

Johnston reps: housing should meet local needs

By TIM FORSBERG  
Johnston Sun Rise Editor

As Rhode Island grapples with affordable housing, a proposed bill from some of Johnston’s state representatives seeks to set different criteria for smaller communities in the state when it comes to providing affordable housing.

In general, the bill introduced by State Representative Deborah Fellela and cosponsored by State Representative Richard Fascia would set lower quotas for multi-family affordable housing projects in smaller communities. The bill was presented to the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing last Wednesday.

Fellela spoke before the committee regarding her proposal. She emphasized that a “one size fits all” approach to housing does not work for every Rhode Island city and town. She pointed out that large-scale, multi-family projects can have a far greater impact on infrastructure and local services in smaller towns than they would in larger cities.

“Smaller towns will likely have more infrastructure challenges – water and sewer availability or capacity issues – such as the lack of roadways or existing poor road designs,” she said. Fellela also noted the potential strain on schools, police, fire services and public transportation.

Proposal is reaction to 252-unit plan

The bill was prompted by a recent case where the town sought use eminent domain to acquire land that would otherwise be privately developed as a 252-unit low-income housing project. That process has drawn lawsuits in state and federal courts from the property owners in an attempt to halt the seizing of land.

Fellela’s legislation would create a more involved local approval process before a large or “substantial” multi-family affordable-housing project could be approved in a smaller community. Her bill describes substantial projects as any with more than 60 units and defines smaller communities in Rhode Island as having a population of fewer than 35,000 residents.

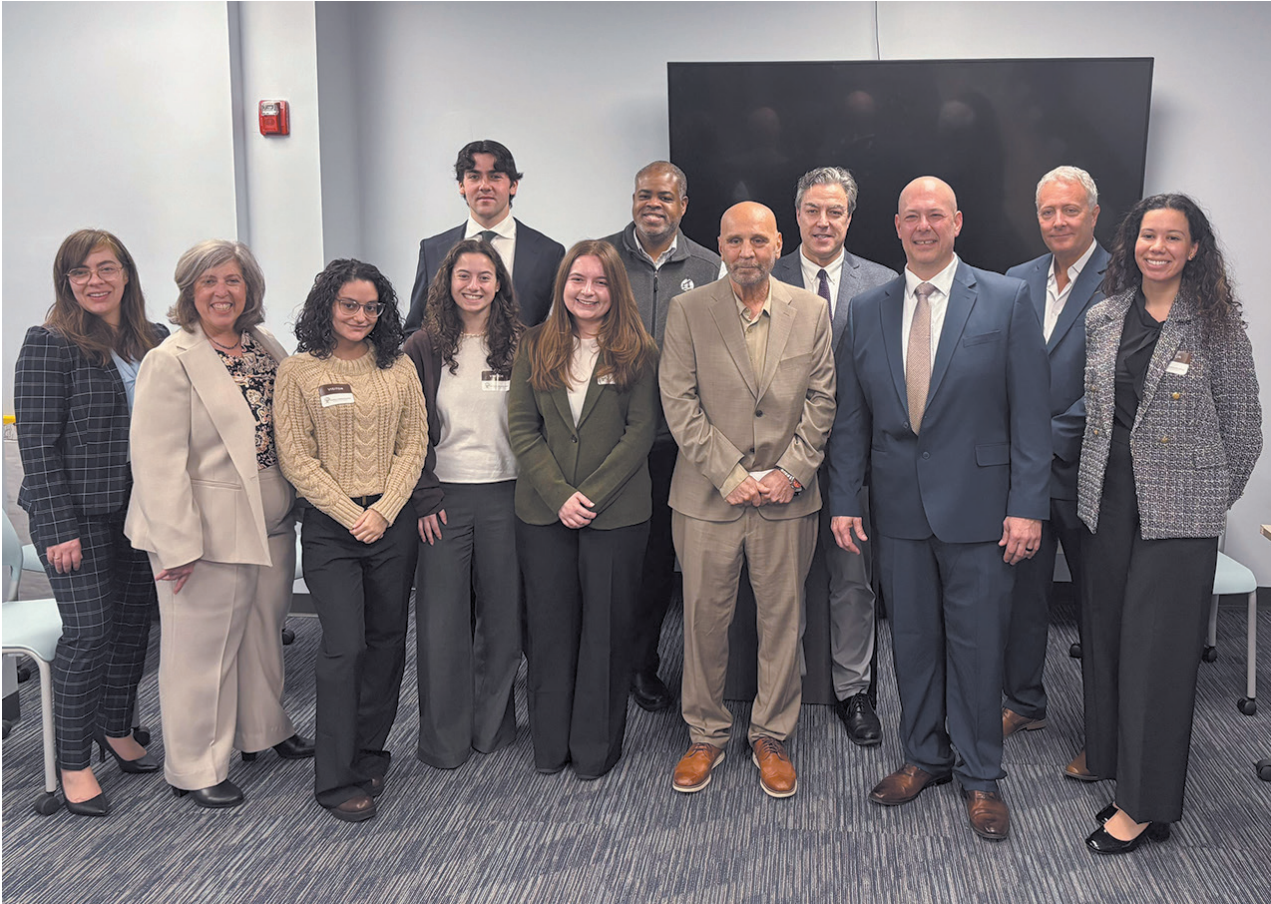
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REP. FELLELA



REP. FASCIA



The leaders of seven Rhode Island Community Action Programs joined together to sound the alarm on the local impact of federal budget cuts. *Beacon Media photos by Tim Forsberg*

Reed, local leaders warn HHS cuts will harm Rhode Islanders

By TIM FORSBERG  
Johnston SunRise Editor

As the Trump administration proceeds with layoffs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Sen. Jack Reed is sounding the alarm on local impact, warning that the cuts put critical support services for Rhode Islanders in jeopardy.

At a press conference Monday at Westbay Community Action in Warwick, Reed joined Joe DeSantis, CEO of Tri-County Community Action, serving Johnston, along with the leaders of the six other Community Action Programs (CAPs) in Rhode Island. He highlighted the potential consequences of the layoffs and broader Republican-led budget proposals that cut funding to programs such as Medicaid, childcare, nutrition assistance and seasonal energy aid.

“The Trump administration and the Republicans in Congress, they want to shred the social safety net, upend this federal and local cooperation and community partnership that has lifted up so many Americans,” Reed said. “Trump, Elon Musk, Robert Kennedy Jr., they’ve taken a sledgehammer to the Department of Health and Human services, cutting 20,000 professionals that helped CAP agencies each day, and they’ve done it in such a careless way.”

Rhode Island’s CAPs serve more than 190,000 residents across the state, offering access to job training, health care, affordable housing and energy assistance. The programs are: Westbay Community Action, Community Action Partnership of Providence, Tri-County Community Action, Blackstone Valley Community Action, Community Care Alliance, East Bay Community Ac-

tion and Comprehensive Community Action.

DeSantis, who has served the community for 52 years, maintains a hopeful but realistic approach when it comes to the news of budget and staffing cuts.

“I’m an optimist. I feel that we’ll get through this. I know we’re going to have some cutting back to do. But we’re fighters. I’ve been fighting this fight forever and been through a lot, but this is the worst I’ve ever seen,” he said.

While DeSantis is unsure what programs will be cut, he is trying to plan for them. If a federal program is eliminated, that program may not be sustainable locally.

“I’m particularly worried about Medicaid cuts because 65% of our money comes from Medicaid,” he said. “We run a community health center, so if they cut Medicaid or

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New England Institute of Technology campus. *Beacon Media file photo*

NEIT to offer two-year bachelor’s in four majors

By ADAM ZANGARI  
Beacon Media Staff Writer

The New England Institute of Technology will offer bachelor’s degrees that students can attain in only two years starting this fall.

The four majors in which 24-month bachelor’s degrees will be offered are in cybersecurity, business management, graphic design and criminal justice.

While many now offer three-year bachelor’s programs, NE Tech’s quarterly schedule allowed the institute to cut off another year and get students into the

workforce even faster, Provost Doug Sherman said.

“The reason that we can do this in two years is because our academic calendar is different from the traditional two-semester calendar,” Sherman said. “Our calendar is four 10-week quarters, so our students are actually in school 40 weeks of the calendar year versus the traditional 30 weeks – so it allows us to accelerate even more.”

To make sure students receive the same amount of education as a traditional four-year bachelor’s student

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BOB AND MARIE RABAIOTTI

## Johnston Couple Finds Friendship and Fun at Senior Center

Bob and Marie Rabaiotti have made the Johnston Senior Center (JSC) a central part of their lives for many years. As longtime residents of Johnston, where they have lived throughout their 23 years of marriage, the couple has found a welcoming community at the center.

Bob, an avid card player, participates in the weekly card leagues at the JSC. Meanwhile, Marie, who was once a member of the Book Club, continues to be a familiar face at the center. Known for her kind heart and generous spirit, Marie has developed a special fondness for the card players and shows her appreciation by baking homemade treats for them each week.

The Rabaiottis enjoy everything the Johnston Senior Center has to offer, from social activities to the meaningful friendships they’ve built over the years. Whether it’s playing cards, sharing stories, or lending a helping hand, Bob and Marie embody the spirit of community that makes the JSC a special place.

**Editor’s Note:** Photo and information courtesy of Richard J. DelFino Jr., Executive Director of the Johnston Senior Center, at 1291 Hartford Ave., Johnston.

## Police Log

### DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

While on a fixed post on Hartford Avenue on March 23 at approximately 2:05 a.m., Officer Richard Xon observed a white SUV travel past his location at a high rate of speed, above the posted 35 mile per hour limit. Xon estimated the vehicle to be traveling at approximately 55 miles per hour.

The vehicle then turned onto Memorial Avenue and briefly pulled into a driveway before reentering Hartford Avenue, traveling the wrong way on the one-way street.

A traffic stop was initiated and the officer made contact with the driver, identified as Conner Elias, 24, of 147 Pine Hill Road in Scituate. The officer noted in his report that Elias had the smell of alcohol on his breath and exhibited signs of intoxication. When asked why he pulled into the driveway and proceeded the wrong way, Elias allegedly told the officer he knew he was speeding and tried to avoid the police.

Elias reportedly stated that he had been drinking at a bar in Providence and was on his way home. He admitted to having a few drinks and believed he was over the legal limit. He was then asked to submit to a series of standardized sobriety tests, which he agreed to while other officers responded to the scene.

A preliminary breathalyzer test produced a blood alcohol content (BAC) reading of .230 percent. At that time, he was placed under arrest for suspicion of operating a vehicle under the influence. He was transported to police headquarters and his vehicle was towed from the

scene.

At the station he consented to another breathalyzer test, which resulted in BAC readings of .189 percent and .187 percent, likely due to the time between tests.

Elias was charged with driving under the influence, first offense with a BAC above .15 percent, speeding (11+ mph over the limit), first offense, and a one-way travel violation. He was later released with a Third District Court summons.

### BENCH WARRANT

At approximately 4:50 p.m. on March 22, Officer Patrick Gendreau observed an individual outside of a residence on Greenville Avenue. He reported he recognized the man as Richard Parrillo, 50, of 81 Stone Avenue in Warwick, who had outstanding warrants for his arrest.

Officer Gendreau turned into the driveway, and Parrillo allegedly quickly tried to make his way into the residence. The officer instructed Parrillo to return to his cruiser, where he confirmed his identity. Parrillo also acknowledged to the officer that he was aware he had multiple outstanding warrants, which dispatch personnel later confirmed.

Parrillo was placed in handcuffs, searched, and transported to police headquarters where he was processed and later transported to the Adult Correctional Institutions.

**Editor’s Note:** The preceding police log information has been taken arrest reports provided by the Johnston Police Department.



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# Town council revisits eminent domain resolution

By **TIM FORSBERG**  
*Johnston Sun Rise Editor*

On April 3, the town council again convened to hear and vote upon a proposed resolution to use eminent domain for a new police department, fire department, and town hall campus proposal.

The special meeting convened following an Open Meetings Act violation finding against the Town Council’s January 28 meeting, as determined by the Rhode Island Attorney General’s office.

“I want to reiterate that we are here basically because of procedural issues, and this was already discussed and we’ve had presentations and discussions a few months back,” said Councilman Alfred Carnevale.

According to reports, the violation complaint was filed by Johnston resident Gerry Willis along with Steve Ahlquist the reporter and editor of RI Future for not providing adequate public notice ahead of the council’s original vote in January. According to the January agenda, the sparse details written about the process were “Resolution 2025-10: A resolution regarding a hearing pertaining to the property located at Assessor’s Plat 37, Lot 193.”

To find the wording and more details about the resolution, one had to visit the Town Clerk’s website and click on a highlighted link that provided the information on the eminent domain procedure.

The resolution was proposed to acquire land on George Waterman Road that would otherwise be privately developed as a 252-unit low-income housing project. That process has drawn lawsuits in state and federal courts from the property owners in an attempt to halt those proceedings.

As previously reported by the SunRise, the Town of Johnston’s attempt to acquire the property through eminent domain for the municipal complex was dismissed in state court. This follows an agreement by both the town and landowners, as the case is still progressing forward with arguments proceeding in federal court.

After obtaining an appraisal that found the property was worth \$775,000, the town put that amount into the state court register and claimed ownership of the property. That process has been reversed, and those funds have since been returned to the town following the legal challenges brought by the property owners.



Councilman Robert Civetti and Councilwoman Lauren Garzone review documents prior to the council meeting. *Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg*

During the council meeting, Council President Robert Russo read the resolution in its entirety. Councilman Robert Civetti was the only council member to pose questions about the resolution.

