


*Escaping Anxiety*



Johnston High School senior Jenna Asselin hopes to share the calming habits of yoga.

**PAGE 15**



# Viens shooting ruled homicide

## Juvenile charged with manslaughter

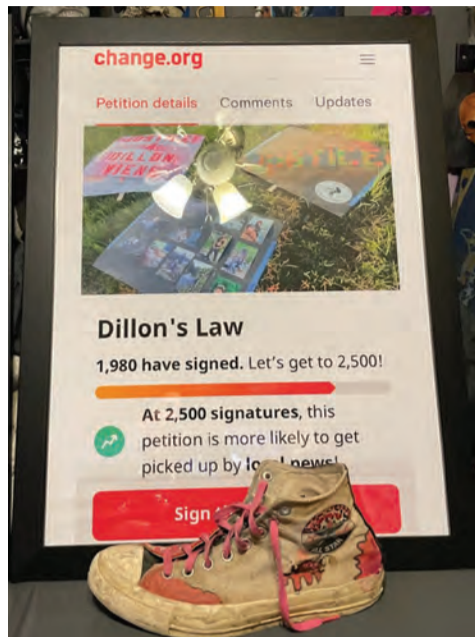
By RORY SCHULER

Following more than a year-long investigation, Johnston Police arrested a juvenile last week and charged him with manslaughter in the 2022 shooting death of Dillon Viens.

Viens' death, first labeled "accidental" by police, has now been ruled a homicide by the State Medical Examiner.

"It was a crime," Dillon's father David Viens said following the arrest. "Dillon was a victim."

Johnston Police Chief Mark A. Vieira announced the charges last week.



**DILLON'S LAW:** Last week, Dillon Viens' parents testified at the Rhode Island Statehouse, in favor of laws that would tighten penalties for irresponsible storage of a firearm.

**BREAKING NEWS:** A juvenile has been charged with manslaughter in the 2022 shooting death of Dillon Viens, which has been ruled a homicide.

DILLON - PAGE 9

# The Lunker



**RAINBOW ROAD:** Breonna Carleton, 12, holds a 1.2-pound rainbow trout – one of seven she reeled in during last Saturday's Kids Fishing Derby in Johnston – winning her the Grand Champion Award. Turn to the Sports section, starting on Page 16, for the full story and more photos. (*Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine*)

# Where's the budget?

## Civetti says Town Charter sets April 1 deadline for presentation

By RORY SCHULER

Is Johnston's town budget behind schedule?

Over the past few years, proposed budgets have been dropped on Town Council in June and approved just after the start of the fiscal year on July 1.

However, Johnston Town Charter calls for that discussion to begin on April 1.

Current Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. says the Town Charter deadline is an "archaic rule."

Town Councilman Robert J. Civetti argues it's a vital planning schedule, to which — until and unless it's changed — should be adhered.

Early in Monday night's Town Council meeting, Civetti turned to Town Clerk Vincent P. Baccari Jr.

"If you could just follow up and see if the (town's finance director) or the administration could attend the next meeting," Civetti said to the Town Clerk. "Just wondering if we're ever going to get a presentation to the council so we can approve the 2021 audit, the 2022 audit, and also the status of the budget. Per charter, the budget is supposed to be presented to the council by April 1. And ... we're supposed to be having workshops ... To the best of my knowledge, we have no schedule relative to that. I'd like to see a schedule."

Baccari took note.

Polisena did not attend the Town Council meeting. He has not attended a Town Council meeting since he was inaugurated in January.

### Mayoral Response

Polisena Jr. replied to questions regarding Civetti's concerns via email on Tuesday.

"I am disappointed and alarmed that Mr. Civetti would cite an archaic rule

that hasn't been adhered to in decades, throughout multiple administrations," the mayor wrote. "Section 8-3 of the Charter was adopted in 1963 and it does not align with best budget practices for 2023. The final state budget, which impacts revenues for municipalities and school districts, is never available before April 1."

Former Mayor Joseph M. Polisena, who presided over 16 consecutive budgets (current Mayor Polisena Jr.'s father), regularly waited until the very end of the fiscal year to release the budget to the public.

"As usual, our budget will be presented to the Town Council and public by the end of June for approval in July," said the Polisena Jr. "Even though there is no consequence to going beyond the April date, the reference to this timeline does highlight the need to amend this anachronistic provision and align it with present-day realities. It's grossly negligent to put a budget together without first having accurate revenue streams."

A Town Charter Review Commission will be examining the document, and proposing possible amendments.

Civetti criticized the town's failure to follow the Town Charter.

"Although the mayor may feel that the budget portion of the Town Charter is an 'anachronistic provision' it still represents the governing document which the town should be in following," Civetti said Wednesday. "I am amazed how this administration thinks it is acceptable to wait until June to present a budget to the taxpayers and the Town Council and then wait until to July to approve a budget for a fiscal year that has already started."

Neighboring cities have started the public portion of their budgeting processes.

