

Johnston's state Senate seat to remain vacant through November election

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston's primary seat in the Rhode Island state Senate will stay empty until after the November election.

Sen. Frank Lombardo III, a Democrat representing District 25 (Johnston) since 2010, died overnight Feb. 21, following a battle with cancer.

According to Faith Chybowski, director of communications for Rhode Island Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore, "under State law, Sen. Lombardo's seat will

remain vacant until his successor is elected in November and sworn in in January."

A seat vacancy two weeks earlier would have triggered a special election.

"If the vacancy occurs after the first Monday in February in the second year of the biennial period for which a general assembly was chosen, no warrant shall be issued for a special election to fill the vacancy," according to state law.

SENATE - PAGE 11



LEGISLATOR LOST: Sen. Frank Lombardo III, 65, passed away early Wednesday morning, Feb. 21. The Democrat representing District 25 (Johnston) in the Rhode Island State Senate, was first elected to the seat in November 2010. (Photo courtesy RI State Senate)



THE TEAM: This year's Johnston Academic Decathlon team is made up of Captain Cameron Ferrara, Tyler Buote, Caroline Pesenecker, Logan Brennan, Neko Mahony, Janelle Nunez, Sofia China, Elliot Cortesi, Arianna Dandy, Gianna Orozco, Sophia Finegan, Robert Graham, Jasmin Guerrero, Jonas Littlefield and Connor Niles. (Submitted photo)

Academic Decathlon all about student coaching, motivation

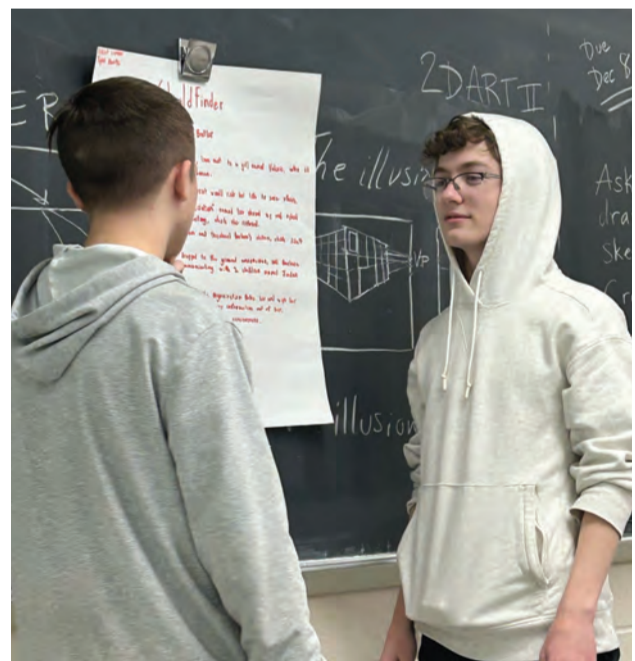
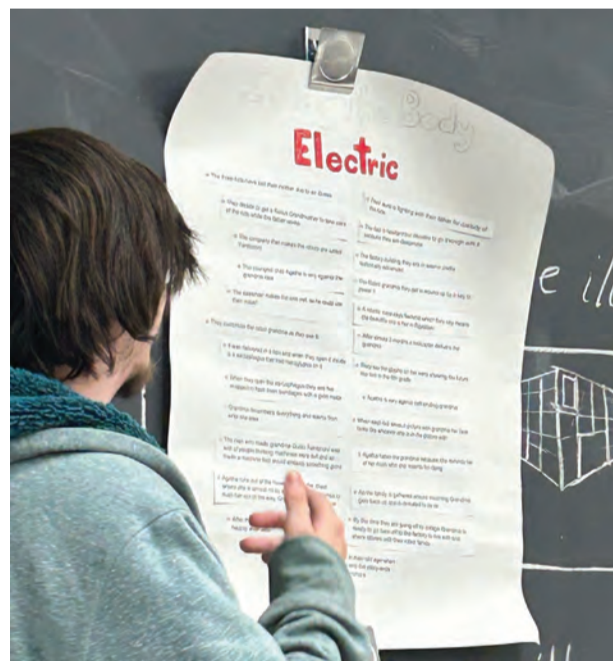
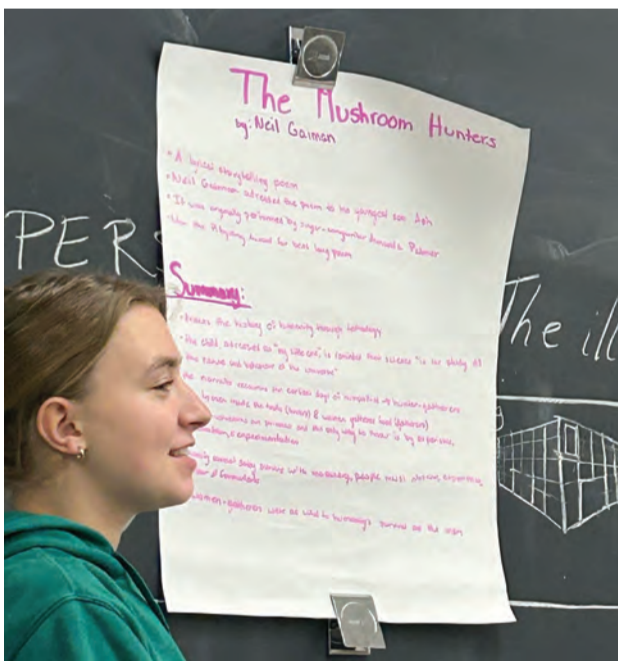
By JOHN HOWELL

Johnston High School students are not likely to know the name Frank Lenox, but rest assured that teachers Debby Smyth and Kerry Murphy have been in contact with him since the beginning of the academic year.

Lenox, a physics teacher at East Greenwich High School, is the executive director of the Rhode Island Academic Decathlon, a day long competition that will be held Sunday, March 3 at Bryant University.

The Johnston team is among 15 vying to represent the state in the

DECATHLON - PAGE 12



YEAR-ROUND STUDY: This year's Johnston Academic Decathlon students focused on learning diverse strategies. They studied literature, discussing short stories and leading group discussions. Students stronger in certain disciplines helped their teammates by creating content they could share. (Submitted photo)

RHODE ISLAND ISSUES

Accused immigrant's case a political hot potato

By RORY SCHULER

Molestation suspect's release a matter of public policy or terrible error?

It was a rare, stinging rebuke of state officials by an enforcement wing of the federal government.

Then the Ocean State's Attorney General weighed in, reddening the handprint left behind by the immigration enforcement arm slap.

An undocumented immigrant accused of child molestation was released by the courts despite a U.S.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer. Was this a matter of policy or a terrible error? Was this an example of the process working, or breaking down?

On Tuesday, ICE responded. They're not sorry and they stand by their initial criticism, the spark that ignited the discussion.

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JHS

Panther of the Week

POTW: This week's Panther of the Week is Lailany Aponte. Lailany is a freshman at Johnston High, and a member of the girls basketball team. She was nominated by Mr. Kerry Murphy. Ms. Murphy said, "Lailany is a leader amongst her peers. She helps others day in and day out, serving as a coach and cheerleader in art class. When we started a group task, Lailany managed to get all students in the group to coordinate their efforts. She worked to keep all on task while I navigated the room. She would make a great educator or facilitator of some kind. Lailany is also a noteworthy poet, who is using her art and words together in an exciting manner. She is a highly effective communicator!" (Photo submitted by Matt Velino, Johnston High School Principal)



Editor's Note: This is the newest installment of an ongoing weekly series highlighting Johnston's amazing students. Staff at Johnston High School will be nominating students and submitting a caption and a photo for publication. You'll find each week's winning Panther within the pages of the Johnston Sun Rise.



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Senior 'Spotlite'



BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Jackie Rave's almost 90 years old. Don't tell anyone. The Johnston Senior Center "Spotlite" shines her way this week. (Photo courtesy Richard J. DelFino Jr.)

If you've been around nine decades, the tenth may be the best

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

The Johnston Senior Center (JSC) "Spotlite" this week shines on Jackie Rave. Jackie grew up on Federal Hill and is the oldest of eight children. She drives herself to the Center four days per week, where she enjoys playing Hi-Lo Jack and Bingo.

She loves the camaraderie developed over the three years she has been visiting the JSC, with the many friends who are committed to their scheduled games. Like clockwork, Jackie enters the Center, always offering a sincere greeting, sporting fashionable attire, and a smiling face.

She navigates the building with an energy and enthusiasm you might not expect from someone about to turn 90 years old, a number hardly anyone would believe is her real age.

Jackie retired at age 75, working the last 12 years as an account payable clerk. However, mostly all her adult life, Jackie worked as a server in some of Rhode Island's best known restaurants. Jackie worked for the Player's Corner Pub, The Helm, the Driftwood, and Café Itri. In that capacity she met many well known people.

In the heyday of the Warwick Musical Theater, many of the performers would dine at the Helm restaurant in Warwick and would come back to visit Jackie on an annual basis.

The smile and kindness she exhibits today certainly served her well in the restaurant business. Jackie is also a woman who is thankful for the life she has enjoyed living, but nothing gives her more happiness than her only child, her son with whom she resides.

Jackie lovingly speaks of a son who selflessly cares for her and attends to her every need. Jackie is certainly like many older adults who appreciate life's blessings, even the simplest things.

Here at the Johnston Senior Center, let us help you explore all that can help you appreciate life in later years.

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

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Land cleared for new Johnston Elementary Center

Mayor expects school to open for 2026-27 school year

By RORY SCHULER

Construction crews have begun clearing land at the future site of the new Johnston Elementary Center.

"With the land clearing now taking place, the new elementary school is becoming a reality," said Johnston Public Schools Superintendent Bernard DiLullo Jr. "The project has begun on schedule with an anticipated fall 2026 opening date."

"We will have a formal ground breaking ceremony some time in March or April," DiLullo said. "Exciting times are ahead as we watch the construction of this beautiful new facility."

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. confirmed that "construction started this month and is scheduled to be completed by May of 2026."

"With summer vacation starting a month after the target date, this timeline gives us enough maneuverability to deal with any potential delays that may come up so the building can be open for that new school year," Polisena explained. "It will be fully operational by the beginning of the 2026-27 school year."

The scope and timeline of the project has had to shift since a \$215 million school construction bond was approved by voters in 2022.

"The main benefit to starting the project now as opposed to last year is the interest rates, but in a good way," Polisena said. "We borrowed \$85 million back on Sept. 29 (2022). I tried to take advantage of high interest rates and since September 2022, we've earned \$5 million in just interest on that \$85 million, at around a 4.5-5% rate of return on the principal. This is enough in interest to pay for one year's debt service payment. I am trying use the high rate environment, which is normally a detriment, to our benefit, in order to maximize our earnings to achieve full potential on the borrowing."



CLEAR THE WAY: Construction crews have started to clear land behind Johnston High School where the new Johnston Elementary Center will be built. Town officials expect the school will open for the start of the 2026-27 school year. (Photo courtesy Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr.)

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- Smoke Shop/Sunny Hill Farm
- Speedway
- Stop & Shop
- Stop & Shop Fuel
- The Joint on 6
- Tobacco King
- Tri-Town Wine & Spirits
- Walgreens-Plainfield St.
- Walgreens-Putnam Pike



ICE

(Continued from page 1)

Passing The Blame

The incident, and subsequent barbs exchanged, were local manifestations of a political rift — not just between left and right, but within (and outside) the Democratic party, on both a state and national stage.

Rhode Island's governor and the state's AG are both Democrats (though likely gubernatorial competitors next election cycle). The federal immigration officials were all working under a Democratic U.S. President (though Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas was impeached by the Republican-led U.S. House of Representatives last week).

The governor refused to comment on the case, at first. His staff refused to go on the record despite several requests for comment by Beacon Communications. Questions were deferred to the Department of Corrections (DOC), which confirmed the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) in Cranston still follow a 2014 directive by then-Gov. Lincoln Chafee, directing the DOC to no longer honor federal immigration detainees without a warrant.

And then the governor's staff said they dug deeper. They decided to hit back, emailing their findings to members of the media.

"In a recent WPRI story, the Attorney General and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) criticize the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Rhode Island Division of Sheriffs for 'ignoring' an ICE request to detain Manuel Garcia Dela Cruz, a man accused of child molestation," wrote Olivia DaRocha, Press Secretary for Gov. Daniel J. McKee.

The story, which included statements by Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha, was broken by a Beacon Communications report (publisher of the *Johnston Sun Rise*, *Cranston Herald* and *Warwick Beacon*), "Feds scold state over undocumented immigrant's release (posted at 1:29 p.m., Feb. 20)." WPRI's reporting followed soon after, and included similar comments from Neronha.

"The Attorney General asserts that Garcia Dela Cruz's release 'should not have happened and there should be a review by the DOC and [the Sheriffs] of why it did,'" DaRocha wrote. McKee's press secretary then asserts that "the Governor reviewed ICE's accusation with DOC and the Sheriffs and has found it to be false."

