

## Schools short-staffed?

### Mansolillo: 'I'm very concerned about the safety of our students'

By RORY SCHULER

Each month, at their regular meeting, School Committee members are granted a few moments to voice congratulations or share salutations.

At the Sept. 12 meeting, following a brief welcome back statement, School Committee Member Susan Mansolillo switched to a more somber tone.

"I'm concerned that we have open positions in the schools — TA positions," she warned the district's parents. "I know that we have budget constraints, but

I'm very concerned about the safety of our students. I'm saying it on the record. I know that our budget was not fully funded this year, the way we needed it to be. But I want to say it on the record that we do need the additional funding at some point."

Earlier this week, Johnston Superintendent Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr. confirmed the district has several open spots.

SCHOOLS - PAGE 8

## PRIME SLIME



**SLIME PROPRIETOR:** At 12 years old, Penelope Santos may be one of the Ocean State's youngest entrepreneurs. The founder of Angel Stars Slime LLC makes and sells all sorts of slime. She and her mother recently secured a business license from the town of Johnston. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler)

### 12-year-old entrepreneur founds LLC and secures town business license

By RORY SCHULER

The proprietor's a tween but her business is an infant heading toward toddlerhood. "Some parts are easy and some parts are hard," Penelope Santos said after mixing a fresh batch of slime. "You have to take some risks to be successful."

While Johnston has a well-deserved "business friendly" reputation, the town may now boast one of the Ocean State's youngest entrepreneurs.

SLIME - PAGE 12

## Same solar development, slightly smaller scope?

By RORY SCHULER

Next Thursday the Johnston Zoning Board will hear from developers who want to build a slightly smaller 157-acre solar farm along Winsor Avenue.

"I would say if they're going back to the Zoning Board it's with a new plan," Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena re-

sponded via email over the summer when asked about the new proposal, which had originally been slated to come before the board in July. "Since there's not much else that can change, the new plan is probably smaller in size and may be different in layout. There is nothing to legally prevent them from proposing a new plan."

Not every town official agrees with that assessment.

The solar project is slated for "new business" discussion at 6:30 p.m. during the Sept. 28 Johnston Zoning Board meeting.

Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti said the "Winsor III Solar Farm Proposal that will consume a large forested Area in

District 5." Civetti represents District 5 on Town Council.

"Since the Mayor is no longer using the Sun Rise to advertise meetings and most people in Town no longer read the Providence Journal, many are not aware of the upcoming meeting," Civetti wrote earlier this summer. "People need to know that

SOLAR - PAGE 11

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**YANKEE'S WORK ETHIC:** Kathy Yankee recently received a promotion at the Johnston Senior Center. (Photo courtesy Richard J. Delfino Jr.)

# Kathy proves the 'Yankee Work Ethic' is real

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

**T**he Johnston Senior Center 'Spotlite' this week shines on Kathy Yankee. Kathy has been employed here at the Center for two years. For 22 months, Kathy was responsible for the Center's "Housekeeping Needs," and was alone responsible for all janitorial and custodial services.

Kathy's work ethic was outstanding and her attention to meticulously keeping this building spotless was second to none.

When an opening came about in the demanding position of kitchen manager, Kathy was the unanimous choice of staff as the person with the commitment and attention to detail that would be perfect for the job.

Add in her "obsession" with cleanliness, and she was the perfect candidate for the job.

For the past two months Kathy has done outstandingly in her new position. Outside of work, Kathy enjoys working seven mornings a week at her "passion," which is caring for her horse at a local stable.

She says working at the stables and being around these beautiful animals gives her "a peaceful serenity."

She also stays very busy caring for her daughter and grandchildren who reside with her.

Like Kathy, we appreciate immensely the dedication and commitment of all our staff, whose efforts on behalf of our members is so greatly honored.

**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.

# OLG hosts annual Italian Feast and Festival

By PETE FONTAINE

The 2023 Our Lady of Grace Italian Feast and Festival, held in honor of La Madonna della Difesa, will long be remembered as one of the best in recent years despite periods of inclement weather and highlighted by the Roman Catholic Church's classic community camaraderie that has become a trademark during the impressive tenure of Pastor Rev. Peter J. Gower.

There was fantastic homemade Italian food, expanded seating under the Big Top as well as booths with games, goods and amusements for children and people of all ages at the new look Festival Field on Sheridan Street.

Perhaps even more impressive was despite brief interruptions of inclement weather, there were several milestones that will rank among the best at the highly popular Rite of September.

One was Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena Jr. presenting the Most Rev. Bishop Richard G. Henning with a key to the town during the annual Feast Mass which was followed by a procession through the streets with proud parishioners carrying the statue of La Madonna della Difesa.

"Feast 2023," Father Gower began, "we have so much to celebrate. We were blessed with a beau-



**VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS:** These are some of the many proud parishioners at Our Lady of Grace Church who cooked and served delicious homemade Italian food during the annual feast and festival in honor of La Madonna Della Difesa. (Submitted photos)



**SPECIAL SCENE:** In keeping with tradition, OLG's annual feast mass was followed by proud parishioners carrying the statue of La Madonna della Difesa during the annual procession.



**MEMORABLE MOMENT:** Mayor Joseph M. Polisena Jr. presents a key to the Town of Johnston to the Most Rev. Bishop Richard G. Henning during the annual feast mass inside the storied Roman Catholic Church on Lafayette Street.

■ OLG - PAGE 4

## Don't Let Medications Lie Around Your Home!



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		C	O	L	A	L	B	S						
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U	N	R	E	A	L	I	T	Y	N	A	Z	I	S	
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**TASTY TREATS:** The famous golden-brown doughboys were again a huge hit during the recent Italian Feast and Festival at Our Lady of Grace Church in Johnston.

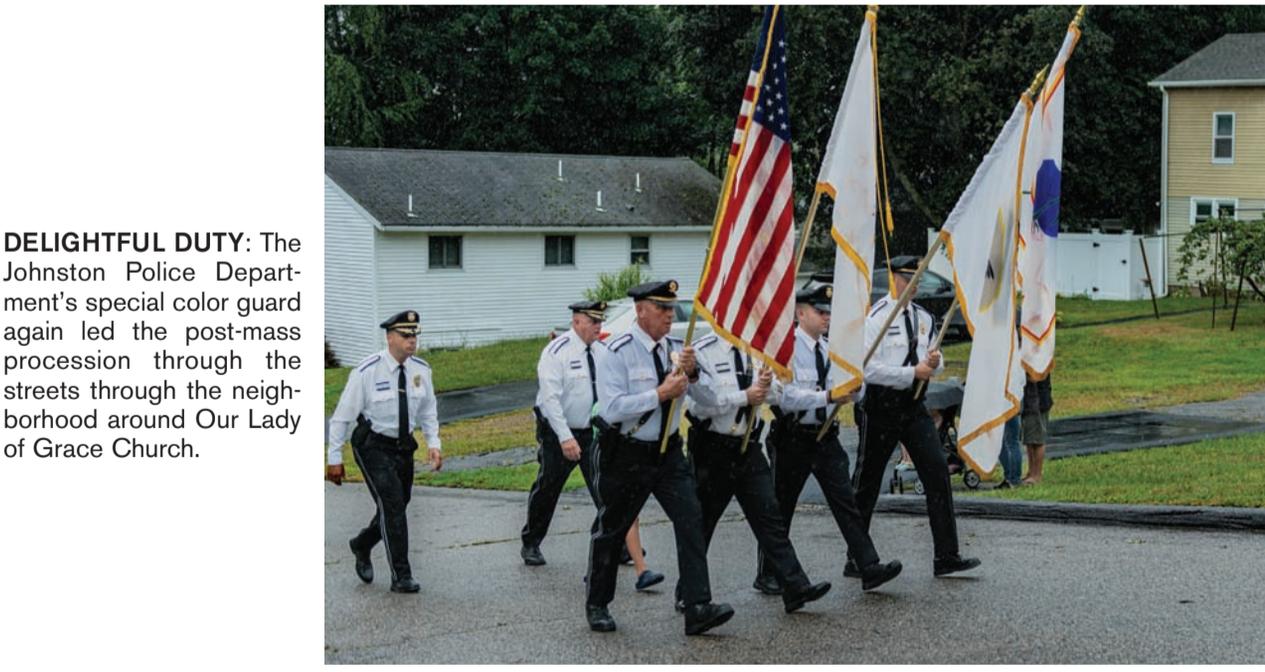


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**KIDS KORNER:** Rockwell Amusements' famed Scrambler provided many thrills and chills for children of all ages during the OLG Feast and Festival.

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**DELIGHTFUL DUTY:** The Johnston Police Department's special color guard again led the post-mass procession through the streets through the neighborhood around Our Lady of Grace Church.

**■ OLG**  
 (Continued from page 3)

tiful celebration this year; even with the weather at times was not in our favor but we were still able to gather Thursday, Friday and Saturday and celebrate a beautiful mass on Sunday with our new bishop as we honor Mary.”  
 Father Gower then paused adding: “though Sunday was a wash it did not dampen our spirits in any way, for Our Lady of Grace is resil-

ient and faces the challenges that certain weather can bring but overall, it was an experience of pride and joy for the entire parish. We like to celebrate as a parish and share the fellowship that makes us the parish that we are - the people who come together to share in their lives work hard for the mission of the church, which is to bring Christ's message to as many people as we possibly can.”  
 Although OLG did not break any financial records, the record they did break as Father Gower related

“was seen in volunteerism; we had more people than ever this year coming together because of their great love for the church. They also know it is through their volunteerism that we are able to reach out to so many people.”  
 Father Gower then emphasized: “Bringing Christ and his message to the hearts of so many people be long for a reason to hope, and to be filled with joy so once again to the larger community, a great big thank you for all that you did to help make this a fantastic feast.”

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# JOHNSTON POLICE LOG

## NO LICENSE

Around 9:30 a.m., July 28, Johnston Police Patrolman Aaron Blanco was on a fixed post at 1074 Plainfield St., when he spotted a black Mercedes traveling approximately 10 miles over the speed limit. He initiated a traffic stop and identified the driver as Jonathan T. O'Brien, 28, of 1635 Cranston St., Cranston. DMV files revealed the vehicle's registration was expired and O'Brien's driver's license was suspended. He was cited for Speeding 1 to 10 MPH in Excess of Posted Speed Limit, Driving with Expired Registration and Driving with Suspended License (fourth or subsequent offense). The vehicle was towed from the scene.

## DUI

Around 10:50 p.m., Aug. 20, Johnston Police Patrolman Matthew D. Murphy was on a detail in the area of 2200 Hartford Ave., while another Johnston officer attempted a traffic stop on a black Chevy Silverado with Massachusetts plates.

"The vehicle initially refused to stop," Murphy wrote in the arrest report.

Less than 10 minutes later, police located the truck and driver, who they later identified as Floyd A. Lackey, 55, of 3 Wade Road, Plainville, Massachusetts.

"I detected a strong odor of alcohol emitting from Mr. Lackey's breath, and immediately noticed his slurred speech," Murphy wrote. "I also observed Mr. Lackey to have bloodshot and watery eyes, and his facial skin was blush-red. I noticed Mr. Lackey to have difficulty standing on his own, as he was leaning on the side of his truck."

Lackey allegedly told police he had been drinking at home and decided to go for a ride, according to the report. Police asked him to consent to a series of standardized field sobriety tests. He refused and was arrested, read his rights, his truck was searched and towed from the scene.

At headquarters, Lackey also refused to take a "chemical test."

Lackey was criminal charged with Driving Under the Influence of Liquor or Drugs (first offense, BAC unknown). He was also issued a citation for Refusal to Submit to a Chemical Test.

## DRUG POSSESSION

Around 4:45 p.m., June 18, Johnston Police Patrolman Patrick Gendreau took a fixed post "in order to attempt to conduct a pretext motor vehicle stop of an individual who has two active warrants.

Police identified the suspect as Thomas A. Orlando, 30, of 15 Manuel Ave., Johnston.

Gendreau spotted Orlando driving south on Killingly Street and initiated a traffic stop. He eventually stopped for police on King Street.

The driver told police he didn't have a license on him, and gave police a different name and address.

Police ran a background check on Orlando and confirmed an active bench warrant out of North Providence for the violation of a No Contact Order. He was placed under arrest and charged for Driving with Expired License or Without a License (second offense).

Police advised Orlando that there were active warrants for his arrest. He was taken into custody and searched. Police then searched his vehicle.

"An inventory of Mr. Orlando's motor vehicle was conducted, at which time I located what appeared to be a crack pipe under the driver's seat, which had a white powdery like residue on the end of the pipe," Gendreau wrote in the arrest report. "While searching the general area in which the pipe was located in under the driver's side seat, I then located a partial plastic bag with a white powdery substance with solid white rocks accompanied inside of the bag."

The vehicle was towed from the scene. Orlando was transported back to Johnston Police Headquarters.

"Due to the discoveries made on scene, an unclothed search of Mr. Orlando was conducted ... which was met with negative results," Gendreau wrote.

A further search through Rhode Island Court Connect revealed Orlando was a bail violator. He was also charged with two additional misdemeanors: Possession of Schedule I, II, III, IV, V, and Obstructing Officer in Execution of Duty.

Orlando was remanded to the ACI Men's Intake Center as a bail violator.

## FORGERY

Around 1:15 p.m., May 2, Johnston police responded to headquarters to speak to a possible victim of check fraud. The victim told police that he checked his bank statement and found a check cashed that he believed to be fraudulent. The check for \$925.35 was cashed on April 19.

The bank provided police with surveillance images of the man who cashed the check.

Police identified the man who allegedly cashed the check as Richard Y. Hiraldo, 24, of 23 Kinfield St., Providence. He had provided the bank with an ID while cashing the check.

The bank also told police that Hiraldo also attempted to cash another check on April 26 for \$900, but the date on the check was made out for 2003, so they contacted the owner. The account owner told the bank

that she never wrote the check. Since the check was not cashed, the bank did not file a complaint, according to an incident report filed by Johnston Police Detective Derek Parascandolo.

The bank agreed to file a criminal complaint against Hiraldo for the previous check he successfully cashed.

Police detectives reviewed the surveillance footage for a description of the suspect. They also noted that in the footage, Hiraldo "can be seen utilizing his phone."

A cross agency check revealed the suspect had previously been arrested by Rhode Island State Police in 2021 on a charge of Receiving Stolen Goods, and he "is also a suspect in another incident" connected to a cashed fraudulent check.

An arrest warrant and affidavit was prepared for Hiraldo on charges of Fraudulent Checks (under \$1,000), Forgery and Counterfeiting in General, and Obtaining Money Under False Pretenses or Personation (less than \$1,500).

Around 4:30 p.m., Aug. 8, Johnston Police learned that Hiraldo was taken into custody by State Police on the active JPD warrants.

## ROAD RAGE

Around 12:45 p.m., Aug. 2, Johnston Police responded to a reported road rage incident that resulted in damage to a vehicle. The caller told police she was traveling east on Greenville Avenue when another vehicle made an abrupt U-turn from the westbound lane into the eastbound lane, cutting her off.

She gave police a description of the vehicle, the driver and the plate number. The caller told police she "followed the vehicle back to a residence where the operator exited the vehicle and challenged (the victim) to get out of her vehicle and fight."

The caller told police she left and phoned police.

Police noted minor damage to the vehicle's rear driver's side panel allegedly caused by "the objects being thrown." Police identified the alleged road rage driver as Jennifer Duran, 25, of 7 Golini Drive, Johnston.

The victim told police she wished to pursue criminal charges. Police issued warrants against Duran for two misdemeanor charges: Throwing Article at Moving Vehicle and Disorderly Conduct.