BUDGET - PAGE 6

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# JHS Panther of the Week



**POTW:** This week's Panther of the Week is Steffi Rotella. Steffi is a senior at Johnston High and is a member of National Honor Society, Yearbook Club, Creative Writing, all while making First Honors. She was nominated by Mr. Oliver Reid and Ms. Kerry Murphy. Mr. Reid said, "Steffi goes above and beyond with all her assignments. She demonstrates mastery and shows her creativity and personality in her work. She is a great classmate, supportive of peers and willing to share expertise and experience if someone needs help or advice. She gets along with everyone and is such a positive figure in class. She is always willing to take the assignments to new places, things I have not even thought of. She is a pleasure to work with and to have in class and demonstrates all the best qualities of being a Johnston Panther." Ms. Murphy said, "Steffi is an intrinsic learner who holds herself to the highest of standards and leads her peers by example. She steps up when needed, whether it means dropping off work for an art competition, designing an art show poster, or editing the yearbook. Steffi is a thoughtful person who makes JHS a better place to work and learn!" Steffi also designed the Art Show flyer. The Art Show is at 6 p.m. on May 3. (Photos submitted by Matt Velino, Johnston High School Principal)

**Editor's Note:** This is the newest installment of an ongoing weekly series highlighting Johnston's amazing students. Staff at Johnston High School will be nominating students and submitting a caption and a photo for publication. You'll find each week's winning Panther on Page 2 of the Johnston Sun Rise.

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Contest is open to all ages. Entries must be postmarked or dropped off on or before May 5<sup>th</sup>.  
 Winners will be notified and prizes will be available for pick up the week of May 8<sup>th</sup>.



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**WHERE ART THOU:**  
 This poster was created by Steffi Rotella, a JHS senior art student in Two-Dimensional Art IV Honors.



**HEZ DISPENSER:** Tri-County Community Action Agency snipped the ribbon on a new Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Community Center at 104 Greenville Ave. in Johnston. From left to right, Tri-County President and CEO Joseph DeSantis, Johnston Town Council member Alfred T. Carnevale, Nadine Tavares, lead HEZ initiative project officer with the Rhode Island Department of Health, HEZ Director Lisa Kennedy, and Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. helped cut the ribbon on the new center. (Photos courtesy Tri-County)

# Tri-County opens HEZ Community Center on Greenville Ave

By RORY SCHULER

Johnston, North Providence and Smithfield residents in-need of community services have a new beacon of hope shining on Greenville Avenue.

The Tri-County Community Action Agency snipped the ribbon on a new Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Community Center at 104 Greenville Ave. in Johnston.

The HEZ mission is “to build a healthy and resonant” HEZ across the three towns,” by investing in communities in their capacities to affect change,” according to Tri-County President and CEO Joseph DeSantis.

The organization plans to succeed “by honoring the expertise of those who live and work in these communities” and “challenging the system and structure (that) perpetuate health inequities.”

“The success of our HEZ comes from you, the organizations and the people who constitute this Collaborative, such as school departments, housing authorities, recreation departments, senior centers, municipalities, residents, and our own program staff, such as Head Start, WIC, Prevention, Health Center and others,” DeSantis said. “Make no mistake about it, this is one of the best grassroots, community organization efforts Tri-County has participated in since its inception, and it embodies what Community Action is all about.”

Johnston Mayor Joseph M. Polisena Jr. spoke to the crowd gathered to celebrate the center’s opening.

“I don’t know if you realize this, but we all have the same job,” Polisena said. “And I’m not talking about the jobs that we have from 9 to 5. I’m talking about the job that comes from our inherent human nature; our traits for compassion, kindness and empathy. And that job is to help those who need it; help those who are less fortunate. But we can’t do it alone. We need organizations like Tri-County to help us reach those people who need assistance.”

Polisena said he’s “very excited” about the Greenville Avenue community center, which aims to help provide heating and food assistance, as well as healthcare (both physical and mental).

“And I would really urge the residents of Johnston, North Providence and Smithfield to utilize this center,” Polisena said. “It’s here for the help. Please utilize it.”

Johnston and Tri-County have a long-forged relationship. The nonprofit community organization has a purchase agreement in place to take ownership of the vacated Calef School. Once the transfer of the old school property is complete, DeSantis said Tri-County may move a large portion of its administrative offices from its Hartford Avenue location to the Calef School, which is in dyer need of renovations.

“I know the town of Johnston will always stand by Tri-County,” Polisena said. “We have in the past. We will continue to do so in the future. And any help you need Joe, please, come right to the town.”

**ANY HELP YOU NEED:** Johnston Mayor Joseph Polisena Jr. pledged unflinching support from the town for Tri-County’s HEZ initiatives.



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**Johnston Sun Rise**

# Tropic of Cranston



**THE COURT:** The tropical-themed Semi-Formal court included, from left to right: Hailee Joyal Weiss, Loren Pastore, Juliana Ortiz, Bobbi'Sue Trahan, Katelyn Loffler, Lucas Anderson, Abraham Tillett, Dean Paris, Logan Martins, and Brandon Souza.

## JHS Sophomores hold tropical-themed semi-formal at the Cranston Country Club

By **LUCAS ANDERSON**  
Special to the Sun Rise

**O**n Thursday, April 6, the Johnston Senior High School Sophomore Class of 2025 held their tropical-themed Semi-Formal at the Cranston Country Club, which over 100 students from the class of 2025 attended.

Each guest was presented with a tropical lei upon arrival, where they could then cast their vote for semi-king and queen and take photos by Mare Studios.

After all 100 guests arrived, each was served dinner before being called out to the dance floor with music provided by DJ Maxx Major.

The semi-court consisted of queen nominees Katelyn Loffler, Bobbi'Sue Trahan, Hailee Joyal Weiss, Loren Pastore and Juliana Ortiz. The king nominees included Lucas Anderson, Abraham Tillett, Dean Paris, Logan Martins and Brandon Souza.

Following the gathering in front of the dance floor, Stephanie Galasso, the sophomore class advisor, announced that Lucas Anderson and Katelyn Loffler had won semi-king and queen, respectively.

This memorable night was wrapped up with more dancing on the dance floor and many pictures taken at the photo booth.

