



Johnston Fire Chief David Iannuccilli speaks with Mayor Joseph Polisena, Jr. before Tuesday's special town council meeting. Chief Iannuccilli went on to provide the council with a long list of deficiencies that his department faces which he believes necessitates the building of a new fire station. (Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg)

New town complex in, planned apartments out

Building blocks in place for Town Hall, police, fire HQs Schools chief caught unaware

By TIM FORSBERG

In a decisive move during a special Town Council meeting Tuesday, Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. introduced a plan to replace a low-income housing project proposed by a private developer with a new, centralized municipal campus housing the Fire Department, Police Department and Town Hall.

The projected cost of the project has yet to be determined.

The first time the project was mentioned publicly was when the town clerk filed the meeting's agenda last Friday afternoon. With a Town Council vote of 4 to 0, and District 5 Councilman Robert J. Civetti not present, the proposed resolution was approved.

"We plan to fund the project by

changing our strategy on the high school, going back to the original plan of a renovation with a focus on career and technical pathways, use of our \$40-million cash reserves, and our revenue stream from the police and fire departments," Polisena said.

The resolution came as a surprise

CAMPUS - PAGE 10

Schools budget focuses on instruction, facilities

Growing deficit nears \$2 million

By TIM FORSBERG

Under the guidance of Schools Superintendent Bernard DiLullo and Business Manager Dean Huff, the Johnston School Department is building budget projections for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The process ensures that all positions within each school in town, or department, are accounted for in the budget proposal.

"Each leader comes to the sessions with a prepared operating budget proposal that includes supplies, instructional materials, equipment and building needs," DiLullo explained. "Also included is the need for any additional staff based on school census or student needs. Once these meetings are completed, a draft budget is prepared, usually by mid-February."

The School Committee will then hold budget workshops to refine the proposal.

"Community input is welcomed at these meetings," DiLullo said. "Once the budget proposal is finalized, we submit it to the town for their assessment."

The Johnston School Department faces a budget deficit approaching \$2 million. The deficit began in 2019, when operating expenses outpaced revenues. The deficit has grown steadily each year, reaching nearly \$1.6 million by the end of 2023, while projections for 2024 suggest an additional deficit of \$400,000 to \$500,000. Last year, the School Department budget grew \$3.7 million to a total of \$63,496,920.

According to DiLullo, recent investments have focused on instruction. He noted that required instructional materials previously purchased with grant funds have now shifted to the operating budget following the expiration of those grants last September.

"Technology purchases and staff have been reduced as a cost-saving measure, as have some clerical and print center staff," DiLullo said. "Over the years, various positions have been eliminated."

Critical building needs continue to be part of the budget proposal. There are heating and roofing concerns in some of the school's buildings that can no longer be delayed. The superintendent believes it is "critical to ensure our students continue to have a warm and safe place to learn."

DiLullo highlighted the importance of the new elementary school, planned to open in the fall of 2026, which will address many facility issues at the elementary level. The district also plans to use the Winsor Hill building as an Early Childhood Center, requiring renovations such as a new roof, bathrooms and heating upgrades.

The superintendent also discussed the impact of state-mandated curriculum requirements in math and English Language Arts.

"I believe the purchase of these materials, in addition to the high-quality professional development to support teachers, will provide a positive outcome for our students' achievement."

SCHOOLS - PAGE 4

Town prepares for budget season

By TIM FORSBERG

With last year's budget of \$134 million setting the stage, Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. and the town's departments are preparing financials that address school budget deficits and balance growth, rising costs and infrastructure challenges.

During the next few weeks, department heads will present their key goals for the next fiscal year in the form of their departments' operating budgets. Those budgets are expected to consider economic development, infrastructure improvements, environmental issues and other initiatives.

Passed last June, Johnston's current budget of \$134,342,201 million represented a \$5-million increase from the previous year's budget of \$129,081,852. Growth in the town during that period effectively prevented a tax increase, as there was an additional \$2.3 million in tax revenue collected during that time.

A newly enacted senior tax discount – a flat tax exemption rather than an exemption based on property value –

brought relief to about 2,700 residents. The town's previous exemption model was based on a system where higher property values produced less of a discount.

In a recent interview with state Auditor General David Bergantino, he stated that – school deficit aside – the town is sound fiscally.

"The town is in a very good situation financially. There are no other town concerns from our standpoint. The town has a robust surplus," he said.

His office noted several trends favoring the town. The financial health of the general fund shows that, during the last five-year trend there were operating surpluses in four of the five years presented, and the unrestricted fund balance exceeded the Government Finance Officers Association's reserve recommendations.

The town has a AA municipal bond rating, which has remained consistent for five years. Five municipal pension plans administered by the Employees' Retirement System of RI and 100% of the

BUDGET - PAGE 7



Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. reviews documentation during a recent interview with the Sun Rise. (Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg)



DMV Administrator Walter Craddock (left), state Sen. Victoria Gu and state Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro with the blue envelopes and emergency contact cards that will be given to any driver who opts into the program. (Submitted photo)

Helping drivers with autism navigate traffic stops

By ROSEGALIE CINEUS

The Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles has gone statewide with a new program aimed at helping drivers with autism.

The Blue Envelope program is a new DMV service that works to facilitate smooth and effective communication between neurodivergent drivers and law-enforcement officers.

According to Walter Craddock, administrator for the DMV, the program gives drivers who are on the autism spectrum a way to keep their license, registration and proof of insurance in one convenient place – a blue envelope that includes driver directions on what to expect in a traffic stop.

And just as important, that blue envelope tells law-enforcement officers that a driver may be dealing with diagnosed difficulties involving disruption and mental processing.

“Whenever we do things that can assist individuals and [make] encounters with law enforcement efficient and effective, whatever we can do to move that along, I think is very, very important,” Craddock said.

The blue envelope also has important information for police officers on how to work with a neurodivergent driver and shares tips on different

signs to recognize and ways to make the interaction run smoother.

The program gained traction when two state legislators were inspired to propose it thanks to a Westerly high school student who had learned about similar programs while researching for his senior project.

Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro and Sen. Victoria Gu proposed a bill to create the program. The legislation was approved by the General Assembly in June 2024.

Some police departments had already adopted a Blue Envelope program before the General Assembly had approved the legislation.

Craddock believes five police departments implemented it on their own – Central Falls, North Kingstown, Narragansett, Bristol and Cranston.

According to Cranston Police Capt. Justin Dutra, the department has issued approximately 60 blue envelopes since the start of the program. He is hopeful that with support from the DMV more drivers will take advantage of the envelopes.

Craddock says there’s been interest from the police chiefs’ association to include police departments as supplemental locations where people can get the blue envelope.

Mobile Beacon launches wildfire disaster recovery program

Johnston’s own Mobile Beacon, a leading provider of high-speed wireless internet access for nonprofits, schools, libraries, and healthcare organizations, is proud to announce the launch of its 2025 Wildfires Disaster Recovery Program.

This initiative is designed to aid community anchor institutions impacted by the devastating January 2025 wildfires in Los Angeles, California, by providing essential connectivity to support recovery efforts.

Through the Disaster Recovery Pro-

gram, eligible organizations can receive up to 25 free 4G LTE hotspot devices. These devices are coupled with Mobile Beacon’s reliable, unlimited

wireless internet service. Organizations are responsible for purchasing Mobile Beacon’s service at \$10/month. By ensuring access to critical online resources, this program helps organizations restore operations, support displaced individuals, and provide vital services to affected communities.

“Connectivity is essential during times

of crisis,” said Joseph Gleason, Director of Programs and Strategic Partnerships. “This program reflects our unwavering commitment to fostering digital inclusion and helping communities rebuild by providing the tools they need to stay connected and thrive.”

This initiative builds on Mobile Beacon’s mission to create a digitally inclusive world where everyone has access to the transformative power of the internet. By restoring connectivity to organizations on the front lines of disaster recovery,

communities can rebuild stronger than before.

The program is available from January 21 to April 20, 2025, or until supplies are exhausted.

Interested organizations can verify their eligibility and learn more about the program by visiting <https://www.mobilebeacon.org/disaster-recovery-technology-kit-wildfire/>.



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Neronha, Infante-Green on student rights

Attorney General Peter F. Neronha and the state Department of Education today shared guidance with school officials on safeguarding the rights of Rhode Island school children regardless of their nationality or immigration status.

Recent changes to federal immigration enforcement policies are prompting questions about the potential presence of federal law enforcement, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), at schools. While we do not yet know if federal authorities will conduct operations targeting Rhode Island schools, this guidance is intended to assist schools, teachers and administrators in protecting the rights of every student.

“Working with our local, state and federal partners, this office has and will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute violent offenders, whether those offenders are U.S. citizens, non-citizen lawful residents or offenders that are here unlawfully. Immigration enforcement is the role of the federal government, and this office will continue to cooperate with federal immigration authorities as necessary and in compliance with state and federal law,” said Neronha.

“That said, federal immigration officials have signaled that they no longer view schools as off-limits for even routine enforcement actions. Yet, Rhode Island children must have access to education without interruption or fear. While federal immigration enforcement policies may have changed, basic legal and constitutional principles have not. We are issuing this guidance to remind our teachers and administrators of those legal principles so they can focus on what they do best: educating our kids and keeping them safe at school. Unless there is a real public safety exigency, immigration enforcement does not belong on school grounds, where it has the potential to negatively impact all students regardless of immigration status. Now and always, we must protect our children as they navigate their formative years, and we must support our school faculty members who help guide our kids to greatness.”

“Providing all students access to safe and welcoming learning environments is essential for empowering them to excel academically and beyond the classroom,” said Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green. “In accordance with federal and state law, Rhode Island remains committed to providing all students a quality education that sets them up for success. We are deeply appreciative of Attorney General Neronha and his team for their assistance in providing our school communities guidance and resources to navigate recent shifts in federal policy.”

School access

Governing law prohibits immigration enforcement officers from accessing non-public areas of schools, including classrooms and hallways, without a judicial warrant issued by a federal district or magistrate judge, based on a finding of probable cause. Further, Rhode Island law requires schools to implement safety protocols to ensure that only authorized individuals are permitted access to non-public areas of the school. Accordingly, schools may prohibit all unauthorized visitors, including federal law enforcement officers without a judicial warrant or court order, from entering non-public school areas, except in the event of a genuine public safety emergency.

Information access

Students are entitled to enroll in public school in Rhode Island regardless of their

immigration status or the status of their parents, and schools may not discriminate based on national origin or immigration status. Schools are generally not required under federal or state law to collect citizenship or immigration status information as this information is irrelevant to the enrollment process.

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Rhode Island Educational Records Bill of Rights generally prohibit disclosure of student educational records and instead provide limited access for specific purposes. Schools should have written policies and procedures for gathering and handling confidential student information. Schools cannot disclose information to third parties, including federal immigration authorities, unless doing so is authorized by, FERPA which generally requires a court order, judicial warrant or valid subpoena to make such a disclosure. If a school receives a request for information from ICE, they should review the request with legal counsel to ensure compliance with federal law.

Warrants and subpoenas

- ICE administrative warrants do not by themselves authorize immigration officials to access non-public areas of a school or to search school records. Such administrative warrants cannot compel school personnel to assist with the apprehension of a person identified in an administrative warrant. Additionally, such administrative warrants are not sufficient to mandate disclosure of student information that is otherwise protected by state and federal law.

- A Notice to Appear (NTA) is a document that seeks to start formal removal proceedings against an individual before an immigration court. An NTA does not require school employees to take any action or grant an immigration enforcement officer any special power to induce cooperation.

- Administrative subpoenas are not court orders and do not require immediate compliance. School policies should require personnel to immediately alert administrators about the service of an administrative subpoena to allow for consultation with legal counsel and notification of parents/guardians.

- Federal court warrants are issued by District Court judges and magistrate judges based on a finding of probable cause. When presented with a facially valid federal court warrant, school personnel must comply with the requests of federal immigration authorities as set out in the warrant. They should, whenever feasible, notify the chief school administrator and/or their legal counsel to verify the terms and requirements of the warrant.

School officials should always act in a manner that promotes the safety and security of their students and school personnel. School officials should not interfere or obstruct law-enforcement officials in the lawful exercise of their authority. Should federal immigration authorities seek to carry out enforcement actions on school grounds, they must do so in conformance with the requirements of the Fourth Amendment and other federal and state laws.

The Office of the Attorney General and RIDE will continue to work together with our public schools and with our state and federal law-enforcement partners to ensure adherence to these principles and to promote a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of our students.

Questions related to this guidance should be referred to the Office of the Attorney General at 401-274-4400.

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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



COUNCIL ROUNDUP

The Council Roundup is a digest of hearings, ordinances, licenses, and other proceedings from the Johnston Town Council's January 21 meeting. All members were present except Council President Robert Russo.

STATUS ON PUBLIC HEARINGS

Zone Map Changes:

Valerie McGuire submitted a petition to rezone Assessor's Plat 57, Lot 170 on Hartford Avenue from mixed B-2 and R-40 to B-2. This was referred to the Planning Board for an advisory opinion.

Mohamad Yaser and Rhonda Sasa petitioned to rezone Assessor's Plat 8, Lot 14 on Morgan Avenue from R-20 to R-7. This was also sent to the Planning Board for review.

ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2025-1:

Authorizes borrowing up to \$300,000 for planning storm-water facility improvements. Town Planner Thomas Del-ler presented this ordinance.

Ordinance 2025-2:

Amends Chapter 340, Article IV, Section § 340-16 of the Town Code, focusing on industrial performance standards. The ordinance requires covering dirt mounds

to minimize dust, sediment runoff, and erosion. It was introduced by Councilwoman Linda Folcarelli on behalf of residents near industrial sites and referred to the Planning Board for an advisory opinion.

LICENSE APPROVALS

The Town Council unanimously approved the following licenses:

Avalon Assemblies:

Antonio Benevides, for furniture and equipment assembly services at customer locations, based at 23 Rollingwood Drive.

809 Auto Sales:

A name change and license for Juan Castillo at 577 Killingly Street, a former used car dealership.

True North Tattoo LLC:

Elizabeth Sylvia at 1227 Atwood Avenue, offering tattoo services and art commissions.

Iced Hair Studio LLC:

Aysel Aliyeva at 1481 Atwood Avenue, specializing in haircuts, coloring, and styling.

Donald's Auto Repair:

Donald Funes at 32 Starr Street.

Busy Bees LLC:

Karissa Kane at 2674 Hartford Avenue, an indoor children's play area with working suites for adults.

Tortilleria Guatemalteca Jirch:

A take-out food busi-

ness at 56 Greenville Avenue.

Freshman Barbershop:

Manuel Jiminez Morales at 1500 Atwood Avenue.

CONSTITUENT REQUESTS

Traffic Signs and Enforcement:

Maribeth Drive residents requested "Do Not Block the Box" signs with additional fines at intersections with Killingly Street and Ruth Street. Suggestions were made to involve the State Highway Commission.

Central Avenue residents reported speeding concerns and suggested traffic enforcement or installing a speed bump.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Land Donation:

Resolution 2024-45 authorizes accepting donated land (Assessor's Plat 35, Lot 185) near the Public Works Garage. Environmental conditions were discussed, and the motion was adopted.

Flood Mitigation Project:

Resolution 2024-66 approves over \$2 million in grant funding for the Atwood and Hartford Avenue Chronic Flooding Mitigation Project. Additional funding

is anticipated.

NEW BUSINESS

Petitions and Resolutions:

Narragansett Electric and Verizon were approved to install a new pole on Spruce Street.

Bachar Sasa petitioned to rezone Assessor's Plat 43, Lots 264 & 265 on Shun Pike from R-40 to Industrial, referred to the Planning Board.

Resolution 2025-5 approved \$6,490 for engine diagnostic hardware/software for the Department of Development and Public Services.

Resolution 2025-6 increased Central Nurseries' contract by \$9,201.25 for a landscaping buffer due to unexpected issues.

A climate control system for the sign machine room, at a cost of approximately \$8,000, was approved.

A \$50,000 beautification plan for a landscape project near Town Hall was authorized.

CLAIMS

Claims from Clerkin, Sinclair & Mafouz, LLP on behalf of Debra Lombardi (vehicle damage) and Benitz Caceras Mirca (damages) were referred to the town solicitor.

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dents going to other districts is approximately four million dollars," DiLullo said. "This is why it is critical for Johnston to continue to plan for additional career programs and the facilities to house such programs. If we can keep half of the students who leave our district by offering meaningful career pathways, we will be more financially stable."

DiLullo acknowledged the loss of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief grants has had significant impacts. "Many of the interventionists and support staff funded by these grants were either discontinued or moved to our operating budget based on district need," he said.

The Johnston School Department remains focused on addressing the major budget drivers, including salaries, benefits, out-of-district costs and the needs of special education and multilingual learners. "We will continue to pay close attention to these areas to keep costs manageable while ensuring the best outcomes for our students," DiLullo said.

Opinion

EDITORIAL

A pragmatic, empathetic government program?

A shout out for good government policy is in order for the Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles, which last week announced that a new program meant to help improve interactions between police officers and drivers with autism was going statewide.

The “Blue Envelope” program — which had been piloted in Connecticut and New Jersey, and in numerous Rhode Island communities including Central Falls, Cranston, Narragansett and Bristol — strives to provide a means for neurodivergent commuters to quickly and easily proclaim that they have processing issues or communicative delays, which could be misinterpreted or unexpected to an officer engaging the driver in a traffic stop.

If you’ve ever been involved in a traffic stop, even for something silly like a blown tail light, you know that it can be an incredibly stressful and anxiety-inducing situation. For those on the autism spectrum who may have

• WHERE TO WRITE:
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difficulty dealing with high-stress or unanticipated situations that call for action, it can be even more severe. If the responding officer

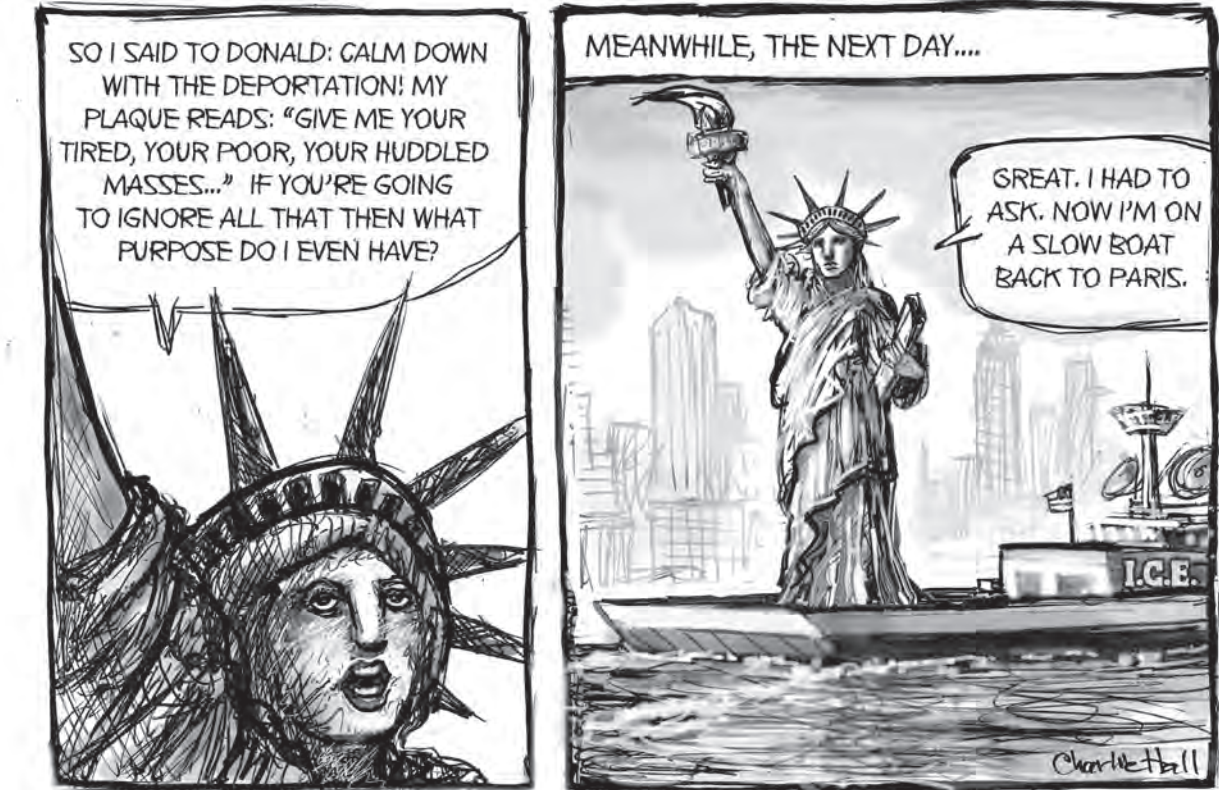
does not know about these developmental differences, the situation could spiral out of control, to the detriment of the driver, the officer’s safety, and the overall relationship between law-enforcement officers and the people they serve.

The program is not mandatory for anyone, but those with autism-related or sensory-processing afflictions now have the ability to opt into the program at any time, regardless of where they live in Rhode Island. The DMV will provide them with a blue envelope to hold their driver’s license, registration, insurance card and an emergency contact card.

The envelope also provides instructions to the driver on exactly what to do during a traffic stop, and the officer will have received training to be aware of the situation once they are handed the envelope, ensuring that all parties are on the same page for the duration of the traffic stop.

We applaud Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly) and Sen. Victoria Gu (Dist. 38, Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown), who sponsored the bill enacting the program to begin in the state, along with Gov. Dan McKee for signing the bill into law, and to Bud Craddock at the DMV for bringing the program statewide.

This is the kind of straightforward, empathetic and highly effective legislation that can prevent a potentially life-altering or traumatic experience from happening to those who are already at higher risk of being victimized or put into harm’s way due to their disabilities, and it is the kind of policy that makes us proud to be Rhode Islanders.



Transparency a pressing issue for everyone

By ETHAN SHOREY

In a side capacity to my job as a local newspaper editor and writer, I’m also president of the Rhode Island Press Association. To people of a certain age, that name might sound stodgy and old, but we’ve been working hard to make sure we’re focused on things that matter to the people of Rhode Island today.

One of those is to remind everyone as often as we can that there are still very strong publications that function with a mission to keep you informed and to help make our communities better places. Raising that awareness puts important stories in the public eye.

Recently, we also started accepting all-digital outlets as members, and several of those have come aboard recently.

Many of our local high school staffers and students are also aware of Rhode Island High School Journalism Day, which we brought back three years ago in a virtual capacity. Last year, our northern Rhode Island area was represented well, and I have no doubt that at least some of that was due to students here growing up knowing the importance of a local news outlet to their community and wanting to perhaps be a part of that one day.

RIPA also puts our money where

our mouth is on this one, funding scholarships for students who want to go into journalism.

Another area of focus is to advocate for good policy and to make sure the government isn’t stifling the ability of average people to get information.

One bill we’ve advocated for over the past few years, and are hoping for a positive outcome this year, is Sen. Louis DiPalma’s legislation that would increase the public’s access to government documents and information. The access law offers a number of changes to how police information must be reported, including on misconduct and body camera footage, reducing costs of record searches and redaction (current practice deeply impacts news outlets’ ability to acquire information for public consumption), and increasing fines for government officials found to violate the Access to Public Records Act. That includes daily fines for willful and knowing withholdings.

To some, this might sound like “just” a press issue, but it’s a you issue as well. That’s by extension or if you’re ever in a position where you need to acquire key information for yourself or someone you know or love.

A quick point on the “willful and knowing” item: the vast majority of

findings against state or local governments when it comes to withholding information are not deemed to be in this category. Most findings are considered the garden variety, and would never result in a fine. This is reserved for the worst offenses.

We would greatly appreciate hearing from you if you’ve been forced to deal with long and frustrating attempts to get information. Government and agencies can do so much good with the right people and processes in place, but many also know how quickly things can turn when the wrong people act improperly and then want to keep their actions secret. Email ripessassociation@gmail.com with your story.

I’m not naïve enough to have missed that “the media” (there I go speaking of it as some amorphous blob as I tell others not to) isn’t thought of nearly as fondly as it once was. That said, people of every political persuasion, if they’re honest with themselves, know the good that can come about when someone, whether in traditional media or in one’s alternative outlet of choice, exposes the truth.

Ethan Shorey is president of the Rhode Island Press Association and editor of The Valley Breeze and its five newspapers. The news outlet you’re reading this in is a RIPA member.

The world's most vulnerable are in danger

By JUSTIN D. BIBEE

The world's most vulnerable individuals face grave danger.

With a single signature, President Donald Trump has effectively shut the door on refugees, stripping countless innocent children and families of their right to seek asylum.

Since the founding of the United States, the nation has upheld a moral responsibility to offer refuge to those in need, providing a chance to build a new life and pursue the American dream.

But now, that dream is slipping away – especially for those who have fled war-torn regions or escaped their homes in the dead of night out of fear for their lives.

This situation is heartbreaking, but we cannot allow America’s moral compass to waver.

For decades, tens of thousands of refugees have endured long, grueling waits for the opportunity to rebuild their lives in the United States. Imagine their despair.

Many can never return home – to places like Afghan-

istan, Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo – due to ongoing conflict, the threat of torture or even death. Women and girls are especially vulnerable. Meanwhile, unaccompanied children who have braved perilous journeys to escape violence in Central America now find the border closed to them, leaving their futures uncertain.

In this moment of crisis, we must not turn our backs on those who need us the most. America has long been a beacon of hope for the persecuted, the displaced and the desperate.

To abandon that legacy now would be a betrayal of the very values that define us. We have a moral obligation to stand up for refugees, to advocate for their right to safety and to ensure that the promise of a better future remains within reach.

The time to act is now – before more lives are lost, before more dreams are shattered and before we lose sight of the compassion and humanity that make our nation strong.

Justin D. Bibee is a human rights advocate.

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In 2 states, accuracy of gun forensics challenged

What does a senseless murder more than 30 years ago in Rockford, Illinois, have to do with recent events at the Toolmark Analysis / Firearms Identification Section of the Rhode Island State Crime Laboratory? More than you might think ...

Second of two parts

Recent events at the Toolmark Analysis / Firearms Identification Section of the RI State Crime Laboratory (RICL) have something in common with the Illinois State Police Crime Laboratory in the Pursley case: both laboratories are controlled by law enforcement.

