

'I'm afraid to ask'

Fundraiser set for mom of 3 living with Stage 4 cancer

By RORY SCHULER

Crystal Vizcaino tried not to cry. She rubbed at an uncomfortable false eyelash while sitting in the back booth at J&T's Breakfast & Lunch. Vizcaino's used to waiting tables at the little Johnston eatery; not sitting at a booth like a customer.

One-by-one, her fellow waitresses and restaurant patrons stopped by the booth, offering hugs and kisses and messages of support.

CRYSTAL - PAGE 11

FOR CRYSTAL:

Crystal Vizcaino has been living with cancer, while trying to still be there for her three kids. On May 19, her friends plan to hold a fundraiser from 1-4 p.m. at Copperfield's. (Sun Rise photos by Rory Schuler)



GROUND BROKEN

SHOVELS READY: Johnston State Rep. Deborah A. Fellela, D-43, School Building Committee Chairman Joseph Rotella, and Town Council President Robert V. Russo toss some dirt at the site of the future Johnston Elementary Center. The town held a groundbreaking ceremony on Saturday, May 4. For more photos from the event, go to Page 10. (Photo courtesy Rep. Deborah A. Fellela)

Fox to succeed Howell as Beacon Communications publisher

By RORY SCHULER

Joy Fox will succeed John Howell as Beacon Communications publisher.

"John has been at the helm for five decades," Fox said Wednesday morning. "He's watched these communities change and grow. And John's not going anywhere."

Howell, the longtime owner and publisher of Beacon Communications, announced today that plans are in the works for Fox to be his successor as leader of the trusted source for community journalism across Warwick, Cranston, Johnston, and beyond.

Beacon Communications publishes three weekly Rhode Island newspapers — the Warwick Beacon, Cranston Herald and Johnston SunRise — and a weekly shopping guide, The Reminder.



LEADERSHIP TRANSITION:

Plans are in the works for Joy Fox to succeed John Howell as Beacon Communications publisher.

Howell, the longtime owner and publisher of Beacon Communications, announced Thursday.

(File photo)

PUBLISHER - PAGE 4

Two Johnston candidates declare run for D-25 state Senate seat

By RORY SCHULER



THE RACE BEGINS:

There's a Democratic Primary race emerging between two lifelong Johnston residents, Richard J. DeFino III, at left, and Andrew Dimitri, at right, for the seat left vacant by the death of Sen. Frank Lombardo III, the Democrat who represented Johnston's District 25 since 2010. (Submitted photos)

A pair of Johnston Democrats have announced their candidacy to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Sen. Frank Lombardo III, the Democrat who represented District 25 since 2010.

So far, only a Democratic Primary race has emerged in the town's main Senatorial district, waged by a pair of Johnston men, Richard J. DeFino III and Andrew Dimitri.

For now, the Johnston state Senate seat will remain empty until after the November General Election. Lombardo died Feb. 21, following a battle with cancer.

Both DeFino and Dimitri are lifelong Johnston residents, and both touted their hometown credentials in their candidacy announcements. They'll compete for the Democratic nomination and could face a Republican challenge in the General Election (however, the local heads of the Republican party say they've yet to find suitable candidates; at press-time, so far, no Republican challengers have entered the District 25 race).

DISTRICT 25 - PAGE 5

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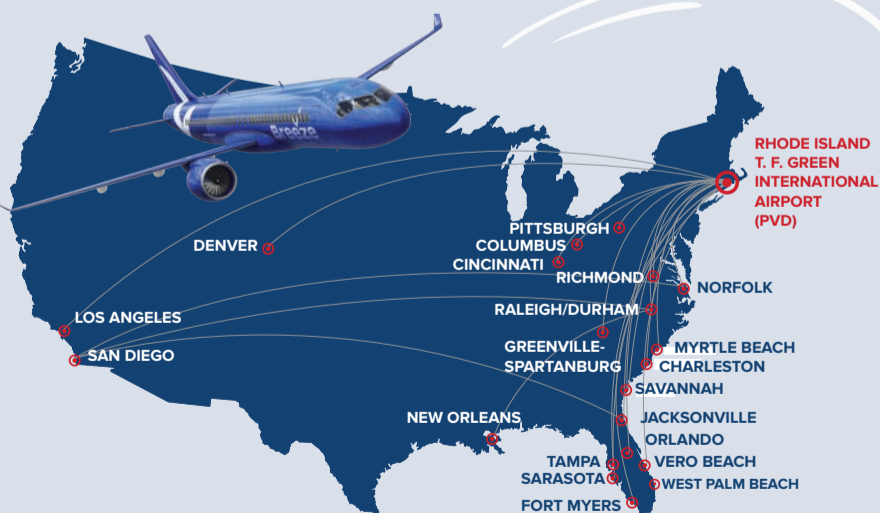
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RELUCTANT GUEST: This week's Johnston Senior Center Spotlight shines on Anna Brown, who was reluctant to join the senior center, but finally gave in and gave it a try. Now, she's spreading the word to friends and family. (Photo courtesy Richard J. DelFino Jr.)

Senior center may be the cure to heal your pain

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

The Johnston Senior Center Spotlight this week shines on Anna Brown, who after many years of refusing an invitation from her brother to join him here at the JSC, finally said yes, and has been coming ever since.

She can still remember coming into the Center on that first visit, and felt like she had been coming forever. People were friendly and welcoming. Anna, who said she mostly skipped lunch, now looks forward to a meal mid-day, after a round of Bocce, with family and friends.

Anna and friends also enjoy Bingo and day trips offered by the Center. Anna, who grew up in the Silver Lake section of Providence, worked as a bookkeeper, after school and graduation.

She married her "childhood sweetheart" at 21 years of age, and was a "stay at home mom" after having her first, of three children, at 22.

As a young girl, with two brothers, just five years of age, Anna lost her father. Many years later, she lost her husband at the age of 50, having to care, as her mother had, for three young children.

Her mother was an example of hard work and dedication to her family. That example would give her the strength and will to succeed. Today, Anna boasts of having eight grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Coming to the Johnston Senior Center, being around friendly people, and finding a way to occupy time, has helped ease the pain of losing your life partner. Like any loss of a loved one, feelings can be triggered that result in sadness and loneliness.

Here at the JSC, we are a community that brings about light, where there is darkness. Anna said she is very much looking forward to the many events planned throughout the summer here at the JSC, where that light will shine brightly and the warmth felt each day will be meaningful.

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.

Rita Moreno electrifies NEIT Commencement

By WILL STEINFELD

What makes a commencement special?

There are a couple of key ingredients: students celebrating, proud families hooting and hollering encouragement, pageantry, music, big arenas. The personal moments are what bring the day to life. Long speeches? Usually less so.

Not so, however, at New England Institute of Technology's commencement this past Sunday, where NEIT's speaker, actress Rita Moreno, ended up getting some of the most rousing applause of the whole day.

Moreno, age 92, began her stardom in Hollywood's golden age, with major roles in *Singin' in the Rain*, *Westside Story*, and *The King and I*. Over her decades-long career, with major roles as recent as 2023's *Fast X*, Moreno became the first Latina actress, and one of a select few artists of any background for that matter, with an EGOT – an individual Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony award.

Given these prior heights, it was no surprise Moreno was completely at ease on the stage at the Amica Mutual Pavilion, bounding up the steps to the podium and delivering a speech that included a singing interlude and practically a full comedy set, too. The message from the star to the graduates? We're the same.

"Many of you are the first in your family to enroll in college" said Moreno. "Your stories are an inspiration to me." Moreno related her own stories of overcoming hardship, immigrating at age five from Puerto Rico with her seamstress mother, breaking through with her first roles only to find herself repeatedly pigeonholed into whatever token non-white character was available – an insult that continued even after she began to receive major accolades.

Each win, even graduating from college, Moreno seemed to say in her address, brings a new challenge. However, she added, at the end, you get to look back and see a pretty good journey. Moreno's closing line was delivered with a fist banging down on the podium for emphasis: "Never, ever, give up. Congratulations, and here's to your dreams."



WHAT A PERFORMANCE: NEIT President Richard Gouse shares the moment with actress Rita Moreno at commencement Sunday at the Amica Mutual Pavilion in Providence. Moreno, 92, urged the graduates to never give up in her address. (Beacon Communications photos by Will Steinfeld)



WHAT IT IS ALL ABOUT: Friends and family cheer the graduates Sunday at NEIT commencement at the Amica Mutual Pavilion in Providence.

Johnston students awarded degrees Sunday were

Max Albion AS, Brendan Amalfitano BS, Ralph Apici Jr AS, Emily Burghardt AS, Caitlin Cooney MS, Danielle Dorsley CERT, Angel Dubois AS, Scott Ferreira Jr AS, Edward Natareno AS, Gina Pitrone Almstrom CERT, Joshua Tonucci BS, Jafeth Vargas AS and Tiffany Waldron MS.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE:

NEIT share the excitement to the applause and cheers of those attending NEIT graduation ceremonies.





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Zip's creepy, but a keeper

Zip's a different kind of stuffie than the stuffed clamshells we usually dish on in the Ocean State.

"My Zip is scary, but now a keeper," said Rebecca Rotondo, of Johnston, who submitted this photo of her vintage stuffed Zip the monkey, following our top PRIME-TIME story, "The Enduring Appeal of Stuffies," in the April 18 edition of the Johnston SunRise.

"I just read, 'The Enduring Appeal of Stuffies,' by Elaine M. Decker," Rotondo wrote. "I have ZIP the monkey! It is from childhood, I cannot seem to part with ZIP. I am 70, and had ZIP since I was a baby. I was shocked to see another ZIP. Photo attached of my ZIP."

Rotondo shared that the Zip was almost destined for the Johnston landfill.

"I almost trashed Zip!" She recalled. "He isn't that cuddly — quite scary! But now he is a keeper."



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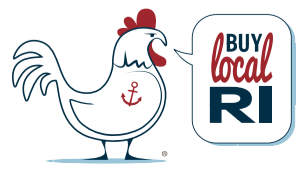
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■ Publisher

(Continued from page 1)

Howell will remain Editor of the Warwick Beacon, a post he's held since he bought the paper in 1969.

"Obviously this is a pivotal moment for local newspapers," Fox said Tuesday, shortly before she and Howell broke the news to Beacon Communications staff. "Community news will continue to be our priority and our focus going forward. I think that these papers are such a part of the fabric of these communities, not just from a news perspective, but from a local business perspective."

Howell passed the torch to Fox during a brief newsroom meeting Wednesday morning, as the SunRise and Beacon papers were on deadline.

"It's no secret, here or anywhere else, that community newspapers face an uphill climb financially," Fox said. "I look forward to really engaging with our communities, and making sure these newspapers are here 50-60 years in the future."

Fox has nieces and nephews who live in the Beacon Communications readership footprint. She said she hopes that in half a century, they'll still have copies of the Warwick Beacon, Cranston Herald and Johnston SunRise to read each week.

The papers' ultimate goal, under Fox's leadership, will be to "reach a bigger audience and more people" than ever before.

Richard Fleischer, retired Beacon Communications General Manager, joined Howell and Fox to make the announcement in the newsroom Wednesday.

"I've worked for John for 50 years," Fleischer recalled. They've been business partners and close confidants. He said, if not for recent medical issues, including two back surgeries, "John would still be taking his silly little boat out into the middle of Narragansett Bay and dodging icebergs."