Undocumented Documented

McKee's office provided a Rhode Island Division of Sheriffs Incident Report dated April 26, 2023. The report, written by Deputy Keith Connelly, documents a phone call received from the District

Court bail room informing the Sheriffs Department that Dela Cruz had posted \$50,000 surety bail, but had an ICE 247 Detainer "lodged at the prison."

"I called ICE and spoke to Agent Ted Donaghan and explained to him that Garcia Dela Cruz had posted bail on his sixth division hold and we would be releasing him, and he has a 247 detainer," Connelly wrote.

An ICE 247 detainer informs local authorities that they have "an alien subject to removal from the United States" in custody. A "247 detainer" can be issued for multiple reasons, including felony charges filed against an inmate. The form instructs local authorities to "maintain custody of alien for a period not to exceed 48 hours" (written in all capital letters at the top of the form).

"Agent Donaghan explained to me that his department was short staffed and they would not be able to pick him up," Connelly wrote. "I then called Captain Rao at records and ID and let him know that ICE would not be picking him up due to staffing shortages. Captain Rao told me that we could release Garcia Dela Cruz from the courthouse, and he did not have to return to the prison ... Inmate Dela Cruz was released by Sgt. Clays at approximately 11:20 a.m. at the district court bail room."

DaRocha said state officials' hands were tied.

"Far from 'ignoring' ICE's detainer, the Division of Sheriffs notified ICE ... that Mr. Garcia Dela Cruz had posted bail and would soon be released by the Rhode Island District Court," she wrote Friday. "The responding ICE agent said that ICE was short staffed and would not be able to pick up (Dela Cruz). The Sheriffs' Division had no choice but to honor the Court's bail order and release (Dela Cruz) from its custody."

The Background

When U.S. Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Boston announced the Feb. 6 arrest of a "Guatemalan national charged with child sexual assault in Rhode Island" on Feb. 15, the agency called out the ACI in Cranston, where the suspect had been detained, insisting that the facility "ignored the ICE detainer and released him."

ACI Warden Sergio DeSousarosa referred requests for comment to J.R. Ventura, Chief of Information & Public Relations and Public Information Officer for the DOC, who provided an "official statement" on the ERO's claims last Monday, Feb. 19.

"The inmate in question was discharged from court, not from the ACI," Ventura said. "When inmates leave our custody to go to court, they are remanded to the custody of the Sheriff's Office for transport. We are exclusively responsible for custody at the ACI. The court

decides what happens to inmates and their sentences."

Later that day, Ventura also confirmed that the DOC does still follow then-Gov. Chafee's policy: "Yes, RIDOC follows the 2014 directive."

Providence Police arrested Dela Cruz in March 2023. He was charged with first- and second-degree child molestation on March 13, 2023. According to Hodge, the Court initially "ordered him held without bail and scheduled a bail hearing for March 31, 2023."

"On the 31st, the matter proceeded to a full bail hearing," Hodge wrote via email on Feb. 21. "At the close of the evidence, the Judge found that the State had satisfied the first tier (proof of guilt evident and the presumption great). The State then asked the Court to continue to hold the defendant without bail, noting among other factors that the defendant was not born in the United States."

Hodge said prosecutors do "not recall being aware that ICE had lodged a detainer against the defendant. On April 26, 2023, (District Court Associate Judge Joseph Terence Houlihan) set bail at \$50,000 with surety over the State's objection. The defendant posted bail that same day and was released."

The attorney general's office took the case to the Statewide Grand Jury last fall.

"On Sept. 11, 2023, the grand jury returned an indictment charging the defendant with one count each of first- and second-degree child molestation," according to Hodge. "(Superior Court Associate Justice Maureen B. Keough) arraigned the defendant on Oct. 4, 2023 and released him on the same bail."

The case is next scheduled for a pretrial conference on March 13.

The next day, AG Neronha's office revealed that their prosecutors had argued the case during a hearing, in an attempt to keep the defendant in custody. The AG's Office provided a full statement detailing its efforts to keep the accused behind bars.

"The issue of bail in this very serious matter was the subject of a full evidentiary hearing before the district court last year," according to AG spokesman Brian Hodge. "At the conclusion of that hearing, this Office argued that the Court should order the defendant held without bail, on the grounds that the defendant posed a danger to the community and was a flight risk. The Court, notwithstanding that it found that the state's evidence established that the proof of guilt was evident and the presumption of guilt great, ordered that the defendant be released on surety bail of \$50,000, over the objection of this Office. The defendant apparently posted that bail and was released directly from the courthouse notwithstanding the lodged federal im-

migration detainer. Plainly, that should not have happened and there should be a review by the Department of Corrections and the Department of Public Safety of why it did."

The AG vs. The Guy?

Several days later, DaRocha took Neronha to the woodshed.

"Attorney General Neronha should be well aware of *Morales v. Chadbourne*, a 2014 federal court decision which held that Rhode Island cannot hold a person in custody based upon an ICE detainer alone; to do so could violate the Fourth and Fifth Amendments to the United States Constitution and expose the State to liability," she wrote in an email to the local media. "Indeed, the Attorney General's Office defended the DOC in the *Morales* case and the Attorney General's Office helped craft the State's ICE detainer policy to comply with the Court's decision in *Morales*. Peter Neronha was the U.S. Attorney at the time of the *Morales* decision and the Department of Justice defended the individual ICE officials implicated in the lawsuit. As such, Attorney General Neronha was undoubtedly aware of the decision's impact on federal and state law enforcement."

DaRocha argued that "Neronha's comments were unfounded."

ICE - PAGE 6

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ICE

(Continued from page 5)

"They gave the false impression that Mr. Garcia Dela Cruz's release was as a result of some act or omission on the part of either DOC or the Division of Sheriffs, rather than as a result of Constitutional constraints and ICE staffing problems," the governor's press secretary wrote. "It should be noted that the Attorney General's professional responsibilities include being the legal advisor to the Rhode Island State Police and the Division of Sheriffs, and he has an ethical obligation to the DOC as its counsel in the Morales case."

"The Governor and Division of Sheriffs are gratified that ICE has resolved its staffing issues and was able to take Mr. Garcia Dela Cruz into custody over the weekend," DaRocha wrote to conclude her email to reporters.

Following DaRocha's scathing criticism, Neronha took to X (the social networking platform formerly known as Twitter) to respond.

"My memory is fine," Neronha wrote. "I know the case Gov cites and I cited it during my interview ... We did our job. Whether the Gov's agencies did theirs was the question the media raised three days ago but went unanswered. I'm glad the Gov has finally — finally — answered that question."

In response to requests for further comment, Hodge referred only to Neronha's post on X.

Sanctuary State?

ACLU of Rhode Island Executive Director Steven Brown helped persuade then-Gov. Chafee to issue his 2014 directive, which many critics called a step toward declaring Rhode Island a "sanctuary state."

"We agree with the Governor that the criticism aimed at his office by ICE and the Attorney General is completely unwarranted," Brown said earlier this week. "The fact that ICE was short-staffed when they were advised that this person was being released provided no grounds for the state to continue to detain him; it was ICE's responsibility to pick him up, nobody else's, so the blame falls on them. In fact, it would have been illegal for the state to continue to hold him, something ICE and the Attorney General certainly should know."

Brown argues the accused, who has yet to be convicted, held up his end of the deal so far.

"It's also worth emphasizing that the controversy generated by ICE and the AG is over an incident that took place almost a year ago," Brown said. "The Attorney General's office asked a judge to deny bail to this person — who, it must be re-

membered, was presumed innocent — because they were concerned he was a flight risk. The judge disagreed and ordered him released with certain conditions. The judge was proven right. Over the course of almost a year, this person attended all his court hearings and made no effort to flee."

Immigration has once again become a hot-button issue on the national stage. The right warns of caravans and unfettered infiltration at the border. While left-wing office-holders offer translucent and sometimes opaque policy statements, rarely committing to concrete positions, fearing criticism from both flanks.

"It is therefore deeply troubling to see state and federal agencies attempt to politicize this incident, as it only serves to inflame passions against immigrants in Rhode Island in general, and undocumented immigrants in particular, the overwhelming majority of whom abide by our state's criminal laws," Brown criticized, offering "one final note" on the case.

"The ACLU of RI was involved in the court case cited by the Governor that limits the state's power to hold people based on ICE detainers," Brown recalled. "It's worth noting that that case involved a U.S. citizen who had twice been held by state authorities based on (erroneous) ICE detainers, profoundly demonstrating the dangers of giving ICE broad powers to demand the detention of people through that process."

ICE-Cold

In the meantime, ICE has refused to back down or amend the news release that launched the conversation.

"Your story is correct when it reported the individual was 'released last spring despite a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) order to keep him in custody,'" ICE spokesman John Mohan wrote Tuesday morning. "We stand by our news release as accurate. As cited in the news release sub headline we correctly noted that: 'Local jurisdiction ignored ICE detainer and released the Guatemalan national.' The immigration detainer was filed by ERO Boston in March 2023 after the individual was encountered where he was detained at the time (the ACI). Also as cited in the release, the immigration detainer filed by ERO Boston was not honored and the individual was released 'in April 2023 by order of the Sixth District Court of Providence.'"

Beacon Communications forwarded the Rhode Island Sheriffs Department incident report (provided by McKee's office) to Mohan and fellow ICE spokesman James Covington: "The attached report from the Sheriff's office says quite clearly that ICE was short-staffed and could not send anyone to pick up the inmate. Can you respond to this portion directly?"

Mohan replied with the following: "We are going to decline to comment further except to repeat that we stand by the accuracy of our news release, which, as mentioned, cites that the 'local jurisdiction ignored ICE detainer' and the individual was released 'in April 2023 by order of the Sixth District Court of Providence.'"

The governor's office said they had no further response following the receipt of ICE's latest statement.

RI GOP Seeks Clarity

Meanwhile, the Rhode Island General Assembly's Office of the House and Sen-

ate Minority (GOP) Caucuses issued a "call for clarity from Gov. McKee."

Rhode Island state Senate Minority Leader Sen. Jessica de la Cruz and state House Minority Leader Rep. Michael W. Chippendale issued a joint statement, asking McKee to reveal his "plan should a large group of migrants arrive at our doorstep and a definitive answer or repudiation as to Rhode Island's status as a 'sanctuary state.'"

"As long as 113 Rhode Island Military veterans and 1,800 Rhode Island residents are sleeping on the streets, we should not be accepting any migrants shipped into our state," Chippendale said. "Our citizens must be assured that our already overburdened healthcare, housing and social services will not be further impacted by the arrival of migrants into our state while our citizens are suffering. Rhode Islanders deserve immediate clarification of the state's policies and should demand such from Gov. McKee."

Sen. de la Cruz has submitted public records requests aimed at exposing the details of the arrest and release of the inmate in question.

"Now, we have learned that a Guatemalan national, with an active ICE detainer was released on surety following charges of first-degree child molestation, raising serious questions regarding public safety," she wrote. "This massive failure significantly increases the need for clarification of the state's policy regarding illegal migrants with active detainer orders. Was this incident an egregious error or a matter of policy? According to the RI Department of Corrections, they still follow the 2014 directive of then-Governor Lincoln Chafee of not honoring federal immigration detainers." Together, Chippendale and de la Cruz called on "Gov. McKee to act in the best interest of Rhode Islanders by immediately clarifying the state's policies and sanctuary status regarding illegal migrants and to end the very real threat to public safety from a decade old mandate stifling collaboration of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies."

Beacon Communications forwarded the GOP press release to McKee's office asking for a response; none was offered.

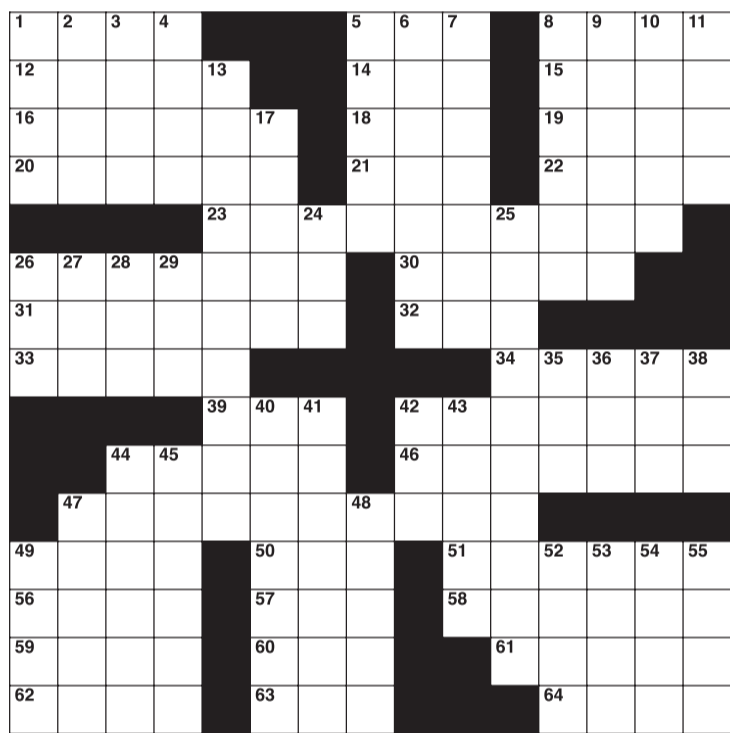
Winning the Blame Game?