On September 3, 2024 both the RICL and the Attorney General’s Office (RIAG) issued public statements about a problem at the RICL — a nonconformity with laboratory standards in a single case (the ‘mismatch’ case). Remedial steps were taken, including the suspension of internal examinations, the outsourcing of further examinations to an external, accredited laboratory or qualified consultant, and the retention of an outside, accredited agency to conduct an assessment/technical review of the operations of the RICL’s firearms section.

The State Crime Lab Commission (Commission) created by statute to oversee the RICL met twice in August and

once in October, 2024, to discuss the issue. Although subject to the Open Meetings Law (OML), the Commission labeled the issue as a “personnel matter,” which allowed its discussions and actions to be shielded from public scrutiny. Curiously, however, at a Commission meeting on April 11, 2024, the Commission disclosed information relating to a non-conformity issue that appears to be nearly identical to the one that is the subject of the current controversy.

What the Nichols Report recommended

This inconsistent application of the OML was partially mitigated by the external agency report prepared in connection with RICL’s remedial steps. This October 9, 2024, report by Ronald G. Nichols, President, Nichols Forensic Science Consulting, Inc. (“report” or “Nichols’ Report”) was the result. It was provided to defense counsel in the ‘mismatch’ and other pending cases potentially impacted by the ‘personnel matter/nonconformity’ issue. Its findings included:

- three examiners misidentified thirteen fired cartridge cases in the mismatch case, incorrectly identifying a submitted Glock firearm as having made the toolmarks in question
- the misidentification came to light

when the cartridges were correctly connected to a different Glock pistol recovered by another agency

- the misidentification was attributable to the examiners’ exclusive reliance on a toolmark common to all Glock pistols (a “class characteristic”) while ignoring other markings

- greater attention should be paid to “sub-class characteristics”—toolmarks that are more individualized to a specific firearm

The report’s recommendations included:

- analysts should increase their reliance upon “sub-class characteristics”
- analysts should use language more discerning than ‘conclusive’ or ‘inconclusive’ in reports
- ‘conclusive’ results should be based upon an examination of both class characteristics and sub-class and incidental characteristics.

Lowering expectations about toolmarks

Rhode Island is not the only state dealing with this issue, which was identified in a 2009 National Research Council Report (NRC Report) and the 2016 report of the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST Report). Courts across the country have taken steps to improve the reliability and understanding of toolmark analysis. Some of these actions echo the Nichols’ Report recommendations including:

- restrict the degree of certainty in firearm examiners testimony (avoid the use of the word “match” or “conclusive”)
- limit firearms testimony when the opinion is based on class characteristics

only

- allow challenges to an individual analysis (as opposed to the entire field)

Policy considerations

Will the RICL voluntarily accept the “best practices” recommended by the Nichols, NRC, and PCAST reports like other jurisdictions, or will litigation be needed? Consideration of prior history may be helpful: In 2009, the General Assembly considered transferring the RI Department of Health’s (RIDOH) Forensic Science Section to the Rhode Island Department of Public Safety, a law enforcement entity. Coincidentally, the aforementioned NRC Report opposed such a move because it would be inconsistent with each agencies’ functions, create problems of perception and conflict of interest, and inhibit the independence of the laboratory. Fortunately, the transfer was rejected by the legislature.

Additionally, to achieve the best results here, the commission must be more diverse. Currently, it is heavily weighted in favor of law enforcement, with the RIAG serving as its chairperson. Additional members should be appointed – specifically other criminal justice stakeholders such as the judiciary, the criminal defense bar, the larger legal community and additional representatives from the academic community, especially from the University of Rhode Island’s renowned College of Engineering, given that field so closely fits with the functions of the RICL.

Michael A. DiLauro, Esq.
The Just Criminal Justice Group LLC
Warwick



Town of Johnston Notice of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws § 45-24-53 that the Johnston Town Council will hold a Public Hearing **February 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Johnston Municipal Court, located at 1600 Atwood Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider proposed **Ordinance 2025-3 (formerly 2024-CP-158)** to amend the Zoning Ordinance and the Official Zoning Map, as summarized here.

Applicant:	Valerie J. McGuire
Assessor’s Plat:	57
Assessor’s Lots	170
Present Classification:	B-2 & R-40
Proposed Change to:	B-2
Said lot being located on:	Hartford Avenue

The proposed Ordinance may be altered or amended prior to the close of the public hearing without further advertising, as a result of further study or because of the views expressed at the public hearing. Said proposed Ordinance is available at the office of the Town Clerk for examination. Any alteration or amendment will be presented for comment in the course of the hearing. All persons interested in the above application are requested to attend said meeting and be heard. Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the Office of the Town Clerk seventy-two (72) hours in advance of the hearing date.

Per Order:
Robert V. Russo
Johnston Town Council

Attest:
Vincent P. Baccari, Jr.
Town Clerk

1/23, 1/30, 2/6/25



INVITATION TO BID
Greater Providence YMCA
East Side/Mt. Hope Branch
438 Hope St., Providence, RI

Project: Removal and replacement of aerobics studio flooring with Mondo VinylSport VM66 for ADA compliance.

Bid Docs: Available in person or via email from Dylan Desrosiers at (401) 427-1873 or ddesrosiers@gpymca.org.

Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference: Friday, February 7, 2025 at 10AM.

1/23, 1/30/25

Town of Johnston

Notice is given pursuant to Rhode Island General Law § 3-5-17 that the Johnston Town Council, sitting as the Liquor Licensing Commission under Title 3 Chapter 5 of the Rhode Island General Laws of 1956, as amended, shall hold a Public Hearing on **February 10th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Johnston Municipal Court Building, 1600 Atwood Avenue, Johnston, RI.

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

Applicant: Ever Barillas
Business Name: Casa Noble, LLC
d/b/a Casa Noble Restaurant
Location: 761 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919
License Type: Class BV-Full - Liquor License-

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

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

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

1/23, 1/30/25

TOWN OF JOHNSTON Notice of Public Hearing

DATE: **March 4, 2025 — 6:00 p.m.**
PLACE: **Johnston Senior Center**
1291 Hartford Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919

Pursuant to the Rhode Island Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (RIPDES) General Permit for Storm Water Discharge from Small MS4s and from Industrial Activity at Eligible Facilities Operated by Regu-

lated Small MS4s(General Permit), a public hearing will be held at the Johnston Senior Center on March 4, 2025 at 6:00 PM to discuss the Johnston PHASE II STORMWATER ANNUAL REPORT.

Name and mailing address of Small MS4 Operator: Town of Johnston, 1385 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, Rhode Island 02919; RIPDES PERMIT #RI040

In accordance with Part IV-E of the RIPDES GENERAL PERMIT, the operator must annually evaluate their compliance with the Storm Water Management Program Plan (SWMPP) and the conditions of the GENERAL PERMIT, as well as the appropriateness of the selected Best Management Practices and efforts toward achieving the measurable goals.

This NOTICE is hereby given of the best intent to receive public comment and to hold a public hearing regarding the Towns Phase II Storm Water Annual Report. Interested parties may submit comments on the draft annual report to the Department of Public Works by the close of public comment period.

Written responses to significant comments received will be provided to those persons that submitted said comments and all persons that request a copy of the responses. The responses will include a final Annual Report and identify what changes to the SWMPP have been made, if any.

The Annual Report (Final Version), any proposed amendments to the SWMPP, and all public comments will be submitted to RIDEM.

Copies of the proposed Phase II Storm Water Annual Report may be viewed at the Johnston Town Hall (1385 Hartford Avenue, Town Clerks Office), Department of Public Works, or Towns Website.

Availability of Information

The proposal and accompanying documents are available for public review during normal business hours (7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) at the Johnston Zoning Office, 100 Irons Avenue.

All persons interested in the proposal are requested to be present at the time and place to be heard thereon. Representation may be by an attorney or other party; advice may be obtained on particular aspects of the application process and legal procedures, and recourses after Zoning Board hearing and decision.

Facilities are accessible to the handicapped—special accommodations

may be requested from the Zoning Office, (401) 231-4000 ext 4068, at least 48 hours before meetings. Persons using TDD equipment may contact the Town through “Relay Rhode Island” at 1 (800) 745-5555.

Per Order of the Johnston Department of Development and Public Service

1/23, 1/30/25

Town of Johnston Planning Board REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**Tuesday, February 4th, 2025
6:00 P.M.
Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919**

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

III. OLD BUSINESS

PB 24-42 - Forest Drive Solar. A Vote to Continue from the February 4th Meeting to the March 4th Meeting. AP 46 Lots 103, 171, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212 and 213- Zoned R-40. Owner:- Shore Holdings, LLC. Applicant -Revity Energy.

PB 24-41 – ZBA File 2022-2 – Petition of Johnston Asphalt LLC, Applicant for 100 Allendale Avenue, AP 36 Lot 77, zoned Industrial. The petitioner is seeking a Special Use Permit Section 340-75 for Installation of Two Hot Mix Asphalt Storage Silos. This matter is before the Planning Board for (1) an advisory opinion prior to the Zoning Board’s hearing on remand from the Superior Court; (2) requested waiver of site plan review pursuant to § 340-27(A) (3) of the Zoning Ordinance; and (3) recommendation to Building Inspector pursuant to § 340-13 of the Zoning Ordinance.

IV. NEW BUSINESS: NONE

V. ADJOURNMENT

- The Planning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at <https://clerkshq.com/johnston-ri> or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.
- Items not heard by 9:00 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.
- Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

1/30/25

University of Rhode Island names Johnston students to Fall Dean’s List

The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several Johnston students have been named to its Fall 2024 Dean’s List. Among them are: Joseph Acciardo, Ife Alarapon, Aliza Almonte, Jade Almonte, Alyssa Andrade, Abigail Andres, Ben Annicelli, Kayla Aquilante, Gabriella Athaide, Anthony Autiello, Kevin Biscelli, Keri Brule, Melanie Capraro, Nick Carlino, DJ Casenas, Ryan Chhay, Christopher Civetti, Janet Clements, Elise Connors, Nicholas Cronan, Joseph Cuoco, Gulianna Desmarais, Willson El Hage, Jeremy Farias, Gezzelle Fernandez, Jennelle Fernandez, Julian Fitzgerald, Raff Florio, Mike Foncellino, Chris Forte, Chris Geraghty, Habiba Ghazi, Milan Gil, Samantha Grullon, Dee Harley, Maddie Heroux, Malik Hill, Charlene Hohlmaier, Tessa Huelsman, Jennifer Hutchings, Ashley Ibeh, Ifeanyi Ibeh, Lila Imrane, Jared Janiak, Kaylee Lameiro, Gabriella Lombari, Cassie Magnone, Gregory Manni, Brooke Marcotte, Samantha

Marcotte, Giulia Marrocco, Peyton McClish, Aidan McCrillis, Andrew Medeiros, Manee Men, Justin Midence, Thomas Missirlis, Jaylen Molina, Mia Laine Mollicone, Sarah Monahan, Jessica Mongeau, Carlos Monteiro, Mahammad Nadirli, Ayomide Olagundoye, Lilian Oliva Garcia, Dominic Pacheco, Jason Padula, Brady Parmentier, Bryan Perez, Matthew Petrarca, Ashley Piccolo, Mel Privitera, Isabella Ragosta, Mia Ragosta, Joe Raulino, Marissa Reilly, Marlene Reyes, John Rico, Katie Rico, Jack Russo, Kyle Samms, Kasem Sasa, Lily Scuncio, Makayla Scuncio, Awa Shahzad, Natalina Sharpe, Joseph Silvia, Athena Sin, Jayden Testa, Joseph Thomas, Jackson Troxell, Nick Viau, Danielle Warren, Hailey Weedon, Jimmy Zhang

To be included on the Dean’s List, full-time students must have completed 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable during a semester and achieved at least a 3.30 quality point average. Part-

time students qualify with the accumulation of 12 or more credits for letter grades which are GPA applicable earning at least a 3.30 quality point average.

The University of Rhode Island is a diverse and dynamic community whose members are connected by a common quest for knowledge. As a global education leader and the state of Rhode Island’s flagship public research institution, URI offers distinctive opportunities designed to meet the global challenges of today’s world and the rapidly evolving needs of tomorrow. Founded in 1892, URI now enrolls more than 18,000 students and offers more than 200 degree programs across nine schools and colleges. As a land- and seagrant institution, URI is a key driver of economic development in Rhode Island and contributes significantly to the health and vitality of the state, the New England region, and the nation. To learn more, visit: uri.edu.



Celebration of Life

Recently, at the Johnston Senior Center, Elaine Vita and her daughter Debra Vita, (pictured) hosted a celebration of life for Robert Vita, who was a member of the Center for over 20 years, and whose death two years ago was remembered. Robert participated in many events including bus trips, holiday celebrations, and mystery lunch. Bob was loved by many here at the Center and a man of faith and family. (Submitted photo)

■ Budget (Continued from page 1)

actuarially determined contributions (ADC) were made.

The town’s two largest locally administered pension plans, for police and firefighters hired before July 1, 2010 and July 1, 1999, respectively, were funded at the ADC for the five years.