But, perhaps the only thing more dear to Howell's heart than rowing is the Warwick Beacon, Fleischer told employees.

Howell pledged to the newsroom that Beacon Communications would "always stay locally owned," and he would not sell the newspapers to a massive

news conglomerate.

"I'm not leaving," Howell assured his staff. "However, I don't expect to put in another 52 years."

While Howell's used to getting up at 5:30 a.m. to go rowing on the bay, he's been spending the last few months flat on his back staring at a computer screen, but his focus remains on local news coverage and community involvement.

Fox, a Cranston native and Warwick resident started her career in print and broadcast journalism and has long held a deep passion for quality local news and storytelling.

The former Herald editor and leader with a long record of public service will also continue to lead the strategic communications consulting firm Clarendon Group, founded in 2000 by Christine Heenan.

Howell has known Fox since she was a high schooler at St. Mary Academy - Bay View. The Cranston native first entered the Beacon newsroom as a once-a-week intern reporter for the Warwick Beacon.

She returned six years later to serve as the reporter and editor of the Cranston Herald from 2001 to 2003, covering September 11 and the Station Nightclub Fire, as well as hundreds of city council and school committee meetings, countless school events, and small business openings.

"I'm excited about Joy's commitment to Rhode Island," Howell noted. "She has obviously worked in various governmental positions, knows the people, and she understands the importance of local news."

Fox's time in journalism includes stints at Providence Business News and NBC10, as well, before moving on to government and small business. She was the director of communications for Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo spanning her time as General Treasurer and Governor, has worked as a senior advisor to former U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, and for the last several has been a small business owner.

She is currently the CEO of Clarendon Group and serves as the president of the board of trustees for Sophia Academy, an all-girls middle school in Providence. She was a Democratic candidate for the 2nd Congressional District in 2022.

"I think there is such a special thing happening here," Fox told Beacon Communications staff. "I think we can put all the right pieces into place."

District 25
(Continued from page 1)

The Background

"As you may be aware, I continue to be a lifelong resident of Johnston (Simmonsville) in the general area where five generations of DelFino's have lived, worked, and contributed to our Johnston community," DelFino wrote to announce his candidacy.

The Providence College graduate went to work for his High School alma mater Bishop Hendricken High School after earning his degree.

"I then took a position in Governor Lincoln Chafee's office, as the Legislative Coordinator, and continued in that role in Governor Gina Raimondo's office," DelFino said. "I then served as the Director of Municipal Affairs in Governor Daniel McKee's administration."

Last year, DelFino went to work as the Director of Community and Legislative Affairs at the Johnston-based Tri-County Community Action Agency.

He served a term on Johnston Town Council, from January 2015 until January 2019.

DelFino provided a long list of current board appointments: Chair of the Johnston/ Smithfield Juvenile Hearing Board, member of the Roger Williams University Paralegal Advisory Board, a member of the Johnston Democratic Committee, the Executive Board of Johnston Little League, and Vice-President of the Rhode Island Soccer Officials Association.

Dimitri works as an attorney. He attended St. Rocco School in Johnston, LaSalle Academy, the University of Rhode Island, and Roger Williams University School of Law. According to his campaign announcement, Dimitri is "an enthusiastic sponsor of Johnston youth sports and supporter of local businesses around town."

Dimitri traces his roots back to St. Rocco School and Church, and said his "journey to becoming an attorney and community volunteer was deeply rooted in him by his family."

Dimitri listed his father, fellow attorney William (Bill) Dimitri, as a major influence. The father and son work alongside wife and mother, Lisa Dimitri. According to Dimitri's campaign announcement, "Bill and Lisa raised Andrew and his sister Angelica to work hard, treat everyone with kindness and

respect, and never shy away from a challenge."

"My upbringing instilled in me a profound sense of duty towards my neighbors and my community," Dimitri said. "Now, as a practicing attorney, I have worked to help people navigate the judicial process and I am eager to leverage my knowledge and skills for the betterment of our beloved town and state."

Good Sports

DelFino's father also has a deep background in Johnston and local politics. Richard J. DelFino Jr. served as the former head of the Johnston Democratic Town Committee and served several terms on the Johnston School Committee. The elder DelFino now works as the Executive Director of the Johnston Senior Center.

"My family's community and public service are long-standing in the town of Johnston, and my experience in government affairs gives me the advantage of promoting an effective legislative agenda on behalf of the people of Johnston," DelFino wrote.

DelFino, a volunteer youth coach for the Town of Johnston Recreation Department, coaches his three sons in several sports.

His primary opponent, Dimitri, has also been active in the town's youth sports leagues.

"Johnston is not just where I call home, it's who I am and where I dream about starting a family of my own," Dimitri said in candidacy announcement. "Our town has a spirit of unity and resilience that I've cherished since childhood. From my earliest memories playing Johnston tee-ball, baseball and football, to attending school, to earning the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 22, every formative step of my upbringing was taken in this town. The long-valued principles of hard work, teamwork, and overcoming obstacles together are not just taught but lived out every day here in Johnston. These are qualities I strive to embody daily."

Legislative Pitch

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

DelFino provided a

glimpse of his potential future "legislative agenda," which includes bills "to create a calendar in the Rhode Island District Court to hear all matters of non-compliance within 30 days of disposition in the Municipal Zoning, and Housing Courts, resulting in expedited corrections on behalf of neighbors and residents."

DelFino said he also hopes to introduce legislation establishing "a ratio of mental health workers in schools, to the total population, that will meet and address student's mental health needs."

DelFino's a proponent of guaranteed "cost of living increases for state and municipal retirees that will be equal to negotiated contracts of current state and municipal employees." He proposed creation of "a task force of the Rhode Island State Police and municipal police departments to study, recommend, and enforce speeding in our neighborhoods."

DelFino proposes lobbying the town's "federal delegation for funding the creation of highway barriers, similar to those seen in neighboring states, that will line our interstates that pass through residential neighborhoods." He supports a "police task force" to investigate and prosecute "all matters of property destruction by graffiti, on state, municipal and private property with mandatory restitution and community service in all matters."

He also plans to "introduce and support legislation that would prohibit solicitation on any municipal road, state road, or state highway that were identified by law enforcement as putting the public in harms way."

"This would include any on and off ramp, median, and heavy volume traffic intersections around the state," according to DelFino. He said each city or town's "Chief Law Enforcement Officer" should be the decision-maker on areas of each municipality where solicitors (often referred to as pan-handlers) would be prohibited.

He ended his legislative pitch by promising to "to always support our teachers and first responders."

Door-to-Door

Dimitri said his "vision for Johnston and the state is grounded in the practical challenges facing everyday Rhode Islanders."

"Over the last several weeks, I've spoken with dozens of friends and family members about

the possibility of running for the Senate, and each conversation I had reinforces my priorities for our community: strong and safe schools, support for all our first-responders, and economic development policies that put small businesses first," according to Dimitri. "Family-owned businesses are the backbone of Johnston and every community, and I am steadfast in my commitment to fostering an environment where they can flourish."

He touted his love of the "outdoors as a sportsman, golfing, the beach, and much more."

"Rhode Island is a beautiful state, from our coastline to the Connecticut border, so I want to support policies that conserve our natural resources and protect our enjoyment of the great outdoors," Dimitri said. "Johnston is more than just a place; it's a way of life. I am deeply invested in our past, present, and future."

Both candidates are reaching out to voters, looking for support and engagement.

Dimitri extended an invitation to his possible future constituents.

"I am here to listen, learn, and lead," he said. "Whether you're a lifelong friend or a new acquaintance, I welcome you to reach out anytime with questions, concerns, ideas, or just to say hello and get to know me. Together, let's shape a brighter future for Johnston and Rhode Island."

Dimitri announced his candidacy on Friday, May 3.

DelFino announced his run late Tuesday night, May 7, challenging his opponent to a test of bravery: "Today more than ever, we need a candidate and public official who possesses the commitment and the courage to lead."

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RI BUDGET CHALLENGES, Part 4

Managing Medicaid spending growth is RI's greatest budget challenge

By **MICHAEL DIBIASE**

No state program poses a greater fiscal challenge to Rhode Island than its Medicaid program, which provides indispensable healthcare services to over one in three Rhode Islanders, including our most vulnerable populations: low-income individuals and children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Even with the federal government covering more than half the cost, Medicaid is still the largest single source of state spending, accounting for roughly one-third of Rhode Island's state budget.

Spending on Medicaid is growing faster than overall state spending. Over the past five years, state Medicaid expenditures grew from \$1.1 billion to \$1.6 billion—an increase of 45%. During this

same period, overall state spending grew by 37%. For the next fiscal year, FY 2025, the governor is proposing to increase state Medicaid expenditures by \$108 million—a 7% increase year over year—despite a decline in Medicaid enrollees. To put this increase in perspective, total state general revenues are projected to grow at an annual rate of about 3% for next year, and over the next five years.

The rate of growth in state spending on Medicaid has been difficult to contain. While some of the surge in Medicaid spending over the past few years is attributable to the temporary uptick in enrollment while federal pandemic rules prohibited disenrollment, most of the growth has been driven by the rising cost of healthcare, which historically tends to grow faster than inflation.

Future growth in Medicaid spending in the state is also being driven by a new provider rate review process overseen by the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC). In September of last year, OHIC recommended relatively large rate increases for a subset of pro-

viders, consisting of behavioral health, home and community-based, and children's services. The governor's FY 2025 budget proposal adopted OHIC's recommended increases, although the rate hikes would be phased in over three years, with the first year costing \$22 million in state dollars. As part of its package of health legislation, the Senate notably is seeking to expand OHIC's authority over provider rates, including those paid by Medicaid.

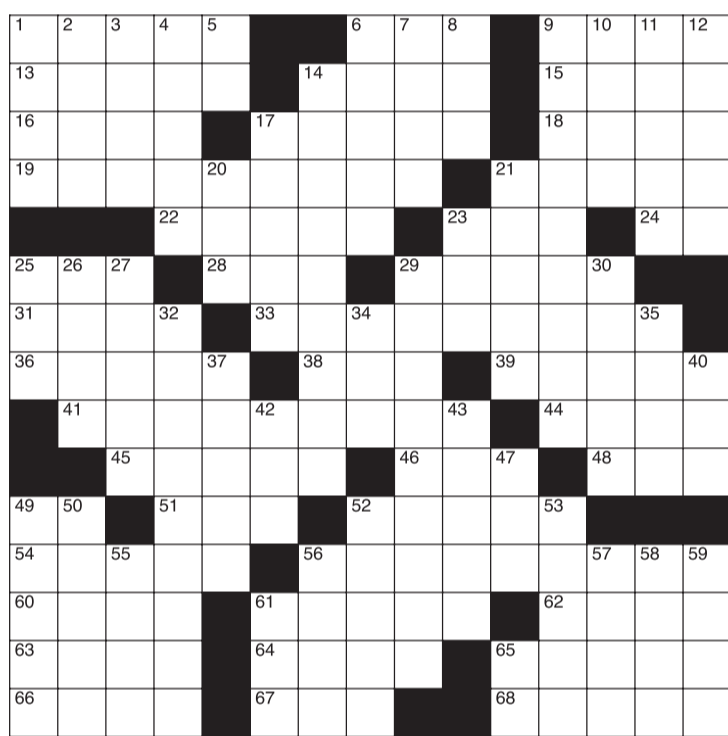
Despite the robust growth in Medicaid spending over the past several years and the generous increase proposed in the governor's budget for next year, there remains considerable pressure to hike Medicaid's historically low reimbursement rates to providers like hospitals, nursing homes, and physicians. As healthcare providers continue to experience financial challenges and Rhode Islanders more frequently encounter difficulties accessing healthcare services, there is a compelling case for the state to continue to increase Medicaid rates and spending, particularly with the federal government

shouldering more than half of the cost.