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr., a fellow Democrat, worked in McKee's office prior to announcing his candidacy for mayor. Since leaving McKee's administration, Polisena has become a vocal critic of his former boss.

"Governor McKee's emphasis on deflecting blame raises concerns about his commitment to effective governance and proactive problem-solving," Polisena said late last week. "In times of crisis or adversity, it's paramount for leaders to demonstrate accountability and take decisive action to rectify the situation. Simply shifting responsibility without taking concrete steps towards resolution does a disservice to the constituents who rely on effective leadership. Whether it's the Washington Bridge, the insane Pawtucket soccer stadium deal, this lapse with the illegal immigrant, instead of allocating energy towards disassociating himself from the problems we face, Gov. McKee should channel his efforts into implementing strategic measures aimed at long-term solutions."

Polisena called McKee "the Bailey Zappe of Governors" — more third-string quarterback than team coach.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Home of Iowa State University
- 5. ___-fi (slang)
- 8. Mottled green and yellow fruit
- 12. Capable of thinking and expressing oneself clearly
- 14. Sports broadcaster Eagle
- 15. Midday
- 16. Kinsmen
- 18. Cable network
- 19. Simpleton
- 20. Brunch beverage
- 21. Fed
- 22. European capital
- 23. Native inhabitants
- 26. Mechanical device
- 30. Rare geese native to Hawaii
- 31. Bedroom furnishing
- 32. The products of human creativity
- 33. Mass transit option
- 34. Made a mistake
- 39. Sacred sound symbol
- 42. Large N. American reindeer
- 44. Dull and flat
- 46. Partner to huffing
- 47. Written works

CLUES DOWN

- 1. One who graduated
- 2. An inspired holy person
- 3. Electronic counter-countermeasures
- 4. A place to store things
- 5. Indian instrument
- 6. Spanish saloon
- 7. Whole number
- 8. Not fastened
- 9. Gives a boost
- 10. Lounges about
- 11. Interested in
- 13. Remove salt
- 17. Type of sword
- 24. Naturally occurring solid material
- 25. Gets involved without being invited
- 26. Feline
- 27. Bobby __, NHL champ
- 28. "Kill Bill" actress Thurman
- 29. Hawaiian dish
- 35. Moroccan coastal region
- 36. Baseball statistic
- 37. Long period of time
- 38. Moved earth
- 40. Central Netherlands city
- 41. Take stock of
- 42. Central processing unit
- 43. Distinctive qualities one generates
- 44. Getting stuck
- 45. Loss of bodily movements
- 47. Veranda
- 48. Abrupt
- 49. What cats do
- 52. Expresses pleasure
- 53. Type of cheese
- 54. Professional STEM organization
- 55. Automatic data processing systems

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BACK IN CUSTODY: U.S. Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Boston announced the Feb. 6 arrest of a Guatemalan national charged with child molestation in Rhode Island. The suspect was released from custody last year despite an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainer. (Photo courtesy ERO Boston)

Opinion

EDITORIAL

Seeking answers, and accountability, for infrastructure woes

With oversight hearings commencing to find out how Rhode Island wound up narrowly avoiding an unprecedented calamity – and instead just got stuck with a historic, exorbitantly expensive headache that won't soon be over – following the discovery of the failing Washington Bridge, it brings to mind a few key questions about how we got to this point, and whether or not a reprioritization of priorities is in order moving forward.

Of course, figuring out how a bridge built in the late 60s so rapidly got to the point of being near critical failure should be our primary concern. Carrying hundreds of thousands of people each week, the need to understand how such a vital structure got so deficient, so quickly, is crucial to understanding how we can avoid something like this happening again in the future.

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

But the Washington Bridge won't be the last time that Rhode Island's languishing infrastructure causes budgetary woes and inconveniences for taxpayers.

In Warwick, the city faces a possible \$14 million hit due to its compromised sewer infrastructure; which the ratepayers will be saddled with in order to fix. There have been multiple stories in just the past couple of years regarding thousands of gallons of untreated sewage going into local waterways, closing schools, and disrupting traffic due to these types of issues.

Roads, bridges, sewers and other utilities are not exciting aspects of our society to spend taxpayer dollars on, but the lesson that continuously seems to be ignored is that ignoring the responsibility to continuously maintain these crucial components of our state will only increase the burden later on by many magnitudes more, and at the risk of lives and environmental protection in the process.

Deferred maintenance is a cost-saving measure only in the short term. In the long term, it merely pushes the weight of responsibility onto future generations who did not create the problem in the first place.

When former Governor Gina Raimondo began the Rhode Works program to repair roads and bridges, it was a valiant effort to address the situation that was not caused by any one administration or person, but was contributed to by many. Of course, funding this endeavor has been its biggest hindrance.

At what point will the need to secure our infrastructure and make investments in it for our prolonged future become the top priority? At what point will deferred maintenance become politically damaging?

Hopefully, it won't take a true catastrophe in order to see the light.

Rhody trots out "ALL THAT" its new tourism slogan that, like the others, is sure to be to die for!



LETTER

Risk survey question removal was 'knee jerk reaction' by School Committee

This letter is in response to the article in the Feb. 22 Johnston Sun Rise titled "School Committee Removes student sexuality questions from risk survey."

I believe the Johnston School Committee's decision to remove sexual identity questions from the risk survey is misguided, and it will ultimately hurt the community as a whole.

By not collecting this data, which would be anonymous, you are effectively saying that information about our LGBTQIA community does not matter, and all bullying is the same. Except, it is categorically not the same.

In the CDC study from 2021, titled Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, it was found that nationally 1 in 4 gay and lesbian youth have experienced bullying on school properties, and over 2 in 10 did not go to school due to feeling unsafe. Another sobering statistic is that gay and lesbian youth attempted suicide, in that year, nearly 4 times more than heterosexual youth.

More local details can be found in the "Adversity and Mental Health of Sexual & Gender Minorities in Rhode Island" report, put out by the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare. According to this report, put out in 2022, 29% of RI sexual and gender minority students were bullied at school, compared to 17% of cisgender, heterosexual males.

How do these statistics relate to our town and this survey? Gathering information on what portion of our student population is LGBTQIA would help ensure they get the critical support they need. Knowing what portion of Johnston youth may be experiencing an over-

whelming amount of bullying would help us to be proactive.

The knee jerk reaction of the school committee to remove these questions from the survey would just bury any problems that may be happening. Instead the committee should be looking for ways of identifying and addressing any issues within that community. By downplaying any targeted LGBTQIA bullying, and saying it is all the same, you risk children in the community not feeling supported, and you lose the chance to educate and promote inclusivity within the schools.

I would hope that after the school committee reviews the facts and gets more understanding of the importance of collecting this data, they will add the questions back to the survey. This will give the students the opportunity to answer all the questions, and for the community to get a full understanding of the results.

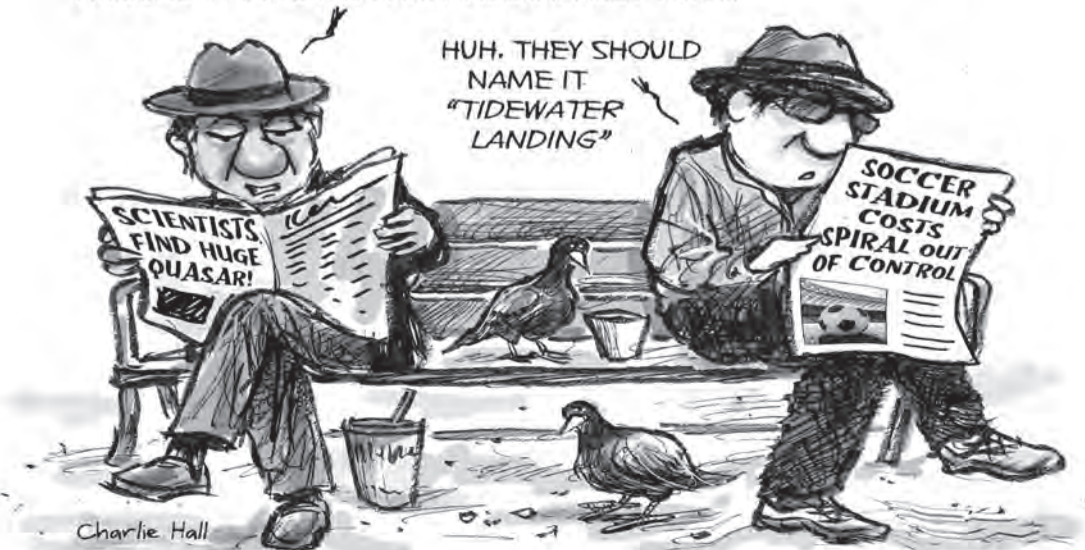
Chris Cahill, of Johnston

Editor's Note: According to Patricia Sweet, Director of Prevention Programs & the SPC Regional Prevention Task the survey has been administered in the state since 2016. Johnston has participated each year since. Questions 5 and 6 have been included in the survey since 2018. Out of the 21 school districts that have approved the survey to date, just two have asked the organization to remove those questions — Johnston and North Smithfield. The other remaining school districts are waiting for school committee meetings in March to approve this year's survey.

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ACLU probes training courses attended by Cranston and Johnston police officers

By **KEVIN FITZPATRICK**

Cranston and Johnston police officers were among those who attended training courses run by an organization now banned in nine states for its advocacy of unethical policing strategies and discriminatory rhetoric.

The police training organization Street Cops Training is facing backlash following a report filed by the New Jersey Comptroller's office in December 2023 detailing an extensive list of misconduct by instructors during a 2021 conference in Atlantic City.

While no Cranston or Johnston officers attended that particular Atlantic City conference, several have attended other "Street Cop" seminars closer to home.

The Report

Included in the report are a number of profiling tactics for motor vehicle stops which the report characterizes as "unconstitutional," instructors "glorifying" violence and a militaristic approach to policing, and over 100 discriminatory and harassing remarks, many of which targeting women and minorities. Many of these remarks were attributed to the organization's founder and CEO, former police officer Dennis Benigno.

Among the most damning was the report of the behavior of an Instructor Kivet. The report reads: "Instructor Kivet showed an offensive meme of a monkey in a shirt after describing a motor vehicle stop of a '75 year old Black man coming out of Trenton.'"

Written on the slide next to the monkey are the words "SIMPLE QUESTIONS ... SIMPLE ANSWERS."

According to the report, "Benigno acknowledged in a court filing in a lawsuit against OSC (Office of the State Comptroller) that the Conference was 'standard fare' for the Company."

At the conclusion of this article, the Comptroller's office provided a list of 39 states that made direct payments to Street Cop Training between 2020-2023, among them Rhode Island.

On Feb. 26, the Rhode Island branch of the American Civil Liberties Union announced that they had filed an Access to Public Records Act (APRA) request with each police department in the state to see which departments had taken part in training. Following an APRA request, public organizations have up to 10 business days to provide the documents requested.

The RI ACLU's statement reads: "The New Jersey report is eye-opening and extraordinarily disturbing. Rhode Islanders deserve to know which police departments sent officers, however unwittingly, to learn how to engage in unconstitutional traffic stops and searches, and whether steps will be taken to retrain them. This revelation only highlights the crucial need for the General Assembly to reinstate the law mandating the collection and review of traffic stop and search data, passage of which has been stymied by law enforcement for four years despite the clear need for its revival."

Local Departments

The Cranston Police Department was among those departments.

Minutes from the Board of Contract and Purchases for Feb. 15, 2022 and Feb. 7, 2023 list bid waivers in the amounts of \$900 and \$675 respectively for "Street Cop Training."

Cranston Police Chief Col. Michael J. Winquist confirmed that Cranston police officers attended four total Street Cop Training sessions from March 2022 to November 2023, held at the Warwick Fraternal Order of Police Hall.

The trainings Cranston officers attended were as follows. "Deceptive

Behaviors and Hidden Compartments" on March 28, 2022, attended by four officers; "Rhode Island Case Law/Search and Seizure" on Oct. 4, 2022, attended by four Cranston officers; "The Brick Wall: Stopping Crime on our Roadways" was held on Feb. 27, 2023, attended by three officers; and "Anatomy of the Criminal Vehicle" was held on Nov. 6, 2023, attended by four officers.

According to Winquist, no Cranston police officer was sent by the department to the 2021 conference in Atlantic City, nor any other conference held by the company.

Winquist was unable to speak in detail on the content of the Warwick training sessions, but said that no reports of the training made by officers who had attended them mentioned unconstitutional search and seizure practices, discriminatory behaviors, or an "us vs. them" mentality. He said officers who attended found the training useful, and that they had "high remarks" regarding the trainers, who they found to be well credentialed and experienced.

Johnston PD Re-evaluates

Johnston Police are in a similar situation — no officers attended the Atlantic City conference, but some have attended other Street Cop seminars.

