

## Schools near 'fiscal cliff'

### Mayor calls for interim school 'takeover' before 'problem becomes irreversible'

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisenia Jr. fears school department finances are close to falling off a "fiscal cliff," and a "Town takeover" may be the only thing that can stop the hemorrhaging before the damage "becomes irreversible."

On June 16, Polisenia announced the "interim takeover of the Johnston School Department and the administrative consolidation of their business office functions," according to a press release. "This takeover will be codified by a joint resolution before both the Town Council and

School Committee."

In the meantime, Polisenia and the town have retained former Cranston mayor, Rhode Island gubernatorial and congressional candidate, Republican Allan Fung.

"I have been engaged by the town of Johnston to help them with the school deficit issue," Fung confirmed Wednesday morning. "In my prior capacity in the city of Cranston I dealt with school deficits on many occasions and the town wanted to get proper legal advice to ensure we have a sound school district that's providing a high quality education for their students."

■ SCHOOLS - PAGE 5

### Polisenia's first proposed town budget cuts residential property tax rate by 34%

By RORY SCHULER

Next year's budget has been proposed and property owners should expect a decrease in residential property tax rates.

"To offset the soaring cost of residential real estate values, I've lowered the residential tax rate per thousand from \$23.34 to \$15.30," Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisenia Jr. explained Friday. "Our commercial rate dropped less than a dollar as commercial real estate didn't rise like residential real estate. In fact, the value of commercial office space decreased."

The town ran a "Notice of Proposed Prop-

erty Tax Rate Change" legal advertisement in the June 16 edition of the Providence Journal.

Later that day, Polisenia also announced a "Town takeover of the Johnston School Department."

"The Town of Johnston proposes to increase its total property tax levy to \$75,540,802 in the 2023-2024 budget year, the total property tax levy this year is \$72,855,935," reads the legal ad. "The result is a proposed net tax levy increase of 3.69 percent."

Most property owners are seeing a near doubling in residential real estate values.

■ BUDGET - PAGE 6

## PANTHERS INTO THE WILD



By RORY SCHULER

**G**raduates in sky-matching blue lined up on the sidewalk outside Veterans Memorial Auditorium.

They giggled and panicked and hugged and posed for selfies.

Then they lined up and entered the grand theater. Soft yellow lighting calmed their moods. They passed moms and dads and brothers and sisters and friends and mentors.

Multi-media messages screamed from their mortarboards.

Following music and song and advice from dignitaries and class leaders, 174 seniors became full-grown Panthers, released into the wild with a high school diploma in their hands and a theater full of encouragement and congratulations at their backs.

**Editor's Note:** For our full JHS graduation coverage, turn to Pages 11-23. Also, look for our Top 10 students spread and a special section insert devoted to the region's graduates inside next week's edition.

### FULL GROWN PANTHERS:

Salutatorian and 2023 Class President

Ayomide Josephine Olagundoye delivered two speeches last Thursday night. She and her fellow Johnston High School graduates celebrated their commencement at Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Providence. (Photos courtesy Maré Studios)

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**ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:**

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**Johnston Sun Rise**

# 'Senior Spotlight'



**FLOWER POWER:** Diane Mackie is the focus of this week's Johnston Senior Center "Volunteer Spotlight." Do you know someone at the Johnston Senior Center who deserves recognition? If so, let the executive director know! (Courtesy photo)

## Volunteer blooms at the JSC

By **RICHARD J. DELFINO JR.**

Our Johnston Senior Center "Volunteer Spotlight" this week is Diane Mackie.

Diane has been volunteering at the JSC for about a year, having retired from the state of New York where she was a practicing attorney and nurse working as a long term care consultant for nursing homes and assisted living residences.

Diane started here as a garden club coordinator and is completely responsible for all the beautification efforts here at the center.

The many flowers that presently adorn this property are a result of her efforts.

She credits Jacavone Garden Center for providing the many flowers planted around the property.

When Diane is not tending to the flowers, she volunteers as a server at lunchtime.

She takes pride in knowing the names of all the members she serves, and enjoys interacting with staff and visitors.

Mackie is also actively recruiting anyone who might enjoy planting and potting on this beautiful property. She's a great example of "giving back" to the community in which she resides.

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

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# Johnston Sun Rise

# Veteran defenders of freedom

By JOHN HOWELL

“Yah, I liked biking. I joined the Narragansett Bay wheelmen,” says Roger Desjardins, who at 98 was the senior member aboard the “Honor Flight Freedom” that left Monday morning at 6:30 from Green Airport for a full day in Washington, DC.

To the surprise of those gathered around him, Roger pulls out an iPhone from the Army uniform he wore when he was discharged on Jan. 24, 1946 (it still fits him) and scrolls through photographs until he settles at one showing him on a bike. It was taken when he was 58 on a 360-mile round trip ride to New Hampshire.

“Did you have a beer when you got up there?”

“No, I drank water and milk. I had a beer when I finally got home,” he says to laughs.

North Providence Mayor Charles Lombardi, who served as Desjardins’ guardian during the flight, takes in the story. He’s not surprised. Lombardi selected Desjardins as the grand marshal for the town’s Memorial Day Parade. He is perpetually awed by the WWII veteran’s recollection of events and positive outlook. In a matter of fact tone, almost as if he was talking about someone else, Desjardins relates how he was in New Guinea, then the Philippines and at the end of the war a subway guard in Okinawa, Japan, where he learned some Japanese. He said a few phrases to impress his listeners.

During his deployment while hunkered down in a fox hole his ear drums were blown out by an exploding shell and he suffered other injuries, which he doesn’t detail. He was evacuated for medical attention and then shipped back to the battle line only to have shrapnel from a grenade hit his eye. He says his vision is okay now.

After his discharge and on his return to Rhode Island, Desjardins got a job with Owens Corning as a pipefitter, a job he kept until retiring. He also married in 1950.

“What took you so long,” he was asked.

“It took her five years to make up her mind,” he answers.

As the oldest member of the flight, Desjardins (accompanied by Mayor Lombardi) were selected to place a wreath on the grave of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery during the flight that had them visiting the WWII,

Korean and Vietnam War Memorials.

Also assisting with the wreath laying were WWII veteran Anthony Basamian, 96, and Paul Vadenais, who sponsored the flight in honor of his father, Normand G. Vadenais (a Corporal in the U.S. Army). For the first time since the first Rhode Island Honor Flight, founded by retired Providence Fire Chief George Farrell in 2012, 15 members of the Rhode Island Professional Fire Fighters Pipes and Drums accompanied the flight and performed at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was also the first time Farrell and his crew of devoted volunteers held a flight on a Monday, which required an earlier departure than the customary Saturday Southwest flight. Boarding started at 6:30 a.m. so those attending assembled in the short term parking lot at 4:30 in order to parade into the terminal at 5 to the cheers of family and friends and first responders who stood rigid as they saluted.

When Farrell started the flights, he focused on recognizing World War II vets, then as those ranks thinned or were incapable of making the trip, he reached out to Korean veterans. On Monday, 15 Vietnam vets were aboard the flight. Monday’s was the 28th Rhode Island Honor Flight. It was purposely held Monday as June 19 is Juneteenth, a federal holiday celebrating “Freedom Day” and the end of slavery.

Desjardins was not the sole WWII vet.

Raymond Raiche, who served in the Navy during the battle of Iwo Jima, would have gone on an earlier flight but didn’t want to leave his wife alone. On Monday he was accompanied by his son, David, who served as his guardian.

“It’s amazing,” said David, “I’m learning more and more about what he did (during the war).” In the battle of Iwo Jima, Ray said his job was to retrieve bodies from the beaches.

On arriving at the Southwest gate, veterans were told it was going to be a hot day in Washington, to drink plenty of water, to take their meds and to make a stop at the restroom as that would be difficult once aboard the plane. It’s details like that Farrell and his crew thought of in advance to ensure every participating veteran was cared for and thanked for their service.



**98 AND HIGH TECH:** WWII Army veteran Roger Desjardins of North Providence, the oldest member of Honor Flight Freedom that left from Green Airport Monday, pulled out his cell phone to accompany stories he was recounting. Behind him is North Providence Mayor Charles Lombardi who was Desjardins’ guardian for the flight. (Sun Rise photos by John Howell)



**A GRAND SENDOFF:** WWII, Korean and Vietnam War veterans and those attending Honor Flight Freedom were greeted with cheers and phalanxes of first responders when they entered the terminal as a group at 5 a.m.



**HONORED TO FLY:** Frank Olivo, of Johnston, served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. On Monday, he was on-board the 28<sup>th</sup> Honor Flight to the nation’s capital. This portrait was taken while Olivo was in the service. (Courtesy photo)

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# We're in a 'bunny boom'

By DANA RICHIE

At dusk, it stands perfectly still, tucked between two shrubs at the edge of a lawn. Disturbed by the slightest movement, it hops into the grassy area.

Many west bay residents have noticed an invasion: rabbits. They often appear in multiples, remaining perfectly still on sidewalks and in yards. Or maybe, you notice the remnants of their raid in chewed up plants and disturbed gardens. It's the talk of the town: why are there so many rabbits this year?

Suzanne, a resident of Oakland Beach for 30 years, said that her yard is now "a petting zoo," home to newborn and adult rabbits. She said she often sees 5 or 6 rabbits in her backyard at any time of day, which is way more than she ever remembered seeing growing up in Warwick.



"They're in everybody's yard," she added. "They're also across the street in the neighbor's yard."

Neighbors have come up with their own theories to make sense of this phenomenon. Maybe it's because dog owners are more strictly following the leash laws? Maybe it's because there are fewer coyotes or eagles in the area? Maybe the brush and trees are fuller so there's more cover and food for them?

Dylan Ferreira, Principal Wildlife Biologist focusing on deer and New England Cottontail Rabbits for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, said the population explosion is likely explained by a boom period in Eastern Cottontails' cyclic population fluctuations.

"This is definitely not the first time I've talked about a lot of rabbits," Ferreira said. "This definitely happens every so often. There will be a really booming year for the rabbit population and a lot of people are noticing in their yard, their driveways and when they're driving around."

He explained this alternating pattern. There are years when there are not a lot of rabbits due to a variety of factors including weather or breeding outcomes. This leads to a decrease in the predator population because there is less food available. Then, because of the lack of predation, the rabbit population increases. With more rabbits, there are more food sources available to predators, causing predator populations to increase. That poses a greater threat to the rabbit population, causing the number of rabbits to decrease.

"It kind of just goes back and forth through time," he added. "There will be high years and low years."

Ferreira added that other factors like weather and breeding conditions could contribute to this year being a high year.

"In the years that you see a lot more rabbits than usual, it's probably a combination of the perfect breeding conditions and survival conditions and then not as many predators as prior years," he said.

Chadwick Rittenhouse, Assistant Professor in Residence at the University of Connecticut, earned his

PhD in wildlife science and has been working with wildlife conservation for 20 years, recently focusing on monitoring and studying New England and Eastern Cottontails. He said that the rabbits you see "hopping around Warwick" are likely Eastern Cottontails, which are 20% larger than the New England species.

"They're just doing what bunnies do, which is multiply," Rittenhouse added. Healthy female rabbits typically birth three to four litters a year with an average of 5 per kit, according to the Wildlife Center of Virginia.

Rittenhouse explained that these two species, though they look almost identical, are very different. The New England Cottontail, the only rabbit species native to New England—including Rhode Island, prefers young forests as habitats and thus are less visible to humans. Because they prefer grasses and shrubs, Eastern Cottontails have more proximity to humans. Rittenhouse said that in his research, whenever the Eastern Cottontail pops up, the population of New England Cottontails tends to dwindle.

"What you're seeing is Eastern Cottontails taking advantage of the wonderful habitats that we, as humans, have created for them through our lawns and how we interact with and use the land," Rittenhouse said. "In many respects, it's changing forests into homes or developments with greenspaces and shrubs and all kinds of things that rabbits like around them."

Rittenhouse shared some telltale signs of rabbits moving into your yard. First, he said, you'll see them at potentially all times of day. He also recommended inspecting the yard for rabbit droppings, which he said resemble Coco Puffs. Rittenhouse said it's also worth examining the flowers and shrubs that have been chewed up: rabbits' teeth are offset a little bit, and they tend to enjoy gnawing on woody plants. He also shared that rabbits may repurpose the underground burrows of other creatures but prefer to nest in brush, shrubs or somewhere that can provide a "hiding cover."

Ferreira added that "too many rabbits is not neces-

sarily a bad thing," but recognizes that some homeowners might not want them on their property. He recommends fencing around vegetable gardens because that also protects from other creatures.

Suzanne said that the rabbits have been "making a mess" of her garden. She said that usually the rabbits will eat grasses, but if it's dry enough, they'll move to leaves and vegetables. So far, fencing has not protected her garden from the rabbits' appetite. She's even questioning whether it's worth it to keep gardening.

"It's already more than a part time job for a garden anyway before you add this," she added. "Why bother having a garden if you have to put that much into it?"

Rittenhouse said that rabbits "will try pretty much anything," but he has found that planting marigolds around other plants has had mixed results with deterring rabbits. He thinks it depends on how hungry the rabbits are. He also recommended using foliar spray on your garden and reapplying it every time it rains.

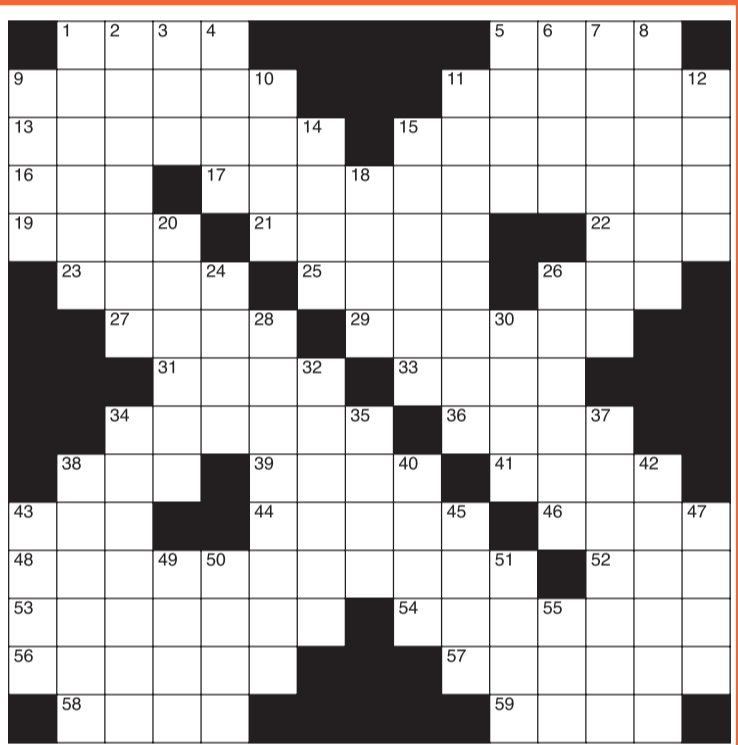
"There's not a lot that people can do to stop the spread of Eastern Cottontails," Rittenhouse added. "They're very comfortable living around humans."

Ferreira said that the Department of Environmental Management's main approach to rabbit populations is legally regulated hunting. From October 15 to the end of February, each registered hunter is allowed to harvest three rabbits a day. He said that they do not have the same data for rabbits as they do for deer because hunters are not mandated to report their kills. Ferreira added that hunting does not really control the rabbit population the way it does for deer because there is still a surplus.

Suzanne does not want to take any efforts that would kill the rabbits. She's taken to conducting her own research, looking into sprays and plants that will slow the rabbits' reign of destruction in addition to considering her own theories about why the population has grown so much.

"What in our life is making it so we're noticing it now?" she asked.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Understand intuitively
- 5. Two of something
- 9. Not involving computer tech
- 11. Acclaimed
- 13. Undermine
- 15. The condition of being concealed or hidden
- 16. Irritate
- 17. The process of developing a theory
- 19. Ceramic jar
- 21. Not fresh
- 22. Dad's fashion accessory
- 23. Popular review site
- 25. New Mexico county
- 26. '\_\_\_ death do us part
- 27. Fees
- 29. Takes with force
- 31. One-time Yankees rookie sensation
- 33. Gordon and Snider are two
- 34. Body parts
- 36. Arranges
- 38. Fiddler crabs

- 39. Mimics
- 41. Witnesses
- 43. They \_\_\_
- 44. Lasso
- 46. Runs down
- 48. In response to
- 52. Bird-like dinosaur
- 53. Metamorphic stages
- 54. Conditions of incapacity
- 56. Sodas are sold in these units
- 57. Break away from
- 58. Ethereal
- 59. Boggy

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Mangled
- 2. Ruffled some feathers
- 3. Not young
- 4. Lakers legend
- 5. Nocturnal S. American rodent
- 6. Direction (Scottish)
- 7. Intestinal inflammation
- 8. Spring back in fear
- 9. Owl genus
- 10. Girls

- 11. Unbeliefs
- 12. Force unit
- 14. Expired trade agreement
- 15. Went alone
- 18. Animal noises
- 20. Woman who graduated from a specific school
- 24. The very top
- 26. Organs in males
- 28. Earnings
- 30. Z Z Z
- 32. Reddish browns
- 34. A salt or ester of acetic acid
- 35. A place to get off your feet
- 37. More disreputable
- 38. Kidney condition
- 40. Cease moving
- 42. Quick
- 43. Extra seed covering
- 45. "Survivor: Panama" winner
- 47. Six
- 49. One who inspects lamps
- 50. Small parrot
- 51. Primordial matter of the universe
- 55. \_\_\_ fi (slang)

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**WORK HARD**  
**BE KIND**



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# Schools

(Continued from page 1)

Fung cited attorney-client privilege when pressed to answer follow-up questions.

As of this week's print deadline, the Johnston School Committee had announced a pair of last-minute meetings, on Wednesday, June 21 and Thursday, June 22.

The Thursday meeting has been labeled an "emergency meeting" and will feature a pair of closed-door executive sessions followed by a prepared statement from School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia.