However, given the sheer size of Medicaid spending and constrained state revenues, it will become more and more challenging to substantially increase Medicaid rates without crowding out other state spending priorities, such as education, transportation, and public safety, as well as other human services programs. In the short term, policymakers need to prioritize rate increases to those providers for which service access and quality are most at risk. In the longer term, policymakers need to explore ways to moderate the upward trajectory of Medicaid spending while, at the same time, ensuring that the healthcare system can deliver the services that Rhode Islanders need and deserve.

Michael DiBiase is the president and CEO of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy research organization. This is the final installment of a four-part series on Governor Dan McKee's proposed fiscal 2025 state budget.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

1. It wakes you up
6. A place to sleep
9. Czech village
13. Appetizer
14. African country
15. Dark brown or black
16. Parent-teacher groups
17. Saturates
18. ESPN personality
19. Songs to a lover
21. Cavalry-sword
22. Begat
23. Patriotic women
24. Famed Princess
25. One who does not conform
28. Neither
29. Nigerian monetary unit
31. Body parts
33. Hit Dave Matthews Band song
36. Depicts with pencil
38. Make into leather

39. Plants grow from them
41. Alias
44. Fingers do it
45. More dried-up
46. Clod
48. Senior officer
49. A way to listen to music
51. The bill in a restaurant
52. Historic center of Artois region
54. Cyprinid fishes
56. Poisonous perennial plant
60. Scottish Loch
61. Heads
62. Extra seed-covering
63. Wings
64. Britpop band
65. Forearm bones
66. Small immature herring
67. Female sibling
68. Hymn

CLUES DOWN

1. Vipers
2. Not on time
3. Resembling a wing or wings
4. Tears down
5. Professional designation
6. Noise a sheep made
7. Type of lodge
8. Speak poorly of
9. Ties the knot again
10. Apron
11. Studied intensively
12. City in Finland
14. One who monitors
17. 18-year astronomical period
20. Trent Reznor's band
21. Takes to the sea
23. Split pulses
25. Valentine's Day color
26. Wyatt ___
27. Type of rail
29. One from the Big Apple

30. Asteroids
32. Made more sugary
34. Change in skin pigment
35. Mild yellow Dutch cheese
37. Koran chapters
40. A place to relax
42. Young woman ready for society life
43. Female horses
47. Half of Milli Vanilli
49. Icelandic poems
50. Indiana town
52. Golden peas
53. Closes tightly
55. It's mined in mountains
56. Cliff (Hawaii)
57. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
58. Monetary unit
59. Primordial matter
61. TV station
65. Rise

LETTER

To the mayor and town council, from a flood-affected resident

I am writing to bring to your attention the ongoing flooding problem that our city is facing, especially in certain areas where outdated drainage systems are struggling to effectively manage water flow. As a resident, I've seen firsthand the negative impacts of insufficient drainage infrastructure, including basement flooding, continuous sump pump operation, land erosion, and widespread flooding.

A road encompasses more than just a surface; it's a pathway designed to ensure safe transportation. Each component — curbs, lights, signage and drainage — plays a crucial role in maintaining safety for all road users. In my neighborhood, the drainage system falls short, leading to water accumulation during rainfall, exacerbating the flooding problem.

In my neighborhood, the drainage system consists of simple holes resembling wells with grates, which are unable to effectively channel water flow. As a result, during rainfall, these wells quickly fill up but gradually seep into the ground. This process contributes to a rise in the water table, worsening the flooding issue as water accumulates on the surface, unable to penetrate the ground and find its natural course.

My side yard, intended to catch rainwater and serve as an outlet for my sump pump, now becomes inundated with water from the neighborhood during rainfall. This results in a continuous cycle of pumping water, leading to increased electricity costs. The frequency and severity of rainfall only compound this issue, preventing the ground from adequately drying between storms.

Once the rain ceases, the challenge of lowering the water table ensues, requiring my sump pump to continuously operate until the water table drops below my basement floor. This process entails the gradual movement of water through the ground, followed by the absorption of surface water and drainage system runoff. Only then does the sump pump cease operation. However, this ongoing activity results in a significant increase in my monthly electric bill, averaging an additional \$150.

Unfortunately, the frequency and severity of rainfall have intensified, leaving insufficient time for the ground to dry before subsequent downpours occur. Consequently, this creates a compounding effect where the water table rises more rapidly than it lowers, exacerbating the situation.

Implementing a proper drainage system would not only alleviate road flooding but also mitigate water table rise and associated issues like erosion and compromised safety.

Following my communication with the mayor's office, DiPrete Engineering firm visited to assess the situation. However, I am yet to receive an update on their findings. Additionally, I've heard about a proposed \$40 million bond to address flooding town-wide. While this proposal aims to tackle the issue comprehensively, I'm concerned about the financial burden and the pace of implementation. I propose a funding system akin to the sewer maintenance fee, allowing gradual improvements street by street.

Furthermore, I urge consideration for town-wide betterment, akin to individual home renovations that must meet code requirements. If the town undertakes road paving, should it not also address accompanying infrastructure needs like curbs and drainage?

I understand the reluctance toward increased taxes, but I believe it's essential for our town's infrastructure to evolve and meet contemporary needs. I am curious about the town's drainage installation efforts in recent years and plans for the future.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I eagerly anticipate positive steps toward resolving our community's flooding challenges.

Michael Vieira, of Central Avenue, Johnston

Editor's Note: Michael Vieira wrote and sent this letter to Town Council and Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena. He spoke at last month's Town Council meeting, asking for help with persistent, worsening flooding issues.

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

All the world's a stage for graduation day

Hope springs eternal this time of year — for lovers of warmer weather and scores of starry-eyed students looking to make the next leap upwards in their academic or professional careers.

There's something innately hopeful about a graduation ceremony. It's the celebration of one journey coming to an end, and the recognition of the next journey beginning. The contagious feelings of pride and excitement for the future are something that can make even the most cynical stop and reflect on moments where the road ahead seemed so wide open, and yours for the taking.

Graduations — whether they signify a passage from Pre-K to proper school, elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, high school to university, or from any level of post-graduate education into various branches of the professional world — represent the never-ending march forward of humanity; forging new paths, inspiring new innovations, and continuing the elusive search for a better and more prosperous tomorrow. The youthful who enjoy such ceremonies provide us all hope for a brighter, better tomorrow.

It is also enjoyable to witness from an outside perspective to see what keynote speakers universities find to generate buzz for their big events; and make no mistake, graduations have become as important to advertising the university's prowess as any summertime newsletter or high school college fair.

New England Institute of Technology grabbed Rita

Moreno, best known as Anita from "West Side Story", but also for the distinction of being the only Latina EGOT (someone who has won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Award). Another EGOT winner (and pride of Rhode Island College), Viola Davis, will receive an honorary doctorate at URI. Bryant got Karen Lynch, President and CEO of CVS Health. Salve Regina got President Dwight D. Eisenhower's granddaughter, Susan Eisenhower. RISD got an Emmy-award winning ad designer from Squarespace, and Providence College got a guy who co-wrote a book with Oprah.

You get the point. In an ever-competitive industry of higher education, it seems graduations are no longer just an opportunity for bright, young minds to reflect on an academic career complete and to look ahead to a lifetime of new opportunities, they're also a chance for higher education institutions to flex their muscles and grab headlines, all in hopes of the process beginning all over again the next year.

Provided these (assumedly highly compensated) guests of honor take the time to try and instill the same values of hard work, pride in accomplishments, and not fearing taking on long odds to become something special in this great big world, rather than just pad their own egos, we see nothing wrong with adding a little celebrity flair to a day already ripe with plenty of pomp and circumstance.

Enjoy your moment on the big stage, graduates, an even bigger one awaits.

LETTERS

An 'Ultra Conservative' wakes up in the 'Twilight Zone'

As for conservatism I consider myself an Ultra Conservative. So, let's examine what that truly represents, in the hope of awakening the sleeping giant of voter apathy, as approximately 40% of eligible voters choose not to.

I was born on Mother's Day 1949, not Birthing People's Day. Back then we started the school day with a moment of silent prayer and traditional values were the norm. We instinctively understood life was what you made it, via pulling yourself up from your bootstraps.

When I was seven my father left my mother and my two sisters and I and we moved into a housing project. My mother immediately got a job working 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., but was told if she wanted to continue living in the project, she would have to quit her job and go on public assistance because we were too young to be left alone. When the superintendent left our apartment my mother went into her bedroom, closed the door, and cried herself to sleep. Back then it wasn't like winning the lottery, as fraud and abuse has become epidemic proportions.

If a bully was chasing you, you'd run to the nearest biggest kid, as they would break it up and have you shake hands, not videotape it for laughs. The culture was wholesome and inspirational, and we understood moral absolutes and said our prayers before bedtime. Marriage was be-

tween a man and a woman, and boys couldn't use the girl's bathrooms and there were only two sexes. Our society wasn't perfect, but we continued to make strides. As for our society today, via liberalism, you can say "Welcome to the Twilight Zone."

As a conservative I believe in cost-effective government, as unions are bankrupting every state and municipality, via endless unsustainable enslaving provisions, as unions have zero regards for taxpayers and consumers.

As for criminality and the incredible costs of incarceration when you consider repeat offenders prisons shouldn't reflect home away from home in which there should be rehabilitation requirements. As a conservative I believe in the death penalty and speedy trials. As for first degree murder the death penalty should reflect the brutality they inflicted on their victims.

When you consider the perverse deplorable attitudes of far too many young people today you can point your fingers to public education and the dummied down of moral absolutes and academics. Everyday parents and various local governments are realizing the need for cost effective school vouchers, as our town continues to invest in a profoundly failed system, as the unions and Democratic Party are one in the same.

When immigrants came to America

it wasn't the land of free services, as millions are walking in, via open borders that include murderers, terrorists and vicious drug dealers. In today's job market if you can't speak two languages go to the back of the line. If English was our official language, it would save \$Billions annually. In 2023 the estimated costs to accommodate non-citizens was \$157.7 Billion, as Medicare and Social Security are slated to go broke by 2033.

Our present federal deficit is \$34.7 Trillion, and the interest is presently \$726 Billion, which is more than we spend on Defense, as liberal politicians continue to give everything away via getting more people dependent on government.

Our country was once revered around the world, not the laughing-stock or the great Satan that it's fast becoming. I could go on indefinitely but can only hope that my words opened a few minds.

In closing, as for the unlikable attitude of President Trump his attitude is the stuff you need when sitting across from the enemies of our country, as our country is in dire need of conservative leadership that is nowhere to be found in the nowadays democratic party. May God continue to be patient with our nowadays basket case society.

Peter A. Filippi III, of Johnston

Say 'No' to Rank Choice Voting

Voting is our constitutional right as citizens and residents of Rhode Island. We need everyone to vote without any confusion. Whether you are Democrat, Republican or Unaffiliated, Rank Choice Voting (RCV) will affect you! RI State lawmakers are considering RCV for the 2028 Presidential Election.