"No members of the Johnston Police Department attended the October 2021 Street Cop Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey referenced in the ... New Jersey State Comptroller report," according to Johnston Police Chief Mark A. Vieira.

"In February and October of last year we did send officers to two 'Street Cop' trainings," Vieira explained. "On Feb. 27, 2023, two officers attended the 'The Brick Wall-Stopping Crime On Our Roadways' training held at the Warwick FOP Lodge. On Oct. 12, 2023, two officers attended the 'Rhode Island Case Law Training' held at the Barrington Public Library."

"The officers who attended these trainings found them to be valuable and indicated the use of unconstitutional policing tactics were not promoted by the instructors," Vieira said. "At this time, the Johnson Police Department will not be sending officers to further 'Street Cop' trainings.' The Johnston Police Department does not condone the kind of training, language or behavior described in the New Jersey report."

Winquist, Vieira and Warwick Police Chief Col. Bradford Connor also said that they have no intention of sending officers to any further training with the company.

Winquist said, "When I read the comments from the ACLU I was taken aback. We do not condone that type of behavior at the Cranston Police Department."

Winquist said the department will continue to very carefully vet outside officer training courses.

POST Role, Too

Winquist, in addition to his role as chief of police in Cranston, is the chairman of the Rhode Island Police Officers Commission of Standards and Training (POST). The RI ACLU contacted POST last week to ask them to determine which departments had sent officers to Street Cop Training sessions, to make those findings public, and to take affirmative steps to retrain officers who attended the trainings.

Executive Director for RI ACLU Steven Brown said in an interview with the Cranston Herald, "Unfortunately, we got a letter back from the Commission in which they stated that they didn't believe it was within their jurisdiction to investigate a matter like this. I think that's very unfortunate. (One would) expect a commission like this to be extremely in-

terested in finding out if officers are getting improper training. But that being the case, we decided to file open records requests with every police department in the state to find out that way what agencies may have been making use of this training program."

Brown went on to say, "Firstly, we want to operate from a knowledge base protocol. We want to find out exactly what has been going on with Rhode Island police departments. After we get a better sense of that, we'll figure out what recommendations we might have to offer to address this, and we certainly think that something needs to be done to correct the improper training that officers may have received by attending these conferences."

Winquist explained POST's assertion that an investigation into Street Cops Training was beyond their duties as a commission.

"The statute is very specific on my duties and the duties of POST," Winquist said. "Essentially, our role is to approve the curriculum at the municipal police academy and elsewhere. We can obviously set hiring standards and training standards for probationary, non-permanent officers. So, once an officer becomes permanent, which is usually after they complete their probationary period, each department is responsible for any type of continuing education that they provide."

He continued, "Some states have certain requirements to complete a certain number of hours of training and (in) Rhode Island, there's no such requirement. So each department determines what their needs are regarding training. Sometimes they'll take care of that in house and other times this expertise in another school such as Street Cop or something like Drug Interdiction, then we do our best to vet these training opportunities that we pay for and then, obviously, we rely on the officers to come back and follow up policies and procedures."

According to Warwick Police Chief Col. Bradford Connor, one Warwick officer did attend, but that officer was a member of the Narragansett Police Department at the time. Winquist, Connor and Vieira all said they have no intention of working with Street Cop Training again in the future.

Banned in 9 States

Following the backlash resulting from the New Jersey Comptroller's report, Street Cop Training has been banned from operating in nine states, moved its operations to Florida, and filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. The organization has made a number of statements on social media, including a statement made Friday on their public Instagram:

"To this day still not one real complaint or problem tied back to the 2021 conference. Well one guy said we cursed too much lol. But that's not bad out of almost 1k in attendance. We literally received a ton of messages from attendees who were of mixed race and gender and told me that it never even crossed their mind that they were offended in any way."

The statement continued, "Yea we dialed back moving forward. We are human. We make mistakes just like our critics who are apparently perfect and flawless at everything they do. We appreciate all the support as it continues to pour in. Thank you all so much."

The organization also has a private Instagram account, to which you must send a message to with proof that you are a member of Law Enforcement before you are allowed to see its 4000+ posts. That account has over 16,000 followers.

Editor's Note: Johnston Sun Rise Editor Rory Schuler contributed to this report.



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STICKER SHOCK

Students deliver message to Super Bowl snackers

By RORY SCHULER

Ferri Middle Schoolers Anthony Hopp and Zelic Rolland knelt in the crowded Market Basket snack aisle with big round decals stuck to the tips of their fingers.

One at a time, they slapped the messages onto chips and dips, reminding potential Super Bowl snackers about Rhode Island's Social Host Law.

Johnston's Market Basket grocery store gave the Johnson Prevention Coalition, coordinated by Tri-County Community Action Agency, permission to deliver the message prior to this year's big game.

Students from Johnston's Ferri Middle School Above The Influence (ATI) group met some of the region's other members in a mission to educate and remind the community of the consequences of providing alcohol to underage youth.

Binta Marong, 17, a student at Mount St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket, joined Hopp, 14, and Rolland, 13, in the Market Basket snack aisle. Together they all took the Sticker Shock messages off a giant roll, one by one.

The "Sticker Shock Campaign" has become an annual Super Bowl tradition. They also institute a dose of Sticker Shock leading up to the Fourth of July each summer.

"Buying or serving alcohol to underage youth is a violation of Rhode Island's Social Host Law that states it is illegal to permit an underage person to consume alcohol," according to the Prevention Coalition. "The goal of the campaign is to educate and remind our community of the consequences of providing alcohol to underage youth. Rhode Island's Social Host Law states it is illegal to permit an underage person to consume alcohol."

The group defines "permit" as "to give permission for, or approval of, the possession or consumption of an alcoholic beverage by any form of conduct, which would cause a reasonable person to believe that permission or approval has been given."

The Sticker Shock campaign is funded by the State of Rhode Island's Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals through SAMSHA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Partnership for Success Grant.

STICKER SHOCK:

Binta Marong, 17, a student at Mount St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket, joined Ferri Middle School students Anthony Hopp, 14, and Zelic Rolland, 13 (above), in the Market Basket snack aisle.



STUDENT MESSAGE: Students from Johnston's Ferri Middle School Above The Influence (ATI) gathered at Market Basket in Johnston to participate in the "Sticker Shock Campaign," which has become an annual Super Bowl tradition. (Sun Rise photos by Rory Schuler)



Obituaries

Senator Frank Lombardo, III

Senator Frank Lombardo, III, 65, a 35-year Johnston resident, passed away at home, surrounded by his loving family, Wednesday, February 21, 2024. He was the beloved husband of Patricia A. (Gallagher) Lombardo. Born in Providence, he was a son of Frank Lombardo, Jr. of Johnston and the late Theresa A. (Sellechio) Lombardo.



Frank was the President of Lombardo and Son, Inc. in Providence and Senator of District 25 in Johnston from 2010 to present. He is also a member of the Associated Builders and Contractors; a member of Rhode Island Builders; and a member of the Refrigeration Service and Engineering Society. He is an Eagle Scout from BSA Troop 4, Greenville and a Camp Counselor for 2 years at Yawgoog Boy Scout Camp. Frank loved riding his motorcycle and snow skiing. He started his wrestling career at Smithfield High School and is a former coach of the Johnston High School and LaSalle wrestling teams and also coached Smithfield and Johnston Little League.

In addition to his wife Patricia and father, he is also survived by his son Frank Lombardo, IV and his wife Ashley of Johnston and daughter Victoria L. Aceto and her husband Anthony of Johnston. He was the brother of Robert "Bob" Lombardo of Palm Springs, CA and David P. Lombardo of Greenville. Frank was the loving grandfather of Landon and Liella Lombardo.

His funeral was held Tuesday, February 27, 2024, at 8:45am from the TUCKER-QUINN Funeral Chapel, 643 Putnam Pike, Greenville, with a Mass of Christian Burial that followed at 10:00am in Our Lady of Grace Church, Johnston. Graveside burial was in St. Ann Cemetery, Cranston. Visitation was held Monday, from 4-8pm. In lieu of flowers, donations to Operation Stand Down, 1010 Hartford Ave., Johnston, RI 02919, or RISPAC, 155 Plan Way, Warwick, RI 02886, will be appreciated.

For Online Condolences visit, TuckerQuinnFuneralChapel.com

Obituaries

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

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ALL SMILES: Beth Littlefield (top left), an executive board member of the JSMA, and student vice president Sheila Haley, Heather Annicelli and Missy Loffler are all smiles during the recent Calendar Raffle drawing.

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Clear your calendar for year-round prizes

By PETE FONTAINE

Johnston High School's national award-winning music department enjoyed another success story that will benefit college scholarships, an awards banquet and participation in a prestigious competition among schools throughout the northeast.

A number of JHS musicians and vocalists turned salespeople sold 739 calendars in their annual, recently completed raffle that generated a profit of \$7,390.

It was last July that the Johnston School Music Association (JSMA) began soliciting prizes and worked until December for the unique fundraiser, which this year featured \$4,000 worth of prizes that were all donated by what Director Ron Lamoureux called "51 generous business owners in and around Johnston."

"We simply could not assemble such an amazing project without incredibly generous donors," said Lamoureux. "From the start, people like Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr., town council and school committee members, as well as local eateries and other businesses came on board. A 'big thank you' (to) everyone that helped make up 29 drawings for this year's Calendar Raffle."

Council members Robert Russo, Robert Civetti, Linda Folcarelli and Lauren Garzona; state Senators, the late Sen. Frank Lombardo III and Sen. Frank Ciccone; state representatives, Rep. Deb Fellela and Rep. Ed Cardillo; the Johnston School Committee, Johnston Police Union 307, Firefighters Local 1940 and Lions Club were all among the groups and individuals that helped write the 2024 success story.

Add to that the owners of Asian Bistro, Market Basket, Trattoria Roman, Baffoni's Poultry Farm, Central Nurseries, Hei Place, Jacavone Garden Center, The Chicken Coop, Frisky Fries, Luigi's Pizza and the Lighthouse Restaurant — they all offered valuable gift certificates.

There, however, was some disappointment for the student musicians and vocalists who were scheduled to go to an out-of-state competition. That plan had to be scrapped because of what Lamoureux called "higher travel costs than we've paid in past years and that's disappointing for our seniors — they are the hardest working students in the school."

Nonetheless, the JSMA didn't lose any enthusiasm and Lamoureux announced that "we now have the opportunity to do more fundraising for future endeavors while emphasizing our annual Savers Fun Drive and Annual Mattress Sale, just to name a few."

Yet another reason for this year's success was that the Calendar Raffle featured some 10 cash prizes of \$100. Lamoureux said, "We're hopeful of that total increasing in 2025."



SUPER SALESPERSON: JSMA President Katie "Missy" Loffler had the most student sales — 70 — in the recent calendar raffle and above pulls the winning ticket for a \$100 cash prize, donated by Navigant Credit Union. (Photos submitted by Steve Turten)

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'ONE OF THE KINDEST'
Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio called Sen. Frank Lombardo III, center, "one of the kindest and most generous people" he ever had the "good fortune to know." The state Senate shared a gallery of photos of Lombardo, who passed away early Wednesday morning, Feb. 21 at the age of 65. (Photos courtesy the RI state Senate)

Senate
(Continued from page 1)

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisenia Jr. confirmed "the seat will remain vacant until the end of its term, which is the beginning of January 2025." He assured Lombardo's constituents that they will not lack for representation in the meantime.

"I've spoken with both senate leadership and Sen. Frank Ciccone, who is the only other senator with Johnston in their district," Polisenia said Friday. "I've been assured Johnston will remain well represented, and in the spirit of Sen. Lombardo, during the vacancy."

Sen. Frank A. Ciccone, a Democrat, has been representing District 7 (Providence, Johnston) since 2002.

Sen. Lombardo held several committee seats and a chairmanship. He was the chairman of the Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government, and a member of the Commerce, Labor and Rules, Government Ethics & Oversight Senate Committees.

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Decathlon

(Continued from page 1)

worldwide competition, to be held April 25-26 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In addition, team members are competing for individual medals within three divisions: Honors, made up of students with 3.75-4.00 GPA, Scholastic (3.00-3.74 GPA), and Varsity (0.00-2.99 GPA).

That all sounds highly numbers driven, which it is. However, as Lenox has experienced as coach of the East Greenwich team for 25 years, the decathlon does more than shine a light on the best and brightest.

Johnston's Competitors

The Johnston team has consistently been a top contender in the state, missing first place by less than 20 points out of more than 30,000.

"I really enjoyed watching the students come together as a team this year," said Johnston's Academic Decathlon Coach and Business Teacher Debra Smyth (she also serves as DECA Advisor and Class of 2024 Co Advisor). "Our captain, Cameron Ferrara, really took the reins and established what I believe to be a winning team!"

This year's Johnston team is made up of Captain Cameron Ferrara, Tyler Buote, Caroline Pesenecker, Logan Brennan, Neko Mahony, Janelle Nunez, Sofia China, Elliot Cortesi, Arianna Dandy, Gianna Orozco, Sophia Finegan, Robert Graham, Jasmin Guerrero, Jonas Littlefield and Connor Niles.