The Auditor General’s office did note some negative trends as well. Audited financial statements were consistently being issued between 8 and 12 months after year end. The towns other post-employee benefits plan is managed in trust; however, annual contributions were significantly less than required. The office also noted the town’s school budget deficit.

Last year, the school department’s budget increased \$3.7 million to a total of \$63,496,920, with \$2.7 million coming from the state and \$1 million from local appropriations. That led to an overall increase of 5.82% in their budget. Comparatively, on the town side of the equation, the budget increased 3.57%.

During last year’s approval process, Councilman Robert Civetti calculated that the school department saw an increase of about 5.5%.

“We’re definitely going to have to meet with them and look at their budget a little bit further,” Civetti said at the time.

The School Department is facing a mounting budget deficit, now approaching \$2 million. The School

Department’s deficit began in 2019 when the district’s operating expenses outpaced revenues. By 2020, the department faced a cumulative deficit that has grown steadily each year, reaching nearly \$1.6 million by the end of 2023. Projections for 2024 suggest an additional deficit of \$400,000 to \$500,000.

According to Polisena, a budget should be presented during the next few weeks. While there is no indication yet of how much the budget will increase or whether there will be a corresponding tax increase, Polisena noted potential economic headwinds.

“Budgets always seem to grow because everything goes up in cost, right? You never pay somebody less—you’ll only pay them more,” Polisena explained, highlighting rising costs in both public and private sectors.

Acknowledging the reality of annual pay increases for rank-and-file workers and their effect on the town’s finances, especially those in unions, the mayor noted, “They always get raises every year, whether that’s 1%, 3%, 2.5% or whatever it may be. I think we need to always balance that with growth because we get growth every year. The growth is, you know, dependent on what gets built and what our costs are.”

Addressing the town’s infrastructure challenges, Polisena pointed to outdated systems in need of urgent attention.

“We’ve got pipes that are 80 years old that should have been replaced

probably 40 years ago,” he said. Public buildings, he added, are also deteriorating and require investment.

While commending efforts by past administrations and town councils to keep taxes low during the last two decades, Polisena spoke about a measured approach to taxation. He called it a “balancing act” of making necessary improvements while keeping taxes in line. He cautioned against avoiding tax increases entirely, citing potential long-term budget issues.

“You need to not just avoid raising taxes for four or five years in a row. I think that can cause budget problems,” he said. “But you have to hold the line on taxes, whether that means you don’t raise them, or you only raise them by a nickel, a dime, fifteen cents – whatever it may be.”

Using an analogy, the mayor compared his approach to fiscal management to chopping up credit cards and eating ramen noodles every day, a strategy that may work but have negative outcomes.

“What I think does take skill is ... in that example, to eat healthy without spending a lot. Cutting coupons, buying things that are on sale – that’s what I would equate to the town.”

Polisena said he believes in emphasizing cautious investment.

“I would like to invest in the community, but invest wisely, and only invest what I have to,” he said.

Obituaries

Sean C. Kelley

Sean C. Kelley, 51, of Warwick, passed away peacefully surrounded by his loving family, Saturday afternoon, January 25, 2025 at Rhode Island Hospital.

Born in Providence, the beloved son of Lucy P. (Brennan) Kelley of Johnston and the late Francis X. Kelley. He grew up in Johnston and lived in Cranston before moving to Warwick in 2016.



Sean had a passion for cars. During the span of his career, he explored roles within the automotive field. Within the Cranston area he was a much sought after auto mechanic as a graduate of New England Technology and Certified Master Technician in multiple areas of auto repair. From 2000-2006 Sean operated his own repair shop, Pontiac Service. He was well known for his honesty, integrity and fair pricing. After closure of Pontiac Service, Sean became an auto instructor at MTI followed by UTI. When UTI closed the Massachusetts campus, he worked for the Rhode Island Department of Motor Vehicles as an inspector.

An avid New England Sports fans, Sean loved the Patriots, Bruins and Red Sox.

Besides his mother he is survived by a son, Luke P. Kelley; a sister, Mary F. Kelley and his aunt, Eileen Kevane. He was predeceased by his sister, Patricia A. Kelley.

His funeral will be held Friday, January 31, 2025 at 8:45 a.m. from the PRATA-GALLOGLY Funeral Home, 78 Providence Street, West Warwick followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10:00 a.m. in St. Robert Bellarmine Church, 1804 Atwood Avenue, Johnston. Interment will be in St. Ann Cemetery, Cranston. Visiting hours Thursday 4:00-7:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, contributions to St. Robert Bellarmine Food Shelf, 1804 Atwood Avenue, Johnston, RI 02919 in his memory would be appreciated. Information and condolence, please visit: www.Prata-Gallogly.com

Obituaries

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

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

– Thank you

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WEEK'S PUZZLE:**

A	R	E	N	A	S		M	G	D							
T	I	M	E	L	E	S	S		S	A	N	A				
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Sun. Feb. 2- SPUMONI'S, Pawt- SOLD OUT!
Sat. Feb. 8- ASSADOS, Harmony (matinee)
Sun. Feb. 9- CROSSROADS PUB, Warren (matinee)
Fri. Feb. 14- LIONS CLUB, Pawt. (Valentines Day)
Sat. Feb. 15- RIVER FALLS, Woon. 4:30 dinner
Sun. Feb. 23- NEWPORT PLAYHOUSE, Newp. (matinee)
Sat. Mar. 1- Tri-City Elks Lodge, Wrwk. (Show only- \$25)
Sun. March 2- 579 BENEFIT, Pawt. 2:30 dinner
Sat. April 5- O'ROURKE'S, Cranston



Reservations, info @ agingdisgracefully.net

**Enter for a chance
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2025 Chevy Trax 1RS**



Vehicle courtesy of Hurd Auto Mall, Johnston

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\$50 EACH OR 3 FOR \$100**
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BEACON MEDIA, 1944 WARWICK AVE, WARWICK
AND FROM MEMBERS OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF WARWICK**

Proceeds from the raffle to benefit local non profit organizations

Raffle run by the Rotary Club of Warwick. Drawing to be held April 2025,
winner has option of cash, full details on the ticket

Must be 18 years of age to participate. Odds of winning are 1 in 3000



The WRWC looks to surpass the the turnout of last fall's successful river walks in the new year. (Submitted photo)

Woony River walks kick off the year in style

By BARBARA POLICHETTI

Make 2025 a year of discovery with monthly walks organized by the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC). The organization is partnering with “15 Minute Field Trips,” to offer the community a year-long series of activities that will explore the Woonasquatucket River greenway in Johnston and beyond.

The walks offer hands-on activities and have something of interest for nature lovers of all ages – whether it’s learning about coyotes, mushrooms, bees, or how to preserve the watershed’s ecosystem.

“Our team is thrilled to collaborate with 15 Minute Field Trips to bring these exciting and educational opportunities to Johnston,” said Colleen Keenan, WRWC’s Events & Outreach Coordinator. “We hope families of all backgrounds will join us for these events to explore, learn, and connect with the amazing natural spaces in their own communities.”

15 Minute Field Trips is a non-profit educational organization which combines art, community action and love of nature to offer hands-on education programs. The WRWC notes that the walks are more than just fun and a chance to get outside – they are also an invitation for the community to engage in local conservation efforts. Each activity is designed to help raise awareness about biodiversity and sustainability.

The organization has monthly walks scheduled through November 2025 and many will feature special guests, including experts from the Rhode Island Mycological Society and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island. Activities will include science experiments, observing moths and bats, discovering local wildlife such as turtles and coyotes, exploring pollinators at work,

and crafting art from repurposed materials.

The walks began last fall and were well received, with people of all ages showing up to learn about the natural wonders that exist not far from their own backyards.

The Greenway is a 7-mile public, multi-use trail that runs alongside the Woonasquatucket River and is a popular recreational space for walkers, cyclists and runners. The trail begins at Lyman Avenue in Johnston and connects amenities such as Buttonhole Golf Course, Snake Run Skate Park, and fish ladders as it continues into downtown Providence.

The walks are free and start at the fish ladder off Goldsmith St. in

Johnston. In general, each walk lasts about 1.5 hours. If people would like to register in advance, they can visit <https://tinyurl.com/15MT2025>. They can also keep up with the outings and other WRWC events by following the organization on Facebook and visiting <https://wrwc.org>.

The Woonasquatucket River begins in a swampy area in North Smithfield and flows southeast through increasingly populated communities to end in downtown Providence near the Providence Place Mall. It is nearly 16 miles long and drains a watershed of about 50 square miles. Its name is Algonquian for “where the saltwater ends,” and it is often called “the Woony” by locals for short.

2025 River Walks Schedule

Curious About Coyotes (January 25) – Learn about the habits and habitats of these fascinating creatures through stories, games, and tracking activities.

Likable Lichens (February 22) – Explore the symbiotic relationships that create lichens and their role in ecosystems during this interactive field trip.

March of the Frogs (March 29) – Discover the life cycle of frogs, meet live amphibians, and learn about their importance to the local environment.

Making Mushroom Logs (April 26) – Get hands-on with fungi as we create mushroom-growing logs to take home and learn about their ecological benefits.

Bike for Bees and Butterflies (May 31) – Ride the Greenway while learning about pollinators

Moth Night (June 28) – Attract and observe moths and discover the nocturnal wonders of the insect world.

Terrific Turtles (July 26) – Meet local turtles, learn about their habitats, and create turtle-themed crafts.

Mushroom Walk (August 30) – Join experts from the Rhode Island Mycological Society to identify and learn about wild mushrooms.

Traveling Seed Circus (September 27) – Experience a playful, educational presentation on seed dispersal and take home native seed packets.

Just Batty! (October 25) – Celebrate bats with interactive games, live demonstrations, and bat-themed art projects.

Turkey Trot! (November 28) – Talk turkey about wildlife along the Greenway while enjoying a seasonal outdoor adventure.

POLICE LOG

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

On January 10 just before 6 p.m. Patrolmen Gendreau and Levesque responded to Susan Elizabeth Drive for a report of an SUV off of the roadway.

At the scene, officers met with an eyewitness who stated they pulled into their driveway and observed a motor vehicle stopped on the street, which had not moved for a short period of time. Officers were then told that the vehicle proceeded through the dead end, off the road onto the grass, and into a front yard before circling around. The eyewitness then asked the operator to stop and turn over the vehicle's keys. Police were then alerted.

Contact was then made with the driver, identified as David Buote, 49, of 2 Jasmine Lane, Johnston. In their report, officers indicated that the vehicle was parked on a large hill with the headlight still activated. They observed indentations

where the motor vehicle had traveled and circled before coming to a stop.

When questioned, Buote allegedly told officers that he didn't know he was parked in someone's yard. He was asked to exit his vehicle and positioned on the roadway. Officers reported that Buote was incoherent, confused, and smelled of alcohol. Buote was asked how much alcohol he had consumed, responding with "not much" and "two nips"

A search of Buote revealed an emptied vodka nip in his coat pocket. A series of standardized sobriety tests were then initiated by officers, who determined based on their training and experience that Buote was incapable of safely operating a vehicle. Buote was taken into custody and transported to police headquarters.

A search of his vehicle prior to towing revealed an additional seven nips located inside of the front driver and passenger side cabin, six empty and one

full. At the station Buote was given a breathalyzer test twice, which produced a blood alcohol content reading of .304 and .289.

Buote was charged with several offenses, including driving with an expired license first offense, laned roadway violations, and driving under the influence with a blood alcohol content of .15 or greater, first offense. He was later released with a Third District Court summons to appear on January 24.

BENCH WARRANT

On January 13 at approximately 5 p.m. while on a fixed post on Hartford Ave., Officer DeFelice observed a car pass his location traveling at 57 mph in a 35 mph zone.

A traffic stop was then initiated, and contact was made with the driver, later identified as Kenneth Snead Junior, 46, of 52 Lake St. in Providence. Background checks on Snead revealed he had an active bench

warrant for failure to appear in reference to an arrest for reckless driving and other offenses out of the Lincoln State Police barracks.

Snead was taken into custody, transported to police headquarters and processed. He was issued an E-citation for speeding 11+ miles per hour in excess of the posted speed limit, and driving with an expired registration. He was later transported to the ACI men's intake center.

SHOPLIFTING

Officer Murphy reports that on January 15 at approximately 8:30 p.m., he was on a fixed post on Hartford Avenue when he observed a car traveling westbound with no front registration plate.

Murphy reports that the car came to a stop at a red light at the entrance to the Amazon fulfillment center before making a U-turn and proceeding eastbound on Hartford Avenue.

A traffic stop was then conducted and contact was made

with the driver, identified as Sandro Crugnale, 51, of 2154 Hartford Avenue Apt. 9 in Johnston. While running checks on Crugnale, an active warrant issued by the Johnston Police Department was discovered. Crugnale's license was also revealed to be suspended, with Crugnale having three prior convictions for the same charge.

Checks of the vehicle's registration revealed that they did not match the vehicle they were attached to, and the car he was driving was not registered. According to several police reports, Crugnale had allegedly shoplifted on multiple occasions from the Season's Corner Market located at 1680 Hartford Ave.