“If the town were to move forward with this, are we bound that every item in here has to be

put on that property or could certain items that we decide they are fine where they are currently located [remain], or does this bind the town that we have the police, fire, all the facilities in there,” he asked.

According to Town Solicitor William Conley, this resolution only authorized the initiation of

the eminent domain process. Other matters that will arise during that process will be subject to the complete review of the town council as the matter proceeds.

There was no public comment allowed during this hearing, and all five council members voted to adopt the resolution.

## McKee makes appointments to the Ethics Commission, Parole Board

By **CHRISTOPHER SHEA**  
*Rhode Island Current*

The previous head of the Rhode Island National Guard is Gov. Dan McKee’s latest pick to join the state’s Ethics Commission, replacing a member the governor placed on the state parole board.

Retired Maj. Gen. Christopher P. Callahan will join the nine-member volunteer panel responsible for enforcing and administering the state’s code of ethics.

Callahan retired from the military in February after decades of service — the last 10 years as the 44th adjutant general and commander of the state’s National Guard. Callahan previously served as commander of the 56th Troop Command at Camp Fogarty in East Greenwich, where he led, trained and supported 900 soldiers and six different military units.

He also served as the director of aviation and safety at the Quonset Point Air National Guard Base in North Kingstown from 2006 to 2011 and was a battalion commander in Balad, Iraq.

In his announcement Wednesday, McKee touted Callahan’s experience and the value it would bring to the commission which has the power to fine and remove elected officials from office.

“Throughout his more than four decades of military service, General Callahan has built a proven record of fairness, integrity, and ethical leadership,” the governor said in a statement. “He will be a valuable addition to the commission, and I have full confidence that he will help uphold the highest standards of integrity in public service.”

Callahan thanked the governor for his trust and confidence.

“I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Ethics Commission to ensure transparency and integrity throughout our state,” Callahan said in a statement.

Advice and consent from the Rhode Island Senate is not required for the position, as no such wording was included in the 1986 constitutional amendment that created the commission. Terms on the commission are five years.

Callahan will replace Dr. Jill Hume Harrison, a sociologist at Rhode Island College who McKee appointed to the seven-member Rhode Island Parole Board. Harrison had been appointed to the Ethics Commission by McKee in August.

Harrison will take the spot of Tonya Glantz, who the governor appointed to the Parole Board in January 2024.

Harrison previously served as a consultant and researcher with the Culture of Wellness for the Maine State Prison. She also has previous experience in Rhode Island, providing seven years of meditation and cognitive behavior training to people incarcerated at the Adult Correctional Institutions in Cranston. She continues to offer onsite diversity, equity and inclusion training to cadets.

She holds a bachelor’s degree from Wells College in

New York and a master’s degree from George Mason University in Virginia. She earned her PhD in sociology at the University of New Hampshire.

“I am honored to accept the governor’s appointment to serve on the state’s probation and parole board,” Harrison said in a statement. “This role presents a significant opportunity to contribute to the fair and effective administration of justice in our community.”

Senate approval is not required for appointments to the Parole Board, whose members serve three-year terms and can be reappointed.

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Members of Revity Energy address the planning board in regard to their special use permit application to add additional solar arrays and a single family to their solar farm located near Oak Swamp. *Beacon media photo by Tim Forsberg*

# Residents voice concerns on solar proposal

**By TIM FORSBERG**  
*Johnston Sun Rise Editor*

The Johnston Planning Board met on Tuesday, April 1 to review several development proposals, including a solar array project expansion and a new Dunkin drive-thru.

Revity Energy, LLC, sought approval to develop additional solar arrays to complement their existing facility, along with a single-family home to be located behind 3 and 17 Forest Drive.

Located at the end of Shore Drive and Butler Drive, the total area of the lot is approximately 34 acres, situated along Oak Swamp Reservoir. The site currently contains a large solar array, completed in the spring of 2023. Revity proposed to construct two new 0.5 MW solar arrays and one single family home, a reduction of homes from their original 2023 proposal. The proposal included the creation of a roadway accessible from Forest Drive, leading to the proposed home and the second 0.5 MW solar array.

One member of the public spoke out in favor of the proposal. Several area residents had concerns about drainage issues, the lack of trees and vegetation to block the view of the arrays, and noise concerns amongst other issues.

Lawyers, landscape architects and engineers for Revity addressed the concerns and offered assurances that these issues would be addressed. However, members of the public were informed that those issues will be addressed in future planning board meetings which Revity must participate in. The board issued its approval for the development's special use permit.

Quick Fuel Market, located at 1601 Hartford Avenue, in the area of Johnston War Memorial Park, obtained a special use permit to add a drive-thru for a proposed in-store Dunkin' restaurant. The applicant, Shanker Veer LLC, requested approval to construct a 12-foot-wide driveway alongside the building, extending from the existing parking lot, to accommodate the new service. As the property is currently zoned B-2, a special use permit was required to allow for the new drive-thru.

Board members were satisfied with the project details, which included where the proposed lane will be constructed, potential traffic concerns on Hartford Avenue, and where drainage runoff will be directed. Following the presentation to the board, the motion was passed.

Other matters, such as a petition to purchase a plot of land located next door to 205 Shun Pike and a proposal to amend the town's zoning ordinance regarding noise regulations were continued and held until the next planning board meeting. Additional items, including a review of a draft of the town's affordable housing plan, changes to the future land use maps in the town's comprehensive plan, and zoning updates were also continued.

The planning board also changed its next meeting date to May 13 at 6 p.m. at the Johnston Senior Center. Residents are welcomed to the public meeting to share their input on proposed developments.

# Scouts offer affordable, exciting summer camp options

As summer approaches, families across Rhode Island and Southern New England have an exciting opportunity to enroll their children in affordable and adventure-filled summer camps offered by the Narragansett Council Scouting America.

Open to boys and girls, including those who are not part of the Scouting program, these camps provide a mix of outdoor fun, hands-on learning, and personal development.

The Adventure Day Camp, designed for children ages 6-10, offers an engaging mix of activities such as archery, boating, swimming, crafts, outdoor cooking, and STEM projects. Held at multiple locations, including Adventure Base Camp in Cranston, Camp Yawgoog in Hopkinton, and Camp Norse in Kingston, Massachusetts, the day camps run weekly throughout the summer. Each location offers unique experiences, with Adventure Base Camp featuring wooded trails and a pond, Camp Yawgoog providing scenic waterfront adventures, and Camp Norse incorporating themed weekly activities. Flexible scheduling, multiple-week discounts, and financial assistance ensure that all children have the opportunity to participate.

For older campers ages 10-17, Camp Yawgoog offers an immersive overnight experience exclusively for registered Scouts. Running from late June to late August, this program allows participants to build outdoor skills, advance in rank, and form lasting friendships.

The Narragansett Council is committed to providing meaningful summer experiences that foster leadership, teamwork, and a love of the outdoors. Registration is now open, with a special promotion for new Cub Scouts who join before June 23, offering \$100 off their first week of camp.

For more details or to register, families can visit [www.ncscouts.org](http://www.ncscouts.org) or call (401) 351-8700.

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ANIMAL

TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local♥Adoptable♥Loveable



Photo credit: Rhode Home Rescue

# Joe Joe

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# Anatomy of a home-repair scam: Gain trust, scoop cash

By JOHN HOWELL  
Warwick Beacon Editor

Joe imagined he had found a kindred spirit last week. The young man before him spoke with an Irish accent and told Joe he had come from Ireland. Joe's family immigrated to this country from Ireland. "We hit it off," said Joe [not his real name]. "I trusted him."

Joe, 83, had seen the man outside his house the day before but didn't answer the doorbell. This time he was outside when the red-haired man approached. The man said his company was doing work in the Gaspee neighborhood and he had noticed a crack in the foundation of Joe's house. He handed Joe a flyer with the name of an Attleboro construction company and pictures of their work. It turns out the company is legitimate; however, the man claiming to work for it was an imposter.

The man pointed to the crack and told Joe he'd better pay attention to it. Joe is familiar with cracks in the foundation and has fixed them himself. This time he thought he'd let someone else do it. He asked what it would cost. The man told him \$4,000 and said he didn't expect to get paid until the job was completed. Joe thought it was expensive, but he signed the paperwork and told the man to do the job.

The next day a couple of laborers showed up and started digging around his foundation. The man showed up, too. The crew was also working on the stairs of the house across the street.

## The price more than doubles

Then Joe got the bad news. The man said that their preliminary work revealed the damage was really serious and he would need \$9,500 to proceed. What's more, he wanted the money in advance.

Joe questioned having to pay until the work was completed. The man insisted he needed the money right away in order to buy special equipment. Joe wrote him a check. The foundation work continued. Joe heard banging but couldn't imagine what was happening.

That day the man called again and said sections of the foundation were collapsing and fixing it would cost \$89,500. Joe was aghast. He told the man he didn't have the money and would need to get a homeowner's loan. What about the \$9,500 he had already paid? he asked. The man stuck to \$89,500, but Joe talked him down to \$80,000. The man arranged to come the next day for the money. Joe looked at his foundation and found that sections of it had been chiseled out.

By now Joe was having second thoughts about his "kindred" spirit. He stopped in at police headquarters with copies of his supposed "contract" and talked to an officer who told him everything looked OK.

## Everything was not OK

Joe proceeded to Lowe's to pick up some items. Before leaving, he got a call from Warwick police. He agreed to meet them at his house within the half-hour on Friday, March 28. That's when he learned they had been tracking a home-repair scam for some time. The police told him this was much bigger than Warwick and possibly involved international players.

Soon after, Joe told former Ward 1 City Councilman Robert Cushman, who reported the scam on his website, The Taxpayers Spin. Cushman said he'd received

more than 70 responses to the posting from people who claimed they had been scammed too, some by as much as \$100,000.

As instructed by police officers and two men from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Joe did as told when he got a call from the man. The man identified himself and the amount of money that was to be handed over.

Joe looked outside. The Gaspee neighborhood, near Salter Grove Memorial Park, was packed with police and unmarked cars.

The Warwick Beacon also received calls from residents who witnessed Friday's commotion. Eyewitnesses noted that the alleged scammer's work crews fled on foot when the authorities arrived, leaving behind their vehicles and other belongings.

When a Beacon staff member arrived and approached two men who appeared to be law enforcement, one wearing a mask and one with his weapon visible on his waistband, the two refused to identify what agency they represented and suggested checking with Warwick police before walking briskly to their unmarked cars and driving off.

A Warwick police detective left "Joe's" home and spoke with the Beacon. According to Detective Matt Smith, he was conducting a fraud investigation as a local component of a Homeland Security Investigations joint task force. He referred any additional comment to his officer in charge. He had no additional information on the men who had been lingering across the street and appeared to be law enforcement.

Warwick Police Maj. Andrew Sullivan confirmed Smith's details. According to him, Homeland Security is the lead agency on the investigation. "The primary purpose of the investigation is a scam targeting elderly homeowners," he said.

When asked about the work crews who fled, he noted that this was not an immigration enforcement matter. Warwick police did not pursue any of the people who fled. "That was incidental to the primary investigation," he said. "No one was taken into custody [related to immigration]." Sullivan did acknowledge that the suspect was known to hire day laborers.

On Tuesday, the Beacon reached out to ICE via email for more details.

"We are not able to comment on ongoing investigations," replied Kate Pote, spokesperson and public affairs specialist, Homeland Security Investigations, New England Field Office.

## Too late to stop payment on check

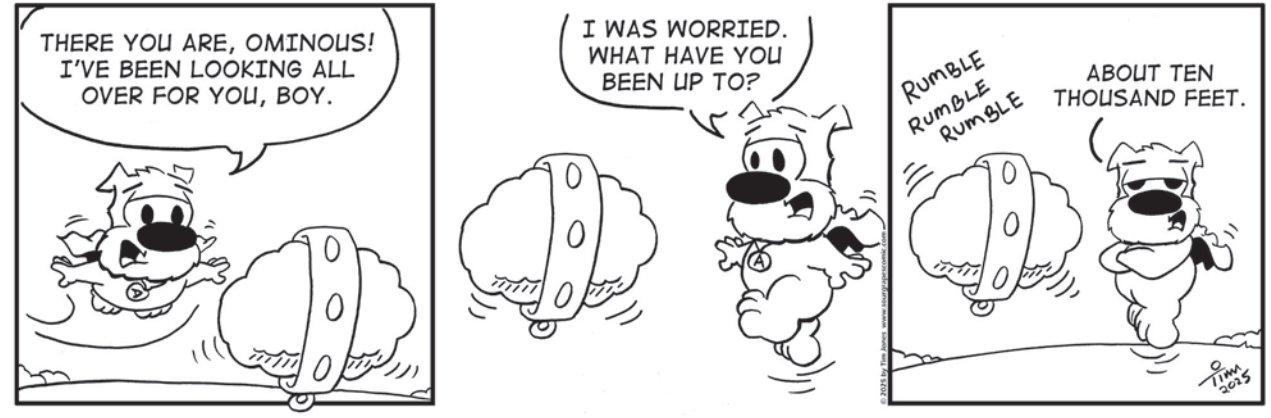
Joe said police told him the man had been arrested and was being held. Joe called to cancel his check, but the bank told him it had been cashed. He said he wanted his story to be told to warn others but not to use his name or address for fear of retribution from some gang whether in this country or from abroad.