What Rank Choice Voting does is give options to rank candidates in primaries as first, second, third choice and so on. Then they have rounds. Your candidate must pass the rounds in order to win. If not, it goes to the 2nd choice, and then then next round, and so on, until there is a winner of over 50%.

The concern is the voters won't be educated with how this works. If something is too confusing, many will shy away from voting. We need people to vote! Alaska implemented Rank Choice Voting for the 2020 election and have regretted it since. They have it on their upcoming election to repeal Rank Choice Voting. RCV undermines voter confidence and leads to slower election results and increased irregularities. RI lawmakers should pro-

hibit RCV statewide and pre-empt local jurisdictions from adopting RCV for local elections.

Educating voters can be challenging as we are at all different stages in our life. As a nursing home supervisor for the Board of Elections, I have seen firsthand how nursing home residents and mental health hospital voters might not be able to understand the process and become too overwhelmed and would rather wait to vote in the general election. In no way should voting ever be a challenge for any Rhode Islander! We need voting to be clear as they are with directions now.

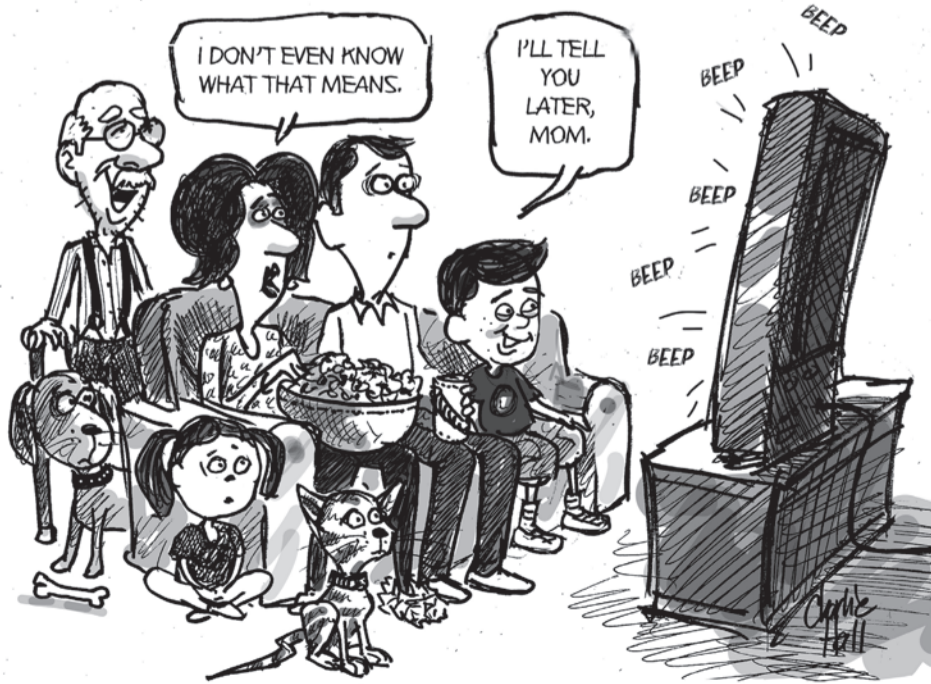
Please consider signing this petition so the Rhode Island legislature can see that this isn't acceptable for RI voters. We need RI Lawmakers to vote NO for Bill S2425 & H7540.

Remember that your vote is your voice, and you need it to count! You can sign the petition at: <https://chn.g.it/M6W5bTZWpG>

Thank you!

Sandra Taylor, of Johnston

Meanwhile a RI family gathers to watch the Tom Brady Roast last weekend...



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They sang their way from Oz, traveling under the Sea all the way to an LA riverbed

By LISA SCOTTI
Special to the SunRise

Johnston's St. Rocco School lit up the stage on a recent Saturday night when first through eighth grade performed a medley of Broadway show pieces, ranging from "Wicked" to "The Little Mermaid" to "Grease". Directed by St. Rocco's music teacher Bethany Rachdouni and art teacher Alessandra Muccio, the children sang, danced, and joked with a sold-out audience.

"Using Broadway as our vision," explained Rachdouni, "we thought of shows the kids could most relate to and have the most fun with."

With the help of St. Rocco faculty and parents collecting tickets, selling concessions and ushering, the night ran smoothly, with only some sound glitches. Rehearsals began in January, and Muccio and Rachdouni said that "excitement and courage grew" as they progressed.

"It was beautiful to see all the students, staff and families come together and showcase the many talents of our students," said Lisa Ciunci, the fourth-grade teacher at St. Rocco School.

Second grader Sebastian Set Guzman, who sang and danced as Sebastian the Lobster from "The Little Mermaid", practiced on the weekends, using a Disney sing-along until he knew every word.

"I felt great, not nervous at all and confident in myself," he said, adding that the costume was like "wearing pajamas."

One of the most surprising moments was the appearance of an actual car for the "Greased Lightning" number, rented from West Warwick High School. The graduating eighth graders belted out "Greased Lightning" and closed the show with "We go Together", another popular "Grease" tune, as teachers joined them on stage and added the Hand-Jive to the finale.

"The magic and bravery these kids radiated completely blew us away," said Muccio. "We love what we do... (this) amazing bunch of kids make our job easy!"

Editor's Note: Lisa Scotti is a teacher at St. Rocco School.



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A fancy dress & sensible shoes

Patient prom felt worlds away from the hospital

By BARBARA POLICHETTI
Special to the SunRise

There was lots of hairspray, and plenty of sequins and suit jackets Friday as a large room on the second floor of the Hotel Providence was turned into a hub of pre-prom activity.

Hairstylists and make-up artists hovered over teens who were putting on their best for a very special night of dining and dancing.

The young guests were past or present patients of Hasbro Children's Hospital which, through the support of the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation and local franchisees, was holding the special night for teens dealing with chronic or critical illnesses.

The theme of the night was "Aloha," and the ballroom had been transformed with an explosion of tropical flowers.

Dining was preceded by a "Mocktail" hour which featured a live ukulele band, non-alcoholic beverages, and hot hors d'oeuvre.

It was all barely a mile from the hospital, but it seemed worlds away.

"Oh, I plan on dancing," said 13-year-old Izabelle "Izzy" Major of Cranston as she waited for the festivities to begin. She's been taking dance classes since she was two years old, and only slowed down a little bit during her two-year battle with leukemia.

She's in remission now, and very busy with her classes at Western Hills Middle School, spending time with friends, and Baxter, her Golden Retriever.

Poised beyond her years, Izzy is also a member of The Adolescent Leadership Council (TALC) at the hospital.

For prom night, she chose a short dress with a small floral print, sneakers for comfort, and subtle eye-makeup that highlighted her deep blue eyes. She said she loves the fact that the prom is all about fun — particularly for teens who have had to wage some tough health battles.

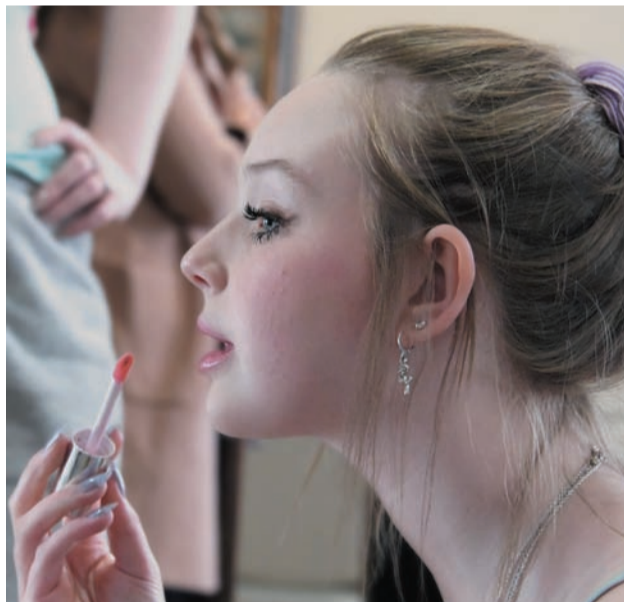
She said she doesn't mind talking about her illness because she wants to help others.

"I think a lot of people think they are alone, and they are not," Izzy said, adding that she has remained a determined optimist.

"Even when I first got diagnosed," I told myself, 'you're going to be okay,' "she said. "It kind of became my mantra and I think I got it from mother. She is amazing — and she is my biggest supporter."



BIG NIGHT: Izzy Major of Cranston invited Juliana Liberatore, her friend and fellow dancer at the Maria Benson Centre for Dance in Cranston. (SunRise photos by Barbara Polichetti)



FINISHING TOUCH: Scotlyn Winfield of Coventry puts on her last touches of makeup.



READY TO DANCE: Izzy Major of Cranston was ready to dance the night away. Past and present patients of Hasbro Children's Hospital attended a special prom night for teens dealing with chronic or critical illnesses.



PATIENT PROM: About 60 youths attended the special prom organized by Hasbro Children's Hospital.



A LONG LINE OF SHOVELS: Above, Superintendent of Johnston Public Schools Dr. Bernard DiLullo Jr. served as Master of Ceremony at the Johnston Elementary School Groundbreaking Ceremony on Saturday, May 4. At right, Johnston Elementary students led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Remarks were delivered by Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena Jr. (below middle), U.S. Sen. Jack Reed, Rhode Island Department of Education Commissioner Angelica Infante-Greene, Johnston School Building Committee member Helena Buonanno Foulkes (below left), Johnston School Committee Chairman Robert LaFazia, Johnston State Rep. Deborah A. Fellela (D-43), Rhode Island State Treasurer James A. Diossa, Johnston resident and Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) General Secretary-Treasurer Michael F. Sabitoni. (Sun Rise photos by Steve Popiel)



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SHE'S MISSED: Longtime J&T's Breakfast & Lunch waitress Crystal Vizcaino, of Johnston, has been diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. She has three kids and the bills are piling up. Below, she posed for photos with some of her beloved patrons and, above, her fellow waitresses at the George Waterman Road restaurant last week. (Sun Rise photos by Rory Schuler)

■ **Crystal**
(Continued from page 1)

Vizcaino's facing "the fight of her life" according to friends. Earlier this year, she was diagnosed with Stage 4 cervical cancer, which has metastasized throughout her body.

She's had trouble asking her doctors questions and remains uncertain of her prognosis.

"I don't know," she said, fighting back the tears. "I don't want to ask. I'm afraid to ask."

Vizcaino has three kids — a fully grown daughter and two sons, a 17-year-old and a 20-year-old with severe autism. Her two sons are both students at Johnston High School.

On Sunday, May 19, her friends plan to hold a fundraiser from 1-4 p.m. at Copperfield's Burger & Beer House, 678 Killingly St., Johnston.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the door, or in advance at J&T's Breakfast & Lunch, 98 George Waterman Road, during regular business hours. According to organizer Bobby Nicholson, music will be provided by 2nd To None (lead vocalist Debra Coppola, Kenny Williams on lead vocals, guitar, bass guitar; and Jerry Potenza on guitar, saxo-

phones, bass, keyboards and vocals).

Nicholson thanked Copperfield's owner Karim Menibe for providing the fundraiser venue. The Johnston music promoter said that he and five-time World Champion boxer Vinnie Paz "have stepped up to help" the mother of three "in the fight of her life." He also thanked local businesses — J&T's Breakfast & Lunch, Borrelli's Bakery, Rosa Mia Pizza, Resmini Law Office and Catanzaro Food — for making donations for the fundraiser.