Crugnale was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and held pending arraignment. He was also issued a summons for operation of an unregistered vehicle, and a summons for display of plates,

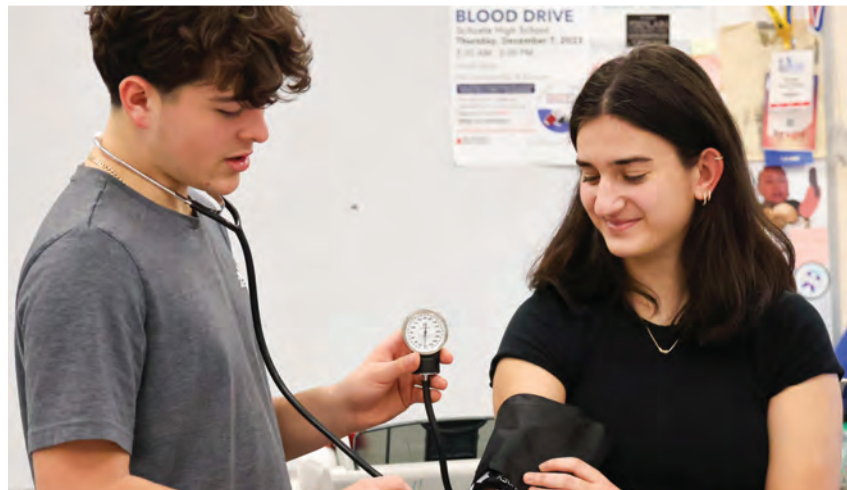


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OPEN HOUSE

WEDNESDAY | FEB. 5, 2025 | 6 P.M.

Snow Date: Feb 12th



10:1

STUDENT TEACHER RATIO

5

RIDE-APPROVED CTE PATHWAYS

12

PATHWAY ENDORSEMENTS

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These are just some of the dilapidated conditions found at (L to R) Town Hall, the Fire Department Headquarters and the Police Department Headquarters. (Submitted photos courtesy of Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr.)

■ Campus

(Continued from page 1)

to Schools Superintendent Bernard DiLullo, who said he learned of the plan the same time it was released to the public. The town had been exploring the possibility of building a new high school. The planned building was to be built for 761 students, as NESDEC (New England School Development Council) projections show Johnston’s enrollment beginning to shrink in the 2025-26 school year, reaching 761 in the 2028-29 school year.

DiLullo said he preferred not to comment on any proposals yet as he did not have the complete details.

TAKING BY EMINENT DOMAIN

“As many of you are aware, there is a 252-unit, 100% low-income housing project being proposed off George Waterman Road. The developer is using state law to usurp town zoning, ultimately rendering the town powerless to stop the project,” Mayor Polisena said in a Facebook post announcing his decision on Monday. “This project would cost our current taxpayers millions, with at least \$2 million to educate the kids in our school system. With that being said, I am hereby announcing the taking of all 31 acres of that land by eminent domain.”

In response to inquiries from the Sun Rise, Polisena said several situational factors led to the selection of the site. He said town buildings are “decrepit” and first responders work “in squalor.” He added that the administration took a hard look at three different sites in the past for facilities improvements, with the hardest look given to AA Wrecking. at 1307 Hartford Ave., but those plans did not come to fruition.

Prior to the announcement of this housing development, the town had no designs on the 31-acre parcel with access to sewers and water.

Polisena said the proposed municipal complex is “not extravagant, but modern and efficient buildings for our first responders and employees.” He said he believes the change will provide a “one stop shopping experience” for residents, who will no longer have to drive to different town buildings to receive certain services. He also advocated that bringing public safety closer to residents



will provide more security, particularly from a firefighter perspective, as many of their rescue runs are to residential homes and not commercial businesses.

The ambitious proposal seeks to modernize all three facilities with new buildings. It also seeks to provide economic and operational efficiencies and 21st century services to the community. It also appears to block a proposed low-income housing plan now in its pre-application stage.

PROPOSED HOUSING PROJECT

The housing project, proposed by Waterman Chenango LLC of Johnston, seeks to build a 255-apartment building on the same land at 178 and 200 George Waterman Road. According to a letter from Kelley Morris Salvatore, the Providence lawyer representing the project, it would consist entirely of rental units for low-income residents. She described the property as 31 acres, of which about 18 acres are upland-land that is buildable, not wetlands or other environmentally sensitive land. A call to Morris Salvatore went unreturned prior to the Sun Rise deadline.

“I still think the American dream is to own a home,” said the mayor in a recent interview, adding that he is committed to supporting policies that promote homeownership versus prioritizing renting.

“But I think there is a way to incentivize homeownership, and I understand times are tough,” he said, citing taxation and construction incentivization. “However, I do not want to do anything to incentivize renting, whether that be market-rate rent or low-income rent.”

During the council presentation, public comments were open for the overflow crowd, which spilled outside into the parking lot. One member of the public, Janison Astentao, a resident of Johnston, spoke out against the proposal and asked the council to seek a compromise.

“The reason I came here primarily is because of the housing crisis in Rhode Island and America. Two hundred and fifty plus units of housing is an extreme amount of housing and it’s something people have needed,” Astentao said, acknowledging that there was a need for new town buildings as well. “It’s a real trouble getting housing and getting a place where your family can stay. I really ask that you consider what your resi-



dents need.”

THE MUNICIPAL CAMPUS PROPOSAL

The resolution cites a review conducted by Police Chief Mark Vieira and Fire Chief David Iannuccilli that found the site is an “excellent” location for public safety services. All three town buildings are approaching the end of their operational usefulness, according to the mayor and chiefs.

Fire Chief David Iannuccilli presented the council with a laundry list of deficiencies and derelictions his Fire Department faces, including a basement with only one egress and a building that doesn’t meet fire code. He said the department had outgrown the station, which now presents health and safety hazards.

“I have been on the department for over 30 years, and during that time, there have been no significant upgrades to the building other than any needed repairs. The current condition of our building has led to an increase in the cost of repairs, and as time goes on these repairs become more frequent and more expensive,” said Iannuccilli. “Our building does not meet national fire protection agency standards.”

Dozens of pictures of current physical conditions of the Fire Department were presented to the council in the form of a packet during the council meeting. He added that the station does not have a working sprinkler system, something the department requires of businesses in town.

“More importantly, it’s my concern of the life and safety issues that are present throughout the building, but to be honest, my firefighters deserve better,” said Iannuccilli.

For Police Chief Mark Vieira, department deficiencies mean public safety is at risk. He said the size of the current police force is in jeopardy due to the dilapidated conditions found in flood-prone rooms and jail cells, closet offices and electrical systems.

“There is a concern that our current police station will adversely impact our recruitment and retention efforts due to a less than desirable work environment with overcrowded workspaces and the inability to support

■ CAMPUS - PAGE 17



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Narragansett Bay is laboratory for URI PhD candidate



Recipients of Emerging Coastal Leader Awards gather for a group photo at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus. (Photos courtesy of Rickie Ewton)



Ewton with her Emerging Coastal Leader Award and Elin Torrell, director of the Coastal Institute at URI.

By JOHN HOWELL

As an elementary school student, Erica “Rickie” Ewton read Jurassic Park. It was an introduction to biology, and as a kid she dreamed of somehow procuring dinosaur DNA and creating her own park.

She remembers thinking, “You can do anything if you put your mind to it.” Her love of reading and her mother, Stacey, had a lot to do with her pursuit of discovery. The reading introduced her to new places and ideas.

“I latched onto science,” she says.

Her mother, a hard worker, kept her on track.

Ewton grew up in Oregon and went to Oregon State University for undergraduate studies. As a sophomore, she was accepted into a program that took her to Australia, where she accompanied a team doing studies on corals. As she was 17 years old, her mother had to sign for her to receive a passport. The experience furthered her interest in research, biology and science.

The Warwick resident is a recent recipient of an Emerging Coastal Leader Award at the University of Rhode Island. Her field of study has taken her from that early dream of dinosaurs to creatures so small – 5 microns – they aren’t visible to the naked eye. They predate dinosaurs and are considered among the first living organisms – plankton.

There are thousands of plankton species, and Ewton is doing her dissertation on the tiny mixoplankton. Her field of study is relatively new. Her research is leading her to discoveries, including new mixoplanktons.

Ewton is a PhD candidate in biological oceanography at the university’s Graduate School of Oceanography. She anticipates walking across the stage with her husband, Connor Jaymes Dionne, this spring to receive her PhD. Dionne is likewise finishing his dissertation. He is studying how to make batteries more efficient and sustainable by modeling and fabricating them from novel materials that are more abundant and geopolitically secure.

It was serendipitous that Ewton and Dionne should meet. Always prepared to try something new – Ewton calls herself a “serial hobbyist” – and realizing she needed a break from her passion for scientific research, she decided to learn ballroom dancing. She and Dionne were paired. They excelled. Their team competed nationally and they won competitions. They would have continued had it not been for the pandemic that fractured the team. But the partnership between Ewton and Dionne blossomed. They were married in 2021.

Narragansett Bay is Ewton’s laboratory. She builds upon water data that includes salinity, temperature, oxygen content and other characteristics that have been recorded daily from the same location in the middle

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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By JENNIFER COATES

In his novel entitled *It's About Time*, author Richard Ratcliff penned these poignant words: "I am learning daily to be the reluctant guardian of your memories. There was once light in those eyes; I miss that." There are many family members and caregivers who share these same sentiments when talking about the ones they love who are suffering from memory loss. Memory loss, whether the result of aging, dementia, Alzheimer's Disease or other causes, can alter the course of our life's journey. As painful as it is to admit, there often comes a time when those who suffer from memory loss can no longer live independently or, in many cases, remain at home with family or other caregivers. Safety becomes a deep concern, but so does the sustainability of a situation which can be stressful and even debilitating for long-term caregivers. It is times like these when the support and resources of a memory care assisted-living residence such as Briarcliffe Gardens become so important. This established, state-of-the-art residence, situated on a private, 30-acre campus in Johnston, provides a comprehensive and compassionate home where memory-loss residents can still live fulfilling, vibrant and active lives.

Thought has been put into every feature of this memory-care residence. When the plans were being drafted for Briarcliffe Gardens, director and owner Akshay Talwar, along with his team, poured over every detail. Each design decision was based on thorough research conducted by evaluating other memory care programs around the country. Talwar felt he could improve upon what was previously available to people in need of these services and broke the mold in the design of Briarcliffe Gardens.

Every detail here was carefully curated, from the soaring ceilings and skylights of their common rooms to the variety



There is always something brewing at Briarcliffe, including this recent entertainment by fan-favorite singer, Vini Ames. Keeping life vibrant and engaging is one of the primary goals at this state-of-the-art Memory Care Assisted Living Residence in Johnston.

of therapeutic programs to the caliber and training of its professional staff. All are intended to enhance the quality of life and the safety of the residents of this homey center. Special attention has been paid to those activities which spur memories, encourage socialization and connectedness, lift morale and offer support, give a feeling of predictability, calm and order, and entertain and inspire. Some of the many other features of Briarcliffe Gardens include:

- Sunny & cheerful common spaces for entertainment, crafts and socialization
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Schedule your personal tour of Briarcliffe Gardens, located on Old Pocasset Road in Johnston by contacting them at 401-944-2450, ext. 202. For more information, you can also visit them at www.briarcliffegardens.com.

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Sports

Martins making history in senior year

JHS grappler hits 100 wins, looks to make noise at states

By ALEX SPONSELLER

Johnston wrestler Logan Martins has been a staple in the town's wrestling community for a decade and has enjoyed a historic senior year at JHS this winter.

The all-stater has done some of his best work this campaign and recently hit his 100th career win. He did so in front of his team, friends and family, and it marked one of the several significant milestones he has achieved on Cherry Hill.

"It was a great feeling. I've been wrestling since the third grade. I didn't start off too well, so to get 100 wins in high school, it's pretty cool. I've competed in a lot of tournaments, got a lot of matches in. It's really special. I was surprised, I got a plaque, my family was there, my brother was back from college, my old coaches were there. It was cool," said Martins. "It was something that I thought about a lot, I tracked every



Logan Martins (center) along with his parents and the Johnston coaching staff at last week's senior night. (Beacon Media photos)

MARTINS - PAGE 16



Shemore Constant (left) and Henry Rodriguez (right). (Photos by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com)

Panthers still fighting for first DI victory

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston boys basketball team is still looking for its first win in its opening season in the Division I ranks as it sits at 0-12 in the league and 0-14 overall.

The Panthers dropped a pair of games in the past week, falling to defending Division II champ Lincoln 67-45 then Shea 56-18 on Monday night.

The Panthers were back in action on Wednesday when they hosted 2-11 Smithfield, hoping to grab a victory before hosting Tiverton and Cranston East next.

BOYS HOCKEY
RMT 5, Coventry/Johnston 2

The Coventry/Johnston boys hockey co-op dropped to 1-7 this season after falling to Rogers/Middletown/Tiverton.

Evan Rogers scored both goals for the co-op while Ethan Almeida, Collin King and Owen Sanders registered assists. Goalie Abby Enos finished the day with 17 saves.



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Midseason report on our winter teams

We're at the mid-season point for winter sports, well, maybe a little beyond the halfway mark, and there has been plenty to digest as we gear up for the playoff push the next few weeks.

Here are some take-aways:

In Division I boys basketball, I felt pretty strongly that Classical would be the odds-on favorite to win it all again. Sure, La Salle and Hendricken would be in the mix, but I felt pretty good that the Purple would repeat as four of their five starters returned from last year's state championship roster.