Over the weekend, Joe's son and neighbors responded to his plight. They patched foundation holes and applied a protective barrier of tar. All that remained to be done was filling in around the foundation with cracked stone to improve drainage.

On Tuesday, Warwick police identified the contractor now detained by federal authorities in this case as John O'Brien, 48, an Irish national with no known local address. No information was available about where he is being held.

# SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones





# Opinion

## EDITORIAL

### Solutions, not blame, will make energy cheaper

It's not always easy to accept when forces beyond our control are to blame for things that make our lives more difficult, particularly when they result in real financial stress.

Rhode Islanders have been rightfully upset about skyrocketing electric and heating bills over the last year, which have forced many to make hard decisions about toughing out a cold winter or spending less in other areas to ensure they could heat and power their homes.

These are decisions, frankly, that no one should have to make.

And while it might be convenient and cathartic to lay all the blame for these high costs onto the utility that distributes 90% of our local energy – the utility formerly known as National Grid, now Rhode Island Energy – that approach misses the mark factually and does nothing to move us toward a better, less expensive future for Rhode Islanders.

The hard truth is that many of the drivers of energy prices in Rhode Island are completely out of the hands of Rhode Island Energy. New England relies heavily – over 50% – on liquid natural gas to heat homes during the winter. Demand for that commodity far outpaces supply, and the war in Ukraine (one of the world's biggest exporters of natural gas, including to the United States) increased that demand and constrained production, leading to even higher prices during the crucial winter months.

Greed is not the answer, either. Much of Rhode Island Energy's role is mandated by law. For example, it is not allowed to mark up the price of energy that it buys and then sells to customers. And while the company reported around \$88 million in profits last year, it has not increased distribution rates to customers since 2018.

What gets the conspiratorially-minded folks riled up is Rhode Island Energy's status as a public utility that is also funded by investor capital; meaning it is incentivized to return a profit on that investment. But this is standard operating procedure for many utility companies, and Rhode Island Energy's return on investment for its investors is modest – hovering around 4%, which is less than the return on a government treasury bond (just north of 4.5%).

Rhode Island Energy is essentially a middleman between the producers of energy and the customers who rely on it being delivered reliably. It is responsible for maintaining all the infrastructure that delivers that energy and paying taxes on that infrastructure, which brings significant revenue to the state and its municipalities.

While pointing fingers might make us feel better for a short while, the only thing that will ease the pain from higher utility costs is to continue to improve policies for energy production and how we purchase our energy.

A bill from state Rep. Joseph Solomon Jr. to allow Rhode Island Energy to join other states in purchasing more nuclear power – more consistent than wind and solar and increasingly green as nuclear-waste disposal technology rapidly improves – is a good step toward relieving some of the stress on a system that is too reliant on liquefied natural gas.

We are encouraged by the leadership of Greg Cornett, president of Rhode Island Energy, who has put in the effort to listen to concerned ratepayers and take the heat from a population looking for a scapegoat.

While other leaders in the country are directing massive layoffs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – including firing everyone responsible for administering popular and effective LIHEAP program that keeps 6 million Americans from freezing or roasting to death during the most extreme weather months – Cornett's apparently authentic desire to find ways to reduce our energy burden is a breath of fresh air.



## LETTERS

### Social Insecurity: There's no massive fraud here

To The Editor:

Social Security is in the worst crisis since its founding in 1935.

Not because it's running out of money – there are viable proposals to shore up the Social Security trust fund.

Not because of fraud or administrative costs – Social Security has a payment accuracy rate of 99.7%, and its administrative costs are 0.5%, by far the lowest of any large program in the public sector. If there was massive fraud, we would have heard all the details.

Leland Dudek, the new acting commissioner of SSA, has made multiple rapid and chaotic policy changes. Together with Elon Musk, he has pushed out dozens of officials with decades of experience running its complex systems. The agency was already short staffed, but the exit of so many key employees leaves retirees with little to no recourse should the rapidly changing systems cause an interruption of benefits.

Phone lines are tied up for hours. People might wait on hold for up to six hours, or they might be cut off after a couple hours. Although many Social Security recipients have long been unable to physically access local offices, DOGE's website states 22 office leases have been terminated, making access that much more difficult.

The SSA website crashed four times in 10 days this past month.

Untrained and unvetted DOGE employees have unprecedented access to sensitive SSA data, including beneficiaries' bank-account information.

I strongly encourage Rhode Islanders to call their senators and representatives today to tell them to do everything in their power to save Social Security. If you are not personally being affected, your parent or your grandparent or your disabled neighbor is. Veterans and people on Medicare or Medicaid are being affected by similar chaos and similarly draconian budget cuts.

Demonstrations are being held throughout Rhode Island every week. As more and more people begin to understand that this is not right, the number of demonstrators increases each week. On Saturday, April 5 at noon, there will be a large march from Hope High School in Providence to Kennedy Plaza.

Dana Holmgren  
Cranston

### What's on your mind?

The Johnston SunRise encourages letters to the editor. It's part of our mission to reflect a multitude of perspectives on everything from community news to national politics. In the interest of including as many viewpoints as possible, we ask that you hold your letter to 250 words. We can accommodate a longer piece on a complex topic as an op-ed, preferably with a local focus and a maximum of 750 words. With your letter or op-ed, we ask that you include a phone number (not for publication) where we can reach you to confirm authorship. We'd like to hear from you.

• WHERE TO WRITE:  
TimF@beaconmediari.com  
or...  
The Johnston SunRise  
1944 Warwick Avenue  
Warwick, RI 02889

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John Howell, Publisher Emeritus

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# LETTERS

## Old growth is best forest fire prevention

**To the Editor,**

As the anniversary of a massive brush-fire approaches, it's time we learned our lesson.

On April 14, 2023, a human-set brush-fire in Exeter burned more than 200 acres of forest, the largest wildfire in Rhode Island in more than 50 years.

While Rhode Island's forests are naturally not fire prone, this fire started in a forest clearcut created by The Nature Conservancy and the Natural Resources Conservation Service a few years before.

This clearcut caused flammable wood slash to be deposited on the forest floor from the logged trees, made dry through the increased sunlight from the massive hole in the tree canopy.

Flammable underbrush and young trees thrived from the increased sunlight and more wind was able to flow through the forest due to the holes in the forest canopy.

## Sheehan's standards for Trump aren't fair

## To the Editor:

Former state Sen. James Sheehan, a teacher of civics and U.S. history, has earned a failing grade in fairness when it comes to his treatment of President Donald Trump. (“Trump tests our checks and balances,” March 27)

For example, Sheehan faults Trump because he “hand-picked department heads whose top qualification was unquestioning loyalty to Trump himself.” But what president hasn’t held his Cabinet members to that same standard?

How does Trump's expectation of loyalty differ from President Biden's cabinet appointees who unquestioningly covered

## Legal Notices

**JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD  
OF REVIEW  
REGULAR MEETING  
AGENDA**  
Thursday, April 24, 2025  
at 6:30 PM  
Johnston Senior Center  
1291 Hartford Avenue

## I. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

## II. Minutes from Previous Meetings

### III. Old Business:

#### IV. New Business:

**Petitioner: Richard Dion (Contractor) Michael Labbadia (Owner) & Nicole LN Ave AP 33Lot 108, Zone R 40, requesting a Dimensional Variance. New shed.**

Petitioner: Louis Silvera of Maximus Construction (Applicant)  
Andrea DiMaio (Owner) 6 Day  
street AP 14 Lot 36, Zone B2, Ap  
plicant requesting a use variance  
to construct two 2 family struc  
tures in a B2 zone.

**V. Adjournment:**  
Per order of the Zoning Board of Review  
Thomas Lopardo, Chairman

- The Zoning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at <https://clerkshop.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 TTY (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

Despite this, millions of taxpayer dollars are being allocated to logging our state-owned public forests from the 2024 Green Bond under the guise of fire prevention, while in reality it's making our forests more fire prone.

The best way to prevent brushfires in our forests is to protect fire resistant old growth forests and ban clearcutting on state-owned land.

Increased logging from tax subsidies to the timber industry will just make fires in our forests more likely.

Please email your state representatives and senators to pass the Old Growth Forest Protection Act H 5294, and oppose the Forest Parity Act (Timber Industry Expansion Bill) H 5098/S 0679.

**Nathan Cornell**  
**Warwick**  
**Cornell is president of the Old**  
**Growth Tree Society**

up for Biden's declining cognitive function for four years, all to the detriment of our nation? Regarding their duplicitous behavior, Sheehan is silent.

Sheehan criticizes Trump's use of tariffs as causing "erratic trade wars with our close trading partners, such as Canada." Well, these "close trading partners" have been exploiting unfair and outdated trade policies to the detriment of American workers for years. On this subject, Sheehan sides with the Canadians; President Trump, in sharp contrast, puts the interests of American workers first.

Sheehan also faults President Trump for calling out the abuse of power by radical judges such as Obama-appointed James Boasberg. Sheehan ne-

glects to mention that this specter of judicial overreach was anticipated by founding father Thomas Jefferson, who opposed the Judiciary Act of 1801 for that very reason.

Intervention by left-wing activist judges is compromising President Trump's ability to execute the duties of his office in a timely fashion. It proves Jefferson was right about the threat of judicial tyranny.

Sheehan claims to endorse our system of “checks and balances.” But at the same time, he dismisses the need to put any check on the power of “judicial authority.” That obvious contradiction is particularly unfair to President Trump.

**A. H. Liddle**  
**Warwick**

## *In-your-face gloating*

**To the Editor,**

As a teen, Donald Trump was sent to military boarding school by his father in an attempt to “toughen him up,” a parental decision that would turn out to have its desired effect.

So, how do I know this? From his roommate at the school, who would later marry my cousin, and from whom I heard unflattering stories about Trump's character – which included walking around campus brandishing a cut-off broomstick to intimidate lower classmen, and pretending to still have a superior cadet rank even after it was taken away for abuse of power and privilege. And yet, oddly enough, these first-hand stories aren't all that important to understanding Donald Trump since he's an open book to anyone who chooses to see him for what he really is – a self-absorbed braggart and bully.

To me, the most troubling aspect of the Trump administration, aside from its stunning incompetence, is the in-your-face gloating while recklessly slashing government programs and throwing thousands of employees out of work. Elon Musk gleefully waving around a chainsaw. Tom Homan smirking about shipping off migrants without due process to an El Salvadoran dungeon. A vengeful Donald Trump going after any individual, institution or country that happens to irk him.

What kind of person acts like this? Well, apparently someone devoid of empathy or basic human compassion who's never had to deal with personal adversity or hardship – or, if they ever have, then their memories must be really short and highly selective.

**Peter Carney**  
**Warwick RI**



# SunRise Scoops

### Community Cleanup at Borden/Governor King Cemetery

The Johnston Historical Society is holding a Historical Cemetery Clean-up event as part of program sponsored by the R.I. Historical Cemeteries Commission. The event will take place on Saturday, April 12, at the Borden/King Cemetery, located along Hartford Avenue, at the corner of Winfield Road. The clean-up will run from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Volunteers should bring rakes and gloves. The rain date is Sunday, April 13. Any questions can be referred to the Johnston Historical Society at 231-3380.

### Hop on Over to See the Easter Bunny

The Johnston Recreation Department, with a special thank you to Citizens Bank, is excited to announce that the Easter Bunny is coming to town. Join in the fun on Saturday, April 19, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Johnston Senior Center, located at 1291 Hartford Avenue, for a morning filled with fun and treats. Enjoy pastries and refreshments while meeting the Easter Bunny. This free event is open to all, and each child will receive a special gift from the Easter Bunny. Don't forget to bring your camera to capture the memories. For more information, visit [www.johnstonrec.com](http://www.johnstonrec.com).

### A Spring Fling Dinner

The First Baptist Church, 1613 Main Street, West Warwick will be holding a Spring Fling Dinner Fundraiser on Saturday, April 19, from 1 to 3 p.m. This is an old-fashioned family style meal: Sausy hot dogs, beans, green salad, homemade potato and macaroni salads, brown bread, assorted desserts, coffee, punch and water. There will also be a spring bulb sale. Ticket prices for adults are \$15, children 6 to 10 are \$8 and under 5 are free. All proceeds to go to help defray the cost to replace and install a new boiler system.

### Cast your line at the 2025 Fishing Derby

The Johnston Recreation Department, with special thanks to Citizens Bank, is excited to announce the 2025 Fishing Derby for children ages 4 to 12! The event will take place on Saturday, April 26, at Johnston War Memorial Park. Drop by any time between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. This fun-filled, free event will feature awards for individual achievements. Be sure to bring your own bait and fishing poles. Please remember that the derby is designed for kids—adults may assist with casting and releasing fish if needed, but the young anglers should do all the fishing. For more information, visit [www.johnstonrec.com](http://www.johnstonrec.com).

### Almost May Breakfast

The Woodridge Congregational United Church of Christ, located at 546 Budlong Road in Cranston, will host its 41st Almost May Gourmet Breakfast on Friday, April 26, from 8 to 11 a.m. with continuous seating throughout the morning. This all-you-can-eat event features a menu including scrambled eggs, frittatas, Johnnycakes, waffles, ham, sausage, home fries, Holly's famous baked beans, strudel, muffins, assorted pastries, juice, milk, coffee, and tea. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children ages 5 to 12, and will be available at the door.