Around 2 a.m., Aug. 27, Johnston Police responded to the RISP barracks at 1575 Old Louisquisset Pike in Lincoln to take custody of Duran, who had been picked up on the Johnston Police warrants. She was transported to Johnston Police Headquarters without incident.

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**TOP AWARD:** Cherry Hill Pre-School owner Cheryl Curcio shows off her Rhode Island Community Choice Award.

## Cherry Hill Pre-School wins top honor at RI Community Choice Awards

The Rhode Island Community Choice Awards held a gala at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, on Thursday, Sept. 7, to award local businesses the top award. For the first time ever being nominated, Cherry Hill Pre-School of Johnston was the winner in the preschool category.

Unbeknownst to the owner Cheryl Curcio, Cherry Hill Pre-School received enough nominations during the nominating period in April to be listed in the contest along with several other preschools. The voting process took place in June and final results were revealed on Sept. 7.

such an amazing honor! Cherry Hill Pre-School has been educating young children for 42 years." Miss Cheryl had been advertising Cherry Hill Pre-School on the website and social media the past several years as "the best kept secret in Johnston" because so many people that live locally had no idea they existed. However, a parent recently commented that he thinks the secret is out now!

"We are so grateful for the love and support of Cherry Hill Pre-School," she said. "This award is

## LEGAL NOTICES

**NORTH CAROLINA GASTON COUNTY**  
 IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
 DISTRICT COURT DIVISION  
 FILE NO. 23-CvD-832

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**

ANA LILLIAN DELIZ, Plaintiff,  
 vs.  
 ORLANDO ROMAN GONZALEZ LOPEZ, Defendant

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TAKE NOTICE that a pleading has been filed against you in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: **ABSOLUTE DIVORCE BASED UPON ONE YEAR CONTINUOUS SEPARATION.**

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty days from the date of the first publication and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the court for the relief sought.

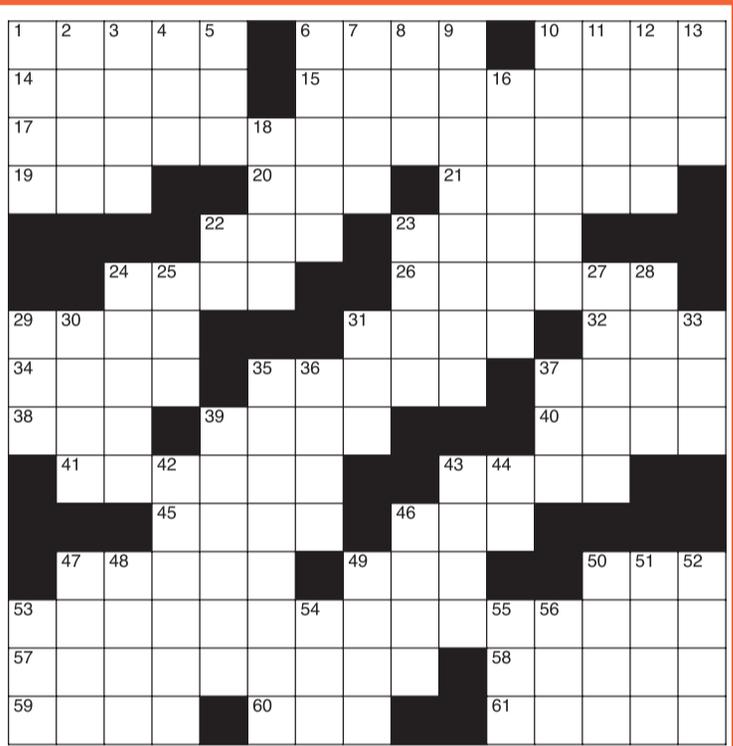
This is the 7th day of June, 2023.

N. CLIFTON CANNON, JR.  
 Attorney for the Plaintiff  
 355 S. New Hope Road, Suite B  
 Post Office Box 551154  
 Gastonia, NC 28055  
 704-867-9070  
 N.C. Bar No.: 10154



**CHERRY HILL HONORS:** Cherry Hill Pre-School is located at 10 Waterman Ave. in Johnston. The school recently won top honors at the RI Community Choice Awards.

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Type of cat
6. Weaponry
10. Western Christian Church service
14. Significant eruption of pustules
15. Baltic nation
17. Start of American holiday season
19. Unhappy
20. Maintains possession of
21. Metrical foot of one long and three short syllables
22. Mountain pass
23. Vestments
24. Type of dish
26. Escaped quickly
29. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
31. Wings
32. Political action committee
34. Touches lightly
35. Stood back from
37. Philippine Island
38. Popular winter activity
39. Type of amine
40. Small freshwater duck
41. Filled with love
43. Without (French)
45. Vetch
46. Swiss river

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Body art
2. Middle East military title
3. Actor Pitt
4. Container
5. Speak incessantly
6. Relating to algae
7. Jacob \_\_\_\_, journalist
8. Rock TV channel
9. Boat's cargo
10. Most wise
11. Within
12. Chinese industrial city
13. Scotland's longest river
16. Not capable
18. Footwear
22. Savings account
23. Capable

24. Vaccine developer
25. Tax collector
27. Fencing swords
28. Native religion in China
29. Promotional materials
30. A shot in a film production
31. Afflict in mind or body
33. A passage with access only at one end
35. Breathing devices
36. Employ for wages
37. Kids' TV channel (abbr.)
39. Popular Boston song
42. Made amends
43. Selling at specially reduced prices
44. Atomic #18
46. With fireplace residue
47. Unleavened cornbread
48. Draw out
49. Southwestern Alaska island
50. Where the Pyramids are
51. People of Nigeria
52. Smaller quantity
53. Destroy the inside of
54. City
55. Chivalrous figure (abbr.)
56. No (Scottish)

**KINDNESS**  
*always*  
**COMES BACK**



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# Opinion

LETTER

## A nail in the coffin of local news

To the Editor,

It was disappointing to come home from vacation last week and read that the new mayor of Johnston, Joseph Polisenra Jr., had decided to spend tens of thousands of extra taxpayer dollars to run municipal notices in a newspaper few in his town were buying any more. Polisenra told *The Boston Globe*, "I'm in this to protect the taxpayers." Huh?

The genesis of this ridiculous overspending is that Polisenra was unhappy with a few past stories in the free weekly newspaper, the *Johnston Sun Rise*, and so punishment of the owner, Publisher John Howell, of *The Warwick Beacon*, was in order.

As I see it, this is pretty clear cut. The *Sun Rise* used to get about \$12,000 per year for Johnston's municipal ads. Extrapolating the *Globe's* math with my own estimates, Johnston taxpayers could now pay as much as \$100,000 per year for ads that few will see in *The Providence Journal*. As an extra kick in the pants, readers have to pay (a lot!) for the *Journal* to see them. I have a bit of experience with this, as I co-founded the free *Valley Breeze* newspaper in 1996, and purchased *The Observer* from the Burgess family 10 years later. When it was clear *The Breeze* met the legal standard to accept municipal ads, many towns rushed to use our much less expensive

advertising. I didn't get those dollars by urging politicians to "think local," though it helped. We got the ads because using our well-read papers, at much lower prices, was simply smart business. Somehow this is escaping Johnston's leadership.

There is one thing Mayor Polisenra and I agree on. "Solicitation of Bids" ads should reach a wider Rhode Island audience beyond Johnston's borders. He would be right to place those ads in both the *Sun Rise* and the *Journal* (or better yet, the R.I. Newspaper Group, which would put the ads in every weekly in the state. But How-

ell runs that, too.) As for the rest of the local ads? Do people in Newport or Attleboro care about a Johnston Zoning Board meeting? That's where the 100,000 tax dollars go up in smoke.

Years ago, School Committee meetings had to be advertised in the paper, too. R.I. legislators ended them "to save money." It was a terrible decision. A few years later, a new member of the Smithfield School Committee wrote a letter to the *Observer* asking "Where are all the people who used to come to our meetings?" They were gone. Today in Johnston, "people are now relying on word of mouth to find out about upcoming meetings, because they don't subscribe to the *Journal*," Lynn Grissom told the *Globe*. One has to wonder if some politicians prefer things this way. No transparency, no busybody citizens at meetings.

There is another thing Johnston residents should remember. The *Sun Rise* is free, and so, it depends on advertising to get by. That includes municipal ads from Johnston. No community is "entitled" to a community newspaper. Today, as many local ad dollars quietly go to Facebook and Google, thousands of papers across the country have closed, creating "news deserts" where nobody is telling the stories, good or bad. The day could come where nobody would put the mayor's picture in the paper at his swearing in, or with Eagle Scouts and Little Leaguers. And nobody would report on town politics. Last week, hometown newspapers in Charliho and Coventry were shut down. The *Sun Rise* may not be in any danger yet, but Mayor Polisenra has moved them closer to the cliff. Residents should know that. I hope the mayor will do the right thing, restore the ads, and live with a bit of criticism now and then. The people in town deserve a good newspaper – and the truth.

Tom Ward, of Cumberland

**Editor's Note:** Tom Ward was founder, majority owner and publisher of *The Valley Breeze* newspapers from 1996 to 2019. He retired in 2020.

GUEST OP

## Taking down the Independent Man

By PATRICK T. CONLEY

The current nationally divisive controversy over statues and monuments — here in Rhode Island over Columbus and Commodore Esek Hopkins — has forced me to confess that I took down Rhode Island's most famous monument, the Independent Man (with help, of course).

Back in the mid-1970s, I was the volunteer chairman of the Rhode Island Bicentennial of Independence Commission (ri76). Bill Dugan, the state property director, came to me with a proposal to re-gild the Independent Man, the Gorham-built statue that had stood stoically atop the State House dome for three-quarters of a century.

To undertake this project, he requested a grant from the commission. Unfortunately, the state did not fund ri76 adequately, so grant money was scarce. Fortunately, I agreed with Dugan that such a project could provide a great public spectacle.

Because of our limited budget, many members of my commission were reluctant to fund the project. After some debate and much urging by me, we voted by a show of hands. The result was an 11-to-11 tie. Then, as chairman, I voted "aye" to break the tie, and the Independent Man project soon became a stunning, attention-riveting success.

To orchestrate the project, I recruited my South Providence friend, Marty Byrne, head of the Ironworkers Union, Local 37. His skilled laborers volunteered their

services to remove the Man on Aug. 9, 1975 and then transport him to the Paul King Foundry in Johnston for repair and refurbishment.

As the refurbishing neared completion, Lloyd Bliss, the enterprising owner of the Warwick Mall, suggested that we give Rhode Islanders an up-close look at the statue by putting it on display at his mall. My commission accepted this offer and devised a way that ri76 could recoup some of its funds by charging people to have their picture taken with the Man. Hundreds took advantage of this opportunity and thousands more came to view him.

This project inspired Klitzner Industries of Providence to craft Independent Man medallions and miniature statuettes. Rhode Islanders bought thousands of these souvenirs, raising money for our state's celebration of independence. Today these statuettes are presented to current inductees into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

Unfortunately, no good deed goes unpunished. Owners of other malls and shopping centers complained that the state had given the Warwick Mall an unfair trade advantage by creating such an attraction, and they brought suit to enjoin the display.

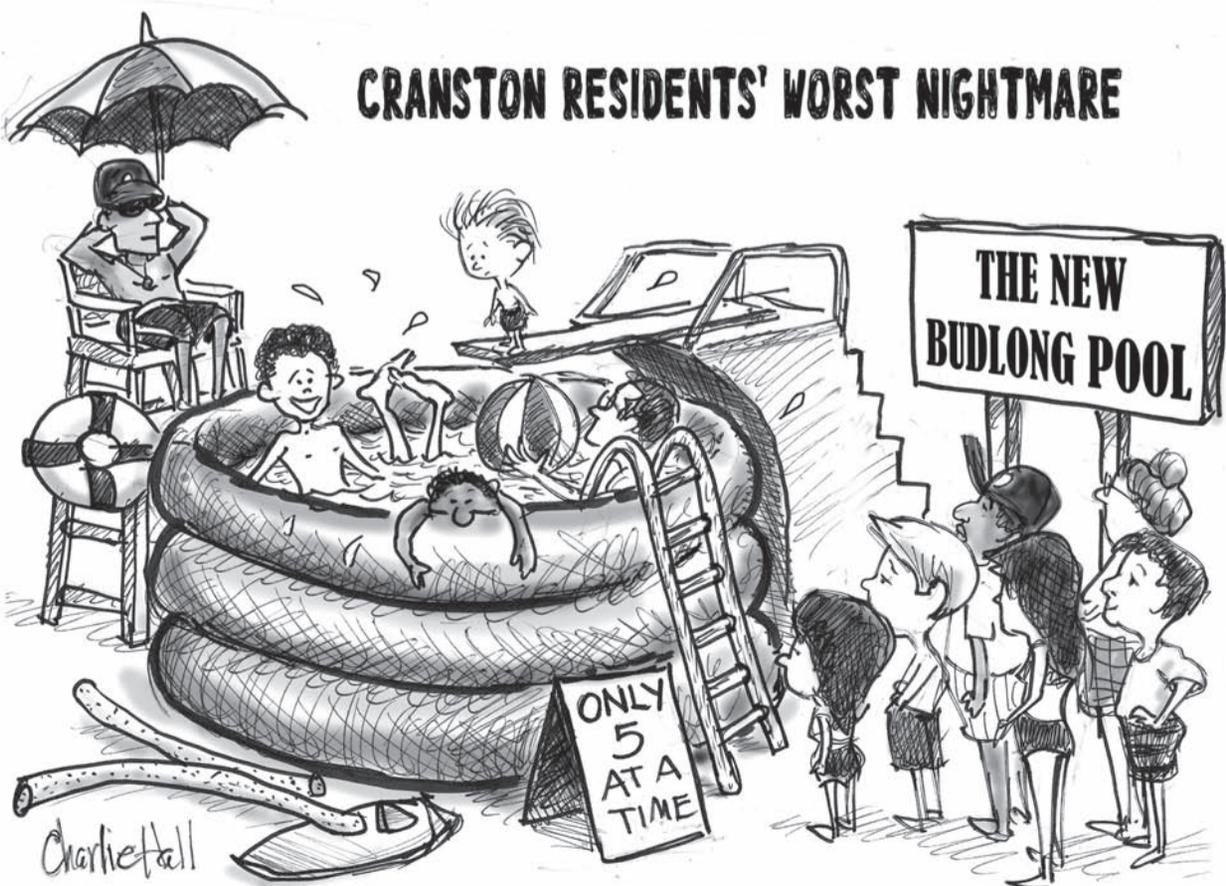
That successful legal challenge cut short the Man's mall visit. He was removed to the State House Rotunda

for display and was later installed, with some difficulty, to his lofty perch on July 20, 1976 via helicopter. The Man's ascension was marked by a ceremony presided over by Governor Phil Noel, Adjutant General Leonard Holland, and me.

Since July 1976, the Independent Man has stood like a sentinel over our seat of government. He symbolizes the spirit of independence and innovation that made Rhode Island an American leader in the development of religious liberty, democracy, federalism, the establishment of our nationhood, and the creation of our industrial economy. Thankfully he stands high enough, at 235 feet, so that anyone desiring to remove him can only do it (as I did) with great difficulty.

However, Time, which allegedly heals all wounds, has now wounded the footing of the Independent Man necessitating another take down. I hope this descent and repair will be as successful as that of 1976, and that the man's return to his stately perch will become a focal point of the upcoming 250th Anniversary of Independence in 2026 as it was for ri76.

**Editor's Note:** Patrick T. Conley, *Historian Laureate of Rhode Island*, was the volunteer chairman of the Rhode Island Bicentennial of Independence Commission in 1976 and the chairman of the Rhode Island Statehood Bicentennial Observance in 1990.