As the President of the Class of 2025, I would like to thank all the teachers, members of the decoration committee, class officers, and students for attending and helping make this dance what it turned out to be. This will forever be a night to remember as we continue to write our story as the Class of 2025.

**Editor's Note:** Lucas Anderson serves as Johnston High School Sophomore President. The Johnston Sun Rise regularly publishes stories submitted by the JHS Student Council.



**SEMI ROYALTY:** Above, Katelyn Loffler and Lucas Anderson were named queen and king of the dance. (Courtesy photos)



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# POLICE LOG

## FATAL CRASH

A Providence man died in a crash Sunday on Hartford Avenue in Johnston.

According to Johnston Police Chief Mark A. Vieira, the department responded to the fatal crash at 10:30 p.m. Sunday in the area of 2880 Hartford Ave.

The crash involved a tractor-trailer and a Toyota Corolla.

"A preliminary investigation determined the operator of the Corolla was entering Hartford Avenue from the Parking lot of the Sky View Motor Inn and struck the tractor-trailer which was traveling westbound on Hartford Avenue," Vieira said earlier this week. The driver of the Corolla, was identified as Tomas Osario-Gomez, 37, of Providence. Osario-Gomez was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

"The operator of the tractor-trailer and a passenger of the Corolla were both transported to Rhode Island Hospital for minor injuries," Vieira said. "Members of the department's Accident Reconstruction Unit also responded and the crash remains under investigation."

## CAR CHASE

Two East Providence men led police on a chase from Johnston into Providence on April 18.

Around 6 a.m., April 18, Johnston Police were dispatched to a store in town (the store's name was redacted from the publicly available police incident report) in reference a reported shoplifting.

As Johnston Police Patrolman Bryan Yepes approached the intersection of Hartford and Atwood avenues, dispatch informed incoming officers that the vehicle was fleeing the scene in a gold or tan SUV, traveling east on Hartford Avenue.

Police located the suspect and attempted to initiate a motor vehicle stop. "The operator refused to pull over and continued to travel eastbound on Hartford Avenue and continued ... traveling into ... Providence ensuing a pursuit," Yepes wrote in the arrest report.

Rhode Island State Police and Providence Police were notified to join the pursuit.

"The pursuit took place mostly in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Providence," Yepes wrote. "The pursuit ended on the dead end of Cleveland Street."

A passenger, later identified as Greg Anthony, of 38 West Drive, East Providence, attempted to flee the scene on foot, but was apprehended.

The driver, later identified as Michael Chrissos, of 159 Central Ave., Apt. 2, East Providence, also attempted to flee the scene. Police quickly took him into custody.

Both were handcuffed and transported to Johnston Police Headquarters where they were processed and photographed.

After background check, police discovered Chrissos had a suspended driver's license.

"It should be noted that both parties have multiple prior charges on their BCI," Yepes wrote.

Chrissos was charged with Conspiracy, Larceny Under \$1,500, Driving with a Suspended License and Eluding Police. Anthony was charged with Conspiracy, Felony Shoplifting and Habitual Offender.

## NO LICENSE

Around 9:40 a.m., March 4, Johnston Police Patrolman Nicholas A. Crowe was on a fixed post at 1064 Plainfield St. when he observed a white Toyota Camry pass his location traveling east with heavy window tint.

Crowe initiated a traffic stop. He identified the driver as Luis D. Francisco, of 25 Rockingham St., Providence. He told police he did not currently have a RI driver's license.

A check on Francisco revealed he had an inactive license but no active warrants. He was issued a summons for a misdemeanor charge of Driving Without a License (fourth or subsequent offense). A tow truck arrived on the scene to take custody of the vehicle. Francisco also received a citation for Violation of Inspection Laws.

## BENCH WARRANT

Around 10:15 p.m., March 8, Johnston Police investigated a "suspicious white Volkswagen Jetta" on Goldsmith Street at the dead end.

Police spoke to the vehicle occupants, and identified one of the passengers as Nasir I. Dupont, of 8 William Ellery Place, Providence.

Police determined the driver did not possess a drivers license, so a tow truck was called to the scene.

A background check determined Dupont had an active bench warrant out of Sixth District Court related to an original larceny charge filed by Woonsocket Police.

Dupont was taken into custody without incident. He was processed and later transported to the ACI Men's Intake Center. The driver, whose identification was redacted from the arrest report, also received a citation for Driving Without a License (first offense).

## LARCENY

Around 2:10 p.m., March 7, Johnston Police responded to a store in town to investigate a larceny that occurred on March 4.

Store employees received a notification advising them to be on the look out for two men entering stores and shoplifting large amounts of Prevagen. Employees then reviewed security camera footage and discovered the theft had oc-

curred around 7:31 p.m., March 4. Two white men can be seen entering the store on foot from the parking lot across the street.

According to its distributor's online description, "Prevagen is an over-the-counter supplement for healthy brain function and memory improvement."

One man was dressed in a grey sweatshirt, white pants, a black hat and a blue mask. Police said he appears to divert attention while lingering around the store while talking on a cell phone. The other man, dressed in a black jacket, black pants, black shoes and a red hat, enters the store behind the first man and then walks to Aisle 10, where the Prevagen was in stock.

The man removed a concealed black bag and loaded Prevagen from the shelf into the bag. The man then exits the store with the Prevagen, passing all points of purchase without paying.

According to police, the second man lingers for a short while longer and then made a small purchase and left the store. The men were then spotted running through the parking lot.

"The two males appear to be working in conjunction with one another, however, they do not appear to make contact during the incident," Johnston Police patrolman Matthew D. Murphy wrote in the incident report.

