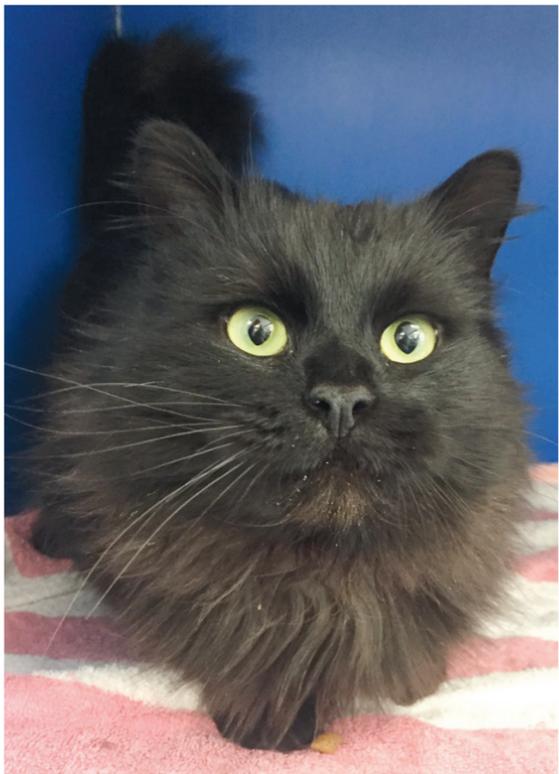


Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

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Dublin is a true beauty, inside and out! From her luxurious long black coat to her striking bright green eyes, you can't find a prettier girl than her! Dublin loves attention and is looking for a loving forever home. She is available for adoption at Pawswatch at the Community Cat Care Center in Johnston, RI. They are currently showing cats by appointment only so please contact them via email at communitycatcarecenter@gmail.com for an application and to make an appointment to meet this stunning girl! Whoever adopts Dublin will be truly lucky!



LUXURY DEATHTRAP

Luxury Deathtrap channels dystopian anxiety with new single 'Technogrip'

By ROB DUGUAY

Over the past 20 years, the amount of space technology has taken up in our everyday lives has grown immensely.

Cell phones have become handheld information hub centers, computer programs can do anything from studying viruses to streaming podcasts, and even some cars come with their own WiFi network.

While the convenience that comes with this progression has surely made our lives easier, the boundaries are becoming blurred and our limits are hard to see. This can put some scary, apocalyptic thoughts in one's head, and as a reaction to it, the Boston hard rock power trio Luxury Deathtrap unveiled the single "Technogrip" on Feb. 26.

The band has local ties to the area due to guitarist, vocalist and principal songwriter Nick McGowan being from Warwick.

McGowan and I recently had a talk about him becoming a teacher, growing from an acoustic duo to a full-fledged band, the theme behind the single and a live EP that's on the way.

ROB DUGUAY: You're currently based in Boston, where you went to grad school. Which university did you go to for your graduate studies, and what drew you to moving there from Warwick?

NICK MCGOWAN: I went to Emmanuel College for my master's degree in education. I ended up staying in Boston afterwards because I got a job as a teacher. I decided when I was an undergrad that I was going to go from studio art to teaching, and it happened in an organic way. I did go to the University of Rhode Island for my bachelor's in art and I played in bands the whole time. I did music as a side thing and then I got the opportunity to teach. I really liked it, so I decided to pursue it as a career.

RD: Luxury Deathtrap started out as an acoustic duo, but now it's a full-on rock trio with you on guitar and vocals, Amanda Stahle on bass and Eric

Hochwald on drums. How did you go about crafting this current amplified sound the band has? Have any bands played a major influence on Luxury Deathtrap's music?

NM: We knew that we wanted a big, heavy, '90s rock sound, and the acoustic duo was sort of a way to hash out the songs. I started playing bass and then I started playing the bass like a guitar, and then I figured I'd buy one, so I bought an acoustic guitar. I then wrote the songs on it and then I had another guy who played acoustic join me for some open mic nights around Boston and Providence as an acoustic duo. Then I figured that these songs would be better served in more of a rock trio, a la Nirvana and bands like Failure that have a big power chord and crunchy sound. That's how it happened.

RD: "Technogrip" has a theme that centers around a futuristic dystopian society where technology has become infused into man. What influenced this concept behind the single? Are you a big fan of films like "The Terminator" and "Blade Runner," and did they play a part in the vision behind it?

NM: Absolutely, I'm a huge fan of "The Terminator" and I don't think we're that far away from science fiction anymore. I think James Cameron has become a real visionary and I think eventually Facebook and Google are going to eventually merge to form something similar to Skynet, but that's a whole other topic. I had written the riff for it a while ago and I had the opening line, "Baby's got a microchip and it's too late to cut the cord," that really set the stage for the theme of the song. We've been sort of forced into using technology a lot more due to COVID-19, and I think it's an appropriate time to develop the single and craft the lyrics around a future dystopian society that's dependent too much on technology. I feel that we're on a slippery slope with how much tech has been infused in our lives and becoming one our synapses, that's where

I see it going and it turns into this whole sinister type of plot where surveillance comes into play and the microchip becomes a tracking device.

RD: This vision of technology and humanity joining together has actually been pushed by Elon Musk a lot, with him claiming that a microchip implanted in someone's brain can cure paralysis, blindness or other things. You just alluded to it, but what are your feelings on this? Does it freak you out at all?

NM: It freaks me out immensely because anything that doesn't belong in the body shouldn't be in the body, I don't care whose idea it is. If it's Bill Gates or it's Elon Musk, even if it's for medical advancement, I think that it's a slippery slope where it becomes more and more common and these things come with a whole other ethical issue as far as privacy goes. We need the ability to disconnect from technology, and that's not going to be possible if it becomes ingrained in our body. We all need the ability to disconnect from it and I don't see that ever happening if these implants become commonplace. I think it's a bad idea and unfortunately, I don't know if I'm just a pessimist or I watch too many movies, but I don't see it as a good thing.

It's a scary thing, it's a foreign object in your body. Not like a metal plate but it's something that can send and receive information which people can potentially hack into if it has a network associated with it. It's open to malicious intent, which is why it's a bad idea.

RD: Can we expect a full-length album or EP to follow up the single?

NM: We want to have this one as a one-off single and in the future we're looking to do a live EP, which is our next project. These are songs that have already been recorded but not live, so that's where we're at.

For more on Luxury Deathtrap, visit luxurydeathtrap.bandcamp.com, like the band on Facebook, or check it out on Spotify.

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

Facts, not emotion, must guide policy

In today's hyper-politicized, ultra-combative and increasingly divided United States of America, a core issue contributing to all three of those worsening conditions seems to be a fundamental disconnect between those who stand on either side of two guiding sets of principles.

On one side, we have those who live their lives largely guided by emotional ideology. On the other side are those who live their lives guided by a strict adherence to objective, observable facts. It goes without saying that this is a wholly inadequate generalization of a complex and diverse country, but we have to start somewhere to understand how our society got this way.

The argument over pending firearms legislation aimed at restricting specific aspects of gun ownership in Rhode Island – specifically the right to purchase vaguely-dubbed “assault weapons” and the right to own high-capacity magazines – poses an especially pertinent backdrop to examine our hypothesis and these two disparate sides at work.

On one side of the issue, you have legislators and members of the public who have seen observable evidence of the widespread horror that can be wrought on the innocent by unchecked possession and illicit use of firearms, specifically brought on by weapons that a militia member in 1776 could never have dreamed of. They see this as an obvious problem in need of a decisive solution.

On the other side of the issue are the proponents of the Second Amendment – a position that has remained largely unchanged for decades. This side sees all efforts to further curtail gun ownership as a direct threat to democracy and an infringement on their rights as American citizens. They believe that gun restriction actions of today will, in their view, inevitably lead to total confiscation of all guns and pave the way for a tyrannical government.

In this case, both sides have an unavoidable emotional involvement regarding the issue at hand. Pro-gun advocates fear for the loss of the ability to defend themselves. Those looking to prevent those who would cause harm from easily accessing firearms fear more killing of innocent men, women and children. Thankfully, there has been extensive analytical research conducted on the efficacy of restrictive gun policies in America.

But what may surprise you, especially if you are in favor of the proposed legislation banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, is that these specific measures have not actually demonstrated a significant decrease in violent homicide anywhere they have been implemented.

But before the Second Amendment advocates cheer too loudly, they should recognize that data does show, without a shadow of a doubt, that other gun restrictions such as universal background checks, waiting periods on purchases and preventing those with a history of domestic abuse or mental illness from acquiring firearms has had a tremendously positive effect in preventing violent deaths. In fact, the 13 states that have implemented universal background checks have an average of 58 percent fewer firearms homicides than those without – according to a Boston University study that looked at state police and FBI data from 2017.