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## Schools

(Continued from page 1)

"Unfortunately, we have at least two or three teacher assistant positions unfilled in some of our schools," DiLullo explained. "We have advertised on Schoolspring since the end of the 2023 school year to fill available vacancies but have not had qualified applicants. Most recently we advertised for a teacher assistant on Sept. 12 with no applicants to date. The district has also been conservative with filling positions in order to operate within our budget. Currently we have 10 unfilled positions in the district."

### Taken Over?

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. recently announced an attempted "town takeover" of school finances. While the School Committee initially resisted the move, the board eventually agreed to cooperate with Polisena's team of financial examiners — Johnston Town Council approved the hiring of a specialized Pennsylvania auditing firm, and Polisena hired attorney and former Cranston Mayor Allan W. Fung, a partner at Johnston law firm Pannone Lopes Devereaux & O'Gara, at \$275 an hour.

"While I don't have any legal authority over the school department, I don't know if it's all budgetary constraints," Polisena wrote in an email earlier this week. "It's my understanding the school department is suffering from what the town and many private businesses are suffering from too — we can't find anyone who wants to work. I believe there are positions posted online that haven't been filled. I would encourage anyone who's qualified that is in search of employment to apply."

Mansolillo says the situation's far more complicated.

"There are several factors impacting our hiring issues," she explained on Wednesday morning. "First, we currently don't have the budgetary allowance to hire. Second, our district staff are among the lowest paid in the state so it is difficult to attract new hires but we do usually have good local people who want to work for the district."

Once again, Mansolillo sounded the alarm bells.

"Operating our schools without the necessary staff impacts the safety and learning environment for our students," she said.

Polisena had kind words for school administrators.

"If there are any vacancies that are remaining unfilled, I would applaud the school department for engaging in responsible fiscal restraint," he wrote. "Just because we have a difference of opinion, I can still say I know all five members to be good people and they would never do anything to jeopardize the education of Johnston's students."

### Where's the audit report?

The pending audit results are a matter of contention between town and school officials. While the School Committee has not officially received a copy of the auditing firm's "preliminary report," Mansolillo has received a copy through a third party.

Asked for an update on the auditing process earlier this week, Polisena contends it remains unfinished.

"The audit should be done soon,"

Polisena wrote. "There shouldn't be any changes made because we're dealing with raw numbers. Everything can be quantified. The numbers are what they are and should speak for itself. When the audit is released I'm hoping it serves as a baseline for the school department's decisions in the future. We always anticipated this to be completed between summer and autumn."

Mansolillo insists the mayor's communication with the School Committee has been insufficient.

"As for the audit, can the mayor explain further?" Mansolillo asked. "It is my understanding that the preliminary audit has been completed since late July and there is no reason why this hasn't been shared with the school committee and the administration if we are working collaboratively and in good faith. It has been shared with others, which is how I have obtained a copy. We need transparency from the mayor and his team on this matter. The school department has been cooperative and transparent throughout the process."

The preliminary report Mansolillo tracked down was dated July 26.

"What I wanted to get on the record was the fact that when the mayor didn't fully fund our budget, we had to reduce the budget by not filling many open positions," Mansolillo said earlier this week. "Not having those positions filled puts our students at risk. It's imperative we fill those positions, and fully fund the budget that we brought to the town in June. The safety of the students is the most important thing. We can't rely on volunteers."

### Budget Blowback

The Johnston School Committee initially requested \$65,466,300 from the town for this school year — a \$5,032,084 difference year-over-year, or more than an 8 percent increase in expenses.

Ultimately, Polisena and Town Council allocated \$2.15 million in local appropriations to the school department for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

"This amount represents the largest local allocation to support the school department in the town's history," according to the resolution approved by the School Committee.

District 5 Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti voted against Polisena's proposed budget, which came roughly \$3 million short of fully funding the school department's request for the 2023-24 school year.

"This is part of the reason I opposed the budget," Civetti said earlier this week. "There's a lack of transparency. I had hoped in April (the administration) would hold workshops, and allow the public to attend the meetings. We never had any workshop meetings. We never heard from department heads, or heard them say what their requests were ... I have to assume that (the school department) made the proper cuts so that they could live within their means."

Civetti also voiced concerns that Polisena planned to use "Amazon money" for more than just debt service.

"There's around 3.3 million of Amazon money that's not being used for debt service or educational costs," Civetti warned.

Mansolillo hopes the district can find a way to fully fund staff salaries.

"We didn't ask for the money for fun," Mansolillo said. "We asked for the money that it takes to operate a safe learning environment for the students."



**NEW SLATE:** From left to right, Raylin Santos (Recording Secretary), Alessandra Pesare (Senior Class President), Matthew Clements (Corresponding Secretary), Alexia DiLorenzo (President), and Lucas Anderson (Vice President), are the new officers for JHS student council. (Photo courtesy Lucas Anderson)

## Student Council announces new slate of officers

By LUCAS ANDERSON

Following the Nomination and Election meeting held on Tuesday, June 6, the new Johnston Senior High School Student Council officers officially step into the shoes left by their predecessors.

Starting with the new President, Alexia DiLorenzo is an up-and-coming senior who previously held the position of Vice President in the JHS Student Council. Alexia will be filling the role left by Charles Curci, the previous Student Council President. She is extremely excited to work with everyone and uphold the traditions of Johnston Senior High School.

Next, the new Student Council Vice President is Lucas Anderson, a soon-to-be junior. Lucas had previously served as both President and Vice President of his class in their respective years, and looks forward to working with Alexia and other members of student council in this upcoming year.

Returning to the position of Recording Secretary is Raylin Santos, who will be a senior in the 2023-2024 school year. Raylin has previously worked alongside Michelina Irons, the previous recording secretary, when they both were elected into the office in this prior year. Raylin looks forward to serving as the Recording Secretary again this year and seeing the new perspectives of the new Student Council Officers.

The final position among the Johnston Senior High School Student Council is the Corresponding Secretary, which has been awarded to Matthew Clements. Matthew is an up incoming junior who is prominent within the sports side of JHS. He looks forward to working with everyone and has learned a lot from both the previous corresponding Secretary, Talia Laflamme, in addition to both of his sisters, Rebecca and Janet Clements, who had also served as corresponding secretary in their years in high school.

Alexia, Lucas, Raylin, and Matthew all look forward to working with the student of JHS, in addition to the teachers.

We all wish to uphold the traditions that have been created in the past, while also making new memories along the way. We cannot wait to work with Mr. Greg Russo, the Student Council Advisor, in this upcoming year to plan events such as the annual homecoming parade, winter ball, and senior send-off dance. Not only that, but we would like to thank all the previous officers -- Charles Curci, Talia Laflamme, and Michelina Irons -- for everything they have done during their time in office. Johnston Senior High School is about to be hit with a wave of change, but as the student council, we will continue the traditions that generations prior have set. "Although change is good, there are some things that should remain the same."

**Editor's Note:** Lucas P. Anderson serves as Student Council Vice President and Representative of the Class of 2025. The Johnston Sun Rise regularly publishes stories and photos submitted by members of student council.

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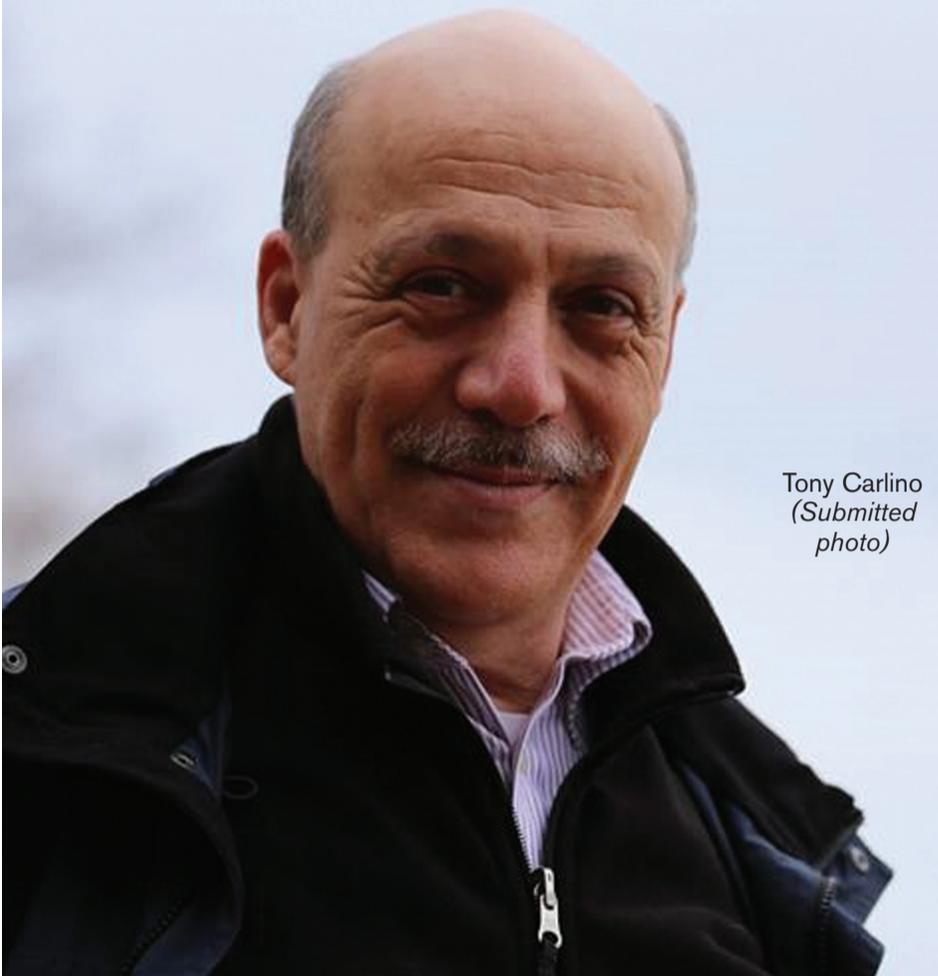
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# Sun Rise Scoops

## SCOOP OF THE WEEK



Tony Carlino  
(Submitted photo)

### Sept. 27 Johnston Historical Society Guest Speaker

At 7 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 27, the Johnston Historical Society will host guest speaker Tony Carlino. Carlino plans to discuss his expertise regarding Rhode Island historical icon Roger Williams. Carlino's presentation will cover Williams' "Life and Legacy," including his early life, education and early influences, coming to New England (his time in Boston, in Plymouth, and in Salem), his banishment and his founding Providence, his writings and his legacy.

Carlino was an Adjunct professor at Rhode Island College from 1998 to 2019, when he retired. His Master's thesis on Roger Williams was published in the May 2000 edition of Rhode Island History. He has also written for The Providence Journal, Cobblestone Magazine, and has served on various panels and lecture programs for The Virginia Mayflower Society, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, Camp Canonicus, The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, The Roger Williams National Memorial, and The John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage.

Carlino grew up in Rhode Island, and lives in Warwick. The Sept. 27 presentation will be held at the society's Museum, 101 Putnam Pike (Route 44) in Johnston. It's free and open to the public.

## JHS Student Council hosts blood drive

By LUCAS ANDERSON

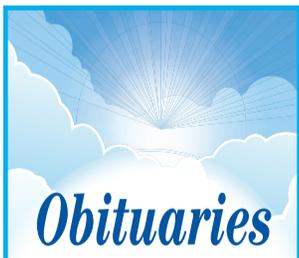
On Wednesday, Sept. 27, the Johnston Senior High School Student Council will be hosting a blood drive in cooperation with the RI Blood Center.

It is open to only students who are currently attending JHS.

If you would like to make an appointment to donate blood, please go to [ribc.org](http://ribc.org) in order to make an appointment.

Blood donations are essential in helping many Americans survive, especially during the blood shortage we are currently facing. If you are interested in donating, please do not hesitate, as time is of the essence.

**Editor's Note:** The Johnston Sun Rise regularly publishes stories submitted by the Johnston High School Student Council. This piece was written by Lucas Anderson, JHS Student Council Vice President.



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

Sept. 23

### Annual Race for Matt & Grace (named for Johnston's Matt DiIorio).

The race was started in Sept. of 2010 by Katie Hopkins and her brother Patrick in honor of their cousin Grace Hopkins who was diagnosed with FA September of 2008. The race was called "The Race For Grace" with about 70 participants, according to the event's website. At the after party for the race in 2012, Katie and Patrick announced they were changing the name of the race to "The Race for Matt and Grace" to honor the fight of both families.

"We invite you to join the families of FA patients Matt DiIorio, Grace Hopkins, and Alex Fielding on Sept. 23, 2023, at Rhode Island College in Providence for the 13th Annual Race for Matt & Grace," declares Matt's friends and family. "This daylong event features a 5K, 1.5 Mile Fun Walk and an after-party with food and live entertainment."

You can sign up at their website: [give.curefa.org/event/fara-5k-or-race-for-matt-and-grace-2023/e489319](http://give.curefa.org/event/fara-5k-or-race-for-matt-and-grace-2023/e489319).

Race registration runs from 8:30-9:30 a.m., followed by a speaking program and the race fires off at 10 a.m.

Oct. 1

### Fall Harvest Craft Fair

On Sunday, Oct. 1, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Our Lady of Grace Church, at 15 George Waterman Road, in Johnston (entrance on Sheridan Street), will hold its annual Fall Harvest Craft Fair. The organizers expect more than 30 local artisans, who will be offering handmade arts and crafts. The fair will also feature Italian food, sweet treats, a penny social, raffles and more.

Oct. 7

### Johnston Historical Society Yard Sale

The Johnston Historical Society will be hosting their annual Yard Sale on Saturday, Oct. 7, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the society's Museum, 101 Putnam Pike (Route 44) in Johnston. A Sunday, Oct. 8 rain date has been set (same times). The historical society is also offering spots at the sale for a \$25 donation (one 6-foot table; bring your own). Those interested in "renting" must contact Anthony Ursillo at 401-764-5901 or [aursillo401@gmail.com](mailto:aursillo401@gmail.com). The Johnston Historical Society is a 501 (3C) non-profit organization.

### NAMI-RI Offers Family Support Groups

The RI chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-RI) offers free support groups for families and friends of loved ones who are struggling with their mental health. The groups are led by trained facilitators who also have lived experience as family members themselves. The group meetings last about 1.5 hours, and everyone who participates in the meeting gets a chance to share. The other members of the group try to offer help and resources, when appropriate, based on their own experiences. More information and full schedule can be found at [namirhodeisland.org](http://namirhodeisland.org) or call 401-331-3060. No pre-registration for these monthly groups is necessary.

First Thursday at 6 p.m. IN PERSON ONLY at the Rochambeau Library in the Community Room, Rochambeau Library, 708 Hope Street, Providence (NEW-starts Aug.)

Second Tuesday at 5 p.m. IN PERSON ONLY at the Middletown Public Library in the Community Room, Middletown Library, 700 West Main Road, Middletown.

Third Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. MEETS VIA ZOOM ONLY. Please call 401-331-3060 or email [info@namirhodeisland.org](mailto:info@namirhodeisland.org) for the Zoom link.

Fourth Wednesday at 6 p.m. IN PERSON ONLY at the Hope Valley Grange, #71116 Main St, Hope Valley.

### 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 deductible according to your filing status. To donate, go to the following website: [www.rifoundation.org/funds/soul-of-1971-scholarship-fund](http://www.rifoundation.org/funds/soul-of-1971-scholarship-fund).

**Editor's Note:** Send submissions to Sun Rise Editor Rory Schuler at [rorys@rhodybeat.com](mailto:rorys@rhodybeat.com) or Front Desk Coordinator Ida Zecco at [idez@rhodybeat.com](mailto:idez@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.