The value of the stolen merchandise

totaled \$618.39. Police said the suspects are also suspected of a similar theft from a store in Greenville. The case was forwarded to the Johnston Detectives Unit for further review.

Police eventually identified the suspects as Timothy E. Ring, of 157 Fairfield Ave., Woonsocket, and Kenneth Leblanc, of 190 Coe St., Woonsocket. Both men now face felony Shoplifting, Conspiracy and Habitual Offender charges.

Police say Leblanc had five previous convictions and is incarcerated at the ACI. Police say Ring had six previous convictions and is also incarcerated at the ACI.

## FELONY ASSAULT

At 11:21 a.m. April 19, Johnston Police were contacted by Providence Police about an active warrant for Eliseo J. Harris, of 27 Zanfagna St., Second Floor, Johnston for felony assault.

Three Johnston police officers visited the address in an attempt to locate Harris. Someone at that address said he was not at home, but agreed to contact Harris. Harris was reached by cell phone and he told police he would turn himself in at the Johnston Police Department.

Harris met officer back at police headquarters. He was taken into custody without incident, processed and turned over to Providence Police.

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## Watch Your MOUTH

by Rochelle Rhodes, D.M.D. and David McFarland, D.D.S.

### HOW TOOTH POLISHING WORKS

Teeth are almost always polished at the end of a dental cleaning, but have you ever wondered why it's done? Dental polishing includes several benefits such as removing plaque and stains, smoothing the surface of teeth, making teeth look shiny and clean, and preventing gum disease. During a dental cleaning, plaque is first removed through the scaling process. Any remaining plaque is removed during the polishing phase using a rubber cup and polishing paste or air polishing with water and baking soda. Polishing helps remove stains from substances like coffee, wine, and tobacco. For many people, polishing is mostly cosmetic, but it also reduces the level of bacteria in the mouth, helping to prevent cavities and gum disease.

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**FEELING GOOD:** Ni'cole Whalen of New England Massage & Healing Arts celebrated the official opening of her new studio in Johnston. Whalen, a licensed Massage Therapist, Certified Hypnotist and Reiki Practitioner, specializes in the relief of chronic pain, stress and burnout through mind-body therapies. Contact Whalen at the studio, 1665 Hartford Ave., Suite 4, by calling 401-642-9231.

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## Budget

(Continued from page 1)

"Why is Johnston one of the only communities, if not the only community, that waits until June and July to present and approve a Town budget?" Civetti asked. "I know several communities that

have already had several budget workshops and hearings to discuss the fiscal 2024 budget. In each of these communities the budgets will be approved well in advance of the commencement of the 2024 fiscal year."

Providence Mayor Brett Smiley presented his first city budget this week, seeking an increase in property taxes. The Warwick School Department planned to meet Wednesday night for a budget hearing. And Cranston Mayor Ken Hopkins revealed his proposed operating budget for 2024 at a special City Council meeting on Friday.

"Because they follow the Governor's proposed budget, which always gets changed by the General Assembly, then they have to amend their budget based on what the General Assembly does," Polisena Jr. replied. "We don't waste time and resources doing the budget process multiple times. Again, this is how the process has worked here in Johnston for decades."

### Historically Late

Johnston Town Council President Robert V. Russo urged patience in the budgeting process.

"The budget is being prepared by the administration as it is an ongoing process and it would be irresponsible in my opinion to release a budget document without having the school budget figures as well as state aid calculations in place," Russo argued. "In my 29 years on the council I can think of only a handful of times in the 90's that I received a budget on or about April 1 as Charter mentions. However, in my experience the budget is not accurate until the town

knows what the General Assembly is doing with state aid to education as well as any town aid through reimbursements."

Russo sees no problem with the town's budgeting cycle.

"The Town Council, including Councilman Civetti, have historically received the budget once the administration had a handle on state funding," Russo said Tuesday. "This is not new, and I was surprised when the issue was brought up (Monday) night as the issue has not been brought up for the past 20 years and this is the first time I can recall Councilman Civetti has brought up the issue during his tenure as a councilman."

Russo also argues that later budgeting has provided more reliable budgets.

"I can say one thing, when the budget was provided on April 1 the town ran multi-million-dollar deficits, but when more time and work was put into the budget and it was submitted later the town started running surpluses," Russo explained. "As to the Charter I believe the provision addressing the April 1 budget submittal is antiquated and in need of change."

Members of the Town Charter Review Commission will be selected soon, and Russo expects the April 1 deadline will likely change.

"The date should be some time in June when proper figures are available," Russo said.

### Transparency Request

Civetti has served on Town Council for the past six years. He said Russo is correct, that during Civetti's tenure on the council,

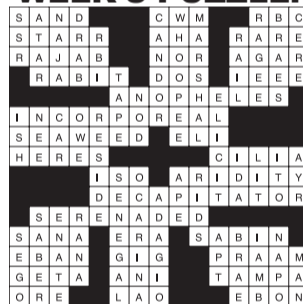
"the budget was never delivered by April 1 as required by the Town Charter."

"The former mayor had already been in office for, I believe, 10 years before I was elected on the Town Council," Civetti said. "(Former) Mayor Joseph Polisena was set in his ways and things were operating efficiently and effectively. The Town had made great progress and was in sound financial condition under Mayor Joseph Polisena. With the changing in the Mayor's office, I felt that we ought to start things off on the right foot and comply with the provisions of the Town Charter relating to budget presentation, and public workshops. No matter whom is in office, I believe that having budget workshops to fully review and dissect the budget and have public participation is truly the best practice for maintaining an open and transparent government."

Above all, Civetti, who represents Johnston's District 5, has called for transparency in the budgeting process.