The whole point of this is to show that, whether you're an advocate for creating more restrictive gun laws or you think any gun law is a step towards an Orwellian state, factual data and emotions must be separated in order to advance meaningful public policy.

As the data currently shows, restricting who can get a firearm rather than what firearm they can get is the crucial issue. Requiring a background check to find out if someone has a violent history or a mental illness that may make them dangerous with a weapon before they are able to purchase one is a tremendously effective policy. But data has not shown – to this point – that making AR-15s illegal will do much of anything regarding violent gun crime.

These two facts will likely cause some cognitive dissonance to those on both sides of the issue. They demonstrate that some gun legislation should be enacted based on good, scientific data – while other gun legislation may be the result of more emotionally based reasoning than solid, objective facts.

Having said all that, we can't ignore the repugnant tendency for those on the pro-guns side of this issue to berate, demean and even outwardly threaten individuals who stand on the other side – as most recently seen with emails sent to Rep. Justine Caldwell, a leading sponsor for the aforementioned legislation going through the Rhode Island House.

Nothing will undermine efforts of those who wish to see less restriction on their Second Amendment rights quite as quickly or effectively as a pro-gun advocate emailing a direct threat of violence via firearms to a legislator who – whether they're advancing the right policy or not to do so – is only trying to help prevent tragedies like we've seen all too often in recent memory.



OP-ED

Time to address COVID-related screening declines

By CORI CHANDLER

One hundred-sixty. That's the number of Rhode Islanders projected to die from colorectal cancer in 2021. It stands that well over half of these deaths will be a result of “non-screening.” These numbers reinforce the fact that screening saves lives.

As we mark one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the rippling impact of the virus on public health is becoming increasingly clear. One of the alarming new realities is that people are putting off potentially lifesaving cancer screenings, and we risk seeing an increase in late stage cancer diagnosis and deaths as a result. To help combat this, it's imperative we make it as easy and affordable as possible for men and women in Rhode Island to get screened for cancer.

As we enter Colorectal Cancer Awareness month, Rhode Island lawmakers are considering legislation which would do just this. Public health advocates and cancer survivors across the state have come together to urge lawmakers to remove patients' out-of-pocket costs for follow-up colonoscopies following a positive non-invasive colorectal cancer screening exam.

What does that mean? Let's talk it through:

Say you're over 45 years old, and per American Cancer Society guidelines, you're due for a colorectal cancer screening. It's been a tough year;

you've largely stayed home during COVID-19 and rather than scheduling a cancer screening in a doctor's office, you took an FDA approved at home test for colorectal cancer and received the scary news: an abnormal result. You immediately contact your doctor who orders a colonoscopy as a next step to the screening process. Under current state law, insurance is not required to completely cover the costs of this follow-up colonoscopy as a preventative screening test, and you received a bill. But, the American Cancer Society Colorectal Cancer Screening guidelines state that a follow-up colonoscopy in this situation should be completed without any cost to the patient as an integral part of the preventative screening process.

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States among men and women combined, but it's a preventable disease. According to the CDC, 68 percent of colorectal cancer deaths could be avoided with timely screening. However, we also know that financial concerns are one of the top barriers to receiving appropriate cancer screenings.

The numbers are alarming: Due to COVID-19, the number of colonoscopies nationwide declined nearly 90 percent in April 2020 from the previous year, which could result in an additional 4,500 deaths from colorectal cancer in

the next 10 years.

It's imperative that we do whatever possible to remove barriers to screenings, while also acknowledging that we are not yet clear of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, there are several home-based colorectal cancer screening options that are effective and easily accessible. Fear of a financial burden resulting from a follow-up colonoscopy should not be something a person has to be concerned with as they proactively take care of their health.

This legislative session, lawmakers have a commonsense opportunity to make a small change to

regulation that could have far reaching, life-saving results.

In recognition of Colorectal Cancer Awareness month and in an effort to encourage a return to health screenings after a sharp pandemic related drop off, we urge Rhode Island lawmakers support H5432 and S383 to eliminate cost-sharing for preventative colorectal cancer screenings for ages 45 and over, including follow-up colonoscopies.

Cori Chandler is the Director of Government Relations for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) in Rhode Island.



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SUN RISE SCOOPS

By MERI R. KENNEDY

Focus on mental health

NAMI Rhode Island is the state affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. It offers an array of education and training programs and services for individuals living with mental illness, family members, schools, providers, and the general public. These programs draw on the experience of individuals with mental illness and family members who have learned to live well with their illnesses and are eager to help others, as well as the expertise of mental health professionals and educators.

Programs are free and virtual. For more information on programs or becoming a volunteer, visit namirhodeisland.org, call (401) 331-3060 or email info@namirhodeisland.org.

RI Housing offers loans

RI Housing's Hardest Hit Fund Rhode Island (HHFRI) program is offering zero-interest, forgivable loans to eligible Rhode Island homeowners

who became unemployed or underemployed 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 housing.com/hhfri.

Bunnies Galore

Free craft and activity kits for children are available at the Mohr Library. Stop by the library to pick up one, or email Ms. Meri meri@mohrlibrary.org or call 401-231-4980 to reserve it.

Be Kind RI

Participants can sign-up to receive free text message requests and provide food pick-up and delivery to fight hunger.

During this pandemic, Rhode Islanders have suffered deep losses. We've lost friends, family and neighbors to COVID, and continue to watch as many are still struggling

with its lingering effects. We have masked over our smiles, socially distanced ourselves away from hugs, skipped critical rites of passage, and communed through one Zoom too many. Yet this week, Rhode Islanders have a new tool to fight pandemic despair and increase happiness through social connection.

Be Kind RI, a technology platform developed by Nesterly Inc., works similar to a dating site to pair volunteers with neighbors who need them by utilizing text alerts. Brought to Rhode Island through an innovative partnership between Age Friendly Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and Family Service of Rhode Island, Be Kind RI is first tackling the hunger crisis in our state, as more than 25 percent of Rhode Islanders experience food insecurity.

Here's how it works: volunteers register, define where and when they can lend a helping hand, and receive a text to pick up groceries for a nearby neighbor in need from a local food pantry or grocery. Be Kind RI allows volunteers to accept the request or take a pass - no hard feelings! Projects that are passed go to the next volunteer on the text/SMS list. Unlike other volunteer programs, this service is 100 percent free to use and hyper-local, so Rhode Islanders can opt to do a service project in their neighborhoods, or a nearby one.

Be Kind RI is currently recruiting 200 volunteers and will launch food assistance support for seniors and others at higher risk for COVID during the week of March 15.

For more information and to register, visit be-kindri.org.

Looking for '78 Blizzard photos

The Johnston Historical Society is looking for photos from around the Blizzard of 1978. Anything that includes recognizable backgrounds in Johnston, such as businesses, landscapes, street signs, etc., can be sent to Johnston-Historical1825@gmail.com.

Johnston Senior Center offers services

If you need any help with heating or housing 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.

Making the grade

Congratulations to Johnston resident, Julia Russo, for making the dean's list at the University of Connecticut this past semester.

News from the Mohr Memorial Library

Mohr Library is currently accessible to the public during reduced hours but continues to offer curbside pickup and other services during its regular schedule. Services include curbside delivery; reference help by phone, email or in person; recommendation lists and one-on-one help to explore interests in reading, viewing and listening; printing from home or your device; use of computers and copier; and a free notary public, evenings and Saturdays by appointment.

Johnston Community Library Book Club

Kids ages 8 to 10 can meet online, by invitation, Thursdays at 3 p.m.

to hear readings and discuss books with library trustee and volunteer Denese Carpenter.

Interested in other times or want to suggest a book for discussion? Let them know.

Parents can learn more about sign-up procedures by contacting Library Director Jon Anderson. Email info@mohrlibrary.org or call 401-231-4980, ext. 7.

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.

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.

Zoom-ba is here

MS Dream Center offers 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 Monday's at 1 p.m. and Saturday's 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 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.

SunriseScoops@aol.com. Photos in jpg format are accepted and news can include community events, promotions, academic news and nonprofit events as well as virtual 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.