### Youth Track and Field Registration Open

Young athletes in grades 1 through 8 are invited to participate in the Johnston Recreation Department's Track & Field program designed to help them develop running, jumping, and throwing skills while staying active. The season runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays from April 22 through June 12. The cost is \$85 per individual, with a discounted rate of \$65 for each additional sibling. Please note that credit cards are not accepted; payments should be made by check payable to JYSA. Visit [johnstonrec.com](http://johnstonrec.com) for more information.

### 2025 Johnston T-Ball Registration Open

The Johnston Recreation Department is now accepting registrations for the 2025 T-Ball program. Open to boys and girls ages 5 and 6 (as of May 1, 2025), this fun and engaging program focuses on fundamental skills like catching, throwing, and batting, with mini-games played toward the end of the season. Sessions will take place on Saturdays from May 3 through June 14. Registration is available at the Johnston Recreation Office, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The cost is \$80 per child and \$60 for each additional sibling. The department is also seeking volunteer coaches and program sponsors to help support youth sports. If you're interested in getting involved, visit [johnstonrec.com](http://johnstonrec.com) for more information.

### US Coast Guard Auxiliary Boating Safety Class

The US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Flotilla 07-08, is offering a one-day boating safety class on Saturday, April 12, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The class meets all the requirements for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) Boater Safety Identification Card. The class will take place at the Warwick Police Department Community Room, located at 99 Veterans Memorial Drive, Warwick. Please note that seating is limited to 22 students, and reserved seating only—no walk-ins will be accepted. To reserve your seat, call 508-343-0235 today. Payment of \$50 (cash or check made out to USCGAUX Flotilla) will be collected from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. before the class begins. Please bring a photo ID, as the USCG and RI state test will be administered during the class. Those who pass will receive their RI Boating Safety Card by mail from the RIDEM. Students are encouraged to bring their own lunch and note-taking materials.

### Support the La Fazia Spring Cleaning Drive

Johnston's own Derek La Fazia, Jr., a 17-year-old La Salle Academy student, is once again leading the La Fazia Spring Cleaning Drive to help individuals transitioning from homelessness into stable housing. Throughout April, donations of essential household cleaning supplies—such as all-purpose cleaners, dish soap, paper towels, and mops—can be dropped off at La Fazia Auto Body, 920 Plainfield Street, Monday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Monetary donations are also welcome. Checks should be made payable to Crossroads Rhode Island (memo: *La Fazia Spring Cleaning Drive*) and can be dropped off at La Fazia Auto Body or mailed to Crossroads RI, 162 Broad St., Providence, RI 02903.



Eshaal Ali and Amara Noble presenting their poster board and homemade calming jars. Submitted photos

## Cool time at Thornton Chill Fair

Thornton Elementary School 5th graders hosted their 2nd Annual Chill Fair on Wednesday, March 26. The event showcased months of hard work as students researched coping skills, created informative poster boards, and presented their findings to students in grades 1 through 4, as well as faculty, staff, parents, and guardians.

Guided by classroom lessons with the school counselor and school psychologist, the students developed their projects with a focus on stress management and emotional well-being. The Chill Fair not only highlighted the students' dedication but also provided valuable resources for the entire school.

The event was a success, highlighting the importance of coping skills and peer support in school.



Alexander Xaymongkhoun showing first grader Kinzlee Dansereau how to crochet.



Left to right: John Ciccone, Pat Survillo, Nick Rocchio, Bob Rocchio, Joe Scichilone and Richard Vallante

## Prata bocce league rolls up successful season

The Prata Bocce League, which kicked off in December 2024 and concluded in March, brought together six teams with six players each, along with a dedicated manager for every team. While this league is often dubbed the "fun league," there's no shortage of friendly competition, as members are passionate about the sport. The players, embrace the league as an opportunity for camaraderie and enjoyment. The season concluded on a high note

with two teams tied and one needing to win both games for the championship. In the end, John Ciccone's team emerged victorious, claiming the coveted title. The league primarily featured participants from Cranston and Johnston, who all enjoyed a great season of spirited play.

The Rhode Island Bocce League will be starting soon, continuing the bocce excitement for local enthusiasts. Submitted by Louis J. Spremulli

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# LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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By JENNIFER COATES

The expression “Home is where the heart is” is an oft-repeated phrase that is both familiar and evocative to all who hear it. Whenever these words are uttered, they immediately evoke the sentiment that no matter where life takes you, you can be “at home” as long as you are surrounded by the people and things you love. Home can truly be wherever you rest your heart.

As we age, the concept of “home” will often change. Perhaps we are no longer able to remain in the home where we raised our families. Perhaps we need more help than the independent lives we once led. Perhaps we need to eschew the possessions we once accumulated in our homes and embrace a simpler life, instead savoring time spent with loved ones and making new acquaintances. Life and “home” may change, but they can also be better as we go along.

“Life getting better” and creating “places where the heart can settle in” are part of the mission of The Preserve at Briarcliffe. The Preserve is the newest addition to the Briarcliffe family. Opened in June of 2021, this thoughtfully designed senior living residence is home to seniors looking for this simpler, stress-free life. A life of security, peace of mind, comfort, opportunity, and freedom. A “new” home that caters to their every want and need.

Each of The Preserve’s sixty-six apartments is designed to meet the specific needs of those who are either completely independent or who require assistance with such basic needs as medication management or help with simple, everyday activities. It is the ultimate in senior living, known in the industry as a Continuing Catered Retirement Community (CCRC).

The Preserve’s apartments come in six different floor



**The Preserve at Briarcliffe is a warm, inviting retirement community located in Johnston. If you or a loved one is considering a new home, visit one of their apartments, including this studio apartment with its thoughtfully-planned bathroom and kitchenette.**

plans including 330 square foot studio apartments and one-bedroom units. Each apartment has a kitchenette (complete with quartz countertops, small-scale refrigerators, and a microwave), “European-style” bathrooms for safe and easy access (complete with barrier free showers, grab bars and two emergency alarm pull stations), wheelchair-width doors for those with mobility challenges, and access to the outdoors. Each apartment is individually controlled for heat and air-conditioning. Every room is bathed in natural sunlight.

Every amenity here at The Preserve has been carefully curated. Restaurant-style dining with restaurant quality food, housekeeping, landscaped grounds to explore, a full-service salon and fitness center, laundry service and cozy lounges where scheduled activities and entertainment are held. There is a library and game room for family gatherings. Though transportation is provided, there is hardly ever a reason to leave!

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# Spring Home

Spring is the perfect season for new beginnings...



By **BARBARA POLICHETTI**  
Beacon Media Staff Writer

Spring is officially here. It's the season of budding trees, daffodils, and the sense that summer will really arrive.

It's also the season when many people get the urge to clean – to throw open their windows, declutter, dust and, in general, reclaim their homes. It's almost as if they are whisking away any remnants of winter with a new, clean fresh start.

The history of spring clean can be traced to religions and cultural traditions that date back to ancient times. But, more simply, it's a great time here in New England to let fresh air in and disorder out.

It seems like it should be simple -- work that can be done with mops and brooms – but as our lives have become more complicated, so has the task of cleaning and decluttering.

In honor of spring, Beacon Media talked to several professional organizers in an attempt to get some inspiration for clearing away the cobwebs and also take a look at the psychology of clearing your space and why, for many people, it is such a difficult task to tackle.

Stacy Jackson, owner of Little Boxes (Organizing, Downsizing and Decluttering) in Warwick, loves to make order out of disorder. She has dug through entire households, garages, basements, and more in order to help clients get control of their “stuff” – and their lives.

A former teacher who has also worked as an artisan restoring stained glass, Jackson said she found her career as an organizer after her father-in-law passed away. He had been an eclectic collector, she said, and after his passing the family was left not only with grief, but the weight of what to do with his many possessions.

● **DECLUTTER** to next page

...and to embrace the urge to clean, declutter



An example of what a little work can do. Here are before and after pictures of a playroom organized by Elsie Seber of Min2MAX. Submitted photos

Elsie Seber, owner of Min2MAX organizing is committed to helping clients feel better about their homes and themselves. Submitted photos courtesy Elsie Seber



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# 'Don't toss it out. Toss it to us.'

Donating is sustainable, helpful

By BARBARA POLICHETTI  
Beacon Media Staff Writer

If decluttering is part of your spring-cleaning regime, you should end up with lots of items – clothes, books, shoes, linens, and more – that need a new home after they leave yours.

Most professional organizers recommend that you not just toss it all in the trash but donate it to the charity of your choice. And Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island (BBBSRI) wants people to know that they can help.

“We always say, ‘Don’t toss it out. Toss it to us,’” says Tina Santos, marketing director for Big Brothers Big Sisters. “Donating is convenient and easy, and you know that what you are getting rid of is really helping someone else.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a national non-profit organization that is committed to helping youth reach their potential through its mentoring network. Clothing and other donations support much of the mentoring work and help them assist partner agencies, Santos said.

She said that BBBSRI makes donations work for them by teaming up with Savers thrift stores and selling the donations it collects to the stores.

“The funds we receive (for the donations) support about 70-percent of our mentoring work,” Santos said. “The impact is tangible. In 2024, 100-percent of our mentees advanced to the next grade and 93-percent of parents noted improved mental health in their children.”

Donating not only supports the work BBBSRI does, but it is good for the environment and an easy way to recycle, according to Santos. She said that the clothing and other “soft items” that the organization collected “diverted 4 million pounds of textile waste from the landfill.”

Santos said that Big Brothers Big Sisters makes it easy for people to donate. It offers free curbside pickup at people’s homes and also has drop-off centers, and more than 100 green bins throughout Rhode Island.

“We want to make sure it is convenient and easy to donate,” Santos said. “We say, ‘bag it, tag it and drop it.’”

While donations are critical to the programs Big Brothers Big Sisters provides, Santos said that they are also aware that they are helping people get unwanted items from their home.

She advises anyone embarking on a spring-cleaning project to do their homework and pick a charitable organization to donate to rather than just tossing items in the trash.

In addition to clothing, some of the items Big Brothers Big Sisters accepts includes clean handbags, towels, sheets, books, small toys, sporting goods, and small appliances in working condition.

“Donating is sustainable, and it helps organizations do good work,” she said.

● DECLUTTER

“I would say that loss and major life changes are the two biggest reasons I am contacted,” she said. “It can be someone who is starting a new career or getting ready to retire, but they cope with making changes in their homes and deciding it is time to move on.”

One of the things she loves about being an organizer, she said, is that it is a visible way to help people, and most clients end up feeling better about themselves – not just their homes.

“It’s just so good to see progress being made and a project completed,” she said. “Getting started is the hardest thing for most people – it’s very easy to get overwhelmed. But I love it.” She added that after a completing a job, she gets notes from clients saying that they felt better about themselves.

Elsie Seber, a professional organizer for nearly 10 years, agrees about the transformative nature of cleaning up one’s life. Owner and founder of Min2MAX based in Barrington, Seber said her professional mission is to help people “achieve clarity of action by optimizing (their) environment.”

Like all the professionals we interviewed, she said aside from the physical and practical results that come from being organized, there are psychological and emotional benefits to getting one’s house in order.

“I associate physical chaos with mental chaos,” Seber said, adding that she after she finishes a job, she often gets heartfelt letters of gratitude from clients who say they are not only enjoying being neater, but they feel calmer and more peaceful

“For me being organized is about just being in a space that you can breathe in,” said Seber who worked as a project manager at Boston University and at the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol.

She said she is very neat by nature and attributes the trait to having grown up sharing a bedroom with a very messy younger sister. “I’ve been organizing ever since then,” she said.

Most clients feel guilty or ashamed that they need help getting their homes in order, but Seber said they should know that needing professional assistance is more common than they think. Studies have shown,



Rachel Fontaine, owner of Fountaine Organizing says she knows where everything is in her house, and if you want to be organized be prepared to declutter. Beacon Media photo by Barbara Polichetti



Stacy Jackson, owner of Little Boxes organizing services in Warwick, says she loves what she does. Photo contributed by Stacy Jackson.

she said, that many Americans buy items that already own simply because they can’t find what is in their homes.

Seber said that when many clients first contact her it’s because they feel stuck “or frozen. “I tell people I can help unfreeze them,” she said. “We do it together -- it helps so much when you have a teammate.”

Rachel Fontaine, owner of Fontaine Organizing in Cranston, said that she understands the work her clients put into learning how to keep their houses free of clutter because she is not a naturally neat person. “I had to teach myself to be organized,” said. “I like to describe organization as the ability to find what you need when you need it – I can pretty much find anything in my house at any time.”

Like other professionals in her field, Fontaine has invested time and training for her work and belongs to several national industry organizations including the Institute for Challenging Disorganization. She also collaborates with colleagues on some jobs and said she often works with Kate Bosch, a professional organizer in Providence.

Bosch, who has fond childhood memories of organizing her toybox, said she loves helping other people dismantle their messes. “It’s like a fun puzzle to me,” she said, adding that communication with the client throughout the process is key.

Laurie Lindemann, owner of DeClutter Pronto, in East Greenwich agrees. Clients are letting you into their lives when they ask for help cleaning up their homes and it can be an emotional process, she said.

“I love this work, and I try to make it fun for my clients,” she said. “Sometimes we laugh, sometimes we cry together but we do have fun.”

Lindemann follows the teachings of Marie Kondo, the Japanese organizing consultant who rocketed to fame around 2011 when she published her book *The Life Changing Magic of Tidying Up*.

It sold millions of copies and in 2015 she was named to Time Magazine’s list of the 100 most influential people in the world and now oversees a business empire committed to the art of decluttering. Kondo has approximately 4 million followers on Instagram and is well known for her philosophy that your home should not be cluttered with items that do not bring you joy.

