

Coalition sounds alarm on US education cuts

Reed blasts ‘war on public education’

By TIM FORSBERG

Sen. Jack Reed, Rep. Seth Magaziner and Rhode Island education leaders gathered Monday to denounce proposed cuts to the U.S. Department of Education, warning that budget cuts would have catastrophic consequences for students, teachers and families in Rhode Island.

Reed and Magaziner both emphasized that the cuts, driven by President Donald Trump and supported by business magnate Elon Musk, would severely harm the state’s education system.

Reed said proposals by the Trump administration to dismantle the Department of Education amount to a “war on public education.” He described the administration’s efforts as ideologically driven and said they would harm children, particularly those with disabilities, by stripping away federal funding.

“President Trump has said repeatedly he wants to eliminate the Department of Education, and Project 2025 lays out an attack plan to do just that,” Reed stated.

He condemned such a move as “outrageous,” and emphasized the broader economic impact of the proposed cuts, predicting that they would disproportionately affect working families in Rhode Island.

Magaziner echoed Reed’s concerns, pointing to the wider implications of the budget reductions. He criticized the Trump administration for possibly targeting essential services like career training programs and Pell Grants, which help Rhode Island families afford college.

“Without federal support, the public education system in Rhode Island would be crippled,” Magaziner warned, adding that the proposed cuts would devastate the state’s higher education institutions and vital support programs for students with disabilities.

Magaziner also called out what he described as the “incompetence” of the administration’s workforce reductions.

“They just canceled a program that helps high school students with disabilities transition into the workplace,” he said. “It’s wrong, it’s cruel, it’s illegal and it’s incompetent.”

A call to public action

Reed and Magaziner urged Rhode Islanders to take action, to rally public support and push Congress to reject the proposed cuts. Reed called for a concerted effort to prevent the cuts from becoming law, saying it would take Republicans in Congress to recognize the damage the cuts would inflict on American students.

COALITION - PAGE 8



Sister Daisy Kollamparampil, St. Rocco Principal Melissa D’Amico and several of Sister Daisy’s former students activate the new crosswalk traffic signal in front of the school and church. *Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg*

New crosswalk safety devices installed where pedestrian struck

By TIM FORSBERG

Prayers by and for Sister Daisy Kollamparampil, FMH continue to

be answered.

On Nov. 7, 2023, Sister Daisy was seriously injured when she was struck in the Atwood Avenue cross-

walk near St. Rocco School and church. A driver failed to stop, rear-

CROSSWALK - PAGE 11

Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizens Award recipient Dariana Muñoz showcases her award with Johnston Senior High School Principal Matthew Velino. *Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg*



HISTORY MADE

Daughter of immigrants honored by Daughters of the American Revolution

By TIM FORSBERG

Johnston High School senior Dariana Muñoz is making history.

Dariana is captain of the cheerleading team and she’s the president of Students Against Drunk Driving. She is a founding member of the school’s flag football team. If that wasn’t enough, she’s a member of the Student Council and the National Honor Society.

She’s now also a recipient of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizens Award.

“Dariana is the poster child of why when you come to a new school, you should get involved early and often, it helps to transition, get more comfortable,

and succeed” said JHS Principal Matthew Velino.

Since its creation in 1934, the DAR Good Citizens Award and Scholarship Contest has honored high school seniors who exemplify the values of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism. Selected by their teachers and peers, these students stand out as role models in their homes, schools, and communities.

According to the DAR website, each accredited high school in good standing with its state board of education may nominate only one senior per year for the honor.

Honorees are then invited to participate

DAR - PAGE 12

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Welcome to the force, Honza!



The Johnston Police Department recently introduced the newest member of their team, Honza, a German Shepherd from the Czech Republic. Honza will be working alongside his handler, Officer Eli McGuire-Krueger, as they begin an intensive training program at the Rhode Island K-9 Academy. This initial phase of their training will focus on narcotics detection.

Honza's arrival marks an exciting addition to the department, reinforcing its commitment to public safety and proactive policing.

Please join us in welcoming Honza and wishing him and Officer McGuire-Krueger success in their training and future service to the community. *(Photos courtesy of the Johnston Police Department Facebook page)*

POLICE LOG

The police log information has been taken from public record police incident and arrest reports provided by the Johnston Police Department.

for display of plates and operating a vehicle with a cancelled registration.

SUSPENDED LICENSE

On February 7 at approximately 11:30 a.m., Officer Richard Varan observed a vehicle on Killingly Street with a front passenger plate and a rear combination plate which did not match. A traffic stop was then initiated.

Contact was made with the driver, reported to be Russell Berard, 57, of 19 Floral Way, Glocester. Berard allegedly advised the officer that he did not have any paperwork for the vehicle and that it was unregistered. A check of Berard's license revealed it to be suspended, and that this stop marked a fourth offense.

Berard was placed under arrest and his car was towed from the scene. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and later released with a Third District Court summons for driving on a suspended license fourth offense and operating an unregistered vehicle.

WARRANT

While on a fixed post in the area of 1450 Harford Avenue on February 8 at approximately 2 p.m., Patrolman Elijah Bolarino reportedly observed a vehicle pass with no license plate on the front of the car. A check of the rear plate revealed that the registration was cancelled in November 2024.

A traffic stop was then initiated and contact made with the driver, identified as Johnathan Gonzalez, 29, of 175 Babcock Street, Providence. Background checks revealed that Gonzalez had an outstanding warrant from the Providence Police Department for a violation of a no contact order.

Gonzalez was then placed under arrest, transported to police headquarters, and held pending the arrival of Providence Police. Gonzalez was issued a summons

Johnston students named Fall 2024 dean's list at Quinnipiac University

The following area students were named to the dean's list for the Fall 2024 semester at Quinnipiac University: Rebekkah Condon, Emma Homenick, and Emily Whitlock.

To qualify for the dean's list, students must earn a grade point average of at least 3.5 with no grade lower than C. Full-time students must complete at least 14 credits in a semester, with at least 12 credits that have been graded on a letter grade basis to be eligible. Part-time students must complete at least six credits during a semester. Names followed by an asterisk denotes with honors.

Quinnipiac is a private, coeducational, institution located 90 minutes north of New York City and two hours from Bos-

ton. The university enrolls 9,400 students in 110 degree programs through its Schools of Business, Communications, Education, Computing and Engineering, Health Sciences, Law, Medicine, Nursing and the College of Arts and Sciences. Quinnipiac is recognized by U.S. News & World Report and Princeton Review's «The Best 388 Colleges.» The university is in the midst of program expansion and renewal for both traditional and adult learners, attraction of diverse communities, development of innovative corporate partnerships and construction of an ambitious set of capital projects. For more information, please visit qu.edu. Connect with Quinnipiac on Facebook and follow Quinnipiac on X @QuinnipiacU.



Joined by his parents and Principal Matthew Velino, Luis Alvarez accepted his diploma at a special ceremony held at the February School Committee Meeting. Alvarez plans now to join the Marines. *Beacon Media photos by Tim Forsberg*

Luis Alvarez accepts his diploma from Johnston Senior High School Principal Matthew Velino.



Graduation ceremony promotes dedication, service to country

By TIM FORSBERG

Johnston High School senior Luis Alvarez has shown that, when it comes to his studies and future opportunities, he is Semper Fi. On Tuesday, Feb. 11 at a special ceremony during the Johnston School Committee meeting, Alvarez received his graduation diploma, having now completed all of his high school requirements.

School Committee member Robert LaFazia helped spearhead this alternative graduation program for the district. He noted Alvarez is only one of only two Johnston Senior High School students to receive his diploma through this route. LaFazia explained how the alternative program works. When a student hasn't met the requirements for graduation, they attend summer school. Once they pass their courses the district of-

fers options for student graduation recognition. In this case, Alvarez opted to attend a school committee meeting. "We welcome you since you did all that hard work to earn that degree to come before the School Committee, and we are honored to give you that diploma," said LaFazia. He added that this route takes a lot of hard work and dedication on behalf of a student and their family.

Now that he has his diploma in hand, Alvarez is off to serve our country in uniform. "I do want to say that Luis is joining the Marines," said Matthew Velino, principal of the high school. The committee responded with a round of applause. Committee members offered their encouragement and support to Alvarez on his journey ahead. "If you really want to pursue

something, you really want to become somebody, no matter what, you can succeed in life," said Committee member Mary Sue Andreozzi. While handshakes and congratulations were shared with Alvarez, Susan Mansolillo summed up the event with words the entire committee could agree upon. "May he go with God as he goes off into the Marines," she said.

New England Tech cuts tuition 47% in trades programs

By ADAM ZANGARI

The New England Institute of Technology made waves last Monday when they announced that they would be cutting tuition nearly in half in certain programs starting this semester. Tuition will fall in these programs:

- Building Construction Technology
- Electrical Technology
- Electrical Technology with Renewable Energy Systems
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
- Plumbing and Heating Technology
- Welding Engineering Technology
- Automotive and Marine Technology

Speaking on behalf of the institute, Vice President of Community Engagement & Workforce Development Amy Grzybowski said the tuition cuts show

New England Tech's commitment to helping students of all economic backgrounds receive an education. "It just reinforces our commitment to affordability, accessibility and high-quality education for students pursuing careers in those skilled trades," Grzybowski said. "We know that demand for this workforce continues to grow. We're helping students gain practical training and industry certifications without the financial barriers. It's an opportunity for students to not see cost as a barrier." The new published tuition for students in the programs, according to Grzybowski, is \$18,540, not including any aid that a student may receive. Grzybowski said reducing tuition in these programs had been discussed for some time, and that now was the right time to do it.

"Some of our skilled trades programs were already at this price, and so we wanted to align all of them to be the same price," Grzybowski said. "It helps a student choose the pathway that they want, and not just choosing that particular pathway because of price or affordability." Making sure that more prospective students could pursue careers in fast-growing fields, Grzybowski said, was also a top priority for New England Tech. Citing both local and national statistics on the trades industries, Grzybowski said that it was extremely important for more students to receive an education in the trades, and that it was critical for the institute to keep leading the way in that field. "The skilled trades industry is facing a

critical labor shortage, both nationally and here in Rhode Island," Grzybowski said. "The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training is projecting a need for over 15,000 specialty trade contractors in the state by 2032 We're really hoping to increase the access to education and help bridge the workforce gap." NEIT is hoping that increased enrollment will offset some of the reduced revenue per student from tuition, Grzybowski said. "We are doing strong from an enrollment standpoint, because we're a leader in these particular fields," Grzybowski said. "We are committed to leading the way in this space, and we're able to adapt to ensure that we're able to provide the access for these particular programs."

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Fascia ends 80-year GOP
drought in District 42

By BARBARA POLICHETTI

Richard Fascia wasn't looking to set any records when he decided last year to run as a Republican for State Representative in District 42.

A former Providence police officer who said his parents raised him with a strong sense of right and wrong, Fascia said he was motivated by a desire to serve his community. He also knew that it was hard to field GOP candidates for the ballot and he didn't like the thought of an unchallenged seat.

"I think people deserve a choice," he said, of the decision that landed him on the ballot facing Democrat Kelsey K. Colletta in a town where only about 16-percent of the voters are registered as Republicans.

And on election night, Fascia did make history. He won the District 42 (Johnston, Cranston) seat by about 60 votes, making him the first Republican to represent the district in more than 80 years.

Because of redistricting over the decades, it's hard to say definitely, but according to records compiled by the House Minority Office, the last Republican to hold the District 42 seat was Raymond S. Eastwood. A World War I veteran, Eastwood held the seat from 1939 to 1940.

"I was the most surprised son of a gun on election night," Fascia, 68, recalls with a smile. "I am so honored and humbled to represent the voters – this is a job I will 'interview' for every single day I am in office."

So, how did he do it?


Having grown up in the Eagle Square section of Providence in a family that was very active in the Democratic party, Fascia said he went old school. He knocked on doors, kissed babies, shook every hand, and "went to the opening of an envelope."

Fascia said he also worked hard to help voters get to know him – including his love of serving as police officer for 20 years, his time on the Johnston's Zoning Board, and his commitment to public service.

On his campaign website, he listed one of his proudest accomplishments as helping to lead opposition 55-panel solar farm in the Windsor section of town -- a project that he said was completely "out of place" for its proposed location.

Fascia, who retired from the Providence police with the rank of sergeant, is currently the Human Resource Manager for USENTRA Security in Warwick. After leaving the police, he held a number of jobs including working for the Providence Housing Authority as a fraud investigator, and later for Crossroads Rhode Island where, according to official State House biography, he was Director of Safety and Security for ten years.

Married for 42 years to his wife, Elizabeth, the couple have two children and four grandchildren. Family has always





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Member
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State Rep – State Rep. Richard Fascia represents Johnston and a small section of Cranston. He also made history on election night when he won the tight race for his District 42 seat – he is the first Republican to hold that seat in more than 80 years. Submitted photo

been central in his life, he said, and to this day he still credits his parents with teaching him strong moral values, but even more importantly, the importance of "being compassionate to people."

"I think that doing good for others was instilled in me," he said, adding that he likes to think his parents would be proud of his new role at the State House. "Let's just say that after the election, I visited the cemetery and had a long talk with them," he said.

Fascia campaigned on a platform of fiscal responsibility, family values, transparency and accountability to voters. His campaign website describes him as conservative on some issues including opposing "WOKE ideology, benefits for illegal aliens and gender reassignment for children."

He has been appointed to serve on three House standing committees: Education, Municipal Government and Housing, and Labor.

A Johnston resident for 26 years, Fascia said he wants the town – and the northwest parts of Cranston he represents – to continue to be good places to live.

And despite the fact that he can, at times, still have the serious demeanor of a former police sergeant, he says he doesn't actually take himself too seriously.

"What do I do in my spare time?" he queries after being asked the question. "I'm old," he says. "I have the obligatory tomato garden in my backyard. I really like being out there enjoying the sunshine."

"My hope," he said, "is to make sure that the Johnston and Cranston voters I represent have a voice at the statehouse that echoes their feelings – not someone else's political agenda."

Assumption Students Named
to Fall Dean's List

Assumption University has announced the University's Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester. Students named to the Dean's List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on the prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

The following Johnston students have been named to the list: **Elliot Gauvin**, Class of 2027, **Dean Simeone**, Class of 2026 and **Jaiden Tonucci**, Class of 2026.

Assumption University, founded in 1904 by the Augustinians of the Assumption, is a premier New England University for high-quality education, integrating career preparation and education of the whole person, drawing upon the best in the rich and centuries-long tradition of Catholic higher education. Assumption's graduates are known for their intellectual seriousness, thoughtful citizenship, and dedication to the common good. Located in Worcester, Massachusetts, Assumption has undergone a series of major advancements since transitioning to a university, including new academic buildings, degree programs, and athletic facilities for our NCAA Division II student athlete population.

The University offers 37 majors and 50 minors in the liberal arts, sciences, business, nursing, and professional studies, and other areas, as well as graduate degrees and professional credentials. For more information about Assumption University, please visit www.assumption.edu.



U. S. Senator Jack Reed made an impromptu visit to Head Start students in Johnston last week. The Head Start and Early Head Start programs are run by the Tri-County Community Action Agency. In a Facebook post after the visit, Reed said, “This critical program gives children tools they need to be healthy and successful. I'm fighting to protect funding that helps make sure teachers & families have what they need to succeed.” *Beacon Media photo by Barbara Polichetti*

Reed Visits Johnston Head Start, Pledges to Protect Funding

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District planning for increases in MLL program

By **TIM FORSBERG**

The impact of multilingual learners (MLL) and their future effect on the school district was discussed in detail during a special presentation to the School Committee.

Superintendent Bernard DiLullo and MLL Coordinator Kelly Montalbano provided insights at the Feb.11 meeting on the challenges the district faces now and within the next 10 years as the MLL program grows.

“This is to give you some background on the changing population in Johnston in terms multilingual learners. We’ve seen a significant growth...Rhode Island had the number one growth in the nation in terms of percentage of multilingual learners students,” said DiLullo to the members of the committee.

According to the presentation, Rhode Island was tops in terms of percentage of MLL students between the years 2010 and 2020. The state had the fifth highest percentage, 12.2 percent in 2020, of MLL students across all states, trailing Texas, California, New Mexico and Nevada. Rhode Island also has the highest percentage of MLL students across New England.

DiLullo compared the town’s MLL students against those of surrounding communities during these time periods.

“From 2013 to 2014, we went from 77 MLL students to an increase of 313 MLL students in 2023 to 2024,” said DiLullo. “That’s a huge jump in a short amount of time and keeping in mind that these students require additional supports in our schools.”

MLL learners are categorized by how long a

student has been in the country. The category of ‘newcomer’ represents a student who has been in the country for up to two years, ‘developing’ categorizes students in country three to six years, ‘long term’ is a student who has been in country for more than seven years.