"For the budget year ending 2022, the Johnston School Department ended with an approximately \$955,000 deficit," according to Polisena's press release.

The mayor says he "was recently notified that the schools will likely end the current 2022-23 fiscal year with a multi-million dollar deficit."

"Consecutive deficits are unacceptable and against state law," Polisena said in the press release.

"I am also gravely concerned the Department will run another deficit by the end of the upcoming 2024 fiscal year as well, which would amount to three consecutive deficits. Even though the Department exists as a separate entity from the Town, we all have an obligation to the taxpayers."

The school department's swelling budget has been the topic of discussion during the budgeting process for the past two years.

"While the Town recognizes the Department faces unprecedented mandates from the State, I believe we are at a critical point where the Town needs to intervene and take over the Department before the problem becomes irreversible," Polisena said in the press release. "I am grateful to the School Committee and Superintendent for their willingness to work with the Town oversight. All changes implemented by Town oversight will be for the 2024-25 school year. These changes will be made with the new schools in mind."

The town has also launched a major school building renovation project, which has been plagued by cost overruns. The project, first pitched by Polisena when his father was mayor and he was vice-president of Town Council, initially called for major renovations at the middle and high schools and a brand new Early Childhood Center and new town-wide elementary school center.

The project and a \$215 million bond went to voters, who overwhelmingly supported the plan.

However, that project was recently down-scaled drastically, eliminating the middle school renovation and new ECC building (instead focusing on the new elementary school and a high school rebuild).

The bond was pitched as a "no tax increase bond" prior to the vote. New revenue from the Amazon project is expected to cover future bond payments.

"First, the town will be loaning funds to the schools to address the past deficits," Polisena's press release explained. "Next, the Mayor and Town Council are in the middle of the fiscal year 2024 budget process and will be finalizing it later this month."

Johnston Town Council is expected to discuss and vote on the 2023-24 budget at a 5:30 p.m. public meeting on Thursday, June 29.

"To ensure that Johnston students are receiving a high-quality education, the Mayor and Town Council are committed to appropriating another \$2.15 million to the Department," according to Polisena's press release. "This is the largest appropriation to the schools in Johnston's history."

As of this week's print deadline, neither the budget nor the town takeover of school finances have been discussed or voted on in public session.

"The school department is going to run a deficit in two consecutive fiscal years," Polisena reiterated in an interview following the dissemination of the "Town takeover" press release. "For this upcoming FY2024 budget, I am foregoing \$1.4 million in one-time capital projects for the Town and shifting that over to the School Department to help stop the bleeding, which totals their local aid increase to \$2.1 million, an exorbitant amount of money."

Past transfers from the town to the school department haven't prevented the current projected overage.

"Just allocating more money isn't going to solve the problem," Polisena wrote via email. "The Town will take over the financial management of the Department and work in conjunction with educational and financial experts to adopt meaningful changes and maximize operational efficiencies. Additionally, every taxpayer needs to know the Department is burdened with cumbersome state mandates, particularly when it comes to out of district tuition."

Polisena said the town's public school system pays about \$17,000 per pupil for out-of-district tuition and district-wide spends around "\$2.8 million to send students to other schools for CTE programs we simply cannot implement here in Johnston due to financial and facilities constraints."

"This is the time to make the changes not only because of the operational inefficiencies but also with the new schools coming in the near future," Polisena wrote. "We need to ensure that we are providing a high-quality education to every student but also not wasting taxpayer dollars. I am not going to idly sit by and watch the school department fall off a fiscal

cliff."

Town Council President and attorney Robert V. Russo questioned the use of the word "takeover" to describe the plan of action.

"I think the wording 'takeover' may not completely describe the actions going between the respective town and school administrations," Russo said. "The town is seeking to oversee the school finance department to see where the shortfalls are and correct any structural issues in their budget and spending. The town is not interested, nor can it legally influence the daily operations of the school department."

Russo suggested the action is more of a cooperative partnership with a shared goal.

"It is my understanding that both administrations have had an on-going dialogue and have the same goal of maximizing the educational environment for the schools while at the same time looking out for the taxpayers," Russo explained. "My understanding is that town's finance people will be overseeing the schools financial department — not taking over daily operations of the school department. (The) town cannot take over school operations by law."

School Committee Vice-Chairman Joseph Rotella deferred most questions to Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr. and Polisena.

"It is my understanding that the town administration and school administration have been meeting for weeks and developed a resolution to close the holes in the school finances," Rotella said Tuesday. "The town simply wants to have the town finance department assist the school finance people to find a resolution going forward. I welcome the collaboration."

DiLullo would not answer questions regarding Polisena's proposed "takeover."

"I don't have a comment at this time but Mr. LaFazia is preparing a statement regarding the press release," DiLullo wrote via email, following several requests for comment.

The Wednesday, June 21 special meeting, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. in the Ferri Middle School library, has just a single item on the agenda: "a budget workshop discussion and vote."

The agenda for the Thursday, June 22 meeting (scheduled for 5:30 p.m. also at Ferri) calls for the School Committee to convene into separate executive sessions to discuss collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation (Regarding: Town takeover of School Department) and the school administrator's Job Performance.

Although no votes or public discussion have taken place, Polisena said he is confident both the Town Council and School Committee will vote to support the "Town take-

over."

"I've met with the superintendent and school committee chair multiple times over the past few weeks about their current financial situation," Polisena wrote via email Wednesday morning. "Per the superintendent and school committee chair, the original increase in allocation of aid from the Town I proposed was not sufficient due to their current financial state, even with a possible last minute increase in aid to not just Johnston but several schools across (Rhode Island), from the General Assembly's edits to the budget (we will know by Friday if that additional increase is coming through). Therefore, I had to go back and shift money away from the Town to put toward the school department's operations. The school committee then adjusted their budget accordingly with the increase in aid. As is not only customary but also best practice, I've already met with all five council members individually for their annual budget breakdown and there were no objections to an increase in Town aid to school department."

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## Watch Your MOUTH

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



### MY FILLING IS MISSING

Fillings can fall out for several reasons, including tooth decay, tooth trauma, teeth grinding, and chewing on something hard. A missing filling should be fixed by a dentist as soon as possible to avoid further decay in the affected tooth. Keep the filling, if possible, because the dentist may be able to reattach it. Swish your mouth with saltwater frequently to reduce bacteria, which contributes to tooth decay. Try to chew food on the other side of your mouth to keep food debris out of the affected tooth. Continue to clean, brush, and floss the tooth as you would normally, but do it gently. If you're in pain, try taking a non-prescription NSAID to reduce pain and inflammation. Whether you are in our office for repairs of a missing filling, a smile makeover, or for a simple cleaning, our personal, casual, and relaxed style in providing quality dental care will help you at ease. We'll take the time to get to know your needs, answer questions about home care of any dental issues, tell you about the latest techniques and materials, and make sure that you are comfortable. Find out just how pleasant a visit to the dentist and enhancing your smile can be—call us at DENTAL ARTS GROUP, 401-521-3661. Complete family dental care is available at 1136 Hartford Ave., Johnston. P.S. While not always a dental emergency, a lost filling should be replaced within a few days to avoid damage and decay to the unprotected tooth.

[www.dentalartsgroupri.com](http://www.dentalartsgroupri.com)

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

**Call the Hotline at**  
**401-954-9012**  
**for your free roof assessment or go to**  
**[www.roofassistancehotline.com](http://www.roofassistancehotline.com)**

Reg#11374

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Sat. July 15- ATRIUM-ON-MAIN, Pawt.

Sun. July 16- DAVENPORT'S, East Prov.

Sat. July 29- ST. MARIA DI PRATA, Crns.

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### REPORT TO TAXPAYERS ON CURRENT AND PROPOSED BUDGET

|                            | Current Budget       | Proposed Budget      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|                            | 2022-2023            | 2023-24              |
| <b>Expenditures:</b>       | <b>Operating</b>     | <b>Operating</b>     |
| Education                  | 60,116,216           | 63,496,920           |
| General                    | 7,313,070            | 7,197,746            |
| Planning & Public Services | 5,606,433            | 7,062,109            |
| Police Protection          | 19,167,064           | 20,121,079           |
| Fire Protection            | 22,619,742           | 23,535,958           |
| Parks & Recreation         | 1,157,527            | 615,265              |
| Public Libraries           | 662,863              | 676,993              |
| Other Departments          | 236,134              | 318,634              |
| Debt Service & OPEB        | 3,753,886            | 6,057,148            |
| <b>Total Expenditures:</b> | <b>\$120,632,935</b> | <b>\$129,081,852</b> |
| <b>Revenues:</b>           |                      |                      |
| Local Property Taxes       | \$71,918,014         | \$73,635,089         |
| General State Aid          | 11,353,735           | 11,784,926           |
| State-School Construction  | 178,472              | 150,000              |
| State-School Aid & Music   | 20,507,201           | 21,786,519           |
| Other Revenues             | 16,675,513           | 21,725,318           |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>      | <b>\$120,632,935</b> | <b>\$129,081,852</b> |

**PROPOSED BUDGET:** The town ran a "Notice of Proposed Property Tax Rate Change" legal advertisement in the June 16 edition of the Providence Journal. This comparative analysis ran with the ad. Note the increase in revenues, education, police and fire expenditures in the proposed budget.

### Budget

(Continued from page 1)

Johnston "is currently conducting a revaluation of property, which is mandated by the State of Rhode Island," according to the budget legal ad, which explains:

"It is anticipated that there will be an overall increase in property values and when coupled with the increase in the proposed tax levy will result in a property tax rate of \$15.30 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for residential real estate, \$27.43 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for the commercial real estate and \$64.64 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for tangible personal property, as compared to the current property tax rates of \$23.24 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for residential real estate, \$28.34 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for commercial real estate and \$64.34 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for tangible personal property."

According to the mayor, "the preliminary FY 2023-2024 residential tax rate has been reduced by 34.17 percent."

"A property tax rate of \$15.36 for residential real estate, \$27.49 for commercial real estate and \$64.69 for tangible personal property would be needed in the coming budget year to raise the maximum levy authorized by Section 44-5-2 of the general laws," according to the budget legal ad.

School spending was, once again, the driving force in an expanding budget, according to Polisena.

"The highest total expenditures were debt service to the schools, \$2.1 million, and I decided to give the schools an additional increase in school operational aid which is amounts to another \$2.1 million (this is separate from school buildings — this goes to operations like teacher pay, support staff pay, funding special education and out-of-district expenses)," Polisena wrote in an emailed response to questions.

Education funding in Johnston is expected to increase from \$60,116,216 this year, to \$63,496,920 in the proposed budget, a \$3,380,704 (or nearly 6 percent) increase.

"The school operations are the town's biggest budget driver. On the town side, the town's biggest increase is the new police contract (prior to this contract they were the lowest paid department in the state which was abhorrent and embarrassing for the 12th largest municipality)," Polisena wrote. "After the public safety increase, which I fully support, the town fully funded all staffing vacancies so we can provide better services to residents. The bigger problem may actually be

finding people to fill those vacancies, particularly in public works."

Police department funding is expected to increase nearly \$1 million, or about 5 percent, from the current \$19,167,064 to a proposed \$20,121,079. The current fire department budget will see a similar increase, from \$22,619,742 to a proposed \$23,535,958 (an increase of about 4 percent).

Johnston Town Council will discuss and vote on the 2023-24 budget at a 5:30 p.m. public meeting on Thursday, June 29, at Johnston Municipal Court, 1600 Atwood Ave.

"The council traditionally has its budget public hearing toward the end of June," Town Council President Robert V. Russo said last month. "By then state revenue figures should be in and the council will have time to review for any adjustments necessary on the budget submitted."

Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti has been asking for a copy of the budget since April, when Town Charter requires the proposed budget be presented to the council.

"Not one discussion about the budget during a council meeting; not one presentation by the mayor or his personnel at a council meeting and the budget is advertised in the paper showing a 7% increase to the overall budget," Civetti said last week after seeing the legal ad.

Civetti assured taxpayers that Town Council will discuss and vote on the budget before tax bills are sent out to the public.

He met with Polisena early Monday morning to see the full budget proposal.

Civetti said the mayor explained "how he was budgeting to fill all the vacant positions."

"My main concern is that the Amazon tax money of \$5.7 (million) is included in this budget when debt service only goes up by about 2.2 (million dollars)," Civetti warned. "That means over \$3 million of Amazon money is being used to fund operating costs. What happens down the road when debt costs go up where is that money coming from?"

Civetti wants to see the town set up a debt service reserve fund to cover these costs.

In the wake of surging property values, Civetti broke down the administration's proposal, and what it may mean to the average taxpayer.

"With every revaluation, usually one-third see a tax increase, one-third stays the same and one-third see a decrease," he explained. "Everyone is different. All I can tell at this time is how much the levy increased versus prior year. But that increase can be attributable to a combination of growth in the tax base and increase in tax rate ... details only the Tax Assessors Office and maybe Finance Director can provide."

# Opinion

EDITORIAL

## More time is a good thing on school construction

Amidst the many actions taken by the General Assembly during the final moments of the 2023 legislative session, one decision in particular could potentially serve to the benefit of municipalities, taxpayers, and Rhode Island public school students for generations to come.

As many as 18 school districts are in the midst of the arduous and time-sensitive endeavor of formulating and finalizing plans for construction projects aimed at renovating or entirely rebuilding schools throughout Rhode Island. It's hard to overstate the complexity of this process, which involves getting buy-in from voters to approve bonding to fund these projects, and then a multi-step, years-long process of designing and building projects in line with RIDE rules in order to secure reimbursement funding after those projects are completed.

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

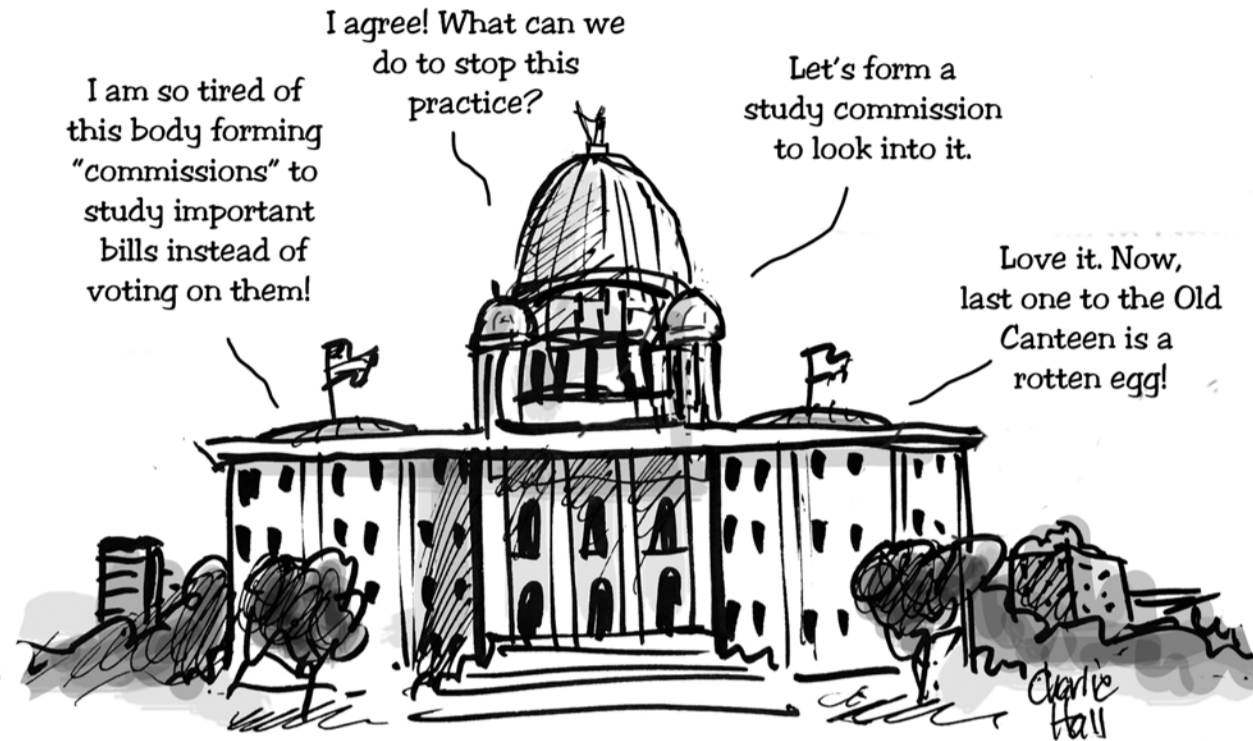
Each district is unique in its challenges, scope of work, amount of money borrowed, and how much money it will (in theory) get back from the state. But one constant remains throughout: there's just not a lot of time to waste.

For districts currently undergoing projects that have been approved (such as \$350 million to replace both high schools in Warwick), the clock has been ticking to get a construction contract in hand in order to qualify for RIDE bonuses to boost the city's reimbursement rate. For other districts, they face ticking clocks to finalize what projects they want to take on, get those projects vetted and approved by the community and local regulating boards, and designed and committed to by a contractor, in order to ensure they can receive the maximum reimbursement and any eligible bonuses.

One of the key deadlines for all this work had been Dec. 30, when all materials needed to be submitted to RIDE in order to finalize bonuses and lock in a total reimbursement rate. Thanks to the action of the General Assembly, that deadline has mercifully been moved back by six months, to June 30, 2024. This will enable districts more time to vet out construction estimates, and finalize designs ideally with more community input from stakeholders. Decisions of such magnitude should never be made under the gun, and the difference between reimbursement rates can mean a difference of many millions over the life of these bonds.

We are grateful that legislators heard the concerns of their constituents and from municipal leaders who are doing their best due diligence to ensure that these once in a generation investments in local public schools are doing so not in an expedited rush, but with the time necessary to make sure they get all their respective ducks in a row prior to putting taxpayers on the hook.