Lindemann said that Kondo changed her life and got her on the path of becoming a professional organizer. She was grieving the loss of her husband and going through mountains of his belongings in the family’s historic Cape Cod style house when she read Kondo’s book.

“I thought, ‘I can do this,’” she said. And after going to New York City to hear Kondo speak in 2016, she became a certified Kondo consultant.

Lindemann said that people will be amazed at what a little decluttering can do. She had just started culling from her own home when she found that guests would ask if she had gotten new furniture or painted a room.

“People thought I had redecorated when all I had really done was gotten rid of some things,” she said.

Spring is a great time for cleaning, Lindemann said, and it can be a season that lasts all year long. “I find that after clearing their spaces, people start taking better care of themselves,” she said. “They take off the clothes that were hanging on the treadmill and start using it.

“It’s like I’ve helped them open up space for new beginnings.”

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# Pollinator Pathways Connect Native Species

By **FRANK CARINI**  
*ecoRI News senior reporter*

Neck surgery in 2005 put Amy Ottilige’s life on hold. She was “bored,” until she noticed a monarch butterfly fluttering outside her window. The simple observation changed her life. Instead of just briefly stopping to smell the flowers, she came to appreciate the bugs’ life on them.

Once recovered and after some self-education, Ottilige embraced the importance of native plants and the pollinators they support. Since 2014, when she began “raising” butterflies, some 1,500 of the nectar-feeding insects have completed their metamorphosis in her yard, including 161 monarchs in 2023 and 28 swallow-tails in 2024.

“I just started, and then I ended up having a whole width of my house as a pollinator garden,” Ottilige said. “I’ve raised all types of butterflies, but monarchs are my favorite.”

The Warwick Wildlife and Conservation Commission member is continually educating herself about pollinators and their needs, and has received her pollinator steward certification. She is a member of the Monarch Watch program, and she has made and distributed several pamphlets — “Pollinators & How We Can Help,” “What is Pollination?,” and “Your Pollinator Garden” — to educate the public about the importance of pollinators.

Anne Holst, who has been chair of the Wildlife and Conservation Commission for the past 15 years, noted it’s important to plant native flowers in your yard, or at least in a few pots.

“When surrounded by grassy lawns, pollinators move or die, but the presence of native plants sustains them,” Holst said. “We need bee lawns. People need to realize that if you don’t have pollinators, you’re not going to have food.”

ecoRI News spoke with both women about the importance of pollinators and their disturbing decline, and how pollinator pathways can help.

“People can learn the basics of working with their own gardens and yards to provide healthy environments for bees, butterflies, and birds, all creatures we need to ensure flowers, fruits, and vegetables can grow abundantly,” Holst said. “Bees are very limited in how far from the hive they can go unless there is a continuous path of plants that they can get pollen and nectar from.”

Most native bees have a range of no more than half a mile, so the goal of pollinator pathways are to connect properties that are no farther apart than that.

Ottilige noted that pollinator pathways — in backyards, on municipal property, or in a business park — don’t need to be intense, time-consuming, or expensive. She said they can be as small as a window box with a few native perennials.

“Do what you feel you can afford and handle. You can start with a simple, small window container,” Ottilige said. “If you have a large yard, you can have half as a meadow. It’s up to you how much you want to put into it, and it’s up to you to be able to sit back and have a cup of tea and watch all these beautiful things fly around.”

The women recommended not mowing your lawn every week and allow it to grow taller for two or three weeks before cutting; leaving some patches of your yard vegetation-free to provide habitat for native ground-nesting bees; and creating a mowing schedule around the life cycles of native plants, because wildflowers aren’t only beautiful in bloom, but they also provide important ecological services.

“We’re trying to educate people about the fact that the most unhealthy thing is what we call the monocul-



Pollinator pathways can come in all shapes and sizes, from gardens to pots. *Frank Carini/ecoRI News*

ture lawn and everything that goes on it,” Holst said. “You’re just depriving pollinators of food.”

Pollination enables native plants in yards, parks, farms, orchards, and forests to reproduce. While imported European honeybees are the pollinators most often celebrated, there are some 4,000 bee species native to the United States, plus flies, moths, butterflies, and other insects, that also provide this service for free.

Pollinator populations, however, are in sharp decline, largely because of the overuse of pesticides, the relentless development of habitat, and the human-caused climate crisis. Monarch butterflies have declined by about 90% in the past few decades, according to the National Wildlife Federation. A 2017 study found a 75% decline in all flying insects in the past 28 years.

“In the long term, we’re putting a big dent in the evolution of life on the planet,” according to the researchers who authored last year’s study. “But also, in this century, what we’re doing to the tree of life will cause a lot of suffering for humanity.”

It should come as no surprise then that our massive footprint is stomping out insect life. According to a 2019 study, about half of the world’s insects are speeding down a path toward extinction that threatens the collapse of ecosystems. Insects are a food source for amphibians, birds, fish, reptiles, and some humans.

They are also pollinators, and humans need them.

Three-fourths of the world’s flowering plants and about 35% of the world’s food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. Some scientists have estimated that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators such as bees, beetles, butterflies, moths, and other insects, plus birds and bats.

More than 40% of insect species are declining and a third are endangered. Their rate of insect extinction is eight times faster than that of mammals, birds, and reptiles. Total bug mass is decreasing by 2.5% annually, according to research.

“We’re not asking them to spend beaucoup money,” said Ottilige of encouraging people to help pollinators. “It’s whatever you feel like you want to do and try.”

*Note: This story was originally published by ecoRI News in September 2024. It has been updated.*

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# All the *tools* you need for *spring* and more

By JOY FOX  
Beacon Media Publisher

“I need nothing,” said Cherine Whitney as she pushed her cart away to do exactly the opposite after a gleeful exchange about how hard it is to resist a Job Lot deal.

Safe to say, Whitney is not alone.

Job Lot shoppers often stop in for one quick item only to find their cart overflowing with the store’s famous “crazy deals”, “insider deals”, and just plain old deals they couldn’t refuse, especially as the seasons change.

No matter what a person’s level of ambition for cleaning and gardening this spring, Job Lot is ready and waiting. Garden supplies, cleaning supplies, indoor/outdoor rugs, patio sets and accessories are fully stocked. If you need it, chances are they’ve got it.

Since 1977, finding what your want has been a priority for company leaders since opening their first store in North Kingstown. The other important goal is to provide “an ex-

ceptional customer experience,” according to Bob Tougas, store team leader.

### Providing value

“For us, it’s Kindergarten 101,” said Tougas of Cranston. “Treat people the way you want to be treated. When you visit our stores, we want you to have that family feel and know that you will be taken care of.”

Twenty-five years ago, after corporate consolidations in the grocery business left him looking for a new job, friends suggested he apply to Job Lot. Prior to joining the North Kingstown team, he worked for three years to get the new Job Lot on Warwick Avenue up and running.

Tougas doesn’t miss a beat when asked to cite the wide range of products they have on hand to meet customers’ year-round needs and seasonal supplies. Cleaning supplies, patio furniture, gazebos, pop-up tents, vegetable seeds, hoses and nozzles, planters, fire pits, pool supplies – and so much more. While the depth and breadth of products may have



Bob Tougas of Job Lot catches up with Cherine Whitney, a long time customer, about her latest craft project. *Beacon Media photos by Joy Fox*

changed here and there over the years, the biggest shift he’s noticed is how customers are buying.

“Buying online and using ship-to-store continues to increase,” he said.

It’s exciting to be in a place that is growing, he says while tidying shelves and displays. The company plans to open 20 new locations in the coming year on the East Coast.

### Providing the product

The North Kingstown store on Frenchtown Road plays a little different role in the vast network of stores that spans from Maine to Maryland. It’s the closest to the company’s headquarters in the Quonset Business Park and is likely to receive more frequent visits from company executives, to check on merchandise and, well, to shop.

And that’s how Marlene Bellini, vice president of buying, joined the conversation with Tougas last week. She popped in to grab some last-minute gifts.

Bellini, along with her team of 12, help keep the stores

stocked with everything customers need and more. Relying on planning, forecasting, analytics, Bellini starts her buying at least a year in advance. The team has its ear to the ground for buyouts, closeouts, overstock from Amazon and Macy’s, and hundreds of retailers in between.

She says if the “price is right” she jumps on it. She just placed an order for 80,000 shirts. But she is also mindful to steer clear of chasing trends and to not worry about what WalMart and Target are doing. Ship-to-store has also allowed the chain to buy smaller quantities too.

“We love a brand and so does the consumer, and if we can offer that brand at a better price, we do,” she continued, listing off clothing brands such as Champion to Fiskars gardening tools. For her, all roads lead back to value for the customer.

### Weathering the economy

Like many businesses, Job Lot is not immune to shifts in economic policy and public health emergencies.

And when it comes to weathering the economy, Tougas

echoes the same point, it “goes back to everyday value.”

“We are all trying to save money, no matter the price point,” he said. “We have all kinds of customers, and they are all looking for value.”

Bellini added that the company has never strayed from who they are. “We understand our business and are passionate about it. This passion starts at the top with Marc (Perlman principal owner and CEO of Ocean State Job Lot).”

The company navigated the pandemic, which brought increases to freight and shipping along with a surge in sales because of people staying home and going back to take care of their yards.

The also navigated increased tariffs during the first Trump administration and now are paying attention to the next wave of tariffs coming. Their teams are looking for different countries to source products. They say they will continue to make sure their shelves are stocked with whatever their customers need.

“We will always have reasonable prices to give someone a deal,” said Tougas.



Bob Tougas of Cranston is a store team leader at Job Lot.



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Marlene Bellini talks buying trends and customer value with her colleague, Bob Tougas.



# Consider Spring-Flowering Epimediums

By JOYCE FLEISCHER

I came to know Epimediums rather recently in the 25 years that I’ve been gardening. The two kinds I have in my garden are shade-loving and evergreen, and any carefree plant that can bring joy twelve months of the year gets my vote.

I don’t remember how I found out about Karen Perkins, the owner of the now-closed Garden Vision Epimediums nursery. But it was early days of the pandemic, and I ordered the Epimediums online and arranged for in-person pick-up outside her home in rural central Massachusetts. It was not actually an “in-person” pickup. We agreed to a date and time for me to come. Then on one of those impossibly beautiful early spring days my husband and I drove to her home and claimed our plants that were set out on a small table under an umbrella in the front yard. I could see rock ledge on the side of her shady garden where her nursery plants were growing. What an ideal place to grow these plants. I couldn’t help but wish to tour her garden. She grew about 170 different varieties.

The plants looked delicate and very small in their 2½” square pots. I got two of two kinds. i9 ‘Thunderbolt’ was discovered in the Republic of Georgia. It has yellow flow-



E. pinnatum ssp. colchicum flower. Photo courtesy of Garden Vision Epimediums

ers with leaves that turn mahogany in the cold months. It is drought tolerant, a little less than a foot tall, and spreads by rhizomes. My tiny plants have bulked up and gently spread in a harsh environment on the north side of the house under a juniper tree. They get no sun in the winter and take the brunt of the north wind. Real troopers.

The other kind is called Epimedium ‘Pink Champagne’ and is a taller, clump-forming plant. The pink flowers grow above their mottled, arrow-shaped leaves. Karen says that this variety, a hybrid by plantsman Darrell Probst, is her favorite. These plants are happy in a rather sunny spot next to an azalea. In spring I cut back the old leaves to

show the new ones. That’s the extent of care.

Epimediums play nicely with other woodland plants, such as hellebores, hostas, tiarellas, trilliums and hepaticas. Because they have evergreen leaves—unlike some spring ephemerals such as bleeding hearts or bloodroot—you know where they are in the garden and can easily place new plants nearby without disturbing them. And in the early spring when you are going through the beds for a tidy-up of the battered hellebore leaves you can trim the Epimediums at the same time. They say that Epimediums love dry shade. It is true that many of them will successfully grow on dry ground, but only once well-established. It is best to water Epimediums regularly the first year that they have been planted to be sure that their roots get moisture.

Epimediums are also called barrenworts and bishop’s hat. They are in the barberry family and are native to China, Japan, and Korea. Some varieties have fun names like ‘Ninja Stars.’ I’m thinking that all are worthy of garden space.

*Note: Fleischer tends her flower gardens in the Edgewood neighborhood of Cranston whenever the weather lets her.*

## Pooh Bear and Buc-ee the Beaver love Spring

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines cleaning as “to rid of dirt, impurities, or extraneous matter.” Let’s be honest, everyone’s definition of “clean” is a little different. For some, it means spotless perfection; for others (like me), it means shoving things into a drawer and calling it a day. Then there’s spring cleaning, that mythical time of year when we suddenly feel the urge to scrub, dust, and question our life choices.

While keeping the kitchen and bathrooms clean is a daily chore, I often find that other areas of the house tend to accumulate clutter, waiting for a day when I finally feel motivated to tackle them. That day seems to come every spring! Usually, it is a weekend when I am not working, a day when I wake up and enjoy my cup of tea sitting next to a wide-open window that lets the warm breeze in. That rush of fresh air against my cheek miraculously awakens my dormant cleaning skills.

I jump up from my seat and head to the bedroom. I draw back the drapes and open the windows, letting in both sunlight and fresh air. I strip the bed, tossing the sheets and comforter into the washing machine along with a Tide Pod infused with stain remover and the fresh scent of Spring Meadow. Soon, with the crisp air drifting through the window and the lovely fragrance lingering in the fabric, our bed will smell like we’re sleeping in a spring meadow.