During the 2020-21 school year, there were 101 students classified as newcomers, 76 developing, and 24 long term, for a total of 201 students. As of the 2023-24 school year, 150 students were classified as newcomers, 103 were developing, and 59 were longterm, for a total of 312 students. As for current statistics, the total number of MLL students in Johnston’s schools as of today is 339. According to the Rhode Island Department of Education, there were 3,172 students in the district during the 2023-2024 school year.

These categories require the district to provide differing levels of service time requirements with an MLL-certified teacher to acclimate the students. Entering and emerging students require three periods of service per day, developing students require two periods per day, while longterm students require one period per day.

“As they make progress, the service drops down from three periods per day to one period per day,” said DiLullo.

According to current regulations, Johnston is considered a high incidence district, having more than 150 MLL students. Newly proposed regulations, expected to be implemented later this year, would still have Johnston categorized as a high incidence district, as it has more than 250 MLL students. Currently, MLL students make up 10 per-

cent of the district population. However, teachers of those students do not need to be multilingual themselves.

“MLL teachers do not need to be able speak another language, they need to be trained to teach students how to acquire the English language. There are different strategies that are put in place in the classrooms,” said Montalbano. “Many of our MLL teachers do not speak another language. With training, you are given strategies to utilize to help support the English language.”

Montalbano stated that such classrooms support and utilize a trans language approach, which is students speaking their own language and trying to speak English at the same time.

“Right now were at 339 [MLL students],” said Montalbano, who stated the distribution of these students was fairly level across all grades. “Ninety-two of those were dually identified as having IEPs (individualized education programs) for some speech or academics, from K to 12.”

Montalbano stated that the district tries not to overload any individual classroom, especially at the elementary level, with MLL students.

Proposed regulations call for teachers and administrators that are employed by public schools to be able to demonstrate awareness or proficiency in the knowledge and practices of MLL instruction by the 2029-30 school year. Such trainings would paid for by the district and must be done during the school day when possible.

“Everybody has to be aware or have to be certified to teach in MLL to be able to teach in a public

school in Rhode Island. That trend is already happening in teacher prep programs where teacher teachers who are in prep programs are also required to start learning how to work with MLL students” said DiLullo.

In order to meet the proposed requirements for the English language development block of instruction, DiLullo estimated conservatively that six new MLL teachers may need to be hired by the 2029-2030 school year.

With the completion of the new, consolidated elementary school on the horizon, there’s hope that MLL resources will be better allocated.

“It may help, but we’re still going to have the same numbers. We might be able to distribute students slightly different, or utilize someone differently or in a different spot,” said Montalbano.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHRONICLES

The School Committee Chronicles are a digest of proceedings from the Johnston School Committee's February 11 meeting. All members were present.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

The Johnston School Committee recognized and granted a Johnston High School diploma to Luis Alvarez, who completed his high school requirements. Find coverage in this week's edition.

BUSINESS MATTERS

The committee approved the minutes from their January 28 meeting. Invoices paid as of January 31 were documented for the record. There were no budget transfers requested by the committee or by Business Manager Dean Huff.

COMMITTEE REQUESTS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All committee members extended congratulations and well wishes to Luis Alvarez for completing his diploma. Member Gregory Russo had additional questions regarding last month's presentation by Superintendent Bernard DiLullo regarding the school's special services and number of individualized educational plans (IEPs) and how they compared to other school districts. The superintendent stated that every district in the state has seen an increase in these categories. Committee member Carolyn Thornton Iannuccilli recognized Justin Erickson for being named the Rhode Island Inter-scholastic Athletic Administrator Association's Athletic Director of the Year for his recent work in the town's sports scene. She also commended the Johnston

Senior High School, including Student Council President Lucas Anderson for his organization of the events, for being recognized by the Rhode Island Blood Center for their outstanding contributions during recent blood drives.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECCOMENDATIONS

A request for the advice and consent of the School Committee to consider the Rhode Island Department of Education Stage 1 Necessity of school construction and identification of need for Winsor Hill and Graniteville schools was approved. The resignations of Ryan Barrette, Johnston High School Guidance Counselor, effective February 21, 2025, and that of Kyle Turcotte, a Grade 5 teacher at Sarah Dyer Barnes Elementary, effective

February 14, 2025, were approved. The school committee accepted the resignation for retirement purposes of Theresa Votta, Registered Behavior Technician, and Denise Pepper, Registered Behavior Technician, approved for June 30, 2025. Two unpaid days off were approved by the committee for Filomena D'Errico on May 29-30, 2025. The committee approved the waiver of the building use fee for the after school dance program at Brown Avenue School for The Dance Connection. A field trip to the Great East Festival in Springfield, Massachusetts for the Ferri Middle School Band and Chorus on May 30, 2025, was authorized. A request to approve the homeschooling application for one student for the 2024-2025 school year was approved.

Johnston Senior Center Pool Players Set to Compete Against Cranston

Pool has become one of the more popular pastimes at the Johnston Senior Center, with players honing their skills with a spirited yet friendly sense of competition. What started as casual games among members has now evolved into a more structured and competitive environment, with players ready to test their abilities beyond their home tables. Now, the Johnston Senior Center's team is taking that competitive edge on the road. Later this month, they will face off against their counterparts at the Cranston Senior Center in what promises to be an exciting and well-matched showdown. The competition is not only about winning but also about sharpening their skills and building relationships with fellow pool enthusiasts from neighboring communities.

LEGAL NOTICES

JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, February 27, 2025 at 6:30 PM
Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Avenue

- I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Minutes from Previous Meetings
- III. Election of Officers for 2025

- IV. Appointing Member of the Land Trust
- V. Old Business:

ZBR File 2022-2-Petition of Johnston Asphalt LLC, Applicant for 100 Allendale Ave. AP 36 Lot 77. Zoned industrial. The Petitioner is seeking a special use permit pursuant to Section 340-75 for installation of Two Hot Mix Asphalt Storage Silos. This matter has been remanded by the Superior Court for a new hearing before the Zoning Board.

- VI. New Business:

Petition of Amanda Saucedo 25 Pinewood Ave AP 9 Lot 78, Zone R15. Requesting to construct an attached garage with living space above. 30ft.x 20ft. 600 SQ. Feet
- VI. Adjournment
Per order of the Zoning Board of Review
Thomas Lopardo, Chairman
- The Zoning 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 Department of Development and Public Services, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.
 - Items not heard by 10:30 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or special meeting at the discretion of Board.
 - Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

2/20, 2/27/25

Town of Johnston
Planning Board
AMENDED MEETING
AGENDA

Tuesday, March 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 AP 46 Lots 103, 171, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212 and 213- Zoned R-40. Owner:: Shore Holdings, LLC. Applicant -Revity Energy. The Petitioner is seeking A Public Hearing on the Master Plan Application of a Major Land Development and Special Use Permit applications pursuant to Unified Development Review to develop two 0.5 MW solar arrays and one single-family residential lot. Behind 3 and 17 Forest Drive.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

PB 24-12-Wendy's Restaurant

- 1386 Atwood Avenue AP 44 Lot 359 Zoned B2. Applicant John Marth. Petitioner is seeking A Public Hearing for a Master Plan with Unified Development Review to develop a New Standalone Restaurant with Drive Through. A Special Use Permit for the Drive Through is being requested under section 340-76.1 B Variances are being requested for quantity of wall signs and an add an additional Freestanding sign under Section 340-74.
- PB 25-01- Advisory Opinion on the request to Rezone 183 Shun Pike AP 43 Lot(s) 264&265 from R-40 to I-Industrial. Applicant: Bachar Sasa.
- PB 25-02-Advisory Opinion requesting amendments to Section 340-16 Industrial Performance Standards of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the covering of dirt mounds.
- PB 25-04- Petition 2024-CP-173 requesting to change the zoning AP 8 Lot 14 from B-2 and R-20 to R-7. Applicant Mohamad Yaser & Rhonda Sasa.
- PB 25-05 - 1515 Atwood Avenue AP 20 Lot 77. Zoned B 2. Owner 266 Putnam Avenue, LLC. Applicant Michael Grieco Jr., Member. A Public Hearing for a Master Plan with Unified Development Review for a New Restaurant with Drive Through.
- V. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT & SPECIAL ITEMS
PB 25-03- Affordable Housing – Review DRAFT Plan, listen comment, recommendation action to the Town Council
- PB 22-57 – The Comprehensive Plan. Future Land Use Maps
- PB 23-35 – Zoning Update. Discussion and review of draft zoning ordinance. Major restructuring of the ordinance was required because of the changes and the failure to update the ordinance over the past years when changes were made to state law.

- 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.

2/20/25

TOWN OF JOHNSTON
Amended Notice of
Public Hearing

DATE: March 4, 2025 — 5:45 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 Regulated Small MS4s(General Permit), a public hearing will be held at the Johnston Senior Center on March 4, 2025 at 5:45 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 #RIR040

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

2/20/25



Legal Notice
Town of Johnston
Adopted Ordinances

At a recent meeting of The Johnston Town Council, the Council did adopt the following Ordinance effective immediately:

Ordinance 2025-1

An Ordinance authorizing the borrowing of up to \$300,000 for the purpose of financing the planning of improvements to the Town's Stormwater and Sewer Facilities

Ordinance 2025-3

An Ordinance in amendment of the Town of Johnston Zoning Ordinance and accompanying map. Said Ordinance changes the Zone Map for Assessor's Plat 57, Lots 170 from B-2 & R-40 to B-2

Said Ordinances are on file and available for review in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Johnston Town Council
Robert V. Russo
President

Attest:
Vincent P. Baccari, Jr.
Town Clerk

2/20/25

Ferri Middle School Second Quarter Honor Roll

High Honors

Anthony Achilli 2031
Joshua Adesina 2031
Scarlett Agnoli 2029
Sofia Amane 2030
Sienna Amato 2031
Adrian Amaya 2029
Mason Arruda 2031
Mackenzie Arsenaault 2029
Jason Aung 2030
Lannie Baker 2030
Eric Barboza 2031
Benjamin Beausoleil 2031
Jeremy Borja Arellano 2031
Damani Bowe 2030
Caleb Brunelle 2030
Gabriel Brunelle 2030
Calla Cadieux 2029
Jeffrey Cadieux 2031
Katelyn Cahill 2031
Leonardo Cardoso 2030
Breonna Carleton 2029
Charlotte Chapman 2030
Charles Chaves 2031
Krishna Chu 2029
Emelyn Coggins 2030
Callie Crete 2031
Nicole Curiel 2031
Jaden DeLeon 2030
Alana DiCostanzo 2031
Jillian Dixon 2030
Deborah Dosunmu 2031
Kendall Duguay 2029
Sofia Echeverry 2031
Ibrahima Fall 2029
Sokhna Fall 2029
Marco Fava 2029
Ava Feola 2031
Francesca Ferranti 2029
Francesca Finelli 2031
Carleigh Flath 2029
Colin Flath 2031
Susan Gerzevitz 2031
Nevaeh Hardy 2030
Ian Heywood 2029
Nicolas Hurtado 2031
Miranda Houry 2030
Noah Macartney 2030
Ella Martin-Sharkey 2029
Julianna McDaniel 2029
Emma McDougall 2029
Emma McVeigh 2031
Giuliana Merola 2031
Nya Michel 2031
Landon Moy 2030
Lindsey Moy 2030
Joshua Ortiz 2029
Isabella Owusu 2031
Elizabeth Paulson 2031
Alex Penta 2031
Lucas Penta 2031
Romina Pinedo Ore 2031
Logan Poole 2030
Mason Poole 2030



Sophia Proulx 2030
Finley Provoyeur 2031
Ethan Quixtan Portillo 2029
Salina Reth 2030
Derek Ricci 2029
Madeline Ritch 2030
Seanghai Sok 2031
Aiden Spencer 2030
Alexa St. Clair 2029
Amyra Stec 2031
Mason Thao 2031
Harper Troxell 2031
Brandon Turbitt 2029
Emma Turbitt 2031
Emilio Urena Moya 2030
Cory Veitch 2029
Nicolas Villa-Pinto 2029
Reese Ware 2031
Ella Watters 2030
Benjamin Young 2031

Honors

Kelly Abreu 2031
Neji Acksonovong 2029
John Adesina 2031
Evanyelin Aguilar 2029
Noah Allard 2031
Chloe Antine 2031
Ethan Archambeault 2029
Alexis Arias 2029
Melisis Arias 2029
Victoria Arriaza 2031
Carlos Asian 2031
Jordan Baccaire 2030
Ariana Barboza 2029
Dean-Joseph Beckel 2031
Princess Benitez Rosado 2031
Talia Berardis 2031
Emilia Bonilla 2031
Walter Borden 2031
Gabriel Bowden 2030
Jayden Brito 2029
Kadie Bun 2030
Nolan Cahill 2029
Ryder Calabro 2029
Giavana Catullo 2031
Awa Ceesay 2030
Jacob Celeste 2029

Caleb Cenafils 2030
Anthony Chamberlain 2029
Brooke Charpentier 2029
Natalie Chea 2030
Ryleigh Cole 2031
Riley Corvese 2031
Noel Cuascut 2029
Domenic D’Aguanno 2029
Chloie Darby 2031
Moriah Dasilva 2030
Michael DeAngelis 2029
Natalia DeBrossard 2031
Jeyden DeLeon Morales 2030
Paola DeLeon 2029
Ethan DeMedeiros 2031
Evelina DeSimone 2030
Anthony DiFonzo 2029
Islene Dominguez 2030
Mason Douglas 2031
Caleb Doura 2029
Lucia D’urso 2031
Ethan Espinal 2031
Jeremy Estrada 2031
Sophia Fajardo 2030
Cayden Farpelha 2030
Evan Farrell 2030
Damian Figueroa 2030
Lila Figueroa 2029
Savella Florio 2029
Zachary Forgetta 2031
Tyler Franco 2031
Hailey Garcia 2030
Gabrielle Gonsalves 2029
Itzayana Grave 2031
Jireh Guadalupe Olivo 2031
Charlize Guthrie 2031
Trezure Hall 2029
Samuel Halton 2029
Dolan Hand 2031
Henry Healy 2030
Ana Herrera 2031
Nathan Hidalgo Salazar 2030
Kaylee Hopkins 2030
Cameron Hubbard 2031
Michael Iafrate 2030
Gian Izzo 2031
Hannah Jackson 2030
Eric Jenkins 2031
Jowell Jimenez 2030

Mason Johnson Goncalves 2029
Jean Julio Jules 2030
Torin Kalnietis 2030
Layla Kelly 2029
Leonardo Khiev 2031
Jaycob Khun 2029
Gavin Kleinberg 2030
Sophia Koshgarian 2029
Alessio La Terra Bellina 2030
Dominic Lacasse 2029
Ali LaFazia 2030
Giuliana Lafleur 2030
Angelina Lambrese 2029
Jillian Laprade 2030
Taylor Larson 2030
Anthony LeDoux 2031
Sabrina Lisi 2031
Lillyann Lucini 2030
Gunner Manning 2031
Jillian Marandola 2030
Isla Marchetti 2029
Khady Marone 2029
Alex Martinez 2031
Marco Maselli 2030
Juliana Mattson 2031
Jameson McClish 2030
Jax McCranie 2031
Lockhart McLaughlin 2031
Addyson Meloni 2029
Aryana Mills 2031
Elliana Mitchell 2031
Ryan Morales 2031
Madison Morsilli 2031
Olivia Motta 2031
Alexander Mrozewicz 2029
Blake Mulcahy 2031
Silas Mullen 2031
Kyleigh Murphy 2029
Lelaina Nicoletti 2029
Aaron Nop 2031
Isabelle Nunez 2029
Avery Odhiambo 2031
Padraig O’Gara 2031
Esther Ortiz 2031
Lucas Ortiz 2031
Matthew Otero 2029
Nathaniel Owusu 2030
Kennedie Pace 2030
Arianna Pagnano 2030

Jordan Paolantonio 2031
Krisha Patel 2029
Robert Pattie 2030
Jayliana Pedraza 2029
Allyson Pena 2029
Tyler Pepler 2030
DiMartino Petit Homme 2029
Sky Pilkington 2029
Jalah Pincince 2030
Khloe Pipkins 2029
Sierra Placella 2030
Isabella Plaisted 2031
Sergio Polanco Sanabria 2029
Ethan Pongvongkeo 2029
Kaylee Ponte 2031
Sophia Ramirez 2030
Xavier Ramirez 2031
Christian Ramos Cardoza 2030
Kevin Ramos Cardoza 2031
Christopher Ramos-Mues 2030
Cameron Regnault 2031
Johnathan Remington 2031
Jayvion Rhau 2031
William (Cayden) Rhau 2030
Francesca Ricci 2031
Valerie Rios 2029
Adrian Rocha 2031
Emma Rodrigues 2031
Nathanael Rojas 2031
Victor Rojas 2029
Gabriel Rosa 2031
Ayshan Safarova 2031
Greyson Sano 2031
Penelope Santos 2029
Avery Sarit 2029
Rachelle Saucedo 2030
Christopher Sbardella 2029
Natalia Scorpio 2029
Lily-Anne Segee 2029
Aria Simeon 2031
Phoenix Sinphoune 2029
Remi Sinphoune 2031
Caytlen Sip 2030
Jenae Smith 2029
Brayden Sobel 2030
Mia Solano 2029
Ezekiel Sonaikie 2029
Mikayla Souza 2030
Zaniya Stokes 2029
Julianna Stonis 2029
Maliyah Tillett 2031
Harold Tordoya 2031
Daniel Treglia 2030
Junior Valdez Espinoza 2029
Trinity Vanstone 2031
Lynette Vasquez 2029
Sridhar Venkatakrishnan 2030
Isaac Vera 2031
Harmony Wagnac 2030
Grace Wilbur 2029
Evelynn Wilder 2031
Lucius Wilder 2030
Solange Womack 2030
Winston Xaymongkhoun 2029
Lorelei Znoj 2029

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- Sun. Mar. 2- 579 BENEFIT. Pawt. 2:30pm
- Sat. March 15- COURTHOUSE CNTR, King.
- Sat. April 5- O'ROURKE'S, Cranston 5pm
- Sun. April 6- CHELO'S, East Providence 12
- Sat. April 12- BELLA, Glendale 5:30
- Sun. April 27- CHELO'S, Providence 12pm

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iii RISLA

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Coalition

(Continued from page 1)

“These cuts are going to hurt our kids and our families,” he said. “We’re going to do everything we can to stop this. But it’s going to take a gargantuan effort.”