## THE RI LEGISLATURE SHUTS DOWN FOR THE SUMMER



LETTER

## Public mostly absent from poorly advertised town planning meeting

The Johnston Neighborhood Workshop with Planning and Development met on Thursday night, the same time as the Johnston High School graduation ceremony. The meeting was attended by fourteen people and 4 or 5 of those people there were from RI Energy.

The workshop was advertised only on social media to and wanted us to take their survey about our personal electrical use.

Large Town Maps were on display to show where the electric hubs are currently located. The maps showed changes through the years with hot spots meaning trouble and also showed where the proposed solar fields would go as well as more wind turbines.

According to RI Energy, our electrical grid is getting overloaded as it needs maintenance and to grow with our use of energy, due to the growing use of electric cars.

The residents were presented a PowerPoint presentation with the first slide called, "Act on Climate."

The last bold sentence of this slide stated, "Mandates enforceable in RI Superior Court."

- RI Energy wants 100% Renewable: 2033 STATE-WIDE electricity supply, includes both in-state Generation & Energy credits
- Extend the Renewable Energy Fund, 600-1000MW Offshore Wind FRP
- 100% Decarbonized- Act on Climate: 2030/40/50
- 2028 Extension of least cost procurement & State Energy Efficiency Programs
- \$25 Million High-Efficient Heat Pump Programs
- \$23 Million EV Charging Station Infrastructure Pro-

gram.

- The Electric Sectors priorities are to implement the 100% RES.
- Modernize the electric grid.
- Deploy advance meters. Procure offshore wind.
- Continue deep investments in energy efficiency.
- Complete RGGI program review.
- Transportation Sector Priorities are to target 10% EV registrations by 2030.
- Align future transportation funding with Transit Master Plan & Bicycle mobility plan.
- Continue RIPTA electrification.
- Adopt Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) rule.
- Continue EV/E Bike incentives.
- Model Climate impacts of transportation projects.
- Develop complete Streets' plan.
- Thermal Sector Priorities are to target 15% penetration of electric heat pumps by 2030.
- Scale up heat pump incentives.
- Adhere to biodiesel blending.
- Explore gas system transformation (Future of Gas Docket).
- Continue energy efficiency & weatherization.
- Begin developing 100% renewable thermal standard.

A resident asked, "Where are the materials sourced?" The presenter said, Vietnam, Taiwan and Southeast Asia. They did mention the minerals needed are only available in China.

The more Green we are going, is the more China owns the USA. We can't stop using natural gas, oil or coal as solar and wind can only help a small per-

centage.

The Industrial Wind Project off of RI and Southeastern MA Coasts is currently in the works. They are installing 1,700 to 2,000 wind turbines that are 80-100 stories high. They are taller than any building in Boston! Once you change the ocean's environment, you can't get it back. These have been blamed for problems with bird migration and killing of whales because it throws off their sonar.

According to the Census-reporter.org, Johnston has over 29, thousand residents and the median household income is \$75,579. There was a question as to how much it cost to buy and install a heat pump. A RI Energy attendee said he paid \$14,000 and that was after rebates and stated there was little in rebates available for him.

No plan is final until the town council approves it. RI Energy is thinking it will pass in April 2024.

The next workshop is in September and we NEED RESIDENTS TO TURNOUT! Johnston Residents want transparency and must see ADVERTISED meetings when the Johnston Neighborhood Workshop with Planning and Development meet again on this issue! A fellow resident suggested to advertise on the town hall sign and that is a great idea.

Thank you Johnston Sun Rise, for printing this, as the residents have a right to know what is happening in their town and must prepare to save for these expensive mandates, soon to come!

For Freedom,

Sandra Taylor  
Chair of the Johnston  
Republican Town Committee



|   |  |
|---|--|
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# Johnston Senior High School Q4 Honor Roll

## High Honors

Melissa Aguilar 2025  
 Lucas Anderson 2025  
 Allison Benoit 2023  
 Kevin Biscelli 2024  
 Trinity Blondin 2024  
 Hailey Brown 2023  
 Emily Buddenhagen 2024  
 Tyler Buote 2025  
 Ryan Carvalho 2025  
 Vincent Chan 2023  
 Michael Chavier 2024  
 Matthew Clements 2025  
 Haley Connors 2023  
 Destinee Costa 2023  
 Charles Curci 2023  
 Arianna Dandy 2025  
 Enaijah De La Cruz 2023  
 Alexia DiLorenzo 2024  
 Lauren Dixon 2025  
 Willson El Hage 2023  
 Cameron Ferrara 2024  
 Olivia Forgetta 2023  
 Joshua Galeas 2023  
 Naomy Garcia Ore 2026  
 James Guilmette 2023  
 Caleb Guimaraes 2023  
 Lauren Hill 2023  
 Emma Homenick 2023  
 Aliyah Hunt 2023  
 Siera Jeetan 2023  
 Emily Klein 2023  
 Brenton Lang 2025  
 Gavin Lapan-Brayall 2023  
 Nina Lautieri 2023  
 Thadeus Leomensah 2023  
 Timothy Liang 2026  
 Jaylin Loeum 2024  
 Dylan Lussier 2024  
 Neko Mahony 2025  
 Chelsea Maranhao 2024  
 Dylan Martins 2023  
 Logan Martins 2025  
 Maylin McAteer 2023  
 Bennett McClish 2026  
 Peyton McClish 2024  
 Ava Melo 2023  
 Jaylen Molina 2023  
 Jacob Muller 2023  
 Brendon Norris 2024  
 Janelle Nunez 2025  
 Ayomide Olagundoye 2023  
 Lilian Oliva Garcia 2023  
 Gianna Orozco 2025  
 Sebastian Orozco 2024  
 Nicole Patenaude 2025  
 Noelle Patenaude 2025  
 Joshua Philbrick 2023  
 Genesis Pineda 2025  
 Emily Pistocco 2023  
 Skyla Prata 2025  
 Fallon Provoyeur 2026  
 Tyler Renaud 2023  
 Tzivya Reyes 2026  
 Nicholas Rianna 2023  
 Isabella Ricci 2026  
 Hollan Rodgers 2026  
 Justin Rogala 2023  
 Steffi Rotella 2023  
 Aiven Rua 2025  
 Phoenix Russell 2023  
 Rayven Russell 2026  
 Derek Salvatore 2023  
 Raylin Santos 2024  
 Jason Schino 2026  
 Makayla Scuncio 2023  
 Lucas Simpson 2026  
 Aiden Soto 2025  
 Miley Souza 2026  
 Luke Taglianetti 2025  
 Jackson Troxell 2023  
 Cameron Vanstone 2023  
 Cameron Veitch 2026  
 Nathen Zalisk 2023  
 Catrina Zinni 2023  
**Total High Honors: 84**

## 1st Honors

Logan Hayden Akins 2025  
 Skyla Almeida 2026  
 Kaitlyn Barbosa 2026  
 Logan Brennan 2024  
 Gianna Brodeur 2023  
 I'daizha Brown 2026  
 Macenzie Buddenhagen 2024  
 Andrew Cardullo 2026  
 Dariana Carrascoza 2023  
 Michael Cepeda 2023  
 Henock Constant 2023  
 Anthony Corsinetti 2023  
 Giuseppe Cucinotta 2025  
 Jazmin Cuello-Pineda 2025  
 Timothy Davis 2024  
 Adrianna Dinucci 2025  
 Tyler Diodati 2025  
 Jada DiRaimo 2026  
 Vanessa Febus 2026

Emily Feinstein 2023  
 Gianna Ferranti 2026  
 Robert Franchini 2025  
 Deanna Funches 2026  
 Ayberson Garcia Cruz 2025  
 Hannah Gervais 2023  
 Kinyia Glenn 2025  
 Joseph Grenier 2026  
 Riley Guenette 2024  
 Jonathan Guilmette 2024  
 Gianna Halliwell 2024  
 Malikai Hopp 2025  
 Susana Huezo 2023  
 Mineishka Hunt 2024  
 Ariana Iasimone 2024  
 Michelina Irons 2023  
 Emily Joseph 2026  
 Alyssa Kleinberg 2026  
 Fujiy Kue 2023  
 Talia Laflamme 2023  
 Noah Lavergne 2023  
 Isabella Maggiacomo 2024  
 Channosophonn Mam 2025  
 Samantha Marcotte 2024  
 Ariana Medeiros 2023  
 Dylan Moore 2023  
 Alexandra Musa 2026  
 Elijah Odhiambo 2023  
 Sheyla Perez Sosa 2025  
 Alessandra Pesare 2024  
 Jacob Pettit 2026  
 Matthew Ponte 2025  
 Jonathan Prata 2026  
 Catherine Privitera 2025  
 Thainaliz Quinones Cruz 2024  
 Donavin Quinones 2024  
 Isabella Ragosta 2023  
 Gianna Ricci 2025  
 Alexis Rivera 2026  
 Dylan Robbins 2023  
 Faith Rosadio 2026  
 Miguel Santamaria Romero 2025  
 Jesse Santillan 2025  
 Shanna Scopelliti 2024  
 Andrew Sia 2024  
 Marlon Soto 2023  
 Sheyla Soto 2023  
 Zayvion Stokes 2023  
 Alexander Subirana 2026  
 Branden Testa 2024  
 Jayden Testa 2024  
 Abraham Tillet 2025  
 Anthony Vendetti 2026  
 Austin Wheeler 2025  
 Syeda Zainab 2024  
**Total 1st Honors: 74**

## 2nd Honors

Michael Abbruzzi 2025  
 Ferlandi Aguilar Lopez 2023  
 Aubree Allen 2024  
 Katlyn Allen 2026  
 Vincent Allen 2026  
 Elizabeth Almonte 2023  
 Tala Alsheikh Kassem 2026  
 Christopher Alves 2025  
 Jenna Aucone 2024  
 Genesis Bamba 2026  
 Marlice Baptista 2026  
 Gabriella Barata 2026  
 Isabella Barata 2025  
 Kalina Bonetti 2024  
 Kara Bonetti 2026  
 Jordan Bracey 2025  
 Jack Bremer 2025  
 Mark Brouwer 2023  
 Fabricio Brun 2024  
 Dylan Calabro 2026  
 Hannah Calabro 2023  
 Samuel Cambranes 2023  
 Ryan Capraro 2026  
 Michael Carlino 2024  
 Javanna Carnett 2024  
 Kylie Caroselli 2023  
 Jacob Carr 2024  
 Autumn Cartwright 2026  
 Lorenzo Catanzaro 2026  
 Joseph Centeno-Gonzalez 2023  
 Dylan Cerio 2025  
 Henri Chan 2025  
 Sofia China 2024  
 Christopher Civetti 2024  
 Davon Cole 2023  
 Elise Connors 2024  
 Evan Correia 2024  
 Evan Correia 2023  
 Juliana Correia 2024  
 Juliana Correia 2023  
 Elliot Cortesi 2025  
 Yohani Cortez 2023  
 Michael Cucca 2026  
 Nolan Cumiskey 2023  
 Madison Dacosta 2023  
 Gabriel Daya 2024  
 Armando DeCosta 2023  
 Antonio DeFalco 2023  
 Nathan Della Morte 2026

Edison Diaz Gomez 2026  
 Anthony DiBiasio 2025  
 Michael DiLorio 2025  
 Samantha DiMaio 2023  
 Ava DiNobile 2026  
 Briana Dominique 2023  
 Skyler Dupre 2024  
 Samson D'Uva 2025  
 Linda Echeverria 2023  
 Emily Fashjian 2026  
 Landon Faucher 2024  
 Steven Finegan 2024  
 Tyler Fortin 2025  
 Haileigh-Rose(Alister)Fredette 2026  
 Ashley Galeas 2023  
 Stanley Garcia 2023  
 Annabella Gesualdi 2026  
 Amanda Giron Caballero 2025  
 Angela Gonzalez 2023  
 Yadier Grullon 2026  
 Jasmin Guerrero 2024  
 Kenderra Guertin 2025  
 Carlos Gutierrez Deleon 2025  
 Juan Gutierrez Deleon 2023  
 Zachary Hanna 2025  
 Wally Hassan 2025  
 Tyler Holton 2025  
 Walter Homenick 2026  
 Dineishka Hunt 2024  
 Olivia Iafrate 2026  
 Jada Irons 2023  
 Vanessa Javery 2025  
 Hailee Joyal Weiss 2025  
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 Hannah Lavergne 2024  
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 Na'imah Lopes 2026  
 Joseph Lopez Tavares 2025  
 Genesis Luna-Olivo 2023  
 Angelica Maddaline 2026  
 Jayla Mainey 2024  
 Gabriella Manchester 2023  
 Analese Marcano 2026  
 Samantha Marcotte 2023  
 Balla Marone 2025  
 Mouhamadou Marone 2023  
 Kameron Martins 2024  
 Janina Mazzulla 2023  
 Aidan McGarry 2023  
 Ava Mello 2026  
 Rachael Mendoza 2026  
 Jiana Mitsoulis 2024  
 Jaden Mollock 2026  
 Melissa Emely Monteiro 2026  
 Alan Montenegro 2025  
 Karissa Morales 2025  
 Max Mousseau 2026  
 Natalia Munoz 2023  
 Diana Naser 2023  
 Susan Nassi 2026  
 Elijahna Negrón 2024  
 Connor Niles 2025  
 Davian Nunez 2024  
 Daniel Ordonez-Flores 2026  
 Randy Ortega 2025  
 McKayla Osinger 2023  
 Jeremy Ovalles 2025  
 David Pagliarini 2024  
 Lexie Palma 2024  
 Gregory Panarello 2024  
 Alexis (Alex) Pannone 2024  
 Gabriella Pascale 2025  
 James Pastore 2024  
 Loren Pastore 2025  
 Alvin Pena 2026  
 Ariana Perron 2026  
 Brea Pezzullo 2026  
 Kaylee Phillips 2026  
 Juliana Pires 2023  
 Ethan Placella 2025  
 Kaylee Poole 2024  
 Hailee Quinn 2024  
 Miguel Quintanilla 2023  
 Joseph Ramos Cardoza 2026  
 Sydney Raposo 2025  
 Victoria Repollet 2026  
 Alan Rietwijk 2023  
 Johan Rodas Cruz 2024  
 Brissya Rodriguez 2026  
 Jahaziel Rodriguez 2024  
 Yandery Rodriguez 2024  
 Diana Rosales 2024  
 Lana Salamone 2024  
 Lilianna ( Warren ) Salois 2025  
 Leah Sanchez Perez 2026  
 Kianyelis Santiago Lorenzana 2025  
 Caitlyn Savard 2023  
 Patience Scholl 2026  
 Kimberly Sibilis 2025  
 Jonathan Simpson 2023  
 Athena Sin 2023  
 Christian Sonner 2024  
 Shylah Soto 2024  
 Paul Souza 2023  
 Jacob Spinella 2024  
 Ariana Stoepker 2025  
 Emmerson Sylvia 2024  
 Parker Sylvia 2023

Alik Symoungkoun 2026  
 Sunny Sysomphou 2023  
 Carl Taglianetti 2024  
 Alejandra Torres Morales 2023  
 Ariana Torres Morales 2024  
 Bobbi'Sue Trahan 2025  
 Jared Urizar-Santos 2025  
 Isabella Vargas 2026  
 Marques Vasquez 2025  
 Samantha Vasquez 2026  
 Sarah Vasquez 2025  
 Anghelina Vejarano 2023  
 Ronald Vento 2026  
 Nicolas Viau 2023  
 Lia Vidal Roman 2026  
 Victoria Villafane 2026  
 Ava Waterman 2024  
 Jordan (Fae) Weston 2025  
 Dominic Whitten 2023  
 Nicholas Williams 2025  
 Logan Woodall 2025  
**Total 2nd Honors: 181**

## 3rd Honors

Jayvin Adamo 2026  
 Sebastian Aleman 2023  
 Anayeli Almonte 2026  
 Willow Andrews 2024  
 Nicki Aucone 2025  
 Camani Batista 2023  
 Ava Becker 2026  
 Nicholas Benoit 2026  
 Morgan Bernier 2023  
 Olivia Bryant 2026  
 Sadie Bun 2025  
 Josue Cabrera Ramirez 2025  
 Melanie Capraro 2023  
 Georgiana Cardullo 2024  
 Brooklynn Case 2025  
 Alexander Cerce 2023  
 Nevaeh Cole 2023  
 Landon Costello 2024  
 Jonathan Cruz Granados 2026  
 Anthony Daya 2026  
 Devin DelSanto 2024  
 Franger Diaz Pena 2026  
 Fernando Diaz 2026  
 Sam Dominique 2023  
 Alberto Estrada 2024  
 Regan Estrella 2024  
 Bryan Falcon 2023  
 Alex Fedorchuk 2024  
 Alexa Ferrario 2026  
 Isabella Ferri 2023  
 Medjina Filidor 2023  
 John Ford 2023  
 Irais Franco 2024  
 Kingstan Glenn 2024  
 Kyle Glode 2023  
 Robert Graham 2025  
 Isabella Grimshaw 2026  
 Dylan Guernon 2024  
 Brandon Hall 2023  
 Victoria Hansen 2026  
 Marcel Johnson Goncalves 2025  
 Alyssa Leclerc 2025  
 Casandra Lopez 2026  
 Liliana Martinez 2023  
 Hailee McDaniel 2025  
 Gabriela Mercado 2024  
 Jeremy Morataya 2025  
 Jonathan Morris 2025  
 Heber Munoz Lopez 2026  
 Hector Munoz-Lopez 2024  
 Sergio Navarro 2022  
 Mia (Ryo) Nilsson 2025  
 Daniela Noriega Garcia 2024  
 Dean Paris 2025  
 Matthew Penafiel 2025  
 Jianilda Perez Figueroa 2023  
 Anthony Perito 2026  
 Michael Perugino 2024  
 Caroline Pesenecker 2025  
 Jaqueline Pinto Lopez 2023  
 Danny Quinn 2024  
 Isabella Ribezzo 2023  
 Jordan Rivera 2025  
 Joemil Robles Torres 2026  
 David Roland 2026  
 Wilkin Roques 2025  
 Leandro Roquez 2026  
 Brayan Rosales Carrascoza 2024  
 Camila Sanchez Lamarche 2025  
 Kiara Sanchez 2026  
 Jaselle Santos 2023  
 Anthony Sevigny 2023  
 Nathaniel Smith 2024  
 Ricsa Soth 2023  
 Skyley Soto 2025  
 Michael Stone 2025  
 Jaliyah (Ronnie) Vanstone 2026  
 Jasmine Vasquez 2026  
 NeAri Vasquez 2024  
 Steven Vera Vaca 2026  
 William Vizcaino 2023  
 Cameron Walker 2024  
 Jaiden Weston 2026  
**Total 3rd Honors: 83**



# Sun Rise Scoops

## Sun Rise Staff Reports

June 23

### Johnston High School Class of '73 Reunion

Friday, June 23, at 6 p.m., The Inspiration of '73 will celebrate its 50th year reunion. It will be held at the Valley Country Club, 251 New London Ave., Warwick. Cocktails: 6 – 7 p.m. and Dinner: 7 p.m. \$80 per person. There will be live music. If you are in contact with any classmates, spread the word. For more information, check out the JHS Class of 1973 Facebook page or call Donna at 401-497-9292.