"Coaching Decathlon provides an opportunity to get to know students in a different setting," said AD Assistant Coach, Johnston Senior High School Art Teacher and Fine Arts Co-Chairperson, Kerry L. Murphy. "We delve in — deeply into content without class time constraints. I am always amazed that so many members of our team start rich conversations when it's the scheduled time to leave. We stay later than scheduled on most days."

Murphy's often amazed at the young minds that are drawn to the competition.

"They ask wonderful open-ended questions like, 'What life advice would you offer?' We have outstanding people on our team. They are a curious and fun bunch of young adults!"

"As coaches, Debbie and I work closely with the captains each year to plan a field trip that supports the annual theme," Murphy explained. "This year we decided to visit The Breakers for an underground tour that brought our discussions of Technology and Humanity to

new heights! It took quite a bit to organize the tour for such a large group, but The Preservation Society of Newport County bent over backwards to assist us in creating a memorable experience for our team."

The captain may be the leader, but each student is expected to step up during the competition.

"We encourage leadership in all our team members," Murphy said. "Students regularly facilitate learning using diverse strategies. Literature study involves pairs of students discussing short stories and leading group discussions. Everyone is involved in presenting about selected artworks. Students whom are strong in a particular discipline create content to share on Google Classroom as well as in meetings. Our members have become stronger communicators in front of our eyes, and that's a life enriching skill set!"

Get Them Motivated

In a recent interview, Lenox was asked how he motivates kids to take on extra academic work when they feel they get enough of it in school.

"Students who want to continue their education at the college level are under a lot of pressure to distinguish themselves from their peers, in particular 'extracurriculars' that help them stand out in the application process," he answered in an email.

"AD provides this opportunity, but it requires commitment. Rather than listing 10 different activities, colleges are looking for a commitment to 2 or 3 activities and to excel. Earning a position on the AD team shows commitment. The best part is that students have 10 different areas to display," he said.

While aspects of the decathlon correlate with course work, such as math, essay, and social sciences, much of the competition draws on skills and knowledge outside of the curriculum. The speech is frequently cited by students as the most challenging part of the competition. Competitors deliver a prepared and an impromptu speech before a panel of volunteer judges. There is also an interview component where volunteers judge performance.

Yet another component of the event, the super quiz, is outside the high school curriculum. The quiz, conducted in an auditorium setting with spectators, is the final event and based on the overarching theme of the competition. Reading materials, as well as tests in subjects like music and art, may incorporate questions relative to the theme.

"The year's theme, Technology and Humanity, comes with the explosion of



NEWPORT UNDERGROUND: This year, the Johnston Academic Decathlon team decided to visit The Breakers in Newport for an underground tour to discuss Technology and Humanity. (Submitted photo)

AI (artificial intelligence) — mostly ChatGPT," said Lenox. "While many students are comfortable with the 'technology' piece, the 'humanity' element is something they have a lot to learn about. There is a balancing act between the two, and it is interesting to see students trying to find that balance."

How It Started In RI

The history of the Academic Decathlon in Rhode Island dates back to 1983. Fifteen years earlier, the concept of an academic contest based on a series of competitions in academic disciplines took root in California under the direction of Dr. Robert Peterson. As the decathlon caught on, Peterson looked to introduce more and more states to the event. Invitations were sent to individual schools, asking them to send a team to the national competition even if they were located in states with no state competition.

Bishop Hendricken High School followed up on the invitation in the spring of 1983, returning with several individual medals. The news was the catalyst of the formation of a group seeking to create a state academic decathlon. Representatives from public, private and parochial schools, teacher unions, school organizations, corporations and legislators formed a board of directors, and by the start of the academic year in 1983 more than 30 schools were preparing for a

December competition that year.

Over the decades, RI Academic Decathlon has hosted the national competition on two occasions, with events held in Providence involving more than 50 teams from across the country and several foreign teams. This year's United States Academic Decathlon will be held in Pittsburgh. And as has been the practice since the state organization was founded, the state winner will be granted sufficient funds to make the trip to the nationals, albeit one year it was held in Hawaii and another in Alaska.

Prospects of traveling may be the allure of the decathlon for some, but it's hardly enough to get students to hit the books after a full day of classes.

The most daunting aspect of coaching from Lenox's perspective is pulling the team together.

"What is the toughest thing about coaching an academic team, especially when the teams are designed to be inclusive of students with varying skills?" Lenox asked. "Students in the Honors and Scholastic division are naturally drawn to AD. Varsity students, on the other hand, need some incentive to commit to AD. Each one is different and it takes time to learn what interests them. Needless to say, the team is incomplete without them."

Editor's Note: Johnston Sun Rise Editor Rory Schuler contributed to this report.

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Getting a Divorce?

What You Should Know Before You Sell Your Home

By Jennifer Cosgrove O'Leary



Divorce can be messy and emotional. Add to the mix the decision to sell the marital home, which is often the couple's largest financial asset, and things get even messier.

As Rhode Island's first and only Certified Divorce Real Estate Expert (CDRE), Jennifer Cosgrove O'Leary has the following advice for couples going through a divorce and selling their marital home:

- Get advice from experts in the field. Just as you would choose an attorney who specializes in divorce, and a financial advisor who has experience with divorce, choose a real estate agent who understands the challenges of divorce and can manage communication effectively to avoid escalating tensions, and get you top dollar for your home.
 - A CDRE is specifically trained in the legal and financial ramifications of selling your home while going through a divorce. We are a neutral 3rd party acting as a buffer between you and your soon to be ex-spouse, fostering calmer interactions and facilitating productive communication.
 - A CDRE advises on timing the sale to minimize capital gains taxes and navigate other financial implications.
 - We ensure a fair market value assessment and negotiate effectively based on divorce agreements.
 - A CDRE has familiarity with legal processes and has the training to guide you through legal requirements and coordinate with your attorneys seamlessly.
- Working with an experienced divorce real estate agent provides you with someone who will maximize the value for both spouses while respecting individual needs and concerns, while taking care of the details so you can concentrate on moving on.
- Takes care of marketing, staging, showings, and negotiations, reducing your stress and will often advance the cost for any repairs necessary to maximize the equity return.
 - Has connections to appraisers, inspectors, and other professionals needed for a smooth transaction.

- Understands local market trends and can strategize for the best timing and pricing.
- Don't rush. There is often a strong desire to get the sale over with. Take your time and find an agent you and your spouse both trust. Go with someone you both think you can work with. A good agent should be able to provide you with references of other divorcing couples they have worked with. Check those references and in the end you can rest easy knowing you have hired an expert who has your best interests at heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jennifer Cosgrove O'Leary is one of the top 10 Realtors® (as certified by Real Trends) in the state of Rhode Island and the Co-Owner/Broker of Greenwich Bay Brokers. She is the only Certified Divorce Real Estate agent in the state, and is also a Senior Real Estate Specialist. Jennifer leverages her years of interior design experience, as well as her degree in occupational therapy to provide guidance on the critical aesthetic and ease of use elements that are part of the home buying and selling process.



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LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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Meet the owners of Johnston's Fearless Beauty Salon ~ Amanda, Nicole and Ann Marie. Always accepting new clients and looking to hire some new talent! To learn more, call 401-943-7373!

Johnston Senior Center Highlights

From the Staff

Our Valentine's Day Event was a huge success! Our Senior Center gives our all, to make our members feel welcome and enjoy the time they spend here.

Along with the activities, lunch is served daily. Bingo is every Thursday and Friday at 2 p.m.

Looking forward to seeing you!

Together we will bring our Center back to life and make it better than ever. Thank you to all our members.

Weekly Fun

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

Upcoming Activities

Mondays — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Arts & Crafts, 10:30 a.m.; Hi Lo Jack, 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.

Wednesday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Quilting, 9:30 a.m.; Zumba, 10 a.m.; Fit & Strong — Chair, 11 a.m.

Thursday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Mahjong, 9:30 a.m.; Chair Yoga, 10 a.m.; Bone Builders, 11 a.m.

Friday — Walk away the pounds, 9-9:30 a.m.; Line Dancing, 10 a.m.; Fit & Strong-Chair, 11 a.m.

Trips & Events

- Tuesday, March 5, 1 p.m., Painting with Lorraine (\$20 per person)
- Tuesday, March 5, The Knotty Oak Room for Breakfast, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 12, Ballroom Dancing, from 1-3 p.m. (Come join the fun!)
- Monday, March 18, Biomes Marine Biology Center, 10 a.m. (\$5 per person)
- Tuesday, March 26, Book Club with Mary, 10 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 26, Lunch & Movie (\$10 per person)
- Wednesday, March 27, Mystery Lunch (\$10 per person)
- Wednesday, March 27, Paint with Sue, 6 p.m. (\$20 per person)

More at Mohr Library

Join Ms. Melyssa for STEAM on Thursdays through April 4.

- STEAM: Thursdays at 5 p.m., March 14 through April 4

Children ages 6 to 9 are invited to experiment, explore and build with Ms. Melyssa.

- Art Smart for Ages 8 to 12: Wednesdays from 4 to 5:30 pm, March 13 to April 10

Have fun exploring different art styles, techniques and genres.

Register at <https://mohrlibrary.org/forchildren.php>.

- Art Smart Jr. for Ages 5 to 7: Continues Saturdays, March 19 and March 30 through April 20 (no class March 23). Choose from two sessions, from 2 to 3 pm, or 3:30 to 4:30.

Have fun exploring different art styles, techniques and genres

See mohrlibrary.org or call 401-231-4980 to register. There is an ongoing book sale in the lower level, whenever the library's open.

Library hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Required registration opens March 6 for art and science programs for elementary-school-age kids with Ms. Melyssa.

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Boutique Rental Space Available For Sellers

By JENNIFER COATES

What do you get when you take three hairstylists whose combined experience in the beauty industry exceeds 65 years and put them together in their own salon? You get three fearless beauties who embrace fearless beauty every day ~ unafraid of sharing their talents with clients, young and old, new and longtime; unafraid of buying a salon after a world-changing pandemic, unafraid to make their clients look and feel beautiful, from head to toe.

Meet Amanda Russo, Nicole LaCroix and Ann Marie Rega-Faria, the three owners of Fearless Beauty in Johnston. These stylists have decades of experience under their aprons and behind the swivel chair. Amanda is the "youngest" stylist at 11 years, followed by Nicole with 20 years and then Ann Marie who got her cosmetology license in 1987 (37 years ago!) Though Ann Marie is no longer cutting hair, she has now fulfilled a lifelong dream of owning a salon. These three dynamic women welcome you to Fearless Beauty, and say, come on in!

Fearless Beauty is a cheerful, sunny, and tidy place where you

can go to escape the world and be pampered. The salon has multiple stations where Nicole and Amanda work their magic. When these three gals purchased an existing salon, they put their personal stamp on it; today it is a tranquil, comfortable, and inviting business where men, women and even children are welcome.

The salon provides a wide range of services with everything from hair cutting and styling to body waxing, eyelash extensions, skin care, electrolysis, manicures, pedicures, and spray tanning. Amanda and Nicole keep up with all the latest trends in hair color, cuts, and styles. They will give you an honest assessment of options but will also do whatever they can to accommodate your wishes.

While both Nicole and Amanda are professional hair stylists, Nicole is also an experienced nail technician. Want a gel manicure? Done. Want a gel overlay or just a natural treatment? Done. Again, this team of stylists and technicians aim to please. Your satisfaction really is their primary goal. They know that as soon as you walk out of Fearless Beauty, you are an example of their work so they do their best, 100% of the time.

There are open stations seeking renters, so if you are looking for a change, want to get set up in an easier to access salon, or just want to bring your talents to a new space, then reach out to the gals to get started. Amanda, Nicole and Ann Marie would like to add more services to their menu (estheticians, massage therapists, barber, stylists). There is plenty of room to grow here at Fearless Beauty!

Fearless Beauty is located at 1395 Atwood Avenue, Unit 107, right near the bottom of the exit ramp off Route 6. For your appointment, call 401-943-7373. Find them on Facebook or at www.fearlessbeautyri.com Hours are Tuesday – Friday, 9:00am – 6:00pm, Saturdays, 9:00am – 4:00pm.

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Sports

Panthers advance

Defending champs headed to semis

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston boys basketball team would run away with a 61-51 Division II Quarterfinal win over Rogers on Tuesday night to advance to this weekend's semifinals against unbeaten, top-seeded Lincoln.

The Panthers led the entire game until Rogers would hit a shot to take its first lead, 46-45, with 6:00 remaining in the fourth quarter. Johnston would call a timeout shortly after and roll from there to grab the victory.

Senior Neari Vasquez put on a show in the fourth quarter, scoring 12 of his team-leading 19 points in the final frame, including hitting two big 3-pointers.