"All I am asking of the mayor and his administration is to be transparent with the town's finances and afford the Town Council and the taxpayers with the ability to participate in budget workshops prior to adoption of the Town Budget," Civetti said. "The Town Council has recently authorized a Charter Review Commission. However, until that process is completed and the Charter is revised the Mayor and the Town should be in compliance with the provisions of the existing Town Charter no matter how old that Charter may be."

### ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:



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COPAYS AND DEDUCTIBLES MAY APPLY

# Opinion

EDITORIAL

## Defending legal notices in newspapers

An array of bills before the Rhode Island General Assembly would chip away at both newspapers and transparency in government. They seek to alter numerous state laws that require governments, both large and small, to publish notices of certain activities in printed newspapers.

The assault on legal notices is likely to become an annual occurrence at the Statehouse, as a few advocates have adopted the familiar refrain of: "Why pay for print, when you can post it free online?"

The newspaper industry is painfully familiar with this logic. It's been used repeatedly to hammer the business model and either diminish or shut down print publishers everywhere. Yet despite ugly perceptions, Rhode Island newspapers are alive and doing quite well. Collectively, they are mailed, dropped or brought home to

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

more than 260,000 households. Considering that each household averages more than one adult reader, that's exceptional reach in a state of a million people.

This legislation also dims the light on government and its activities. These legal notices run the gamut, bringing the public critical information about zoning board agendas, town budgets, changes to tax rates, bids for government projects, vacancies on powerful boards, sales of tax-delinquent properties, personnel property in self-storage facilities, public hearings, liquor license applications, zoning amendments and so much more.

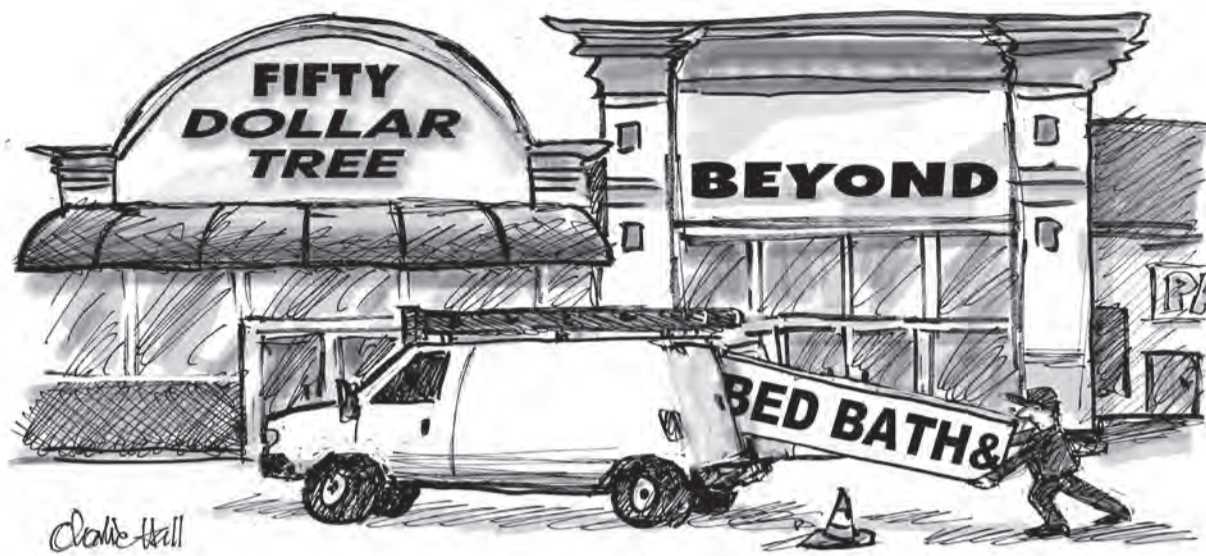
Despite the appeal of dumping all this information into online depositories, there is a world of difference between posting a notice where someone might find it, and actually delivering it to their home. That's what newspapers do. They take critical information about a community, and they bring it home to some of its most invested and engaged citizens.

Nearly every community in this state is still served by a "paper of record," which despite all the setbacks to the industry, remains a trusted source of unbiased coverage and insights. These papers are consistent, visible, reliable and recognized by readers as THE source for this vital information.

If legal notices migrate to the internet, they will move further away from those with unreliable internet connections or the elderly who aren't comfortable navigating it. This would also change the burden on governments forever. Instead of making an effort to actually deliver these notices to the public, governments would start filing them in a virtual cabinet, relying on citizens to come find them. Even if web-based legal notices are easy to find, they are less likely to be found by a digital public that is hyper-distracted by apps, social media and targeted ads.

Ink and paper have a permanence and utility that online databases never will. Making something "public" on the internet and seeing it published in print are not the same thing, and never will be.

CHANGES TO 2 POPULAR BUSINESSES AFTER ONE'S FINED AND ONE FOLDS.



LETTER

## Arming campus cops in RI a 'highly inflammatory, senselessly draconian knee-jerk legislative reaction'

An open letter to the House Judiciary Committee,

It is with respect and concern that I am compelled to write today in opposition to H 5299, proposing to arm campus security at our state colleges (CCRI RIC).

My comments will be confined to CCRI, since I have been a tenured professor there for 29 years.

The central issue in question would be why are legislators involved?

Why is this august body looking to undermine the college's autonomy?

Why are these sponsors of this highly divisive bill wanting to undermine the community unity at public institutions of higher learning here in our great state?

And why would legislators get into the business of mandating anything at the state colleges without speaking with experts in education, campus security, and mental health?