The proposed budget cuts are part of a broader \$9 trillion reduction in domestic spending that would target not only education but also critical public health agencies. Reed and Magaziner emphasized that these cuts are driven by ideology, not fiscal responsibility.

From elementary school through college, uncertainty Rhode Island’s education leaders voiced strong concerns over potential cuts to federal education funding. Education Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green warned that such reductions would harm the state’s progress in K-12 and higher education systems.

Infante-Green said about 15% of Rhode Island’s education budget, or \$275 million, comes from federal funding, which supports critical programs for low-income students, special education, school nutrition and career training.

“This money goes directly to our school districts,” she said. “If we think we won’t feel the impact, we’re not paying attention.”

She pointed out that Rhode Island is making a faster recovery from pandemic-related learning loss than its New England counterparts, but federal funding cuts could reverse this progress.

“This proposal serves to harm our progress and the foundation of our education system,” she warned. She also emphasized the broader role of the U.S. Department of Education in enforcing laws and ensuring educational safeguards, calling on Rhode Islanders to unite in defense of the state’s education system.

Specific concerns in higher education

Shannon Gilkey, Rhode Island commissioner of postsec-

ondary education, underscored the importance of federal funding in higher education, noting that many students rely on Pell Grants for access to college.

“The research happening right here in Brown University and the University of Rhode Island will change the world,” Gilkey said, citing the need for continued federal support in advancing research and innovation. He also stressed the importance of a skilled workforce, with 67% of jobs by 2030 requiring a credential beyond high school.

Rhode Island College President Jack Warner warned that federal funding cuts could jeopardize the affordability and accessibility of higher education. He described the college’s commitment to “affordable excellence,” noting that federal support helps keep tuition fees low, allowing many students to graduate debt-free and contribute to Rhode Island’s economy.

“If that gets compromised, it directly affects the number of students who can come to our institution,” Warner said.

Warner also pointed out that Rhode Island College receives additional federal grants to support disabled students and those impacted by COVID-related learning loss.

“We provide workforce training to support our key industries,” he added. “Anything that compromises that can be really difficult for the state of Rhode Island.”

‘Don’t mess with the students of Rhode Island’

Infante-Green added, “We’re going to keep moving forward, because we’re already on the path to success. So please, don’t mess with the students of Rhode Island, because we’re going to be here waiting for you.”

Mary Barden, executive director of the National Education Association of Rhode Island, warned that eliminating the department would drastically harm those from lower-income and rural communities.

“Eliminating the Department of Education is equivalent to giving up on our future. Our students need more opportuni-



Rep. Seth Magaziner and Sen. Jack Reed sounded the alarm at a press conference Monday, emphasizing the critical need to protect federal education funding for Rhode Island students against proposed changes at the Department of Education. *Beacon Media photo*

ties, more resources, and greater protections, not less,” Barden said. She explained that proposed cuts would lead to increased class sizes, reduced job training programs, higher education becoming more expensive and special education services withering.

Barden highlighted the widespread benefits of federal funding, noting that 90% of Rhode Island students and 95% of students with disabilities are educated in public schools.

“As a 20-year classroom teacher here in Rhode Island, I know the positive impact the Department of Education’s funding and programs have on all students,” she said.

Barden also emphasized the critical role of Title I funds and Pell Grants in providing educational opportunities and supporting students with disabilities in the wake of the pandemic.

Maribeth Calabro, president of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers, called the apparent dismantling of the Department of Education a “direct threat to the principles of equity, innovation and national progress.” She stressed the department’s essential role in ensuring equal access to quality education for all students.

“The American dream was started in the foundation of the Department of Education,” Calabro said. “It is instrumental in ensuring that every child has access to a quality public education.”

Calabro further warned that the proposed cuts would increase inequities and teacher quality.

“Without federal oversight, students in marginalized communities would face even greater disparities in resources, teacher quality and educational opportunities,” she said. Calabro also addressed the threat posed to higher education funding, noting that Pell Grants are crucial to many students’ ability to attend college.

Barden and Calabro called on elected officials to prioritize public education and protect federal funding that supports students, families and educators.

“We must resist any attempt to weaken or abolish the Department of Education,” Calabro urged. “Our children, our communities, our nation deserve nothing less than a robust and fully supported Department of Education.”

RI Kids Count weighs in

Paige Parks, executive director of Rhode Island Kids Count, addressed the potential consequences of proposed federal cuts to education funding among children across the state.

“Rhode Island Kids Count is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health, safety, education and economic wellbeing of Rhode Island children,” said Parks. “This is not about politics – this is about Rhode Island’s children and the role federal investments play in their education.”

Parks emphasized the role of federal funding for low-income students, who make up 44% of

Rhode Island’s public school population. Title I funding, which supports these students, allows schools to provide essential academic assistance and specialized programs. Federal funds are particularly vital in urban districts, with Providence, Central Falls, Woonsocket and Pawtucket relying heavily on U.S. Department of Education support. Smaller districts like Newport and Tiverton also receive significant contributions.

Federal funding also supports services for children with disabilities, including funding from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

“Before the pandemic, Rhode Island received about \$46 million in IDEA funds, helping more than 22,000 students statewide,” Parks said. “Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education would reduce resources for children with disabilities, leaving them at greater risk of falling behind.”

The potential loss of federal funding also threatens after-school programs, which are important to academic and social development. Parks said the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program alone provided \$6.5 million to Rhode Island in 2024, benefiting more than 5,200 children.

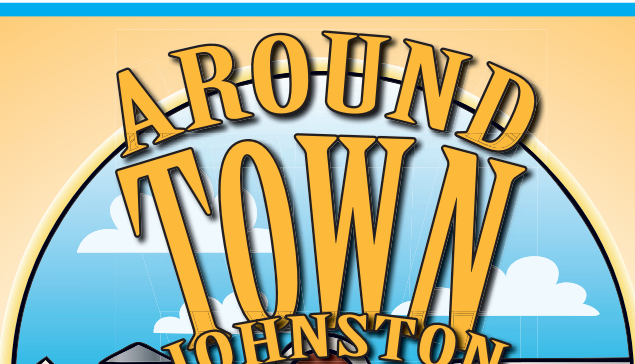
Parks also highlighted the success of Rhode Island’s Career and Technical Education programs, with a graduation rate of 92% – much higher than the state average.

“CTE programs work so well for so many kids. We cannot let these funds be at risk,” she said.

Mental-health programs, including training for students and educators, are another critical area supported by the U.S. Department of Education.

“Reducing or eliminating these funds would be harmful to all of our children,” Parks warned. She called on Rhode Islanders to advocate for continued federal support for education.

“We must stand up and speak out for our children,” Parks said, “especially for low-income students, children with disabilities, those in after-school programs, CTE students and those facing mental-health challenges.”



JOHNSTON
Sun Rise

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Tim Forsberg, Editor
timf@beaconmediari.com

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

This isn't 'efficiency' – it's casual destruction

Has it felt to anyone else like we've gone through a year's worth of chaos, disruption and uncertainty in less than a month?

That's because we have.

And this dizzying strategy of "flooding the zone" — a term coined by the twice-convicted former White House Chief Strategist, Steve Bannon, which refers to blitzing the American people and media with a disorienting number of newsworthy and potentially chaotic decisions one after another, never giving any one event time to be adequately discussed, adjudicated or digested — is not likely to subside anytime soon.

Trump has clearly learned his lesson about trying to impose his will through the legitimate levers of power

• WHERE TO WRITE:
1944 Warwick Avenue
Warwick, RI 02889
TimF@BeaconMediaRI.com

provided by our cherished Constitution. He has, instead, given full authority to the world's wealthiest man to "audit"

all of the federal government's wasteful spending and set it right. Or, judging from the rhetoric we've seen thus far, set it all alight.

And since Elon Musk's work in the "Department of Government Efficiency" is completely unchecked, unverifiable and opaque, we're all going to have to take his word for the facts and figures he presents and live with the momentously impactful decisions he recommends to America's chief executive.

The reality of this situation exceeds parody and cynicism. It is, frankly, unbelievable that any American could be OK with a brazenly corrupt and anti-democratic regime like the one unfolding in front of our eyes.

We would ask those who placed their vote for Trump in 2024 and continue to support him: Would you be OK with any of what is occurring right now if Kamala Harris or another Democrat sat in the Oval Office? Would you silently accept a president claiming ultimate authority above the law, ruling solely through executive action as if they were a king and demanding the removal of all dissidents in the cause of "saving the country?"

Auditing the efficiency of any business or organization takes time and careful consideration. An audit of massive federal government programs cannot be done adequately in the course of days by glancing through a budget spreadsheet and deeming certain expenses "wasteful" with no context.

What is happening right now is not an audit. It is the targeted elimination of departments that provide critical services to all Americans, including some of the most vulnerable populations, but also including veterans, children and, by the way, millions of people of all political stripes who rely on Medicaid and federal assistance programs.

Governing via chaos, disruption and uncertainty is not governing. It's wanton, casual, destructive lawlessness, and any self-proclaimed patriot should be opposed to it.

LETTERS



Submitted photo courtesy of Uscathoilic.org

Open Churches to the Homeless

To the Editor,

This picture is an example of how churches should react to the homeless. In certain areas of the country they have opened their doors. What a show of support. Why can't this be repeated throughout the country.

This is an example of the word of God. This is what he wants from all

of us. Homeless in the pews in San Francisco, even

without the cold. Why is everything on the government to get things in place?

Let's see if we can get some churches open here in Rhode Island. Our organization will be the first to supply our rescue kits to that location. We are only a phone call

away. Society needs to be more aware of who these people are and what they have been through. We just had one pass away from drug addiction. Nobody knows their own future and giving back always gives you a piece of mind.

Louis Spremulli
Spirit of Hope, non-profit
Johnston

In changing times, keep working together

To the Editor,

I've been doing a lot of thinking lately about the American story – what a wild ride it's been! Think about all those early immigrants who poured in, bringing their skills and ideas with them. They really helped build this country into what it is today, right? It's amazing how they adapted, learned the language and became part of the fabric of America.

But things have changed, haven't

they? A lot of folks feel like things aren't quite the same, that some of our old ways are fading and new ideas are shaking things up. It's easy to feel a little lost or uncertain sometimes. And let's be honest, the economy is tough for a lot of people right now. We need some fresh thinking to solve those problems.

We need to remember that everyone who's come to America looking for a better life has brought something to the table. It's important to talk about immigration and how to

make things work for everyone, but we can't let hard times make us unfairly judge people.

The key is to work together. We need to understand each other and find ways to build a society where everyone has a chance to succeed. That's what I hope for – a future where everyone can thrive and make America even better.

John Cervone
North Providence

And here in RI, a federal court judge has annoyed "The Prez" by freezing his freeze...



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Federal cuts may turn out to be catastrophe

STORY OF THE WEEK: Providence is Rhode Island's ground zero for an array of possible cuts sparked by the administration of President Donald Trump and his GOP congressional supporters. With Republicans mulling \$2.3 trillion in Medicaid reductions over the next decade, the fallout would hit hard in Providence, home to the biggest concentration of low-income Rhode Islanders. Elsewhere, the Trump administration's move to cut federal research funding has been delayed temporarily by a Massachusetts judge; opponents warn it would cause layoffs, suspend clinical trials and disrupt ongoing research. Just in the last year, Brown University received \$139 million in NIH grants, Rhode Island Hospital got \$31 million, and URI \$19 million. Providence struggles even under the best of circumstances to generate enough revenue to operate city government, so Mayor Brett Smiley is closely watching for next steps. "Any one of these things would be a risk," Smiley said during an interview on Political Roundtable this week, re-

fering to the potential federal spending cuts. "All of these things have the potential to be a catastrophe." Trump had a net 6-point approval rating in a CBS News poll this week, and as we noted last week, Americans tend to embrace the general notion of cutting government. The true test of public support for the president's approach, however, will take more time to assess, depending in part on what happens with inflation, the economy and whether Americans feel a tangible loss from federal spending cuts.

THE RESPONSE: Hundreds of Rhode Islanders recently demonstrated outside U.S. Sen. Jack Reed's Providence office, calling for the state's congressional delegation to take a strong stand against Trump, Elon Musk and their effort to remake the government. Reed joined me for a wide-ranging interview two days later and in describing the delegation's response to the Trump administration so far, he initially cited his opposition to Pete Hegseth's nomination as defense secretary. That

TALKING POLITICS



by
IAN
DONNIS

might offer little solace to critics of Trump, since even the president's most controversial Cabinet nominees have cleared the Senate. Ultimately, though, Reed said, "We're in a position right now where, based on our constitutional system, the courts are the best form of relief. The president's arguably breaking the law in many cases, and as a result, it's the courts that must declare that and impose the proper sanction."

REED'S REACTION: Sen. Reed joined the Senate almost 30 years ago, in 1997, during the so-called

'vacation from history' – the time between the end of the Cold War and 9/11. Here are some excerpts from our interview earlier this week.

***On the ability of courts to prevent excesses.

Reed: "Well, I think the lower courts are doing that right now, and it's people who've been appointed by Republican presidents and Democratic presidents. They just understand this is clearly against the law. When it gets up to the Supreme Court, there it gets to be a little more complicated.... I think their concern is going to be not only what's the right thing to do, but will they be recognized and will that judgment be enforced by the president. And again, Trump's behavior is trying to send signals even to the court that you have no power. I have all the power. That concerns me, and it should concern everyone."

***Was Politico right to contend that Trump broke the Senate due to caving GOP opposition to once-unthinkable Cabinet nominees?

Reed: "Well, there is a very sig-

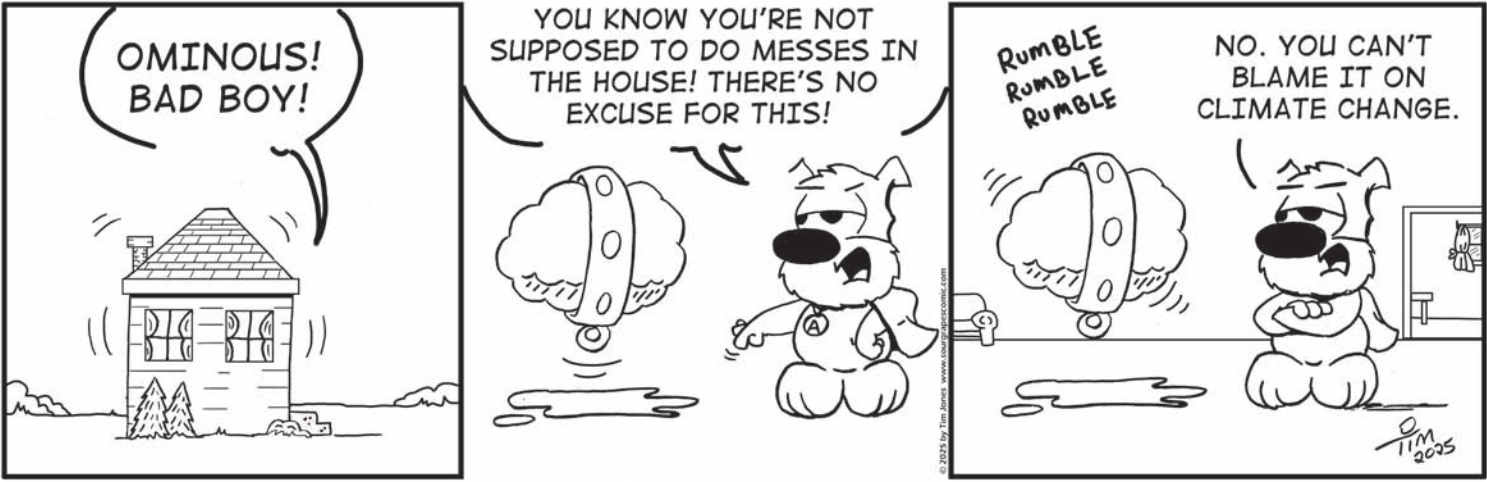
nificant and real danger because our constitutional role is advice and consent. And frankly, my suspicion is that many of the people that voted for these individuals [like Tulsi Gabbard and Robert F. Kennedy Jr.] had no confidence in their ability to do the job. And as a result, the Senate, I think, stepped back from its constitutional role, and that's unfortunate. The closest we got was Hegseth. It's the first, the second time, I believe, that a vice president ever had to vote to break a tie for a cabinet appointee."