Vizcaino recently lost all her hair. She's been receiving treatments, which have left her weak. She has a hard time walking and standing. And most of all, the uncertainty of the future and her current living situation have combined to make the last few weeks particularly rough.

Owners of J&T's Breakfast & Lunch, John and Tina Poulos, stopped by to offer hugs and pose for a few snapshots with Vizcaino.

The Johnston mother of three's housing situation has been shaky, and she may need help finding a new place to live. She's not able to work, faced with an intense medical regimen, and hoping for a little bit of light during a dark several month stretch.

Vizcaino's friends are hoping they can provide a little financial relief, via the May 19 fundraiser, to make the next few months a little easier.



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As Celtics playoff run continues, Gomes looks back on coaching Coach Mazzulla



A PROUD COACH: Bishop Hendricken head basketball coach Jamal Gomes holds up Joe Mazzulla's jersey in the gym where Mazzulla spent his high school days playing.

By ADAM ZANGARI

It didn't take long for Jamal Gomes to decide that he wanted 14-year-old Joe Mazzulla on his team.

"It didn't take long to figure out what type of person and what type of athlete that young man was going to be," Gomes said. "What made Joey special was his ability just to make everybody better around him."

Gomes, Bishop Hendricken's head coach since 2000, has won 14 state championships at the helm of the Hawks. His first three came with Mazzulla as the team's starting point guard.

Seeing Mazzulla become the head coach of the Boston Celtics, leading them to an NBA-best 64-18 record this past year, has been an incredible experience for his former coach.

It hasn't surprised Gomes, though.

"He's won at every level consistently, both as a player and a coach," Gomes said. "I'm not surprised at where he is and what he's doing."

It's something that Mazzulla told Gomes was his goal when he was head coach of NCAA Division II Fairmont State, in Fairmont, West Virginia, less than a decade ago.

Mazzulla's rise in the NBA coaching wasn't exactly a linear path. Three years after Mazzulla officially joined the Celtics as an assistant in 2019, previous Celtics head coach Ime Udoka was found to have had an improper relationship with a staff member, which led to the Celtics suspending him before ultimately releasing him from his contract. Mazzulla, at only 34 years old, was thrust into the role of interim head coach just days before the Celtics' 2022 training camp was about to begin.

Like watching a son

"I called him, like 'Joe, you OK? I just want to make sure you're doing alright. If there's anything you need, just let me know,'" Gomes said. "He calls back a couple of days later, says 'Coach, I'm sorry to call you back so late. It's been a crazy week.'"

Mazzulla would ask Gomes to watch his first practice with the Celtics, and asked him to sit at his desk in one of his first staff meetings.

After that practice, Gomes said that he was almost in tears driving home.

BACK IN THE DAY: Mazzulla poses with Gomes after receiving one of many awards he would receive in his high school playing days.





LEADING THE WAY: Senior Joe Mazzulla goes up for two of his game-high 24 points against South Kingstown. The Hawks defeated the Rebels, 73-49, on Friday to close the book on their perfect regular season and will begin the Division I playoffs this weekend. They earned a first round bye and do not have to compete tonight. (Warwick BEacon photo by Ed Owens)

REMINISCING: Gomes has a scrapbook of photos and newspaper clippings about Hendricken basketball from his early coaching days, including this Warwick Beacon photo from 2006.

Coach
(Continued from page 12)

"For me, it was like watching my son achieve at the highest level, and to see what he did that day, I was just so proud of it," Gomes said. "I watched him run a practice like he was a ten-year NBA veteran."

Mazzulla's coaching style, Gomes said, is something that many people have said it similar to his own, remarking that Mazzulla's brother- Utah Jazz assistant coach Justin Mazzulla- said that he saw a lot of Gomes' coaching style in his brother.

Gomes said, it takes around four years for a coach to build a culture around their team. In his second year, Mazzulla has done some incredible work doing so- and Gomes said he's still going to learn more over the next couple of years.

"I tell young coaches all the time that it takes that time to develop what you want to develop, bring in the players you want to bring in," Gomes said. "He's still going to be learning, but I think he's in a much more comfortable position, and he's much more confident. That takes time."

Mazzulla is still the youngest head coach in the NBA at 35 years old. Uniquely, he's the only coach in the league younger than one of his players- 37-year-old veteran Al Horford.

Seeing that success at such a young age, though, is something that Gomes credits to Mazzulla's maturity.

"He knew who he was and who he wanted to be at a young age," Gomes said.

Running in the family

The Mazzulla name was one that was already familiar to those in the Rhode Island high school basketball world by Joe's freshman year.

Dan Mazzulla, Joe's father, was a Johnston coaching legend, having coached both boys' and girls' basketball in the town since the 1980s. Johnston's indoor recreation center is now dedicated to him.

Having Dan put his trust in Gomes, at that time still early in his coaching career, meant a lot to him.

"I was blown away by it, because as a young coach, I hadn't proven anything yet," Gomes said. "We had had a couple of tough seasons, but he decided to send his son here."

Dan never got to see his son's head coaching dreams fulfilled. In 2020, he passed away after a battle with cancer.

Gomes, though, knows that his old friend would be very proud of his son.

"Dan would be proud, although I think he would downplay it a lot," Gomes said. "I think Dan would continue to be tough on Joe like he was back when he was in high school and in college, but he would be very proud of him."

Winning on Warwick Ave.

Throughout Mazzulla's high school career, the Hawks won the state title in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

What sticks out in Gomes's mind, though, is the meetings he would have with Mazzulla, getting to know him better and giving him advice as he grew up.

Mazzulla, Gomes said, was very mature from a young age. Still, he remembers having individual talks with him to make sure that he stayed focused and built his character.

"It wasn't a 45-degree angle to the top with Joe," Gomes said. "I can remember having many conversations with him, as I've had with many of our players over the years. They're growing, they're maturing, they're learning how to be young men and how to start to navigate through life. It wasn't always easy, but I think that's what really makes it so special to see where he is now."

Two weeks before the state championship in Mazzulla's senior year, he was involved in a serious car crash that left him briefly hospitalized.

"I left and went over to his house- he had just gotten home," Gomes said. "We start thinking about his recovery

process, and I remember leaving that day, and he said 'Coach- I'll be back.'"

Gomes said that without Mazzulla, the rest of Hendricken's team put together one of the best games he'd ever been a part of against North Kingstown in the state quarterfinals.

Mazzulla made it back in time for the state semifinal, although he was clearly hurting during the game and had to play limited minutes. During the state championship game, though, he fought through the pain, delivering a near-triple double and the game-winning basket to beat Cranston West 71-69.

"We weren't sure if he was going to play the game- talk about a warrior and battling and pushing through adversity," Gomes said. "It was just a testament to who he was and the level of competitor in his character and the toughness that is within him."

That period of time has a special significance to Gomes, and seeing the players from his early teams succeed in life, no matter where it takes them, is something that he values deeply.

"I really learned how to be a coach right around the timeframe when Joe was here," Gomes said. "For me, it's full circle."

Potential history for Hendricken

Mazzulla, though, isn't the only former Hawk to have gone from Warwick Ave. to the first seat on an NBA bench.

Michael Malone- who was at Hendricken from 1984 through 1986- is one of the longest-tenured head coaches in the league, having been with the Denver Nuggets since 2015. Last year, he coached them to their first title in franchise history.

Currently, the Nuggets and Celtics are generally considered the favorites in their respective conferences to reach the NBA Finals. If it happens, Bishop Hendricken High School would reach an unprecedented achievement- two former students coaching against each other in the Finals.

Malone and Mazzulla have another thing in common - well-respected fathers in the coaching business. Brendan Malone, Michael's father, was head coach of the Toronto Raptors and Cleveland Cavaliers, and won two titles as an assistant coach for the Detroit Pistons of the late 1980s. While Michael was in high school, Brendan was coaching the University of Rhode Island men's basketball team.

To Gomes, two esteemed coaches putting their trust in Hendricken's program showed a strong trust in the culture of the school and its basketball program.

"We don't compare ourselves to other schools- that's not who we are," Gomes said. "We just try to be the best that we can be. I feel that we do a very good job of bringing the best out of our young men that come here, and I think families see that in the product that we produce."

Gomes never knew Malone, who left Hendricken to go to a prep school the year before Gomes' freshman year. Still, he said it was special that the school has produced four NBA coaches- Malone, both Mazzullas and Jimmy Baron, a shooting coach with the San Antonio Spurs.

The Celtics carry the burden of high expectations this year, as a franchise with seventeen championship banners hanging in the TD Garden and a roster that's regarded as one of the most talented and well-rounded in the NBA's recent memory.

If there's anyone that Gomes thinks can handle that pressure, though, it's the kid who first walked into Hendricken's gym 22 years ago.

"All the great coaches deal with it on a day-by-day basis," Gomes said. "I'm confident that he'll bring the team to where they need to be this year."

There are two more things that Gomes wants Mazzulla to know, as well.

"The first message I want to send him is how much I love him and how proud I am of him, who he is and what he's doing," Gomes said. "My second message to him is as long as he brings the best out of everyone around him, he's going to be successful no matter what."

ANIMAL TALK
By Karen Kalunian
Local Adoptable Loveable



Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

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



Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

Roland

Are you ready to get rollin', well so is Roland! This ten-month-old pup loves to run! He's got the supermodel legs to prove it too! Roland is a mixed breed with a beautiful brindle coat and a white nose that looks like it was dipped in sugar! If you have another playful pup, Roland loves other dogs! If you are ready to spend your days playing and snuggling, then contact Rhode Home Rescue for more information. You can visit their website <http://www.rhodehomerescue.org> or email them directly at rhodehomerescue@gmail.com Roland is ready to run right into your heart!

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By JENNIFER COATES



With all the stresses on your time this spring, rely on the dependable and time-saving help of Kaushal Jain of Jain's Laundry. Let her lighten your load at this busy time of year.

It's finally beginning to feel more springy! Even though we still have chilly days like these, there are finally flowers, and sunshine, and chirping birds, and more hours of daylight . . . AND, there is also mud, and grass stains, and piles of dirty, sweaty clothes. No doubt about it, with warm weather comes more time spent outside, and with more time spent outside comes more LAUNDRY! Spring sports and spring excursions and spring holidays all equal more need (and less time) for those unavoidable chores - like doing the wash!

Why battle the laundry this spring when you have the able and ready hands of Kaushal Jain of Jain's Laundry? Jain's Laundry is a busy and convenient Laundromat located right off Route 44 in Johnston. For an incredible .89 per pound, Kaushal will wash, soften, dry, and even fold your laundry - all in one day - at this user-friendly, clean and efficient Laundromat.

Not only is this an amazing time-saving service, but this price also covers the cost of the softener, bleach, soap and hangers! The math is simple enough - ten pounds of dirty clothes, dropped off in the morning and ready to go by the end of baseball practice - all for \$8.90. Fifteen pounds of dirty clothes, dropped off on the way to work and ready to go by dinner - all for less than \$14.00!