"Coach Mark Livingston told us to stay together. We have been through this before, we've been through tough times when we have been down but we always stick together



PLAYOFF WIN: Johnston's Mike Carlino takes the ball up the court on Tuesday night against Rogers. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

SEMIS - PAGE 16



ALL-STATE: Johnston's Logan Martins takes on Hendricken's Seth McGrew. (Photos by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com)

Martins takes fourth at states

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League Wrestling State Championships were held last weekend in Providence and a handful of locals made some noise on the state's biggest stage.

Johnston's top performer was Logan Martins, who placed fourth for Johnston at 126 pounds while teammate Ryan Morales finished sixth for the Panthers.

Leading the way for Cranston was West's Andrew Alchihed, who entered the season coming off a knee injury and returned to form down the stretch. Alchihed had a nice outing last weekend as he wrapped up second place overall at 215 pounds for the Falcons.

Jayden Soy took home a sixth-place finish for the Falcons at 138 pounds, followed by teammate Dante Richardson, who finished sixth at 175 pounds.

Hendricken's Matthew Pappas finished second at 150 pounds for the Hawks, while Pilgrim was led by Trevor O'Connor with a second-place finish at 175 pounds.

STATES - PAGE 16

JMCE annual golf outing slated for May return

By PETE FONTAINE

The Johnston Memorial Cancer Events "Super Bowl-like" golf tournament will tee off on Saturday, May 11 at Connecticut National Golf Club in Putnam Ct.

It's officially entitled the JMCE (501c3) Hasbro Children's Hospital Friends & Family Golf Event that will tee off for the 18th year to benefit the Hematology/Oncology Departments at the nationally acclaimed facility in Providence.

"It's amazing what the JMCE has done for Hasbro Children's Hospital," countless players will

tell. "What started as Campfires for Cancer has ballooned into perhaps Rhode Island's most famous and important amateur golf tournaments."

Attest: the JMC golf go-round has raised upwards of \$370,000 for Hasbro Children's Hospital to date and tourney organizers are looking to reach the \$500,000 plateau in the immediate future.

"The JMCE Golf bash is a tournament unlike any other," people like Attorney Steve Pucella, who chairs the now 24-year-old Ricky Salzillo Memorial Game Dinner will tell you. "Especially since it's played in memory of

JMCE - PAGE 16



FRIENDLY FOES:

Among the 160 golfers who played in last year's annual JMCE Memorial Golf Tournament were: Mike DiRocco, Chris Miller, Arthur Pitassi, Mike St. Angelo, Michael St. Angelo, Michael Picerno, Ryan Parker and Jasper Bruinslot. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)

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CLASSIC COOKS: The JMCE's pre tee-off food fest cooks were Lori Guernon, Julianne DeAngelis, Lisa St. Angelo, Joe Grasso, Phyllis Gelsomino, Debbie Johnson, Michelle Caprarco and Jen Johnson.

■ **JMCE**
(Continued from page 15)

long-time friends Raymond Johnson, John Furia, Frances Grasso, Sal Gelsomino, Anna Mazzulla and Laura DeAngelis."

Moreover, it's the many family members of those six friends – who lost a battle with cancer – that make the JMCE Golf Tournament an overwhelming success by doing everything from making chowder and hot wieners to cooking sausage and pepper sandwiches on the charcoal grill.

"We'll again have food all day," said Vin LaFazia, who chairs the event with his tireless committee of friends, most of whom are members at famed

Gloucester Country Club in Chepachet. "No one goes hungry; there's the pre-tee off luncheon as well as foods on the course."

Likewise, the JMCE Golf will feature many giveaways, a giant raffle, awards ceremony and four divisions – Open, Coed, Women and Seniors for players 65 and over. Interested players must register and pay before April 15, 2024. There are also different levels of sponsorships up to majors for \$500.

Registration forms are available by calling Linda LaFazia at (401) 233-2564 and Judi Graham at (401) 497-2954.

In keeping with tradition, each player will receive a special gift and upon entering the committee will need to know each golfer's shirt size.



ONTO THE NEXT ONE: Johnston's Neari Vasquez.

■ **Semis**
(Continued from page 15)

and come back. That was my time, and when we broke the huddle he said, 'This is where you shine,' and I said, 'yes sir.' I just went out there and got buckets, I was in kill mode," said Vasquez, who was excited to show off hit shooting ability as the team's top forward. "It's a big part of my game and once I hit one, I started feeling it and started shooting it more. It's a big part of my game and finishing."

Branden Testa added 17 points in the win while Jayden Testa scored 10 to reach double figures. Michael Carlino also came up clutch, scoring all five of his points in the fourth quarter to help propel the offense as well.

The team's championship defense will continue against the high-flying Lions, who beat Cranston West in the quarters on Tuesday as well. Although the Panthers will enter the matchup as the underdog, Vasquez is confident that the team's championship mettle will help guide them against Lincoln.

"We're not new to this. We always stay together, we always battle back. We weren't panicking with 5:30 left, that's a lot of time. We just needed to run our sets, hit some buckets and stay locked in," said Vasquez. "Lincoln's a very tough team with great players, all five players are great. We can give them a great fight, we were beating them until the fourth quarter the last time we played. We know how they play, they know how we play. We just need to stay locked in."

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REACHING THE PODIUM: Johnston's Ryan Morales, who finished fourth.

■ **States**
(Continued from page 15)

Spencer Fine finished in second at his new weight class at 190 pounds after winning the state title at 182 last winter.

Hendricken's Seth McGrew placed third at 126 pounds, followed by teammate Braydon Wilding who took fourth at 132 pounds. Pilgrim's Donovan Watts finished fourth at 165 pounds for the

Pats. Hendricken's Lincoln Tiernan wrapped up fourth place at 175 pounds as well.

Toll Gate's Jack Sabatelli finished fifth at 106 pounds, while teammate Marcos Ramirez took fifth at 120 pounds.

Pilgrim's Allison Patten won the 100-pound title on the girls side, while Toll Gate's Angel Bui took first at 114 pounds. Toll Gate's Victoria Salinas took first at 145 pounds.



TEAM EFFORT: Members of the RIIL along with Gov. Dan McKee. (Submitted photos)

Playoff hoops set to return to AMP, venue honors Reynolds

BY CAROLYN THORNTON
Rhode Island
Interscholastic League

The RIIL and Amica Mutual Pavilion announced today that the finals of the RIIL Boys & Girls Divisional Basketball Championships will be played, March 4-6, at the AMP in Downtown Providence. The slate will comprise seven championships – Boys Divisions I, II and III and Girls Divisions I, II, III and IV.

“We are excited that the Road to the Ryan Center for the Credit Union State Championships will also now include a stop in Providence at the AMP for the RIIL Boys & Girls Divisional Championship games,” RIIL Executive Director Mike Lunney said at a Friday morning press conference.

“Through a coordinated effort between the RIIL, [AMP General Manager] Larry Lepore, [Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Executive Director] Dan McConaghy and their staff over the last couple of years, we worked through some significant logistical challenges,” Lunney said. “Ultimately, thanks to everyone’s persistence and especially thanks to the support of our friends at Amica Mutual, we’re happy to say that the RIIL Boys and Girls High School Basketball Division Championships are coming back to Providence.”

From 1981 to 2004, the Providence Civic Center was the home of the RIIL Boys and Girls Division Basketball Championships.

“During those 23 years, high school basketball players across the state dreamed of having the opportunity to play at this great facility,” Lunney said. “I had the opportunity to take two teams to the Civic Center as head coach of the Portsmouth High School boys basketball team in 1996 and 1997. So I know how special this experience is for kids.”

Quarterfinal round games will be played Feb. 26 and 27 at the home sites of higher-seeded teams.

The semifinal rounds will be played March 1-3 at East Providence High School, Cranston East High School,

Cumberland High School and Rhode Island College.

The Divisional Finals will then be played over a three-day period at the AMP beginning on March 4 with the title games for Girls Division IV (4 p.m.), Girls Division III (6 p.m.) and Boys Division III (8 p.m.). The Girls Division III (6 p.m.) and Boys Division III (8 p.m.) championship games will be played on March 5. The Girls Division I (6 p.m.) and Boys Division I (8 p.m.) finals will be played on March 6.

“We look forward to putting on a first-class event,” said Lunney. “And I know that there is tremendous excitement among our 102 boys and girls high school basketball teams, who have been battling it out all season long for the chance to create their own special memories on the court right here at the AMP.”

Friday’s press conference also included a special dedication of the Media Room at the AMP in memory of late Providence Journal sports columnist Bill Reynolds. Larry Lepore, who had lobbied for the dedication of the room, and Reynolds’ former Journal colleague Kevin McNamara offered a tribute to Bill, who was a sports columnist at the ProJo for nearly 40 years and also authored several award-winning books. Governor Dan McKee signed the Bill making the media room dedication official, as Bill Reynolds’ longtime partner Liz Abbott looked on.

“I think it’s only fitting, too, that we’re going to be honoring Bill Reynolds because as we all know . . . Bill Reynolds was synonymous with basketball, and he definitely had an affinity for high school basketball,” Lunney added. “For someone that grew up in the East Bay, I know he’s a Barrington guy and I crossed paths with him a lot. He knows what a special experience this is, so I think combining this press conference together is an important thing. You knew - and kids knew - that when he showed up to one of your games, it was a big game. So when he was covering it, it was a big deal. Definitely a great opportunity for us to recognize and remember Bill.”



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RIIL Executive Director Mike Lunney addresses the media.

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How 2024 fishing regulations are shaping up

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI

At press time the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island were all still seeking public comment and input on 2024 fishing regulations for saltwater fishing. So, the regulations list for the tri-state area will likely be completed by May 1. But, here is some news on how regulations are shaping up.

The RI Marine Fisheries Council will meet April 1 to vote on their recommendations to the Director. The Director will take the Council's recommendations plus all public comment received at the February 28 public hearing, and the recommendations of Division scientists and make final rule decisions that will be in effect May 1. Connecticut and Massachusetts are on similar tracks.

Striped bass. For 2024 the striped bass regulations will be the same as last year, one fish/person/day at 28 to less than 31 inches. However, there are a number of at sea and shore side filleting requirements i.e. keeping the racks of filleted fish with only two fillets per fish until all anglers are off the vessel or if on shore no filleting permitted while still actively fish with fishing lines in the water. The fillet requirement is part of a coastwide regulation for striped bass issued by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Striped bass are still overfished according to the 2022 stock assessment. An updated 2024 stock assessment is being done.

Tautog regulations will likely be the same as they were last year. Tautog are not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. Tautog have a 16-inch minimum size. The Spring season opens April 1 to May 31 with a three fish/person/day limit; a closed season June 1 to July 31 during the spawning season; a late summer/early fall season from August 1 to October 14 with a three fish/person/day limit; and then from October 15 to December 31 the limit jumps to five fish/person/day. In all periods only one fish may be greater than 21 inches and there is a ten fish/vessel maximum.

Bluefish. The Division of Marine Fisheries is not proposing to change the recreational bluefish regulation for 2024. So, the regulations are likely to be the same as last year. For private vessels and shore anglers the limit is three fish/person/day year round with no minimum size. For-hire vessels have a five fish/person/day limit. Scup are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. However, recruitment has been below average from 2017 to 2022. So, 2024 regulations must be changed to achieve a 10 percent reduction in recreational harvest. Several proposals have been shared including increasing the minimum size from 10.5 to 11 inches, reducing the possession limit (in some cases from 30 fish last year to 20 fish, even one proposal reduces possession to 9 fish) as well as reducing the season lengths. There are adjustment suggestions for the minimum shore size too from 9.5" to 10" or keeping it the same. A lot of options still at play here.

Summer flounder is not overfished but overfishing is occurring, so fish managers have been asked to achieve a 28 percent reduction in recreational harvest. There are a few options on the table to reach this reduction including increasing the minimum size from 18 to 18.5 inches or increasing



WHAT'S THE CATCH: Bluefish regulations will likely be the same as last year, three fish/person/day, no minimum size, includes skipjack bluefish. Shaina Boyle caught this 36-inch bluefish last year fishing with Capt. Dave Monti. (Submitted photo)

ing the minimum size to 19 inches. If the minimum size increases to 19 inches the season could be expanded (starting April 1 rather than May 3) with an enhanced bag limit.

Black sea bass are not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. The Division has not proposed changes to black sea bass regulation at this time. The minimum size will likely be the same as last year 16.5 inches for private anglers with a season starting May 22 to August 26 with a two fish/person/day limit with an increase to three fish/person/day from August 27 to December 31. The party and charter boat sector has a 16-inch minimum size, however the season does not start until June 18 with a two fish limit that then increases to six fish/person/day on Sept. 1

For regulation updates in Connecticut visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Fishing/Saltwater/Saltwater-Fishing>; in Massachusetts <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/recreational-saltwater-fishing-regulations>; and in Rhode Island <https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-regulations>.

Notice of Scoping Meetings on Atlantic Herring

River herring serves as forage for fish and birds of all types including striped bass, bluefish, and osprey. Anglers coastwide have expressed concern about river herring and shad being caught as by-catch by commercial fishers targeting Atlantic Herring.