Attention Town of Johnston Pet Owners

Dog Licenses

Dog Licenses are available as of April 1st and can be obtained during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays) at the Office of the Town Clerk, Johnston Town Hall, 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 (Rabies Certificate required). The License fee is \$5.00

Vincent P. Baccari, Jr.,
Town Clerk

3/19/21



Request for Proposals Town of Johnston

Comprehensive Plan Update

Town of Johnston is requesting bids for a Comprehensive Plan Update. Bid specifications are available at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office located at 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 beginning March 19th, 2021 weekdays between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Specs are also available on the Town's website at www.townofjohnstonri.com. Sealed bids will be accepted until 10:00 am, April 8th, 2021 at the Johnston Town Clerk's Office at the above address and will be opened publicly at that time via a virtual meeting using the Zoom meeting platform. The virtual opening can be attended by going to <https://zoom.us/> and clicking on "Join a meeting". Enter the following meeting information:

Meeting ID: 858 6531 3535

Password: 873578

If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone: 833 548 0282 US Toll-free- 877-853-5247(Toll Free)

The Town of Johnston reserves the right to reject any or all responses or parts thereof, to waive any informality in them, or accept any bid deemed in the best interest of the Town. The Town of Johnston will offer interpreters for the hearing impaired provided the request is at least three (3) days prior to scheduled bid opening by calling (401)553-8830.

Joseph Chiodo, CPA
Finance Director

3/19/21

Office of the Town Clerk
Town of Johnston
1385 Hartford Avenue
Johnston, Rhode Island 02919
(401) 351-6618

Notice is given pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 3-5-17 that the Johnston Town Council, sitting as the Liquor Licensing Commission under Title 3 Chapter 5 of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended, shall hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, April 12th, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Municipal Court Building, 1600 Atwood Avenue, Johnston, RI. Due to the Governor's Executive Order related to the pandemic, this meeting can also be attended virtually by using the Zoom virtual meeting platform. To attend virtually, visit <https://zoom.us/> and click on "Join Meeting". Enter the following information:

Webinar ID: 857 5768 4873

Password: 568750

If you do not have a computer or mobile device-Dial in by phone: 888 788 0099 (Toll Free) - 833 548 0276 (Toll Free)

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider the following application for a liquor license.

Applicant: Angela Fried
Business Name: Fried Enterprises, Inc d/b/a Mr. Biggs Saloon
Transfer From: Fried Enterprises, Inc d/b/a Mr. Biggs Saloon
Location: 1463 Atwood Avenue Johnston, RI 02919

License Type: Class BV Full - Liquor License- Transfer of Stock

Remonstrants are entitled to be heard before the granting of the license.

Per Order: Johnston Town Council
Robert V. Russo, Council President

Individuals requesting interpreter service for the hearing impaired must notify the Office of the Town Clerk seventy-two hours in advance of the meeting date.

3/19, 3/26/21

JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD MEETING AGENDA Thursday, March 25th, 2021 at 6:30 PM VIA Video Conference

Via Computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81863924073?pwd=ZW9sc25uN2pWb1B0aytldkM4bmhRZz09>

Via Telephone: 833 548 0276 or 833 548 0282 or 877 853 5247

Meeting ID: 81863924073

Passcode: 555597

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/>

The Johnston Zoning Board of Review will hold its regular monthly meeting on March 25th, 2021 at 6:30 pm, by **ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE**. Persons interested in the following petitions are encouraged to join the Video Conference. If you require accommodations call the Zoning Office 48 hours in advance of the meeting at (401) 231-4000 ext. 4117. Persons utilizing TDD equipment may contact the Town through "Relay Rhode Island" at 1-800-745-6675. The agenda for the evening will be as follows, subject to change:

Case to be heard at 6:35 PM

File 2021-8 - Petition of Hartford Solar Holdings, LLC Owner/Applicant for Reservoir Avenue, AP 43/54 Lot 256/30, 59, & 75, zoned B-3 & R-40. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit to construct a ground-mounted solar system.

Case to be heard at 6:45 PM

File 2021-9 - Petition of Mohamad Yaser & Rhonda Sasa, Owner/AP 24 Lots 9, zoned R-15. The petitioner is seeking a Dimensional variance to create 2 lots that do not conform to lot requirements and a Use Variance to Construct a Two-Family Dwelling on one of the newly created Lots.

Case to be heard at 6:55 PM

File 2021-10 - Petition of Richard Delfino Jr. & Debra M., Trustees, Owner/Applicant for 94 Simmonsville Avenue, AP 29 Lots 19, zoned R-20.

The petitioner is seeking a use variance from Section 340-8 subsection 2 Number 4 - Multi-family dwelling and a dimensional variance to Section 340-9 to construct a Triplex Dwelling.

Case to be heard at 7:05 PM

File 2021-7 - Petition of Justice Realty, LLC, Owner/Applicant for 985 Hartford Avenue, AP 22 Lots 690, zoned R-15. The petitioner is seeking a Use Variance from Section 340-8 subsection 2 Number 4 multifamily housing, dimensional variance to Section 340-9. Table of Dimensional Regulations and a variance to Section 340-71, Expansion of a non-conforming use to construct two additional units for a total of 12 units.

NOTE:

If a Case has not been called for a hearing by 10:30 p.m., the Board, at its discretion, may continue the Case to a subsequent or a special meeting.

The Zoning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at ClerkBase on the Town's web page or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Building Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.

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

3/12, 3/19/21

■ Fellela

(Continued from page 1)

second one. I did hear the second one with the Pfizer, you might get a reaction, I've heard a few people in town mention that, but I guess it all depends."

She added that those who are reticent about the vaccine should receive it, as more inoculations will allow the state to get closer to a sense of normalcy.

"At least we're going to have to wear the masks for some time, I think I will anyway just to be safe, but I feel the more people that get [the vaccine], the better off all of us will be," Fellela said. "The businesses can open up, the restaurants with the spring right upon us [and] summer, it would be great to see the businesses back to where they were."

While discussing the upcoming budget talks, Fellela endorsed the concept of marijuana legalization. "I really think I'd be for it," she said, noting that it could drive revenue to the state like it has in neighboring Massachusetts.

"I know my mayor here in town, he's not a fan of it because there's so many different things they have to talk about as far as people

driving with it," Fellela said. "People may be under the influence, especially if they're driving a town truck or state truck, so I think we do have to do the right process of legalizing it. We have to go through the right channels with all the committee hearings and hearing all the pros and cons, but there is some good revenue."

Fellela said she thinks the American Rescue Plan stimulus is going to help plenty of Johnston residents, many of whom she added have seen their small business affected or closed by the pandemic.

"The coffee shops I miss, some of them on the east side over there that have closed," Fellela said. "I give credit to people that have tried new things. I see one of our local persons in town that owns a restaurant has just opened up a food truck, so you've got to think outside the box. I think by thinking outside the box like that, you can make things better for the state."

The state has begun its budget process, and Fellela hopes the town will be level-funded yet again. She did acknowledge, though, that it will be a "tough budget cycle" and predicted that committees are going to work deep into the morn-

ing on some nights to find solutions.

"I think getting the stimulus helps. I get emails daily about folks being on the verge of rent, they can't pay their rent," Fellela said. "The small restaurants, so many little shops have closed. A lot of people, day-care centers in the beginning were hit really hard."

With the pandemic reaching its one-year anniversary, Fellela guessed that plenty of the changes made around the state during 2020 will remain in effect for the foreseeable future. She pointed to the ability to work from home for many employees and the virtual extinction of snow days as distance learning has altered the education landscape.

"So many people are working from home now where it's feasible," Fellela said. "People can actually do that, work from home, especially if you're a young family where it could save you on childcare and that end of it. I think we're going to see that, more technology ... We can do our meetings at home. Even school. Now there's no more snow days. They can actually use their computers and work from home, I think we're going to see that."

Fellela also touched on Women's History Month this March, noting that there are more than 50 women working between the House of Representatives and Senate in the Ocean State. Fellela, the longest-tenured member of the Johnston delegation, said, "we've really got a good group of women this time around [with] a lot of different views."

She also credited former Gov. Gina Raimondo, whose Governor For A Day program invited girls from around the state to write essays and participate in state government. Fellela said Raimondo's ascension from state treasurer to governor and then U.S. commerce secretary shows young women that anything is possible.

"I think young girls can see that, and apply for those type of things or work towards that type of goal if they feel that would be good for them to do," Fellela said. "That Governor For A Day, I participated in that program a few times with the governor, I think it taught them their skills as far as writing, but also speaking, and that is a big thing, I think, for young women today, and it's a proud moment for our state."

OBITUARY

Robert D. McCrave

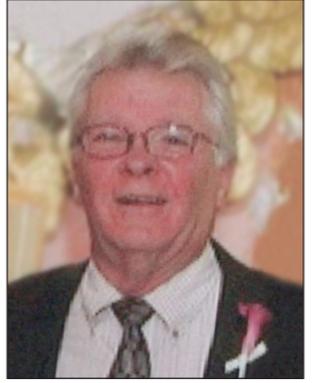
Robert D. McCrave, 78, passed away, Tuesday, March 16, 2021. He was the beloved husband of Carol A. (Comella) McCrave.