For the most competitive prices in the area, you will find both the wash-fold, same-day service offered by Kaushal here at Jain's Laundry as well as a room full of coin-operated washers and dryers for the "do-it-yourselfers". If you are short quarters, the Jain's have got you covered. A change machine that accepts up to a \$20.00 bill is

available here. There are also large capacity machines available for all size loads, from 25 pounds to 65 pounds. The top loading machines are available here for only \$2.25 per load. The laundromat boasts state-of-the-art dryers which are incredibly efficient, rotating both clockwise and counter-clockwise to prevent that annoying bunching and twisting that make drying uneven in conventional dryers. Such a bang for your hard-earned buck. There is plenty of parking and a friendly, helpful staff

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Sports

Panthers climbing standings

Defending champs win three straight

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The Johnston boys volleyball team picked up a statement win when it held off Mt. Hope 3-1 (25-19/ 25-22/ 25-22/ 25-22) last week at home.

Mt. Hope entered the matchup in third place in Division III and boasted a 7-2 record while the Panthers were 5-3 and looking to climb the rankings.

The two teams split the first sets, but the Panthers, led by Balla Marone, took control in the third and fourth set to wrap up the win. Marone was dominant up front and led the team in kills on offense.

"I felt like my team really needed me out there and I had to go out there and do my thing," said Marone of his late surge.

All four sets were competitive. The largest margin was in the first when the Panthers won by six points, but it was thanks to a late rally after the clubs were tied 19-19.

Getting the win in a playoff atmosphere will be big for the team moving forward, according to Marone.

"Right now, we're really confident and this is going to boost our mental-



ON THE RISE: The Johnston volleyball team celebrates during a timeout last week. (Photos by Alex Sponseller)

PANTHERS - PAGE 16

JHS softball, baseball on win streaks

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston softball team has taken a few bumps in recent weeks but got back on track with a dominant 13-0 shutout win over Burrillville on Monday.

Haley Boudreau was lights out in the circle, pitching five shutout innings and racking up 12 strikeouts while only allowing two hits and one walk.

The top of the Johnston lineup came through on offense, with Boudreau, Alexia DiLorenzo and Arianna Velasquez all driving in three runs. Kalyn Foster also delivered a trio of RBI in the win.

It was the team's second straight win after beating Middletown 8-1 last week.

Boudreau finished the day with a whopping 16 strikeouts in the circle against the Islanders, allowing no earned runs and just three hits. Velasquez led the way offensively with a pair of RBI while Foster, Madison Campano, Jadyr Giroux and Moriah Fleury also knocked in runs.

Johnston faced Westerly on Wednesday, but the results were not available at press time.

BASEBALL

The Johnston baseball team rolled to its fourth straight win on Tuesday when it shut out Chariho 10-0.

Emmanuel Rios was stellar on the mound and earned the win. He pitched all five in-

nings, allowing no runs, three hits and striking out five batters.

Matt Clements and Dean Paris each knocked in a pair of runs while Ethan Bracey, Chris Civetti and Dylan Guernon also drove in runs.

The Panthers also beat Mount St. Charles 10-0 the previous game.

Bracey got the win for Johnston on the mound, pitching five innings and allowing no runs and striking out three batters. Clements had a monster day at the plate, going 3-for-4 with five runs batted in.

The streak has pushed the Panthers to fourth place in Division II and they will next be in action when they travel to Chariho on Thursday.



GETTING THE WIN: Johnston pitcher Emmanuel Rios. (Photo by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com)

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STARTING TO GEL: Johnston's Santo DiRaimo.



BOUNCE BACK: Johnston's Ryan Carvalho returns a shot.

■ Panthers

(Continued from page 15)

ity. We want to win a championship, we really want to win that third one in a row," Marone said.

The Panthers had an up and down start to the season after losing nearly its entire lineup from last year's championship roster.

Captain Santo DiRaimo feels that the team is starting to find its rhythm and will be ready to go come playoff time.

"The energy was high. Coming off a win (against Davies), we had high hopes for today. We're starting to gel together.

In the beginning of the year, no one really knew each other," said DiRaimo, who was also happy to see the team bounce back after dropping the second set to the Huskies. "It brought us down a bit, but we kept the energy high after that, came together and got the win."

The Panthers improved to 6-3 with the victory and advanced to fourth place in DIII.

Johnston returned to the floor on Monday and picked up a 3-1 win over Exeter-West Greenwich for its third straight victory. Johnston maintained control of fourth place with the win and will next be in action when they take on North Providence at home on Thursday.

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SETUP: Johnston's Michael Carlino sets up a shot for a teammate.

Comedy heals all wounds

Netflix aired the Roast of Tom Brady on Sunday night and it delivered. It was everything that you'd hope a roast would be and what a roast should be about.

Like most people, I was skeptical.

Tom Brady is arguably the greatest athlete in American sports history and lives a charmed life. How much dirt could the roasters really have on him?

Most of the roasters were old players and team personnel, not comedians. How funny could they possibly be?

Well, within the first five minutes it was clear that Brady had plenty of shenanigans to chew on and the presenters were ready to go. It was three hours of comedy gold.

After the live event ended, I was impressed and felt my jaws hurting from smiling so much. As I began to process it throughout the day on Monday, I began to realize what my biggest take-away from the night was.

Time does not heal all wounds ... comedy does.

In the past handful of seasons, there has been a lot of drama in Foxboro. As a lifelong Patriots fan, the dynasty ended in a way that I always feared. It ended with ego, tension, finger pointing, and passive aggression, primarily between the three Patriot figureheads in Robert Kraft, Bill Belichick and Brady.

Brady left town in 2020 because he could no longer tolerate Belichick and his rigid ways. He was resentful toward Kraft for not having his back, either.

Kraft recently fired Belichick,

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPONSORER
SPORTS EDITOR

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and after the 10-part docuseries covering the team's historic run, it was clear that Kraft was also sick of the Belichick shtick. In turn, Belichick saw Brady as self-centered toward the end while also feeling like Kraft became a micromanager. It was an ugly divorce.

As the final years wore on, more and more stories of the drama leaked to the press. The three of them did their best to deflect and downplay the reports, oftentimes denying them outright. That is the appropriate thing to do.

However, where there's smoke, there's fire, and there was a massive cloud of smoke hovering over the entire New England region in the past seven or eight years and these issues were finally addressed on Sunday night.

Brady is retired and Belichick is not coaching. The time was finally right for the three of them to lay it all out there, let go and move on. What they accomplished as a team may never be matched.

It felt therapeutic. The three were brutally honest and held nothing back. Not only did they

have the license to finally be transparent in front of the world, but it was encouraged. Sure, a few jokes made each of them shrink in their chairs while the audience fell out of theirs. Again, they certainly did not take it easy on each other.

That was the perfect environment to bury the hatchet, though. It was a safe place in front of an engaging audience. It's hard to be insulted when that's the whole point.

As a husband, a son, a brother, I believe in transparency. Half the battle of working through your differences with others is acknowledging what is bothering you. Admittedly, I am probably a little too transparent at times, but I am a firm believer in saying what's bothering you and why it is upsetting.

In such a public business like professional football, those legends never really had the opportunity. Not to mention they were co-workers, there is only so much you can say out loud in the office.

Although it is unlikely that the three of them will ever be best buds, it was great to see that there is enough respect between the three of them that they can be in the same room and enjoy each other's company. That final toast between Belichick and Kraft did feel a little forced, but the fact that they did it at all was encouraging.

Things got personal in the final years, there are things they'll probably never fully let go of. But Sunday night showed that, in general terms, they have forgiven and forgotten. When watching the three of them up

there, it almost felt like a weight was lifted off their shoulders. There was no more need to whisper to others or hold onto resentment. They each had the floor to openly jab one another and they did just that. Now that, my friends, is the best form of therapy.

Let's get to the fun part. Here are a few of my favorite gags from the roast. Note, these are not transcriptions, as most of them would not be appropriate for print if quoted directly. Heck, I could only find a few that were usable. This was certainly not a family event.

Julian Edelman to Belichick: "Remember when you used to yell at us, 'The kids down at Foxboro High could make that play!' Well, Foxboro High was the only job offer you had! 'Do your job?' More like 'need a job,' Coach."

Belichick to Rob Gronkowski: "I've been watching you on FOX NFL Sunday, and I'm begging you, please stop doing your job."

Drew Bledsoe to (recently divorced) Brady: "I've experienced a couple of things you'll never experience. The feeling of being the No. 1 overall pick in the NFL, and a 28th wedding anniversary."

Brady to Roger Goodell and the NFL: "The NFL spent \$20 million and found that it was more 'probable' than not, that I was 'generally' aware that someone may have deflated my footballs. You could have just given me the 20 mil and I would've just told you I did it!"

RIC drops final two games

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Sophomore outfielder Sophia Crudale (Cranston, R.I.) went 3-for-5 with two walks and an RBI over two games as Rhode Island College lost both games of a Little East doubleheader to VTSU Castleton (2-1, 4-3) at Spartan Field on Saturday afternoon.

GAME ONE

The two sides engaged in a pitcher's duel for the first three innings. The Anchorwomen would break the ice with an RBI double by senior third baseman Victoria Young (Sterling, Conn.) in the fourth.

After the Spartans tied it in the sixth, an RBI single with the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh allowed Castleton to walk-off RIC and take the opener.

Junior pitcher Abby Kidd (Granby, Conn.) threw 6.1 innings and struck out seven in the loss (16-3).

Crudale went 1-for-2 with a run scored and two walks in the setback.

GAME TWO

Crudale would knock in the first run of the game in the second with an RBI single. The Anchorwomen would score another run via a passed ball.

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Good striped bass bite and my three favorite ways to catch them

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI

The great news is that the striped bass are here on their spring migration north. I caught a 30-inch fish in Greenwich Bay Saturday in front of Buttonwoods, Warwick with a Yo-Zuri Crystal minnow after fishing for about 30 minutes there and anglers have been reporting a great bite too in the East Passage of Narragansett Bay.

Jeff Sullivan of Lucky Bait & Tackle, Warren, said, "Anglers are catching school striped bass, to keeper slot size fish as well as 30 to 40 inch fish in the East Passage. They are using shads, spoons and lures of all types with success from Bristol to Providence."

It is important to note that striped bass are in tough shape. They are overfished and we are engaged in a stock rebuilding plan so great care should be taken to catch and release these fish safely to reduce post catch mortality. Anglers should keep the fight short as playing with the fish tires it out, keep the fish in the water even when dehooking, photo taking and releasing if possible, and try not to handle the fish a lot.

The striped bass limit is one fish/person/day between 28 to less than 31 inches.

Striped bass should be measured from the tip of the snout or jaw (mouth closed) to the farthest extremity of the tail. Recreational anglers are required to use inline circle hooks when fishing for striped bass with whole or cut natural baits, except when fishing with a natural bait attached to an artificial lure such as a tube and worm. The use of non-lethal devices to remove striped bass from the water is required; gaffing striped bass is prohibited.

And this year we have a new striped bass fillet law in Rhode Island (Massachusetts has one too that is a bit different) which includes no filleting of striped bass or possession of racks or fillets is permitted while actively fishing with



BASS BITE: Capt. Dave Monti with a spring striped bass. (Submitted photo)

lines in the water; racks must be retained and kept whole (including the head, tail, and body) and no striped bass shall be mutilated in a manner that prevents accurate measurement; no more than two fillets should be taken from a legal striped bass; the equivalent of one fish per angler; private rec anglers racks must be retained until the vessel is secured to the dock or removed from the water and all fillets have been offloaded; and party/charter racks must be retained until the vessel is secured to the dock or removed from the water, all paying passengers have disembarked, and all fillets have been offloaded.