At this point, the Rams have been the best team in the state as they sit at 10-0, Hendricken got revenge by beating the defending champs last week, and both Central and Barrington have had

their moments and sit firmly in the playoff race.

Although I am not backing down from my original take that Classical will repeat, the Rams have proven to be the better unit by beating the Purple, Hawks and Eagles. They beat Classical by two points, though, and Hendricken earned a hard fought win in Providence last week. Division I, for now, is wide open.

Johnston has had a tough go in its first season in DI. A rebuilding season was to be expected for the Panthers, who graduated their entire starting lineup and moved up. Johnston has yet to get a win, so the goal from here should be to simply improve and lay a foundation for growth next year.

The Pilgrim boys have been strong in Division II as they set their sights on a deep run with an expe-

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR

ALEXS@
RHODYBEAT.COM

rienced, well-rounded group. The team is 5-3 in league play and 11-5 overall. Dylan Vale and Carter Clifton remain one of the best duos in the league and Jack Bannon and Jack Cirelli have been consistent producers behind them. The Pats have gotten so-so results against teams ahead of them in the standings, so there is still one step to be taken before we call them bona fide championship contenders, but there is

plenty of time for them to make that progress. Cranston West is at 5-8 in DII with a brand new starting lineup, so it will be interesting to see how far guys like Noah Germain can take this group and if it can be a factor down the stretch.

Toll Gate has found itself a home in Division III and has been hanging in the top-5 of the division all winter. The team moved down from DII this season and has felt the benefits immediately. Brayden Healy and transfer Damola Oremosu have been arguably the best front court in the division while Jack Colvin and Liam Leahy have been strong in the back court. Similar to the aforementioned Patriots, the Titans have struggled at times against the top few teams, but Toll Gate certainly has the pieces to insert itself into the championship conversation. By the way, the Titans beat the Pats in a cross-over thriller on Monday, further making their case as a DIII power.

Our top girls basketball team has been Pilgrim as it has returned to prominence this year after a season away.

The Pats have been excellent this season and have been led by a large group of sophomores, which makes this success even more impressive. Lily Hall has been the leader as a senior, but sophomores Madison Tu-

irok, Skylar Hawes and Maddison Belanger, among others, have filled out the rest of the lineup and have provided a spark. The Pats entered the week at 6-2 and in third place, with their only losses coming to first and second place Prout and Lincoln School. The game against Prout was a dogfight, but Lincoln School won by a wider margin. Point being, the question in DIII appears to be, can anyone beat the undefeated Lynx? Pilgrim will be right in the mix to reach the finals, but can one of these teams pull off the upset?

We have a few boys hockey teams that have had interesting seasons to this point.

To start, the defending champion Bishop Hendricken Hawks have not skipped a beat after graduating a big senior class headlined by MVP Griffin Crain. Mason Crain and the new leaders have remained a top team and beat the rival Rams last week. Moses Brown entered the week in first place and dealt the Hawks their only loss. Division I is up for grabs, and the Hawks are right at the top ready to go for it.

We have two teams in Division II with championship aspirations.

The East Greenwich-Toll Gate co-op dropped down this season and has had fantastic results, entering the week in first

place. Joe Andreozzi and Jack Kiernan would be top players on any Division I unit, and guys like Brady Parks, Brady Slinn and Wyatt Gelzhiser have enjoyed breakout years behind them. There are legitimately 6-8 teams that have what it takes to win a title, but EG-TG could be the top dog.

Also in that mix is the Cranston co-op. After a 1-3 start, the Falcons have bounced back and sit at 5-4. Devin DeAngelis has been one of the best scorers in the state and Cranston's offense has been sharp as of late, as has freshman goalie Bryce Crance. Consistency will be key for this team, because if it stays hot, anything can happen the rest of the way. The offense runs three lines deep, the defense has a legitimate top line, and Crance has been solid as a freshman. All the pieces are in place for this team to catch fire and make a run.

The Cranston East-West girls swimming co-op has remained unbeaten and in first place as we approach the end of the regular season. For the girls, who have been led by Bianca Asencio and Elaine Wu, their regular season finale is against undefeated Westerly. The regular season title will likely come down to the final meet of the year, setting up what could be a fun division championship the following week.

Frezza breaks record at RIC

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Sophomore Andrew Frezza (Johnston) broke the school record in the 5,000m (15:41.59) as the Rhode Island College men's track and field team competed at the Wheaton College Lyons Invitational on Saturday afternoon. Frezza took third in the 5,000m.

Sophomore Gabriel Dosunmu (Providence) won the long jump (6.63m). Freshman Brody Shiels (Wakefield) won the 600m (1:28.95).

Junior Brandon Mota (West Warwick) finished second in the weight throw (15.88m). Junior Isiah Briggs (Providence) finished second in the long jump (6.48m) and 14th in the 60m (7.32).

Senior Garrett Jones (Beacon Falls, Conn.) finished third in the triple jump (12.51m) and fifth in the long jump (6.18m). Sophomore Giovanni Monteiro (North Providence) finished third in the 600m (1:30.47).

Sophomore Enrique Edjang (Providence) finished third in the weight throw (15.84m). Junior Shamus Culhane (North Kingstown) finished fourth in the weight throw (15.37m).

Freshman Joshua Dabanka (Providence) finished fifth in the triple jump (12.19m) and 12th in the long jump (5.78m). Freshman Trevor Morgan

RIC women shine on track

Junior Tayshia Cary (Wakefield) set a new program record and finished first in the 60m (7.89) as the Rhode Island College women's track and field team competed at the Wheaton College Lyons Invitational on Saturday afternoon. Cary also finished first as part of the 4x200m relay team (1:46.71).

Freshman Quiana Pezza (Cranston) finished first in both the 4x200m relay (1:46.71) and the long jump (4.98m), second in the triple jump (10.73m) and fifth

in both the 60m (8.07) and the 200m invite (27.14).

Fifth-year Trinity Hayes (Providence) finished first in the 4x200m relay (1:46.71), second in both the 200m invite (26.37) and the 400m (1:00.15) and 10th in the 60m (8.37). Freshman Bendu Kamara (Pawtucket) finished first in the 4x200m relay (1:46.71), 11th in the 200m invite (28.66) and 16th in the 60m (8.65).

Sophomore Lexie Zakrzewski (Taunton, Mass.) won the 600m (1:50.52). Senior Samantha Sainristil (Cranston) finished second both in the shot (11.14m) and the weight throw (14.02m).

Sophomore Marlyn Dunlop (Providence) finished second in the 200m open (31.12) and 13th in the 400m (1:16.00). Junior Haley Oliver (Coventry) finished second in the 800m (2:23.97).

Junior Bethanie Jean-Phillipe (Cranston) finished third in the long jump (4.72m). Freshman Grace Lane (North Smithfield) finished third in the 600m (1:52.82).

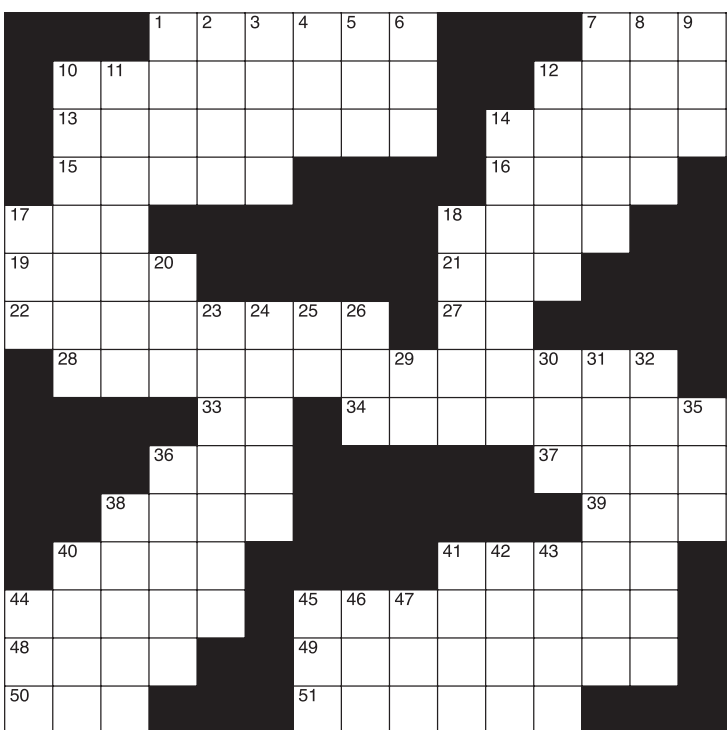
Sophomore Shirley Portillo (North Providence) finished fourth in the 600m (1:54.08). Freshman Funmilayo Mclin (Providence) finished eighth in the weight throw (11.32m).

Junior Milana Melvin (Johnston) finished ninth in the weight throw (10.85m) and 13th in the shot (8.93m). Junior Sasha Sainristil (Cranston) finished 10th in the triple jump (9.32m) and 11th in the long jump (3.73m).

Freshman Mariangely Rodriguez (Providence) finished 13th in the weight throw (9.64m). Freshman Gianna Wilson (Pawtucket) finished 15th in the 800m (2:52.81). Junior Valeria Uribe Calderon (Central Falls) finished 16th in the 800m (3:18.44).

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will compete at Boston University's John Thomas Terrier Classic on Saturday, Feb. 1.

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CLUES ACROSS

- Where entertainers perform
- Miller beer variety
- Ageless
- River in SE Europe
- Able to be repaired
- Type of wrap
- Atomic #54
- Type of tent
- U.S. Treasury position
- Opposed to
- Protective covering
- Bridge building degree
- Clouding of the lens
- Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus
- Unacceptable
- Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
- American national park

- One point south of due east
- Assist in a crime
- Greek mythological personification of Earth
- A major division of geological time
- German courtesy title
- English family dating back to Norman times
- Discounts
- South American nation
- Former Milwaukee Buck Michael
- Hostile
- Passports and drivers licenses are two
- Discourages from doing

CLUES DOWN

- Supreme god of ancient Egyptians
- Nevada city
- Energy, style and enthusiasm
- Bird's beak
- Language
- Midway between south and southeast
- Punjab village
- Small biting flies
- Sportscaster Patrick
- A way to get around
- Repeat
- A way to cook with fat
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Reciprocal of a sine
- Fir tree genus
- "Transformers" director Michael
- Criminals who steal
- Genus of leaf-footed bug
- Music product
- "Talk to you"
- Santa says it three times
- Doctors' group
- African nation
- Ageless
- When you hope to get somewhere
- Worn
- Deprives of vigor
- Used to have (Scottish)
- Where you live
- Muslim ruler title
- Basics
- Type of drug (abbr.)
- Spanish soldier
- It precedes two
- Illuminated

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Check ice before fishing or skating, ponds

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI

Now that it is cold all need to be mindful of ice on ponds and lakes that may look safe but is not. Check with local cities and towns to find out if ice is safe to fish or skate on and use the safety tips offered on state websites before you walk out on ice.

Ice must have a uniform thickness of at least six inches before it is considered safe by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. It generally takes at least five to seven consecutive days of temperatures in the low 20s. However, safe ice is determined by several factors such as the size and depth of a pond, presence of springs or currents, and local temperature fluctuations.

For safe ice tips visit www.mass.gov/service-details/ice-strength-and-safety. In Rhode Island, visit the DEM Division of Parks and Recreation 24-hour ice information line at 401.667.6222. A safe ice guide can be found at www.riparks.com. As of Monday morning, no RI State Park ponds or lakes were declared safe by the State.

Ponds stocked with trout

The State of Massachusetts has a great interactive make that lets you know what ponds were stocked and when. For example, Whiting Pond and Falls Pond in North Attleborough were stocked in September. For a complete list of trout stocked ponds in Massachusetts visit Mass Wildlife at Trout stocking report | Mass.gov.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is conducting winter trout and salmon stocking. Stocking will be in selected areas weather permitting and began this week.

Starting January 21 Rhode Island planned to stock a total of thirteen ponds. As of Monday morning, January 27, the State's website related Carbundle Pond, Coventry; Meadow Brook Pond, Richmond; Watchaug Pond, Charlestown; Wyoming Pond, Hope Valley; Silver Spring Lake, North Kingstown; Barber Pond, South Kingstown; and Round Top Ponds, Burrillville had been stocked. Visit Designated Trout Waters | Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for daily updates.

Fisheries Commission to meet February 4 and 5

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's 2025 Winter Meeting will be held February 4 – 5, 2025 at The Westin Crystal City, Arlington, VA. This will be a hybrid meeting (both in-person and remote) to allow for participation by Commissioners and interested stakeholders.

The ASMFC manages many of the species anglers like to catch, eat and/or release including summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish and striped bass.

Of particular interest to anglers will be the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board meeting taking place Tuesday, February 4 , 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Two key items on the agenda include a review of the proposed 2027 Benchmark Stock Assessment schedule as well as a discussion on the scope of Draft Amendment II for 2026 striped bass measures which will determine regulations for 2026. Regulations for this year (2025) will be the same as last year, one fish/person/day at a slot size of 28" to less than 31".

Visit 2025 Winter Meeting Materials Combined for meeting materials and to live-stream the meeting visit <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1665035982583617623> (Webinar ID 606-647-923); and to call in dial +1 (562) 247-8422, access code 709-788-873.