Born in Providence, he was a son of the late Vincent G. and Veronica H. (Kudzma) McCrave. Mr. McCrave was a golf apparel salesman for 30 years before retiring in 2007 from Carnustie Golf Apparel Co. He has been a Johnston resident for 42 years and a member of the Valley Country Club in West Warwick.

In addition to his wife Carol, he is survived by his son Robert D. McCrave, II (Michael Boyle) of Chelsea, MA and his daughter Meridith A. Gardella of Johnston. He was the grandfather of Kiersten and Alec Gardella and brother of Vincent G. McCrave, Jr. of Florida and Veronica Baker of Arizona.

His funeral and burial will be private.

For Online Condolences visit, TuckerQuinnFuneralChapel.com



Advertise Today
732-3100

■ Murphy

(Continued from page 1)

and ethnic communities, low income communities," the NCCRT website says. The organization is committed to breaking down barriers to screening.

Massachusetts has the highest colon cancer screening rate, already screening over 76 percent of the eligible population. According to Dr. Murphy, Rhode Island is not far behind, with about 75 percent of

the eligible population screened.

Some risk factors for colon cancer include obesity, physical inactivity, low-fiber diets and smoking. "All modifiable risk factors that we can work towards eliminating," Dr. Murphy said.

It is recommended that people aged 50 and over regularly screen for colon cancer. However, Dr. Murphy says those with genetic predispositions are screened starting as young as 15 years old.

She also explained that current health guidelines

advocate for the recommended screening age to drop to 45 years old, although not all insurance companies have caught on to the change.

Patients have options for initial screenings.

There are stool-based tests, like Cologuard, that can detect genetics to determine a predisposition of the disease. There are also FIT-DNA tests, which can also determine if the patient has antibodies.

Then, there is the "gold standard" of colon screenings, accord-

ing to Dr. Murphy – the colonoscopy. She says the colonoscopy is both diagnostic and therapeutic, maybe not for the patient, but for specialists to fully assess any polyps that are found. She says that polyps can easily be removed, but it's important for those to be found early.

However, Dr. Murphy has also found increased stigma when talking about colonoscopies.

"For something that is largely preventable, it is something people are nervous about," she

said. "The more we talk about it and make it a norm in the conversation, the more we standardize it. The more we ask these questions and talk about it, more people will be comfortable getting screened and encouraging family members to do the same."

Dr. Murphy spoke about Chadwick Boseman, an actor who died due to stage-four colon cancer late last year. He was only 43.

"That really drives it home for some people.

He was the Black Panther; he was a superhero. We just want to keep everyone healthy."

Dr. Murphy also explained that because of COVID, people are putting off routine doctor appointments and screenings, but she wants to emphasize that "hospitals are safe, we follow all the guidelines, and it's time to refocus on individual health."

"There can be significant ramifications in the future," she said, "so it's important to get screened now."

■ School

(Continued from page 1)

remained low throughout the year. He provided updated numbers through March 10 during Tuesday's meeting, with six of the eight schools mentioned observing zero new cases over the past week. Johnston High School and Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School have reported fewer than five cases.

No school in town saw any new teacher cases over the past week, and only the high school has cumulatively seen more than 10 positive results in educators since September. For total student cases, Ferri has had the most with between 30 and 34, with the high school in second at 25 to 29. All other schools have reported fewer than 20.

DiLullo said about a third of middle and high school students have opted for distance learning, and their hybrid model will remain in place until the end of this year. The elementary schools have moved back to five days a week of in-person learning.

The plan, he said, is to

have all students back in the hallways by fall 2021.

"We want to ensure all students and the families will be safe during this process," DiLullo said of the testing period. "This will take us through the month of April, keeping in mind there is a week of vacation in April. We are all in agreement the goal is to get all of the students back to school as soon as possible."

There was little commentary from the board before voting. Vice Chair Joseph Rotella said there was "quite a bit to digest, but [DiLullo] spelled it out pretty quickly."

Chair Bob LaFazia asked for some more guidelines from the Rhode Island Department of Education regarding the increase in busing capacity and relaxed restrictions in the classroom.

"The possibility of increasing to 75 percent, that would help us greatly in terms of getting kids to school," DiLullo said. "It would be good to get some relief on distance in the classroom with older students, those classes can be very close together, and at the elementary level, we are at the

3-foot range already."

In response to one question in the chat section of the Zoom, DiLullo said the district would like to get seniors back in school before the end of the year so they can take advantage of

some of the potential events and experiences before graduating.

"We want to get our seniors back so they can be together," he said. "We want to start planning activities for seniors. The administration at the

high school is looking at numbers to accommodate them in every class."

The committee approved the plan on a vote 4-0 vote, as District 3 representative David Santilli Sr. was not present at the meeting.

Obituaries

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By JENNIFER COATES

The early-afternoon sun streams through the windows of Little Angels Daycare, casting a soft, diffused light on a small group of children who are settling in for their daytime nap. Snuggled in their own blankets, these little boys and girls have already had a busy morning and a good rest is just what they need to re-energize for the next half of their activity-filled day.

Overseeing the infants, toddlers, and pre-K children at this sweet childcare center in Johnston is a team of attentive, patient, trained, experienced and carefully chosen teachers. Each staff member has been hand-selected by Little Angels' owner Carol Breault and the center's administrator, Sarah Tejada. They know how important these teachers are to the children into whose hands they have been trusted, and they take this trust very seriously.

Little Angels has been the life work of Breault and the passion of Tejada ~ together, along with their dedicated staff, they make a formidable team. They are devoted to the children who attend this daycare, and most especially to their families with whom they have built lasting relationships. In Carol's words: "These are like our own children. You have to have a passion for this work, and we do!"

Little Angels Daycare is a place where play, fun, age-appropriate activities, stimulation, and experiential learning take place every day. The center, which has Bright Star's coveted ratings, has worked tirelessly to create a secure, safe, colorful, joyful, and thoughtful environment for the over 60 children who are licensed to attend. Great effort has been made with every decision, from the state-mandated curriculum goals to the age-appropriate toys, books, and activity centers, to the to the outdoor playground which will be well-used as spring approaches. This is a place with



It is a typical, activity-filled day at Little Angels Day Dare as a group of busy preschoolers are engaged in some fun gross motor play (using their large muscles!) This kind of activity and movement is always incorporated into the daily schedules of this progressive childcare center in Johnston.

predictable routines where lots of love abounds.

During these challenging days, Carol and Sarah have done everything to accommodate those seeking childcare, beginning with their new "Referral Program." In this program, families who refer other families can receive up to 20% off their own tuition.

Also, if you work part-time, Little Angels is now offering a part-time program for new enrollees (while space is available) – call for hours and rates! Finally, newly enrolling families will receive ½ off registration and six months of free live-web camera access. Now is the time to spread

the news to friends and family who are seeking dependable and enriching childcare.

The staff of Little Angels want to assure current and incoming families that they are extremely vigilant in upholding all the CDC and Department of Human Services guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid. Your child's safety is always their first priority.

Little Angels Day Care is located at 83 Waterman Ave., minutes from Routes 6 and 295. You can reach them at 401-349-0711 or visit their website at www.littleangelsri.com. Follow them on Facebook for all the latest, updated news!