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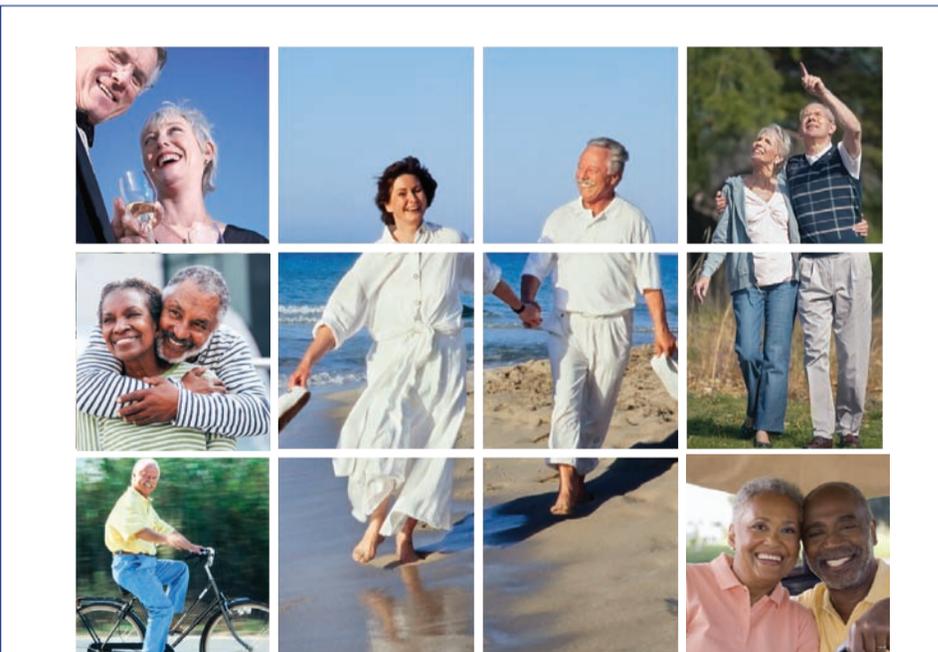


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**PROUD PRESENTERS:** Members of the Goodfellas Motorcycle Club are standing behind a table topped with special tee shirts for the bikers in their 7th annual run. The group includes Ryan Connolly, Joe Ratte Jr., Derek Duffy, Cal Calabro, Nick Demetropoulos, Bill Pryor, Kevin Marandola, Ray Chase, Kevin Hart and Ryan Koscielnak. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)

# Goodfellas raises \$40k for Hasbro

By **PETE FONTAINE**

The Goodfellas Motorcycle Club, which has an unmatched love for helping children who have been stricken with cancer, enjoyed another special success story on a recent sun-splashed Saturday morning that started and finished in Johnston.

For starters, the Goodfellas - who will soon present a check for a minimum of \$40,000 to Hasbro Children's Hospital - completed their 7th annual run that started at Steph Harris's Strings Bar & Grille on George Waterman Road with an escort by three Johnston Police cars - then went into Connecticut and back to the post-run party that featured a smorgasbord of home-cooked Italian food, live music by Joint Custody and a mega raffle that boosted the day's profits.

In keeping with its unique tradition, the run netted \$20,000 from bikers and riders that was matched by Goodfellas' Godfather Bruno Ramieri, a Johnston resident who is steeped in philanthropic work at Hasbro and who for the third time in as many years matched up to \$20,000 of the registration fee.

So, sometime soon, the Goodfellas will hold their annual check presentation at David Levesque's Brewed Awakenings in Johnston that will hike the to-

tal raised in just three short years to over \$60,000 for Hasbro Children's Hospital.

"We only had 150 bikes this time," said Goodfellas/organizer Anthony "Cal" Calabro. "But everyone loves what we do for the children who are battling cancer most especially Bruno who prides himself in working for the highly acclaimed children's hospital in Providence."

Calabro then paused before adding: "We could not do this without Bruno's generosity; he is truly a Greatfella/Goodfella in every sense of the word."

To which Michele P. Brannigan, Senior Philanthropy Officer and Major Campaign Manager at Hasbro Children's Hospital wanted it known: "We are beyond grateful to the Goodfellas for their continued support of the hospital. They certainly know how to host a terrific event and rally the community for an important cause."

Brannigan, who was again on hand to assist the Goodfellas with starting the run, went on: "Through their generosity the Goodfellas and Bruno Ramieri are making a very positive impact on the hospital. And most important it helps our patient families to know there's a caring community standing with them during their difficult days."



**BIKER BUDDIES:** Ken Manchester, Joe Stanton Michael Lacalle, Joe Stevens, Eddie Trick and Nick Gloris were among the 150 riders who helped raise \$40,000 for Hasbro Children's Hospital during the 7th annual Goodfellas run.

**Solar**  
(Continued from page 1)

only one year of time has passed since our Marathon Zoning meeting which lasted over 8 hours and was attended by over 100 angry residents, (and) the Zoning Board and Green Development is bringing this project back to the table."

(Editor's Note: The town of Johnston did advertise a Sept. 21 Zoning Board special meeting in the Johnston Sun Rise on Sept. 7. That legal advertisement was initially slated to run the next two weeks, but was canceled. Both the Sept. 21 and Sept. 28 Zoning Board agendas have been uploaded to the Rhode Island Secretary of State Open Meetings website, but have not been advertised in the Johnston Sun Rise.)

The "marathon meeting" was held in April 2022.

The new project seeks a special use permit to develop a 19 Megawatt (MW) solar field on a more than 160 acre parcel at 118 Winsor Avenue (AP 59, Lot 15). The plot is located in the northwest section of Johnston, about a half-mile from the Smithfield and Scituate town borders.

According to a paid advertisement by a neighborhood group formed in opposition to industrial solar development on residential property (the ad appears on Page 11 of this week's Johnston Sun Rise), "157+ forested acres will be destroyed to install 46,000+ solar panels."

The group encourages Johnston residents to attend next Thursday's meeting (the Zoning Board is also meeting Thursday, Sept. 21, but the solar development is not currently listed on that meeting's agenda).

"Attend the Zoning Board Meeting to put your objection on record," urges the "Stop Johnston Solar" group's advertisement.

Civetti says the project shouldn't be up for new discussion for at least another year.

"The Town's zoning Ordinance is clear that a project cannot be heard

again until two years has passed unless significant changes have been made to the plan and in that event a one year wait period is applied," Civetti said in July. "I am by no means an expert on ... reviewing these plans but there does not appear to be a significant change to these plans since the last time they were presented. The residents need to know that this is back in front of the Zoning Board and that one of the Zoning Board Members that voted against this project last time is conveniently no longer a member of this Board."

The current Zoning Board of Review includes the following members: Chairman Thomas Lopardo, Anthony Pillozzi, Joseph Anzelone, Charles Ainabe and Richard Fascia (with alternates Dennis Cardillo and Albert Colannino).

In May 2022, Bill Fischer, spokesperson for Green Development LLC, said "all of our options are being evaluated," when asked if the company would litigate the matter (Fischer serves as president of True North Communications).

"We are certainly disappointed in the outcome of the vote of the zoning board, as Green made a conscious effort to ensure the design of the projects satisfied all of the town's zoning and subdivision regulations, while complying with the town's comprehensive plan," Fisher wrote more than a year ago. "Green spent a significant amount of resources, energy and time to assemble a well-versed team of experts — who did a tremendous job at the hearing — giving zoning board members the evidence they needed to approve the project. Unfortunately, the town lost the opportunity to protect hundreds of acres of land for generations to enjoy as public space. Not to mention, the financial benefits the proposal was providing the town for the next 25 years."

Green Development executives have donated thousands of dollars to Polise-na's campaign fund.

The Winsor Avenue land is owned by the Steere Family Trust (c/o Suzanne T. Valeriana). Green Development chairman and founder Mark DePasquale co-signed the most recent zoning petition application form, dated June 9 of this year.

"Our plan would have ensured these properties never became housing developments and we worked in a spirit of cooperation with the Land Trust and the town to ensure these acres would be protected and accessible to the public, on day one," Fisher wrote in May 2022. "Anyone who believes this area is currently designated as open space is misinformed and quite frankly anyone utilizing the land for recreational purposes is trespassing on private property. We continue to believe in the merits of the project and although we are disappointed in the outcome, we are not dissuaded from evaluating our options moving forward."

Fisher did not respond by press-time to a request for comment on the newly pending special use permit.

According to a review of the special use permit application prepared by JDL Enterprises, of Westerly, and submitted with the newest zoning application, the proposed site "is the location of a historic farmstead surrounded by agricultural fields to the north, south, and east situated on the top of Sikkibunkiaut Hill."

The site contains a Rhode Island Historical Cemetery and "isolated pockets of wetland."

"This project was previously submitted for Master Plan review and Special Use Permit in May of 2022," according to JDL Enterprises. "The Master Plan was unanimously approved by the Town Planning Board. The Zoning Board voted 3-2 for granting the Special Use Permit; however a 4-1 vote was required for approval and therefore the project was denied."

The report notes the "particular concern" of "cutting and clearing of existing trees, construction disturbance and duration, unease for surface runoff and erosion potential, and visual degradation of the natural landscape aesthetic."

"Green has considered these concerns and modified the original Master Plan proposal to address them," according to the application memo. "Green has reduced the proposed solar development from 24 MW to 19MW, a 20% reduction in overall panel surface area. Panels were selectively removed from areas in

proximity to neighboring properties as well as the Scituate Reservoir watershed, which reduces the overall impact of the proposed solar site, and increases the distance from panels to existing homes."

To conclude the report, in all capital letters, Joseph D. Lombardo, president of JDL Enterprises, assures the Zoning Board that the proposal is consistent with the town's comprehensive plan, meets all criteria and that the Zoning Board "should grant" the application.

Wayne Forrest, one of the residents helping to organize opposition to the Winsor solar projects (the old one and the new one), plans to attend next week's meeting.

"The issues at next Thursday's zoning board meeting are the same as last year," he said Wednesday. "Residents who live next to and nearby this land don't want to see their property values decrease, their daily quality of life deteriorate and suffer, or the destruction of 150 acres of woodlands and wildlife habitat. It is painfully obvious that will happen, if the board approves the zoning variance."

Forrest also attended and spoke at last year's marathon meeting, when his side technically prevailed (but the ultimate resolution headed toward still-unresolved litigation).

"An approval also could set a dangerous precedent whereby any developer could buy open space zoned for residential use and approach the zoning board for a zoning variance to put up a commercial or industrial development," Forrest warned his neighbors. "A developer could argue if the board does it for power-generating solar panels in this case, it would have to approve similar applications. Next thing you know, all the town's green space is gone. The bottom line is solar panel projects belong on land zoned for commercial and industrial use, not in residential neighborhoods or if it means the destruction of woodlands and open space. Quality of life is important to everyone in town. That's why we are here. We want a town to be proud of and we want our town officials do the right thing for all of us."

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## ■ Slime

(Continued from page 1)

Santos walked to the front of the courtroom with her mother during August's Town Council meeting. The audience hum dulled slightly as the 12-year-old stood at the lectern, and her mother stood off to the side recording the proceedings.

The Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School seventh-grader has formed her own company — Angel Stars Slime LLC. And she was appearing before Town Council, not as a guest, but as a business license applicant. (Technically, Penelope is the majority member of the LLC, and her mother Amanda Cornell is the minority member. Both the mother and daughter's names are listed on the town business license.)

"I make and sell slime," Santos said in her Hunter Avenue home earlier this week. "I also sell tote bags."

She arranged her stock of small

slime capsules, each bearing its own tiny angel logo.

Santos makes "foam bean" slime (she calls it Peanut Butter Slime), "bingsu" crunchy slime (Santos' Pumpkin Slime is still in development), and Butter Slime, which incorporates clay, giving the slime a satisfying, buttery feel (check out her Lavender Butter Slime).

Santos designed her own logo and has taken to social media in an attempt to build her newly created slime empire.

She first learned the simple slime recipe by watching online slime-making videos.

"I just kept watching the videos," she said, seated at her parents' kitchen table. "Then I bought a kit on Amazon."

The basic slime components are simple — Elmer's glue and Borax dissolved in water. Then Santos adds texture elements, color and sometimes, scent.

"I add color and foam beads, and sometimes clay, to give it different textures," Santos explained.

■ **SLIME - PAGE 13**

**SLIME SALES:** A Ferri Middle School seventh-grader may be one of the Ocean State's youngest entrepreneurs. Penelope Santos, the founder of Angel Stars Slime LLC, makes and sells all sorts of slime. Some of the vast selection is shown here. (Sun Rise photo by Rory Schuler)



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# Slime

(Continued from page 12)

She assembled her slime-manufacturing components on the kitchen counter — a big jug of glue, the cleaning detergent dissolved in water, some purple dye and a small vial of lavender scent. She secured her long hair under a plastic “bonnet” to keep strays from entering the slime. While manufacturing slime for sale, she also dons protective gloves, to keep the product pure.

Over the summer, Santos attended a week-long class at the Providence Public Library for child entrepreneurs.

The class provided the basics and helped water the seed. The course also gave Santos confidence in her idea and her ability.

“I asked my mom and she helped,” Santos said.

An Amazon delivery arrived at the side door — more labels for her slime stock.

This weekend, on Sept. 24, Santos will be standing behind a table at the Mini Kids Entrepreneur Fair, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Farm Fresh RI, 10 Sims Ave., Providence.

So far, Santos has only received a single online sale. But she remains optimistic. Sunday’s Entrepreneur Fair will be her public sales debut.

Santos measured out a few ounces of glue. She added the activating solution and stirred and mixed and stretched and tangled the mass until it started to smooth and slime-ify. She added a few drops of color and sniffed the vial of lavender.

“This is the most fun part,” she said, giggling and pulling the slime apart between her outstretched arms. “It also helped with relieving stress and anxiety.”



**ONE-KID ASSEMBLY LINE:** Penelope Santos loves making slime. Now she hopes to share it with others, selling her product online. She designed the logo (above right) that appears on each container of Angel Stars Slime. (Sun Rise photos by Rory Schuler)



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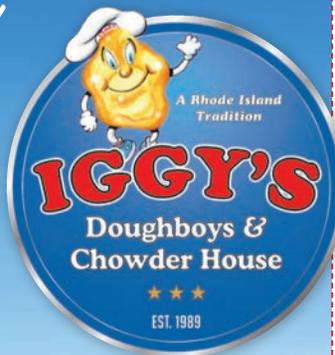
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By JENNIFER COATES

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# Rash of small Johnston fires solidifies community

On April 15, 1897, 41-year-old James Henry McCaffrey of Johnston made a legal appeal for himself or some other suitable person to be appointed guardian over his nieces, Mary and Susie Morris. The girls' mother, 42-year-old Catherine (Flood) Morris, had passed away from tuberculosis in their home on Garden Street on Feb. 18, 1894. Their father, blacksmith Peter Morris, was now gone as well.

James, who owned a grocery store at the corner of Plainfield Street and Webster Avenue, was married to Annie (Flood), Catherine's sister. Guardianship was granted to him and the girls moved into his home on Plainfield Street. Susie was just 11 years old.

The sisters attended Concord Grammar School and principal William Steere found Susie to have good manners and habits. She was courteous to her teachers and classmates, obedient and studious and obtained average grades. But something unsettled was quietly lurking in Susie's mind.

The large 3-story tenement house belonging to her uncle contained the fruit store of Lewis Osborn and the saloon of John O'Donnell on the ground floor.

On the top two floors were the residences of James and three other families. Just before 5:00 on the afternoon of May 4, 1900, one of James's daughters smelled smoke and went to locate the source. She discovered several small boxes had been piled in the cellar and set afire. The blaze was extinguished but, one-half hour later another fire was found burning in the cellar.

Again the blaze was smothered. At 8:00 that night, someone noticed the back steps leading to the rear door of the tenement had been saturated with kerosene oil and set ablaze. Several pails of water were dumped onto the fire and police were notified that someone was apparently committing arson.