June 24

### Strawberry Festival

Saturday, June 24 from 12 – 4 p.m., Smith's Castle, 55 Richard Smith Drive, North Kingstown, invites the public to celebrate their annual Strawberry Festival. This family friendly event will feature once again puppeteer Dan Butterworth, as well as pop singer Jesse Liam. Plenty of colonial games, activities, and crafts will be provided as well as pony rides for children. Vendors will be on-site, and they will be selling their famous strawberry shortcake as well as plants for the garden. A special exhibit will feature collections from the Narragansett Bay Quilt Association. Admission to Strawberry Festival is \$10 per adult, \$8 for seniors and military, \$6 for children over 6 years of age. Family Cap is \$25. For more information: [www.smithscastle.org](http://www.smithscastle.org) or 401-294-3521.

July 11

### Family-to-Family course

The Rhode Island chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-RI) is now accepting registration for our summer session of NAMI's Family-to-Family course which begins Tuesday, July 11, at 6:30 p.m. This is a free and virtual, 8-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program, which means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition. NAMI-Rhode Island's Family-to-Family course is taught by trained family members who have lived experience with a loved one, and includes presentations, discussions and interactive exercises. For more information on the Family-to-Family curriculum and registration requirements, visit [namirhodeisland.org](http://namirhodeisland.org) or call 401-331-3060 or email [beth@namirhodeisland.org](mailto:beth@namirhodeisland.org).

July 22

### The Prout School Class of 1973 Reunion

Saturday, July 22, at 12 p.m., The Prout School Class of 1973 will hold its 50th reunion at The Prout School, 4640 Tower Hill Road in South Kingstown. All 1973 graduates are cordially invited to attend. For further information, 1973 graduate alumni are asked to join the Facebook Group "Prout Class of 1973," or contact Mary Paolino at [mary.paolino@yahoo.com](mailto:mary.paolino@yahoo.com).

July 30

### Warwick Veterans/TollGate High School Class of 1973 Reunion

Sunday, July 30 at 6 p.m., Warwick Veterans Memorial High School/TollGate High School Class of 1973 will hold its 50th Year Reunion at the Valley Country Club, 251 New London Ave, Warwick. Cocktails 6 p.m., Dinner 7 p.m. \$50 per person. Checks payable to "VetsTollGate Class of 1973" can be sent to Ms. Judy Snow, 29 Oberlin Dr. Warwick 02886. Contact us at [ClassOf73VetsTollgate@gmail.com](mailto:ClassOf73VetsTollgate@gmail.com) with any questions.

Jan 1 – June 31

### St. Francis Xavier Academy Scholarship Applications

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

Aug 17

### Lake Winnepesaukee Luncheon Cruise

AARP Chapter 2210, Thursday, August 17, Lake Winnepesaukee Luncheon Cruise trip. Experience the majesty of Lake Winnepesaukee during your 2.5 hour narrated scenic tour aboard the historic M/S Mount Washington cruise vessel. Bus pickup from Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 8:30 a.m., return time is approximately 6:30 p.m. Cost is \$134/person. For more information call Maureen at 401-828-5188. Final payment due by July 10.

Sept 11

### The Comedy Course

Monday, September 11 at 7:00 p.m., The Comedy Course is returning for a 6th year, every Monday night for 6 weeks. Three instructors, with over 100

years of combined stage experience, will guide you on a 6-week journey from writing your first joke to performing your debut comedy routine. You will learn the dos and don'ts of standup comedy and have fun doing it. The course is \$200 per person. The place: TBD. Instructors include: Joe Hebert, Coleen Galvin and John Perrotta. Class size is limited. Call John Perrotta at 401-639-7726 to reserve your seat, now. Payment options are available.

Sept 12

### Boston Duck Tour & Margaritaville Faneuil Hall Trip

AARP Chapter 2210 Boston Duck Tour & Margaritaville Faneuil Hall trip on Tuesday, September 12. Bus pickup from Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 8:30 a.m., return time is approximately 6 p.m. Cost is \$134/person. For more information call Maureen at 401-828-5188. Final payment is due by August 12.

Sept 30

### Pilgrim High School Class of 1983

Saturday, Sept 30, Pilgrim High School Class of 1983 will hold its 40th Reunion at Quonset Tavern by the Green, 615 Callahan Rd., North Kingstown, RI. For more information, please email [pilgrim-class1983@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrim-class1983@gmail.com) or visit our new Facebook page Pilgrim High School Class of 1983. Hold the date!

Oct 15

### Central Falls High School Class of 1963 Reunion

Sunday, October 15, from 12 – 4 p.m., Central Falls High School Class of 1963, will hold a 60th Class Reunion at Chelo's Banquet Hall, 2225 Post Rd., Warwick. Tickets: \$60 for buffet and dancing. Please send checks to: Patricia (Guillette) Mannix, 111 Col. John Gardner Rd., Narragansett, RI 02882. Please include maiden name and phone number on check. For more information call or email Patricia Mannix 401-789-0451; [Patriciagmannix@gmail.com](mailto:Patriciagmannix@gmail.com) Or, Nancy Dube Brazeau 401-789-0304; [nancybraz@gmail.com](mailto:nancybraz@gmail.com).

Nov 7 – 9

### Resorts Casino Hotel in Atlantic City

AARP Chapter 2210 Tuesday – Thursday, November 7 – 9, Resorts Casino Hotel in Atlantic City. The Tour includes 2 nights' accommodation, 2 meal credits (up to \$20 value each) & \$20 slot play. Bus pickup from Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 7 a.m., return time is approximately 6 p.m. Cost is \$299/person (double occupancy), \$279/person (triple occupancy) or \$399/person (single occupancy). For more information call Maureen at 401-828-5188. Final payment is due by Sept. 21.

SCOOPS - PAGE 10

## SCOOP OF THE WEEK



**S**pecial Olympics Wrestling Fundraiser  
Renegade Wrestling Alliance will put on a show this weekend at the Johnston Indoor Recreation Center, with all proceeds going toward the Special Olympics.  
The show, titled "Spectacle," will feature a main event pitting Team David Morales (RI State Rep. District 7) taking and Team Legends. For more details, turn to the Sports section, starting on Page 16.  
The RWA Spectacle event is set to take place at the Johnston Recreation Center on Sunday, June 25 beginning at 5 p.m. (doors open at 4:30 p.m.) Tickets can be purchased at the door as well as in advance at [RWA4ever.com](http://RWA4ever.com).

## Obituaries

**Obituaries**

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

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

— Thank you

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# Scoops

(Continued from page 9)

### Events at Mohr Library

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

Tuesday, June 20, register for Mohr Library's Summer Reading program which includes reading incentives for kids and many great programs. Details are on our website.

Wednesdays, 4 p.m. Art-Smart classes starting in May for ages 8 to 12.

Saturdays, 2 p.m., Art-Smart classes starting in May, for ages 5 to 8.

The library is located at 1 Memorial Ave. in Johnston. For information on all library events, services and hours of operation, visit their website, www.mohrlibrary.org or email info@mohrlibrary.org.

### Johnston Senior Center Highlights

The Johnston Senior Center is better than ever. We are offering more exercise programs and trips every week. We also have a book Club the last Tuesday once a month. A Social worker/Medicare Counselor/ Ship Counselor is also provided 5 days a week. Contact Madeline Ravenelle at 944-3343 Please come for a tour of our facility.

The Senior Center Club the last Tuesday of the month. There is no charge for Senior Center activities. They offer Bingo on Thursday and Friday. Lunch is served daily at 12 p.m. (with a suggested donation of \$3).

### Offering more programs and trips every week

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

Events June - August: Ballroom Dancing will not be back until September. They will not be dancing July and August.

Thursday, June 15: The Memories of Patsy, Whites of Westport Dinner & Show, \$79 pp

Tuesday, June 20: Newport Playhouse, (Spreading it around) Lobster Fest Dinner show, \$95 pp

Wednesday, June 28: Mystery lunch, \$10.00pp

Thursday, July 13: "Stiletto & Saxman" Whites of Westport, at 10:30 a.m., \$79.00pp

Wednesday, July 26: Mystery Lunch at 11 a.m., \$10.00pp

Tuesday, August 8 and 30: Newport Playhouse, "Norman is That You?," 10:30 a.m. Lobster Fest \$95.00pp

Trips September - November

Thursday, September 14: "The Carpenters" Whites of Westport, 10:30 a.m., 79.00pp

Monday- Wednesday, September 17-19: "Atlantic City Gambling Tour to the Tropicana Casino Resort," \$299.00pp DO (single add \$130.00) \$50.00 Meal Credits/\$30.00 Slot Play TBA

Thursday, October 5: "Aidan Keene Tribute Legends," 10:30am, \$79.00pp

Monday, October 16: Maine (Portland) \$429.00pp DO. See Beautiful Historic Waterfront, Lighthouse, Quaint Kennebunkport. 2 nights lodging, 4 Meals \$95.00pp

Tuesday, October 17: Newport Playhouse, "Ghost of a Chance" Lobster Fest, 10:30

Tuesday-Thursday, Nov. 7-9: "Turning Stone Resort Casino" \$339.00pp DO (single \$479.00) \$80.00 Casino Free Play or Bingo Bucks \$30.00 Meal Credits

### Amenity Aid Volunteers Needed

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

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

### Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund

The Johnston High School Class of 1971 is raising donations for The Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation. A generous donor has offered a \$4,000 challenge! The donor will match all gifts to the Fund up to a total of \$4,000. The Class of 1971 initiated the fund on the occasion of its 50th reunion in 2021. Each year a scholarship will be awarded to a Johnston High School Senior planning to attend a college, university, trade or technical school. Donations are tax according to your filing status. To donate, go to the following website: www.rifoundation.org/funds/soul-of-1971-scholarship-fund.

### Low-Income Home Energy Assistance

More than 1 in 4 US households struggle with their home energy bills. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help keep the heat on. The Tri-County LIHEAP Program helps to cover the cost of home heating bills for those that qualify.

Visit www.tricountyri.com for more information about the LIHEAP program, and other weatherization programs that can help to reduce your home energy bills. To submit an application for LIHEAP, or to see if you qualify, contact them at 401-519-1913. The Tri-County LIHEAP program has locations in North Providence and North Kingstown.

### Neighborhood Watch

The 2022 season of Johnston's Neighborhood Watch has officially kicked off. This Neighborhood Watch brings together residents who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together with members of the police department. The program pairs residents with Johnston Police officers in an effort to open up communication, meet other neighbors and create partnerships that help build community resiliency.

### Help OSDRI restock their pantry!

Operation Stand Down Rhode Island needs your help. Their food pantry is in need of a major restock. See a list of needed nonperishable items in the photo.

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

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

## FOOD DONATIONS NEEDED!

- CEREAL
- JUICE
- CANNED MEAT
- SOUP (DRY/CANNED)
- CANNED FRUIT
- OATMEAL
- RICE
- APPLESAUCE
- RAISINS
- JELLY / JAM
- INSTANT POTATOES
- SNACK ITEMS
- INSTANT NOODLES
- PEANUT BUTTER
- BREAD/BISCUIT MIXES
- CRANBERRY SAUCE
- PICKLES
- SHELF MILK
- NUTS
- OLIVES
- BOX DINNERS
- TOMATO SAUCE
- LOW SODIUM/NO SUGAR (ITEMS FOR DIABETICS)
- ANY OTHER NON-PERISHABLES

**DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF MONDAY-FRIDAY, 9AM-4PM OR MAILED TO:  
OPERATION STAND DOWN RI  
1010 HARTFORD AVENUE  
JOHNSTON, RI 02919**



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

# Early Deadlines:

## DUE TO THE JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> HOLIDAY

**Deadlines for our July 6th Edition are:**

**DISPLAY ADS**  
Friday, June 30th by Noon

**CLASSIFIED ADS**  
Friday, June 30th by 5pm

**THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED TUESDAY, JULY 4**

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**TOP OF THE CLASS:** Valedictorian **Catrina Zinni** (below and lower left) delivered her commencement address Thursday night. She plans to enter the University of Connecticut Honors Program to prepare for a career in nursing. (Photo courtesy Maré Studios)



# 'If you got a dream, chase it'

## Reflections from the JHS Class of 2023 Valedictorian

By **CATRINA ZINNI**

I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for being here tonight to celebrate this important milestone in our lives. I have quite a few acknowledgments, so bear with me for a moment, but our success would not have been possible on our own. My classmates and I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the support of each and every one of you. To the administrators, faculty and staff, and members of the town council, thank you for making this night possible. Thank you to the teachers that gave us the knowledge that we will carry with us into this new chapter. There are a few in particular that I'd personally like to mention, that have supported me unconditionally throughout the last few years and helped guide me to become the person that I am now. So thank you Miss Cricco, Mrs. Faiola, Ms. Ruggiero, Mrs. DeSilva, Mrs. Fresolone, and Mrs. Florio. I saw you work harder to help me than anyone I have known. Thank you Mrs. Guilmette for being more than just an advisor and making so many sacrifices to bring our ideas to life. I would especially like to thank my family for always believing in me and having faith in my endeavors. I owe so much of my success to you. I also want to take a second to acknowledge those people in my life that went out of their way to be here for me tonight, as well as those that couldn't but I know are still with me. It is people like you that inspired me to keep pushing through any obstacle.

My last thank you is to all of my classmates, my best friends, the ones that I have spent the last twelve years growing alongside. There are so many aspects of myself that are pieces of all of you. It is you that helped me through the long days, were there through

every high and low, and brought me endless laughs. You are all incredible people that inspire me every day and I cannot wait to see who you become.

As I thought about what I wanted to say to you, I had a difficult time finding the words. I wanted this to be perfect, as this is by far the most meaningful assignment I have been given, but

once I stopped searching I found that the answer was right in front of me. The most important lessons that I have learned in the past four years did not come from the books, lectures, or assignments (sorry teachers), but in the journey of figuring out who I am and the moments with all of you. There is one fact that used to terrify me, but became a building block for the person I have become, and this is the very thing that I have decided to share. It is a simple fact that kept me going in the midst of the challenges, one that we are all especially aware of tonight: that nothing lasts forever. Now I imagine that you are wondering how this could have become a source of comfort for me. The last few weeks have been full of lasts: last lunches, last classes, last trips, last dances, and preparing to go our separate ways in this world. Our lives seem to be changing so fast. I will admit that this has been difficult, and I won't pretend that there were no tears to be shed while writing this, however, this is not entirely a bad thing.

While it means that we must move on, it also means that any struggle that we encounter can't last forever either. They are only temporary. We have already seen this so many times. Thankfully, there are no more one-way hallways and staircases, lunch pods, or hybrid learning models. We can now say we won't have to sit through 6 hours and 13 minutes of school every single day. For those of

you that are continuing your education in the fall, you will find that the final exam that you are dreading can only last so many minutes. The long nights studying will come to an end, just as many already have. The horrible class will only be part of your life for a semester. Those of you joining the workforce, a trade, the military, or going down any other path, will find that this applies to your lives as well. But most importantly, it means that wherever you may find yourself in the future, any situation that seems unbearable will not be. We will all find ourselves in a moment that we don't know how we will make it through, but in this moment, remember that any darkness that you can't see your way out of will turn to light again. You may doubt your strength, but you must continue anyway. Don't let the darkness fool you into thinking that's all that's there. The bright side may not come right away. Maybe not tomorrow, or the next day, maybe not next week... sometimes it can even take four years, but better days always come if you can persevere. And that in itself makes it so much more worth it.

This doesn't only apply to the challenges in life, but it is important to remember in the good times as well. Use it as your excuse to put your whole heart into the things that you do: be a better friend and go after that dream. Never make yourself small. If you know your heart is telling you to do something more, go do it. If you come across someone that is telling you to go a different way or settle for an easier path, you don't have to listen. Live your life the way that you want to and don't have regrets. Any mistake that you make can be corrected if you are willing to accept it. Fortunately, that's why there are tomorrows. More often than not, you have another chance, so don't stop looking.

If you're thinking that this can't possibly be true for everything, you're right. But, along the way, I have only found one exception to this fact. There is one thing that can last forever, and that is the memories that we have made. While the sun may be setting on our time together, as we watched it do as a class last night, the impact that we have left on each other is one thing that can never change. When I look back on the past four years, our class community is the one thing that I know I could not have gotten anywhere else. Our bonds are irreplaceable. In times when I had to rely on others for support, I knew that I had my friends and teachers in the JHS community to rely on. Stay as close as you can to the people that you are, that could always lift a friend back up and would answer 3 am calls so nobody spent a late night alone. Some bonds will inevitably grow apart as we begin our individual journeys, but our high school years will always have been spent with one another. Nobody can change that. We are Panthers forever.