***This didn't make it into the interview due to time constraints, but I asked Reed, 75, if there was anything that could keep him from seeking reelection next year. "The only thing that would stop me would be a medical condition that would prevent me to basically fulfill my obligation to the people of Rhode Island," he said. "I'm working hard as I always try to do. These are difficult times. I'm trying to do my best. In a way, too, I think leaving the scene at the moment of intense political instability might not be the best thing."

BEER BATTLE: The number of craft brewers in Rhode Island has climbed to almost 40 over the last 15 years (and who doesn't enjoy having a cold one at The Guild beer garden near the pedestrian bridge in Providence on a pleasant day?). This has been a bright spot for the local economy and it enhances Rhode Island's appeal as a destination. But craft brewers here are regulated more stringently than counterparts in Connecticut and Massachusetts. This remains a hot topic at the State House, where Sen. Wally Felag (D-Warren) wants to create a study commission examining alcohol and cannabis, and where the elusive quest for common ground continues.

SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



R.I. home sales rose in 2024, reversing downward trend

Sales activity in Rhode Island's housing market rose last year for the first time since 2020. According to data released today by the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, 7681 single-family homes sold in the Ocean State in 2024, a 3.3% increase from 2023. Stunted by rising prices however, sales continue to fall far behind 2019 when 11,013 homes sold. In the five years since then, the median price climbed 66.7%. Last year alone, the 2024 median price of \$475,000 represented an 11.8% increase from 2023.

Chris Whitten, President of the Rhode Island Association of Realtors explained that demand from out-of-state buyers remains elevated. "The pandemic put Rhode Island on the map at a time our state was already short on housing supply. With the ability to work remotely, we've seen thousands moving into the Ocean State."

Last year, nearly one in four residential sales involved out-of-state buyers. For sales of \$1 million and over, the figure rose to 42%.

The multifamily home market also saw gains in sales and median price. Closed transactions rose 3.2% from the prior year and investors interested in the hot rental market helped push the median price up 15.1% to \$541,000, the largest annual increase of all residential housing types last year. First-time buyers and families also sought multifamily properties as a path to home ownership.

Rhode Island's condominium sector experienced a 7% increase in sales, though the median price of sales dropped slightly to \$355,000

from \$357,000 in 2023.

"It's clear our housing market remains extremely out of balance and the cost of owning a home here in Rhode Island has reached unprecedented heights. Obviously, we need to get more shovels in the ground to sensibly increase our supply, but just as important, the full ramifications of proposed laws on our housing market must be understood. While many bills are well intended, the effect of decreased home affordability from added fees, taxes and mandates can add up to thousands in a typical transaction. Sadly, the outcome of many of these bills are making the process more difficult to obtain the American Dream and detrimental to fixing our home affordability crisis," said Whitten.

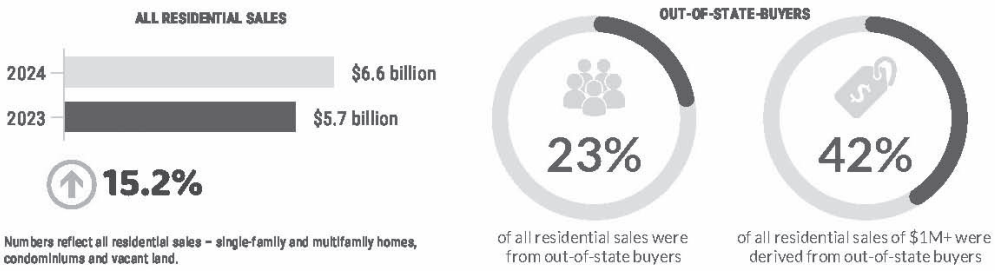
Based on data as of third quarter last year, each Rhode Island home sale pushed \$148,000 back into Rhode Island's economy through industry related income, expenditures related to home purchases and new home construction. The real estate industry accounted for \$14.9 billion or 18.8% of the gross state product according to a report generated by the National Association of Realtors.

"In addition to the enormous personal toll a lack of housing takes on our citizens, it doesn't make sense to do anything that makes the process harder and creates less affordability for one of the state's biggest economic drivers," said Whitten.

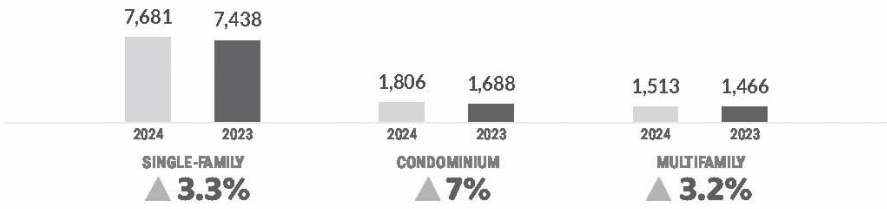
Source: Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®
www.rirealtors.org

YEAR-END 2024

RHODE ISLAND HOME SALES



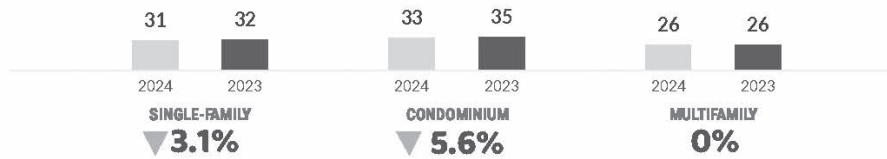
SALES



MEDIAN PRICE



DAYS ON MARKET



Percent change reflects a year-over-year comparison between 2023 and 2024. Information is provided by State-Wide MLS, Inc., a subsidiary of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®, and is deemed reliable but not guaranteed.

Crosswalk

(Continued from page 1)

ending another driver that had stopped for Sister, and pushed that vehicle into the crosswalk where it struck her. She was then hospitalized.

Recently, a new crosswalk safety device consisting of pedestrian signs with an on demand, push button flashing light warning and alarm system was installed at the scene of the accident.

SISTER’S JOURNEY

Sister Daisy’s trek to the crosswalk began long before she set foot on Atwood Avenue during that fateful day.

For 33 years, she has been a dedicated servant of the Catholic church as a member of the Figlie Mariae Hortus (FMH), which is Latin for “Daughters of Our Lady of the Garden.” Born in south India, she arrived in the United States in 1993 after spending a year in Rome. Her career first took her to Connecticut where she served in a preschool. She began her studies at Middlesex College, and while in New Haven she completed her master’s studies at Southern Connecticut State University. She worked in afterschool care and substituting.

Upon completing her degree, she became a middle school teacher for nine years. She was transferred to Brooklyn, New York, and there she taught second grade. When that school closed, she said “the Holy Spirit” brought her here, to St. Rocco, where she has served as a second grade teacher for 11 years. Her dedication to larger ideas drives her to serve.

She said her message to her students is to stay on the right path.

“I try to teach them right from wrong and always do good and always say positive things about other people,” she said.

THE DAY OF RECKONING

According to Sister Daisy, on the day of the accident, she had been preparing to attend a Tuesday prayer service at the church. She left her home at the convent across the street and entered the crosswalk.

“So I wanted to cross the street. I looked to the left side, nobody was coming. So I crossed and then stood in the middle of the street because on the other side of the road, they didn’t stop, so I had to stay there,” she said.

She added that at the time she felt a car very close to her, and before she knew what was happening, the car hit her. She did not realize that there were two cars involved in the incident.

“I said, ‘Oh my gosh, this car is touching me’, and that’s the only thing,” said Sister. “Then I was immediately pushed down.”

Sister Daisy’s injuries were serious but not life threatening. She was out of work for approximately three months. Even though a year has passed, she said she still sometimes experiences discomfort from her injuries.

“I say it was a miracle that I was alive,” she said. “Everyone was praying, they really did pray for me.”

THE REDEMPTION

Sister Daisy accounts that, from that day on, a campaign led by her supporters advocated for change at the crosswalk. Though it took some patience, it paid off.

According to Johnston Police Chief Mark Vieira, this section of Atwood Avenue is known for its congestion

Chief Vieira’s crosswalk safety for pedestrians and drivers

My advice for both pedestrians and drivers to ensure safer roadways in areas like Atwood Avenue is to be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Advice for Pedestrians:

- Always use designated crosswalks and look-out for cars coming from all directions.
- Avoid distractions by not using cell phones or headphones while walking near traffic.
- Try to make eye contact with drivers before crossing to confirm they see you.
- If a crosswalk is not available, try to cross the street in a well-lit area and wait for a break in traffic that allows enough time to cross safely.
- Continue to watch traffic while crossing.
- Always walk on sidewalks when they are available.
- If there is no sidewalk, always walk on the edge of the street on the side of the roadway that faces traffic.

Advice for Drivers:

- Always stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Look out for pedestrians everywhere at all times.
- Slow down in high-traffic areas.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk.
- Use extra caution while driving when visibility is poor at nighttime or during bad weather.
- Avoid distractions like texting while driving.

near the busy intersection of Plainfield Street. There is a considerable amount of pedestrian activity in the area on weekdays during student drop-off and dismissal, as well as before and after church services.

Following the accident a request was promptly submitted to the State Traffic Commission (STC) concerning the crosswalk. The STC is responsible for reviewing all requests concerning changes to state roadways, including the installation of traffic control devices. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is then responsible for designing and constructing any modifications to state roadways like Atwood Avenue.

A safety review of the existing crosswalk was initiated, and installation of rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) was considered. RRFB’s allow pedestrians to activate rectangular shaped flashing yellow LED lights to warn approaching drivers of their intention to cross the street.

“After submitting the request, I learned the STC had previously approved safety modifications to the existing crosswalk with installation of RRFB’s scheduled to

begin in the spring of 2025,” said Chief Vieira. “We are pleased these important safety measures have already been installed and commend the RIDOT for completing this project well ahead of schedule.”

No expenses were incurred by the Town of Johnston related to the funding for this state project.

THE OTHER SIDE

Chief Viera also explained that this incident has drawn attention to other problem crossings in town. The crosswalk located in front of Our Lady of Grace Church on George Waterman Road also experiences a significant amount of pedestrian activity before and after church services since their designated parking lot is also located across the street.

“It is my understanding RIDOT also has plans to install RRFB’s at this crosswalk as the project was included in the same state contract as the St. Rocco’s crosswalk,” said the chief.

A BELIEF IN MIRACLES

While the safety lights have been installed, Sister Daisy still believes that miracles are needed to prevent an accident like hers from happening again.

“The lights can only help so much, you still have to be careful because you can press the light and drivers can still be driving by. I’ve always said, just take one minute extra to stop,” she said. “Because if this was a child, they might not have survived.”

With the overwhelming amount of community support Sister Daisy has received, she wanted to take the opportunity to appreciate those who have seen her through the last year. She also said she has forgiven those involved in the accident, saying it isn’t in her nature to hold a grudge.

While Sister Daisy has humbly refused that the light be dedicated in her honor, the St. Rocco community is thrilled to have both Sister and the light in full service.

“I’m ecstatic that it’s there and that she’s here, I have to say it. I think the people who live in the area, and it’s such a busy street, that they will pay attention to it,” said Principal Melissa D’Amico.

Chief Vieira added, “Sister Daisy is an instrumental figure at St. Rocco’s School who instills moral and ethical values, as well as discipline, in her students. I know firsthand of the positive impact she has made in the lives of her students. I am grateful to hear Sister Daisy and the school and church community are pleased with the safety measures.”

Students at the school were also pleased with the entire outcome.

“I’m very grateful. It took us almost a year to get this, but it all worked out in the end and we really accomplished something,” said Rossella Ritacco, who was a student of the Sister. “We’re so blessed because she’s mostly healed now. It was hard not seeing her.”

As always, Sister Daisy remains humble and thankful for the efforts on her behalf.

“I know Chief Vieira worked so hard, the mayor worked hard, the state, and everyone who called worked so hard and I want to thank everyone,” said Sister Daisy of the efforts on her behalf, which included news articles, phone calls, and an untold number of cards and well wishes. “My life changed completely, but I thank God, it’s a miracle that I tell everybody. I am a living miracle.”

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Members of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment visited the General Assembly this week as the House and Senate passed resolutions honoring the contributions of the Revolutionary War regiment's Black soldiers' contributions. Submitted photo

Legislators honor Black Revolutionary War soldiers of the 1st R.I. Regiment

In honor of Black History Month, the Senate and House of Representatives recognized the contribution of the Black soldiers of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment who helped the nation win the Revolutionary War.

The Senate and House passed resolutions introduced by Sen. Linda Ujifusa and Rep. Jennifer A. Stewart to commemorate the contributions of 1st Rhode Island Regiment, also known as the Black Regiment and Varnum's Regiment.

On hand for the passage of the resolution were reenactors who portray

members of the 1st Regiment, Commanding Officer Joanne Breslin, Major Michael Breslin and Jason Roomes, who is also a descendant of a member of the 1st Regiment. John D. Harvey, curator and caretaker of the Varnum House Museum in East Greenwich joined them.

"It is not widely known that Black soldiers served during the Revolutionary War and it is important to raise public awareness of their contributions," said Senator Ujifusa (D-Dist.11, Portsmouth, Bristol), who introduced the resolution in part because the Black Regiment fought

the Battle of Rhode Island in Portsmouth.

The 1st Rhode Island Regiment was an integrated unit composed of Black, Indigenous and white soldiers who served together from 1778 through the end of the war in 1783.

"During Black History Month, I am especially delighted to sponsor this resolution in the House of Representatives. By honoring the contributions and heroism of these soldiers, we recognize the ways in which Black people have been fighting to expand liberty since the very beginning of the United States nearly 250

years ago," said Representative Stewart.

The resolution officially designated Feb. 11, 2025, "1st Rhode Island Regiment / Black Regiment Day" to commemorate the contribution of Black soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

The resolution states, "In August of 1778, the 1st Rhode Island Regiment stood bravely on the right flank of the Continental Army at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and drove back three Hessian charges and held the line against the British forces to 'distinguish itself with deeds of great valor.'"

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

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■ DAR (Continued from page 1)

in the scholarship contest, which includes submitting a personal statement and an essay. Participation in this portion of the program is optional, but those who choose to compete can earn scholarships at the chapter, state, division, and national levels.

DAR is a non-profit, non-political women's service organization dedicated to promoting historic preservation, education, and patriotism.

To select a nominee, Velino and Deb Licciardi, guidance counselor collaborated and conducted a search to determine who they felt best represented the DAR ideals.

"Mrs. Licciardi came to me and asked whom we should pick, so we did a deep dive to look at all of our seniors and Dariana was a perfect fit," said Principal Velino.

"Ironically history is not my favorite subject, I know it's very important. For example, my parents are immigrants, they came here so we could have a better future," said Dariana, who added that her parents came from the Dominican Republic. "I know how important it is for them to be here and for us to be able to live our lives."

Munoz moved on to the next level of the award process with four other students from across the state. She was the one chosen to represent Rhode Island in the northeast district.

"It feels really good to be recognized. This is only my second year here at Johnston, and I came from a very small, private school, St. Patrick Academy, where I everyone knew me," said Dariana. "So I

thought coming to a public school, I wasn't going to be recognized, especially being new, so I'm glad that they see how I'm doing and they can see all the hard work."

Dariana said that she wants to go to college upon graduation.

"I want to become a teacher, I think I'm leaning towards elementary education," said Dariana, who although doesn't have a college selected yet, she said she's like to stay in the New England area.

As mentioned, part of the process to move on in the regionals was for nominees to write a composition.