The police kept an eye on the property but it did no good. At 6:00 the next morning, a rug in the back hallway of the ground floor was found to be soaked with oil and burning. Half an hour later, the back piazza was aflame. At 1:00, boxes in the cellar were once again discovered to be burning.

At 10:00 the following morning, the building's fire alarm went off. Another fire was extinguished and police questioned everyone in the building about

## Back in the Day



by KELLY SULLIVAN

anything they might have seen. Susie stated that, just before the first fire, she had seen a short, thick-set man wearing a pair of blue pants and a slouch hat leave the yard. Police knew the man and didn't think him to be a likely culprit. Later that day, they questioned her again and her story was different. When they informed her of the discrepancies, she made a shocking confession.

"Yes, I set the fires. My uncle and aunt wouldn't let me go out to play with other girls, and if any came to see me I got a beating afterward. Monday they beat me because a girl came into our yard to play with me. Friday, I thought while in bed, that if the old house could be burned down, I could get a better home

somewhere else and then I thought of burning it myself. I did not mean to hurt anybody."

Susie was arrested and charged with arson. Principal Steere advocated for her, telling authorities that she was trustworthy and sensitive, had morals and knew right from wrong. He expressed worry that prison would ruin her. He was not the only person who felt sympathy for the teenaged fire-starter. All of the police officers saw Susie as a victim more than a criminal.

Another of the girl's uncles, cotton mill designer Robert Spencer Midgley, was overcome with sadness. He told authorities that Susie had always been a good girl. Explaining that he knew her desire to leave James's house, he agreed that he would take her in, despite having six children of his own to support. James and his wife stated that they had no desire to have the child imprisoned despite her bad behavior; Annie described how Susie shopped so lavishly at the recent food fair that she obviously must have stolen funds from the house. Steere explained that the schoolchildren had sold tickets to the food fair and that Susie had sold more than anyone. For every five she

sold, she got one for herself to spend at the fair. James and Annie asked that Susie either be placed in the custody of a probation officer or at Uncle Robert's home.

Susie was arraigned on the morning of May 7, 1900. She pleaded not guilty and was put into the hands of the probation officer. For a while, she remained silent and crying. When she finally spoke, she stated that she did not want to go to prison but would rather be taken in that direction than return to the conditions she had left. She promised if she could be sent to another home, she would do no more wrong.

The court decided not to indict Susie on the charge of arson. They placed her in the custody of her uncle Robert who resided with his family on Sterling Avenue in Providence. When she arrived at his home on the night of May 7, a huge group of her friends and supporters had gathered and they spent the night celebrating around a raging bonfire.

*Kelly Sullivan is a Rhode Island columnist, lecturer and author.*

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Of course, more murders occur during their investigation.

Poirot has retired and hired a bodyguard to keep the hoards of potential customers away from him.

Ariadne has made it to Poirot's villa and convinces him to attend a children's party on Halloween eve, followed by a séance. The astute detective exposes the rigged seance, be-

ginning a night of terror, within the seemingly haunted old house set on the Venice waterways.

There are lots of long bangs to keep the audience jumping and a few red herrings to throw the audience off as Poirot solves the murders.

There are the usual suspects, including a doctor and his weird son, the housekeeper (There's always a housekeeper), an ex-fiancé, and a young mysterious couple.

Things go bump in the night, more deaths occur, characters are accused and Poirot finally puts two and two together and comes up with the killer.

Too much talk, not enough action.

A nice performance by Fey who proves that she is more than a funny face.

While most of the movie takes place inside the house, there are few interesting shots of Venice.



'A HAUNTING IN VENICE': Kenneth Branagh as detective Hercule Poirot. (Photo courtesy of 20th Century Studios)

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# Sports



**CHASE IT DOWN:** Johnston's Kaylee Poole battles a Davies player for the ball. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

## Concussions somehow on the rise

While watching the NFL this past weekend, the thing that stood out to me more than anything was the number of concussions that popped up in the injury reports. Between players exiting games, players being ruled out prior to kickoff, the number of concussions were staggering.

Last year it was reported that regular season concussions in the NFL rose by 18 percent and the number was expected to rise this go-around, which through two weeks seems to absolutely be trending in that direction. Now that concussions are on the forefront of everyone's mind in the NFL, and all contact sports from the youth level on up, it is an obvious correlation that is occurring.

The question that has to be asked at this point is: How can we continue playing football when the numbers are on such a sharp incline? These teams are beginning to scramble each week keeping up with their injury reports and in the middle of games have to get creative as players exit. Safety should be first so of course, it is encouraging that the NFL is enforcing strict policies regarding head injuries, but there has to be a way to clean it up.

Over the past decade, there have been developments regarding helmets and other equipment while the league has also begun enforcing stricter rules in terms of head-to-head contact penalties as well as screening for concussions. On the surface that seems like plenty, it seems like all the options

### My pitch



by  
**ALEX SPONSELLER**  
SPORTS EDITOR  
ALEXS@RHODYBEAT.COM

have been exhausted, but I just refuse to believe it.

Football is football, players will always endure head trauma and unless we make it a non-contact sport, the problem will always exist. That said, how have we not perfected a helmet that significantly decreases head injuries? How have we not cracked down on head hunting penalties to the point that players have no choice but aim for the waist?

What I respect so much about youth football is their emphasis on the fundamentals and one of those fundamentals is the proper way to tackle the ball carrier. Lower your shoulder into their waist, wrap them up tight, then drag or drive them to the ground.

Does that prevent the head from hitting the ground or the occasional accidental head butt? Of course not, but to see players get so far away from these basics as they rise the ranks is infuriating. These players want the flashy collision which is more entertaining, but is far more dangerous and less effective.

I'm a realist, I know that there are plenty of people

■ **PITCH - PAGE 17**

# Panthers settling in, tie Davies

By **ALEX SPONSELLER**

The Johnston girls soccer team tied Davies 0-0 last week on the road to sit at 1-1-1 overall this fall and 0-1-1 in league play.

The Panthers would dominate the possession battle throughout the second half of play but were unable to find the back of the net. Johnston took on Providence Country Day just one day earlier,

which fatigued the Panthers down the stretch.

"We played yesterday so we did have some tired legs out there. (Da-

■ **PANTHERS - PAGE 19**

## Locals honor DeLory in 3rd annual golf outing

By **PETE FONTAINE**

The men and women who played in Friday's 3rd Annual Albert "Cookie" DeLory Memorial Golf Tournament were vastly impressed with the hospitality during the nine-hole event played at Harbor Lights Golf Course in Warwick.

Moreover, it was the first time each golfer received a specially made and designed polo shirt - which featured the official logo - along with backpacks that included a sleeve of golf balls, snacks and other goodies made possible by benefiting Operation Stand Down Rhode Island.

"These people do everything first class," offered Johnston Town Councilman Robert Civetti who again played in the tournament with his brother David Civetti, John Mello and Frankie the Barber and obtained three tee sign sponsorships. "It's also obvious how much people loved the late "Cookie" DeLory."

To which Harry Edwards, a committee member, added: "These shirts are beautiful. This was made pos-

■ **DELORY - PAGE 17**



**LINKED:** Johnston residents John Mello, Councilman Robet Cavetti, David Civetti and Frankie the Barber were among the 76 golfers who played in Friday's 3rd Annual Albert "Cookie" Memorial Golf Tournament. (Photo courtesy of Dick Warner)

# RIC women top Castleton

## FROM STAFF REPORTS

Junior midfielder Marissa Ruzzano (Smithfield) scored the game winning goal with just under five minutes remaining in the second half as the Rhode Island College women's soccer team won their first Little East match of the season in a 1-0 victory vs. Vermont State University Castleton at Alumni Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

After some low octane offense over the first 25 minutes of the first half, sophomore midfielder Tayshia Cary (Wakefield) took a shot that was rolling towards the goal, but was stopped at the last moment by sliding Spartan junior defender Lauren Fotter (Gorham, Maine) before it went into an open net.

That was the only offensive highlight of the first half, as the first 45 minute were defensively focused. Going into halftime, RIC held the lead in shots, 7-4.

Cary took another open space shot in the 85th minute, but it was blocked by a Spartan defender and resulted in a RIC corner kick.

Sophomore midfielder Olivia Williams (Riverside) took the kick and the ball found the head of Ruzzano,

who deflected it into the lower left part of the net for what proved to be the game-winning marker.

RIC junior goalkeeper Chloe Angelone (Bayville, N.Y.) recorded her third shutout of the year, making six saves in the win (3-0-1).

Castleton sophomore goalkeeper Emma Ezzo (West Haven, VT) posted three saves in a losing effort (1-4).

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will play at Mount Holyoke College on Monday, Sept. 18 (7 p.m.).

### Castleton tops Anchormen

Junior midfielder Anthony Recinos (Providence) scored the lone goal for the Anchormen as Rhode Island College lost at VTSU Castleton, 2-1, in Little East men's soccer action on Saturday night.

The Anchormen took an early lead in the 13th minute as Recinos finished off a play from sophomore midfielder Tariq Adio (Providence) for his third goal of the year.

The game was matched evenly, with both teams taking six shots through the first 45 minutes.

The Spartans were able to respond in the 54th minute

when junior midfielder Toby Ritzkowski (Arlington, Mass.) scored his third goal of the season to tie the contest, 1-1.

The Anchormen almost regained the lead when senior midfielder Joseph Scolaro (Bristol) took a shot that struck the crossbar.

The eventual game-winning goal came in the 77th minute when senior midfielder Stanley Andersen (Andes, N.Y.) scored his first goal of the season.

RIC junior goalkeeper Jake Reed (Cumberland) made four saves in the loss (2-1-1).

Spartans graduate student goalkeeper Andres Soto-Burgos (The Bronx, N.Y.) tallied four saves in the victory (2-3).

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will host Emerson on Tuesday, Sept. 19 (4 p.m.).

### Oliver shines on track

Sophomore Haley Oliver (Coventry, R.I.) ran the fifth-fastest time in program history and placed 20th (18:33.04) as the Rhode Island College women's cross country team finished 27th (37 teams) at the UMass Dartmouth Invitational on Sunday afternoon

## Pitch

(Cont. from page 16)

out there who devote their lives to this very issue and if there was a full proof plan then it would be put to use. I am just questioning the hold up. I am questioning why after all of these years we still do not have a system or product in place to stymie the surge in head injuries. Again, concussions are reported now more than ever, they are no longer just considered stingers. I'm all for increasing safety, so that is why I am frustrated and perplexed as to why we have not done so in an effective manner.

So far this young fall season, we have had a number of our soccer teams finish games with tied scores. At the high school level, teams earn three points for a win and one point for a tie. In

the regular season there is no overtime. The score at the end of regulation is what it is.

I have never understood why shootouts are reserved for the postseason and why overtime periods are played at all. Shootouts provide some of the most thrilling moments in sports and should be embraced. They should not be considered a last resort in determining the outcome.

At the end of regulation, cut to the chase and go right to a shootout. This should be done for soccer, field hockey, ice hockey, even lacrosse. Shootouts are the way to go. They are fast, efficient and exciting. What else could you want as a fan?

I am not anti-tie to be honest with you. I don't hate seeing regular season games come to a close at the end of regulation, especially in a game like soccer

when the periods are long and tiresome. I get why making the kids carry on is not ideal.

However, how much more exhausted would kids be in a shootout? Not much, if at all. Sometimes they are completed in two minutes flat.

As for standard overtime period, I hate them, to be frank. The reason why games advance to overtime is because the two teams have been battling neck and neck and are struggling to gain an advantage. Most of the time this continues deep into the period and there does come a point where the excitement wears off. There comes a point where the writing is on the wall and it feels like we're not getting anywhere.

Shootouts, shootouts, shootouts. I am pounding the table for shootouts.



**SPECIAL SHIRTS, SIGN:** Max Andrews (left) and Harry Edwards proudly display the official tournament shirt golfers received in Friday's 3rd Annual Albert "Cookie" Memorial Golf Tournament. Also, Anna Arruda and Stitches owner Len Andrews hold a logo flag that was placed on all nine holes during the recent golf event. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

## DeLory

(Continued from page 16)

sible through the love people had for "Cookie" who has been sorely missed at our (Tri-City) Elks Lodge since his passing in 2019. We are proud to give these shirts in his name and memory."

As for the shirts, they were produced by Stitches Custom Embroidery LLC, which is located on Killingly Street in

Johnston and owned by Len Andrews.

Stitches created a flag for all nine pins at Harbor Lights Golf Course that featured the official tourney logo and received great reviews from the 76-player field.

As Civetti noted during the post-tourney steak fry at Lodge 14 on West Shore Road in Warwick that included a raffle with 115 prizes: "This is another special show of how much people loved Cookie DeLory."

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# NOAA Fisheries needs our support

By **CAPT. DAVE MONTI**

The U.S. House Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2024 will have a devastating impact on fish and habitat as it reduces funding by 14 percent for NOAA Fisheries, a cut of \$900 million. Yet our nation's fisheries support 1.7 million jobs and over \$117 billion in value added impact to providing food and recreation.

I support full funding for NOAA Fisheries and ask that anglers alert their US Representative to reject the funding cuts in the House Bill.

Additionally, the bill has an unrealistic policy rider on fisheries and climate. The bill contains language that would prohibit funding from being used to fund climate change fisheries research. This language would hamper the ability of NOAA Fisheries to undertake climate research and adaptation efforts.

Last year when participating in the University of Rhode Island Graduate School of Oceanography Baird Symposium on Climate Change Impacts of Recreational Fishing, scientists and anglers alike related the impacts climate was having on the recreational fishing community.

Cold water fish such as winter flounder, American lobster (the lobster we all love to eat) and cod have left our region for deeper, cooler water. And warm water fish such as black sea bass, scup and summer flounder have moved into our area in greater abundance. Additionally, for the past three years, we have seen a change in bait profiles in our region which has changed the fish we have in our area, many closer to shore than ever before.

We always had silversides, sand eels, herring and mackerel of all types, Atlantic menhaden, squid, scup, etc. I hear as bait but never all at the same time in great abundance like we have had for the past three years.

Warm water has helped create these robust bait profiles. Warm water fish have followed the food just as larger fish have come into

the region to dine. Exotic fish such as wahoo, enhance mahi, cobia, even a tarpon caught off Cape Cod this summer. And the larger animals such as sharks, porpoise, yellow and bluefin school tuna as well as giant bluefin tuna and whales are all here dinging close to shore.

In early September, the top three fish in the Boston Bluefin Classic tournament came from Rhode Island with fish caught one to three miles off Scarborough Beach, Narragansett. The winning giant bluefin was 788 pounds.

Sharks are being caught close to shore too, with Greg Vespe, a local angler catching six thresher sharks to 325 pounds off Newport on his 19 foot center console boat. And whales of all types are in the area too, in shipping lanes and in places where they haven't been before increasing strikes with vessels.

All of these changes are climate related. Closing our eyes to such impacts is just what the House Appropriations bill would do.

Email or call your US Congressman and ask them to oppose this language prohibiting funding for climate change and fisheries research in the House Appropriations bill and request full funding for NOAA so it can continue its climate change fisheries work.

To find out your Congressman's name, contact information and how to send them an email visit Find Your Representative | house.gov.

## Tips on how to catch bonito and false albacore

Many times, false albacore and bonito are mixed in with striped bass and bluefish. They can be caught from boat and shore with lures and even on the troll, here are some tips.

Keep it simple and lighten up. Local bonito and false albacore expert Susan Lema said "Use as little hardware as possible. Tie directly to a 25-pound fluorocarbon leader with a uni knot and no swivel. This keeps things simple with no hardware flashing in the water to



**FALSE ALBACORE:** Tom Houde with a false albacore caught off Narragansett from his kayak last fall. (Submitted photos)

spook the fish."