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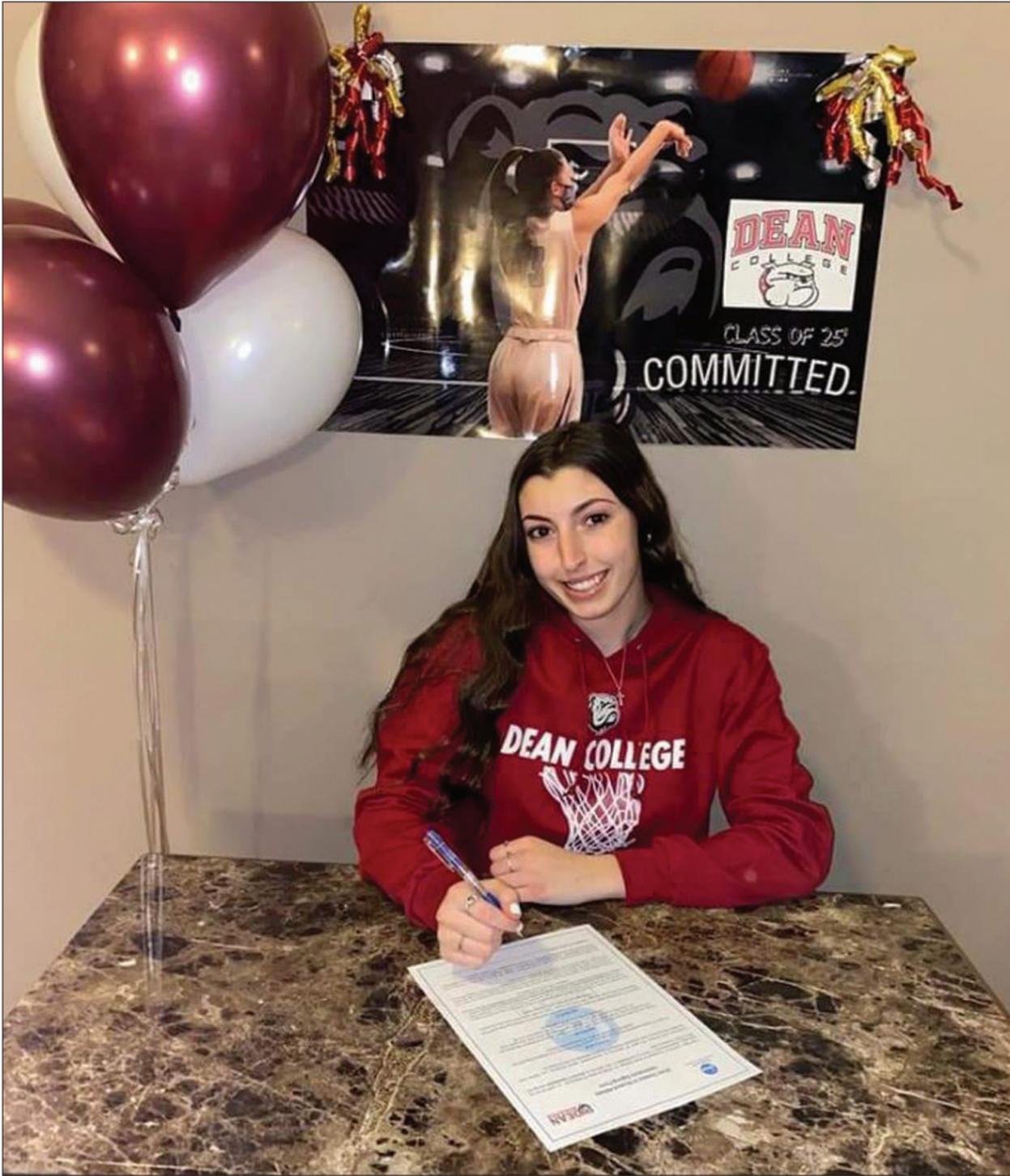
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Sports



MAKING IT OFFICIAL: Johnston senior basketball player Tori Viau signs to play for Dean. (Submitted photo)

Viau commits to Dean College

By ALEX SPONSELLER

Johnston senior basketball player Tori Viau recently made her college decision official as she committed to continuing her career at Dean College.

Viau was the Panthers' top scorer this past winter season and was one of the best shooters in the state during her time in Johnston. She is excited to commit to another four years of playing the game she loves. "I'm so excited, it's definitely a

big step. I always wanted to compete at the next level. I love playing the sport so to know that I have another four years to play, it is exciting. It's exciting to continue to learn

VIAU- PAGE 15

Storylines heading into football season

Last week I mentioned in my column that I would be talking a lot of football the next few weeks. So, here I am, ready to talk some football. This week, I feel like it is important to set the table for this season. Next week I will focus more on predictions, but let's use this week to get our feet wet and to get a feel for the local landscape.

Unlike most years, the pandemic has given us a wonky schedule. It will be shortened, starting in March. Teams have a small window for preseason activity, which seems a bit unfair

My pitch



by ALEX SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR
ALEXS@RHODYBEAT.COM

considering the season is starting much later than the norm. When I say it's unfair, I am not pointing a finger saying that the teams have

PITCH- PAGE 14



AWARD WINNER: Johnston's CJ Ragosta this past season. (Photo by Alex Sponseller)

RIBCA reveals award winners

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Rhode Island Basketball Coaches Association revealed its All-Division and All-State award winners for boys hoops and many locals made the list. Here is a look at the

named that were honored by the RIBCA: Pilgrim's Tyriek Weeks and Bishop Hendricken's David Lynch were named First-Team All-State, while Hen-

RIBCA- PAGE 14

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RIBCA

(Continued from page 13)

dricken's Justin Perez and Johnston's Thomas Zednik made the third team.

Hendricken's Cam Hughes was named the Division I All-Tournament MVP while Lynch and Perez made the All-Tournament team. Cranston East's Jamari Bell was named to the Division I Central First Team while teammate Nick Ricci made the second team. East's Kevin Pinheiro was named to the third team.

Lynch and Perez made the Division I South First team while Hughes and Adres Andujar made the second team for the Hawks. Hendricken's Azmar Abdullah was then named to the third team.

Johnston's Derek Salvatore and Zednik were named to the Division II Northern First Team along with Cranston West's Khalil Badru also made the first squad. Johnston's Hunter Remington was named to the Division II North Second Team along with West's Mike Paquette.

CJ Ragosta was named to the third team for the Panthers while Joe Ragosta was named to the third team for the Falcons. Pilgrim's Peter Kay and Weeks made the Division II South First Team along with Toll Gate's Francisco Lopez. Pilgrim's Kenny Rix and Jared Reminder were named to the second team along with Toll Gate's Liam Hart, while Cam Grilli and Shawn Nolette made the third team for the Pats and Titans, respectively. Pilgrim's Matt Fontaine was named the Division II South Coach of the Year.

Pitch

(Continued from page 13)

been treated poorly, it is just the typical COVID-19 ripple effect that has dealt these teams a tough hand. It will be interesting for sure, but let's take a look.

In Warwick, two teams will be ready to defend titles in Bishop Hendricken and Pilgrim. For Hendricken, it will be interesting to see how things play out with a new starting quarterback. Tom Comella was the team's signal caller the previous two seasons, but now he is gone to play for Division II Stonehill with his brother Nic, who will also be leaving a pretty big hole on the defensive side of the ball.

Hendricken will also have a new offensive line and will also be working without their star playmaker in Angel Sanchez. He also graduated last spring and is playing prep ball. Pointbeing, this team will have a new look, especially on the offensive side of the ball.

However, the state's most dominant force in Jason Onye will be ready to go on the defensive line. Onye, the Notre Dame-commit, will likely be even better than he was last year, which seems like ages ago. The Hawks also return Andres Andujar in the defensive backfield for one last ride before leaving for Bentley in the fall. Of course, head coach Keith Croft and his staff are a well-oiled machine. Hendricken will have plenty of tough competition in Division I and as I said, will likely have some growing pains early on offensively. Defensively though, it's hard to not be impressed.

The Pats will have a new look on both sides of the ball, having graduated over 20 seniors. Pilgrim will have almost an entirely new starting lineup on each side, including a new quarterback in Connor Widmer.

I swung by a practice last week to touch base with the team and get a feel for how things were going, and one thing is for sure: They have committed to Widmer. That is a great decision in my opinion, make it clear who the new signal caller is and start building around him. Mike Borges turned into one of the best quarterbacks in the state last year and was arguably the best in Division III. The quarterback is the most important position in the sport, so to commit early on is a good way to create some stability moving forward, especially when the team is largely new.

As a junior, this will also be a big year in his development as well. If he can put it all together and rise to the occasion, the Pats will be sitting pretty next year when he is a senior. It is tough to truly gauge where this team is at since the majority of it is brand new. But that's what makes it fun. I am interested to see if and how this team returns to the top. The defending champs will have their hands full, not to mention that it has had an irregular offseason.

Cranston West has reached the Division I Super Bowl the past two seasons and have come up short against North Kingstown.

West is another one of our teams that will head into 2021 with a new starting quarterback as Cam Alves will be joining the Comellas at Stonehill. Although West lost a handful of key seniors, it has been a pretty deep roster for the past couple years and I don't expect a drop off from the Falcons this upcoming season. With Brennan Stetson and Kris Degaitas returning on offense, the Falcons should once again have plenty of speed and athleticism to work with.

Not to mention they have had one of the toughest defensive units in the state in recent years as well. At the high school level, toughness and aggression can be such an advantage on the defensive side of the ball, and regardless of who lines up for West, that will be their brand.

East will be a bit of a wild card in Division I this season. Much like the boys basketball team in the winter, the Bolts had one of the youngest lineups last season and this year will be a big test to see where they're at.

Will the youngsters learn from a down 2020 to take a step forward? Will they realize they still need one more year of seasoning before competing with the top clubs? This East team is still pretty young, but with so many seeds planted last fall, it will be exciting to see which ones grow. This is not an official prediction, but don't be surprised if we see quarterback Ben Harding and wideout Tyler Pinckney emerge as a solid duo.

Lastly, speaking of another young rising team, the Johnston Panthers will be poised to take a big step forward. Some felt that 2019 would be the year that they saw big improvement, but they walked away with just one win. So sure, to expect a championship would probably still be a little premature.