Here are three of my favorite ways to catch spring striped bass:

Casting soft plastics, various lure types and weights to fish different depths. Many anglers love this technique and use it successfully in the spring and have caught hundreds of school bass in the spring using surface lures or plugs of all types. Swimming lures are a great way to catch fish in coves, on rivers, etc. My favorites are a grey Yo-Zuri Crystal Minnow and a white or bone colored SP Minnow.

Atlantic menhaden or pogies. Snag the live Atlantic menhaden with a weighted treble hook or net them. Hook the bait through the bridge of the nose, find a school of

fish and put the live menhaden into the school of bait and let it swim. Chunking fresh or frozen menhaden. You can anchor (and chum), drift fish or fish the moving bait schools with chunks. Some anglers use a weight slide to get the bait down to the striped bass.

Trolling with tube and worm. I have had great success in the Bays and near coastal waters using lead line weighted with two or three ounces of lead between the line and a five foot fluorocarbon leader if needed to get down lower in the water column. I find that bubblegum or red colored tubes work best in spring (the tube hook is tipped with clam worm). The idea of add-

ed weight is to get the line down to where the fish are.

Where's the bite?

Freshwater fishing. Anglers continue to find trout in stocked ponds in RI and MA. For a list of stocked trout ponds visit Designated Trout Waters | Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (ri.gov), in Massachusetts visit Freshwater Fishing | Mass.gov.

Sullivan of Lucky Bait & Tackle said, "Fishing for largemouth bass is outstanding, the best it has ever been during this prespawn period."

Striped bass. Matt Kim of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown, said, "Bass in the 30 to 40 inch range are being caught in Warwick on the East Bay. Anglers are using bid soft plastic lures to catch them, the bigger the better."

Elisa Cahill of Snug Harbor Marina, said, "Striped bass fishing has improved with large fish now starting to be caught. And the worm hatch is upon us. One warm day last week and Ninigret Pond came alive, and the bass fishing was on. Other ponds will start popping too as things warm up."

Declan O'Donnell of Breachway Bait & Tackle, Charlestown, said, "We had stripers up to 25 inches long taken at the Breachway this week. More than a few very small school bass were caught as well, mostly in the white wash at your feet."

Dave Henault of Ocean State Tackle, Providence said, "Striped bass to 40 inches have been caught in the upper reaches of the Providence River with more larger fish being caught every day. White and bone colored swimming and surface lures are working for customers."

Tautog. O'Donnell of Breachway Bait & Tackle, said, "In the spring tautog females migrate along the coast to spawn, typically depositing their eggs in mussel beds. This time of year, crabs, sandworms, and clams make good tautog bait."

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Real Estate Transactions

Coventry

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
1 Lisas Way	Cipriano Michael Est and Raitheh, Jenna	Clark, Brad	4/19	\$90,000
15 Anderson Ave	Ronald J Pelletier T and Pelletier, Ronald J	Greene, Jeanne M	4/16	\$385,000
9 Juniper Hill Dr	Myette, Michael D	Ribeiro, Michael	4/17	\$640,000
10 Patton St	Alarie Thomas Est and Alarie, Mark R	Kaiser, Samantha and Bernard, Dianna	4/19	\$420,000
11 Wescott Way Lot 11	Apponaug Properties Inc	Vars, Kevin W and Bilow, Sandra I	4/19	\$647,500
12 Sunset Lake Cir Lot 33	Westwood Const Inc	St Jean, Robert	4/15	\$669,900
18 Wescott Way Lot 18	Apponaug Properties Inc	Kataisto, Wayne and Kataisto, Katherine	4/17	\$775,000
19 Colwintown Rd	Bellospirito Jr, Anthony and Tripoli, Darin J	Lamphere 3rd, John and Lamphere, Katarina	4/19	\$560,000
20 Cheryl Ln	Fitzpatrick, Justine L	Cockcroft, John and Cockcroft, Judith	4/17	\$282,000
22 Arnold Rd	Auger Michael H Est and Choquette, Linda D	Benitez, Alexa M	4/15	\$300,000
40 Sherwood Valley Ln	Badessa Louise T Est and Magrey, Michael R	Taft, Dawn M	4/15	\$150,000
66 Acres Of Pine Rd	Federal Natl Mtg Assn	Lukens, Bryce and Lukens, Bambi	4/17	\$500,000
161 Tiogue Ave	Raboin Normand F Est and Smith, Jennifer	Kim, Jeoung	4/19	\$185,000

Cranston

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
15 Beech Ave	Lst8 Master Participation and Us Bank Tlla	Beriguete, Wilfredo O	4/15	\$365,000
16 Pavilion Ct	Nacci, Judy M	Cheng, Julie	4/15	\$550,000
24 Garfield Ave	Murray Rice, Regina M	White, Nicole R	4/19	\$332,000
30 Mayfield Ave	Rodriguez, Giovanni M and Rodriguez, Tara	Genehin, Matthew P and Rager, James	4/17	\$500,000
40 Pendleton St	Aceto Celeste Est and Aceto, Luigi	Medrano-De-Castro, Fany D	4/19	\$525,000
41 Berwick Ln	Monroe, Stephen D and Munroe, Linda L	Powers, Megan E and Powers, Edwin B	4/15	\$520,000
94 Ingleside Ave	Lowell, Pamela S	Belanger, Dathan	4/19	\$355,600
113 Chandler Ave	Foreclosure Solutions LLC	Barden, Anna	4/16	\$370,000
1134 Amanda St	Milewski, Randi L and Milewski, Christopher J	Courtemanche, Louis J and Charron, Paige E	4/17	\$422,000
205 Main St Lot A6	Briggs David A Est and Holley, Lisa S	Jandron, Kristina A	4/19	\$256,000
295 Woodbine St Lot 64	Branco, Abbey M and Condon, Garrett F	Alcock, Lily K and Gomes, Derek S	4/16	\$380,000
295 Woodbine St Lot 63	Branco, Abbey M and Condon, Garrett F	Alcock, Lily K and Gomes, Derek S	4/16	\$380,000
1000 Chapel View Blvd Lot 311	Angeli, Daniel	Janikies, William N	4/17	\$600,000
1147 Narragansett Blvd	Powell, Douglas G and Powell, Roberta D	Doyle, Janet T and Doyle, Kelly J	4/15	\$650,000
1414 Phenix Ave	Cimarelli Fit and Cimarelli, Mario	Gomez, Rosalio G and Ruiz, Alicia P	4/16	\$700,000

East Greenwich

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
Verndale Dr	Avalon Builders Inc	Begnal, Nicole and Gooding, David	2/1	\$620,000
11 Westcott Way Lot 47	Apponaug Prop Inc	Vars, Kevin W and Bilow, Sandra I	4/19	\$647,500
305 Shady Hill Dr	Jourabochi, Amir H and Jourabochi, Pamela	Mallett, Jacqueline and Mallett, Kenneth	4/16	\$510,000

Exeter

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
184 New Rd	Chamberlain Regina A Est and Chamberlain, David	Shea, Pamela J	4/19	\$535,000
1675 10 Rod Rd	Connor, Danielle M and Arruda, Nathan D	Verros, Cynthia and Verros, Joshua	4/19	\$405,000

Johnston

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
4 Alvina Dr	Montaquila, Peter P	Mardenli, George and Rosciti, Shannon	4/19	\$585,000
6 Alden St	Calcione, Casandra L	West Bay Hm Solutions LLC	4/17	\$260,000
6 Barbara Ct	Etter, Helen P	Sanchez, Joel	4/22	\$480,000
15 Pine Crest Dr	Joseph Dagostino T and Valenth, Marisa	Veras, Juan P and Depelaez, Michelle M	4/19	\$450,000
26 Bradford St	Richard, Ann M	Hart, Paul	4/23	\$400,000
27 Contillo Dr	Hampton, Robert D and Cirillo, Lauren N	Cirillo, Nicholas	4/19	\$340,000
35 Salina Ave	Rado, Matthew C	Rodriguez, Tifany and Rodriguez, Bruno	4/19	\$469,000
260 George Waterman Rd Lot 207	Carey, Raymond J and Carey, Geraldine D	Yata, Manasa	4/22	\$262,500

Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
6 Gilbert St	Ellen M Snyder T and Snyder, Ellen M	Cheshire, Harriet	4/17	\$526,500
24 Great Oak Dr	Cohen, Debra A	Odenis, Thibaut M	4/15	\$485,000
29 Preston Dr	Graham, Nancy	Maynard Dean, Tate T	4/17	\$380,000
71 Jefferson St	Tavares, Shawn P	Crowley, Kevin and Crowley, Carissa	4/15	\$400,000
90 Kenway Ave	Fooks, William B	Brophy, Ashley and Smith, Cody	4/15	\$370,000
92 Wilson Ave	Federal Natl Mtg Assn	Fooks, William	4/15	\$233,000
94 Crane St	Barbara A Fazio Irt and Fazio, Paul A	Villar, Adamaris and Larios, Christian	4/15	\$365,000
163 Cottage St	Harrington Rlty LLC	Scaramuzzi, Michael	3/27	\$370,000
186 N Country Club Dr	Singh, Sarabjit and Phraewphanarai, Anuphab	Bostrom, Kevin J and Dilberto, Jake S	4/15	\$559,000
191 Canfield Ave	Mortgage Assets Mgmt LLC	Scenic Prop Solutions Inc	4/17	\$215,000
209 Northbridge Ave	Berger Irt and Berger, Albert F	Britto 4th, Edward and Britto, Stephanie M	4/17	\$515,000
285 W Shore Rd	Maccione, Christine M	Mia Grp Invest LLC	4/18	\$295,000
516 Church Ave	Turney, Avery	Florio, Austin and Florio, Amber	4/17	\$405,000
615 Jefferson Blvd Lot 105B	Lowe, Rosanne M	Dechristofaro, John	4/16	\$149,900
672 Orleans Ct Lot 672, Petit, Debra and Masterson, James		Mayer, Nancy H and Mayer, Robert	4/16	\$345,000

West Warwick

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
12 Canary Ct Lot 12	Vecchiarell Matthew A Est and Vecchiarelli, Bruno	Hobert, Krista and Hobert, Kenneth	4/19	\$355,000
36 Crestwood Dr	Cabral, Arthur X and Cabral, Doris M	Graber, Michael P	4/17	\$411,350
68 W Valley Cir Lot 15	Residence West Valley Inc	Marshall, Mary J	4/17	\$419,900
450 Providence St Lot 50	Brosco, Rebecca J and Wilson, Mark A	Daugherty-Ambrosino, S L and Ambrosino, Mitchell T	4/19	\$345,000
650 E Greenwich Ave Lot P132	Laxroix, Joseph	Hagan, Melissa F	4/22	\$25,000
1006 Main St	Eighandour, Elsayed	Whalen, James P	4/19	\$465,000
1393 Main St	Rosenberg, Rachael B	Plante, Marc H	4/18	\$505,000

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Rising **debt** is the new reality



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Debt continues to be a major concern for households across North America. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York Center for Microeconomic Data found total household debt reached \$17.29 trillion in the third quarter of 2023 in the United States. This upward trajectory has been going on since 2021 and is largely driven by mortgages, credit cards and student loan balances.