To help address this challenge and others concerning the Atlantic Herring fishery, the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is conducting six scoping meetings to solicit comments regarding the range of alternatives to consider in Amendment 10 (A10) to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Council is proposing to take action through A10 to address spatial and temporal allocation and management of Atlantic herring at the management unit level to minimize user conflicts, contribute to optimum yield and support rebuilding of the resource.

The Council is also proposing to take action to enhance river herring (alewife and blueback herring) and shad (American shad and hickory shad) avoidance and

other catch reduction measures to better support ongoing coastwide restoration efforts for those species.

Rhode Island Scoping Meeting: Tuesday, March 19, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Hampton Inn, 20 Hotel Drive, South Kingstown, RI. Phone: 401.788.3500.

Massachusetts Scoping Meeting: Wednesday, March 27 - 6 - 8 p.m.; Hampton Inn, 12 Kendall Rae Place. Buzzards Bay, MA 02532; Phone: (508)444-4508.

Written comments must be received on or before 8 a.m. EST, Tuesday, April 30, 2024. Comments should be addressed to Cate O'Keefe, PhD, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, Mill #2, Newburyport, MA 01950; and sent by mail or email: comments@nefmc.org. Please note on your correspondence; "Atlantic Herring Amendment 10 Scoping Comments."

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing in stocked ponds for trout and salmon continues to be good for anglers, however, the trout fishing season ends this week February 29 and reopens again on Saturday, April 13.

"Fishing for trout has been very good because the season closure. With good sized brown trout being caught at Beach Pond, (RI and CT). And, 8-10 pound salmon are being caught at Naugatuck River, CT," said Jeff Sullivan of Lucky Bait & Tackle, Warren, RI.

For freshwater fishing information in Connecticut visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Fishing/Freshwater/Freshwater-Fishing>; in Massachusetts visit Freshwater Fishing | Mass.gov; and in Rhode Island www.dem.ri.gov/fishing.

Saltwater. "Fishing for hold over striped bass improved this week with school sized striped bass to 37-inch fish being caught in MA, RI and CT estuaries. My favorite lure this time of year is a white shad anywhere from four inches to nine inches," said Sullivan.

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

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Local 57 will be accepting applications for an upcoming apprenticeship class from Monday, March 11-Friday, March 16, 2024 from 9AM-3PM. Applications must be completed in person at 873 Central Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919. Call the office at 401-331-9191 for more information.

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10 E Shore Dr	Kelley, Linda N	Oneppo, Derek and Oneppo, Denise	2/9	\$395,000
13 Northup Plat Rd	Izzo, Barbara L	Pakuris, Joseph and Pakuris, Gina	2/9	\$1,300,000
14 Sunset Lake Cir Lot 570	Westwood Const Inc	Storybrook Homes Inc	2/7	\$200,000
30 Overview Dr	Kinoian, Allison B	Tan, Seow S and Chan, Esther F	2/9	\$320,000
44 Windsor Park Dr	Jan Quijano-Baez LLC	Mccaffrey, Scott M and Mccaffrey, Sandra	2/5	\$400,000
142 Harley St	Amc Properties LLC	Defosse, Nathan J and Defosse, Nicole P	2/9	\$375,000
237 Knotty Oak Rd	Guilmette, Gary J and Guilmette, Erin	Antunes, Walter C	2/9	\$411,237
375 Ledge Rd	Youngbar, Johnathan T and Youngbar, Danyal M	Mossman, Nicholas	2/9	\$600,000

Cranston

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
8 Depot Ave Lot 310	Kattan, Mohammad Y	Hernandez, Rosa and Hernandez, Ynocencio	2/9	\$525,000
8 Depot Ave Lot 311	Kattan, Mohammad Y	Hernandez, Rosa and Hernandez, Ynocencio	2/9	\$525,000
15 Sprague Ave	Miller, David J	Dacruz Baptista, Luis P and Dias Baptista, Matinilde A	2/1	\$340,000
23 Brookside Dr Lot 21	Vilma M Pezzullo Irt and Pezzullo, Steven	Paomale LLC	2/7	\$368,000
25 June Ave	Malvar, Noriel and Malvar, Esmeralda	Santos Perez, Miriam L and Desanots, Amilsa P	2/2	\$340,000
43 Kearney St Lot 166	Carroll, Michael J	Welch, Joseph	2/2	\$280,000
43 Kearney St Lot 165	Carroll, Michael J	Welch, Joseph	2/2	\$280,000
43 Kearney St Lot 164	Carroll, Michael J	Welch, Joseph	2/2	\$280,000
44 Paine Ave	N D Prop LLC	Hughes, Timothy and Darosa, Sabrina	2/2	\$343,000
46 Country View Dr	Bruno William M Est and Bruno, Michael A	Bruno, William and Brunnschweiler, Christine	2/2	\$350,000
48 Preston Dr Lot 66	Shulver, Paul H	Shulver, Benjamin P	2/2	\$238,000
48 Preston Dr Lot 65	Shulver, Paul H	Shulver, Benjamin P	2/2	\$238,000
57 Maplewood Ave Lot 132	Perez, Miquelina	Mendez Vargas, Guillermo A	2/5	\$575,000
57 Maplewood Ave Lot 133	Perez, Miquelina	Mendez Vargas, Guillermo A	2/5	\$575,000
85 Longview Dr	Camille A Marcello T and Marcello, Camille A	Frangos, William	2/2	\$366,000
139 S Clarendon St	Jchv Grp LLC	Guzman, Brinnia and Payero Reyes, Lucas A	2/7	\$430,000
144 Wentworth Ave	Harvey, Nicholas and Harvey, Oliver	Catarina, Michael and Scott-Pennington, Kaylee	2/9	\$725,000
145 N View Ave Lot 5-12	Beaulier, Alberta A	Deangelus, Gregory and Highfield, Emma V	2/2	\$340,000
145 N View Ave Lot 5-11	Beaulier, Alberta A	Deangelus, Gregory and Highfield, Emma V	2/2	\$340,000
156 Lambert St Lot 158	156 Lambert St Rlty LLC	Cardoza, Julia and Ryan, Amanda	2/7	\$429,000
156 Lambert St Lot 159	156 Lambert St Rlty LLC	Cardoza, Julia and Ryan, Amanda	2/7	\$429,000
180 Warwick Ave	Ceo Re LLC	Bai, Haiqing	2/8	\$305,000
186 Bluff Ave	Chapin Dev LLC	Pearis, Michael and Santana, Adriana G	2/2	\$500,000
575 Pontiac Ave	Coulombe, Louis J and Venditto, Mary A	Alcoke, Jacob P and Delgado, Samantha	2/8	\$385,000
2110 Plainfield Pike Lot 24	New Penn Motor Express LL	Rif Iv Terminals Spe LLC	2/1	\$3,800,000
2110 Plainfield Pike Lot 99	New Penn Motor Express LL	Rif Iv Terminals Spe LLC	2/1	\$3,800,000

East Greenwich

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
25 Keyes Ct	Reed, David H and Reed, Rebecca A	Kadan, Abdullah and Al-Huniti, Tasneem	2/7	\$1,200,000
32 Upland Ave Lot 8	Moone, Danny E and Moone, Lisa J	Epstein, Matthew M and Dolos, Maria	2/1	\$510,000
32 Upland Ave Lot 6	Moone, Danny E and Moone, Lisa J	Epstein, Matthew M and Dolos, Maria	2/1	\$510,000
32 Upland Ave Lot 7	Moone, Danny E and Moone, Lisa J	Epstein, Matthew M and Dolos, Maria	2/1	\$510,000
35 David Ct	Schavone, Peter and Schavone, Julie	Marusak, Daniel and Marusak, Caitlin	2/6	\$1,405,000
58 Wildwood Trl	Veyera, George E and Veyera, Bryan W	Nagaoka, Yasutaka	2/8	\$535,000

Johnston

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10 Parkview Dr	Lundstrum, Rose	Lareaux, L A and Addison Jr, Terry H	2/7	\$395,000
75 Steere Dr	Elkas, Darlene M	Perkins, Steven M and Stevens, Shannon L	2/12	\$394,000
1603 Plainfield Pike Lot C3	Emond, Todd J	Pacheco, Mauro A and Gilmore, Mackenzie	2/9	\$280,000

Warwick

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1 Lisa Marie Cir	Louvet, Giles G and Mccue-Louvet, Jane M	Worrall, Alana and Gaudio, Michael	2/9	\$790,000
14 Wheeler St Lot 28	Dacruz, Elizabeth M	Rhode Island Custom Bldrs	2/5	\$296,250
15 Urban Ave Lot 85	Isherwood, Michael T	Paganetti 4th, Louis D and Paganetti, Renee N	2/1	\$435,000
15 Urban Ave Lot 84	Isherwood, Michael T	Paganetti 4th, Louis D and Paganetti, Renee N	2/1	\$435,000
16 Arrow Ave	Vrmtg Asset T and Us Bank Tlra	West Bay Home Solutions L	2/5	\$255,000
16 Arrow Ave	West Bay Home Solutions L	Cp Invest LLC	2/5	\$277,000
23 Austin Rd	Rondeau Fjt and Tompkins, Kerri-Lynn	Barlow, Brandon and Barlow, Gabrielle	2/8	\$454,500
33 Deer Run Xing Lot 33	Stonebridge Crossing Dev	Lentrichia, Paul F and Lentrichia, Gayle S	2/9	\$766,800
34 Grace Ave	Home Sweet Home LLC	Kaplan, Adam J and Rosenberg, Hyla K	2/6	\$460,000
38 Desmar Ct	Laurie, Lindsay	Weiderman, Michael	2/1	\$463,000
51 Easton Ave	Federal Hm Ln Mtg Corp	Russo, Ryan	2/5	\$190,000
53 Marblehead St Lot 105	Salgueiro, Michael R	Potter, Timothy M	2/9	\$334,000
53 Marblehead St Lot 106	Salgueiro, Michael R	Potter, Timothy M	2/9	\$334,000
54 Dudley Ave	Vieira, Daniel J and Vieira, Kelsie A	Obrien Jr, Daniel J	2/5	\$347,000
58 Hewett St	Durand, Will P and Durand, Marie R	Mannix, Sarah A	2/1	\$480,000
70 Point Ave	Nadeau, Kathy A	Nadeau, Gene A	2/2	\$600,000
84 Hilton Rd	Glodis Mary C Est and Tunnicliffe, Marguerite E	Km Rlty Invest LLC	2/1	\$290,000
96 Pender Ave	Roderick, Stephen	Cafarella, Nicole and Lussier, Luke	2/9	\$365,000
104 Stone Ave	Costa Rose J Est and Costa, Kevin M	Miller Prop Grp LLC	2/2	\$200,000
120 Eastgate Dr	Tipton Joshua D Est and Lowney, John D	Alviti, Melissa A and Alviti, Timothy J	2/2	\$389,000
126 Weeden Dr	Swift Margery F Est and Swift, Gregory R	Swift, Gregory R	2/7	\$288,000
131 Hiawatha St	Flip This House Inc	Puglia, Jessica J and Puglia, Jennifer	2/1	\$390,000
145 Canfield Ave Lot 57	Lsf9 Master Participation and Us Bank Tlra	Gaudet, Darlene	2/1	\$348,000
145 Canfield Ave Lot 55	Lsf9 Master Participation and Us Bank Tlra	Gaudet, Darlene	2/1	\$348,000
145 Canfield Ave Lot 56	Lsf9 Master Participation and Us Bank Tlra	Gaudet, Darlene	2/1	\$348,000
145 Canfield Ave Lot 54	Lsf9 Master Participation and Us Bank Tlra	Gaudet, Darlene	2/1	\$348,000
155 Hedgerow Dr	Cruse, Christopher A and Cruse, Brittany L	Marcus, Louise	2/1	\$534,000
158 Tiffany Ave Lot 33	Stetson, Stephanie	Cerullo, Jennifer	2/1	\$340,000
158 Tiffany Ave Lot 31	Stetson, Stephanie	Cerullo, Jennifer	2/1	\$340,000
227 Centerville Rd Lot 245	Old Key West Rlty LLC	Ag-Sc 227 Centerville Rd	2/9	\$8,130,000
227 Centerville Rd Lot 319	Old Key West Rlty LLC	Ag-Sc 227 Centerville Rd	2/9	\$8,130,000
227 Centerville Rd Lot 244	Old Key West Rlty LLC	Ag-Sc 227 Centerville Rd	2/9	\$8,130,000
227 Centerville Rd Lot 274	Old Key West Rlty LLC	Ag-Sc 227 Centerville Rd	2/9	\$8,130,000
263 Brian Dr	Cubellis Alice Est and Anzivino, Kerri L	Chere, Susan J and Chere, Jerico	2/5	\$295,000
279 Beach Ave	Pickles Francis J Est and Pickles Jr, Norman W	Shine Concepts LLC	2/7	\$280,000
294 Lake Shore Dr	Robertson Re Inc and Robertson, Kenneth W	Rodriguez, Ana E	2/5	\$350,000
300 Crestwood Rd	Lab Prop LLC	Fleury, Gregory and Fleury, Judith	2/5	\$675,000
775 Williamsburg Cir Lot 775	Schooner Rlty LLC	Gao, Jinsong and Tong, Ming	2/1	\$220,000
1003 Channel Vw Lot 1003	Kieliszak, Daniel E and Kieliszak, Louise	Roger E&Carol A Laflamme and Laflamme, David R	2/7	\$710,000
3524 W Shore Rd Lot 909	Weisinger, Elizabeth	Pizzi, Stacie L and Pizzi Jr, Angelo R	2/2	\$212,000
4286 Post Rd	Alan & Deborah Gourd Lt and Gourd, Alan N	Klass, David H and Klass, Pamela N	2/2	\$480,000

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183 Victory Hwy	Tavares, Anthony	Romanoff Jr, Robert	2/7	\$367,000

West Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
77 Enfield Dr	Hevenor, Matthew	Ross, Nina M and Arnuda, Kory R	2/8	\$428,000
97 Nottingham Dr	Conley, Patrick	Airway Leasing LLC	2/7	\$325,000
129 Legris Ave	Difranco, Ryan and Difranco, Michael	Provencher Jr, Robert and Griffith, Phyllis	2/9	\$305,000
1272 Main St	Joaquin Ft and Joaquin, Jonathan	Reservoir Adventures LLC	2/7	\$20,061

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Elegant & Unexpected



BRIGHT GOLD: Lincoln Pollock combines domestic wood with gold to unusual effect for a ring. (Photos provided by Arcwood Jewelry)

Arcwood brings new materials to the jewelry game

By KEVIN FITZPATRICK

Whereas many of the traditions upheld by the wedding industry can be stilted and old-fashioned, a young Rhode Islander is working to change the definition of what wedding jewelry can be. Lincoln Pollock, founder of Arcwood Jewelry is producing minimalist, elegant jewelry which bring together traditional precious metals with an unlikely aesthetic companion: wood.