"They gave me a question and I wrote it on the spot in two hours. I also submitted a resume that included my extracurriculars and my future aspirations," said Dariana. "They also have four standards, dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism, and I also wrote another mini essay of how I represent each quality."

The essay question asked was, "Service is an essential attribute of a good citizen. Discuss how service can foster a strong sense of community and strengthen our American identity?"

Dariana's written summary to that question perhaps best captures why she received the award.

"In conclusion, through service, we can build connected communities and embrace American values. Through each act of service we perform, whether big or small, we are uniting as one and building a stronger nation. Service encourages collaboration, promotes a cohesive community, reestablishes traditional values that define America, and preserves them for years to come. Service empowers citizens to contribute to a greater good, which is essential for the success of our country and its future."



PRIME TIME

LIVING YOUR BEST IN THE PRIME OF YOUR LIFE



Volunteers with the Warwick Village presented to the city council in the fall of 2024. Submitted photo.

A Village comes to Warwick

Issues call for more volunteers, villagers

After more than a year of planning by residents, alongside the Village Common of Rhode Island, Warwick’s Village for older adults is becoming a reality.

There will be an opportunity to celebrate this milestone and to learn more about how the Village supports older adults in the community on Feb 26 at the Elk Lodge on West Shore Road.

The village concept is neighbors helping neighbors in a formal, sustainable organization. Older adults can get trusted help when they need it and stay social, preventing the negative effects of isolation.

According to a press release, the Warwick Village is always looking for volunteers to fill a variety of roles, from serving

on the steering committee to helping older residents who are just feeling lonely and need someone to talk to.

“We can provide rides to doctor’s offices, to the market, pharmacy or other errands, and do shopping for the member,” Caroline Dillon, executive director of the Village Common told the Warwick Beacon in November when the Warwick Village was still in its early organizing phase.

“We offer home help, which includes basic maintenance, such as replacing a battery in a smoke detector, changing a light bulb or removing seasonal items...We all need some technology help, setting up new devices. We have volunteers ready,” she said.

According to Dillon, volunteers must

complete a required background check. Villagers can also be volunteers, which Dillon says has happened often across Rhode Island’s other villages. Interested potential villagers, she continued, can meet with the organization’s membership ambassadors at their homes or at another location.

“We want to be sure that a village is a good fit for the perspective member and expectations are understood,” she said.

The Village Common of RI is a volunteer-driven, membership based, nonprofit organization with villages in Aquidneck Island, Barrington, Burrillville, Edgewood, Gloucester, Providence and Westerly. Each village has members and the volunteers who assist them, supported by the small administrative staff of The Village Common of RI. People can be both members and volunteers.

Formed in Providence in 2015, The Village Common of RI was inspired by the first village created by neighbors in the Beacon Hill section of Boston in 2002. These friends developed a formal network of volunteers available to help members with some of the challenges people experience as they age.

Each village reflects the needs of older adults in the community in which it operates. Villages are increasingly serving older adults in under-resourced communities with diverse populations. Members of Rhode Island villages pay dues based on what is financially manageable for them.

Warwick Village
Launch

February 26, 2025 • 10 a.m.
Tri City Elk Lodge #14
Upper Level
1915 W. Shore Road

According to organizers, the Villages also rely on collaborations and partnerships to leverage their resources and better serve older adults. They partner with health care agencies and providers, senior centers, educational institutions, service clubs, for-profit businesses, faith-based groups, and organizations in the aging services network. They strive not to duplicate services but rather enhance connections to resources.

If you’re interested in learning more about joining the Warwick Village as a volunteer or member, please contact us at warwick@villagecommonri.org or at 401-515-5118.

Visit our website to learn more about The Village Common of RI (www.villagecommonri.org).

With reports from Joy Fox and Adam Zangari.

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Frozen...Rhode Island Style

Being parents of two adult sons and a daughter, my wife and I have attended countless soccer, baseball, basketball, football games, dance recitals, and high school cheerleading performances. The cycle repeated itself when my twin granddaughters Kailyn and Sophia, now age 21 and in their last year of college, competed in hundreds of softball, volleyball, and soccer games, ran track, and cheered for the St. Raphael Academy football team.

These athletic events all had one common thread. They were held in mostly warm environments. While some football games and a few early season baseball and softball games were held during spring and fall when the weather had a chill in the air, they do not compare our newest adventure-high school hockey games. My grandson, 15-year-old freshman Nicholas, is a left-winger on the Blackstone Valley Schools varsity team. Consequently, we are being introduced an entirely new athletic circuit.

In our tour of the state’s high school hockey arenas, we have discovered sites that are reasonably comfortable. Schneider Arena at Providence College, the Smithfield Rink and Thayer Rink in Warwick are okay. Things start to get chillier at the Rhode Island Sports Center on Route 146 in North Smithfield, the Burrillville High School Rink and the Boss Arena at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston.

The deep freeze begins at the Cranston Memorial Ice Rink. But nothing is as arctic as the Dennis M. Lynch Arena in Pawtucket. My wife and I have speculated that the heat was last turned on at this venue in 1982. If that wasn’t cold enough, brain-freezing ventilation drifts through the rink. As you sit and observe the action on the ice, you are almost frozen in place on the aluminum benches. And I’m grateful that high school hockey periods last 15 minutes instead of the standard 20 minutes.

The heat, what little there is, can be enjoyed if you take refuge in the lobby and thaw out for about 10 minutes between the second and third periods when the Zamboni resurfaces the ice. The Zamboni is not used between the first and second periods when the teams gather around their



MY SIDE OF THINGS

by LARRY GRIMALDI

coaches to review the action and get instructions for the last period. So you

endure the igloo atmosphere in frigid silence, insulated with a long-sleeve t-shirt, flannel shirt, a wool toque topped by a hooded sweat shirt, a winter coat, gloves and a scarf as you huddle under a blanket. (I am NOT exaggerating).

My memory harkens back to those winter Sunday evenings spent at the old Rhode Island Auditorium on North Main Street watching the Providence Reds battle their American Hockey League foes like the Quebec Aces, Rochester Americans, Hershey Bears, Springfield Indians, and the Buffalo Bisons for the Calder Cup (the AHL equivalent of Lord Stanley’s National Hockey League prized trophy). While I recall it being reasonably comfortable at the Auditorium, the cigarette and cigar smoke would rise to the rafters and could obscure some of the action on the ice by the third period.

The move to the Providence Civic Center in 1972 (now the Amica Mutual Pavilion) somehow took some of the aura away from the ritual Sunday contests at the old “barn.” I also saw the rodeo, the circus, and the Boston Celtics, with roundball legends such as Bob Cousy and Bill Russell, play the Cincinnati Royals, featuring Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson at the Auditorium. I also skated there during open skating sessions.

At any rate, I’m sitting here at the frozen tundra that is the Lynch Arena and enjoying every minute. I wouldn’t want it any other way.

Larry Grimaldi is a freelance writer from North Providence. Larry and his wife Kathy are co-authors of “Wandering Across America,” a chronicle of their cross-country road trip, and “Cooking with Mammie,” a collection of family recipes prepared with their grandchildren. He has also written the anthologies, “50 Shades of Life, Love, and Laughter, Volumes I & II.” The anthologies are a collection of previously published columns, used with the permission of Beacon Communications. For more information, or comments, e-mail lvgrimaldi49@gmail.com or visit fruit-hillpublishing.my.canva.site

Choosing the Long-Term Care That’s Right for You

You have options when it comes to making decisions about long-term care.

When choosing long-term care, families sometimes wait until they experience a crisis and then are forced to make a decision during less than ideal circumstances. Although moving into a skilled nursing home is a wonderful option, it’s not the only one, and it doesn’t always need to be the first step.

You can decide what is best for you with the assistance of an Aging Life Care Specialist like Sheri Ferola with Saint Elizabeth Community, who explains,

“We work with our clients to find the best fit for them at this moment in time, while planning out their long-term options. We take a holistic approach in assessing their needs then we help guide them through the process. And we’ll be there with them for the duration, adapting with them as changes occur.”

Here are some options in the continuum of care that an Aging Life Care Specialist can evaluate with you.

Home Care

We hear a lot of talk about aging in place where we have the opportunity to grow older in the comfort of our own home. Home care is a great way to make that happen. Let caring qualified staff come to your home to provide services that include skilled nursing, rehabilitation, physical therapy, CNA care, personal assistance and more.

Adult Day

One of the key ingredients of aging well is remaining active, physically and mentally. Adult Day Centers provide engaging and supportive activities all day long

under the supervision of health care staff who offer assistance with everything from personal care to medication management. Many programs offer specialized care for elders affected by conditions like memory loss or motion and mobility disorders.

Senior Apartments

For older adults who live independently but wish to be in a community of their peers, senior apartments are a great alternative. Many housing complexes offer safe and affordable spaces that include resources like security and onsite resident services.

Assisted Living

Assisted living provides independent living much like senior apartments but with additional support and attention. Nursing and CNA staff help residents with their daily care. Dining, laundry and other personal services are available as well. And there are always fun social activities to keep everyone active and engaged.

Skilled Nursing Home

Whether for short-term rehabilitation or as a long-term resident, skilled nursing homes offer the ultimate in quality care. Staff build relationships with the members of the community and are able to monitor and assess their health on a daily basis. Specialized units may focus on memory care or physical activity, depending on the needs of each resident.

Before you decide on your long-term care, consider the wide range of options available to you.

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Office of Healthy Aging Explained

Are you one of the nearly 190,000 Rhode Islanders over age 65? You are in good company; you are part of the fastest growing population in the Ocean State.

I'm excited to introduce you to Rhode Island's Office of Healthy Aging (OHA). We are your partner and funded with your tax dollars. OHA creates policies and programs to support your goals for aging and supporting your independence. OHA is a state agency which exists to help you find the information you need - when you need it.

So, each month you can look to this place, this column, to learn more about the important role OHA plays in advocating for older adults, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers. Our mission is to provide you with the resources needed to live with dignity, security, and achieve maximum independence for your desired quality of life.

How we each choose to age — or grow old — is just that, a choice which looks different for each and every one of us. The team at OHA works as advocates and connectors, educators and protectors, for all our aging Rhode Islanders. Rhode Island has a larger than average older adult population.

Eighteen percent of our neighbors are over the age of 65, and nearly 40 percent of the state's population is 50 or older. We've built relationships with other state agencies and community partners to identify where each of our strengths and obligations lie.

As a third generation Rhode Islander, I know the Ocean State is a great place to grow up. It is also a great place to grow old. Part of what makes it great is our state's commitment to create support systems to allow people to thrive as they age. The team at OHA, alongside our community partners, works to create a Rhode Island that not only meets the basic needs of older adults but also ensures their full participation in society, in their communities, as they age. We must embrace each other through different stages of life and different times of need. Supporting older adults living in our communities' benefits everyone. El-



by MARIA CIMINI



ders enrich society and contribute to our collective well-being. We all know, or are, someone who is an older adult, an adult with a disability, or has taken on caregiving duties. The work of our office touches everyone in the state. By helping older adults, we honor their lives and help them age with purpose and dignity.

As you have aged, no doubt you have made plans. You've thought about where you'll work, and for how long; where you'll live; how you'll spend your time; and who you'll spend your time with. There are many challenges to planning. You may not know your options or how to pursue your goals. You may not know the resources available to you. What may be more challenging, however, is when an unexpected event disrupts your plans. That's where the work of the Office of Healthy Aging can provide a compass.

You are not alone.

Whether you want to improve or maintain your physical health, learn something new, navigate dementia care, transportation resources or need support as you care for your loved ones, each month we'll highlight different resources and opportunities to be sure that you continue to live as you desire.

Imagine the diversity of interest and need of the 190,000 older adults in RI.

We have an obligation and are determined to be accessible and responsive to the needs of our aging adults. That means future months we may highlight services for those who are homebound, opportunities to engage your community, programs focusing on physical accessibility, or multi-lingual or LGBTQ seniors.

But this month, I leave you with the most important resource. Rhode Island's Aging and Disability Resource Center is the best first call to ask your questions and get answers, 401-462-4444. Learn more about our Office at oha.ri.gov, or pop into your local senior center.

Maria Cimini is the director of the Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging.



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Our house backs up to a grassy hill that rises up to a stand of trees. We have a fence back there, but it's a short picket fence allowing a view of all the woodsy goings-on through the seasons.

In spring and summer, it's alive with activity. The drab grays and browns turn all shades of green — each tree a different forest hue from the rich deep emerald grassy meadow. Rabbits and squirrels dart here and there — in constant motion — or sit stock still as hawks or other birds of prey glide high above the treetops.

In fall, the colors are glorious — moving from green to brilliant orange, red, yellow, and deep purple. We've seen turkeys strutting their stuff — usually a group — a large tom spreading his bronze-green iridescent arc of tail feathers accompanied by his harem. One time they came through the back gate, which had come unlatched in the wind, and trooped into our backyard — first the tom and then the ladies, one at a time. They checked out the picnic table, foraged a bit through the fading flower beds, and peered at the back deck — eyeing the stairs but apparently thinking better of climbing them. As if they were a collection of sightseeing tourists, just arrived and eager to explore their latest stop. Their mission accomplished, the tom led the crew down the driveway and out to the street where they calmly paraded onward to their next destination.

We saw a full antlered deer back there once and another time two coyotes staked their claim on top of the hill for several days — sitting as if all was well in their world, soaking up the sun, ears alert, noses in the air. Nothing moved while they were in residence. Usually chattering squirrels and playful rabbits are in abundance — rough and tumbling, dashing across the meadow, disappearing into the trees and bushes, but there were no signs of life that week when the coyotes were kings of the hill.

In winter the trees are brown and bare, but we still see birds. The cardinals and blue jays provide



MY MEMOIRS

by SUSAN DEAN

dashes of color that brighten the grayness and when there's snow — their reds and blues are a vivid reminder that beauty is all around us even in winter's darkest days. Winter weather is tough sometimes — disrupting travel and canceling activities and putting life on hold as we deal with the onslaughts of snow and ice. But sometimes the quiet overnight snowfalls are peaceful and we wake to see our world covered in a soft white blanket transforming our normal outside view from drab to clean bright white.

And most times when this happens I can see the tell-tale signs of the winter animals going about their nocturnal or early-morning travels. For some reason, this rather delights me. Tracks of various sizes and shapes appear near the back fence at different starting points and meander about — some heading straight across the backyard to the large ancient maple tree standing tall and bare. Some tracks go in arcs and circles, stopping at different parts of the yard and continuing on to another stopping place, or doubling back or crisscrossing other sets of tracks. Footprints in the snow that leave a temporary record of nature's never-ending activity in what we call the dead of winter. But nature and life continue to hum — very much alive even as the land seems to lie dormant — quiet, idle, asleep.

There is an elderly man who lives in our neighborhood. I don't know his name — we've never met — and for years he rode his bike slowly down our street and past our house every morning. Then there was a time when we didn't see him and we wondered what had happened. But eventually he resumed his morning outings — only this time walking very slowly using a cane. And this has now become his daily routine. One step in front of the other — making tracks of a different kind — leaving footprints in my mind. Footprints that tell of his perseverance, his courage, his motivation to keep moving and to keep going despite the difficulties.

He reminds me that we all leave footprints of our time on earth. The footprints we leave are our legacy. We were here and every one of us makes a difference in our own unique way. Footprints in the snow — tracks that signify that life goes on and that it is meaningful and purposeful. That something living has left its mark on earth.

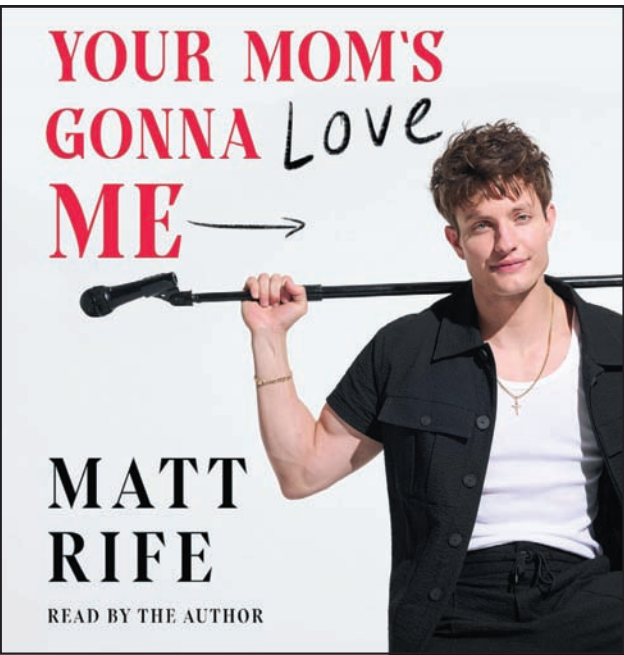
My neighbor's footsteps are leaving a mark on me without his even knowing it. Footprints that silently teach me how to gracefully and courageously move through the seasons of my life. And remind me that my footprints — like the nighttime tracks left behind in the winter snows — signify that I was here. What legacy will I leave behind?