Find them at outflows. Roger Lema (Susan's husband) said, "Fish the outgoing tide in front of rivers, coves and ponds as the water and bait have to be moving."

Be prepared to mix it up. "We have five rods ready to go. Some prepared to cast silver lures like Deadly Dicks and Kastmaster lures. But, we are also ready to troll (at four knots) with broken back lures, shallow swimming and deep swimming lures to use depending on where the fish are in the water column," said Roger Lema. Ep-

oxy jigs and Albi Snax work well too.

Anticipate where the fish are. "Anticipate where these speedsters will surface again and be there when they do. Fish the sides of the schools rather than getting out in front of them," said Roger Lema.

## Where's the bite?

Striped bass, bluefish, false albacore and bonito. "After the storm the water was dirty but the bait was still here with reports of birds working off East Matunuck and in our salt ponds. I expect things to pick up for bluefish, striped bass and false albacore fishing," said Matt Conti of Snug Harbor Marina, South Kingstown.

Vincent Castaldi of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown, said, "Small bluefish and striped bass slot and over slot size are being caught in the Bay from boats. Tube & worm is the mode of preference for kayak and boat anglers with shore anglers having success with soft plastics, poppers and shiny metal lures like Kastmaster."

Tom Olson of Ponaug Bait & Tackle, Warwick, said, "The false albacore and bluefish bite remains strong on the east and southern sides of Prudence Island with the bluefish bite still very strong in Greenwich Bay."

"Fishing last week from shore was slower, with most of the decent fishing occurring at night. Mullet has arrived in our waters so larger plugs and even top water baits should start working.

Peanut bunker is being chased by striped bass, bluefish, mackerel, false albacore and bonito," said Declan O'Donnell of Breachway Bait & Tackle, Charlestown.

"Tautog fishing was off last week as a lot of smalls were being caught and few anglers were targeting them. But things will change as the water cools," said Conti of Snug Harbor.

Castaldi of Quaker Lane, said, "The tautog bite is very good off Newport and in the lower portions of the Bay."

"The hurricane last week has stirred up the water so ground fishing for tautog was off this week," said Tom Olson of Ponaug Bait & Tackle.

Tuna and mahi. "Tuna reports continue to be great out past Block Island where there are plenty of bluefin, yellowfin, and Mahi. Giant bluefin are still in tight to Point Judith lots of fish landed this week," said Declan O'Donnell.

"Freshwater fishing for largemouth bass and pickerel has been particularly good with anglers using shiners, night crawlers as bait. Most ponds are producing for anglers" said Castaldi of Quaker Lane.

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).



**NICE CATCH:** False albacore jumping in the east passage of Narragansett Bay as captured by Melissa Agonia a few seasons ago.



**TAKING THE SHOT:** Johnston's Olivia Iafra gives the ball a boot last week against Davies.

## ■ Panthers

(Continued from page 16)

ies) was pretty quick up top. We had a long 80-minute game yesterday so I think that is what prevented us from getting it in the net during that final push," said Johnston coach Toni Scavitti, who returns for her second season with the team.

Kaylee Poole led the Panthers with three shots on goal in the tie while Alexia DiLorenzo and Alysia Kleinberg each added two. Senior keeper Ava Waterman finished with three saves.

The Panthers fell to PCD 1-0 the day before. Waterman had a strong outing, finishing the day with 13 saves. Johnston cruised to a 4-0 non-league win over Central Falls to open their season.

After enjoying a bounce back season last year in which they finished in first place and made the playoffs, the Panthers are looking to make another run as players such as Poole, DiLorenzo and Waterman all return.

"I'm expecting a strong senior year from Kaylee and Alexia. They are great players with great speed. We're going to fine tune our accuracy and we'll be good to

go," said Scavitti. "(The results) have been all over the place since we've been facing different caliber teams which will help us settle in we're going to have a very good year. It's going to be tough, but we should have a good year. It's definitely comforting (having Waterman in net), I'm not sure what we'll do next year when she's gone."

The Panthers took on Central on Tuesday night but the results were not available at press time. Johnston's next game will be a league matchup against Rogers on Thursday night in Newport.



**THROW IT IN:** Johnston's Cameron Ferrara throws the ball back into play.

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## Telling retirement to 'take a hike'

**TAKE A HIKE:** Retired journalist John Kostrzewa reignited his love for hiking his adopted state. After nearly 3 decades in The Providence Journal newsroom, he decided it was time to take a walk and think about the future. Eventually, his journey led him to his book, "Walking Rhode Island." (Beacon Communications photos by Rory Schuler)

### John Kostrzewa publishes column compilation 'Walking Rhode Island'

By RORY SCHULER

**Reporter's Note:** Unable to write the first line of this feature, I took the story subject's advice, and took a walk. "Walking's a great way to clear your mind," suggested retired journalist and author John Kostrzewa. [10 minutes later] So, here it goes ...

Picking up litter like breadcrumbs, John Kostrzewa embarked on a familiar trek, fully confident he'd discover something new once again.

Just a few feet onto the trail at Goddard State Park, the author leaned down to pick up a piece of trash. He tucked the paper scrap into his pocket and continued up a small hill.

"These trails have been used hard," he said while taking long steps and scanning his surroundings, his ball cap bill swinging left to the shoreline, and right, into the forest.

The longtime newspaper columnist and retired editor scowled at a dog turd encapsulated in a tiny colorful poop bag — smelly litter preserved for future walkers. He easily fought the temptation to tuck the soggy biohazard into his pocket. (He has no problem with dog walkers. But if they leaned over to trap the turds in plastic, then why leave the bag behind? The dog poop bag problem's becoming epidemic on the Ocean State's well-tread woodland trails.)

Despite the occasional tiny twisted landmine, Kostrzewa has a passion for sharing Rhode Island's best hiking spots. Above all else, he loves a good walk — and he loves making discoveries along the way.

#### Step-by-Step

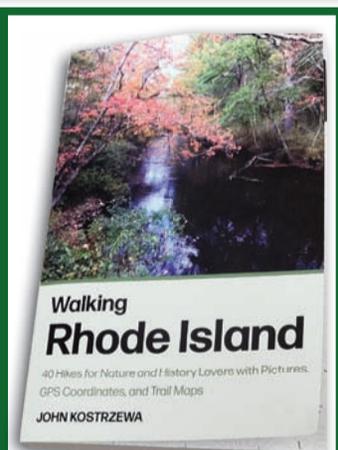
In August, Kostrzewa self-published a compilation of hiking columns he wrote for his former full-time employer, The Providence Journal, in a book called "Walking Rhode Island: 40 Hikes for Nature and History Lovers with Pictures, GPS Coordinates, and Trail Maps."

"Walking Rhode Island is your guide to 40 of the most scenic, natural, and historic trails in the state," declares the book's Amazon listing. "Casual walkers, families, and experienced hikers can pick from easy, moderate, and challenging hikes. Each trail has descriptions of the geological features, wildlife, vegetation, and historic landmarks, directions to the trailheads, and trail tips."

Last week, Kostrzewa had lunch with the Warwick Rotary Club. After the meal, he gave attendees a taste of his newly published hiking companion.

He shared photographs from several key walks, including a climb across the rocky steps of Hopkinton's "cathedral," a high-walled cleft that leads to a perch above Long Pond, where director Wes Anderson filmed scenes for the movie "Moonrise Kingdom."

He and the Amazon listing for his book challenge readers to "spot ospreys soaring high above Great Swamp in South Kingstown" or "explore the remains of a Colonial farm at Parker Woodland in Coventry."



### BUY THE BOOK

John Kostrzewa's book, "Walking Rhode Island: 40 Hikes for Nature and History Lovers with Pictures, GPS Coordinates, and Trail Maps," can be purchased on Amazon or at the Beacon Communications office, 1944 Warwick Ave., Warwick.



**ROTARY BRIEFING:** Book author and columnist John Kostrzewa attended last week's Warwick Rotary Club meeting, where he pitched his new book and the benefits of "Walking Rhode Island." (Beacon Communications photo by John Howell)

## ■ Walking (Continued from page 21)

On Friday, Kostrzewa took a walk, re-enacting Chapter 29, on a breezy late summer morning.

### Off the Beaten ...

While walking the Goddard path, Kostrzewa acknowledged the seemingly inherent Rhode Islander fear of traveling more than 15 minutes from home.

"I think Rhode Island is really a state of neighborhoods," he explained. "It's not so much what town you live in. It's, 'What neighborhood are you from?'"

Despite residing in the nation's smallest state, Rhode Islanders have a high ratio of walking trails, per capita, compared to other densely populated regions. And the Ocean State's deep historical roots stretch back, far beyond the land's first colonial settlers.

Every walk provides a history lesson.

Kostrzewa carefully stepped between tender tree roots that had been further exposed by recent rainfall erosion. He leaned down to pick up a small, black fabric hair-tie; one less morsel of litter on the trail.

The park once belonged to "Robert Goddard, a Civil War officer and Rhode Island politician," Kostrzewa wrote. "There's a weathered plaque on a stone pillar at the parks entrance noting that his children donated the land to the state in 1927."

That's the quick-hit story. But Kostrzewa digs deeper.

### Hidden History

Eventually, the walker reached the Sally Rocks.

From the shore, Kostrzewa pointed out over the row of flattened slippery black stones that stretch into Greenwich Bay and toward Chepiwanoxet Point.

He retold the story he described on Pages 167-171 of his book — the tale of a warring nation's first airplane manufacturer, founded by Yale physics professor Edson Gallaudet and constructed with the "backing of Rhode Island investors."

"He built seaplanes over there on Chepiwanoxet Point," Kostrzewa said from the shoreline, while squinting in the sunshine. He traced the World War I era seaplane factory to the state's first aviation death — a brave pilot who lost his life in these same choppy waters.

"I learned later that a test pilot, Jack McGee, became the first aircraft casualty in Rhode Island when a pontoon on the

Gallaudet seaplane he was flying dipped and struck a swell," Kostrzewa wrote. "The plane flipped and McGee drowned just off the point where I was standing."

At the scene, he reflected for a moment, reconciling the history with the site's natural beauty.

"That's Rhode Island," he said while stepping away from the water. "Just get off the beaten path and you get all this great history."

Kostrzewa has been hiking across Rhode Island for decades and worked at The Providence Journal for 29 years as a reporter, columnist, business editor, and assistant managing editor, according to the author's book jacket bio. He retired in 2017. After leaving the newspaper business, Kostrzewa continued to hike and compile stories. His "Walking Rhode Island" column launched in 2021 and still appears online and within the paper's Sunday edition.

The College of the Holy Cross graduate currently resides in Cranston with his wife Carol.

### Trail Heads

Admittedly, and proudly, Kostrzewa literally followed in the footsteps of another longtime Providence Journal employee and conservation activist, Ken Weber.

He starts his book with a description of the Ken Weber Conservation Area, a trail that begins where a dead-end road terminates off Route 44 in Smithfield.

Prior to his death in 2007, Weber "cut the trail here that's named in his honor," Kostrzewa wrote.

Weber also authored a book — "Walks and Rambles in Rhode Island" — which many avid Ocean State walkers, including Kostrzewa, consider "the bible of hiking in the state."

The late author and trailblazer's wife gave Kostrzewa a blurb for his new book.

"Ken loved to walk the trails and take his time to enjoy all that was around him," wrote Bettie Weber. "Reading 'Walking Rhode Island,' and especially the column about the Ken Weber Conservation Area, gave me a great feeling. Thank you."

There's salvation in those Ocean State woodlands. Kostrzewa echoes Weber's thesis: slow down and appreciate it, "instead of always watching the puck."

You don't have to be a broken down newsroom wordsmith to walk Rhode Island with Kostrzewa. But it helps.

"Get out and see what you can see in the woods," Kostrzewa said. "Take your time."

# ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

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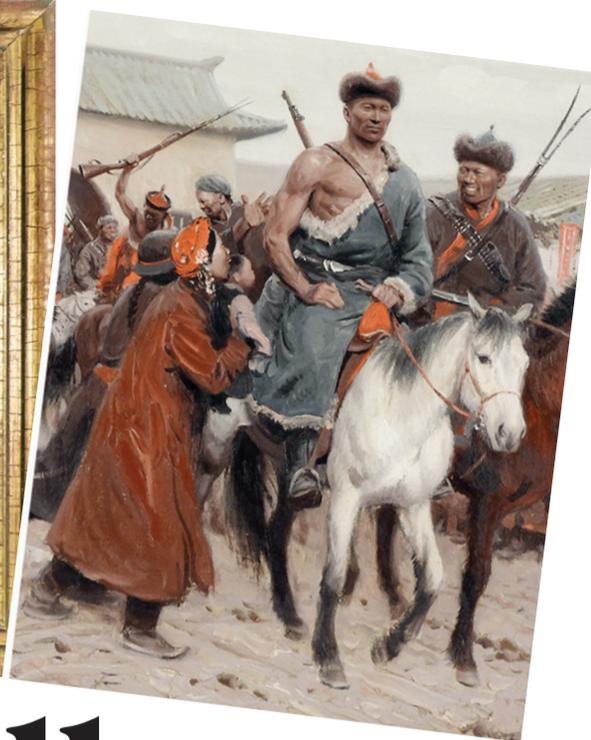
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**SURVIVING EROSION:** John Kostrzewa stands by a beautiful survivor of erosion along the shoreline while walking a at Goddard State Park. (Beacon Communications photos by Rory Schuler)

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## Tom Lovell

### Illustrator of History and Adventure



**By Joel Bohy**  
*Historic Arms & Militaria*  
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color study for *Professor Lowe's Balloon* depicting Confederate soldiers and artillery trying to shoot down the *Intrepid*, one of Professor Thaddeus Lowe's Union balloons, near Yorktown, Virginia in 1862. Despite not being fully rendered like other final drafts in the collection, the study itself stands on its own and is beautifully presented. The work transports the viewer to the moment; the fog and open field where soldiers stand feels almost tangible.

Another military themed piece we have is a painting done for *True Magazine* with Chinese/ Mongolian soldiers parading through a town while onlookers cheer. Although it is a scene many of us will never experience in any capacity, it provides a photographic and familiar quality, as though the viewer had witnessed it themselves.

This is a small sampling of the incredible illustration art by

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# PRIME TIME

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## Protecting Your Health This Fall

With cold and flu season upon us, it's time to protect yourself, not only from those seasonal threats, but also from other health risks.

"During the holidays, our lives get very busy with family and friends," said Dr. J.B. Sobel, chief medical officer for Cigna Healthcare's Medicare business. "Before then, please take time to ensure you get the preventive care you need to stay healthy."

Preventive care is critical for everybody, but particularly for older adults, and especially in fall when risks can increase, Sobel said. Recommendations vary based on age, gender and health status, but the following are some of the most common for seniors, according to Sobel.

### Vaccinations

There are a number of vaccines older adults need to consider to protect themselves. Flu and pneumonia, for example, are among some of the most common causes of senior deaths. There is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to vaccination. Timing and frequency vary, depending on your health history. Ask your health care provider which vaccines are appropriate for you.

- Flu. This vaccine is administered annually, generally before the end of October, and is designed to match the latest circulating flu strains.

- Pneumonia. Administration varies based on health history. If you're 65 or older and you've never had the vaccine before, then you'll likely need two shots, which are administered a year apart.

- Shingles. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends two doses of the shingles vaccine for healthy adults aged 50 and older, spaced two to six months apart, to prevent shingles and related complications.

- COVID-19. Ask your doctors about current recommendations for prevention of COVID-19 infections.

- RSV. Earlier this year, the Federal Drug Administration approved two separate vaccines to address respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in older adults. RSV, a common respiratory infection, usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms, but can be more severe in older adults and children. Talk to your doctor about whether you should get an RSV vaccine.