My ardent and unyielding opposition to this highly inflammatory, senselessly draconian knee-jerk legislative reaction stems from the glaringly lack of evidenced-based research regarding the efficacy of arming campus police. There must be careful deliberation and honest debate for this body to even consider undoing the college's ability to set its own policy.

I am sure most primary stakeholders at CCRI welcome rigorous debate about armed police, and dare I say, many of our campus police might not want that responsibility of carrying a firearm as well?

All I hear coming from specific state politicians is nothing more than moral certainty that supplying firearms will keep us safe and protected.

From whom? From what?

I recently heard a bill sponsor on talk radio say this issue isn't about politics but one of safety. Oddly, this state representative offered nothing to support his claim except red meat platitudes to NRA loving gun-toting listeners.

Has any sponsoring legislator conducted any form of due diligence by offering empirical data?

All that is offered and pointed to are the rare shootings at high schools and colleges as justification to provide weaponry to CCRI campus police. It is all speculative, "What if" doomsday scenarios. However, armed security will not stop any determined person from causing harm. So now the rationale shifts to lives could be saved if there are armed guards.

Really?

Since this legislation seeks to arm campus police, are legislators granting weapons of war to the guards as well? Setting aside the lightning strike-type events, what about the day-to-day interactions?

Several studies have shown faculty and students are opposed to seeing armed guards on campus because it has a distinct chill on free speech. Having armed police patrolling the hallways would dictate people to behave differently.

It is the people's college not some military installation.

Has any bill sponsor taken time to learn how this arming issue could do more harm than good?

Again, did anyone conduct any research at CCRI regarding how having armed security might create a less secure environment for students, especially minorities.

Did any legislator consult all college constituencies for their thoughts on how the college should be protected? I know of no such contact.

In fact, the only safety and security review I know about took place around 2011, when CCRI commissioned the Summit Report. I suggest the sponsors of H 5299 obtain a copy because no sentence in that report recommended active surveillance or firearms.

Across the nation, we are seeing a de-escalation of campus policing and yet here in Rhode Island we have some legislators looking for a problem in search of a potentially violent solution.

Did any legislator study CCRI's Clery Report? If anyone had, they might glean the lack of any crime on any campus to warrant armed guards.

As scripted, H 5299 "mandates" CCRI police carry a firearm and declares them law enforcement officers to provide liability protection under the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights. If I am correct, this bill seeks to create a newly minted CCRI police force while waiving liability!

So this police force gets full liability waiver and would not be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests, even though they would act as an agent of state government?

In my opinion, legislators are in the weakest position to assess and mandate anything at CCRI pertaining to health and safety needs.

What's next, mandating campus carry for students, staff, and faculty?

Speaking on behalf of Guns For Everybody, the loquacious Archie Bunker once said in relation to the rash of airline hijackings, "All you gotta do is arm all your passengers, and then your airlines, they wouldn't have to search the passengers on the ground no more, they just pass out the pistols at the beginning of the trip, and they pick 'em up again at the end. Case closed."

Sincerely,

Steven F. Forleo  
(A concerned professor at CCRI)



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# Grave Responsibilities



**VOLUNTEER TEAM-UP:**  
 The Johnston Historical Society sponsored a cemetery clean-up last weekend as part of the annual Statewide Historical Cemetery Awareness Event. The Society spruced up the Gov. Samuel Ward King Cemetery, JN21, at the corner of Hartford Avenue and Winfield Road.  
 For more information on the Johnston Historical Society, call them at 401-231-3380.  
 (Photos courtesy Christopher Martin)



## HISTORICAL GRANT:

Johnston State Rep. Deb Fellela helped secure a \$1,000 grant for the Johnston Historical Society. From left to right, accepting the grant: Anthony Ursillo, Trustee; Joe Jamroz, Secretary/Treasurer; Fellela and her grandson Elvis; Dan Brown, Trustee; and Steve Merolla, Vice President. The historical society told Fellela they plan to use for the grant to pay for a projection screen for use during historical presentations.  
 (Submitted photo)



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# Dillon

(Continued from page 1)

"The juvenile was arraigned at Family Court (Thursday) and was charged with Manslaughter, Using a Firearm while Committing a Crime of Violence, two counts of Possession of a Firearm by a Minor, and Possession of Ammunition by a Minor," according to a press release from Johnston Police.

"This is no longer an accident," said the victim's mother, Rhonda Brewster. "This is a homicide."

The boy facing manslaughter charges visited a car show in Providence with David and Dillon Viens the weekend before the shooting.

David Viens took photographs.

"I hate to even think of it," he said. "He's in some of my last pics of Dillon ... the same kid that killed Dillon."

## The Charges

Dillon Viens died on Feb. 12, 2022, following the discharge of a firearm at a Cedar Street home in Johnston.

The incident resulted in immediate charges against the adult gun and homeowner Marios Kirios, who police said was not at home at the time of the shooting.

Viens' parents have been forced to deal with the dual grief of losing a child and struggling to understand the mysterious circumstances in which he died.

"It's just the beginning," said the victim's father.

David Viens said he wanted to see "higher charges" filed, but he and Dillon's mother "understand and are grateful that we will find out, hopefully, what really happened."

On Friday, Kirios, 30, who now resides on Central Avenue, Johnston, was arrested on a new charge.

"He was charged with Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor as a result of his unsecured firearm being used in this shooting death," according to Johnston Police. "Kirios will be arraigned at the Kent County Court House on April 28 ... On Feb. 16, 2022, also in connection to this case, the Johnston Police Department charged Kirios with 5 misdemeanor counts of unsafe storage of a firearm."