Offshore wind put on hold except for approved projects, new BOEM guidelines

This week President Trump issued an executive order to temporarily halt off-

shore wind lease sales in federal waters and pause approvals, permits and loans for both onshore and offshore wind projects. Off Massachusetts and Rhode Island waters, windfarms that are already being built or have received final approval will likely continue to be built such as Revolution Wind and Vineyard Wind (now under construction); and South Coast Wind south of Nantucket, which recently received final approval from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM).

The Associated Press reported this week, "The interior secretary will review wind leasing and permitting practices for federal waters and lands. The assessment will consider the environmental impact of wind projects on wildlife, the economic costs associated with the intermittent generation of electricity, and the effect of subsidies on the viability of the wind industry."

The order does not pertain to projects in State waters such as the Block Island Wind Farm that has been operating for a few years now.

Also, last week The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has finalized guidance aimed at mitigating the impacts of offshore wind energy projects on commercial and for-hire recreational fisheries. BOEM's final guidance provides a national framework for addressing social and economic impacts on the fishing industry affected by offshore wind development.

This comprehensive final guidance, informed by extensive public input, establishes clear processes for the offshore wind industry to address potential disruptions to fisheries. It ensures consistency and promotes fair treatment of fishers, regardless of their home or landing port.

The guidance emphasizes early engagement and transparency with fishing communities, encouraging lessees to document interactions. Recommendations in the guidance address design considerations, safety protocols, and financial compensation processes. Compensation measures extend through construction, early operations, and decommissioning, ensuring comprehensive coverage for affected fisheries.

For more information about the guidance, visit BOEM's website at: <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/reducing-or-avoiding-impacts-offshore-wind-energy-fisheries>

Where's the bite?

Cod. Last week Fishing Machine Charters, Pt. Judith, RI at www.fishing-machinecharters.com hooked up with cod in the Cox Ledge wind farm area. Capt. Mike O'Grady said, "We put together a nice catch of cod and choggies with even a few pollack. We will be sailing open boat cod and choggies trips thru the winter when the weather allows us." So, if you are interested in getting out on a boat to fish cod is a good option. In addition to Capt. O'Grady's open boat, large party boats are fishing too. Vessels generally sail between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. and return in the afternoon. Visit www.islandcurrent.com and www.francesfleet.com. Fishing. Full day rates for vessels are generally \$130 to \$135 per adult and around \$80 for those under 12 years old.

Freshwater fishing. This recent cold spell will be great for ice fishers. Cold weather will continue to freeze things over. Beech Pond in Exeter, RI and Voluntown, RI continues to have fishable ice with anglers putting their time in and catching fish there. For a complete list of trout stocked ponds in Massachusetts and Rhode Island see links in above article.

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



Ice fishing can be lots of fun, but both fishers and skaters, should check with towns to make sure the ice is safe. Largemouth bass photo supplied by the MA DEP.

Business Card DIRECTORY

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■ Martins

(Continued from page 13)

one of my matches hoping I’d do it.”

Martins has received interest from college programs, but he is taking his time in weighing his options for the future while focusing on his final high school season. This is Martins’ third year as the team’s captain and he has been leading a young roster both on and off the mats. Martins appreciates the opportunity to be a leader.

“It has been stressful as a senior, thinking about college, but it’s been great to win some tough matches and to show college coaches what I can do,” said Martins. “I’m experienced so it’s also nice to be able to pass that knowledge along, it feels good to see your teammates succeed.”

Martins has also excelled in the classroom and was recently nominated as the school’s male student athlete of the year.

“I’ve always been a student first and I want to be accepted into college for my academics. I work hard in school, so it’s

nice to be recognized for that. It’s a lot with practice every day, doing that with school every day isn’t easy, but I do it,” Martins said.

The Johnston wrestling community reaches far and wide throughout the state, with many grapplers competing at the college ranks. Martins loves being a part of the town’s wrestling scene, one that he has helped maintain the past 10 years.

“A lot of my friends went to other schools, but I went to (Ferri) and then to (Johnston High). I still have some of their parents come watch me, I’ll go watch their tournaments. It’s a nice community that we’ve built,” Martins said.

With just a few matches left before the state championships, Martins is locked in and taking it one day at a time. He has finished fourth twice at states and is looking to crack the top-3 in 2025.

“I’d like to finish in the top-3, but It’s one match at a time,” said Martins. “I just have to keep building, focus on my opponents and make sure I’m wrestling smart.”



Logan Martins after winning a match last week.

Real Estate Transactions

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE	ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
COVENTRY					JOHNSTON				
106 Princeton Ave	Fontaine, Florence	Magiera, Nathan R and Trank, June M	1/6	\$310,000	23 Dennison St	Rossi Elvera M Est and Perlini, Stephanie	Mejia, Jonathan and Mejia, Katia	1/10	\$425,000
156 Fairway Dr Lot 156	Schultz, Lisa	Testa, James D and Testa, Rosemary A	1/7	\$314,900	24 Freedom Ct	Dayalkumar, Bernie	Morin, Christopher and Morin, Lori	1/10	\$506,000
16 Princeton Ave	Paterson, Jerilyn A and Paterson, Nancy L	Seymour, Cathrine	1/10	\$400,000	5 Kingston St	Houde Ft and Houde, Dennis J	lascone, Taylor	1/10	\$445,000
28 Florida Ave	28 Florida LLC	14 Perrin St LLC	1/7	\$275,000	WARWICK				
376 Fairview Ave	Chrzanowski, Daniel and Chrzanowska, Katarzyna	Northup Jr, Thomas D	1/10	\$389,900	101 2nd Ave	Batley, Christion	Sisson, Tammy	1/7	\$330,000
6 Daisy Ln Lot 6	Cianfarani, Ronald G and Cianfarani, Ursula B	Hillman, William and Benson, Mary A	1/10	\$449,900	139 Gordon Ave	C & M Rlty LLC	Greathead, Charles J	1/7	\$399,000
6 Paige Dr	Mulvey, Jennifer H	Douglas, Kimberly and Bourdeau, Debra	1/7	\$300,000	14 Curtis St	Bayha, Robert and Bayha, Sharon L	Oliveira, Oren C	1/7	\$125,000
841 Plainfield Pike	Mortgage Assets Mgmt LLC	Alpha Holdings LLC	1/7	\$156,000	14 Pensacola St	Paradis, Zachary L	Carlson, Kalyan D	1/6	\$393,000
87 Sherwood Valley Ln	Tempo Holdings LLC	Whitfield, John E	1/6	\$240,000	170 Long St	Murgo, Jennifer M	Cortazo, Juan C	1/6	\$380,000
899 Hammet Rd	Cayouette, James M and Cayouette, Tammy J	Lambert, Jennifer	1/7	\$564,900	18 Kernick St	Wanczyk, Stanley E	Linphanit, Linda	1/6	\$310,000
CRANSTON					215 Ottawa Ave	Orion LLC	Driven Rlty LLC	1/3	\$285,000
1 Park View Blvd	Nunez, Laury M and Nunez, Saulo N	Duncan, Kevon	1/6	\$446,000	24 Craig Rd	Kathi E Moter T and Moter, Kathi E	Emmett, Kyle	1/3	\$400,000
100 Packard St	Silvestri Nancy J Est and Havican, Michael D	Watt, Caitlyn T	1/3	\$375,000	2545 W Shore Rd	Tsimikas, George and Tsimikas, Joyce	Harvey, Calene	1/3	\$408,000
101 Warman Ave	Ryan, Cecile M	Faivre, Megan M	1/3	\$180,000	509 Squantum Dr	Phillips, Thomas E and Phillips, Carrie E	Caperton, Daniel and Caperton, Lisa	1/6	\$370,000
101 Warman Ave	Terenzi Linda A Est and Ryan, Cecile M	Faivre, Megan M	1/3	\$180,000	565 Sandy Ln	Sousas Houses To Hm LLC	Bustamante, Elvia Y and Rodas, Miguel A	1/6	\$412,000
106 Fountain Ave	Rodriguez, Hilario and Rodriguez, Karina	Sandoval, Rene A and Ojeda, Diana	1/10	\$460,000	59 Wentworth Ave	Decesare Concetta Est and Decesare, Daniel A	Durand Transportation LLC	1/7	\$276,000
11 Dixwell Ave	Cote, Scott L	Degarcia, Candida C and Garcia, Ramon H	1/3	\$435,000	7 Woodridge Dr	Sheehan 4th, Christopher J and Sheehan, Karissa R	Kristen B Miranda Relt and Miranda, Kristen B	1/3	\$585,000
112 Scenic Dr	Mcgee, Edward W	Natale, Joseph J	1/6	\$338,000	86 Farnum Rd	Lussier Margaret M Est and Johnston, Michelle A	Lgc Hm Improv & Masonry I	1/6	\$307,500
116 Greenwood St	Mealey, David J	Lambert Jr, Raymond A	1/10	\$555,000	90 Huron St	French Jr, Thomas E	Mandeville Prop LLC	1/3	\$90,000
127 Columbia Ave	Ford, Donald P	Broccoli, Jarrod P and Broccoli, Rae S	1/10	\$700,000	WEST GREENWICH				
149 Yeoman Ave	Federal Nati Mtg Assn	Federal Nati Mtg Assn	1/6	\$356,181					
157 Alto St	Bongiorno, Annie and Rodriguez, Wilmer	Varela, Noel R and Nunez, Karina I	1/9	\$550,000					
17 Fairview Ave	Spada, Matthew and Osborn, Leslie	Luong, Minh T and Greenwald, Timothy	1/10	\$586,500	259 Robin Hollow Rd	Bailey, Michael	Billias, Christopher	1/9	\$430,000
200 Cannon St Lot 139	Rego, Duarte M	Rimal, Dikshyanta	1/8	\$290,000	WEST WARWICK				
21 Geranium Cir	Giardina, Joseph R	Belhumeur, Amy L	1/3	\$491,500					
24 Cherry Rd	Joly, Frank J and Joly, Cynthia	Williamson, Winsor P	1/8	\$380,000					
37 Brookfield Dr	Saint Laurent, George P and Saint Laurent, Elizabeth R	Vaca, Andrea E	1/10	\$399,000	1236 Main St	Matos Ft and Matos, Jose F	Day Dream LLC	1/9	\$1,100,000
45 Berry St Lot 918	Wac & Family LLC	Blue Ladder Dev LLC	1/7	\$1,050,000	178 Cowesett Ave	Geary Rita M Est and Laurence, Earlene P	Sylvia, Paul D and Sylvia, Kelly	1/10	\$370,000
45 Berry St Lot 919	Wac & Family LLC	Blue Ladder Dev LLC	1/7	\$1,050,000	57 W Valley Cir Lot 57	Residences At West Vly In	Boucher, Charles and Boucher, Nancy	1/10	\$463,150
45 Berry St Lot 973	Wac & Family LLC	Blue Ladder Dev LLC	1/7	\$1,050,000					
454 Park Ave	Acevedo, Julio and Paula, Gladys	Mesa, Carlos H	1/3	\$460,000					
56-58 Brandon Rd	Brennan, Sandra J and Brennan, Michael J	Velasquez, Baldomero	1/10	\$610,000					
60 Norfolk St	Maclean, Mary P	Reynoso, Josue and Reynoso, Julia	1/8	\$341,500					
60 Norfolk St	Sullivan Nancy L Est and Maclean, Mary P	Reynoso, Josue and Reynoso, Julia	1/8	\$341,500					
66 E Hill Dr	Gertrude G Katz Lt and Katz, Debra M	Petropoulos, Georgia and Petropoulos, Peter	1/10	\$960,000					
EAST GREENWICH									
119 Pine Glen Dr Lot 119, Ledonne, Daniel		Hamor, Mary E	1/8	\$485,000					
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■ Campus

(Continued from page 10)

specialization,” Vieira told the council. “These much-needed improvements are essential to support modern-day policing as the Johnston community continues to grow and evolve. These upgrades would enhance the department’s capacity to continue delivering high quality police services to the community and help assure accreditation standards are maintained.”

Polisena said he believes the complex proposal would take several years to complete. He also anticipates a court challenge to the plan, but said he believes the town is on sound legal ground with its intended public purpose of the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The George Waterman site proposed for these projects, however, does have challenges. About six weeks ago, the administration hired DiPrete Engineering to review the property to determine if it was appropriate for such a development. That review confirmed the site as appropriate for a public safety headquarters and a municipal hall.

Brian Thalmann, senior project manager at DiPrete Engineering, told the Town Council during the resolution meeting that his firm spoke with several divisions of the Department of Environmental Management to ad-

dress potential environmental concerns at the site.

“What we can say is that while there are some challenges that this site presents moving forward, that none of them would be able to derail anything moving through a full design process,”said Thalmann. “We’re comfortable in saying that if this project were to be granted, with the approval at this level and subsequent [eminent] domain process, that the municipal campus could be constructed and would be a good use for this site.”

COUNCIL MEMBERS RESPOND

Following the approval of the resolution, Town Council members spoke with the Sun Rise in regard to the conditions they saw and their thoughts about the proposal.

“I’m very excited because we’re looking for a campus for the ... elementary schools, which is working. Now we’ll have it with our government buildings. We’ll have police, fire, and municipal all in one location, which I think is very efficient, I think it’s a perfect use of the land; I think the town needed it for many years,” said Council President Robert Russo, whose district would include the new complex.