### Health Screenings

The following health screenings are commonly recommended for older adults.

- Mammogram. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women in the United States, according to the CDC. Every woman is at risk, and risk increases with age. Fortunately, breast cancer can often be treated successfully when found early. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends women 50 to 74-years-old at average risk get a mammogram every two years.

## September is Healthy Aging Month!

*Tips for maintaining or improving your health and well-being as you age:*



Exercise regularly



Eat well-balanced meals



Get enough sleep



Get regular check-ups and yearly physicals



Stay socially engaged with family, friends, & your community!

- Colorectal screening. Colorectal cancer risk increases with age. Screenings can find precancerous polyps early, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. The USPSTF recommends colorectal cancer screening for adults age 45 to 75. Though colonoscopy is the most comprehensive test, there are other options you may consider with the help of your provider.

- Bone density scan. USPSTF recommends women aged 65 and older, and women 60 and older at increased risk, be routinely screened for osteoporosis, a disease in which bones become weak and brittle. Screening may facilitate treatment that helps prevent fractures.

- Eye exam. Routine eye exams can identify early signs of eye disease that are more likely as people age. People with diabetes in particular are prone to retinopathy, which leads to vision loss. It's recommended that people with diabetes have annual retinal screenings.

- Mental health checkup. Many people experience seasonal depression during fall. Mental health is strongly linked to physical health. Talk to your health care provider about both, including your personal and family history. They can connect you with additional mental health resources.

To prevent unpleasant surprises, Sobel suggests talking with your health care provider, pharmacist or insurer about preventive care costs. Fortunately, costs are often covered fully by Medicare or Medicare Advantage, he said.

The information contained in this article is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment and before undertaking a new health care regimen. (STATEPOINT)

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# Social Security COLA Increase for 2024

## ELDER LAW

by DON DRAKE

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Social Security COLA Increase in 2024		
Category	Average Monthly Increase	Average 2024 SSA Check
Retiree	\$65	\$1,882
Disabled Individual	\$44	\$1,527
Senior Couple both Receiving SSA	\$89	\$3,061
Widow(er)	\$51	\$1,755
Widow(er) with 2 children	\$106	\$3,626

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Attorney Connelly. “Regrettably, this leaves only a limited window for those who may be affected to modify their financial strategies or estate plans accordingly. As a result, I advise our clients to prepare for these changes in advance and fully understand their potential consequences. After reviewing information from the Social Security Administration and on the Wall Street 24/7 and the ValueWalk sites, there are a number of updates predicted for 2024.” Here are those expected changes:

### Rise in Early Filers’ Withholding Thresholds.

Retirees who choose to claim their Social Security benefits early face two penalties from the SSA. Firstly, their monthly payout is permanently reduced. Secondly, the SSA applies a retirement earnings test, which may result in the withholding of part or all of the benefits based on the beneficiaries’ income.

For those who didn’t reach full retirement age (FRA) in 2023 and are still working, the SSA was allowed to withhold \$1 in benefits for every \$2 in earned income over \$21,240 (\$1,770 a month). However, if a beneficiary reaches their full retirement age in 2023, the SSA can withhold \$1 in benefits for every \$3 in earned income over \$56,520 (\$4,710 a month).

The good news is that the SSA’s withholding thresholds are expected to increase slightly in the coming year. This means that early filers

will be able to receive some extra benefits without going through the retirement earnings test.

### Qualifying for Credits May Get Harder.

To qualify for Social Security benefits, earning the required lifetime work credits is the primary eligibility criterion. One must obtain 40 lifetime work credits, with a maximum of four credits attainable in a year. As of 2023, a single credit equals \$1,640 in earned income.

Therefore, an individual needs to earn approximately \$6,560 in a year to obtain the maximum number of credits. Moreover, similar to other parameters, this threshold of earned income is also tied to inflation. It is anticipated that the threshold will increase next year, requiring a higher income to qualify for the credit.

### Increase in Threshold Income for Disabled Individuals.

Aside from early filers, individuals with long-term disabilities may also expect an increase in their benefits next year. To qualify for continued disability benefits, a beneficiary must meet the income threshold. In 2023, people with disabilities (excluding blindness) can continue receiving benefits if their monthly income doesn’t exceed \$1,470. For blind Americans, the threshold income is up to \$2,460 per month.

### Wealthy Americans Will Pay More.

As of 2023, payroll taxes are applied to all income up to \$160,200, which represents the highest amount of earnings that are subject to Social Security taxes. This cap increases each year based on the National Average Wage Index (NAWI), which is expected to rise again this year. However, it’s worth noting that only 6% of taxpayers are impacted by this cap, while the remaining 94% won’t be affected.

### Maximum Monthly Benefit Will Likely Rise.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) sets a limit on the amount of earnings taxpayers are subject to the payroll tax. Similarly, the amount a beneficiary can receive each month at full retirement age (FRA) is also limited. As of 2023, the maximum monthly payout at FRA has increased by \$283 to \$3,627.

While the inflation rate is currently increasing moderately, it is expected that there will be a hike in the maximum monthly payout next year. However, only 2% of beneficiaries qualify for the maximum monthly benefit, similar to the top taxable earnings cap. In order to receive the highest possible monthly payout, beneficiaries need to meet specific requirements. These include waiting until they reach their Full Retirement Age (FRA) before beginning to collect benefits, having a work history of at least 35 years, and earning at or above the maximum taxable earnings cap for each of those 35 years.

“As older Americans continue to face the ongoing issue of high inflation, these benefits are more crucial now than ever before,” stated Attorney Connelly. “The automatic adjustment feature is essential and needs to be a non-negotiable aspect of Social Security, as it ensures that the benefits do not diminish over time due to the persistent rise of prices. Should the projected increase change from the forecasted 3 percent, we will update the information for our clients and readers.”

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## Tired of the financial roller coaster?

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- Determine your state of risk
- Review your needs
- Reallocate as needed
- Check in regularly with a financial representative you trust.

Contact Steve Volpe at GCU Wealth Advisors. He would be glad to help evaluate your needs and make suggestions to help secure your financial goals.

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# Fighting Fraud Year Round



**AARP - RHODE ISLAND**  
by CATHERINE TAYLOR

Protecting you and your family from fraud is a year-round commitment from AARP Rhode Island in keeping with our mission to empower you to choose the way you live as you age. Keeping your money safe is critical to a financially secure future.

I am pleased we're able to return to offering free local document shredding events to help you guard against identity theft, and am so excited to report the success of AARP Rhode Island's recent Shred Week.

We had a phenomenal turnout at each of our five locations, where we shredded a total of 18,000 pounds — 9 tons — of sensitive documents. We helped more than 900 Rhode Islanders who took advantage of Shred Week.

We want to thank the folks at each of our locations -- Edward King House in Newport, Cumberland Senior Center, Bristol Community Center, the Office of the Attorney General in Cranston and the East Providence Senior Center — who helped out in so many ways. And it goes without saying that without our volunteers Shred Week would not have been possible. Thank you, Tony Ballirano, Ray Bourget, Elaine Cioe, Barbara Cioffi, Sandra Darling, Ken Gagner, Maryellen Hallam, Dan Liparini, Marcus Mitchell, Lorna Oinonen, Helmut Reinhardt, Holly Snyder, Christine Strachan and Andy Schupack!

We spoke to many people during Shred Week who told us that identity theft is a constant worry. It absolutely does require vigilance to protect oneself from the latest scams. We recommend signing up for free AARP Fraudwatch Alerts to keep you on your toes. Register at [www.aarp.org/FraudwatchNetwork](http://www.aarp.org/FraudwatchNetwork). If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

AARP Rhode Island provides a steady flow of fraud prevention information, sending out Fraud Watch alerts via social media, discussing the latest scams on our radio appearances and conducting tele-town halls with the Rhode Island Attorney General. AARP RI Speakers Bureau volunteers give free, helpful fraud presentations across the state — including a 2 p.m., September 18th presentation at Warwick Public Library: Central Library, 600 Sandy Lane. Register at [aarp.org/RIEvents](http://aarp.org/RIEvents).

At the State House, working with bill sponsors Sen. Victoria Gu and Rep. Julie Casimiro, AARP fought to win passage of a new law that requires Rhode Island retailers to post signage warning of gift card scams. And AARP has been instrumental in passing strong financial exploitation legislation protecting older Rhode Islanders.

Most recently, we've worked to protect Rhode Island's 56,692 veterans and military families by warning them and their families of the latest scams, how to avoid them, and ways to fight back.

## A PACT Attack

Sadly, active-duty military and veterans have become a special target for scammers, having lost, according to the Federal Trade Commission, more than \$414 million to fraud and scams in 2022, a 195% increase from 2021.

Right now, they are facing a new threat. According to a new AARP survey, nearly two-thirds of veterans are unaware that they can receive free assistance with Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act—or PACT Act — benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The new law expands access to VA health care benefits for more than five million veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. Survivors of deceased veterans are also eligible to receive these benefits.

AARP found that one in 10 veterans approached by someone offering to assist with enrollment in these benefits say they offer guaranteed a lucrative payout, which is a telltale sign of a scam.

Veterans, service members and their families are targets of scammers due to a presumption of steady income and benefits, frequent moves and deployments, and tight-knit culture that criminals can exploit to gain unwarranted trust.

According to a 2021 AARP survey, veteran/military adults are 40% more likely to lose money to scams and fraud than the civilian population.

AARP's Fraud Watch Network offers these tips for how to avoid these scams:

- Veterans never have to pay for their earned benefits or service records—if told otherwise, it's a scam.
- Veterans who receive a call or see an advertisement from an alleged law firm offering assistance with benefits claims should NOT assume that it is a trustworthy organization.
- Veterans and their families should sign up for the National Do Not Call Registry and use a call-blocking service.
- Veterans should never sign a blank form or agreement with an attorney or company without fully understanding what it is.

To learn about the latest scams and how to avoid them visit the AARP Veterans Fraud Center, at [aarp.org/vetsfraudcenter](http://aarp.org/vetsfraudcenter). To learn how to apply for PACT Act benefits, visit [aarp.org/vetshealthnavigator](http://aarp.org/vetshealthnavigator). For these resources and more information on AARP's support for veterans and military families, visit [aarp.org/veterans](http://aarp.org/veterans).

Remember, if you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam! Wishing you a safe end of summer.



**AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Is Looking for Volunteers**

The AARP Tax-Aide program needs new volunteers for fall training for the next tax year to rebuild our Covid reduced staffs at 29 sites across Rhode Island.

We offer FREE tax prep services for low to moderate income taxpayers of all ages, both working and retired. Because of the complexity of tax preparation, many taxpayers do not file, or go to paid preparers that they cannot afford. You can help.

Our IRS trained counselors prepare and electronically file returns to make sure that our clients avoid fees, and that they quickly receive all of their refund. In 2023 our 120 volunteers served over 5,200 grateful clients across Rhode Island.

We are looking for compassionate and friendly people to join our volunteer team. We'll provide the training and mentor support to help you learn new skills, and you'll get a great feeling from helping those in need.

The program is looking for individuals to volunteer in a number of roles to provide help to taxpayers. Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and span from retirees to college students.

Our tax prep training classes start in October, and are complete before Thanksgiving. In addition to Tax Counselors we need Intake Facilitators to greet clients and Communication Coordinators to schedule appointments. These last two jobs do not require tax code expertise.

If meeting great people, learning to prepare tax returns, and outreach to your community sound interesting to you, please contact us for more information at: [NNHenry59@hotmail.com](mailto:NNHenry59@hotmail.com)



In Your Community

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# September Heralds the Change of Seasons - Yuck!



## MY SIDE OF THINGS

by LARRY GRIMALDI

Most parents secretly breathe a sigh of relief when the calendar turns to September and Labor Day signals the return to school. And while parents may rejoice in their offspring's return to academia, I remain in my curmudgeon mode to proclaim fall as my least favorite season. I have several reasons for disliking this transitional month.

### Fall augurs the looming specter of winter.

Although the trees will paint their foliage in bright reds, yellows, oranges, and other colors, the leaves will soon surrender to the whims of the winds and float away.

Daylight savings time ends and the nights become longer. For this reason alone (aside from the cold and dark winter environment in regions around the Arctic Circle), fall lends itself to an atmosphere of foreboding.

The Halloween, Thanksgiving, and even Christmas displays will pop up at virtually every retail outlet. (Nothing like rushing through the holidays).

While September may tease you with unreasonably warm days, autumn sun will be gobbled up by cool evening breezes.

The Pumpkin Spice Craze returns. (Actually, it has now stealthily crept into August).

Ice cream and frozen lemonade don't seem to be quite as refreshing.

The chowder and clam cakes don't seem to taste as good without the background noise of waves crashing the shoreline.

While our beautiful Rhode Island beaches are deserted, the blustery winds and falling temperatures are not conducive to spending the day at the shore.

We older folks will nostalgically recall the days when visits to Crescent Park, Rocky Point, Olivo's, Lido's, Scarborough, Sand Hill Cove, or Misquamaciut beaches dominated our summer "to do" list.

I'm sure that many spouses dread the beginning of Saturday, Sunday, Monday Night, and any other night football. They are innocent victims of frantic, boisterous entreaties screamed by armchair quarterbacks furiously calculating and recalculating statistics for their fantasy pigskin rosters. (Fantasy football is like advanced nuclear physics to me. I don't understand it and I'd rather just renew my 60-year emotional attachment to the New York Football Giants).

The last of our garden tomatoes will be harvested and we will have to eat "store bought" produce.

I'll have to take in the lawn furniture from the patio and store the gnomes and the other flower garden decorations in the garage.

I'll have to turn up the heat (making my oil company very happy). Along these lines, I have a friend who tries to hold off turning on his heat until November 1. Good luck with that! I'm now at the age where I prefer comfort to cost.

I will have to lower the screens in my front and back doors and slide the glass windows up in their place.

It will be time for the dreaded "changing of the wardrobe." The saving grace in this annual ritual, however, will

be not having to drag out the winter coats, gloves, and scarves just yet. This routine also allows you to clean your closet and weed out the attire that you don't wear or even know you had.

You will save gas, a welcome benefit in these days of high prices, by not having to run your car's air conditioning, but you will have to turn up the heater.

Chances are that you have used your vacation time during the summer and probably will have to wait until next spring for your next break from work. (Since my wife and I are retired and spend the winter in Ft. Lauderdale we escape this fate).

Lastly, you'll have to tune up the snow blower, find the ice scrapper, and make sure that your equipment (or rake) is ready to scoop up those fallen leaves that have not been carried off in the breezes. As an alternative, you can contract for the fall and gutter cleaning with a local landscaper.

As I leave you with these thoughts, I wish you a Happy Autumn.

*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](mailto:lvgrimaldi49@gmail.com)*

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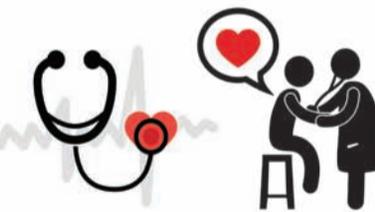
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— HIGHER —  
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Compared with white people, Black people are about one-third less likely to be aware they have AFib.

Visit [heart.org/AFib](http://heart.org/AFib) to learn more about AFib symptoms and stroke risk.

HCA Healthcare  
**FOUNDATION**

The HCA Healthcare Foundation is the national sponsor of Getting to the Heart of Stroke™.

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Photo courtesy of Getty Images

### FAMILY FEATURES

For many people, the heart naturally contracts and relaxes to a regular beat. However, those living with atrial fibrillation (AFib) experience a quivering or irregular heartbeat that can lead to further health issues including stroke, heart attack, heart failure or sudden cardiac arrest.