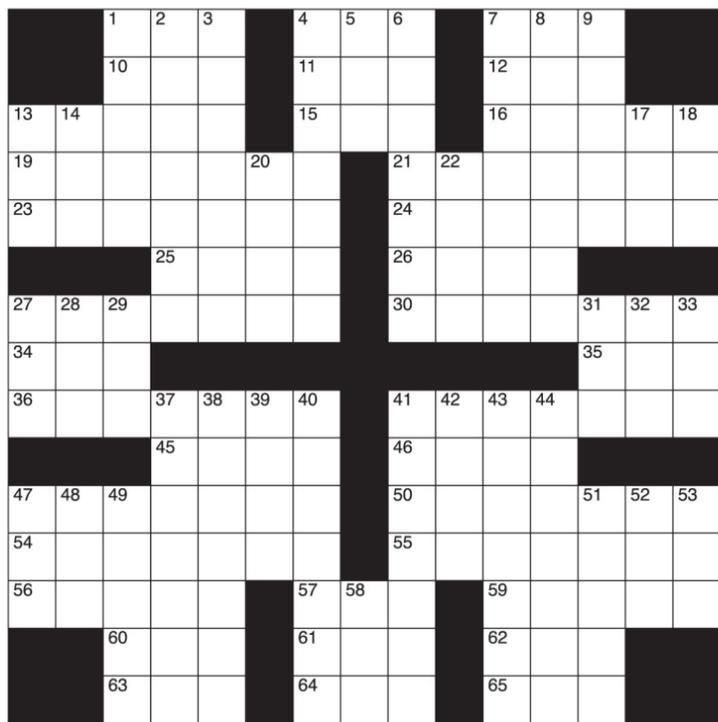
But with quarterback Hunter Remington returning with his top pass catcher in Thomas Zednik, this team should be ready right out the gate. There are still plenty of questions surrounding this roster which is still pretty young, but like East and Pilgrim, those uncertainties set us up for what should be a wild few weeks.

One last football thought, I loved seeing the New England Patriots being so aggressive this week in free agency. Jonnu Smith, Matthew Judon, what a nice start. The roster is already better than it was last season. Here's the thing though ... what good is a nice roster when the quarterback position is unsettled at best?

Cam Newton is cooked if you ask me. He was dreadful passing the ball last season and seems like a lost cause when it comes to mechanics. Not that I am a quarterback guru. Running quarterbacks are great, but passing is vital, and their one option at the moment can't do it. We'll see if they bring another guy in the fold whether it be a free agent, trade, or draft, but I am only moderately optimistic about this season.

The roster may be improved, but bringing back Newton in my eyes will be a massive mistake.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. ___ fi: popular genre
4. Curved shape
7. Defunct airline
10. Beverage receptacle
11. Corporate bigwig
12. Belong to he
13. They cover cuts
15. Cost per mille
16. Walk into
19. Power-producing machine
21. Part of one's character perceived by others
23. Emotionally appealed to
24. Protected
25. Wrestling icon Okerlund
26. Thailand's former name
27. Muscle weaknesses
30. Chooses
34. American film studio
35. Expression of satisfaction
36. Mythical winged horse
41. Ballplayers
45. Edible seaweed
46. Chinese politician
47. Tested for fertility

50. Glove worn with medieval armor
54. Basaltic lavas
55. Small shoaling fish
56. Surrendered
57. Taxi
59. Potato part
60. Female sheep
61. Trouble or difficulty
62. Put into service
63. Soviet Socialist Republic
64. 17th letter of Greek alphabet
65. Type of student

CLUES DOWN

1. Frighten
2. Partner to corned beef
3. Parts
4. Agrees to a demand
5. Elected official
6. Navigator's tool
7. Relating to heat
8. Attractive
9. Wealthy US merchant
13. Engine additive
14. A passage with access only at one end
17. Midway between northeast & east
18. Cool!
20. Brazilian NBAer
22. NW Pennsylvania city
27. Young dog
28. Mimic
29. Large truck
31. The NFL's Newton
32. One and only
33. Diego, Francisco, Anselmo
37. Julie __, actress
38. More nourishing
39. Compound
40. A small carrier attached to the side of a motorcycle
41. Object of fear or alarm
42. ___ Ladd, actor
43. Sacred place
44. A way to express enjoyment
47. Trigonometric function
48. A team's best pitcher
49. Intersecting points
51. Roundishly shaped
52. Adam's partner
53. God of battle (Scandinavian)
58. Human hormone

CHERRY HILL TRIVIA

QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

What percent of Rhode Island residents claim Italian ancestry?



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■ **Viau**

(Continued from page 13)

and grow, said viau. Between the small campus at Dean and her quick rapport with coach Alycia Gervais, Viau was sold on the prospect of joining the Bulldogs.

"It was kind of difficult (being recruited during the pandemic). I applied to some schools and Dean wasn't at the top. Some coaches reached out to me from schools that I didn't apply to. But this coach texted me asking for film, then after we met up, I decided that that is where I wanted to go. It was a great atmosphere. I found that I liked the smaller campuses rather than the big universities ... where you're not just a number and it's more like family. Once I met the coach, it cemented my decision to go there," said Viau.

As she gets prepared for the next level, Viau is expecting tougher competition all around especially considering Dean is changing conferences next winter.

"They didn't have a season this year so I haven't been able to meet the team, only the coaches so far. My focus is just staying in shape knowing that I will have to put in more work than I usually do going to a bigger and better conference. It's going to be competitive. I competed in Division I, but at Dean, they're moving up a conference which will be different from what I've seen," said Viau.

Viau will also miss the Johnston basketball community and hopes to join another tight-knit group at Dean.

"I've played with these people since middle school and my rec days, so it will be hard saying bye to my friends and teammates," Viau said. "The coaches and I have a strong bond, so it will be hard to see different coaching techniques. I'm just hoping that the team I'm going to will have a great bond and will build chemistry as we go."



DEAN BOUND: Johnston's Tori Viau looks to inbound in a game this past season. (Photo by Alex Sponseller)

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Try your hand navigating in a wind farm



BETTER DATA: RI Saltwater Anglers and partners will launch a software application for smartphones and tablets this season to capture enhanced catch and effort data. Summer flounder and all other species commonly caught by anglers will be part of the program. (Submitted photos)



ELECTRONIC RECORDING APP: Fred DeFinis of Middletown and RISAA's lead researcher said. "Anglers said their primary motivation to record catch & effort is to improve fisheries providing managers with more robust data."

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI

Ever think about what it would be like to pilot your vessel through an offshore wind farm. Well you can now give it a try, even though the wind farm is not built.

Sign up for a simulation demonstration on March 23 (space limited) given by wind farm developer Ørsted. It's an opportunity to participate in a full simulation demonstration within the Revolution Wind Offshore wind farm that is planned to be built 15 miles off Newport.

Ørsted is seeking interest from commercial and charter/party fishers as well as private angler opinion leaders to participate in the simulation program. The module will provide a near real-life experience of transiting within Revolution Wind in various sea conditions, changing visibility and traffic conditions.

This simulated navigation demonstration in a full-mission fishing vessel module conducted by the U.S. Maritime Resources Center (USMRC), in Middletown, RI. More information about USMRC can be found at www.usmrc.org.

This is a by invitation only event. If you are interested in attending, please reply to one of the individuals listed below. If you are then selected to attend Ørsted will follow-up with a written invitation. Contact Rodney Avila RODAV@orsted.com or Chris Sarro CHSAR@orsted.com to be considered for the program.

RISAA pilot on electronic recording for better data

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association's (RISAA) pilot project on electronic monitoring for volunteer angler reporting is making great progress. RISAA in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and Harbor Light Software (HLS) is developing an electronic application (app) for smartphones and tablets.

Last month RISAA completed the research and discovery phase of the project providing DEM and Harbor Light Software with the results of RISAA's eREC committee's input, and key learnings from two focus groups of diverse RISAA members (age, type of fishing, etc.) and the results of a member survey on preferred app types and desired features.

Eight eREC RISAA committee members, 24 RISAA focus group participants and 223 RISAA survey respondents combined to deliver research findings that will guide the development of the smartphone/tablet software application in its early stages insuring that the app characteristics and features are those that anglers want and need.

The pilot project aims to create a volunteer recreational angler logbook for use on tablets and smart phones to collect recreational data on catch and effort from the angling public, and to promote the usage of the software among recreational anglers in Rhode Island. The project specifically seeks to develop, test and pilot innovative solutions to address inadequate insight into the impact of recreational fishing on fisheries management in the state of Rhode Island.

Fred DeFinis, RISAA eREC committee member and lead researcher developing and implementing the RISAA angler survey said, "We had great consistency between what eREC committee members thought was needed in an app, what focus group participants wanted and then what RISAA members shared in the angler survey."