“As we saw in tonight’s presentation, [public safety department] conditions are horrible. I didn’t know they were that deplorable. It’s good for the taxpayers, I think the citizens will be happy with it, it’s going to make it a lot easier for our elderly. We’ve outgrown these facilities,

and I think this is the wave of the future to develop like this.”

Russo did acknowledge, however, that this is a long process and that lawsuits may be inevitable.

“We’re in the business of lawsuits nowadays. But you’ve got the benefit, and do a cost/benefit analysis, and the benefit of what we’re looking to do here justifies the cost of a lawsuit,” he said.

“With the discussions that we heard today, we’re in dire need for a safety complex, and this is an ideal location for it, and I think it was a good decision,” added District 3 Councilman Alfred Carnevale. District 1 Councilwoman Linda Folcarelli said she agreed with his sentiments.

Councilwoman Lauren Garzone felt the resolution was past due.

I am very proud that this town is going into the 21st century on a good foot,” she said while listing the decline in facilities. “With public safety, they save our lives, and we weren’t saving their lives, and that’s a darn shame.”

As the council approved the measure, the town will proceed with eminent domain through the exercise of condemnation as provided by the town Charter and take title. In Rhode Island, the government can exercise eminent domain for a number of reasons, including transportation, public utilities and economic development. The government must pay the owner “just compensation” for the property. That determination has yet to be made.

Where’s your favorite slice?

Round up offers highlights ahead of National Pizza Day

By ROB DUGUAY

If there’s anything most of us can agree on, it’s that pizza is deliciously awesome. Whether you like basic cheese, or something more adventurous like buffalo chicken, you really can’t go wrong with the combination of a good sauce, crispy crust and whatever toppings the mind can dream up. Despite its Italian origins, pizza is an American delicacy and there are people all over the country who are enthusiastic about it by the slice, or even by the whole pie.

On National Pizza Day, Feb. 9, consider hitting up your local pizzeria. Yeah, you can go to Domino’s or Pizza Hut, but the independently run, and sometimes family owned, pizza place can provide a culinary experience that few chains can rival.

Tony’s Pizza Palace on Pontiac Ave in Cranston is practically an institution with its 50-year history. Another place in the same city that has a similar reputation is The Big Cheese & Pub on Reservoir Avenue. At Big Cheese consider a side of mozzarella bread too. If you’re looking for a great Sicilian style pie, try Catanzaro’s Pizzeria on Park Avenue or Tommy’s Pizza on Oaklawn Avenue. Both places are fantastic, and Maria’s Pizza & Wings, which is down the street from Tony’s on Pontiac Avenue, is solid as well.

In Johnston, the town is home to D. Palmieri’s Bakery, which has the best pizza strips. I know folks from outside of Rhode Island like to trash these local goodies, but once they have one from there I think they’ll change their mind. La Nuova Pizzeria on Atwood Avenue makes their own dough, which makes a big difference and it guarantees a scrumptious pie. Rosa Mia Pizza on Greenville Avenue can make a pizza in a variety of crusts ranging from regular to thin crust to focaccia with an amazing selection that caters to any appetite. There’s also the Pizza Palace on Plainfield Pike, which always has spectacular specials available.



Photo courtesy of Catanzaro’s Pizzeria

When you’re talking about pizza in Warwick, Crusty’s Pizza on Warwick Avenue comes to mind. The award-winning establishment has been around for over 30 years, and they stay true to their name with a crust that has a proper crunch to go along with their fresh ingredients. If you’re looking for a place that’s very affordable, but also delicious, the Pier Pizza Company on Post Road is exactly what you’re looking for. For the people who are looking for that Massachusetts South Shore bar pizza they’ve been seeing all over the internet, they don’t have to go far by heading to Grainsley’s on West Shore Road in the heart of Conimicut Village. There’s also the amazing and

unique varieties at The Pizza Nomad right over the border on Providence Street in West Warwick.

And if you’re looking to celebrate Feb. 9, then head over to Apponaug Brewing Company on Knight Street within the Pontiac Mills for their pizza party that’s going on from 11am to 8pm.

Everyone has their favorite local pizza place, and if I didn’t mention yours, then my sincere apologies. If any of these establishments I included are new to you, then make sure to go check them out when you can. There’s really nothing like a great pizza, and the area around Cranston, Johnston and Warwick has plenty of fantastic places to choose from.

ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local ♥ Adoptable ♥ Loveable



Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

Leo

If you are looking for action, look no further! Leo is all about action, he loves to play, he’s super smart and he will make you laugh all day! He is just over a year old so still that puppy energy, but he also likes to snuggle after playtime. Leo is a medium size mixed breed with a gorgeous tri-color coat and sparkling chocolate brown eyes! His zest for life is obvious and he can’t wait to find his perfect match! He has been with other dogs in his foster home, but he’d probably be happiest being spoiled as your one and only boy. His dream home would have a fenced in yard where he can run out his energy and adults or older children. Leo might even excel at agility if you are up for that type of activity with him. Go meet him and watch this boy shine! Contact Save One Soul Animal Rescue League via email: Jocelyn@sosarl.org or feel free to visit their website at <http://www.sosarl.org> for more information. Leo says, “Let’s get this party started!”

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

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Johnston children bitten by rabid dog

Back in the 19th and early 20th centuries, few things were as terrifying as hearing a cry of “Mad dog!” Wild-eyed canines, yelping and foaming at the mouth were to be feared as much as Satan. A bite from a rabid dog always meant a painful death was going to ensue.

In April of 1922, three young residents of Hedley Street in Johnston were playing in their yards when a dog making its way down the street stopped and bit all four children along with a friend one of them had visiting. Carlton Kemp Steere, the 5-year-old son of carpenter Byron Steere was one of the children bitten. Arthur Rushmore, the 11-year-old son of machinist Roland Rushmore was also viciously assaulted, along with 6-year-old Dorothy Beckett, the daughter of building caretaker William Becket. Four-year-old Charles Duby, the son of wallpaperer and painter Charles Duby was bitten as well while he played with his friends on Hedley Street that day. The vicious dog was killed soon after its terrifying attack

on the children. Its head was removed and sent to a physician at Brown University so that its brain could be examined for signs of rabies infection.

Rabies, once known as hydrophobia, is caused by the lyssavirus, which is carried in the salivary glands of the infected animal. The word “rabies” is derived from the Latin word meaning “madness” and the illness is spread through bites and scratches. Symptoms of rabies may show up within two days of becoming infected, or take several years to produce any noticeable symptoms depending on how long it takes the virus to work its way into the central nervous system. Fever, sore throat, vomiting, paralysis and death eventually result due to severe inflammation of the brain.

A person afflicted with rabies becomes terrified of water – hence the term hydrophobia. The production of saliva is greatly increased when one is affected with rabies. However, the sight of water is unbearable to the afflicted and any attempt to make a person with rabies

Back in the Day



by
KELLY SULLIVAN

drink water results in the victim suffering painful throat spasms. The parents of the children who had been bitten by the dog in Johnston all decided to put their children on the Pasteur Treatment. It is essential to start rabies treatment even before knowing if the animal attacker is infected as, once symptoms begin, death is certain.

The Pasteur Treatment was the result of four years of research by French scientist Louis Pasteur and his colleagues. It consisted of a series of daily injections of the rabies virus obtained from the brain tissue of a rabid animal, with the initial


doses being weak and the latter doses being stronger in order to stimulate the human body’s antibodies. Pasteur tested the treatment on rabbits – first infecting them and then extracting the virus from the back of their heads and adding formaldehyde to it. Pasteur’s first human subject in his rabies research was 9-year-old Joseph Meister who had been bitten by a rabid dog two days earlier. Beginning on July 6, 1885, Pasteur injected the boy with a 14-day series of shots composed of

rabbit spinal cord suspensions containing a progressively inactivated rabies virus. Meister recovered from rabies and the world realized a major advancement had just been made in the world of science and medicine. Meister later worked at the Pasteur Institute in France as a caretaker. Ten days after the Germans occupied Paris, he committed suicide.

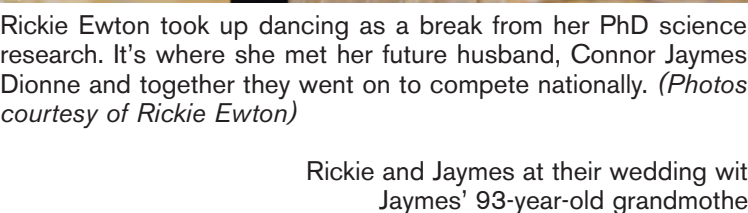
On April 16, 1922, the Brown University physician who examined the detached head of the dog which had bitten the four children in Johnston, called to inform the Johnston chief of police that the dog had indeed been infected with rabies.

The Pasteur Treatment is still used in many countries but the United States has moved on to a safer and more potent vaccine, one in which cell cultures are combined with hyperimmune globulin. Presently, less than ten people in the United States die of rabies each year, compared to the rate of 100 fatalities annually at the turn of the 20th century.

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



Rickie Ewton took up dancing as a break from her PhD science research. It's where she met her future husband, Connor Jaymes Dionne and together they went on to compete nationally. *(Photos courtesy of Rickie Ewton)*



Rickie and Jaymes at their wedding with Jaymes' 93-year-old grandmother.



Ewton
(Continued from page 11)

of the bay since the 1950s. Recent samples include live plankton, of which there are two basic types – phytoplankton, tiny plants that derive their energy from the sun and give off oxygen, and zooplankton, which are swimming animals.

Mixoplankton, she explained, live off of nutrients in the water such as phosphorus, nitrogen silica and trace metals, as well as eating other organisms. As they are fed additional nutrients they become larger and turn to phytoplankton. She measures the effect of light on the plankton. She is also studying how mixoplankton can sequester carbon and how that can affect their size. The more carbon, the bigger the plankton, which in the food chain can lead to bigger fish.

Ewton is uncertain where her studies will lead her. The field of study is relatively new. Discoveries keep being made. She enjoys working with others in the field. She thinks her award will introduce her “to a whole network of bright and connected scientists” that will assist her in applying for funding grants.

Warwick is a special place to her.

“I feel so connected to the Bay. I see it. I collect samples. I feel very much a part of it ... and I’m trying to figure out how the system works.”

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ACLU draws record crowd to advocacy training

Urges local officials to pass immigrant protection ordinance

By JOY FOX

The Rhode Island chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union drew a standing-room-only crowd to the William Hall Library in Cranston on Saturday. Library personnel continually turned away late arrivals from the annual legislative advocacy training due to fire-code restrictions.

According to Steven Brown, the long-time executive director of the ACLU of Rhode Island, the free workshop usually attracts 50 to 75 people. Saturday's attendance topped 125.

"We were heartened by the turnout," he said. "It shows that a lot of people are concerned with what is going on in this country and are looking for ways to help."

Brown noted the strong reaction after the first inauguration of President Donald J. Trump in the form of rallies and marches, but said this time there has been a more muted response. "I was concerned fatigue had descended on people who care about these issues," said Brown. The ACLU team met on Monday to discuss the possibility of planning a second workshop.

According to the ACLU of RI, the two-hour training covered how to be an effective advocate at the State House and with state legislators and explained the legislative process. Brown noted that audience questions and comments covered a variety of issues on Saturday with concerns about immigration and LGBTQ issues topping the list.

State Rep. June Speakman, who represents Warren and Bristol, and Vimala



Steven Brown, executive director of the ACLU of Rhode Island, walks through slides on legislative advocacy at William Hall Library. (Beacon Media photo)

Phongsavanh, managing director of coalition mobilization of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, also presented at the workshop and shared their perspectives as a legislator and a lobbyist.

On Monday, the ACLU of RI sent a letter to all Rhode Island municipalities "urging city and town councils to adopt an ordinance designed to protect their immigrant communities from constitutionally dubi-

ous federal actions and pronouncements." The letter noted that many officials are unaware that they have no legal obligation to honor immigration civil detainer requests and may face legal liability for doing so.

A draft ordinance was included with the letter and includes such provisions as requiring judicial warrants before honoring ICE detainees; assisting crime victims who may be eligible for special immigration

status; rejecting participation in a program known as 287(g) that essentially deputizes local police to serve as immigration agents; and avoiding other forms of engagement in immigration enforcement that can adversely affect public safety and undermine good police-community relations.

The ACLU of RI said "ordinances like this one promote public safety by maintaining and encouraging positive police-community relations. Residents serve as witnesses, report crime, and otherwise assist law enforcement. The foundation for this cooperation can often be destroyed when local police are viewed as an extension of the immigration system."

According to the letter, passing the proposed ordinance "in no way bars your police officers from continuing to cooperate with ICE in enforcing immigration law when backed by judicial authority or otherwise properly mandated by federal law."

"The ACLU of Rhode Island is prepared to take action to protect municipalities that adopt immigrant-supportive policies and practices," Brown said in a press release. "Just as the state has an important role to play in protecting Rhode Island's immigrant community, we urge our local officials to protect all of Rhode Island's residents from the Trump administration's xenophobic crusade by proactively enacting measures that keep cities and town officials from becoming immigration agents."

Visit www.riaclu.org to learn more about this ordinance.



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