Showbiz Memoirs, a Broadway Play and a Twisty Mystery on Audio

Memoirs from Rhode Island-based comic Matt Rife and Tony winner Alex Newell, a Broadway play starring Rachel McAdams and a new book by Queen of Twists Alice Feeney are all heard on recent audiobooks.



by ALAN ROSENBERG



“Your Mom’s Gonna Love Me”

By Matt Rife, read by Rife. Simon & Schuster Audio, 5¾ hours, \$18.99. Also available via any Rhode Island public library.

Here’s what breakout comedy star Matt Rife doesn’t talk about in this new memoir: the offer he and a friend made in September to buy Burrillville’s Conjuring House.

Here’s what he does talk about: losing his virginity (it’s the first thing he mentions); losing his father to suicide when he was a baby; his abusive stepfather and loving grandfather; sex; his struggles to get ahead in comedy; his sudden fame when a TikTok video went massively viral; and the backlash when a joke about a woman with a black eye was taken to mean he advocated domestic violence.

Oh, and the house he recently bought in Rhode Island, reportedly in North Smithfield (neither of which he mentions, for fear of fans finding him, he says). It came furnished, with a “flat and smushed” carpet and dingy beige walls, making him feel like he was moving into “an Airbnb that the owners died in.” But, he says, there’s “a comedy club, and an airport not too far away, so it’s really convenient for all the touring I do.”

And he says, he loves that it’s in the middle of nature — though “the very first thing I bought for the house was a Nerf basketball hoop for the entrance, because blindsiding your boy with a windmill 360 dunk is good for you, too.”

By the way, he recorded the book at Star Trak studios in Warwick.

If Rife’s name isn’t familiar, you probably don’t

spend a lot of time on TikTok, where his videos get hundreds of millions of views, or on YouTube or Netflix, where he’s had several comedy specials. At 29, he’s really just ascending into stardom, but he’s got a surprising amount to say about his life, and he tells it in an engaging way. And being a comedian, with a comedian’s timing, he’s the ideal person to read his own book.

“Beautiful Ugly”

By Alice Feeney, read by Richard Armitage and Tuppence Middleton. Simon & Schuster Audio, 9¾ hours, \$26.99. Also available via any Rhode Island public library.

Just as he was hitting the New York Times best-seller list, British author Grady Green’s beloved wife, Abby, disappeared. In the year since Abby’s red coat was found near a cliff-side road a mile from their house, Grady has been unable to write.

Now, out of money, he has taken refuge on a little Scottish island where his agent owns a cottage where a famed writer once lived and worked. But much is lurking behind the islanders’ smiles in this characteristically twisty tale from the formidable Alice Feeney, author of books including “Sometimes I Lie” and “Rock Paper Scissors.” I never like to give too much away about a Feeney book; suffice it to say that very little here is as it seems.

The book is enhanced by the reading from Richard Armitage, of the “Hobbit” movies. As his world disintegrates, Armitage understatedly but convincingly conveys his character’s confusion and increasing desperation.

“Alex Newell and the Gospel of a Diva”

By Alex Newell, read and sung by Newell. Audible Original, 1 hour, free with Audible Plus membership, \$7.95 a month.

If you’re looking for a lot of insight into the life of Tony-winning actor Newell, you’ve come to the wrong place. If you’ll be satisfied with a display of vocal pyrotechnics, this audiobook may be for you.

Newell, who won a Tony in 2023 for his performance in “Shucked,” says early on that at 32, they’re too young for an autobiography. That means they mostly confine the commentary part of this live-recorded performance to sassy one-liners about the attitude of a diva.

But the nonbinary actor opens up a bit when talking about their turn on TV competition show “The Glee Project,” which led to a recurring role on “Glee” and opened the door to much bigger things. And this discussion leads to a dazzling, heartfelt rendition of “If I Were a Boy.”

I wish there had been more pairings like this of music and musing. That would have gone a long way toward making this book a must-listen.

“Mary Jane”

By Amy Herzog, read by Rachel McAdams, April Matthis, Brenda Wehle, Lily Santiago and Susan Pourfar. Audible Original, 1¼ hours, free with Audible Plus membership, \$7.95 a month.

Mary Jane is a single mother of a special-needs baby living in New York City. In this brief but wrenching play, she confronts her child’s deepening illness in the company of a variety of people, primarily nurses and the mothers of other very sick children.

McAdams, who also played the title role on Broadway in the spring and early summer of 2024, brings intensity and sincerity to the part. What’s surprising from a technical point of view is how frequently the dialogue feels like it was recorded in two different places, with McAdams stopping abruptly as though someone has cut in — but the other actor in the scene pausing a beat before beginning to speak.

It’s a glitch that mars what otherwise is a strong slice-of-life performance.

Alan Rosenberg, of Warwick, is a retired executive editor of The Providence Journal and has been reviewing

audiobooks for more than two decades. Reach him at AlanRosenbergRI@gmail.com.



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Celebrating 50 Years of the Earned Income Tax Credit

IRS aims to raise awareness throughout 2025

by MEG CHEVALIER

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) reached a major milestone in tax year 2025. To help encourage participation, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will work to increase awareness of the credit and the significant role it plays in strengthening our working families.

The Tax Reduction Act of 1975 introduced EITC as a modest tax break to provide financial help to economically challenged families and encourage work. Over the years, EITC has grown into the federal government’s largest refundable tax credit program for low- to moderate-income workers.

Even at 50, there is more work to do to raise awareness. The IRS urges community partners to engage with clients directly through all available channels and help make eligible taxpayers aware of this potentially life-changing tax credit.

IRS’s goal is to capture the attention of those who are eligible for EITC and encourage them to find out whether they also qualify for other refundable tax credits. To qualify for the EITC or EIC you must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if you do not owe any tax or are not required to file.

The credit is a financial boost to the taxpayer, their family, and community. For example:

- **Nationally, as of November 2024, approximately 23 million workers and families received about \$63 billion in EITC.**
- **In Rhode Island during 2024 processing year (2023 tax year) about 68,000 eligible workers and families received about \$170 million in EITC.**
- **The average amount of EITC received nationwide was about \$2,748. In Rhode Island, this was \$2,513.**
- **For tax year 2024, the EITC is as much as \$7,830 for a family with three or more children and up to \$632 for taxpayers who do not have a qualifying child.**



Furthermore, workers move in and out of eligibility based on changes in marital, parental, and financial status. Therefore, millions of workers may qualify for the EITC for the first time this year, making year-round outreach and education efforts critical for raising taxpayer awareness. For that reason, IRS conducts outreach and education related to EITC year-round, either directly through the IRS or through leveraged partnerships.

Closing EITC Participation Gap

Approximately four out of five eligible taxpayers receive the EITC. This means millions of taxpayers are putting EITC dollars to work for them. Unfortunately, this also means that many other taxpayers are not taking advantage of a benefit they have earned. Ultimately, our goal is to positively affect the EITC participation rate. The current rate is 81 percent. To reach the roughly 20 percent of eligible taxpayers that do not claim EITC, IRS will continue to focus on underserved communities or taxpayers with unconventional family conditions.

Workers at risk of overlooking the EITC are people:

- **Living in non-traditional homes, such as a grandparent raising a grandchild**
- **Living in rural areas**
- **With changed marital or parental status**
- **Veterans**
- **With earnings are below filing requirement**
- **Without children**
- **Who are Native Americans, have limited English skills, and people with disabilities or raising children with disabilities**

You can find a complete list of requirements and income limits on [IRS.gov/EITC](https://www.irs.gov/EITC). Having your tax return prepared for free at a VITA/TCE site can help determine your eligibility for the EITC. They will review your information, such as income, filing status and the number of qualifying children to determine if you are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Local VITA site information is available by calling the United Way number 2-1-1. Also, at [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) - search the word “VITA” and then click on Free Tax Return Preparation for You by Volunteers. To locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, visit aarp.org, or call 888-227-7669.

Meg Chevalier is a Senior Tax Consultant/Relationship Manager in the Providence office of the Internal Revenue Service

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Sports

Panthers fall in DII prelims

JHS girls reach playoffs after being moved to DII

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The 10th-seeded Johnston girls basketball team fell to No.7 Mt. Hope 51-38 in the Division II preliminary round on Tuesday night to close out its season.

Alanna Colon led the Panthers with 18 points while Bella Rivas finished her freshman season strong with nine points.

After reaching the Division IV finals last winter, the Panthers were put to the test this year by being moved up to DII with several new starters, including Colon and Rivas. Johnston held its own in its new division, finishing with six league wins and clinching a playoff spot.

The Panthers built some momentum last week when they won their regular season finale by beating Toll Gate 60-31.



Johnston's Alanna Colon (left) and Bella Rivas in last week's season finale against Toll Gate. Beacon Media photos by Alex Sponseller



Ponte takes 13th

The Johnston High School indoor track & field team was represented by Jayden Ponte last weekend in Providence at the Rhode Island Interscholastic League's State Championships. Ponte competed in shot put and placed 13th overall. Photo by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com

Desmarais wins All-Around title

Sophomore dominates at gymnastics championships

By ALEX SPONSELLER

Cranston West sophomore Gianna Desmarais put on a show at the Rhode Island Interscholastic League's Gymnastics State Championships on Sunday, becoming only the second athlete in school history to capture the All-Around title when she rolled to an overall score of 37.2.

Desmarais had a breakout season last year as a freshman, winning the Vault competition and taking second on Bars to wrap up a top-10 finish for Johnston. She returned with the Falcons this year and put on a performance for the ages, defending her Vault title, taking first on Bars and finishing third on the Beam.

Desmarais was equally as dominant on Saturday as she finished the team championship with a 36.9, leading the



Gianna Desmarais on top of the podium last week at RIC. Beacon Media photos by Alex Sponseller



Johnston's Annabella Gesualdi (3) and l'daizha Brown (4) battle for a rebound.

■ Panthers

(Continued from page 19)

Colon led the way with 21 points while Marissa Morsilli scored 14. Toll Gate was led by Mary McNulty with 20 points.

"It gives us some momentum heading into the playoffs, this was an important win, it was a good win because we all got into the books. We were shooting the ball really well. Bella (Gesualdi) got some points down low, Melissa got in the books. Everyone helped," said Colon.

Toll Gate led after one quarter, but the Panthers took control early in the second and never looked back.

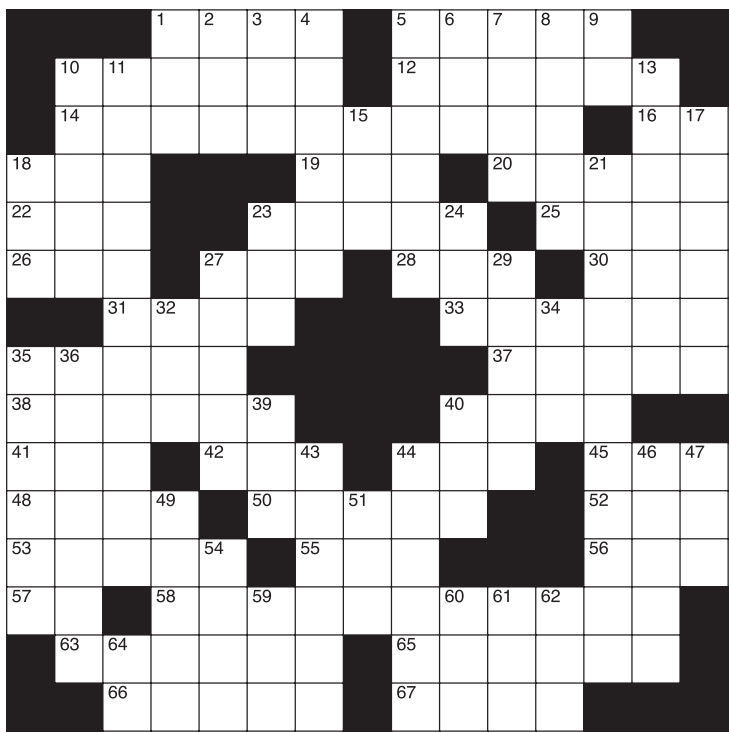
"It was Coach (Jhamal) Diggs. He pushes us each and every game, he called the first time out, got in our faces yelling at us, then we came out hot. We were cold in the first half but at halftime he told us that we had to pick it up and we did. We started hitting our shots and played really good ball," said Colon of the team's turnaround.

Colon was excited to see the young Panthers reach the postseason in the face of adversity this season.

"We're a young team so we've got to keep playing the way we're playing. Nobody expected us to get to the playoffs. No one wants to see Johnston win and that pushes us. We practice and work hard every day," Colon said.

The Panthers will now flip the page toward next winter. With no senior this year, Colon, Gesualdi and Rivas are expected to return to the lineup along with Morsilli, Olivia Iafrate and I'daizha Brown, giving the team its entire roster for another season.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Tropical Asian plant | 41. Weekday | (abbr.) | captors |
| 5. Yankees' slugger | 42. Women's service organization | 4. Prayer | 35. Counteract |
| Judge | (abbr.) | 5. Calculating machine | 36. Goes over again |
| 10. Helps to preserve food | 44. Local area network | 6. Keyboard key | 39. Popular Dodge truck |
| 12. Plant disease | 45. Sensory receptor | 7. Outburst | 40. Male adult |
| 14. One who predicts | 48. Posted | 8. Man-eating giants | 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast |
| 16. Equally | 50. Tibetan pastry | 9. New Hampshire | 44. Rope used to lasso |
| 18. Burundian franc | 52. Licensed for Wall Street | 10. Type of sword | 46. Become less intense |
| 19. Pouch | 53. Very willing | 11. Counting | 47. Subway rodent |
| 20. Arizona city | 55. Golf score | 13. Pants style | 49. Lead alloy |
| 22. Surround | 56. Consume | 15. Political action committee | 51. Japanese honorific title |
| 23. Hard, heavy timber | 57. Touchdown | 17. U.S. government legislative branch | 54. Advise someone |
| 25. Witnessed | 58. Tends to remind | 18. Civil Rights Act component | 59. Famous NYC museum |
| 26. They ___ | 63. In a way, smoothed | 21. Contractors take one | 60. Ocean |
| 27. French river | 65. Poke holes in the ground | 23. Spanish soldier | 61. Cathode-ray tube |
| 28. A way to drink | 66. Herbaceous plants | 24. A person's brother or sister | 62. Cologne |
| 30. Small constellation | 67. Taiwanese river | 27. Expressed pleasure | 64. It starts with these two |
| 31. Peruse a written work | | 29. Song of praise | |
| 33. Type of hound | | 32. Shock treatment | |
| 35. Plant of the goosefoot family | | | |
| 37. Evade or escape | | | |
| 38. A way to confine | | | |
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Body art
 2. Boxing's GOAT

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Gianna Desmarais on the beam last Sunday at Rhode Island College.

Title
(Continued from page 19)

Falcons to a second-place finish in Division II. Although last year's individual champ Lauren Horrigan of La Salle Academy was considered the favorite heading into the weekend, Desmarais' confidence grew throughout the week, especially after Saturday's stellar performance.

"I'm really happy and I'm glad I won. I wasn't really expecting it (at first) but seeing how yesterday went, I was expecting it. I'm happy," said Desmarais. "Confidence. I came into this competition very confident. This week I conditioned myself my hardest so I was happy about that, my confidence was up this week. I came out here and did what I know how to do. I knew if I came in here with confidence and focused on myself that I could push through it."

Desmarais was also thrilled to represent her new team, one that features one of the biggest rosters in the state.

"I find it easier being here at West, I find it easier having a team here to sup-

port me. It feels better and helps my confidence," said Desmarais, who will now turn her focus toward the upcoming New England Championships, where she will be competing in Vault, Bars and Beam.

"It feels great, I'm very honored. Going forward, I only wish for more," Desmarais said.

Prout/Exeter West Greenwich took the DII title with a total score of 133.400 while Cranston West finished second with a 132.750.

Desmarais took first place in all four events in the DII finals. Emalee Dorrance, Lexee Felicio, Madilyn Bolton and Siran Sahakian all qualified for the Floor for the individual state finals. Bolton finished with a 31.800 score on Saturday, second on the team behind Desmarais.

The Warwick co-op finished the day in fourth place in the DI meet with a total score of 132.350. La Salle took first overall.

Abigail Marino led Warwick with a total score of 33.350 while Lia Franchetti finished with a 32.950. Mackenzie Long placed sixth on Beam in the individual meet on Sunday.