I dust off the bureaus, along with the often-overlooked spots on top of the television and cable box. The drawer handles are similarly dirty, which is corrected by one sweep of my dust cloth. The backboard of the bed also gets dusted. Using a damp cloth, I clean the many remote controls on the bureau. Then, armed with Windex, I tackle the mirrors on the wall-to-wall closet, mirrors I usually avoid because, for some reason, they insist on making me look thirty pounds heavier than I really am.

I sprinkle a generous coating of Arm & Hammer carpet freshener onto the rug, then use my foot to swish it back and forth, ensuring it sinks deep into the lower fibers. I will have Hubby vacuum that up later.

With the bed still unmade, I climb up with my feather duster to tackle the layer of dust that has settled on the ceiling fan. Down below, I check under the bed to ensure all our clear plastic storage boxes are neatly arranged.

As the last act of spring cleaning in the bedroom, I carefully make the bed, I ensure the sweet-smelling sheets are tucked in tightly lest they come loose at the corners during my nightly leg thrusts and turnovers.



**Life Matters**  
with Linda Petersen

The comforter and pillow shams are neatly arranged back in place. Giddily, I then set our two beloved stuffed animals on the bed: a Winnie the Pooh from our early days of marriage and Buc-ee the Beaver, a treasured keepsake from one of our favorite stops on our trips to Florida. Of course, they are placed in the middle of the pillows, arm in arm (or paw in paw?)

After an intense battle with dust bunnies, (eliminated just before Easter,) and a mirror that refuses to flatter me, my bedroom is finally spring-cleaned to perfection. The air smells like a delightful mix of spring meadow with just a *hint* of industrial-strength carpet freshener. The bed is crisp, the pillows are fluffed, and Pooh and Buc-ee sit proudly in the middle, holding onto each other and looking like the official mascots of our marriage. I step back to admire my work, feeling accomplished, until I glance at the closed closet door. With a dramatic sigh, I decide that THAT is a task for NEXT spring.

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# Accessory dwellings become reality under new law

By JOY FOX  
Beacon Media Publisher

For years, Marie Limoges believed her daughter’s garage “would make a terrific tiny house.”

About a year ago, she and her daughter, Michele Grimes, started to make this dream a reality. Limoge moved into her tiny house in the Gaspee section of Warwick in January and couldn’t be happier.

“At a certain point you start to wonder if you can get a project like this off the ground,” she said last week standing on the porch of her new 650 square-foot home, noting the stress of increasing rents. “We decided to jump in and get it done.”

On March 19, she and Grimes were joined by elected officials, builders, and others to cut the ribbon on Warwick’s first accessory dwelling unit (ADU) under new legislation.

The Limoge project was managed by Giuseppe “Joe” Pagnani from NE Tiny Homes of East Providence, along with company co-owners Kyle Seyboth and Alicia Medeiros. The three have worked in real estate and property development for years and decided to seize this moment in home construction.

According to a press release from the office of Speaker Joseph Shekarchi, ADUs, sometimes referred to as in-law apartments or granny flats, have become increasingly popular around the country in recent years as states as municipalities balance the need to create more housing while preserving the character of residential neighborhoods.

### New law

The legislation allowing for ADUs was signed into law in June 2024 and was sponsored by House Commission on Housing Affordability Chairwoman June S. Speakman and Sen. Victoria Gu. Shekarchi was the House bill’s top co-sponsor.

The new law provides homeowners the right to develop a single ADU on an owner-occupied property, within the existing footprint of their structures or on any lot larger than 20,000 square feet, provided that the ADU’s design satisfies building code, size limits and infrastructure requirements, according to the Shekarchi’s office.

The legislation prohibits ADUs constructed under this provision from being used as short-term rentals and stream-

lines the permitting process.

### The need

“There is a massive need for affordable housing,” said Seyboth. He noted with the passage of the ADU legislation, there is “an excellent opportunity” in the market.

“This is not a fad,” said Medeiros, noting that as a mom she is already thinking ahead about how they can afford housing in the future and considering her own garage conversion. “People need housing, and this [option] is an affordable, stable solid investment people can feel positive about.”

Pagnani agreed. “Multigenerational living is sustainable and affordable,” he said.

“We must reframe how we think about housing as we grow older, and ADUs are part of the equation,” said Catherine Taylor, AARP Rhode Island state director in a press release. “Aging in community – where 87 percent of Rhode Islanders 45 and older have told us they wish to be – is possible if homes can be modified to accommodate changing needs. Our cities and towns must have housing options that are suitable for differing incomes, ages and life stages. ADUs are an important way to accomplish this goal.”

Along with AARP, the bill was supported by numerous organizations and agencies, including Rhode Island Housing, Grow Smart RI and Housing Network RI.

### Getting started

There are a couple major steps to consider before construction even begins, starting with financing and site review. So long as the homeowner has the space, it can be assessed for an ADU. Projects can range from a new build to converting a garage, basement or attic.

Once the project financing



Marie Limoge, on the deck of her new tiny home, which boasts 650 square feet of living space, including a kitchen, a loft, one bedroom, and one bath. *Beacon Media photo by Joy Fox*

was set, the next important step for Limoge was to find a trustworthy partner. She chose the NE Tiny Home team.

“Start early,” said Pagnani when asked for his top bit of advice for homeowners. His team works with customers every step of the way, from assessing their property to design to organizing general contractors. “We take it all on, right down to the appliances,” he said.

Some properties require site surveys, which may include septic system reviews. And then there is the permitting. Pagnani acknowledged given the newness of the legislation, receiving permitting approvals is taking a little time. He’s committed to working with cities and towns to by “keeping lines of communications open” to navigate projects.

“The permit process took a long time,” said Limoges, again

noting that her project was the first in Warwick under the new law.

For the Limoge project, with financing set and permits in hand, crews ripped the roof off the existing garage and went up two levels. The initial framing started around Labor Day weekend.

The final product: a new build tiny home with approximately 650 square feet of living space, including a kitchen, a loft, one bedroom, and one bath.

“I would have lost my mind doing this on my own,” Limoge said. “It was a wonderful experience. The guys had such work ethic.”

The feeling was mutual. “I love my clients,” said Pagnani, noting the personal rewards he feels helping people age in place.

“What better thing is there than keeping families together,” he said.



The Limoge tiny home was the first in Warwick under new ADU legislation. Aiden, a member of the construction team, along with Marie Limoge, her daughter, Michele Grimes, and builders, Jessica and Jason Correia. *Submitted photo*

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# Lifestyles

## Theater Review: ‘Merrily We Roll Along’



Above: Ensemble of *Merrily We Roll Along*. At Left: Jason Denton as Joe, Dan Pickar as Frank and Tyler Rebello as Charlie. Photo by Bob Emerson courtesy of The Community Players



## Time, Friendship and Regret

By IDA ZECCO

Stephen Sondheim’s *Merrily We Roll Along*, original play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart and book by George Furth is currently being presented by the Community Players of Pawtucket through April 13.

At the heart of *Merrily We Roll Along* is its unconventional storytelling method. The show moves backward through the lives of three central characters: Franklin Shepard, Charlie Kringas, and Mary Flynn. We follow them through their disillusionment, examining their friendship and careers – first of their failures before rewinding to their youthful, idealistic beginnings.

The challenge for any director staging *Merrily We Roll Along* is to maintain the emotional stakes while the plot con-

sistently moves backward. The show asks its audience to hold two emotional states at once – the poignant realization of loss and the youthful glow of unrealized potential. This reverse structure in the hands of the skillful director, John McElroy II, becomes both emotionally powerful and intellectually stimulating. While McElroy II, does a very good job staging this production with some creative blocking and character development, his addition of the first scene in an assisted living residence did not enhance an already lengthy production, nor did the final ending: bringing back the elderly character from the first scene.

The strength of *Merrily* lies in its lead characters who must be strong enough to embody a youthful enthusiasm and the weary wisdom of this narrative. And this production had gifted leads, an excellent ensemble with supporting leads, specifically: Jason Denton as Joe, Melanie Kane as KT, and Hannah Van Meter as Gussie.

Franklin Shepard, played by Dan Peckar, the show’s central figure, is a dreamer gone astray. He begins as an idealistic composer, full of promise, only to end up as a jaded film producer whose moral compass has been crushed by the realities of success. Peckar delivers a stellar performance of Frank; convey-

ing not just the tension between these two personas, but also the deep regret and loneliness he feels as his own identity slips away. Peckar navigates the soaring musical numbers and the quiet, reflective moments.

Charlie Kringas, portrayed by Tyler Rebello, Frank’s close friend and collaborator, is equally compelling. Charlie’s bitterness toward Franklin’s betrayal of their shared ideals runs deep, but there’s a vulnerability in Charlie’s character, a hunger for validation. Rebello performs with sensitivity as the audience’s window into the emotional core of the story: the painful recognition that no dream stays intact forever.

Mary Flynn, rendered by Meghan Smith, the third part of the trio, is the emotional anchor of the show. Initially a witty, sharp-tongued woman, Mary’s journey backward through time unveils a tragic figure who has failed to achieve the artistic success she so deeply craved as she watches her friends drift apart. Smith’s portrayal is spot-on accompanied by a magnificent voice.

Richie Sylvia masterfully conducts the orchestra through a score filled with intricate rhythms, shifting time signatures, and melodies that are deceptively simple yet profoundly evocative. This is Sondheim at his most musically sophisticated.



Tyler Rebello as Charlie, Meghan Smith as Mary and Dan Pickar as Frank.

ed. Musicians must be up to the task, which was not always the case during Friday’s opening night.

*Merrily We Roll Along* reveals how our pasts are never fully behind us, our relationships are never fully resolved, and we often live with the ghosts of unfulfilled dreams. It is reckoning with what we hoped for versus what we achieved, and whether it was all worth it. The show ends on a nostalgic longing, a cry for redemption, a plea for meaning and to the incredible humanity of those who dare to dream, despite the odds.

**What:** *Merrily We Roll Along*

**Where:** The Community Players  
Jenks Auditorium  
350 Division Street  
Pawtucket

**When:** Friday & Saturday  
April 11, 12 – 7:30 p.m.  
Sunday, April 13 – 2:00 p.m.

**Tickets:** Adults \$30.00  
Students \$18.00

**Box Office:** 401-726-6860  
thecommunityplayers.org



Hannah Van Meter as Gussie.



● HOUSING from page 1

For example, the bill would mandate that developers seeking to build these multi-family housing projects participate in a pre-approval conference. Before the pre-approval conference, developers would be required to submit documentation that could include a project description, unit numbers, and a conceptual site plan.

According to Fellela, the bill would also ensure that developers proposing substantial multi-family housing projects could not fast-track their applications through a single comprehensive permit as they are currently able to do, regardless of the size of the community.

“This proposal strengthens local community control by allowing a more thorough vetting of the application,” she explained.

Bill supported by Fascia, Polisena

Representative Richard Fascia co-signed the bill because it aims to balance affordable housing needs with the unique characteristics of each community. He stressed the importance of adapting housing solutions to the unique needs of each municipality.

“What’s right for Providence or Pawtucket may not be right for Burrillville or Exeter,” he said. “Local communities know what’s best for local communities.”

Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr.

expressed his support for the bill but suggested modifications.

Speaking before the House committee, Polisena contended that high-density developments do not fit the character or needs of small communities like Johnston. Referring to the proposed 252-unit low-income apartment complex, the mayor highlighted several concerns, including the impact on the town’s resources.

He said that such a project would add about 80 new students at a cost of \$1.85 million and require a new rescue truck costing around \$1 million. He has proposed taking the land for this site by eminent domain to build a municipal campus including new fire and police headquarters and a new Town Hall.

“Maybe communities like East Greenwich, Barrington, Jamestown and Portsmouth ... have the wealth for modest annual property tax increases for large affordable development complexes, but ... these proposals are happening in blue-collar, working-class communities like Johnston,” he said.

Polisena said he would rather see a tiered approach instead of a one-size-fits-all model. For example, the amount of affordable housing required in a community should be related to its population.

Current Rhode Island law mandates that each municipality have at least 10% of its housing stock in affordable housing.

Polisena acknowledges the impor-

tance of affordable housing, but he emphasized that in Johnston, this would mean prioritizing single-family homes over large multi-unit complexes.

“Working off of this legislation allows us to do just that while still allowing communities to individually address their housing needs as they see fit,” he said.

Now the debate begins

Although the bill was just introduced, it is clear it will face debate and opposition.

In a public session, representatives took issue with bill as proposed. Perhaps the bluntest assessment of the bill came from Rep. David Morales.

“I’ll just start by saying that this is a creative way to keep poor people out of certain communities,” he said, before listing multiple issues he believed were in the bill.

Rep. June Speakman addressed the panel and suggested the removal of “low to moderate income” in the bill’s wording addressing 60 units, so that it includes development of all types of multifamily homes, regardless of pricing.

“Bringing this bill forward, it does undo much of what we have done in the past four years of the speaker’s legislation, and I gather that’s your intent, which is very controversial legislation.

We’ve worked very hard on it,” she said. “I hear all the time that it is insensitive to the needs of smaller communities. I hear that all the time, I live in Warren and I hear it, but I disagree.”

As the bill’s cosponsor, Fascia maintained that the bill ensures that affordable-housing projects are ‘consistent with local needs’ while also maintaining public safety and supporting infrastructure capacity. He said it also aimed to prevent the stigmatization of low-income developments. He added that the legislation promotes fairness by requiring that both subsidized and unsubsidized housing projects follow the same zoning and land-use regulations.