And now, as we are closing off our high school careers, I hope that you find encouragement in this simple fact too. Endings aren't always a bad thing. Forever would be a long time to spend in one place and you would never know what opportunities could pass you by. This ending is allowing us to begin our journeys into our future selves, to look beyond the limits of what high school has to offer. I'm going to leave you with one last piece of advice, the lyrics to one of my favorite songs, "Til You Can't" by Cody Johnson. I want you to know that, "If you got a chance, take it, take it while you got a chance. If you got a dream, chase it, 'cause a dream won't chase you back." Congratulations Class of 2023. We made it!

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**THEY DID IT:** The Johnston High School Class of 2023, donning Panther blue caps and gowns, received their diplomas at a ceremony held last Thursday in the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Providence. (Photos courtesy Maré Studios)

# Johnston Senior High School Graduates

- |                         |                    |                      |                              |                        |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Anthony Abbruzzi        | Nevaeh Cole        | Lea Fratantuono      | Thadeus Leomensah            | Jaqueline Pinto Lopez  | Sheyla Soto              |
| Jacob Abbruzzi          | Haley Connors      | Ashley Galeas        | Karla Liriano                | Juliana Pires          | Nicolas Souza            |
| Ferlandi Aguilar Lopez  | Henock Constant    | Joshua Galeas        | Genesis Luna-Olivio          | Emily Pistocco         | Paul Souza               |
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# LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

## Tita's Tailors and Cleaners

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By JENNIFER COATES



Meet the team of talented and experienced tailors at Tita's Tailors and Cleaners in Johnston: (l-r) Flor, Yeimy, Cecelia, Paola (Tim & Tita's daughter), Tita Meija and Tim Henry.

The door swings open at Tita's Tailors and Cleaners in Johnston and a young woman carrying an armful of clothing strides in. Along with some clothes that need to be dry cleaned is a gown that she will need for an out-of-town wedding in a few weeks, and she has come to exactly the right place to tackle both of these tasks. The dress is a bit too long and a bit too loose in the torso ~ it needs to be fit to her body so she can move in it effortlessly for this special occasion. She wouldn't trust this alteration job to anybody but the best, and that "best" is Tita Meija and her team of hardworking tailors.

Tita's Tailors and Cleaners, which officially opened its doors on Atwood Avenue in September of 2022, is owned and operated by Tita Meija and Tim Henry. The team here at Tita's Tailors is comprised of six tailors, including Tita, all of whom lend their considerable experience, expertise and talent to their work. Because clothes are made in standard sizes, and most bodies are not "standard", having an expert tailor to whom you can trust your things is an absolute must.

These tailors are meticulous, detail-oriented, friendly, and dedicated to their customers. They are respectful of your possessions, your money and your time, working hard to finish their work in an efficient and professional manner.

Tita's Tailors provides a long list of services, including the alteration of men and women's clothing (Think about that old suit that needs a little "taking out" around the waist! Think about that skirt whose hem is falling out or whose hem has fallen "out of style"! Tita's Tailors can alter almost anything including gowns, shirts, dresses, pants, jeans, swimsuits ~ they can even alter costumes, cultural

outfits and household items such as curtains and pillows.

Summer is officially here and we are right in the middle of the wedding season. Don't wait to get that formal or casual occasion attire altered before the crush begins. Tita and her team will do everything to accommodate you, but don't put this off to the last minute!

Tita's Tailors repairs backpacks, zippers, leather items and upholstery. You would be surprised what an expert tailor can do!

Customers will also find dry cleaning, laundry and pressing as well as wash & fold services here. They will

handle your clothes and possessions with professionalism and care.

Come to Tita's Tailors at 11 Commerce Way in Johnston. Hours are Mon. - Friday, 8:00am - 6:00pm and Saturdays, 8:00am - 3:00pm. For more info, call 401-403-2292 or follow them on Instagram, Facebook, Yelp and Google reviews. Their website is titastailors.com. Check out their military/first responders/veterans discounts as well as their generous 10% discount to those who donate clothes (all of which go to local charities such as House of Hope).

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**STEP INTO THE LIGHT:** Student Council President Charles Curci leads his fellow graduates in the line to enter Veterans Memorial Auditorium on graduation night.

# 'You will be the generation to succeed where others have failed'

By **MAYOR JOSEPH POLISENA JR.**



**MAYORAL ADVICE:** Johnston Mayor Joseph Poliseena addressed the graduates.

Parents, family, friends, and most importantly, graduates, It brings me great honor to stand before you tonight to celebrate this important milestone.

I know that for some of you graduates, this day came too fast, and for others, not fast enough.

But Regardless of your feelings, it's finally here.

And after tonight, you are about to enter a world more complex and uncertain than you parents did just two generations ago.

Some of you are heading off to college, others to the military and some straight into the workforce.

No matter what path you choose for yourself going forward, all of you will face both social and economic uncertainty.

There will be forces that seek to define and divide you by your differences.

They will try and pigeonhole you into a group based off your gender, race, intellect, skillset and career.

But, the degree you receive tonight shows the commonality that you all share eclipses any differences you may have.

And the key to your success is the same as it was for every generation that preceded you and for every generation that will follow you.

It's your own hard work and perseverance that will determine your future success.

And that success will not be easy.

There will be many road blocks along your journey of life.

You will encounter people and organizations that will try and break your character, spirit and determination.

But ultimately, it doesn't matter, because no force is strong enough to ever shatter your inherent drive to be successful.

For you must realize there is no greater key in the world to hold than the key to your own destiny.

Nothing is preordained.

Nothing is predetermined.

Instead, your success will be a culmination of your own hard work and drive.

Guided by your faith, family and friends, embrace the tough decisions, don't shy away from them.

Take risks, not recklessly, but with the mindset that the only person who can control the outcome is you.

For the higher the obstacle you overcome, the greater feeling of success you'll have.

And that's the lesson you should take away from your time at Johnston High

Not just what you learned, but how you've grown.

How you've all faced challenges,

Some you've overcome,

Some you may have failed,

But regardless of the outcome, what truly matters is each and every one of these challenges made you stronger, gave you experience, and maybe even taught you something about yourself you didn't even know.

That is the commonality you all share which no force will ever be able to break.

And if you continue to follow that formula throughout life. Seeking out shared challenges, goals and interests.

Embracing collaboration, not division.

You will be the generation to succeed where others have failed.

Congratulations. And I wish you all the best of luck.

# Sports

## Revamped Gershkoff set for season

### Legion club boasts three teams in action this summer

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Gershkoff Auto Body Auburn Post #20 American Legion baseball team got its summer season started last week and is looking to have a big year both on and off the diamond.

With a roster that includes high school players from Cranston West, Johnston, Moses Brown and Bishop Hendricken, Gershkoff is relying on a large crop of underclassmen to step up while it rebuilds its team.

The club got off to a 1-5 start and has been led by senior Nick Masse, who hit .333 at the plate. Dylan Martins and George Threats led the team in RBI.

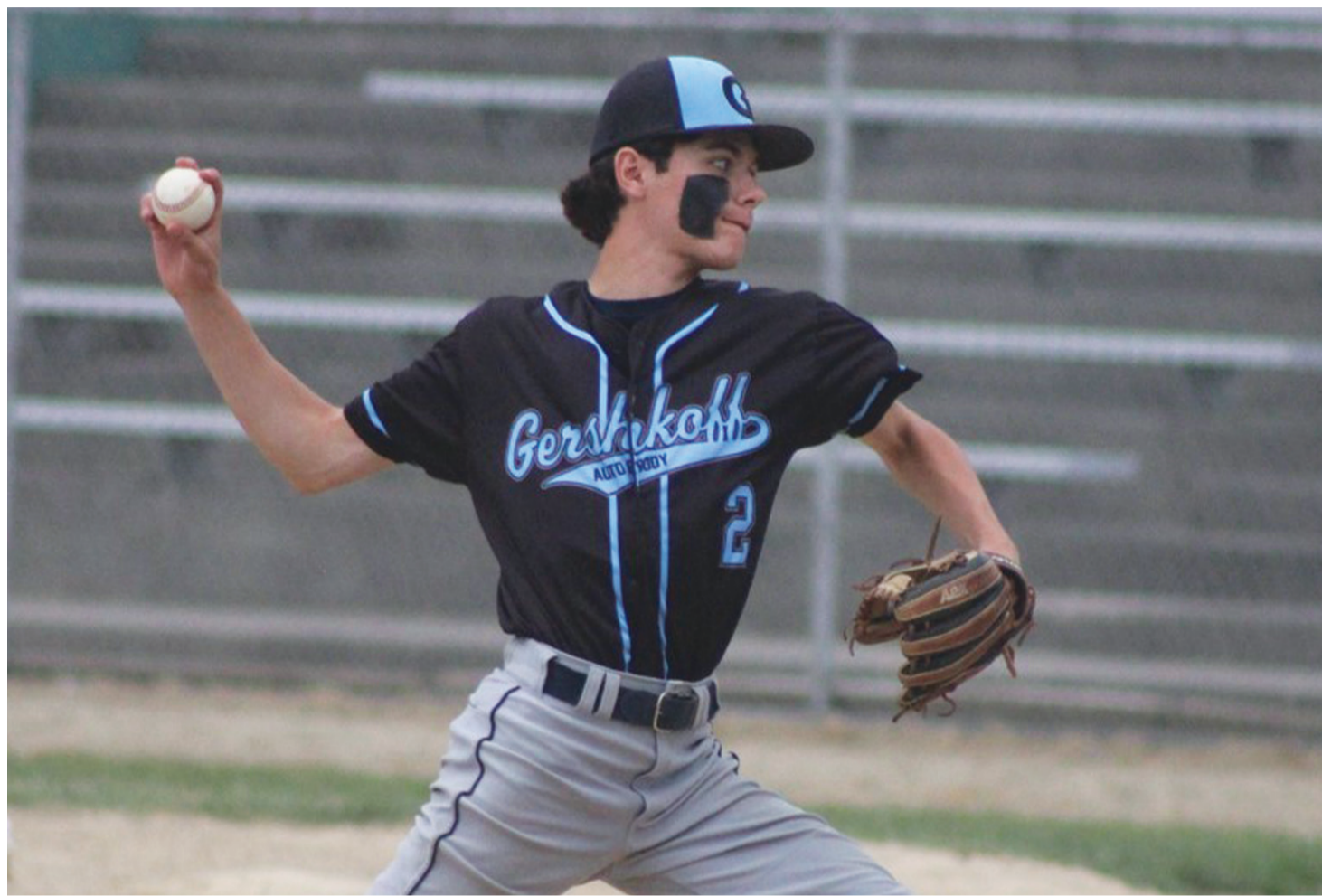
The 17-U team is off to a blazing start with a 4-0 record, most recently getting a 9-4 win over R&R Construction. Jack Fontaine, Jovi Cruz and Gianni Santo all knocked in multiple runs while Logan Martins got the win on the mound, pitching two innings and racking up five strikeouts.

The program's new 13-U Lightning Elite club is also off to a strong start with a 6-3 record. The 13-U club will be facing teams from Connecticut and is already making noise, most recently cruising past Enfield 29-2.

Anthony Campagnone led the way with five RBI while Dom Andrade and Aidyn Pizzuti added four runs each. Corey Ogden got the win on the mound and picked up a pair of strikeouts.

The program will also be offering its players numerous opportunities to enjoy the game beyond the normal state schedules. The club will be traveling to compete in a national tournament and will also be heading to the College World Series in Omaha.

Gershkoff will also be hosting three youth clinics in the month of August. On Aug. 16 there will be a clinic at the Chafee Complex, then another at the



**BOYS OF SUMMER:** Gershkoff starting pitcher Ryan Zarrella deals at a game last week (above). Chris Barboza slides into third base (at left). (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

■ GERSHKOFF - PAGE 19



## RWA's Spectacle to raise funds for Special Olympics

By ALEX SPONSELLER

Renegade Wrestling Alliance will be putting on a show this weekend at the Johnston Indoor Recreation Center as it is set to host another professional charity event with all proceeds going toward the Special Olympics.

The show is entitled Spectacle, and the main event will feature Team David Morales (RI State Rep. District 7) taking on Team Legends. Team Morales will be made up of Eddie Vegas, Coach Will, Danny Atom and Russtache. Team Legends will feature Josh Perez, Wolverine, Danger Boy Alfredo and Thrash.

■ RWA - PAGE 17



# Clippers prove my point in championship win

This past weekend, the Cumberland baseball team pulled off another big upset when it topped La Salle in the RIIL State Championship. What a story and statement play-off run.

The Clippers entered the playoffs as an afterthought. Bishop Hendricken was the top seed, La Salle had a tremendous season, and the two-time defending champion North Kingstown Skip-pers were still in the mix. Cumberland was a good team that picked up some nice wins in the regular season, but I don't think a single person outside of Cumberland would have guessed they'd be walking off the diamond with the plaque.

I only covered Cumberland in the first round of the playoffs when it topped Hendricken. The Hawks were the best team in the state in the regular season and were the favorite to get the job done. I was actually surprised while watching at how close the game was and the Clippers went on to win.

I remember my biggest takeaway was that the Clippers were special; there was something intangible that you could feel just watching them play. Hendricken had the better pitchers, bigger bats throughout the line-

up, the big game experience. However, it was clear that Cumberland was a game opponent that had an x-factor that could not really be explained.

The Clippers were consistent and fundamentally sound. They were clutch and the players fed off of each other's energy. Again, Hendricken's players played like college athletes, but Cumberland came up with play after play to eventually get to the championship round.

From there, it was all Cumberland. What an unlikely run.

Now, the reason why I said this is a statement win is because of the whole public school versus private school debate that has waged on for decades. For those who follow me, I am an avid believer that the advantages that private schools have are minimal and this proves it.

Do private schools have the upper hand? Yes, there's no denying it. There is a wider net for talent, better facilities and amenities. At the end of the day, though, some of these runs that private schools go on can't just be attributed to the fact that they're private.

Hendricken football is the best example. The run that it has been on over the past decade-plus has

## My pitch



by  
ALEX  
SPONSELLER  
SPORTS EDITOR  
ALEXS@  
RHODYBEAT.COM

been remarkable, winning 10 of the past 12 state titles. Sure, the Hawks have some advantages, but those are not enough to explain that level of dominance. The strength of Keith Croft's program is what the focus should be on.

This is the third straight year that a public school has won the baseball championship. Hendricken and La Salle are always in the mix, but this three-year run here shows that it can happen. Public schools can come together to get over that hump.

So, for those who believe that Hendricken and La Salle should be removed from the RIIL, or take on teams out of state, or be lumped into their own division, this should show you that that is not the answer, it just isn't.

Let this Cumberland squad inspire you. It proved that intangibles matter and that doing the

little things on the field add up to big time results. In reality, Hendricken and La Salle probably would win those series more often than not, but what the Clippers proved is that truly, any team can win on any day.

Speaking of the baseball championships, I also have to agree with an opinion that I saw a few people on Twitter voice over the weekend.

The baseball championships take place at Rhode Island College. RIC has a beautiful facility that is more than a capable spot for these championships.

That being said, it sure is sad to see these kids not get the chance to play in a larger facility the way that

they used to when the championships were played at McCoy Stadium.

Ultimately, politics got in the way of the PawSox remaining in Rhode Island, but what those involved failed to realize is that the ripple effect would go far beyond just the minor league club. McCoy is gone. What was one of the region's most iconic venues is now abandoned and forgotten. What a shame.

These kids deserve to get that professional feeling when they play in the state's biggest games. McCoy was a stellar option. Now, it will likely be at RIC to stay. Bryant has a nice complex, as does

URI, but they do not hold a candle to the atmosphere that a true professional park provides.

Yes, the colleges will provide the essentials. Parking, lights, top-notch field conditions, adequate seating. At the end of the day, you know the difference between a pro stadium and a college one, you just do.

Unless McCoy miraculously re-opens which is pretty much impossible at this point, or the state ends up building a new facility, which is also unrealistic, these kids will have to settle for the colleges. I don't want to blast the colleges because their facilities are impressive, but they're just not the same.

# Business Card DIRECTORY

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**HALL OF FAMERS:** New England Pro Wrestling hall of famers Wolverine, Thrash, and Danger Boy Alfredo, who will be at Sunday's event. (Photo by Dylan Conrad)

## RWA (Continued from page 16)

Other big time matchups will include AJP versus Stephen Lust for the RWA Championship, as well as Tony Goodz versus Channing Thomas; Kellan Thomas versus Devin Blaze; Mike Graca versus Jason Devine; BMT versus Sean Leiter, Nikki Valentine versus Big Juicy, and a tag team match between Hustle & Muscle versus D.C.M.C., among the eight other wrestlers set to perform in the Ocean State Royal Rumble.

The event was headed by New England Pro Wrestling Hall of Famers Wolverine and Danger Boy Alfredo, who are getting back involved in the local wrestling circuit after some time away.

"Me and Wolverine left the wrestling scene a few years ago because they weren't doing enough shows. Back in the day, a lot of high schools were putting them on but they just stopped, then COVID hit. I thought we were done but Wolverine and his son made a few appearances and they wanted to get back into the swing of things. He called me up and said, 'You want to get the tights back on and have some fun?'" said Danger

Boy Alfredo. Now, the hall of famers will be entering the ring in their own back yard to put on another show, this time for great cause in the Special Olympics.

Danger Boy Alfredo is thrilled to be back in action and to entertain the Ocean State once again.

"I feel like Tom Brady. I retired for a little bit and then you go back, you see it, and you think, 'I've got to get back into this.' This is a great event for a great organization in the Special Olympics. It's been a hell of a ride so far, it's been a lot of fun."

The RWA Spectacle event is set to take place at the Johnston Recreation Center on Sunday, June 25 beginning at 5 p.m. (doors open at 4:30 p.m.) Tickets can be purchased at the door as well as in advance at RWA4ever.com.

"For us, we are old school and love wrestling, we grew up on it. To have a fundraising event like this, something that is fun and different, we're very excited about it," said Henry Fellela, one of the event's organizers. The community has been great and has always rallied to help raise money for the Special Olympics, the RWA has been great to work with and has helped us along the way. We're really looking forward to Sunday."