Playoffs underway for local winter teams

We're in the thick of the winter playoffs. Some championships have gone down, other tournaments are starting this week. The next few weeks are my favorite of the year.

Here are my takes on what we have seen so far.

We had a trio of girls take home state championships last weekend. Pilgrim's Keaney Bayha and Toll Gate's Vanessa Jones took home indoor track title while Cranston West's Gianna Desmarais won the all-around title at the gymnastics meet.

Bayha's stellar senior year continues after she won the individual cross country title back in the fall. Now, she has another medal to add to the collection as she cements her place as one of Pilgrim's greatest athletes.

Jones made a splash as a sophomore in the weight throw by taking home a top-5 finish and took another step forward this year by win-

ning the state championship as a junior. I'm not sure if she is looking to continue her throwing career at the college level, but by the time she's a senior, she will have no shortage in opportunities to compete for a college club.

On a similar note, Desmarais had a breakout year as a freshman and won the Vault last season before securing a top-10 finish in the all-around category.

She was dominant at Sunday's event, defending her Vault title before winning Bars and taking third on the Beam. Although she was considered to be in the mix to take the All-Around championship, I'm not sure if anyone would have guessed she'd take it in dominant fashion before the weekend. It's impressive to think that she has another two seasons of high school ahead of her. She was a big deal at the youth level when she competed out of Dream Big and

My pitch



by
ALEX
SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR

ALEXS@
RHODYBEAT.COM

now she is the best high school athlete in the state.

The basketball playoffs tip off this week and we have a handful of teams that made the cut.

I know that choosing the Division I boys tournament as my most intriguing is as cliché as it gets, but I am fascinated by how this is going to shake out.

La Salle remained undefeated and enters the postseason as the favorite, but the next few teams all beat up on each other and are fully capable of pulling off a potential upset. Classical played the Rams tough

and are the defending champs, Hendricken split its games with the Purple, and fourth-place Barrington beat the Hawks when they met. Central, Portsmouth and Lincoln are all capable of emerging as factors as well. Although the Rams are the top dog, it is pretty wide open from there.

The girls race that I will be following closest to will be in Division III, where third-seeded Pilgrim will represent our coverage area.

The Pats flew out the gate this season and proved to be a contender with an 11-2 league record. Matchups make fights, so you can't do simple scoreboard math, but No.1 Lincoln School's only loss came to second-seeded Exeter West Greenwich, who the Pats beat. Pilgrim's losses came to the Lynx and fourth-place Prout, who is right in the mix as well. This is a true four-team race in the state's most interesting division.

The Toll Gate wrestling team took home the Division II/III Championship and will have a few grapplers looking to make noise at next weekend's state championship. As always, the Hawks will be well-represented along with Cranston West. Johnston's Logan Martins will be a player and Cranston East may send one or two guys as well.

Ponaganset has built a super team up north, and from what I have seen and heard it appears to be the real deal. The Chieftains will have a chance to run away with the team title with relative ease. Let's see how many of our guys can pull off wins and make this a fight on the team level.

The swimming division championships went down at Roger Williams last weekend and the defending champion Hawks took home the DI crown, setting them up as the favorite to win the state meet coming up on

March 2nd.

It has been an intriguing regular season in DI swim. Hendricken has been impressive with largely a new lineup while the South County co-op has been right in the mix and beat Hendricken when they met. North Kingstown and Barrington were also very competitive at divisions.

It is too close of a race to declare a firm favorite for states, but the Hawks seem to have the inside track. Any of those other three teams can win, though, which should make it one of the closest state championships in recent years.

Hockey playoffs start next weekend so we will get into that next week once we see how the seeding breaks down. Hendricken is fighting for the top spot in DI, while Toll Gate-East Greenwich is clinging onto first place in DII. The Cranston co-op will be a dark horse in DII. Just as a preview.

Locals lead RIC track at BU

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Freshman Quiana Pezza (Cranston) finished 11th in the triple jump (10.48m) as Rhode Island College competed at Boston University's David Hemery Invitational in women's indoor track and field action on Saturday afternoon.

It was an individual meet with no team scoring and featured mostly Div. I and II competition.

Pezza also placed 15th in the long jump (4.49m). Senior Samantha Sainristil (Cranston) finished 12th in the shot (11.96m) and 13th in the weight throw (14.63m).

Junior Milana Melvin (Johnston) finished 16th in the shot (9.82m). Freshman Funmilayo Mcln (Providence) finished 21st in the weight throw (11.38m).

Junior Tayshia Cary (Wakefield) finished 53rd in the 60m preliminaries (8.49) and 59th in the 200m (26.45). Freshman Bendu Kamara (Pawtucket) finished 93rd in the 200m (27.72) and 103rd in the 400m (1:05.01).

Junior Haley Oliver (Coventry) finished 192nd in the mile (5:07.94).

In upcoming action, Rhode Island College will host the 2025 Little East Championship at Providence Career and Technical Academy on Saturday, Feb. 22 (11 a.m.).

Iafrate sharp in Wheaton loss

The United States Coast Guard Academy men's basketball team put together a big run in the second half to come away with a comeback victory over host Wheaton College (Mass.), 80-70, this afternoon in New England Women's & Men's Athletic Conference play at Emerson Gymnasium on the Wheaton campus in Norton, Mass.

The Bears improve to 9-14 overall and 5-9 in league play, while the Lyons slip to 10-13 and 5-9.

Wheaton honored its four seniors in a pre-game ceremony, recognizing Khaled Thaher (Amman, Jordan), Duncan Bubar (Newton, Mass.), Ty Murphy (Dedham, Mass.) and Taro Tari (Chelmsford, Mass.) prior to their last regular-season home contest for the Lyons.

Coast Guard shot 44.8% (30-67) from the field, including 9-22 (40.9%) from three-point range, while committing just nine turnovers, while Wheaton was 40.3% (25-62) from the floor. The Lyons held a 42-36 rebounding advantage, but the Bears made the most of their opportunities with an 8-3 margin in second chance points.

Farrell was 2-3 from long range and added five rebounds, four assists, two

blocks and a steal for Coast Guard, while junior guard Elijah Parent (Bristol, Conn.) scored 16 points on 6-11 shooting, including 4-7 from three-point territory. In addition he grabbed three boards and handed out an assist. Senior center Cameron Brown (Ellicott City, Md.) came off the bench to score 12 points in 16 minutes and sparked the Bears' pivotal second-half run. He also added three rebounds and an assist.

Sophomore guard Dimetri Iafrate (Johnston) led all players with 22 points for Wheaton to go with six boards, three steals, a block and a game-high seven assists. Junior guard Tristan Herry (East Taunton, Mass.) contributed with 13 points, four rebounds and two assists and junior forward Eoin Morrissey (Watertown, Mass.) chipped in with a game-best 11 rebounds in addition to four points, an assist and a steal.

Tari gave the Lyons a 55-51 advantage with a fastbreak layup at the 11:44 mark of the second half, but the Bears put together a devastating 18-6 stretch, fueled by eight points from Brown, to give the visitors the lead for good at 73-66 with 5:20 remaining in the contest. Wheaton scored the next four points, including a big triple from Morrissey to pull the Lyons to within 73-70, but it was as close as the home team would get. Wheaton missed just four free throws in the game, but they all came in the final five minutes of play. Coast Guard put the affair away with the final seven points for a 10-point win.

Wheaton took an early 13-9 lead at the 14:47 mark of the opening half, following a 9-2 run, including a three-pointer each from three of the seniors with Murphy, Tari and Thaher all hitting from long distance. The Bears reclaimed the lead with six straight points on a pair of quick threeballs from Parent, to give them a 15-13 margin with 14:12 to go in the half. The teams traded the lead three more times as part of a contest that saw 14 changes for the day. Wheaton went on a 10-5 burst, capped by a triple from Iafrate to break a tie and give the home team a 23-20 lead with 9:38 to play in the first stanza.

The Lyons later maintained a 33-29 lead with 4:53 showing on the first half clock following a 10-4 run paced by four points from Herry. Coast Guard responded with a 9-3 stretch, including four points from Farrell, to take a 38-36 margin at 2:26 of the half. Wheaton closed out the session with a 7-3 effort with Iafrate canning three straight free throws to give the Lyons a 43-41 half-time lead.

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Register for ‘My Fishing Cape Cod’ kickoff

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI
Special to the SunRise

“My Fishing Cape Cod’s” 2025 Season Kickoff workshop will take place Saturday, March 29, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hyport Conference Center, Hyannis.

Public Registration for this premiere fishing education and networking event starts Saturday. Registration is limited to 210 so don’t delay as last year it sold out.

My Fishing Cape Cod is a fishing education portal for and by fishers on Cape Cod. Their purpose is to, “Help anglers of all ages and abilities (residents and visitors alike) to catch more fish, learn the area, and fully enjoy the Cape Cod fishing experience!” Their portal at My Fishing Cape Cod - your source for Cape Cod fishing reports & more features a blog, forum, educational podcast links, trip listings and a calendar of events.

During the Season Kickoff attendees will learn from some of Cape Cod’s most experienced charter captains and surfcasters. Subjects covered in panel-style discussions will include various types of fishing. This is a great opportunity to network and access information you can’t get anywhere else.

Speakers at the kickoff will include: Cape Shore Fly Guide & Fly Tyler Chris Kokorda of Fly-walker; Surfcaster Calvin Toran-

Sandlin of My Fishing Cape Cod; Surfcasting Ian McPartland of the Goose Hummock; Canal diehard Tony Navarro; 90 year old local expert Carl Johansen; Captain Mike Fowler of Bad Dog Sportfishing; Captain Cullen Lundholm of Cape Star Charters; Captain Tyler Putney of Flatliner Charters; Captain Tyler Macallister of the F/C Cynthia C; Off the Charts Sportfishing; and perhaps a few others.

Tickets are \$25/person with

all profits donated to the Cape & Islands Veterans Outreach Center and Fishing for the Mission 22.

Attend the Kickoff and you will be doing something good for our local veteran community while having a great time talking about fishing. To register visit: Tickets for 2025 Season Kickoff are Going Fast! - My Fishing Cape Cod.

Real Estate Transactions

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE	ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
COVENTRY									
137 Colvintown Rd	Richmond Harold E Est and Giroux, Melissa A	Wise Brothers LLC	1/29	\$200,000	4 Johnson Ave	Randle, Evan and Dinobile, Savanna	Laughter, Emily L and Masi, Alex M	1/31	\$366,500
1712 Flat River Rd	Linares, Karen D	Roca, Julio C and Roca, Angelique I	1/31	\$470,000	44 N Williams St	Sivo, Maria L	Rhody Rentals LLC, 2/4		\$292,000
1850 Plainfield Pike	Fratantuono, Robert C	Fratantuono, Peter J and Lemme, Brooke	1/27	\$610,000	6 York Rd	Carlson, David W and Towd Pt Mtg T2015-4	Almontes, Franky, 2/4		\$260,000
187 Ayoho Rd	Wood, Christopher and Beaudry, Robert	Beaudry, Robert	1/31	\$175,000	7 Lena Dr	Delgreco, Deborah J and Gemma, Susan M	Salvato Sr, Joseph A	1/31	\$430,000
19 Juniper Hill Dr	James M Vesey T and Vesey, James M	Fox, Christopher L and Fox, Audra J	1/31	\$600,000	WARWICK				
190 Hopkins Hollow Rd	Medeiros, Joseph and Medeiros, Alison M	Sowers, M E	1/29	\$479,000	1008 Toll Gate Rd	Ryan, Kevin S	Petrarca, Nicholas	1/31	\$150,000
225 Hopkins Hill Rd	Forsons Realty LLC	53 LLC	1/30	\$1,325,000	119 Holmes Rd	King, Dana F	Cheney Jr, Julian J	1/29	\$400,000
26 Stuart Dr	Barnett, Tara	Taylor, Cornelius	1/28	\$83,000	1200 Quaker Ln Lot 32	Nai Entertainment Hldg LL	Collabdev 3a LLC	1/23	\$1100,000
272 Nicholas Rd	Sutton, Paula J and Sutton, Steven C	Linares, Karen and Caraballo, Roberto	1/31	\$750,000	1200 Quaker Ln Lot 33	Nai Entertainment Hldg LL	Collabdev 3a LLC	1/23	\$1100,000
3 Creighton Pl	Prime Re Investments LLC	Travers, Mildred	1/27	\$390,000	14 Wheeler St	Rhode Island Custom Bldrs	Cunningham, Ciara L and Cunningham, Sharon L	1/23	\$324,900
3 Lane 3	Neri Thea M Est and Santangelo, Theajona	Boiani, William	1/31	\$92,000	188 Wood St	Brian & Heather Johnson L and Johnson, Brian J	Patriot Hm Buyers LLC	1/30	\$155,000
31 Sunset Lake Cir Lot 22	Westwood Const Inc	Lecostaouec, Jean A and Lecostaouec, Julia L	1/31	\$747900	191 Boulder View Dr	Torres, Eric M and Bui-Torres, Oanh T	Marek, Emily and Otenti, Ian	1/24	\$493,000
55 Carrs Ln	Sowers, M E	Sowers, Tyler H	1/24	\$675,000	197 Glen Dr	Lamantia, Michelle and Dowaliby, Lisa	Tatro, Alyssa J and Eldridge, Joshua	1/27	\$375,000
563 Knotty Oak Rd	Forcino, Richard E and Forcino, Jo A	Suriel, Juan and Suazo, Denia V	1/27	\$305,000	20 Overbrook Ave	Pittenger, Sol and Gambino, Monica	Williams, Paul and Bicknell, Hilary	1/30	\$275,000
8 Centennial St	Boulanger David A Est and Boulanger, Jean A	Correia, Luis	1/24	\$340,000	205 George St	Healey, Jane E	Yerger, Richard	1/31	\$390,000
8 Jennifer Ln	Jepson, Jane and Jepson, David	Olney, Cory J	1/31	\$420,000	2103-2107 Warwick Ave Lot 3	Xavier Invest LLC	North Tide Invest Inc	1/31	\$1,300,000
CRANSTON					252 Sumner Ave	Sylvester, Allison and Senra, Nicholas	Colello, John A	1/30	\$480,000
10 River St	Kelly, Kameron K and Kelly, Kody A	Kelly, Kody A	1/28	\$275,200	27 Galant Dr	Bush, Jennifer F and Chilvers, Betsy J	Dupont, Jami and Baron, Joyce	1/23	\$385,000
115 Myrtle Ave	Rhode Island Custom Bldrs	Tiernan, Steven J	1/24	\$425,000	28 Ithica St	New Era LLC	Carvalho, Elizabeth and Shea, Kimberly	1/24	\$419,000
115 Myrtle Ave Lot 2980	Rhode Island Custom Bldrs	Tiernan, Steven J	1/24	\$425,000	280 Long St	Bell, Robert K	American Hm Solutions LLC	1/29	\$200,000
14 Knight St	Perry, Joseph D	Polce, Patrick V	1/27	\$525,000	31 Eagle Run Lot A	Bowen, Lisa M and Bowen, Beth M	Flath, Eric	1/30	\$350,000
15 Pershing St	W A C & Family LLC	Vla LLC	1/28	\$379,000	316 Manolla Ave	Manolla Assoc LLC	Aaa Prop LLC	1/28	\$270,000
15 Pershing St Lot 1821	W A C & Family LLC	Vla LLC	1/28	\$379,000	32 Salix St	Vrmtg Asset T and Us Bk T Na	Ursillo, Jeffrey	1/23	\$229,000
1587 Phenix Ave	Difusco, Jason R and Difusco, Haylen B	Simhaqueva, Jennifer and Sullivan, Craig L	1/24	\$450,000	32 Sykes St	Boudreau, Shirley	Fresh Hm LLC	1/24	\$300,000
18 Ridgevale Ct	Habchi Saad Est and Habchi, Marie	Rex Investments LLC	1/28	\$725,000	357 Pequot Ave	Rhode Island Hsng & Mtg F	Fitzelle, John R and Fitzelle Jones, Mary P	1/27	\$1
24 Aldrich Ave	Pezza, Jillian	Conca, Jonathon	1/27	\$450,000	42 Rosegarden St	Rhode Island Hsng & Mtg F	King, Steven M and King, Victor M	1/27	\$1
32 Woodrow Ave	Threats Patricia Y Est and Simpson, Tanisha Y	Perez, Joshua M	1/24	\$438,500	45 Eagle Run Lot A	Catherine M Murphy T and Mullaney, Eileen A	Mullaney, Daniel J	1/31	\$350,000
35 Whitewood Dr	Whitewood Dr LLC	Difusco, Jason R and Difusco, Haylen B	1/24	\$750,000	51 Winthrop Rd	Thomas O Bernier Reft and Bernier, Thomas O	Wu, Guochu	1/31	\$378,000
400 Pippin Orchard Rd	Smart Homes LLC	Alba, Samuel	1/28	\$1,000,000	53 Welch Rd	Studley, Susan A	Rasombath, Songkham and Rasombath, Khanthaly	1/28	\$450,000
400 Pippin Orchard Rd Lot 73	Smart Homes LLC	Alba, Samuel	1/28	\$1,000,000	62 Nakomis Dr	Buffery, Carol and Hallam, Wayne	Tantimonico, Phillip and Ruggieri, Amanda	1/23	\$479,900
41 Fletcher Ave	Toni Ann Weisman T and Weisman, Elaine	Mandeville Prop LLC and Strom, Richard	1/27	\$295,000	63 Robert Ave	Coffey, Joseph C	Haddad, Alexander and Zottoli, Carla	1/31	\$470,000
52 Lyndon Rd	Fitzpatrick, Francis L and Fitzpatrick, Sara J	Innis, Benjamin D and Hornsby, Emma G	1/24	\$389,000	70 Turner St Lot C3	Kristen B Miranda Relt and Miranda, Kristen B	Sasso, Maryann	1/27	\$415,500
65 Vervena St	Maio, Robert and Maio, Thomas	Kiggundu, Frederick and Kiggundu, Immaculate	1/28	\$467,000	72 W Shore Rd Lot 103	Aldrich, Cynthia and Aldrich, Frederick	Gannon, James R	1/31	\$200,000
90 Bryant Rd	Deciantis, Thomas M	Cheshire, Stacey L	1/24	\$425,000	86 Princeton Ave	Lemon, Mary and Lemon, Linda	Pereira, Jeff R	1/24	\$295,000
EAST GREENWICH					86 Princeton Ave Lot 73	Lemon, Mary and Lemon, Linda	Pereira, Jeff R	1/24	\$295,000
35 Frybrook Dr Lot 35	Sharon L Yarias Lt and Yarias, Sharon L	Harold & Faye Cook Lt and Cook, Harold J	1/31	\$985,000	91 Harvard Ave	Elevator Prop Inc	Morgera, Marina	1/31	\$415,000
9 Tory Ln	Owner Private	Simons, Raymond C and Berman, Jessica	1/29	\$875,000	93 Grove Ave	Finocchiaro Arthur A Est and Finocchiaro, Susan	Mershon, Aimee	1/31	\$340,000
EXETER					925 Halifax Dr Lot 925	Medeiros, Bruce J	Matteson, Michael R	1/15	\$216,000
205 10 Rod Rd	Onorato, Kimberly R and Onorato, Ryan G	Cody, Rebecca	1/30	\$364,000	WEST GREENWICH				
JOHNSTON					3 Pond View Ct	Grotta, Christopher D	Schanck, Gregory W and Eva, Natalie E	1/28	\$630,000
1 Clemence Ln	Cole, Joseph A and Cole, Heidi L	Clinton, Robert	1/30	\$575,000	WEST WARWICK				
1 Cottage St	St James Investors LLC	Kqa 3217 LLC	1/29	\$1	13 Bettez St	Elevator Properties Inc	Louis, Denno	1/29	\$470,500
32 Buchanan St Lot 33	Saccoccia, Kimberly A and Towd Pt Mtg T2016-5	Vasquez Properties LLC, 2/4		\$433,000	32 Trellis Dr Lot 32	Oreagan, Robert C and Maynard, Gwen M	Jepson, David and Jepson, Jane	1/31	\$315,000
4 Audrey Dr	Elevator Properties Inc	Gnacadjia, Colette H	1/31	\$510,000	4 Freemont St	Blair Clifford L Est and Blair 2nd, Gordon D	Cruz, Raquel D and Cordero, Amurys J	1/31	\$272,500
					6 Cleveland St	Dacosta, Elizangela and Dacosta, Daniel	Jancura, Thomas G and Jancura, Megan,	2/4,	\$415,000