Immediately after Dillon Viens' death, Johnston Police released a press release calling the shooting "accidental," but insisting the investigation was ongoing.

"This incident was ruled a homicide based on the State Medical Examiner's report corroborated by interviews conducted by Johnston Police Detectives and physical evidence recovered at the scene," according to Johnston Police, who thanked the Attorney General and State's Medical Examiner's offices for their assistance in the "lengthy investigation."

## Last Snapshots

"I really don't have much comfort because my son's not here," Brewster said Wednesday morning. "Nothing in this world can bring my son back. And I really, at this point, don't think that anything would comfort me as a mom considering the circumstances."

The past year has been hard on Dillon Viens' family. His parents still have "so many" unanswered questions.

Representatives from the Attorney General's office met with David Viens and Rhonda Brewster before Johnston Police made the arrests. The new charges were revealed and explained.

"Because we are the parents, we had a right to have a discussion on what the charges would be," Brewster said. "We heard them before they were put out in the public forum, so we weren't caught off guard ... There potentially could be more charges as more information comes to light."

Contacted the day of the manslaughter arrest, Brian Hodge, a spokesman for Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Neronha, declined comment on the case.

"We cannot comment on juvenile matters," Hodge said via email.

"I'm hoping that some of my questions are answered," Brewster said. "I have so many. And from what I've gathered, and some of my experience working with juveniles, they still have a great level of protection despite the fact they may have committed crimes. Sometimes, and even now in Dillon's case, a lot of the decisions on how private it actually is, don't make sense to me."

Some details of this case may never be released to the public.

Johnston Police refused a public records request for the original incident report and subsequent investigation narratives.

"Per RI General Laws, the reports you are requesting relating to the arrest of a juvenile are not available for public release," Vieira wrote in response to the request. "This is an open case now pending adjudication in the courts. No additional information is available at this time other than the attached press release disseminated on (April 21)."

## Dillon's Law

Just last week, Dillon Viens' friends and family visited the Rhode Island State House to deliver testimony on legislation, sponsored by Johnston State Rep. Deb Fellela, which would stiffen penalties for gun owners who did not properly store their weapons.

"Currently the safe storage act, if not complied with, is a misdemeanor," Fellela said last week. "The legislation I sponsored makes it a felony where unsafe storage leads to access of the firearm by a child or adult and causes death or serious physical injury. Especially in this situation where someone wasn't even at home, and he left his weapons out. There were a number of these bills introduced last (week); this one is the only one having it become a felony. As in my research, there are other states that have this as a felony."

Fellela referenced laws in California, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Second Amendment Rights proponents testified against the legislation, arguing that guns should be within easy reach and unimpeded access, should they be needed for self-defense.

Fellela said the proposed legislation — named "Dillon's Law" — was directly inspired by Dillon Viens' death.

"I do remember when that terrible tragedy occurred, I had gone to the service and spoke to the dad, David Viens, who has advocated for his son during this past year," Fellela recalled. "Such a young life taken, and it always hits home when you see that especially someone from your town. David wanted to make it a felony, so I introduced the legislation. I did explain to the parents how sometimes it doesn't pass in the first year of putting the bill forward and some compromises might need to be made."

Even if the law evolves prior to passage, Fellela has pledged her support.

"I plan to keep advocating for the bill, and we'll see what happens," she said.

State Rep. Justine A. Caldwell and State Sen. Pamela J. Lauria have also sponsored legislation requiring safe storage of all firearms in Rhode Island.

"It is not asking too much to expect those who own lethal weapons to secure them to prevent them from falling into the wrong hands," Caldwell said in February. "Just as our state requires drivers to have insurance because we recognize the potential that vehicles have to inflict harm on others, in the interest of public safety, we should require that gun owners take responsibility for securing their weapons."

That legislation (2022-H 5434, 2023-S 0321) would require "all firearms, when not in use by the owner or another authorized user, be stored in a locked container or equipped with a tamper-resistant mechanical lock or other safety device properly engaged in order to render

the firearm inoperable."

"I would support Representative Caldwell's bill (H5434) also for safe storage, which gives more ... civil penalties ... even though it's not named after Dillon," Fellela said. "That's what the parents really wanted."

## From Grief

Via press release, the Johnston Police Department offered its "deepest condolences to Dillon's family and friends."

"The death of a child is a parent's ultimate tragedy," police wrote. "Although the filing of these criminal charges won't bring Dillon back, hopefully it brings a sense of justice to the family. This tragedy underscores the importance for owners of firearms to properly secure them to prevent shooting deaths such as these involving juveniles."

Dillon Viens' parents have pledged to advocate for all the pending legislation.

"In regards to the bill, the seriousness of stricter gun control and safety when it pertains to adolescents having access, adults need to be held accountable due to their poor judgement," Brewster said. "As I continue to gain some strength day-in and day-out, I plan to be active in seeking justice."

In the case of her Dillon Viens' shooting, "guns weren't locked up, and something did happen, and my son lost his life."

She replied to the argument against stricter gun storage laws.

"I get it," Brewster said. "Everybody wants to protect themselves, but they don't think of the other side of it ... the children who may know where these guns are hidden. That's just ignorance to how severe a situation can become. In Dillon's case, the guns were readily accessible to the child and there was extreme negligence."

Brewster hopes that stricter penalties will convince gun owners to protect their firearms from minors.

"It's a constant struggle for my family to find peace," Brewster said. "Unless you're standing in my shoes; unless you're standing in my ex-husband's shoes; you have no right ... This world lacks compassion and empathy for people who have lost children. How many more of our children need to die before there's stricter gun control?"