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# How to preserve and cook your catch

By CAPT DAVE MONTI

If you are fortunate enough to catch a striped bass in the allowable slot size of 28 to less than 31 inches, and plan to keep and eat it, here are some tips on how to preserve and cook the fish.

Bleeding your catch, getting most of the blood out of it, will help to preserve and keep the meat fresh. To bleed striped bass firmly hold the fish on the deck as you do not want it to move and chance getting cut. Cut its gill plate and then tip the fish upside down in a five gallon pale filled with water. The fish's heart continues to pump much of the blood out of its system. Once the fish dies, we put it in a cooler with ice and add saltwater creating a brine solution. Fish blood has a high salt content so the brine solution prevents the remaining blood from coagulating.

Once fileted and you are ready to cook here is a grilling recipe from the Saltwater Anglers Association Cooking Your Catch columnist Paula Smalec. Paula modified the original recipe which was from New England Open-House Cookbook: 300 Recipes Inspired by the Bounty of New England by Sarah Leah Chase.

**Ingredients:**  
 2/3 cup dry white wine  
 2 Tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice  
 1 plump shallot, peeled and finely minced  
 4 Tbsp. olive oil, plus extra for oiling the grill grate  
 1 Tbsp. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley  
 1 Tbsp. coarsely chopped fresh tarragon  
 4 fresh striped bass fillet portions (6 - 8 oz. each)  
 salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 lemon wedges, for serving

**Instructions:** Combine the white wine, lemon juice, and shallot in a small nonreactive bowl. Let stand until the shallot softens, about 10 minutes. Whisk in the olive oil, parsley, and tarragon.

Place the fish fillets into a Ziplock bag and pour the marinade over them. Seal the bag and allow the marinade to cover as much of the fish as possible for 30-45 minutes.

Preheat your grill to medium high. When you are ready to cook, oil the grill grate. Remove the fillets from the marinade and place them flesh-side down on the grate. Grill the fillets until cooked through in the center (they will flake easily when tested with a fork), 3 to 4 minutes per side, turning them once.

Season the fish at the table with salt, pepper, and freshly squeezed lemon juice.

## Secretary Raimondo equips NOAA with \$3.3 billion for climate fight

Last week U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced about \$3.3 billion in funding for NOAA under the Inflation Reduction Act. Through IRA, NOAA Fisheries will invest in strengthening the agency's core mission to provide science-based management and conservation of the nation's marine resources as we confront climate change. The move was welcomed by the fishing community that has long advocated for enhanced NOAA Fisheries funding to address climate impacts.

IRA funds allow NOAA Fisheries to advance several critical areas focused on tackling the impacts of climate. Funds are earmarked for NOAA Fisheries Climate and

Ecosystem Fisheries initiative as well as North Atlantic right whale programs, Pacific salmon, red snapper, facilities modernization, Arctic research, permitting efficiency, and support for hatcheries and other Tribal initiatives.

Hats to Secretary Raimondo and her NOAA Fisheries chief, Janet Coit, for facilitating this round of funding. For funding details visit Inflation Reduction Act: A Historic Investment in America's Climate Resilience | NOAA Fisheries.

## Where's the bite?

Striped bass and bluefish. Reid Beland of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown, said, "The larger bass are being caught at night off Newport, Jamestown and at Block Island. There are fish in the Bay but anglers are having to work for them."

East End Eddie Doherty, fishing author and Cape Cod Canal fishing expert said, "The action on the Canal slowed last week, however, the new moon appeared on Father's Day and there are still schools of bait swimming in the Big Ditch so hopefully more predators return soon."

Dave Henault of Ocean State Bait & Tackle, Providence, said, "Customers are catching striped bass and bluefish in the Bay but they are having to work for them as they are scattered. Once you find them, you're good." "One customer caught a 24-inch bluefish at Conimicut Point this weekend but the large bass and bluefish are being caught off Newport," said Tom Giddings of the Tackle Box, Warwick.

Scup, black sea bass and summer flounder. Henault said, "Customers that are catching fluke and black sea bass are putting in their time." "Fluke fishing has been decent along the beaches. A lot of recreational shorts and you have to put your time in to get some keepers. Most fish coming from 40 feet of water. Don't be afraid to try stickier bottom where the draggers cant go. Some better reports coming from areas along the backside of Block in 50 ft. Sea bass report continues to improve with bigger fish starting to move up into shallower water. A lot of dinner plate scup being caught while targeting fluke. I took home one 22-inch fluke for dinner this weekend caught at Warwick Light drifting across the channel."

Tom Giddings of the Tackle Box, Warwick, said, "Shoe fishing from Rocky Point Pier, Warwick, has been very good. Customers are catching large scup to 18 inches, fluke to 22 inches and this weekend a customer caught a 37-inch skate that she kept, cleaned and cooked for her fellow anglers on the Pier. Weak fish were also caught by anglers of Warwick Light and the Warwick Neck country Club. Larger fluke are being caught off Newport."

Freshwater. "The largemouth bass bite is good with anglers using both lures and bait (shiners) with success," said Giddings.

"Customers are doing fairly well at Ryan Park in North Kingstown," said Reid Beland of Quaker Lane. "Anglers are hooking up with largemouth bass and some catfish at Ryan Park."

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



**FISH SANDWICH:** Gary Vandemoortele of Smithfield with his first black sea bass of the season, a 21-inch fish caught off Warwick Light on Monday. Gary said, "Guess we're having fresh fish sandwiches for dinner tonight." (Submitted photos)



**STRIPED BASS GOOD EATING:** Katie Spier showing appreciation for her first keeper caught last year while fishing with uncle Greg Spier of Portsmouth. Grilled bass is delicious, the regulation this year is one fish/person/day in a slot size of 28 to less than 31 inches.



**GATOR BLUEFISH:** Shaina Boyle of Smithfield caught this 36-inch bluefish when fishing with father Gary Vandemoortele. Capt. Dave Monti holds fish.

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**Gershkoff**  
(Continued from page 16)

CLCF field on Aug. 18. On Aug. 19, there will be a clinic geared toward 12 year olds that will be transitioning to the big diamond. This clinic will be at Jordan Avenue. Each clinic will be \$45 and will include a free t-shirt.

Lastly, Gershkoff also announced that it will be competing in the newly-formed American Legion Fall Ball league, which is set to take off shortly after the summer season.

"My vision as the Gershkoff general manager is to give youth all ages an op-

portunity to keep players together as one community where they play together and form friendships and bonds throughout the year," said Gershkoff general manager and head coach Dave Schiappa. "Give families the opportunity to afford a program that believes in helping to make players good citizens first, students second, and players third. We can reach out to schools and coaches and also showcase players as best we can. Biggest motto is we are coaches for life and will always be there to help players throughout their life. Ultimately we want to help all of our community to be the best we can be."

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## RISD and the Corliss-Carrington House



The Rhode Island School of Design, commonly referred to as RISD, has long been a part of our state's history. Part university and part museum, it was established in 1877 by the Rhode Island Women's Centennial Commission with an objective to celebrate and study art, craftsmanship, creative thinking, and design from diverse cultures – something it still does to this day.

Like many museums, RISD's collection grew from donations. Some donations came in the form of individual pieces, while others came in the form of entire estates. This is how RISD acquired the Corliss-Carrington House in 1936. A large, stately home built between 1810 and 1812 on College Hill in Providence, the home as a museum displayed period furnishings, artwork, and even antique toys for visiting children to play with. It is a remarkable property of the Federalist style and a testament to the rise of wealth and power in the post-revolutionary industrial era Rhode Island was



**By Travis Landry**  
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very much a part of.

After WWII, the RISD Museum redirected its focus towards 20th century art. Thus, maintaining a historic property like the Corliss-Carrington House fell outside the scope of RISD's core mission and they decided to sell the home in 1961. Many of the items once displayed there as part of the museum's collection have been in storage for decades, but recently, RISD reached out to us about bringing their antique toys to auction. Needless to say, the toys from RISD and Carrington House collection are beautiful and well preserved!

Highlights include an attributed Wilhelm Schimmel folk art dog and a circa 1880 G.A. Schwarz tin horse cart. The craftsmanship and detail on some of these pieces are incredible, and most are in excellent condition for their age. You can almost imagine what joy 19th century children must've felt when receiving these brightly colored ships, dolls, and animals – they were so high-tech back then!

Currently, the RISD Museum houses approximately 100,000 pieces, with approximately 2,000 on display at any given time. The collections come from around the world and include Ancient art, Asian art, contemporary art, costumes, textiles, decorative arts, painting, sculpture, prints, drawings, and photographs. Some of the more prolific artists and designers represented are Picasso, Monet, Manet, John Noble Barlow, Gilbert Stuart, Andy Warhol, Kara Walker, Paul Revere, Chanel, Goddard and Townsend, and more.

If you have never visited the RISD Museum of Art, I encourage you to take a trip to Providence and check it out. With such an amazing world-renowned museum so close to home, it would be a shame not to experience it!



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# ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local Adoptable Loveable



## Jazz

Photo credit: Community Cat Care Center

This sweet face belongs to Jazz and she can't wait to bring the music back into your life! If you have been searching for a loving loyal companion perhaps Jazz is waiting for you? She is a domestic short hair with a shiny black coat and her eyes will truly steal your heart. Poor girl was found outside declawed fending for herself. Please contact our friends Pawswatch at the Community Cat Care Center for more information about Jazz at 401-285-9800. She's hoping for a home where she will be kept safe and loved!

If you have been thinking of adopting or know of an animal in need, please contact Karen directly at [animaltalk1920@gmail.com](mailto:animaltalk1920@gmail.com)



## Ezra

Photo credit: Karen Kalunian-Animal Talk

Have you been searching for a new best friend? Well Ezra is hoping that you'll go meet him and maybe he'll become your new best friend! He is a young (under a year old) pup with a stunning black and white coat and a huge smile! The black "mask" on his face makes him look like the superhero that he is! Ezra is playful, smart and ready to learn all the ropes of becoming the best boy! He looks like he will be on the bigger side with his long super-model legs! If you'd like to meet Ezra, please contact EGAPL The Heart of RI at 401-467-3670 or visit their website at <http://www.heartofri.org> Maybe you'll be the lucky one to adopt Ezra!

# 'Don't talk to boys' ...



## and other advice from the JHS Class of '23 Salutatorian

By AYOMIDE JOSEPHINE OLAGUNDOYE

Good evening. I will skip the whole introduction part this time around and start us off with a little bit of disclaimer: I learned A LOT of things in high school, but being brief is still something that I am working on. So I apologize in advance. But please bear with me- I have a couple of stories to tell, but I promise, they're interesting!

Now it really is an honor to have the opportunity to even speak at graduation. But how could I ever take credit when there are SO MANY PEOPLE to thank for my accomplishments.

I first thank God for orchestrating every detail in my life and bringing my family to America off a lottery.

I thank my parents for instilling in me the value of education ever since I was young.

And I will never forget the two things, TWO THINGS, my mom told me on my first day of kindergarten: always try your best and don't talk to boys. And of course my father, who everytime I would tell him I was bored he would advise me to read my books.

I also thank my four older sisters for providing me with lots of examples of things to do ... and some examples of things not to do.

Of course I am forever grateful for the teachers and mentors in my life that have helped me understand that I need to use this noggin of mine to not only memorize and regurgitate other people's ideologies, but instead think and reason on my own and apply the knowledge that I have learned to help other people.

Thank you classmates and friends, for challenging me, encouraging me, and teaching me more than I could even imagine.

In fact, I THANK YOU ALL. Every single person in this room. Because you have directly, or indirectly contributed to who I am today. Even the people in this room, who have never seen me in their entire lives- I thank you.

And here's why.

So a little bit of a back story: last week, I was telling my sister that one of the reasons why I am excited for this summer is because it will be the first summer in 13 years that I don't have summer homework. I'm 18 now, so if you do the math, I've had summer homework for a large percentage of my life! But I guess it wasn't as bad as we made it out to be sometimes. If it wasn't for

summer homework I probably would have forgotten every single thing that I had learned in math the previous school year- and I wouldn't have been able to calculate that I've had Summer homework for 72% of my summers.

In addition, I wouldn't have been introduced to some of the intriguing books that I had to read.

One of them being Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton. Many people are familiar with the live action version that primarily tells the story of Dinosaurs being reintroduced to the modern world. But like most cases, the movie did not do the book any justice, because it neglected to overemphasize a concept that basically harassed the reader on every single page of the book, chaos theory. In essence, chaos theory basically describes the phenomenon of how small things add up to yield massive impacts. Huge, complex, and incalculable systems are essentially the compound of its constituent parts.

For instance, a common example that chaos theorists like to use is weather. The weather is very very hard to predict, because one miniscule alteration or miscalculation in wind speed, direction, or humidity can lead to a completely different outcome or forecast. So God bless meteorologists.

I mean when people talk about the butterfly effect, they don't actually mean it when they say that "a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil, will set off a tornado in Texas." But the idea still holds true.

The infiltration of a singular idea can completely revolutionize a person's entire mindset.

The slight modification of a habit can break an entire addiction. And if we further apply this concept to our lives, many people would attest to the fact that a smile, ONE SMILE, can go a very long way when you're having a bad day. Just small acts of love can spread from one person to another and indirectly make the world a better place.

That means you- the person that has never met me in their entire life has impacted me in some way, shape or form. Or maybe you're the parent that disciplined the student that I befriended. Or the teacher, student, administrator, or politician that has made Johnston High school such a great experience for me. Whatever role you played- big or small: I thank you.

If you think for a second class of 2023 that your skill



**THE SPEAKERS:** Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisen, Valedictorian Catrina Zinni, Salutatorian Ayomide Josephine Olagundoye, Student Council President Charles Curci, and Class Advisor Margaret "Peg" Guilmette await the start of the ceremony. (Photo courtesy Maré Studios)



**Salutatorian**  
(Continued from page 22)

For your talent or your role is insignificant, please remember that you influence people in ways that you don't even realize. And even if it's just impacting one person at a time, like how you guys impacted me, you still have the potential to leave behind a mark that's immense. If there's one thing that you all can take away from the briefest speech that I've ever written: It would be that you all are so wonderfully intelligent in your own ways.

And I've met sooo many amazing and smart people at Johnston High School.

For example, it doesn't matter what category, Jacob Muller, can beat anyone in a game of trivia or jeopardy. Derek Salvatore, Jaylen Molina, and Cameron Vanstone can pick up any sport one day and become professionals the next day.

If I was as musically inclined as Destinee Costa, Ricsa Soth, Sam Cambranes, Phoenix Russel, Wilson Elhage and everyone else in the band and chorus, the mini concerts I have in my car would be much more enjoyable. Steffi Rotella painted a replication of the Starry Night, better than Vincent van Gogh. Charlie Curci can compose the most beautifully written 50 page thesis in 30 minutes. James Guilmette can not only swim faster than some people can run, but he can argue any point down to a

T. Vincent Chan is not only incredibly artistic, but I'm sure he can write his drawings out in code too. Tyler Renaud is so good at math that I'm sure he could have calculated the percentage of summers that I've had summer homework in his head. Armando Decosta gives some of the funniest yet informative oral presentations that I've heard. And Catrina Zinni, oh man, that girl is one of the most organized, hard working, and caring people that I know. I really wish I could go around and shout out every single person but I'm really trying to be brief here. I've honestly learned something from each and every member of the class of 2023, including teachers as well. Everything that I know, really I've

learned from other people. So who am I to take credit for my achievements?

Class of 2023, you all have so much to offer the world and teach others. But on the flip side, there's still so much that we need to learn.

If I could offer one piece of advice it would be to never stop learning. Whether you travel, whether you learn from life's situations, on the job, in an institution, from a book or a movie, or from the people around you, always be eager to learn more about the truth.

Oh and of course one last piece of advice ... don't talk to boys.

Good luck on your future endeavors, I'm honored to have met you all! Thank you!

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Going to the beach should be fun for everyone! Seniors are no exception. Getting some fresh air is especially great for older adults since it gets them out of the house and comes with many health benefits.

A study in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that being outdoors and active is connected to fewer depressive symptoms, greater self-reported physical functioning, and lessened fears of falling for older adults.

Seniors may need some extra care and prep beforehand to make sure they're safe in the sands. Below, we're going over all of the things you should do to prep for your upcoming beach day with an older adult.



**BEACH SHOES:** Comfortable, well-fitting shoes are a necessity for older people. At the beach, a pair of snug and lightweight shoes can protect feet from sand burns, cuts from broken shells or rocks, and help prevent falls.

**COOL WATER:** Water is essential for any beach day to stay cool and manage your body temperature.

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:** Keep this information in your phone and paper in case your phone loses battery. Get information as well for nearby doctors and health facilities.

**HATS:** A wide-brim hat protects your face from the sun and gives you extra protection while you're walking on the beach.

**HEALTHY SNACKS:** Snacks are especially important for people with diabetes or who otherwise have low blood sugar. Keep some healthy options close like fruit kabobs and trail mix.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Adults with dementia or similar ailments may have trouble finding you if they get lost. Keep contact information sewn into clothes or on an accessory in case of an emergency.

**MEDICATION:** Bring their medication for the day so they don't miss a dose. Check the labels to see if they need to keep any prescriptions at room temperature. If so, ask their doctor for storage recommendations while traveling.

**MOBILITY AIDS:** Don't leave behind their wheelchair, cane, or walker! Some beaches rent beach-specific mobility aids that are better suited for the terrain. You can also get wheelchair mats to make the terrain safe and flat.

**PROTECTIVE CLOTHES:** Long sleeves and long skirts can keep your skin protected. Dense fabrics and loose clothes are good choices to protect yourself from the sun. If you want to go the extra mile, look for clothes with at least an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of 30.

**SUNSCREEN:** Sunscreen is important for seniors to prevent skin cancer and slow skin aging. When picking sunblock, choose one that has broad-spectrum protection against UVA and UVB rays, a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher, and water resistance. Consider reef-safe sunscreen to keep the sea safe from harmful chemicals.