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Fishing

(Continued from page 22)

Saltwater Sportsman Seminar this weekend

This year the Salt Water Sportsman National Seminar Series brings its 2025 New England edition to the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut, on Saturday, Feb. 22. Hosting the 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. event will be George Poveromo, host of George Poveromo’s World of Saltwater Fishing on Discovery. Rick Mola, a legendary Connecticut and New England fishing authority, will co-host.

Courses for the Feb. 22 seminar will encompass the how-to and where-to of saltwater game fish. catching the regions inshore, nearshore and offshore

To purchase tickets and learn more about the seminar, visit: www.national-seminarseries.com.

Council seat opens, step up your game

The Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) has a commercial fisheries seat open.

I served on the Council for eleven years; it was one of the most gratifying positions I have held; and was an honor to serve the State of RI and the fishing community in this fashion. Council persons learn the science behind fishing policy and regulations and get to interact with thousands of Rhode Island fishers.

So, if you are thinking of kicking things up a notch on fishing policy, I suggest you consider exploring applying for this Council seat. Candidates are currently being sought to fill a commercial fishing industry seat.

The Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council (RIMFC) makes recreational and commercial fishing regulation recommendations to the Department of Environmental Management Director.

The RIMFC is composed of eight individuals and the DEM Director or their designer. Council members are chosen from among those with skill, knowledge, and experience in the commercial fishing industry, the recreational (private and for-hire) industry, and in the conservation and management of fisheries resources and/or marine biology. Members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Rhode Island Senate.

Members are appointed to four-year terms, are expected to attend up to eight meetings per year and serve without compensation. Additional background information on the Council can be found on the DEM Division of Ma-

rine Fisheries website: <https://dem.ri.gov>.

Submit a letter of interest and resume to: Molly Ogren, Environmental Policy Analyst, DEM, 235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908; at Molly.Ogren@dem.ri.gov or call her with questions at 401.439.8852.

The deadline for submittals is March 31, 2025. All candidates will be forwarded to DEM Director Terrance Gray and Governor Dan McKee for review and consideration.

Where’s the bite?

Cod. Party boat fishing and a few smaller charter boats continue to fish for cod south of Cape Cod and off Rhode Island waters. Fishing Machine Charters, Pt. Judith, RI at www.fishing-machinecharters.com has been hooking up with cod in the Cox Ledge wind farm area and is running open boats so you might be able to get a single spot on the vessel. Angler Jeff Sullivan, an associate at Lucky Bait & Tackle, Warren, that opens March 1, said, “Cod fishing has just been fair at Nomans Land Island off Martha’s Vineyard.” Larger party boat 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 party boat vessels are generally \$130 to \$135 per adult and around \$80 for those under 12 years old.

Freshwater fishing. Check ice conditions with local cities and towns to make sure ice is safe for fishing or skating. Jeff Sullivan of Lucky Bait & Tackle, said, “I have been fishing on 8” of ice but now with weather a bit warmer some of that ice is down to 4.” However, I have been able to get out for the past twenty days catching trout, black crappie and perch. My bait of choice has been a Tunsten jigs tipped with a wax worm. Kastmaster jigs, and Swedish Pimple jigs have been working well too.” For stocked ponds in Massachusetts visit Mass Wildlife at Trout stocking report | Mass.gov. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) stocked thirteen waterways last week for updates visit Designated Trout Waters | Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

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@verison.net or visit www.noflukefishing.com.



Jeff Sullivan of Lucky Bait & Tackle, Warren, with a black crappie caught though the ice earlier this month in a North Kingstown, RI pond. Submitted photo

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RhodyLife

Small but mighty



Dean Plowman teaches the basics of playing the ukulele. *Beacon Media* photos by Matthew Lawrence

Ukulele class draws all ages crowd

By MATTHEW LAWRENCE

A gentle dusting of snow fell on the evening of Wednesday Feb. 12 as more than two dozen students filed into the large community room at Warwick Public Library. Each was holding a case, and inside each case was a small ukulele. The instruments came in many colors: light and dark wood finishes but also bright red, deep green, electric blue, and hot pink. Some were old, some were borrowed, and some were bought specifically for the Introduction to Ukulele course offered this winter at the library.

Every Wednesday for four weeks, the group meets to learn the basics of the instrument: how to make chords, strum, read tabs, play simple melodies, and sing while playing.

Some of the students are seniors, some are adults, and some are as young as ten. Many are from Warwick but some come from Cranston and other adjacent cities and towns. About three quarters of the students are women. Just about everyone from the first week returned for the second class, and one or two new faces also appeared.

Songs are learned quickly. In the first hour-long workshop, the group got through "The Itsy Bitsy Spider," "You Are My Sunshine," and "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." In the second week they covered



This young student brought a stuffed friend to the workshop attached to the headstock of her ukulele.

ANIMALTALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local♥️Adoptable♥️Loveable



Photo credit: Ryan Pickering

LARK

What's cuter than a puppy in a bow tie? This little puppy named Lark is hoping to sing his was into your heart! If you have been searching for a puppy, look no further. Lark and another littermate are currently available at Heart of RI located at 44 Worthington Road Cranston, RI. They are open on Wednesday's from 3:00-7:00 and Saturday's from 10:00-2:00. No appointment is necessary. For more information you can call 401-467-3670 or visit their website at <http://www.heartofri.org> Please keep in mind that puppies get adopted quickly so be sure to reach out or visit as soon as possible. Little Lark can't wait to start his life in a loving forever home!

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Say you saw it in the

Johnston SunRise



Students used ukuleles of many colors during the workshop.

■ Ukulele (Continued from page 25)

“Happy Birthday” and Neil Diamond’s “Sweet Caroline.”

The workshop is led by Dean Plowman. Dressed in black slacks, a cordovan sweater, and a woven fedora, he speaks to the assembled group through a lightly crackling headset microphone that allows him to speak and play at the same time.

“My first instrument as a youth was actually mandolin,” Plowman says. “But then of course the Beatles came around and the Rolling Stones and I switched to guitar.”

Then came ukulele and banjo, the latter of which he plays in a local Dixieland band.

“String instruments are all pretty similar,” he says before breaking into a laugh. “Well, you don’t want to hear me play the violin.”

For Plowman, music was always a side project. Before retiring a few years ago, he worked as an electrical engineer and also taught engineering to students at Johnson and Wales University, CCRI, Bryant University, and New England Tech.

A few years ago, he contacted the Greenville Library about running a ukulele workshop—he runs those in the summer—and last year brought the idea to Warwick. He also brings

his musical passion to the seniors of Greenville at the Village at Waterman Lake.

The history of the ukulele is fascinating. While many associate it with Hawaii and Hawaiian music, according to Ukulele Magazine the ukulele is a hybrid of two Portuguese instruments called the machêta and the rajão. In the 1880s, the Portuguese island of Madeira was full of poverty and drought, so sugar plantations in Hawaii began hiring desperate workers from Madeira, who brought their instruments with them and performed on the streets of Honolulu. Once their contracts with the sugar plantations expired, three of them set up shop in Hawaii as guitar makers, and the ukulele was born.

Of the common plucked string instruments, Plowman says the ukulele is easiest for beginners to pick up because it only has four strings. New students are given clip-on tuners that allow them to get those strings sounding right. Entry-level ukuleles aren’t expensive, but Plowman warns that the cheap ones will slip out of tune at the first possible opportunity.

During the second workshop, one student inquired about the callouses she was developing on her fingers from practicing. Plowman got excited. “You will get callouses! They will last two weeks. Then you’ll never feel them again.”

In the back of the workshop sit three helpers, students who took the course last year and kept practicing once the workshops were over. One of the apprentices is Wil Gregersen, the Library’s Community Services Librarian and Adult Events Impresario. It’s Gregersen who worked with Plowman to bring the workshop to Warwick.

Gregersen believes that free adult programs draw the best crowds.

“With ticketed events, sometimes you have a hard day at work or you’re tired and you don’t feel like going, but you force yourself because you already have a ticket. With a free course, the people who come are all here because they really want to be.”

“I like giving back to the community,” Plowman says, “and people seem to love it.” For those who want to know more about ukulele music, Plowman’s current favorite is Jake Shimabukuro, who he saw perform at the Park Theatre in Cranston last October. “He plays the ukulele like he’s Eddie Van Halen,” Plowman raves.

And for those who want to hear more music, the Library has several musical events coming up, including a four-week course on the history of country music and a concert featuring Scottish fiddler Louise Bichan.

Johnston Woman Widowed After Two-Week Marriage

Leo Milton Gray was born on March 16, 1922 to David Gray and his wife Alice (Hodgson). Leo and his brothers, Eugene and Richard, grew up in Volinia, Michigan where their father was a farmer. A 1941 graduate of Central High School, Leo enlisted in the United States Navy on June 30, 1942. Standing 5’10 tall and weighing 145 pounds, the hazel-eyed brunette with a scar in the center of his forehead left his home and his job at the machinery manufacturing company Allis Chalmers, to fight World War II.

Verna Marie Cusick was born on Aug. 23, 1924 to William and Mary Cusick. Verna grew up in Johnston, Rhode Island where her father worked as a mail carrier for the United States government. Verna graduated from St. Thomas Junior High School and St. Xavier High School in Providence – where she took part in numerous activities including French Club, typing club, science club, and serving as class treasurer – in 1942. On

Back in the Day



by
KELLY
SULLIVAN

Sept. 1, 1942, she was admitted to the Rhode Island Hospital as a student nurse. Exactly one year later, she was admitted to the Cadet Nurse Corps program at the hospital. The program which trained nearly 120,000 nurses, was established that year to address the nursing shortage brought about by the war. Cadets pledged to serve in civilian or federal government services for the duration of the war. Verna was scheduled to graduate on Sept. 20, 1945.

Three months after Verna graduated, Leo received his discharge from the military. During his 34 months of active service, he had spent most of that

time in the Pacific. Leo went back home to Michigan to visit his family for a few weeks before moving to Rhode Island where he had secured a job in Providence. He and Verna met and, on June 1, 1946, they married. Leo’s mother traveled to Rhode Island for the wedding and then returned home to Mich. It was planned that the young couple would enjoy a honeymoon in Tenn. as they traveled to their new home in Decatur, Mich. where Leo had secured a job as a carpenter.

On June 13, 1946, twelve days after the wedding,

Leo was driving a motorcycle with Verna seated on the back. At about 2:00 that afternoon, they approached an intersection near Dandridge, in Jefferson County, Tenn. approaching at the same time was a Ford truck. The two vehicles collided. While Verna received only minor injuries, her new husband suffered multiple contusions and compound fractures and was rendered unconscious. He died three days later at 12:05 a.m. without ever waking up. He was laid to rest at Cavalry Cemetery in Dowagiac, Mich.

Verna returned to her parents’ home on Riverside Drive in Johnston. The 22-year-old widow worked as a registered nurse in private homes. The tragic twist of fate was irony at its worst – young Leo Gray had survived three years in the throes of a violent war only to lose his life soon after – here in America, in the arms of the young woman he loved.

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



VERNA MARIE CUSICK

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Advantage Kitchens Baths Countertop Flooring

"We make kitchens & bathrooms affordable for everyone"



By JENNIFER COATES

It has been said that you only get one chance to make a first impression, and nothing could be truer than when you walk into a kitchen or bathroom. That initial "wow" factor goes a long way! These rooms can make a lasting impression and can change how a homeowner loves and lives in a home.

While that first impression is important, it doesn't always tell the whole story. What you can't always see at first glance is all the professionalism, expertise and experience that have gone into converting an average space in a home into an eye-catching one. This is when you need to meet the formidable team of experts at Advantage Kitchens Baths Countertops Flooring, a cornerstone of the home improvement community.

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Advantage Kitchen Baths Countertops Flooring is driven by the mantra that "we make kitchens and baths affordable for everyone." This is not just a catchy slogan, it is the driving force behind this family-owned and operated, Johnston-based company of industry veterans. Under the leadership of Richard and Susan Mooradian, co-owners Jim and Sonia Bray, and Kevin Catanzaro bring over a century of combined experience to every project they take on. They make this promise of affordability to their customers, but most importantly, they make a commitment that their projects will always be of the highest quality, start to finish.

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and accompanying budget until every finishing touch has been completed. Big or small, every relationship, every result, every detail, matters to this team.

What sets this successful business apart from its competitors is their direct-to-consumers model. Not only does this process eliminate unnecessary markups, it also preserves the company's high standards. Advantage has long-standing relationships with vendors across the board and supports similar family-run businesses with values like their own.

It is important to note that when embarking on a home improvement project, homeowners are not obligated to use Advantage's contractors; it is also important to note that Advantage also sells and supplies materials alone if that is what their clients need. This is an individualized process that is very client-centered.

Visitors to Advantage's design center at 1232 Hartford Avenue (next door to Market Basket) are welcome Tuesday through Friday from 10:00am to 4:00pm and Saturdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm. There are also free in-home consultations and on-site project evaluations.

To get started on transforming your living space today, call Advantage Kitchens Baths Countertops Flooring at 401-413-0426 or visit them at www.advantagekbcf.com.



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