DeFinis went on to say that "A key research learning was the main motivation why anglers would use such an app and that was to help improve fishing for all and for the future by providing fish managers with more robust data to manage recreational fishing. So our marketing communications efforts to market the app will focus on better fisheries management

and not catching the next fish."

Anglers also related they wanted an app that enabled them to supply the desired catch and effort data quickly and simply in a way that does not interfere with fishing activities. Features the app should have to appeal to a range of anglers include environmental data such as tide and weather, a photo capability, fish identification and the ability to store GPS position with the option to share location with fish managers or keep it totally confidential so just the angler can see it when desired.

So the next steps for the eREC committee and partners is to develop an app prototype that delivers needed DEM data to complement existing recreational catch and effort data while incorporating some of the app characteristics and features identified through research that anglers want.

RISAA and partners are also developing a marketing communications plan to promote the use of the app to early RISAA adopters. The aim is to have pre-Beta users from the eREC committee working with a prototype this April, followed by a Beta test group of 25 to 50 before the app launches to the full RISAA membership during the 2021 fishing season. The aim would be to launch an app to the angling public in general for the 2022 season.

If you have any questions about the pilot project contact Steve Medeiros or Dave Monti, RISAA electronic recording pilot project coordinator, at dmontifish@verizon.net or 401.480.3444.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing is in transition. Much of the ice has melted so anglers are targeting largemouth bass and waiting for the trout seasons to start. Traditionally trout season starts the second Saturday in April, scheduled this year for April 10, however, all are anticipating an early season start announcement for the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Last year the season opening a week early due to COVID with more of a staggered start rather than a big crunch on opening day on the shore of RI lakes and ponds. Neil Hayes of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown, said, "I am sure I was about the 50th caller inquiring about an early start of the trout season when I called DEM last week. Since the ice melted anglers have been targeting largemouth bass and doing well at Melville Pond, Portsmouth and Indian Lake, South Kingstown. Earlier this month when we had ice anglers were catching hold over striped bass through the ice in brackish water in the upper portions of Narrow River."

Cod fishing party boats continue to have trouble leaving the dock due to bad weather and cold water. Capt. Andy Dangelo of the Seven B's said, "We have not been fishing for cod much this year. The water is 40 degrees, colder than it has been the past couple of years. 43 to 45 degrees seems to be a sweet spot for cod this time of year. I gave it try and travelled toward the East Fishing Grounds (3 miles east of Block Island) saw gannets feeding, whales and felt optimistic. We spotted some bait on the fish finder but did not hook up with cod. Hopefully the water will warm a bit and we will get back out soon." Party boats fishing for cod this winter 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.nofluefishing.com.

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Spring is on the way and warmer days are coming!

By **DONNA DeLAURO**

Maybe it's time to list your home for sale or just time to do some Spring cleaning. Either way this is a great time to catch up on some of those things on your to-do list.

There are many things we can do to perform some routine maintenance that don't need to break the bank.

Take an objective walk around your home inside and out and make a list of things that need tending to.

Then prioritize the list based on importance and separate what you can do and what areas need a professional.

We can easily do many things ourselves, with what we have lying around the home.

Clean closets, toss out those items that are out of date and will probably never be used, donate items you really don't need but someone would put to good use.

Organize areas to make them appear more appealing to a potential buyer. Plants and decor are great for our personal enjoyment, but a clear open area will create a more spacious feeling.

Decluttering is always a good idea and costs nothing. If you're thinking of moving this is a great time to pack up items that aren't needed for daily life. With a little bit of organizing it's possible to make a space appear to be additional living area. Purge all those unused items you've been saving "just in case"

If you're saving things for someone to use in the future, perhaps the future is now and offer them up to family or friends.

It may be nice to see those items being used and enjoyed rather than sitting in a box taking up space in the basement.

Paint walls and woodwork using up to date colors while keeping it neutral and light.

Let the sunshine in! Remove room darkening curtains and allow natural light in. Dark rooms feel smaller and sad.

Don't forget the basement! Just because it's not part of your everyday cleaning, it is the heart of the home and buyers want to know your mechanics are maintained and working.

Dust off the heating unit, water and oil tank, electric panel box, pipes etc. Vacuum any spider webs on the ceiling, and debris on the floor.

Be sure any potential water intrusion areas are secured and dry.

Run a dehumidifier and place air fresheners

around.

There are plenty of things you can do on the outside of your home, to create an inviting curb appeal.

Rake the lawn; sweep the driveway and walkway, as well as the storm drains in the street.

Clean house gutters but be careful on that ladder and if it's not safe for you to, don't be shy to ask for help.

Extend downspouts to deter water intrusion away from the home.

Clear and trim shrubs away from the exterior of the home.

Clean windows and storm doors.

Touch up weathered paint and remove spider webs from corners.

Replace outdoor lighting with brighter bulbs, to enhance your home at night.

Be sure your house number is visible for those potential buyers driving by.

If you determine you need to hire a professional for things like roofing, painting, mechanic upgrades, contact a Realtor to evaluate what should be done and what can be negotiated with a potential buyer.

A Realtor will be able to advise where best to spend your money in preparation for your potential home sale.

If there are issues that will inhibit the financing process, it may be best to address them prior to listing for sale.

An appraiser will be working for the lender to determine property value based on area sale activity, as well as property condition. If the appraiser flags a condition issue, that may need to be done prior to closing, avoid any delays to keep the process moving, which will be less stressful for all.

In any case performing maintenance will extend the life of the home and keep you safe.

Speaking of safety, as we set clocks ahead one hour it's a good time to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

If selling the home, the property will need to be inspected by the local fire marshal. Detectors will need to be up to date and in the appropriate locations. You can go to your local fire department web site for their specific requirements, or your Realtor will advise what's needed.

Enjoy making your home beautiful and safe while creating value as well.

Happy Spring!!

Donna DeLauro is a Realtor at RE/MAX Real Estate Center in Coventry. She is also a Senior Real Estate Specialist and the Proud Founder of Mature Matters.

Concerned about buying or selling due to COVID-19?

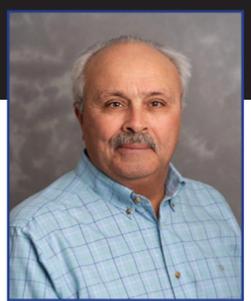
Contact me for a consultation to determine if it's the right time for you based on your unique situation.

Donna DeLauro, Realtor

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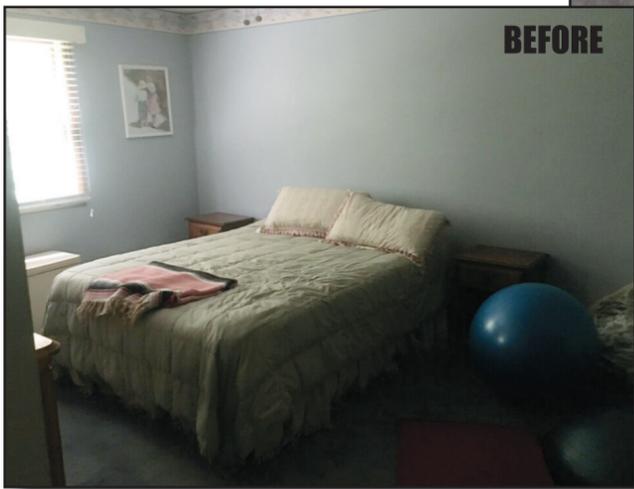
Design Showcase



Designer: **Michelle Parenteau**
Michelle Lee Designs



Photos by Grace Lentini



Home of Diane and Mike Pezza Johnston – Remodel

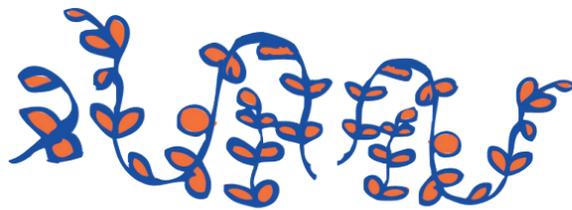
Like many of us, during the pandemic, this couple decided it was time for a remodel of their living space. Along with many other changes throughout their home, Diane and Mike expressed the desire to have their own private spots, where they could unwind at the end of a long stressful day. So, Michelle and her team set to work, creating these spaces.

The front living room was transformed into a “woman cave” for Diane, with a serene color palette for the walls, wood plank tile flooring, and custom designed furniture. A crystal light fixture added just a touch of “bling”. Custom artwork on the walls finished off this beautiful new space.

Mike was looking for more of a masculine feel, so what better than his own private “man cave”. A smoky blue was chosen for the walls. Thick carpeting for the floors, and a bold wood cabinet with metal accents was added. An extra large sectional makes for the perfect spot for relaxing, while watching sports on the large flat screen wall mounted TV. Steampunk artwork, metal accent tables and lamps were added for a finishing touch.