In fact, people with AFib are up to five times more likely to have a stroke, yet many people are unaware that AFib is a serious condition. Managing your AFib is important to reducing your stroke risk.

Consider this important information from the American Heart Association's Getting to the Heart of Stroke, an initiative sponsored nationally by the HCA Healthcare Foundation, to understand if you may be at higher risk of a stroke.

### Symptoms

While some people with AFib don't have symptoms, those who do may experience a racing heartbeat or irregular heart rate. Other common symptoms include heart palpitations (rapid "flopping" or "fluttering" feeling in the chest); lightheadedness or faintness; chest pain or pressure; shortness of breath, especially when lying down; or fatigue.

During AFib, some blood may not be pumped efficiently from the atria (the heart's two small upper chambers) into the ventricles. Blood that's left behind can pool in the atria and form blood clots. The clot may block blood flow to the brain, causing a stroke.

### Risk Factors

Anyone can develop AFib. The risk factors for AFib are broken into two categories: heart-health factors and behavioral factors. Heart-health factors may include advancing age (especially over age 65),

family history of AFib, high blood pressure, prior heart attack or disease, diabetes, sleep apnea and prior heart surgery. Behaviors that may be associated with higher risk factors include excessive alcohol use, smoking and prolonged athletic conditioning. (Appropriate physical activity is important for a healthy lifestyle, but you should discuss your exercise plan with a health care professional.)

"Early identification and treatment of AFib is critical to stroke prevention, especially in high-risk populations experiencing health care disparities or barriers to accessing vital health care resources," said Steven Manoukian, MD, FAHA, senior vice president at HCA Healthcare. "Common risk factors, like high blood pressure, are more prevalent within Black communities, yet Black patients may be diagnosed less often with AFib. Creating awareness of AFib, stroke risk and treatment options can be a lifesaving first step in stroke prevention."

### Treatment Options

It's important to talk to your doctor if you think you may have symptoms of AFib or be at risk for AFib. Diagnosis of AFib starts with an in-depth examination from a doctor. Work with your doctor to identify a treatment plan and goals to help manage your AFib and reduce your risk of stroke.

Treatment options for AFib may include medications to prevent and treat blood clots or control heart rate and rhythm, procedures or surgery. Your doctor may also prescribe medications to prevent and treat blood clots that can lead to a stroke. Discuss the best options for you with your doctor to create a shared decision-making plan.

To learn how to manage your AFib and connect with others, visit [MyAFibExperience.org](http://MyAFibExperience.org).

# The Great Gender Pronouns Debate

September is my birthday month and it seems like a good time to jump in on the debate over gender pronouns. If you've noticed emails or letters with "she/her" or "he/him" after the name of the person who sent the message, you've already been touched by this debate. It's gained fairly wide acceptance rather quickly and has likely left many of you wondering what the heck it's all about.

I'm not sure who or what started it. Perhaps androgynous young people did. Or those transitioning from one sex to another. Whatever the answer, a common solution seems to be to refer to everyone as "they/them" even in the singular. If you don't want to be a "they," be sure to put "she" or "he" after your name.

I can remember when the great gender-related debate was whether to refer to a woman as "Miss" or "Ms" if you knew she wasn't married. It didn't take long for "Mrs" to be replaced by "Ms," too. "Mr" had survived the fray until recently. Now that's up for grabs as well. The other day I saw a signature line on something written by a man that had "Mx" on it. That's one way to duck the issue.

So, what other options do we have other than "they/them"? How about just "it"? "It" has served us well for time immemorial as a way to reference something of an unknown sex. Ditto for using "the uni," short for unisex. Here's another option, one I haven't heard used before: "the neut." That's supposed to refer to something that's had the sex it was born with removed. That seems to be the reason some people jettison the "she/her" and "he/him" options (not literally). If you just want to confuse people, go with she/him and he/her, alternating genders.

Language isn't the only place where gender is in play. Baby showers now usually include a gender-reveal feature. Sometimes the baby's sex is shown via pink or blue layers of a cake. Often a huge balloon is popped and colored confetti rains down. Some couples spend a lot on elaborate reveals. I hope the babies will be comfortable



## RETIREMENT SPARKS

by ELAINE M. DECKER



with the pronouns they'll be born to live with. Thoughtful parents could consider preserving their children's options by combining both colors in their reveals, the equivalent of "they," with a caveat that there are not twins on the way.

In this sex-aware culture, another gender feature occurred to me. I never thought about it until now, but belly buttons could be considered to have genders, too. Innies would be female; outies would be male. (Visualize that for a minute.) This may sound crazy, but is it really any more ridiculous than referring to a single person as "they"?

When I was getting ready for college, my father and I put together a hi-fi system for me using a Heathkit. He was explaining the connector cables to me, but we didn't have those yet. He said that the male end would go in the back of one of the items (I forget which now) and the female end would attach to something else. I foolishly

asked him how I would know which end of the cable was the male.

It would have been so easy for him to just wiggle his pointer finger at me, and then poke it into his loose fist. Instead, he turned purple, got out the Heath catalog and turned to the cable page. He stammered something as he pointed to one of the pictures. The light bulb went on over my head, and I assured him I now understood. I can't tell you how relieved he was!

Who knows where this gender pronouns debate will lead over time. Will baby clothes that are considered specifically female or male be shunned? There are already a plethora of names that are so unisex they offer no clue to the gender of the person who bears them. In fact, one of the websites that ranks baby names by popularity added a unisex column to its lists two years ago. Picture this: You peer into a carriage at a newborn in a yellow onesie. You don't want to ask the baby's sex, so you ask "their" name. It's Taylor or Morgan. Good luck with that.

Somehow there needs to be a stop to this gender pronouns debate before it gets completely out of control. I don't have any idea how to do that. If you have a suggestion, feel free to send it to me, Elaine Decker, I/me.

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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](mailto:emdecker@ix.netcom.com)



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# Theatres Make Adjustments For Handicapped



ACCORDING TO DON

by DON FOWLER

Rhode Island's theatres and entertainment venues have come a long way in making accommodations for the handicapped.

Live theater and music lovers who for years were unable to access many of the older facilities can now enjoy the arts, thanks to the addition of elevators, ramps, wheelchair spaces, listening devices, and railings.

Veterans Memorial Auditorium is a good example of major retrofitting that allows people in wheelchairs, walkers and canes to get to their seats with little difficulty.

Like Vets, the Providence Performing Arts Center, Trinity and The AMP have paid special attention to the needs of the handicapped.

By removing aisle seats, it is possible to provide a wheelchair space next to a seat for a caregiver.

Ushers are now trained in aiding the handicapped by helping them to their seat

and then storing the wheelchairs and walkers in the lobby, bringing them back when the show is over.

I need a cane to maneuver the steep aisles. I store it in the cupholder, so my aisle mates won't trip over it when going to and from their seats.

If you have ever sat in the second balcony at Vets, you will appreciate the railings that were added recently to help those with mobility problems climb the stairs.

Those of us with hearing disabilities appreciate the listening devices that are connected to the actors' microphones, available at no charge in the lobby at PPAC, Trinity and Gamm.

Smaller theatres around the state are doing what they can do with old facilities, providing front row seats in bleacher-style theatres and ramps into the theatres.

When making reservations, inform the theatre of any special needs such as ask handicap or aisle seating.

# Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island was established on Feb. 17, 1969 by founder Joe Brown (1924-2014) who saw an unmet need in his community to provide nutritious meals to homebound seniors.

With a small group of volunteers, he began delivering lunchtime meals to 17 seniors in Providence out of space donated by Grace Church, located in downtown Providence.

In 1972, an amendment to the Older Americans Act allowed great expansion of this new Home-Delivered Meal Program as well as the addition of new and much-needed services to serve homebound seniors statewide.

Within its first 10 years in operation, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island celebrated the delivery of its one millionth meal to a senior in need.

## There Are Multiple Ways To Receive Home-Delivered Meals:

### 1. SELF-PAY

Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island offers a self-pay option for service of its Home-Delivered Meal Program. With the Self-Pay options, you pay the actual cost of food delivery, which equals \$50 per week. The Self-Pay option is available if:

You have been placed on the waiting list (right now, the demand greatly outweighs the resources available to Meals on Wheels of RI). By opting into Self-Pay, you are able to receive our More Than a Meal Model right away!

You are an adult 60 or older who would like to receive meals but you do not meet the program eligibility requirements.

### 2. GRANT FUNDED

If you need assistance paying for meals, you may apply to receive meals through an approved waiver or grant and donor-funded meals. To qualify for meals, participants must meet these conditions:

- Be an adult 60 or older
- Be home-bound or have difficulty leaving home independently
- Not be a participant in an adult daycare or dining program on a day the participant is scheduled to receive meals.

### 3. MEDICAID HCBS

If you are approved for HCBS-LTSS, you are eligible to receive home-delivered meals

# A Closer Look at Tub Cuts and Roll In Showers

## SENIOR SAFETY

by RACHEL MONIZ

OAKLEY HOME ACCESS

Seniors have an opportunity to compare and contrast two popular options for bathroom modifications. The best decision can be made based on budgetary needs, accessibility needs, and personal preferences to maximize mobility and meet the goal of aging in place. Let's take a look at the comparison between these two choices.

### Tub Cuts

Tub cuts are a modification made to an existing bathtub that lowers the side, making it easier to step into the tub.

One advantage of tub cuts is that they are more cost-effective than installing a new roll-in shower. Additionally, tub cuts are an excellent option for those who still want to use their bathtub for soaking or for homes with small children who need to take a bath. This is achieved using a "convertible" tub cut, which has an insert to return tub functionality to the shower. However, tub cuts may not be suitable for those with more severe mobility issues and those who require wheelchair accessibility.

Who would benefit from a tub cut?

The tub cut reduces the overall height of the tub wall

for a shower transfer creating a more manageable step for clients who have difficulty with stepping into the shower. This modification is often done for those with mobility issues or seniors who may have difficulty stepping over the high sides of a bathtub. Tub cut showers can also be a more affordable alternative to a full bathroom remodel. We can create a tub-cut in 2-3 hours at a fraction of the cost of traditional demolition and remodel.

The ideal home for a tub cut is one where all users can step over the cut's curb area, this generally averages between 6-8 inches. When there continues to be some level of difficulty with the transfer, we often recommend to use a tub transfer bench in conjunction with the tub cut.

### Roll In/Barrier Free Showers

Roll-in showers, on the other hand, are barrier-free showers that allow for easy access without any obstacles. They are a great option for those with mobility issues as they are completely barrier-free, making them easy to enter and exit for those with a wheelchair or walker.

What is a barrier free shower? A barrier free shower, sometimes called a curbless shower, is a type of shower

that does not have a raised edge or a step to climb over when entering or exiting. The shower floor is typically sloped towards a drain to prevent water from overflowing onto the bathroom floor. Barrier free showers can in a variety of styles and materials, and can be customized to fit the specific needs and preferences of the homeowner.

The biggest advantage with a barrier free shower is that the threshold is eliminated completely so there is no need to step over anything in order to bathe. Wheelchair users can easily roll into the shower stall and then, if needed, transfer to a shower bench or shower chair. The barrier free shower is the more versatile of these two options as it can be used by anyone, regardless of physical ability.

And for those wanting a particular aesthetic, roll-in showers also offer a modern and sleek look to a bathroom remodel. There are a variety of options for wall textures and appearance.

Ultimately, the decision between tub cuts and roll-in showers will depend on individual needs and preferences.

[oakleyhomeaccess.com](http://oakleyhomeaccess.com)



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# Minimizing the risk of financial abuse for people living with dementia

## SOCIAL SECURITY

by CHERYL TUDINO  
SOCIAL SECURITY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

Financial crime against older Americans is a growing problem. People living with dementia are at an especially high risk of becoming victims. That's why we're committed to combatting fraud.

As their memory and other thinking skills decline, people with dementia may struggle to make financial decisions. They may not remember or report the abuse – or understand that someone is taking advantage of them. This abuse can occur anywhere – including at home or in care settings.

Victims of fraud who are 80 years and older lose an average of \$39,200 every year. Studies show that financial exploitation is the most common form of elder abuse. However, only a small fraction of these incidents are reported.

You can help protect others by learning to recognize common signs of financial exploitation and abuse, including:

- Unopened bills.
- Unusual or large purchases.
- Utilities being shut off due to unpaid bills.
- Money given to telemarketers or soliciting companies.
- Unexplained withdrawals from the person's bank account.

There are also many simple things that caregivers can do to reduce the risk of financial abuse for people with dementia and similar conditions, like Alzheimer's. Do your best to make sure they're involved in deciding which safety measures to put into place.

Some options include:

- Agreeing to spending limits on credit cards.
- Signing up for the "Do Not Call" list at [DoNotCall.gov](http://DoNotCall.gov).
- Setting up auto-pay for bills instead of paying them by check.
- Signing up to receive automatic notifications for withdrawals from bank accounts or large charges to credit cards.
- Requesting electronic bank and credit card statements and watching for unusual purchases or changes in how the person typically spends money.
- Asking credit card companies to stop sending balance transfer checks and opting out of future solicitations.
- Creating a separate account where you can keep a small, agreed-upon amount of money that the person can use for recreational activities, meals with friends, etc.

To learn more about combating elder abuse, visit our blog at <https://blog.ssa.gov/world-elder-abuse-awareness-day-combating-injustice/>.

# Free tax filing options still available

## YOUR TAXES

by MEG CHEVALIER

IRS Free File remains available until Oct. 16 for taxpayers who still need to file a 2022 tax return. If a taxpayer filed for an extension ahead of the April 18, 2023, tax deadline, their return is due to the IRS by Oct. 16. It's a good idea to e-file a complete and accurate return as soon as possible rather than wait until the last minute. Taxpayers should review their e-filing options.

IRS Free File available to taxpayers with income of \$73,000 or less IRS Free File lets qualified taxpayers prepare and file federal income tax returns online using interview-based tax preparation software. Taxpayers who made \$73,000 or less in 2022 will likely find an offer from a Free File provider that matches their needs. Free File's interview-based tax preparation software can help taxpayers take advantage of any tax credits they may be eligible for, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Child and Dependent Care Credit.

Taxpayers can go to the IRS Free File webpage at [IRS.gov/freefile](http://IRS.gov/freefile) to find the right IRS Free File offer for them.

### IRS Free File Fillable Forms

As an alternative, Free File Fillable Forms are electronic federal tax forms available to everyone, regardless of income. People should be comfortable preparing their own tax returns before using these forms.

### Other e-filing options

Taxpayers can also use commercial software to file their taxes. The return is securely transmitted through an IRS-approved electronic channel and checked for mistakes. If the IRS finds easy-to-fix mistakes, like a math error or an incorrect Social Security number, IRS immediately sends it back to

the taxpayer to fix it and re-file it. This saves time and prevents a simple mistake from holding up any tax refund.

To find a tax professional who are qualified to prepare, transmit and process e-filed returns, taxpayers should consult the Authorized IRS e-file Provider database, a nationwide listing of all businesses that have been accepted to participate in the IRS e-file program.

### The military community can use MilTax to file

MilTax is a free tax resource available for the military community, offered through the Department of Defense. MilTax is a suite of tax services available for members of the military, as well as qualifying veterans and family members. There are no income limits. MilTax includes tax preparation and electronic filing software, personalized support from tax consultants and current information about filing taxes. In addition to federal tax returns, qualifying taxpayers can prepare and electronically file up to three state income tax returns.

Active-duty military members stationed in combat zones have more time to file their tax returns. The IRS website has more tax information for members of the military.

Taxpayers in disaster areas may have more time to file. Taxpayers living in an area impacted by a recent natural disaster may have an automatic extension of time to make various tax payments. Visit the Tax Relief in Disaster Situations page of [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) for more information.

For additional information, please visit [www.IRS.gov](http://www.IRS.gov)

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