**SUNGLASSES:** Eye protection protects your vision and prevents the risk of eye disorders. John Hopkins Medicine recommends getting sunglasses that wrap around your face. They also recommend shades that protect against UVA and UVB rays. Hats can also help keep the sun out of your eyes.

**UMBRELLAS:** Beach umbrellas can give you a shady spot to relax. Hand umbrellas can give you portable shade while you walk along the shore.

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# Perseverance (Knees, Don't Fail Me Now!)

MEMOIRS  
by SUSAN DEAN



time. He and I ran the first mile together, and then as we both huffed and puffed along, he slowed and

said, "Nana, I have to stop and walk. Will you walk with me?"

"Sorry, Anthony," I said between gasping breaths.

"I have to keep running! Your mom's behind us! She'll catch up to you!"

I wanted to keep true to my goals, but I was also afraid to break my stride lest I never work back up the stamina to keep going. It's now a family joke about how I left Anthony "in the dust" that year. And with every telling the story gets bigger and more outrageous.

After surgery on my right knee years ago I began wearing a brace every time I ran. But last September I felt a twinge in my left knee while doing the Downtown 5K. I managed to jog to the finish line (goals firmly in place), but couldn't walk to the car without assistance. A cortisone shot and physical therapy followed. My knees had switched roles. My "good" non-surgical knee was now my "bad" knee.

Up to that point I had been jogging once a week with my friend, Karen. Karen and I met in 1996 at a road race - introduced to each other by a mutual running friend. This past spring we resumed - but doing a walk a bit, run some, and a walk/run combination, with my left knee - once so free - now wrapped in a protective brace.

So when Rachel told me she'd signed up for the Gaspee Days 5K this year and wanted me to do it, too, I hesitated. But then I thought, why not? I'm not getting any younger, so if I can still move, there's every reason to try. There's a camaraderie among runners - even the elite runners cheer for those of us bringing up the rear - happy that we're hanging in and going the distance. My brother Rob has been known to complete a 5K, then start over again, catching up to accompany us stragglers to the end, and veering off just before the finish line that he crossed long before. And Dave

is going to do the Gaspee, too, despite some recent injuries. At 73 he plans to do a run/walk combination strategy - which apparently works. We did a practice run recently and he still finished ahead of me, even though I was running the whole way.

Road races are happy places - cheerful events. They're times of fun to share with family and friends, but even more importantly they're a celebration of the blessing of good health. I've had several dear friends pass away in their fifties and sixties, and now have other friends currently undergoing treatment for cancer or dealing with other serious debilitating conditions and illnesses.

So I'll run with Rachel, with deep gratitude in my heart and with thoughts and prayers for those who can't and for those who've left us. Uncle Don - 102 - is in my corner - happy that I'm still going strong. And I know that Aunt Helen is still with me, too - cheering me on and proud that I'm following in her footsteps. I recently had a birthday, which pushed me into the next age division - I just turned 70 - and as weird as that feels, maybe, just maybe, one of these days I'll place - just like Helen. I know she's expecting great things and I'll do my best to keep her legacy alive. I can almost hear her laughingly telling me to "keep moving", and so I will, for as long as I possibly can.

"Come on, Mom, you can do it," said my eldest daughter, Rachel.

We were discussing the Gaspee Days 5K road race. I started running in my thirties and ran my first 5K race when my youngest daughter was two - back in 1987. My Aunt Helen Mellor was my inspiration. She started running in her fifties when she and my Uncle Don bought a summer house in Bridgton, Maine. We'd all go up for the 4th of July and most of us would run the four-mile race up there called "Four on the Fourth". The route had long gradual hills that went on forever. And after somehow making it to the top of each incline, bone-weary and gasping for air, there was barely time to savor the downhill before another "mountain" appeared.

It was a family event - cousins, my brothers, my daughters, my husband - but Helen was always the star. She'd place third or fourth in her age group, then second as the years went by, and pretty soon, as she approached eighty, she'd be first. My Uncle Don, now 102, has her collection of racing plaques and awards still lovingly displayed.

Helen had a couple of same-age "rivals" she viewed as her friendly competition. She didn't really know them - they were just familiar faces she'd recognize at the race year after year.

Helen would look for them at the starting line and plan her strategy (which was always just to "keep moving!"). When they didn't appear a few years in a row, Helen, with her legendary sense of humor, figured she'd simply lucked out and out-lived them and could run uncontested from then on, even walk the race, and still place!

Helen passed away at age 98 in March, 2022. But she never stopped moving. She went from running, to a combination of running and walking, to just walking - every day - almost to the end of her life.

My husband Dave and I didn't meet until 1998, but discovered we had been running in the same 5K races for years. We had the same collection of race t-shirts. Most notably the Downtown 5K in Providence. In 2010 - the 21st running of the race - we were contacted because along with a handful of others we had both run in that race every year since its beginnings in 1990. Our little group was dubbed "The Downtown 5K Dashers". They gave us shirts and jackets emblazoned with the "Dasher" moniker and invited us to breakfast with the elite runners, the media, and the race sponsors. They interviewed and honored us before the race. Every year since, with the exception of the Covid interruption, Dave and I have been donning our "Dasher" t-shirts and completing the Downtown 5K. We figure we're now rather obligated to enter it for the rest of our lives. I can't say I was "dashing" anywhere fast even in the beginning - I'm a slow recreational jogger - but it was fun being recognized for loyalty and perseverance at least!

I've always had three goals in mind when running a race:

- 1) Finish
- 2) Try Not to Finish Last
- 3) Run (Jog!) the Whole Way Without Stopping to Walk

I was last only once, when I did my one and only 10K years ago. I was so far behind that I lost sight of the crowd, missed a turn, and had to find my way back onto the route. They actually gave me an award for hanging in there after finally finding the finish line!

My daughters and my grandchildren have also completed the Gaspee race in years past. One year was particularly memorable. My grandson, Anthony, was nine or ten at the

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## World Elder Abuse Awareness In Rhode Island there is a Haven for Elders in Need

Elders are entitled to the same safety and protection as everyone else. Rhode Island law protects older adults — anyone over 60 — from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. But the crime of elder abuse continues to occur and often goes unreported.

Elder abuse can include acts of physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse, as well as financial exploitation, neglect and withholding of basic needs. It is common for victims to experience more than one form of abuse.

The Saint Elizabeth Haven for Elder Justice is committed to addressing this issue throughout the state.

The Haven's primary focus is to assist elder victims of abuse which often means providing temporary shelter so they have a safe place to stay. From there, the Elder Justice Advocate works with the individual to develop a safety plan and identify resources.

The Advocate will also help connect the elder to legal assistance and, ultimately, with planning their safe transition back into the community.

For elder abuse victims who are not able to leave their homes, the advocate will provide support and safety planning as well as connect the individual to legal resources and other services.

Saint Elizabeth Haven collaborates with community members to provide education and training on recognizing the signs of elder abuse and reporting them in accordance with RI law. Members of law enforcement and

social service organizations have been the main participants but elders, their family members and other professionals were also included.

Advocacy is also an important role for the Haven, addressing gaps in services for elders in both law and public policy. The Haven operates with funding through the RI Office of Healthy Aging (OHA), Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) and a three-year grant from the Department of Justice, (DOJ).

Through the DOJ grant, the Rhode Island Coalition for Elder Justice was created. The Coalition consists of a network of community partners working together to keep elders safe. It includes victim service agencies, senior service agencies, community groups, advocacy groups and law enforcement as well as state and federal agencies.

Their focus is strengthening and enhancing the elder abuse service system while ensuring the prosecution of the perpetrators of this crime.

The Saint Elizabeth Haven for Elder Justice is a program of Saint Elizabeth Community. For more information, please visit [stelizabethcommunity.org/haven](http://stelizabethcommunity.org/haven).

RI law requires those who suspect a Rhode Island resident is a victim of any form of elder abuse to report to the RI Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) Adult Protective Services Unit online at [oha.ri.gov](http://oha.ri.gov) or by calling OHA at 401-462-0555. Reports can be made 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All calls are confidential.

## June is Brain Health Awareness Month

As we live longer, the risk for cognitive decline does increase.



AARP - RHODE ISLAND  
by CATHERINE TAYLOR

And this has people worrying more than ever about their own risk for dementia and memory loss. Indeed, an AARP Vital Voices Survey found that 93% of Rhode Islanders surveyed reported that staying mentally sharp is extremely or very important -- the number one health concern cited by respondents.

Fortunately, when it comes to brain health, we're learning more about what really works -- and the good news is that so much of it is in our control.

Join AARP Rhode Island on June 29 at 10 am at a free Tele-Town Hall to learn about the latest brain health research and ask your questions. Our guest will be Dr. Kate Zhong, a founding member of the Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH), an independent collaborative convened by AARP. We also will be joined by David Parkes, Senior Policy Advisor in AARP's Policy, Research and International Affairs division, who will highlight AARPs' brain health resources.

Partnering with AgeUK to expand its international reach, the GCBH gathers groups of top scientists, doctors, scholars and policy experts from around the world to create scientific reviews with evidenced-based recommendations in understandable context. Since 2016, the GCBH has published reports providing new brain-health information and answering some of the most common questions people have about how to keep their brains healthy.

Based on current brain research, vetted by AARP's GCBH and AARP's Staying Sharp program, scientists have identified 6 Lifestyle Pillars that support brain health.

The first is Engage Your Brain, or learn new things. This doesn't need to be academic learning. Just stimulate your brain by staying curious, pursuing new interests, and challenging your thinking. Some examples are reading, taking classes, learning a musical instrument or language, and practicing complex crafts.

The second pillar is Be Social, or stay socially engaged. Studies show that people with good social networks live longer and are physically and mentally stronger than those who are socially isolated. As the COVID-19 pandemic-imposed limits on in-person social interactions, we found new virtual ways to be with family, friends, and our community, thus avoiding isolation. We can keep those virtual connections going even as we finally get out and about.

Managing Stress is the third pillar. Stress management includes regular exercise, smiling and laughing, distracting ourselves with music and reading, and spending time outdoors in green spaces. Other ways to manage stress are confiding in friends, quieting your mind, limiting screen time, and

taking deep breaths.

The fourth pillar is Ongoing

Exercise, which doesn't have to be extensive. Just get moving. Experts recommend at least 150 minutes of exercise per week, which can be broken down to 30 minutes per day, five days per week. Walking for endurance is the easiest way to start, but you also can incorporate strength training, flexibility, and balance activities into your exercise routine.

Restorative Sleep, the fifth pillar, is essential to overall mental and physical health. Most adults need 7-8 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Sticking to a regular sleep-wake schedule, even on the weekends, is recommended.

The sixth pillar is Eating Right. What you eat has a big impact on your brain. A brain-healthy diet limits meat and sweets and emphasizes fish, nuts, beans, grains, leafy green vegetables, and healthy fats such as olive oil.

You'll have the opportunity to learn more and ask your questions of Dr. Kate Zhong and David Parkes at AARP Rhode Island's June Tele-Town Hall. Mark your calendar for 10 a.m., Thursday, June 29th. The event is free for AARP members and non-members. Register at [www.aarp.org/RIEvents](http://www.aarp.org/RIEvents).

I look forward to connecting with you!

Meanwhile, mark your calendar and plan for AARP Rhode Island Shred Week, July 31-August 4. Stop identity thieves in their tracks by safely disposing of documents containing personal information at any of our five drive-by locations. It's convenient and it's FREE.

- Monday, July 31, Edward King House, Newport
- Tuesday, August 1, Cumberland Senior Center, Cumberland
- Wednesday, August 2, Bristol Community Center, Bristol
- Thursday, August 3, Office of the Attorney General, Cranston
- Friday, August 4, East Providence Senior Center, East Providence

Drop-offs, 9 a.m. to noon; no more than two boxes per person; no businesses, please.

And remember that when it comes to fraud, if you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam. Stay informed with the AARP at [www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork](http://www.aarp.org/FraudWatchNetwork).

Catherine Taylor is AARP Rhode Island State Director.



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For more information visit [www.aarp.org/RIEvents](http://www.aarp.org/RIEvents)

# Earworms from the Past

A few days ago I was struggling to brush my teeth. My dominant hand is still partially paralyzed. The toothpaste



## RETIREMENT SPARKS by ELAINE M. DECKER

kept rolling off the brush. When I was in marketing at Colgate Palmolive, one of my assignments was in oral care. I learned that the brushing action and flossing are actually more important than the product. Put another way, I remembered that a "little dab will do you."

Suddenly, I became captive of an earworm from the past, with the jingle: "Brylcreem, a little dab 'll do ya!" burrowing into my ear. "Brylcreem, you look so debonair!

Brylcreem, the girls will all pursue ya. They love to get their fingers in your hair." That wasn't a Colgate brand, but as it happens, another of my product assignments included Wildroot, which had its own jingle. "Get Wildroot Cream oil, Charlie! It keeps your hair in trim." Now I had two competing earworms. And they were fighting for ear time with a jingle that's all over TV that I can't un-hear: "1-877-Kars-4-Kids."

If that weren't bad enough, when I cut the banana onto my cereal, I saw that it had a Chiquita sticker on it. I didn't even try to suppress that classic ditty. What was worse, I started to remember additional popular jingles from the past, starting with other Colgate products. "Use Ajax, the foaming cleanser. B-b-boom. Floats the dirt right down the drain." Then I moved on to non-Colgate ones. "Mr. Clean gets rid of dirt and grime and grease in just a minute. Mr. Clean will clean your whole house and everything that's in it." I wish.

Fortunately, not every brand I worked on in my ten years in marketing there had a jingle. But that didn't stop my tumble down the rabbit hole of earworm memories. Colgate marketed Hebrew National hot dogs, but "I wish I were an Oscar Meyer wiener" is what got stuck in my ear. And I don't even like hot dogs. After eating one, I'd probably need Alka-Seltzer: "Plop plop fizz fizz. Oh, what a relief it is." (Except when it has become an earworm.)

Not all of these jingles are tied to products. Some come to us from TV shows, especially ones from our youth. "It's Howdy Doodie time; it's Howdy Doodie time... It's time to start the show; so kids, let's go!" Or how about the still popular: "M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E! Mickey Mouse, Mickey Mouse. Come along and sing a song and join the jamboree!" Or "Happy

trails to you, until we meet again. Happy trails to you, keep smiling until then." I had such a crush on Roy Rogers! Also on Robin Hood. But he didn't have a theme song.

How about other entertainment. "Take me out to the ball game. Take me out with the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and cracker jacks. I don't care if I never get back." Or the iconic "I don't wanna grow up, I'm a Toys R Us kid." Then there are all those classic folk songs that get stuck on repeat whenever you hear them. "If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning."

**"Brylcreem, a little dab 'll do ya!"**

"Where have all the flowers gone?"

Lots of pop songs from the past can become earworms. Who can forget "One, two, three o'clock, four o'clock rock... Gonna rock around the clock tonight." Or drift off to "Wake up, little

Susie, wake up." Meanwhile, we were "Wasting away in Margaritaville. Looking for my lost shaker of salt." Notice that the pop songs that become earworms are seldom ballads. We aren't meant to fall asleep while we're being tormented.

More likely than not, your vintage earworms vary with the seasons. In the summer, songs by the Beach Boys blanket your brain; "Under the boardwalk" and "Surfin' U.S.A." Around the holidays, songs about Christmas, Santa Claus, and "Rudolph, the red nosed reindeer" have your ears ringing. Even in Spring, you'll have "...Peter Cottontail, hopping down the bunny trail."

By now you are probably being tormented by earworms of your own. I'd apologize for doing this to you, but misery loves company. The only advice I can offer you is to pass them on to someone else. Everyone must have a jingle lurking in their past, waiting to be set free. If not, give them one of your own. Or just remind them that a little dab will do them.

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

# You Can't Make It Up: Chapter III "The Dirty Half-Dozen"

NOTE: For my new readers, "You Can't Make It Up, Chapters I and II columns can be found in my book, "50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter." Order details appear at the end of this column.



## MY SIDE OF THINGS by LARRY GRIMALDI

secret security question list so I don't forget the new key to the cloud universe. Since I don't have national security

clearance and I'm certainly not, nor ever have been, a spy or intelligence officer, I find this monthly exercise to be particularly annoying

Sometimes we find ourselves in baffling situations, causing us to shake our heads and mumble, "You Can't Make It Up!" I've documented some of these encounters in the aforementioned columns. I've now gathered enough material for Chapter III. In the spirit of the Lee Marvin flick, "The Dirty Dozen," let's enjoy the latest version of The Theater of the Absurd featuring the "The Dirty Half-Dozen."

IS THE RIGHT RAMP THE WRONG WAY? Have you ever eased your car onto the "on-ramp" next to the "off-ramp" of the highway only to be confronted by the ominous WRONG WAY alert on the median strip? I don't know about you, but that notice always prompts instant panic before I realize that I'm neither the victim of a traffic engineer's cruel joke, nor in violation of motor vehicle law.

WHO IS LISTENING? Recently, I pulled up to the drive-in window of Windy's (the name has been changed to protect the guilty). I ordered a hamburger, chicken nuggets with barbecue sauce, and a diet root beer. When I got home, I found a chicken sandwich, nuggets with honey mustard sauce, and a regular root beer in the bag. Perhaps I had placed my order in Urdu, the native language of India and Pakistan, and they didn't understand me. So, I just chicken-winged (pun intended) it and ate my lunch.

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? Have you ever tried to get a real HUMAN BEING to answer an "800" customer service telephone? If you are a stubborn consumer, and don't mind expending unlimited time, energy, and exhibiting sheer determination to repeat the word "representative" at least 15 times, you stand a decent chance. Even then, a pre-recorded robot will direct you to the company web site. I don't know about you, but I scream at the robot (I know that nobody is listening), "If I wanted to use the web site, I wouldn't have run the communications gauntlet and risked high blood pressure." Then I scream 'representative' another 15 times to finally reach the consumer communications Promised Land of one-to-one conversation!