"I just love the understated," Pollock said. "I love minimalism, and I like fashion that is not in your face. But if you look at it, you could still tell all that quality. It can be just subtle differences, subtle things that could tell you its quality."

Pollock's jewelry is simple in appearance, two materials running parallel alongside each other, often with a third material of diverse substances such as gemstones, glass, or even preserved flower petals. Pollock constructs each ring by hand, shaping the metal and the wood in his home studio. He prioritizes sustainability in his practice, sourcing his materials domestically, and using recycled silver and gold whenever possible.

The 23-year-old Pollock started and continues to run his business from his family's home in Cranston, where the tools of the trade are split between the garage and basement. Lathes, saws, workbenches, sanders, and even a small "vacuum chamber" for sealing the veneer which goes into his process. Every aspect of his business is run by Pollock himself.

"I do all my own photography and videography. It's really a one-man-show as of right now."

■ JEWELRY - PAGE 22

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ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

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Zeus

Photo credit: Lisa Kirshenbaum

Meet Zeus! This little adorable guy has so much to offer but he really needs a very specific type of home. You see poor Zeus has had some trauma in his past so he will need an adult only home with patient people who understand him. Someone who will give him the time to feel comfortable and loved! Also, a quieter home with a fenced in yard as this little guy loves to run and play! He is currently in a foster home and is doing well. Zeus is a two and half year-old Shih Tzu mix breed with the most beautiful coat and a brilliant smile! If you would like more information about Zeus please contact Lisa.foha@yahoo.com or visit their website <http://www.fohari.org> Zeus is hoping that you'll be his perfect match!

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



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AT THE LATHE: Lincoln Pollock works at his lathe shaping the wood he will use for his jewelry. (Photos provided by Arcwood Jewelry)



ENGAGEMENT: Arcwood's jewelry is often custom made with materials provided by the client.

Jewelry

(Continued from page 21)

Inspiration to start Arcwood struck Pollock around the same time he was making the decision to leave college. He was studying marine biology, with a minor in music, at Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

"I loved studying it, but I just didn't feel like it fit with what I wanted to do, you know?"

He had moved home to Rhode Island, working to finish his music minor at CCRI, when kismet came in the form of a YouTube video demonstrating the jewelry making method he now uses today.

"I saw that and just fell in love with it," Pollock said. "I spontaneously bought all the stuff to do it and then just started doing it, for a year just practicing every day."

Pollock worked for a year honing his craft, taking part in the online community of jewelry makers he found, and asking every jeweler, metal worker, and woodworker he could find to ask them questions. In March of 2023, he was ready to begin.

"Not having a background in jewelry or business and then starting something in jewelry-business," Pollock said, recalling those early days. "You know, I knew it was gonna be difficult. But reality kind of hit after the first few months. Like okay, I really gotta go to if I want this, I gotta take it while I can. I gotta do everything in my power."

Before he even officially opened for business, his first customer was calling. Recommended by a friend, a local firefighter was intrigued at the thought of a wooden wedding ring. Aside from the beauty of the material, the man had a more unique consideration: safety.

Pollock explained "If you have a pure metal ring, let's say the ring gets stuck on something [while] you're doing something. It could be any number of things. It could get caught and you could really hurt your finger."

"He liked the wood rings because... It's not as much trouble," Pollock continued. "It wouldn't really hurt you as much if you got caught somewhere because chances are it would probably break before it would do much damage to your finger."

Pollock recalls this as still one of his favorite custom orders. He said that the firefighter loved the ring, and was so grateful he even gave Pollock a gift afterwards. Pollock has come to love the process of working with a customer to make a custom product. He's even begun integrating materials provided by the customers themselves into his custom rings. He talked about a recent order from which he was afforded the opportunity to work with a rather uncommon wood in this part of the world: Mango.

A couple with roots in Florida wanted an engagement ring constructed from their family's mango tree. Pollock instructed them on how to take a proper cutting (via video-chat) to send to him. Upon its arrival, he paired the wood with 18 karat yellow-gold. Additionally, flakes from family heirloom wedding bangles were inlaid into the wood for a doubly personal end product.

This practice of integrating materials significant to the client has become a staple of Pollock's process. In addition to the woods and metals, he has also integrated the petals from wedding flowers, or stained glass, or gemstones into his jewelry.

However, not all of Pollock's work is custom. He brings a growing stock of rings, pendants, and earrings regularly to markets around Rhode Island. He listed the Pawtucket Farmers' Markets, the Fine Furnishing Show, and the Holiday Market at Waterfire Arts Center as particularly favorites. He likes the artsy crowds he can find there.

As of now, Pollock works another job in addition to running Arcwood Jewelry, but hopes that will soon change. He hopes within five years to have a workshop here in Rhode Island, where he can work with clients and local artisans to make this product he's so proud of. He never wants to mass produce his work.

Pollock hopes Arcwood will remain "an authentic, bespoke company." He says "I definitely want to keep it local, and just keep everything handmade."

On March 5, Arcwood Jewelry will be holding a from 5-7 p.m. at the Brenton Hotel in Newport as part of the Newport Artists' Collective's salon series. To see more of Pollock's work, visit: arcwood-jewelry.com.



ON DISPLAY: Lincoln Pollock uses recycled metals whenever possible in his jewelry. (Photos provided by Arcwood Jewelry)

Rhody TREASURES

ANTIQUES • COLLECTIBLES • CONSIGNMENTS • ESTATES • VINTAGE

The Thrill of the Hunt at a NYC Estate Sale



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



When in the wild as a picker, there is nothing more exciting (while simultaneously frustrating) than an estate sale. In all honesty, I personally hate them. The thought of waking up at 2:00am or even camping out the day before to be first in line is grueling to me. I'm also the type of guy that needs a shower every morning to function so you can see why the thought of this is so mentally taxing to me. But once in a blue moon, there is a rare case that makes it all worth it.

Earlier this month, a good friend and trusted picker received a tip on a New York state ordered estate sale in Manhattan for the contents of an apartment. The contents included an entire room filled with comics and original comic art, all to be sold as one group. There were several other things in the home, but the comics were the main attraction. Right now, you might be questioning what "New York state ordered" means. Unfortunately, the gentleman who owned this apartment and collection passed with no family, friends, or anybody else listed as heir to his estate. When this happens the court intervenes, and everything is sold off to benefit the city and/or state. That's the background of the collection as we know it, now here is the story of what happened.

Whenever you enter into a situation like this, you are essentially buying a lottery ticket. Prior to the es-

tate sale opening, there were only seven photographs showing the volume of the collection, with a few boxes undone to give an idea of the contents. In this case, those seven photographs were enough to show this collection would be worth the early morning effort! My buddy (who lives in western Connecticut) left his house Friday at 7:00am to reach the upper west side of Manhattan by noon and to hold a spot in line 24 hours before the sale opened. With him securing our position we knew we had a decent chance of obtaining the collection - we were determined!

Kevin and I left Rhode Island at 3:30am Saturday to be in Manhattan for 6:30am, so we could join my friend in line and be right in the door for 8:00am. By the time we got there, dozens of people were waiting. Once the door opened, we had to make an offer on the collection and pay for it before we could

even look at one comic book! It's not like this was a \$100 gamble, more like a \$24,000 one. Imagine that pressure! We weren't the only people there for the comics either, so we knew our offer had to be a good one - and yes, it was accepted!

Despite how intense the whole experience sounds, it was honestly the most exhilarating moment work-wise in a very long time. The worst part was I even didn't get to look at the comic books even after paying, we were under time constraints and had to load the van and get out of New York. Kevin and I were back in Rhode Island by 1:00pm - What a day!

Fast forward two weeks when we finally had time to sort the collection and we pulled out 114 key issues for grading, along with original published artwork from Ghost Rider, Lois Lane, and other D.C. and Marvel Comics! We haven't sold a thing yet, but it looks like the fruits of our labor will be totally worth it. What a rush!



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With a wing and a prayer

I am an expert traveler, and I enjoy it very much. As a child, we criss crossed the country and Canada for 6 months out of the year. While THAT kind of traveling was not so enjoyable, having to sleep on the floor of our VW van and pee in a coffee can, but I saw some great, rural parts of the country. One day there was a moose drinking from the river outside our door. Another time my dad had to bang a pot out the window to scare off a mountain lion. There was also that infamous time when a bear climbed onto our picnic table and we all ran into the van, except for my brother who tried to escape to get his box of Cracker Jacks that the animal was devouring. Then there was the time my father bypassed stopping in Las Vegas, to my mother's chagrin, and the time we went to the Grand Canyon and I did not want to interrupt my nap to get out and see it.

As an adult, I have travelled singularly many times, to attend

professional conferences, to go to Washington DC to review federal grants, to visit my son, Francis in California and friends in Florida. After my father passed away, (and mom found out that they had oodles of money saved due to his stingy ways, she would take us on exotic vacations in the jungles of Costa Rica, Belize and Nicaragua and to the Mayan ruins in Guatemala. I learned to expertly facilitate these trips, with all of their planning difficulties. My mother did not want to stay in touristy places, so we would stay in an Inn where the locals would stay, complete with a man servant to heat the bath water and light the gas lamps, leaving the bread, cheese and wine for our meal. We managed to enjoy each of our trips without any problems.

Hubby is not so experienced, which has caused him a great deal of stress as we have prepare to fly to Cancun, Mexico, for Steven's upcoming nuptials.

Life Matters



with LINDA PETERSEN

He insisted we get our airfare four months ago when it "would be cheapest". Of course, this was a fallacy as the airlines frequently have great sales. He was correct to ensure that our passports and TSA pre-check documents were in order, but a month ago he pressured me to reserve and pre-pay for a parking spot at the airport. He also had acquired a multitude of clothing for the trip, which sat neatly piled on the living room couch, along with a big, floppy sun hat, 4 different kinds of sunscreen, a first aid kit and 3 dif-

ferent kinds of sunburn pain killer spray. He had purchased travel samples of toiletries, without thinking he could bring our regular ones if they were in the checked suitcase and not in a carry on which would be intercepted by TSA in the security line. He was a nervous wreck and he was very annoyed that I was calm, claiming I did not take the trip seriously.

Crazily, Hubby insisted we wake up and leave at 6 a.m. the morning of our 12:30 pm flight. He said there might be traffic on the way so he wanted to leave early. We got to the airport at 7:30 a.m. Only 5 hours to wait until our flight. The worst part was, I asked him to stop at a drugstore so I could pick up some more Tylenol, (it was going to be a long day,) and he angrily refused, saying we didn't have time and I "always do things at the last minute." Hubby is never angry at me, so this burst of temper hurt my feelings and I did not ask him

anything else for the rest of the day. At the airport, Hubby was dissatisfied with the boarding pass being on my phone. Convinced that this method was not "safe", he insisted we get in the long line at the ticket counter to get a paper ticket, which airlines actually charge for these days. Traveling is very stressful for him, and I tried not to do anything else to annoy him lest he get back in his truck and drive home without even going.

The biggest joy of the day has been my new Air Wheels carry on luggage. This lovely device substituted as a mobility scooter for me. Pop on the power button, and a foot rest and power handlebars appear. With a twist of another button, the power handlebars rise up for easier steering. A small pillow sits on the top of the suitcase for comfort and the pull handle of the suitcase serves as a backrest when sitting on it. What could be better?



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