Fascia concluded that the bill represents a thoughtful, balanced approach to addressing the state’s affordable housing crisis, recognizing the need for new developments while preserving the quality of life for existing residents.

Representative Richard Hull saw it in a different light, saying the bill reminded him of “snob zoning” – land-use regulations used to discriminate against certain types of residential uses.

“I understand what you’re trying to do for your town, but what [Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi] has done at the cost of this session and previous sessions is to open up housing for people throughout the state,” said Hull. “As I look at some of the fine notes in the bill ... those things are designed to keep people out.”

● NEIT from page 1

would, Sherman said that NE Tech made changes to the overall curriculum, including the removal of general-education courses and reduction in the number of credits required to graduate.

“We worked very hard and very deliberately to integrate the general-education learning outcomes into our major courses,” Sherman said. “We’ve worked very closely with our faculty within our majors to develop new learning outcomes for certain courses that would help students to develop those same kinds of outcomes that we achieve in our more traditional bachelor’s degree program.”

The four majors chosen came out of a desire to allow students to enter the workforce in high-demand fields quickly, Sherman said.

Only four majors could be approved at the program’s onset, as the New England Commission of Higher Education was unwilling to give accreditation to more programs with no proven record of success. As such, he said, NE Tech chose the four programs based on which majors were most in demand.

“Our Career Services Department helps our graduates connect with employers, and so they’re very in tune with what the employment needs are in the local area and regional area and, for that matter, even nationally,” Sherman said. “So when we talked with them about it, we asked what they would select as the top four programs based on employment demand, and these four rose to the top.”

The format, Sherman said, would help students save money while allowing them to make money sooner as part of a growing workforce. He hopes it will help NE Tech increase its enrollment numbers as well.

“In many institutions across the country, there’s been a dip in enrollments, and it’s primarily caused by the fact that the demographics of college-age students is shifting – there’s less and less of them,” Sherman said. “Students are going to get a very high-quality education that produces meaningful skill sets that will help them get employed, and there’s an opportunity to start earning income one or two years prior to their peers who go through a more traditional pathway. So there’s that opportunity ... that I think will attract a lot of students to come to these programs. It benefits everybody, really.”

Sherman said that the students in the program will be monitored to determine whether they’re achieving the same learning outcomes as students receiving a traditional bachelor’s degree.

If the program is successful, Sherman said, NE Tech would ask the New England Commission of Higher Education to approve more two-year bachelor’s programs.

“We’re going to collect lots of evidence,” Sherman said. “We have lots of ways to determine whether or not they’re receiving these same outcomes. And if we see this as something we’re successful in doing, we’re hoping that we can do this across the board with some of our other programs. We honestly think that if we are successful, especially with the integration of the general-education outcomes into the major classes, we think it could revolutionize baccalaureate-level education. Time will tell.”



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# Nominations open for ‘Civic Education Teacher of the Year’ award

Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore announced that nominations are now open for the RI Department of State’s third annual Civic Education Teacher of the Year award.

The award will honor one outstanding teacher who has demonstrated a commitment to and expertise in teaching civics, social studies, or American government, with special consideration given to teachers who employ innovative teach-

ing practices and experiential learning opportunities for their students. Nominations can be made by a current student, teaching colleague, or administrator.

“Each year, I look forward to reading the nominations of these incredible history and civics teachers in schools throughout our state,” said Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore. “I strongly encourage students, fellow teachers, and administrators to consider nominating

their teacher or colleague for this award and recognizing them for their dedication to their profession.”

Since the award’s creation, 24 Rhode Island teachers have been nominated. The inaugural winner was John Healy, of E-Cubed Academy, a Providence Public Schools teacher of 29 years. In 2024, the Department honored Crystal Bozigian, of North Providence High School, and Shannon Gormley, of Central High

School.

Nominations must be submitted by 5 p.m. on April 22, 2025 online at [www.sos.ri.gov/teacheraward](http://www.sos.ri.gov/teacheraward).

To be eligible, nominees must be current, full-time teachers of civics, social studies, or American government in grades 8–12.

For more information about the award and full eligibility details, visit [www.sos.ri.gov/teacheraward](http://www.sos.ri.gov/teacheraward).

● REED from page 1

get more people off Medicaid, we have less people coming in,” which will mean less reimbursement.

Paul Salera, president and CEO of Westbay Community Action, whose organization serves Kent County and hosted the conference, said his organization’s food pantry serves 120 households per day, five days a week. He fears that job cuts and potential budget cuts could be harmful to each CAP, as they get funding from the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. He added that these organizations may need to rely on community partners who might not be able to contribute as much due to rising costs from tariffs and inflation.

“My biggest fear is for the residents of both Kent County and the state and them not being able to get the safety-net services. It’s that husband and wife who live

on Social Security, those older Rhode Islanders who live on Social Security, and now they can’t get heating assistance, which could possibly save them \$50 to \$200 a month off their budget,” he said. “We’re hoping that a lot of this stuff is just headlines, it’s just talk.”

The Trump administration’s HHS layoffs come as part of a broader push by congressional Republicans to advance a budget with cuts across social safety-net programs. Reed criticized the effort, saying that cutting funds for federal programs often shifts the financial burden, resulting in fewer services and higher costs.

“What they’ve done is they’ve made these headline announcements, and the details are following. In some cases, we were seeing cuts and, in some cases, it’s just for confusion,” he said “No one knows how much is being cut or where it is coming from. He wants head-

lines and it’s work out the details later, but everything we’ve heard is cut, cut, cut, cut programs that really help people.”

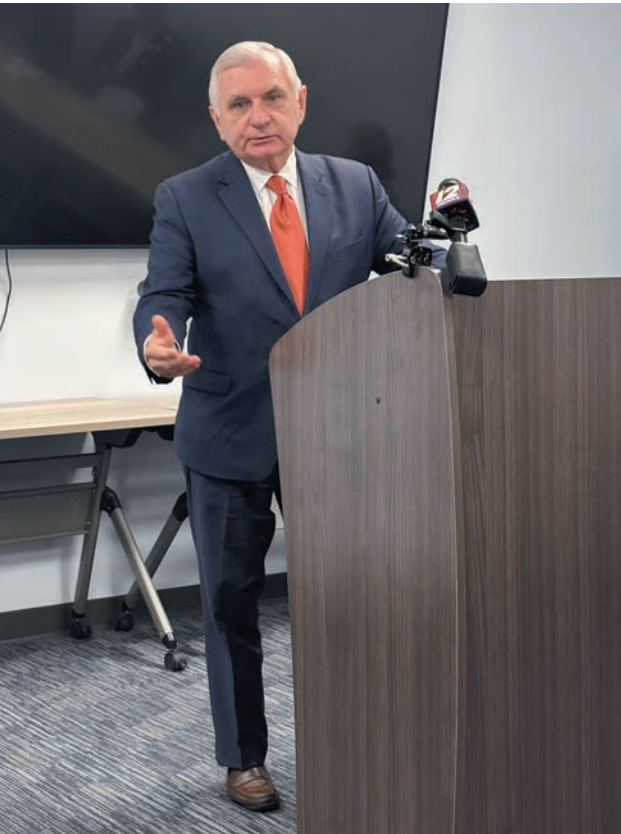
Reed added, “They’re making mistakes about our community’s health and safety, and of course lives, literally.”

The senator vowed to fight the proposed cuts in Washington and urged local leaders and residents to voice their concerns about the long-term impact on Rhode Island communities.

“There’s still a bit of confusion, but yes, Republicans will feel this, too. I hope before we get to that point my colleagues will understand that and step up and say we can’t do it,” he said.



Westbay Community Action’s food pantry, which serves 120 households a day, five days a week, is threatened by federal budget cuts. *Beacon Media photos by Tim Forsberg*



Senator Jack Reed said that proposed federal budget cuts would shred Rhode Islanders’ social safety nets.

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# Sports



Johnston's Emmanuel Rios delivers a pitch. Photos by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com

## Panthers off to slow start

FROM  
STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston baseball team is looking for its first win as it has jumped out to an 0-3 start in Division II to begin the season. The Panthers dropped the season opener in a 3-0 loss to North Providence. Ethan Bracey and Matt Clements earned Johnston's lone two hits as the bats were cold. Johnston used four pitchers including Aiden Neil and Anthony Scorpio, who each struck out three batters. The Panther bats continued to struggle as they were shut out and no-hit by Narragansett, 7-0. An-

● START to page 24



Matt Clements puts the ball into play last week.

## Locals lead RIC to 3rd at Bryant

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Junior Haley Oliver (Coventry) finished third in the 5,000m (18:00.95) as the Rhode Island College women's track and field team competed at Bryant's Ocean State Cup on Thursday and Friday afternoon. The event featured seven Rhode Island teams from across Div. I, II and III. Rhode Island College, Roger Williams and Johnson and Wales were the lone Div. III squads. The team score was comprised of both the men's and women's results. RIC finished fifth with a team score of 115.5. URI won the meet with a team score of 406.0. Junior Milana Melvin (Johnston) finished 14th in the discus (29.59m) and 15th in the hammer (37.89m). Fifth-year Trinity Hayes (Providence) finished third in the 400m (57.88) and fourth in both the 4x100m relay (49.42) and the 200m (25.04). Freshman Quiana Pezza (Cranston) finished fourth in both the triple jump (10.46m) and the 4x100m relay (49.42) and 14th in the 200m (26.50). Junior Tayshia Cary (Wakefield) finished fourth in the 4x100m relay (49.42), ninth in the 100m (13.38) and 16th in the 200m (26.61). Freshman Bendu Kamara (Pawtucket) finished fourth in the 4x100m relay (49.42) and 17th in the 400m (1:02.45). Senior Samantha Sainristil (Cranston) finished fifth in the shot (12.25m), seventh in the hammer (45.62m) and 12th in the discus (32.04m). Junior Bethanie Jean-Philippe (Cranston) finished seventh in the javelin (35.04m). Sophomore Lexie Zakrzewski

● RIC to page 22

## Ovechkin may never be caught

Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin finally broke the NHL's all-time goal record last week when he put away No. 895, topping Wayne Gretzky's record which was set all the way back in 1994. Hockey has become a secondary sport in our region when compared to the likes of football, baseball and basketball, which in this case is a shame, as this is one of the biggest sports stories of the past decade. Like most that watch



**My Pitch**  
by Alex Sponseller

the NHL, I have spent the majority of my life considering Gretzky's record as untouchable. I never thought I would see the day that the record was broken as 895 is such an astronomical number. It was not until last season that I began thinking that Ovechkin had a chance. At 39 years old, Ovech-

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● PITCH from page 21

kin is not as explosive as he once was but remains a productive player. He is now up to 42 goals this season and a plus/minus of 17. This record chase has propelled him to one of his best seasons ever as he has tapped into his younger self.

I thought that by the time he retired he would have a chance, but I thought he’d be lucky to score anything beyond, say, 25 goals this year. This is my longwinded way of saying that what he is doing is remarkable.

We’ll see what the future holds for him, but if he sticks around for another couple seasons, he may actually be able to put the record out of reach for more than Gretzky’s 31 years. The Capitals are one of the favorites to win the Stanley Cup this season, and if they do, would Ovechkin consider retirement with the goals record and his second championship? I can’t say I’d blame him if he walked away under those circumstances, but how could he retire after scoring over 40 goals? Clearly he still has more in the tank.

Although most fans have em-

braced witnessing history, there of course were some naysayers on the radio airwaves the past few days trying to put a damper on Ovechkin’s record. The older generation that still worships Gretzky is very protective of his legacy and Ovechkin being mentioned in the same breath has clearly struck a nerve for some.

Relax. Gretzky is still the greatest player of all time. He’s second in goals scored, first in assists (which is a record that truly, may never be touched), first in points, fourth in career plus/minus, all while being a nine-time MVP and four-time Stanley Cup champion. Although one record slipped away, it’s hard to imagine that we encounter a better, more accomplished player in the sport in our lifetimes.

I am a sucker for historic moments in sports. I love a feel-good story, I love a thrilling game, but perhaps more than anything, I love watching history. While most fans in Rhode Island were locked in to March Madness and the Red Sox opening their season, my eyes were on the goals record. It may, and probably will be, the last time we ever see that re-

cord broken.

By the way, Gretzky was first class throughout the entire process.

He traveled with the Capitals the last few games and when the record was broken, he was the first person to shake his hand on the ice and delivered more than complimentary words of congratulations. Records are meant to be broken and he operated in a manner that few would. Sure, professionals are usually capable of putting on a brave face when needed, but Gretzky appeared to be truly happy for Ovechkin. He seemed proud to pass the torch to the next generation.

There are some things in sports that we rarely, if ever witness. The all-time goals record in hockey is one of the most prestigious numbers that we finally, after 31 years, got to see be reset. Pittsburgh Penguins’ star Sidney Crosby is the next down the list of current players with 622, but is 37 years old. Steven Stamkos is at 580 but is 35.

If Ovechkin keeps playing, we could be waiting more than 31 years. Let’s celebrate witnessing such a significant event.

● RIC from page 21

(Taunton, Mass.) finished 18th in the 400m (1:03.37).

Freshman Grace Lane (North Smithfield) finished 18th in the 800m (2:34.45).

Freshman Mariangely Rodriguez (Providence) finished 18th in the discus (23.97m) and 25th in the hammer (31.41m). Freshman Taryn Reed (Pascoag) finished 19th in the hammer (36.24m) and 22nd in the discus (22.14m).