WHO ELSE HAS PASSWORD PARANOIA? Every 25 days, my laptop reminds me that I have five days to change my password. This warning causes instant consternation in my world of limited tech ability. I've yet to change the password on the first try without waking the computer gods who stridently notify me that I have failed in my quest. (The admonishment always appears in large red "ERROR" letters). After multiple attempts, I succeed and have to erase the old password from my User ID, password,

DO YOU HAVE SELF-INSTALLATION SAGAS? In keeping with my technical inadequacies, I can't grasp the concept of self-install programs. This winter, I contracted for cable service (I know "streamers" are snickering) at the Ft. Lauderdale condo where we spend January through April to escape the rigors of nature's coldest season. The customer service representative at AD INFINITIM (name again changed to protect the guilty) assured me that I possessed the intelligence and knowledge to self-install. He was wrong. After several attempts and the utterance of many "blue" words, I arranged for a technician to hook up the equipment. The \$100 installation fee was worth the preservation of my cardiovascular system.

DO YOU KNOW THE WAY -NOT TO SAN JOSE-BUT CHELSEA? Preparing for a recent appointment at the Chelsea, Massachusetts branch of the Massachusetts General Hospital, I put the 800 Everett Rd. destination into the WAVE (named changed, one more time, to protect the guilty) app on my phone. When we arrived in Chelsea (I thought), the fun really began. After circling the rotary as instructed, we found ourselves listening to the computer directing us onto to Route 93, and after several trips down Columbia Avenue as instructed, we discovered that we had been "wild goose chased" onto Everett Rd. in South Boston! After verifying that I had indeed put in Everett Rd. in Chelsea on my GPS, we started on Columbia Road toward Chelsea, yet again. We spotted an MGH building (number 151, not 800), pulled into the parking lot and asked a security guard for directions to 800 Everett Rd. He informed us that we were actually looking for 80 Everett Rd., not 800 as written on my appointment card. You can't make this up!

No doubt I will amass another collection of bloopers, blunders, and blunderbuss for Chapter IV in the near future. In the meantime, develop your own list.

Larry Grimaldi is a freelance writer from North Providence. Many of his previous PrimeTime columns have been re-issued in the anthology, "50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter: Reflections on Gratitude, Joy, Life's Oddities, and a Few Complaints!" available at Amazon.com or Stillwater Books in Pawtucket." Materials published in this book are used with the permission of Beacon Communications. For more information, e-mail lvgrimaldi49@gmail.com

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## Summery Flatbread

When dining outdoors with family, friends and neighbors, there are few things better than a tasty dish the whole family can enjoy like these Chipotle Chicken Flatbreads. Perfect for al fresco entertaining when served alongside a fresh salad, they're simple to make and allow guests to personalize with preferred toppings before popping in the oven. As a colorful and fresh dish, it's an ideal meal for get-togethers on the patio.

### Chipotle Chicken Flatbreads

Recipe adapted from [butteryourbiscuit.com](http://butteryourbiscuit.com)

- 2 flatbreads
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 clove garlic, diced
- 4 chicken tenders, cooked and cubed
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, quartered
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup ranch dressing
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chipotle seasoning
- 2 tablespoons cilantro leaves, chopped

Preheat oven to 375 F.

Place parchment paper on baking sheet and add flatbreads. Sprinkle cheese on flatbreads. Top with garlic, chicken and tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Bake 16 minutes until cheese is melted.

In small bowl, mix ranch and chipotle seasoning.

Drizzle ranch dressing on flatbreads and sprinkle with cilantro leaves.

# Summer Safety & Accessibility

## SENIOR SAFETY

by JUSTIN OAKLEY  
OAKLEY HOME ACCESS

Summer is one of the most exciting times of the year here in New England. After a long winter, many of us are desperate to get outside and begin to enjoy the short summer season. Additionally, we see a tremendous influx of seniors returning to our community after spending the winter months in warmer areas. With that in mind, we want to provide you with some tips for summer safety that will benefit our senior clients and those with mobility difficulties. In addition, we have shared below some great information from our Rhode Island State Parks that can help find accessible outdoor activities throughout the state.

### Stay Hydrated!

One of the most common reasons for elderly hospital admission during the summer months is from dehydration. We recommend that for all outdoor activities, you have at least 12 oz of water with you in a travel friendly container. Hydration helps to keep our blood pressure regulated and can prevent fatigue and fainting when outside. A good rule of thumb is that "If you feel thirsty, it's already too late!". Prehydration before activity, during, and post activity is crucial.

### Make your Plans Known

Regardless of the activity, ensure that a family member, friend, or caregiver knows your plans. Those plans could include being out in the garden, or perhaps going for a nature walk. Having your location known will help ensure that there is a system in place to check on you and know that you have returned home safely. Even better would be to invite somebody to accompany you on those plans.

### Utilize Mobility Aids

Being outside presents a new set of challenges for those with mobility difficulties. Surfaces are often uneven, sandy, and can be pitched down or up at significant angles. This is a fantastic opportunity to use a mobility aid of your choosing. One option could be a rollator (as shown above) that allows you to sit down for rest breaks, while also providing a strong base of support with its four wheels. Another option could be as simple as trekking poles or a walking stick. There are many options available for your specific needs, and we of course are always happy to discuss this with you.

### Know your limits

One of the common reasons we see falls and injury during the summer is because our clients have overestimated their abilities. After a long winter, many clients go into the summer being over ambitious. It is important to understand that lack of activity during the winter may have led to de-conditioning. Starting slow and gradually increasing outdoor activity will ensure safety.

### State Parks

Rhode Island has taken some terrific initiatives to provide accessible parks to its residents and greater communities. To the right is a chart that describes our state parks, and their accessible offerings.

### RI Summer Accessibility

Another great resource for our clients is <https://access-ri.org>. Their user-friendly website has information for accessible options throughout the state. The site is broken down by activity and ensures that when you leave the house, you know that you will be safe and able to access your location of choice.



|   | Hand Cycle | Paved Trail | ADA Picnic Tables | Accessible Boat Ramp | Accessible Fishing Area |
|---|------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| <a href="#">Beavertail State Park</a>       |            | X           |                   |                      |                         |
| <a href="#">Colt State Park</a>             | X          | X           | X                 | X                    | X                       |
| <a href="#">East Bay Bike Path</a>          | X          | X           |                   | X                    |                         |
| <a href="#">Fort Adams State Park</a>       |            |             | X                 |                      |                         |
| <a href="#">Goddard Memorial State Park</a> |            | X           | X                 |                      | X                       |
| <a href="#">Haines Memorial State Park</a>  |            |             |                   | X                    |                         |
| <a href="#">Lincoln Woods State Park</a>    |            | X           |                   |                      | X                       |
| <a href="#">Rocky Point State Park</a>      |            | X           |                   |                      | X                       |

## Test Your Sun Savvy



**53%**

mistakenly believe that sunglasses with darker lenses provide better eye protection.



**54%**

of adults have light-colored eyes (blue, hazel or green).



**68%**

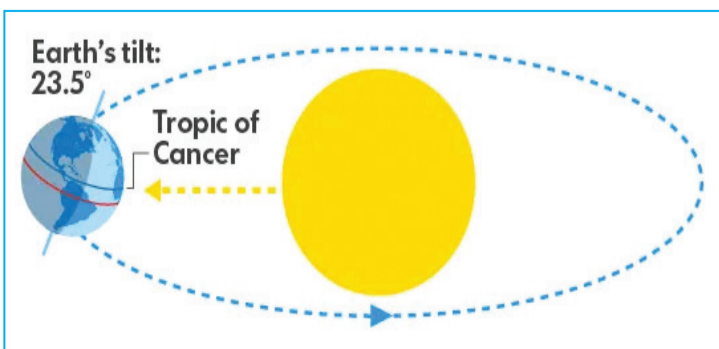
with light-colored eyes don't know that light eyes are more photosensitive.

Source: The Academy's 2014 Harris Poll of 2,027 U.S. adults.  
© 2021 American Academy of Ophthalmology

[aao.org/eyesmart](http://aao.org/eyesmart)

# Summer Solstice

According to the National Weather Service, the summer solstice, which marks the official beginning of summer, occurs at the moment the earth's tilt toward the sun is at a maximum. As a result, on the day of the summer solstice, which in 2023 occurs on Wednesday, June 21, the sun appears at its highest elevation with a noontime position. The precise moment the solstice occurs is when the sun is directly over the Tropic of Cancer. This year the sun will reach that point at 10:57 a.m. Though it's not always sunny on the summer solstice, when the sun is out throughout the solstice people in the Northern Hemisphere can expect more hours of sunlight than any other day of the year. That provides yet another reason to welcome the official arrival of summer.  
TF236041



## How to Select a SUNSCREEN

Choosing the right sunscreen can help reduce your risk of skin cancer and early skin aging caused by the sun.

**Sunscreen is an important tool**

in the fight against skin cancer, including melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

**1 in 5**

Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.



The American Academy of Dermatology recommends choosing a sunscreen that says:

### Broad spectrum

Means a sunscreen protects the skin from ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays, both of which can cause cancer.

### SPF 30 or Higher

How well a sunscreen protects you from sunburn.

### Water resistant or very water resistant

For up to 40 or 80 minutes. Sunscreens are not waterproof or sweatproof and need to be reapplied every two hours or after swimming or sweating.



One ounce of sunscreen, enough to fill a shot glass, is considered the amount needed to cover the exposed areas of the body.

Remember, sunscreen alone cannot fully protect you. In addition, seek shade and wear sun-protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, whenever possible.

To learn more about skin cancer prevention and detection, talk to a board-certified dermatologist or visit [SpotSkinCancer.org](http://SpotSkinCancer.org).



## ELDER LAW

by DON DRAKE  
CONNELLY LAW OFFICES, LTD. SPECIALIST

## Tylenol Abuse Rises as Opioid Prescriptions Drop Unintended Consequences of the Opioid Epidemic

"The 'opioid epidemic' has had some unintended consequences that many could not have predicted," said professional fiduciary and certified elder law Attorney RJ Connelly III. "The addiction to opioids has forced many providers to cut back on prescribing these pain relievers, even to those who truly need them, forcing individuals, especially older adults, with serious ailments such as arthritis to depend heavily on over-the-counter pain reducers. The problem is they do not have the same potency as opioids. As a result, many, especially seniors, are taking much more acetaminophen (Tylenol) than recommended to control discomfort and pain."

"Drugs like ibuprofen (NSAIDs) are much more effective in controlling arthritic pain than acetaminophen, but not as safe," continued Attorney Connelly. "In fact, it is contraindicated in those with heart disease, leaving them with acetaminophen as the only available option."

"Before we begin our discussion, remember this, taken as directed and without alcohol, acetaminophen is better for your heart than ibuprofen products. However, this is a general statement; each person should check with their medical provider regarding acetaminophen or any over-the-counter product."

### The Concerns with Acetaminophen (Tylenol)

"As I stated, taken as directed, acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a relatively safe over-the-counter medication," said Attorney Connelly. "However, there are increasing concerns among many geriatricians about the damage caused by the misuse and overuse of acetaminophen to address acute and chronic pain. As stated earlier, these concerns result from the opioid epidemic and the medical profession's reluctance to now prescribe narcotic medications for appropriate pain control."

A senior's slower metabolism results in the inability to clear medications as quickly as a younger person's system, which can lead to toxicity and even overdose with certain medications. This is due to physical changes as we age, including a reduction in muscle mass, more fat tissue, changes in body composition, and less fluid in the body systems. As a result, our body reacts differently to medications that it could previously metabolize without adverse reactions. Acetaminophen is one of these medications; the result can be life-threatening in some cases.

### The Liver and Acetaminophen

When taking the recommended dose of acetaminophen, it is initially broken down in the gastrointestinal tract and then absorbed by the bloodstream. Usually, this takes about 45 minutes, and for older adults who may be taking suppositories, it takes up to two hours. Then, it is metabolized by the liver to be excreted in the urine. But taking too much acetaminophen can change how the liver does its job. A high amount of this medication causes an increase in a metabolite (the by-product of metabolism) called N-acetyl-p-benzoquinone imine (NAPQI), a toxic by-product.

Typically, the liver can effectively clear tiny amounts of NAPQI, but more significant amounts kill cells and cause irreversible tissue damage. In severe cases, it can cause liver failure leading to biological chain reactions that can lead to death.

In a 2016 literature review by Trusted Source, liver failure caused by acetaminophen overdose caused death in approximately 28 percent of cases, and among those who survived, 29 percent required a liver transplant. Those who survived an acetaminophen overdose without a liver transplant experienced multiple problems due to the long-term damage.

Here is another shocking statistic: those who take acetaminophen over several days at just 25 percent above the recommended dosage have been shown to experience liver damage. The guidance on acetaminophen dosing states that individuals should not take more than 4000 milligrams (mg) daily (with 3000 mg as the recommended ceiling).

Further, a report in the American Journal of the American Medical Association states that even this dosage over four days or more can cause an elevation in ALT (serum alanine aminotransferase) levels, which is a sign of the liver being damaged. The report also states that even when acetaminophen is discontinued, the damaging effects continue for several more days.

### The Stomach and Acetaminophen

A person who uses acetaminophen regularly at doses greater than 2000 mg, faces a four times greater chance of stomach bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract than those who don't. According to a blog on the Kressler Institute site, elevated levels of acetaminophen that cause damage to the liver release a protein that causes intestinal permeability resulting in bacteria leaking from the gut directly into the bloodstream. The result could be a full-blown blood infection; in some cases, these bacteria are resistant to antibiotics.

### The Heart, Kidneys, and Blood

Heavy use of acetaminophen has been associated with a risk for kidney disease, especially when combined with alcohol use. At least one study found an elevated risk of kidney dysfunction when using alcohol and acetaminophen. In a 2013 study, acetaminophen has also been found to have some correlations with kidney cancer. Finally, in a 2011

study of more than 64,000 men and women, acetaminophen was associated with several types of blood cancers, including myeloid neoplasms, non-Hodgkin lymphomas, and plasma cell disorders like multiple myeloma.

### Other Effects of Acetaminophen

Acetaminophen use has also been linked to rare but serious skin conditions such as Stevens-Johnson syndrome (a reaction to medication that starts with flu-like symptoms, followed by a painful rash that spreads and blisters. Then the top layer of affected skin dies, sheds, and begins to heal after several days) and toxic epidermal necrolysis (a life-threatening skin disorder characterized by a blistering and peeling of the skin. This disorder can be caused by a reaction to other drugs present - often antibiotics or anticonvulsants). Exactly how acetaminophen causes these reactions is still in question, but it's essential to keep it in mind. Finally, in another study, researchers found a slightly elevated stroke risk in those with diabetes who used acetaminophen regularly.

### Emotional Health

In an Ohio State University study, it appeared that acetaminophen could affect emotional processing. According to researchers, those using acetaminophen regularly "evaluated unpleasant stimuli less negatively and pleasant stimuli less positively, compared with participants who took a placebo." Both negative and positive events were less emotionally stimulating to those taking acetaminophen, blunting reaction to such events.

Another double-blind study by another research group at Ohio State found that acetaminophen users exhibited less empathy toward others' pain after taking the medication. The results of this study raised questions about the social implications of long-term acetaminophen use.

### Important Takeaways

"As we pointed out earlier, medical professionals say acetaminophen products are relatively safe when taking the recommended dosage and without using alcohol," continued Attorney Connelly. "Providers say that the recommended dosage for adults is between 650 mg and 1,000 mg of acetaminophen every 4 to 6 hours. The FDA recommends that an adult shouldn't take more than 3,000 mg of acetaminophen per day unless directed otherwise by their healthcare professional."

### Here are some other points to remember when taking acetaminophen products:

- Don't take Tylenol or acetaminophen products for more than ten days in a row (some medical providers recommend as little as five days) unless you've been instructed to do so by your doctor.
- It is harmful to mix alcohol and Tylenol/acetaminophen products.
- The biggest concern is damage to the liver, but this combination can also increase the risk of kidney disease.
- You should never drink more than three alcoholic beverages in a day, and always make sure you're not combining Tylenol with any other medicine that contains acetaminophen. Read the labels!

- You should never take more than 3,000 mg of acetaminophen in a day, and to be safe, if you are using it regularly, seek medical advice.

"As Americans age, we need to focus on the safety of all medications, including OTC medications that our older population uses," said Attorney Connelly. "This is especially true since the opioid epidemic has caused healthcare professionals to reduce prescribing stronger and more effective narcotic pain relievers. The result has been those with chronic pain issues, specifically older adults, seeking relief through OTC NSAIDs and acetaminophen. Because medication can be purchased over the counter does not mean it is safe. I can't stress this enough, always check with your healthcare provider."

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bringing his music to people in California, New York, Tennessee, North Carolina,

Pennsylvania, Georgia and Illinois. While usually performing with a full orchestra, he has four musicians who always travel with him.

Mathis still loves to perform, spacing out his appearances and keeping in shape by going to the gym and exercising 45 minutes every day.

“I’ve always been an athlete. It’s always been a big part of my life. I held some records in the high jump. Singing is like athletics. You must prepare and stay in good shape.”  
Mathis signed with Columbia records when he was 18 years old and has always stayed with them. He has had 73 albums on the Billboard charts, making him the 3rd best-selling artist ever, with over 360 million records sold.

“I’ll be there to see this incredible man who is in his 67th year of recording music and performing it around the world.”

“Chances Are” his music was playing when Joyce and I were parking at West Hill Pond. I still get “Misty” reminiscing about those days and the “Wonderful, Wonderful” songs of Johnny Mathis.

“It’s Not For Me To Say”, but to me, his music will also be at the top of the charts.

As an octogenarian, Johnny Mathis is aware that young people are listening to different music today than songs like “Misty”, “Chances Are” and “It’s Not For Me To Say”.

“Most people (At my concerts) are pretty well along in age, but I do see some younger people in the audience,” he said.

Tickets are going fast and range from \$89 to \$509 for special seats in the orchestra pit.

Mathis will perform at the Providence Performing Arts Center on September 30 at 8:00 p.m. after flying around the country,



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