Diane also showed interest in a health and fitness area. This was made possible by transforming a spare bedroom into a private yoga studio. This makeover included vinyl plank flooring and a coat of soft grayish purple paint on the walls. Vibrant cushions and soothing artwork was added to finish off this lovely space, perfect for meditation and yoga. A safe alternative to a public fitness center was created.

For questions on your upcoming projects, call 401.954.2065 or email info@MichelleLeeDesigns.com. See more of Michelle's work at www.michelleleedesigns.com



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How to pay your mortgage off faster



(BPT) - Paid Content by Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance, Inc.

Buying a home is a major life step. Homes are by nature expensive and most home buyers cannot afford to purchase a home outright. Because of that reality, most home buyers finance a home purchase with a mortgage. A mortgage allows you to spread the payments for a home loan across many years. The result? Mortgages can make home ownership much more attainable for the average home buyer.

Why now is a great time to buy

Currently, mortgage rates are at historic lows, meaning that the cost of borrowing funds is lower than it has been in previous years. If it fits within your budget, now is a good time to purchase a home. In fact, Vanderbilt Mortgage is offering new home buyers who chose to finance their home purchase with Vanderbilt 60 days with no payments after their mortgage loan funds. This provides a new home buyer time to settle into their new home and pay for the costs associated with moving - without having to immediately account for their first mortgage payment.

Benefits to paying a mortgage off faster

While mortgages definitely make sense for most home buyers, there are advantages to paying off a mortgage before it reaches full term.

Why?

Because paying down your mortgage early:

Builds equity for resale. Paying down the principal balance on a mortgage can build equity in your home faster. Equity is defined as the market value of the home, minus the amount owed on the mortgage. For example, if your home is worth \$150,000 and you owe \$100,000 on the mortgage, then you have \$50,000 worth of equity in your home. This equity can then be utilized when you sell your home, for a down payment on your next home. In addition, some of the equity could be used to qualify for a home equity loan to make home improvements.

Frees up cash for later. Another benefit to paying down your mortgage earlier is reducing the years the mortgage is active. Paying the mortgage off earlier will free up the money that was needed for a monthly mortgage payment, allowing that money to be spent on other items - or saved for retirement or an emergency fund.

How to pay off your mortgage faster

If you're interested in paying your mortgage off more quickly, here are two common strategies you can use:

Extra payments every month. A more common way to pay a mortgage down early is simply to make extra payments to the loan's principal each month, as frequently as possible. Whether it's five dollars or one hundred dollars extra per month, every additional principal payment you can make toward paying a mortgage down more quickly really adds up. To show you how that would work, Vanderbilt Mortgage has developed an early payoff calculator to show how much you can save by paying extra toward the principal each month.

Annual Additional Payments to Principal - You can also help pay your mortgage off faster by making extra payments to principal once a year. Whether it be a tax refund you receive, yearly bonus or extra savings, this investment toward paying your mortgage off sooner can help save interest cost in the future.

Go at your own pace

It's important to remember not to overextend yourself while you're working to pay a mortgage down. Create a realistic budget and go at a pace you can afford, and you will reap the long-term benefits. Your future self will thank you! Visit Vanderbilt Mortgage to learn more home owner tips or apply for mortgage today!

All loans are subject to credit approval.

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This article might be a stretch when it comes to reader-based columns on antiques and collectibles, but if you are a TCG collector

than this one is for you. We are almost into Quarter 2 of 2021 and the trading card market could not be stronger. Magic: The Gathering, Pokémon, and Yu-Gi-Oh! Are all performing, and we are even beginning to see more obscure cards like Digimon, Dragon Ball Z, Duel Masters, and even 1990's non-gaming cards take flight. This quick acceleration in the market has driven collectors to consume anything and everything card related. Tens of thousands of single cards are continually being graded; the grading companies cannot even keep up. With people bored at home online video entertainment involving cards has become an entire industry, pack openings, box openings. People can not get enough! Just walk into your local Walmart or Target and try to buy a pack of Pokémon or Yu-Gi-Oh! cards. It is not going to happen.

With all this craziness going on it leads dealers and collectors alike asking, "is this a bubble?". In my opinion both yes and no. Like any other field of collectibles, the best will always stay at the top and hyper inflated trash will crash! For example,



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

a 1999 1st edition Charizard will always be the general holy grail for Pokémon collectors out there, but ten years from now I do not see people still paying \$5,000 for an anniversary Charizard card from 2016. As time goes on more and more cards get submitted for grading, continually increasing the supply. Eventually the market has a correction where supply meets demand and surpasses it, causing values to go down. However, there is one coveted portion of the hobby where supply goes down every day, but the demand increases. This magic token I am referring to is sealed product. Sealed product will always be king. Every day you see another YouTube video of someone opening a booster

box, whether it is brand new or a 1999 Pokémon Shadowless Booster Box for \$100,000. Trust me, Kevin and I delivered one and

watched the buyer open it in front of our eyes! Absolutely crazy. Just think, a box that was already worth \$100,000. What is the next one worth now that there is one less in the world?

Collecting single cards is fun, but there are endless possibilities. Regardless of which cards you love, there are tens of thousands of different cards to buy. But there is a limited number of sealed merchandises, and every day the population of it goes down, never up. So, if you are reading this at home and you are one of the new waves of crazy card collectors, shop smart not hard. Do not go chasing your tail in a circle buying endless singles, buy sealed and watch it appreciate like Bitcoin.



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A Budget-Friendly Family Dish

FAMILY FEATURES

Creating family meals with nutrition in mind adds another consideration to a daily task that is often stressful enough. However, making health-conscious decisions each evening at the dinner table doesn't have to mean turning away from your loved ones' favorite dishes.

Simple swaps to more nutritious ingredients paired with healthier preparation methods, such as baking chicken rather than frying it, can help you make more nutrition-based choices. This Baked Chicken Parmesan offers the best of both worlds, providing a 30-minute meal that allows you to spend less time in the kitchen without forgoing healthy habits.

Made with Parmesan cheese, this recipe provides an excellent source of calcium. Dairy foods, such as cheese, are an irreplaceable part of a balanced diet that offers a valuable source of essential nutrients. Plus, because it's made using just a handful of ingredients, it's a budget-friendly option that doesn't break the bank and doesn't call for seldom-used spices or seasonings you may never use again.

Find more family meal inspiration at milkmeansmore.org.



Baked Chicken Parmesan

Recipe by Kirsten Kubert of "Comfortably Domestic" on behalf of Milk Means More

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 6

- 2/3 cup whole-wheat panko breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning medley with garlic
- 3/4 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 3 cups prepared tomato and basil sauce, warmed, divided
- 1 pound thick spaghetti, prepared according to package directions

Preheat oven to 400 F. Line rimmed half sheet pan with parchment paper; set aside.

In shallow dish or pie plate, combine breadcrumbs, Italian seasoning and 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, stirring with fork until blended. Pour melted butter in separate shallow dish or pie plate.

Working with one chicken thigh at a time, dip each side in melted butter to coat. Press butter-soaked chicken into breadcrumbs, turning to coat well on both sides. Place breaded chicken on prepared baking sheet. Repeat with remaining chicken thighs.

Drizzle remaining melted butter over breaded chicken. Bake 8 minutes. Turn chicken over and bake 7 minutes to crisp other side.

Briefly remove chicken from oven. Spoon two tablespoons pasta sauce over each chicken thigh. Sprinkle remaining Parmesan cheese evenly over chicken. Return chicken to oven and continue baking 5 minutes, or until cooked through.

Serve Baked Parmesan Chicken over cooked spaghetti topped with additional pasta sauce.

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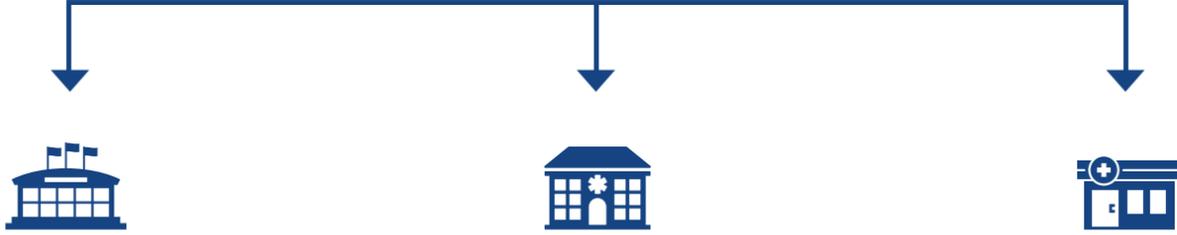
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- Remember, someone else can schedule an appointment for you.

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