Sophomore Shirley Portillo (North Providence) finished 20th in the 800m (2:46.97).

RIC baseball swept

Junior center fielder Lucas McElroy (Westport, Mass.) went a combined 3-for-6 with three singles as Rhode Island College dropped a Little East twinbill vs. Eastern Connecticut (17-1; 3-1) at Pontarelli Field on Friday afternoon.

GAME ONE

Both squads put in a defensive battle, led by the pitching, as the first three innings were scoreless.

The Anchormen were able to put themselves on the board first on a solo home run from senior designated hitter Lucas Pierce

(Chepachet) in the fourth frame.

Fifth-year pitcher Terry Murray (Norfolk, Mass.) was brilliant through six innings until the Warriors rattled off a five-run seventh frame.

The visitors were not done there, as a four-run eighth and an eight-run put the game out of reach. Pierce went 2-for-4 with a double and a homer. Murray picked up the loss (1-2), striking out four in 6 2/3 innings of work.

GAME TWO

Fifth-year shortstop Izaiah Rivera (Pawtucket) registered the first hit of the game with a double to center field in the second inning.

However, he was left on base to end the inning and the Warriors put a run across in the top of the third with a single to pick up the early, 1-0 ,lead.

The Anchormen remained scoreless until the bottom of the sixth as fifth-year third baseman Cal Parrillo (Greenville) grounded out, which plated Pierce to knot the game.

Eastern Connecticut capitalized on a two-out error by the Anchormen in the seventh to take their first lead and held on to complete the sweep.

# Real Estate Transactions

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE	ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
CRANSTON					WARWICK				
112 Gray Coach Ln Lot 1214	Sayaf, Stephanie M	Bailey, Phyllis A and Bailey, James E	3/19	\$389,900	101 2nd Ave	Sisson, Tammy	Gutierrez-Jimenez, Leidy J and Ossa-Quintana, Dibier A	3/17	\$350,000
14 Kearsarge Dr	Johnson, Arleigh and Johnson, Isabel F	Granillo, Abner G	3/21	\$515,000	110 Winter Ave	Olivier, Ross and Olivier, Shannon	Fricchione, Melanie A and Huth, Ollie A	3/20	\$498,500
15 Flynn Ave	Fed Natl Mtg Assn	Montesino, Leslie R	3/18	\$559,900	176 Horse Neck Rd	Burgos, Wilfredo and Ayala, Crystalie	Foote, Nicole and Jones, Ryan	3/20	\$273,000
17 Hillsdale Dr	J&m Home Buyers LLC	Rose, Katherine and Rose, Erika R	3/18	\$640,000	177 Baldwin Rd	Larkin, Robert J and Larkin, Jeane E	Papapietro, Hannah R and Papapietro Jr, Robert	3/17	\$400,000
203 Bay View Ave	Ramos, Ramon C	Fernandez, Ivelisse A and Fernandez, Joel	3/17	\$392,000	19 Cushing Rd	Barriera, Elaine	Prop Bldrs Ri LLC	3/17	\$243,000
28 Selkirk Rd	Valentini, Robert F and Bucci-Valentini, Andrea M	Gagnier, William D	3/17	\$960,000	21 George St	Bailey, Phyllis A and Bailey, James E	Rybasack-Smith, Heather and Smith, Andrew	3/18	\$505,000
31 Friendly Rd	Allen, Sheldon and Allen, Miriam P	Kim, Suzanne and Penzhorn, Nerina	3/21	\$442,000	42 Knowles Dr	Soja, Joseph J	Kwok, Chit P and Lau, Tsz H	3/20	\$415,000
315 Scituate Ave Lot F	Ellen Anderson Lt and Anderson, Ellen M	Rossi, Vincent	3/21	\$324,000	46 Madison St	Sarenson, Maddison and Sarenson, Matthew	Sotne, Lauren K and Plante, Adam D	3/17	\$417,000
45 Fernwood Dr	Principe, Barbara	Whittingum, Ronald	3/19	\$375,000	530 Oakland Beach Ave	Cosmo Prop LLC	Jrm Bldrs Inc	3/19	\$410,000
60 Western Promenade	Hernandez, Enmanuel and Hernandez, Yaremi	Marchessault, Lisa	3/21	\$449,000	71 Gillan Ave	Dejordy, Alexander	Boichat, Marilyn	3/17	\$530,000
9 Gray Coach Ln Lot 915	Patriot Builders Inc	Jenkins, Justin D	3/21	\$349,900	78 Zachariah Pl	Mary P Stone Lt and Stone, Mary P	Chung, Thy and Tu, Don	3/20	\$639,000
EAST GREENWICH					851 Cowesett Rd	Musto, Walter and Musto, Patricia N	Baldinger, Kerry and Baldinger, Jason	3/18	\$679,900
					881 Greenwich Ave Lot 2A	Creta, Elizabeth	Arlia, Frances E	3/18	\$410,000
WEST GREENWICH									
1001 Main St Lot 4	Stairs, Nancy D	Petrucci, Eileen F	3/19	\$254,486	126 Weaver HillRd	Wainman, Sharon	Laplante Estates LLC	3/18	\$400,000
JOHNSTON					WEST WARWICK				
140 Springfield Ave	Damico 3rd, William R	Edwards, Tracy and Edwards, Shawn	3/14	\$560,000	1 Garfield Ter	Arel, Ronald J and Arel, Karen A	Arel, Anthony E	3/24	\$392,000
1725 Plainfield Pike	Defazio, Deborah L	Plaifield Pike LLC	3/21	\$400,000	131 West St	Snow, Randall	Raheb, Ronald	3/20	\$300,000
24 Calumet Ave	Delvecchio Jr, Dennis M and Delvecchio, Tracie A	Grijalva, Hilda E	3/25	\$407,500	16 Matteson Ave	Council Of Giants LLC	Mondesir, Nealy and Mondesir, Marie A	3/21	\$380,000
26 Kensington Way Lot 26	Atwood Ave Condos LLC	Chiang-Harris, Yu-Fen	3/19	\$449,900	29 Brayton St	Mahoney, Seamus	Rhode Home Buyer LLC	3/25	\$165,000
2697 Hartford Ave	Mcguire, Valerie J	Tended Seed Bus Dev LLC	3/25	\$797,000	40 Shippee Ave	Snow, Randall	Dire Pursuit LLC	3/21	\$400,000
27 Pezzullo St	Porporino, Alan	Yarde, Shawn J	3/25	\$520,000	41 Epworth Ave	Potter, Jennifer B	Wilkinson, Phillip L and Kelley, Jonathan R	3/21	\$440,000
28 Kensington Way Lot 28	Atwood Ave Condos LLC	Dimundo, Deborah M	3/25	\$499,900	43 W Valley Cir Lot 43	Residences At West Vly In	Embleton, Amy K	3/21	\$466,150
40 Dean Ave	Frezza, Theresa A and Fusco, Rosemarie A	Patterson, Jason	3/19	\$352,000	610 Wakefield St	Laires, Justin and Laires, Jordan	Knott, Colby A and Beffre, Braelyn P, 3/21, \$480,000		
57 Merino St	Kirios Realty LLC	Cardoso Homes LLC	3/21	\$297,000					
76 Serrel Sweet Rd	A&w Property Group LLC	Caton, Lawrence	3/21	\$405,000					
9 Dexter St	Hetu, Jeffrey M and Hetu, Shannon	Nexgen Properties LLC	3/14	\$295,000					
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# Magaziner discusses Trump-Musk attacks on NOAA

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI  
Special to the SunRise

Last week I was pleasantly surprised to see U.S. Representative Seth Magaziner from Rhode Island hosting an issues form with other U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Members titled “Attacks on NOAA threaten American Communities and Economies.”

During this forum, the Members examined the dangerous consequences of the Trump administration’s ongoing campaign to dismantle the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Members and panelists warned that Trump and Musk’s attacks are calculated moves to silence scientists, privatize public services, and reward tax breaks to billionaires at the expense of the American people.

“Fishing is part of who we are in Rhode Island—and data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on weather, fish stocks, and more plays a critical role in protecting lives and livelihoods in the Ocean State,” said Rep. Seth Magaziner. “I was proud to bring voices together and host today’s forum with House Natural Resources Committee Democrats to elevate local challenges and shine a light on the reckless cuts to NOAA by Trump and Musk that hurt the Ocean State and its coastal economy.”

The second pleasant forum surprise for me was that Sarah Schumann, Rhode Island and Alaskan commercial fisher, and Owner/Principal Consultant, Shining Sea Fisheries Consulting, LLC was the lead fisheries panelist at the forum.

Schumann, said, “All of the ambitious and visionary things that fishermen desperately need, the faster, more collaborative data collection and decision-making, the greater attention to the multitude of stressors affecting fishery habitats, the supports for young people to enter and thrive in fishing careers, will be vastly more difficult to achieve with a diminished and distressed NOAA workforce.”

The form also included comments from committee Ranking Member Jared Huffman of California who said, “Commercial and recreational fishers have stories to tell about the impacts these policies have on their day-to-day lives and their families’ futures. Sarah Schumann highlighted some of these stories at the forum, and there are so many more fishers out there who can and should speak their truth to power while we still have a shot at turning this chaos around.”

Hats off to Rep Huffman for holding the NOAA forum and for Rep. Magaziner for doing a great job hosting. Rep. Magaziner’s leadership makes me, fishers and all Rhode Islanders proud.

### Trout season opens this Saturday. Go Fish!

Rhode Island and Massachusetts have stocked waterways with a variety of trout which makes catching them easy this time of year. Freshwater fishing is a good way to start fishing as anglers of all ages can fish from the safety and comfort of a pond, lake or river bank.

The trout season in Rhode Island opens this Saturday, April 12. Most waterways in Massachusetts were already open before this date.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) has stocked over 60,000 brook, brown, rainbow and golden rainbow trout and Massachusetts stocks over 500,000 fish each year.

Kenneth “Casey” Fernstrom, DEM Senior Biologist and manager of the four trout hatcheries in Rhode Island said, “We are stocking with larger fish this year, most are between 14” and 18”, however, the 20 plus inch fish are more

abundant, particularly the golden trout we stocked this year.”

Anglers who catch a golden rainbow trout on Opening Day and through May 6 will be eligible to receive a golden trout pin. Simply take a picture and email it to dem.fishri@dem.ri.gov for verification. Submissions must be received no later than Monday, May 5, 2025.

“State law requires boaters to have personal flotation devices (PFDs) for each person and a newer regulation is that all operators and passengers of canoes, kayaks, paddle boards and any other paddle craft must always wear a PFD, regardless of age,” said Deputy Chief Michael Schipritt of DEM’s Law Enforcement Divison. “Anglers are reminded to protect themselves from hypothermia. Do not be fooled by warm fishing weather in the spring as the water is very cold in the 50 degree range so respect that and take precautions. Boaters are also asked to make sure their vessels are check out, are in good working order and safe as opening day is the first time many anglers are using their boats for the season.”

A 2025 fishing license is required for anglers 15 years of age and older. A Trout Conservation Stamp is also required of anyone wishing to keep or possess a trout or to fish in a catch-and-release or “fly-fishing only” area in Rhode Island.

The daily creel/possession limit for trout and/or landlocked domestic salmon singly or in aggregate, is five from April 12, 2025, through Nov. 30, 2025, however, only two salmon may be possessed per day. The number is reduced to two Dec. 1, 2025, to Feb. 28, 2026.

For complete regulations, a list of stocked ponds, and a copy of the RI Freshwater Fishing Regulations and Guide visit Fish & Wildlife | Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and in Massachusetts visit Freshwater Fishing | Mass.gov.

### Where’s the bite?

Striped bass fishing in salt ponds, rivers and waterways continues to be very good with anglers catching holdover striped bass to 34”.

Cod Fishing is still open as new regulations have been delayed due to the new Federal rule making executive order, agencies must reduce regulations by ten to introduce every new one. This executive order needs to exempt fishing (as it did in the last President Trump administration) as fisheries open and close regularly based on quotas.

Rick Bellavance, chairman of the New England Fishery Management Council and president of the RI Party & Charter Boat Association said, “Since the fishing year starts on May 1, and the new regulations may not be ready to start the year, NOAA is trying to develop an emergency action that will basically implement the councils desired management plans. NOAA is hoping to be able to implement the emergency action prior to May 1st, but that is not a sure thing. I will most likely learn more at the Mid-Atlantic Council meeting. If the emergency action is not successful, the current understanding is the fishery closes.”

Freshwater fishing. Opening day for trout season in Rhode Island is Saturday, April 12, largemouth bass fishing has been good.

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



Seth Magaziner leads discussions at the Natural Resources Committee’s NOAA issues forum. Rep. Maxine Dexter of Oregon looks on. Submitted photo

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Johnston’s Lucca Ricci slides into first base.



Corey Ogden hauls in a fly ball.

● **START from page 21**

thony Vendetti and Scorpio pitched for the Panthers and Vendetti finished with five strikeouts.

Johnston was then edged by visiting Chariho last week in a 3-2 decision.

Neil and Bracey each drove in runs for the Panthers while Vendetti and Jake Rankin crossed the plate. Emmanuel Rios was sharp

on the mound for Johnston despite the loss, pitching a complete game and allowing just one earned run while striking out six batters. Rios walked only one batter in the outing as well.

The Panthers were back in action on Wednesday night when they faced North Providence in a rematch, but the results were unavailable at press time. The team will hit the road to take on Rogers on Thursday.

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