Canadian households also are in debt. In fact, according to CBC News, Canadians carried more debt in 2021 than people in any other G7 country, with the value owed more than the value of the country's entire economy. As of the third quarter of 2023, Statistics Canada says the average household was spending around 15 cents of every after-tax dollar in service of debt, which equated to \$2.9 trillion across the country.

Research from financial services company Northwestern Mutual found that, excluding mortgages, the average personal debt per individual in 2023 sat at \$21,800, which was down from \$29,800 in 2019. Recent data from TransUnion, a credit reporting agency, confirms that the average credit card debt across the U.S. has increased to \$5,733 per cardholder.

Business Insider calculations based on the latest data show the average borrower in 2023 had a monthly mortgage payment of around \$2,800 on a 30-year-fixed-rate mortgage. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported the average monthly payment on new mortgages in the first quarter of 2023 was \$1,984, up 40 percent from 2019.

Individuals are being hit by high costs in all directions, which is compounding personal debt. Those concerned about their debt can speak with a financial professional as they seek to gain control of their finances. TF243781

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Wentworth's legacy lives on at Rhythm & Roots

By **DON FOWLER**

It was a sad day last week when we learned of the death of Rhythm and Roots founder Chuck Wentworth. I first met Chuck when he was in partnership with the original Cajun & Bluegrass Festival at Stepping Stone Ranch back in the mid-sixties.

Chuck introduced me to some of the greatest music on the planet, born out of places like Mamou and New Orleans, Louisiana, played with the much maligned accordion and sung in a Creole language I couldn't understand.

The music made you move your feet, stand up and dance, and feel joy beyond comprehension.

Chuck moved the festival to Ninigret Park in Charlestown in 1998, opening it up to a wider audience, and adding Roots music from around the world. His wife, children and grandchildren were all part of the staff.

He continued his radio show at URI and ran the February Mardi Gras dance at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, in addition to his full-time job at URI.

He introduced us to roots stars like Cape Bretton fiddler Natalie McMaster, Cajun star Steve Riley, zydeco legends, blues singers, Tex-Mex bands, and western

swing.

In 2022, Chuck's health problems caught up with him, and he was forced to step down from his role as full-time promoter/producer of the world-renowned Rhythm and Roots Festival. Chuck turned over the reins to GoodWorks productions out of Connecticut, and until his passing continued to work with them as mentor and coordinator.

Beside all that, Chuck was one great guy, stopping to say "hello" to festival fans from all over the United States and Canada.

He will be missed, but never forgotten.

A celebration of his life will be held at a further date.

RHYTHM & ROOTS 2024

Save the dates of Rhythm & Roots 2024, to be held at Ninigret Park August 30 and 31 and September 1.

A partial list of entertainers has been announced, headlined by country rock star Emmy Lou Harris and Grand Ole Opry members, the Old Crow Medicine Show.

More information will follow, so get on the mailing list at rhythmandroots.org.



CHUCK WENTWORTH
(Courtesy of Rhythm & Roots)

WARWICK SHOWCASE

THE FALL GUY

(Romcom With Stunts Galore)

Ryan Gosling stars as movie stunt man, Colt Seavers, the title character who takes the falls for movie star Tom Ryder until he breaks his back on a daring stunt.

Although he had something going with camerawoman Jody (Emily Blunt), he disappears for months, working as a valet at a Mexican restaurant.

Called back to action, he finds that Jody has been promoted to direct a major sci-fi movie and is led to believe that she wants him to do the stunts.

Not so. She is upset that he left without even saying goodbye.

More problems. The movie star has vanished, Colt is sent looking for him, only to find himself in the middle of some nasty business, which results in him using his stuntman talents to take care of some tough bad guys.

The story is kind of stupid but is a vehicle for some pretty good stunts involving car chases, pyrotechnics, and helicopters.

Meanwhile, Colt is performing his stunts for the film while trying to win back Jody.

If you can accept the story line, you are in for some pretty good action shots.

If only they had shown more of how the stunts were captured by the cameras.

NETFLIX

UNFROSTED

** 1/2

(Comic Satire)

Being a huge Seinfeld fan, I couldn't wait for "Unfrosted," written, directed and starring Jerry Seinfeld.

After sitting through the hour and a half satire on the making and marketing of Kellogg's Pop Tarts, I must admit- It is one of the dumbest movies I have ever seen.

And yet I laughed out loud several times!

Seinfeld stars as Bob Cabana, Head of Development for the cereal brand, who is working on a secret new product. The plans are stolen by Post and the battle of Battle Creek, Michigan begins.

It is the early sixties and cereal is the rage, along with silly putty, sea monkeys and milk.

When the milk industry discovers that Kellogg's is working on a heatable food pastry they fight back. The sugar barons in South America and Russia get involved. The cereal mascots rebel.

Kellogg's hires a bunch of famous tests pilots, the companies battle, and guess who wins.

See it at the

*with
Joyce & Don
Fowler*

MOVIES





THE FALL GUY
(Photo courtesy of UNIVERSAL PICTURES/YOUTUBE/YOUTUBE)

There are dozens of bad jokes—groaners—lots of corny references and silly stuff, but hey, that's Seinfeld's mind working overtime.

The cast is filled with familiar actors and comedians, including Melissa McCarthy, Amy Schumer, Hugh Grant, Peter Dinklage and Jim Gaffigan.

ANYONE BUT YOU

** 1/2

(RomCom)

We missed this one at the Showcase. It only lasted a couple of weeks. After watching it on Netflix, we know why.

Glen Powell and Sydney Sweeney play Ben and Bea, two young moderns who meet at a coffee shop, spend the night together, and go their separate ways.

She sneaks out in the morning, overhears Ben badmouth her, and hates him

for it.

They meet again months later when their sisters are getting married in Australia and all the families are invited, along with both of their exes that their parents are trying to reunite them with.

Got that so far?

Their aversion to each other continues until they figure out what their parents are up to, so they form a bond to convince them that they are a couple.

All this results in some dumb, forced comedy.

Do they end up together?

What do you think!

WHAT JENNIFER DID

(Canadian Documentary)

This documentary uses actual police footage to follow their investigation of the home invasion and murder of Jenni-

fer Pan's parents.

We watch the interrogation of the 24-year-old pianist as her story slowly changes, more people become involved and clever police work uncovers the truth.

When all the lies are sorted out, the truth is shocking.

BOILING POINT

*** 1/2

(British TV series)

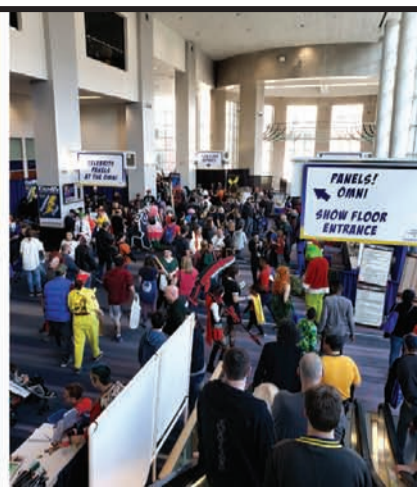
This five-part British TV series is fiction but gives a real-life perspective on what it is like to run a posh restaurant.

The behind-the-scenes look at the rivalries, tension, mistakes and near disasters are very realistic.

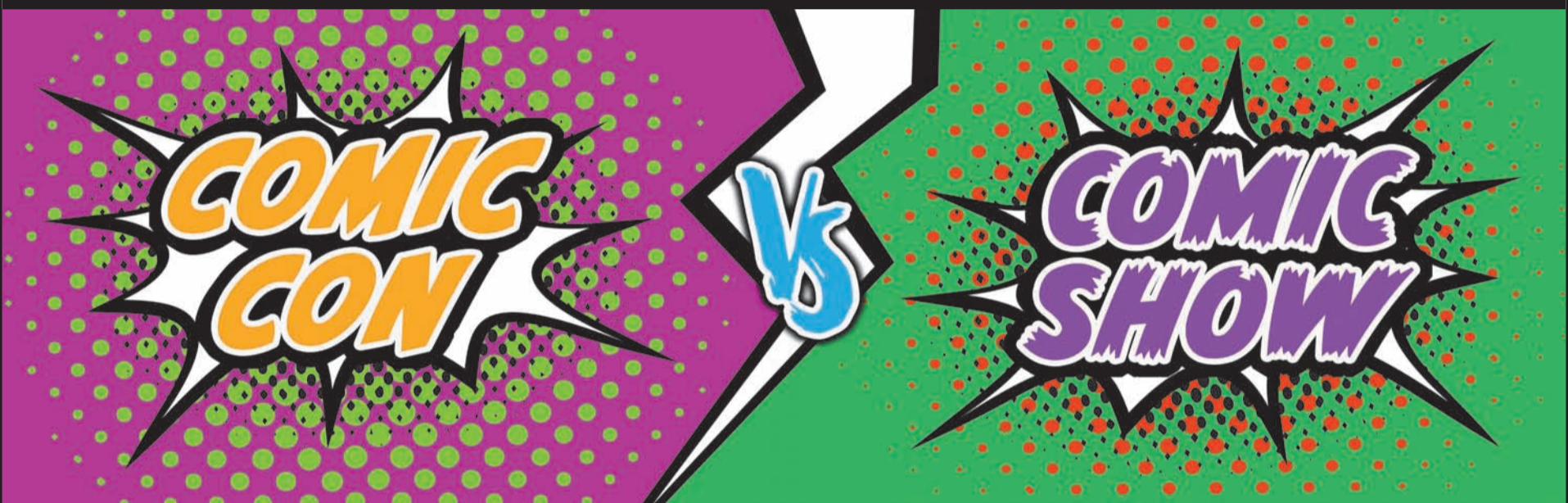
At times it leans toward being a soap opera, but if you want to learn what goes on behind the scenes, you'll find it fascinating.

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New School vs. Old School:



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



up for a show that opens at 10:00am and closes by 3:00pm for a one day event. Hardcore comic book collectors could not ask for a better situation. There aren't thousands of people decked out in costumes packed into a three day convention. It's a simple Saturday or Sunday morning drive with a coffee and you can be home by noon if you don't dally while you are there. These are the true comic shows I live for. You never know what you are going to find, and there are always incredible books to be seen. If you are keen, a great deal will be had.

So, if you're serious about comic books and want to have a little fun, check out your local comic show!

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Everyone has their opinion on what a "comic con" or "comic show" means to them. What you expect to see, who you expect to see, what you are going to do. These are the factors you consider when deciding to go to a convention or show. While I feel every show does serve its purpose, what's good for one attendee may not be good for another.

In my opinion, most large "comic cons" have turned into a media show. Media implying a focus on television and film rather than comic books. These usually take place annually and are held in mega venues like convention centers to accommodate hundreds of thousands of people over sev-

eral days. The theme of comic related material is there, but the show may be more concentrated on celebrity guests and signings, panels, or cosplay to name a few categories. While big comic cons are a ton of fun (I attend several a year), sometimes it can be difficult to discover great comic books at these larger venues. The inventory brought in by dealers often focuses on collectibles, toys, knick-knacks, and t-shirts, etc. Basically, items which will fly off the shelves to adoring fans of all ages

and not necessarily rare comic books worth thousands of dollars for diehard collectors.

So where do you go to find those rare books? Believe it or not, not that far.

It does not matter where you live or what state you are in, there is always a true local comic book show. What is a true comic show you might ask? These shows are held at small local venues, think VFW halls or Elks lodges. In that type of setting, dealers get there around 6:00am to set

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