Brewster said she's been patient, but the process has been painful.

"It's disheartening that it took a little over a year, but I'm glad we didn't have to wait longer than that," she said. "As a mother, having my son's room bare, I go in there from time to time to just feel his presence. It's hurtful ... It will always be hurtful. Not hearing that bedroom door open up. Not hearing him call me from his room. It will forever remain hurtful."



## Obituaries

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

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

- Thank you

## SPIRIT OF HOPE NEWS, JOHNSTON, RI

WWW.SPIRITOFHOPRI.ORG	WE ARE A RELIGIOUS BASED 501C3	ISSUE-4-APRIL-23
<b>MONTHLY LOCAL NEWS REGARDING THE HOMELESS, HUNGRY AND THOSE IN NEED.</b>		
<p>Did you know that after a long winter season of being limited to outside physical activity the body needs to re-boot itself for the rigors of summer pleasures outdoors ? Doctors' visits become important to assure us that our physical and mental health is on par to enjoy the warmer summer months with fellow gardeners or walkers or beach strollers or best of all, busy vacation itineraries.</p> <p>Coincidentally yet sadly, many poorer military veterans in their later years however, have found out how important it is to get regular physical exams and sound counseling services by such providers as the VA Medical Center and its city wide support network of ancillary services such as food pantry vendors, meal sites, housing, transportation and even social gatherings to reunite with fellow veterans - many of whom are really down on their luck both physically, financially and emotionally. ... So here is where a notable veterans' group has again come to the rescue. <b>OPERATION STAND DOWN-RI</b> recently held a health fair and luncheon for their fellow constituents on the campus of the VA Medical Center on Chalkstone Av. in Providence. The very successful event on April 21st was attended by many support groups as well, including VA medical personnel AND ex-army volunteers from the <b>SPIRIT OF HOPE</b> charitable foundation. Thanks to your donations the Johnston based "<b>Spirit of Hope</b>" organization distributed over five hundred dollars in Market Basket and Walmart gift vouchers to close to seventy low income, disabled and even some homeless veterans-both men and women- who attended the event. Other items such as reading books and Dunkin gift cards from both us and the Warwick Elks chapter were greatly appreciated by the proud veterans and by the OSD organizers. Another such event that Spirit of Hope has been invited to participate in will take place in September on a date and location to be announced in late summer. Speaking of which the Board of Directors of Spirit of Hope wish you an enjoyable summer and please keep us in mind with any donations that can now be made online at <a href="http://www.spiritofhoperi.org">www.spiritofhoperi.org</a></p> <p><b>Spirit of Hope</b> is working closely in Johnston with two Parishes to support Johnston residents regarding food for the needy. We also have been suppling rescue kits to the Pawtucket and Providence areas.</p>		
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- Dave's Marketplace
- Coventry Public Library

**Johnston**

- Market Basket
- Marian J. Mohr Library
- Seasons Corner Market - Hartford Ave. & Killingly St.

**Warwick**

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- Warwick Mall - Customer Service Desk
- Seasons Corner Market - Post Road & Warwick Ave.
- Dave's Marketplace - Hoxsie
- Tumbletown Laundromat
- Warwick Public Library
- Greenwood Credit Union

**West Warwick**

- Tumbletown 2 Laundromat

# Angela McCord celebrates 105th birthday



**MIGHTY MOM:** Angela McCord holds the balloon bouquet she received from her daughter Ginny Squizzero during last week's 105th birthday party at The Bridge at Cherry Hill in Johnston. (Sun Rise photo by Pete Fontaine)

By PETE FONTAINE

They honored longevity in a big, big way last week inside The Bridge at Cherry Hill.

Angela McCord, who moved into the assisted living/nursing facility back in 2017, was given a birthday bash unlike any other.

After all, at 105, McCord is now the oldest resident at The Bridge.

McCord comes from a big family of 10 siblings — two of whom also reached the magical centenarian mark. Her sister Emma Pezza lived to be 110 and her brother Julio Rotondo reached the 100-year milestone.

With the help of the staff, headed by Amy Bayton and McCord's daughter Ginny Squizzero, Angela was the guest of honor at a cocktail party in the private dining room. The celebration was highlighted by good food and strawberry shortcake.

"My mother was a soft-spoken, complacent and easy going lady," Squizzero said. "She lived a great life."

Angela was married to Ralph McCord for 40 years. The couple did not have any children. Angela worked for C. Pezza Construction before she retired.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER

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**CLUES ACROSS**

1. It's all over the beach
5. A cirque
8. Corpuscle count (abbr.)
11. Influential report author
13. Satisfaction
14. Recurring only at long intervals
15. Islamic calendar month
16. Neither
17. Gelatinous substance
18. American electronic music producer
20. Old computer system
21. Professional organization
22. Malaria mosquitoes
25. Not composed of matter
30. It's in the ocean
31. Peyton's little brother
32. French commune
33. Eyelashes
38. Equal (prefix)
41. Quality of little or no rain
43. One who beheads
45. Sung to
48. Influential punk artist
49. Amount of time

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Soviet Socialist Republic
2. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
3. Venomous snake genus
4. Uninteresting
5. Straightforwardness
6. Expression of wild excitement
7. Arrange in order
8. East Indian cereal grass
9. Hillsides
10. Bird beak covering
12. Baseball stat
14. Edge of a surfboard
19. Wrapping accessory

**CLUES ACROSS**

23. Express approval
24. Deduce
25. Similar
26. Born of
27. Automobile
28. Obligated to repay
29. Live in
34. Influential journalist Tarbell
35. Set aflame
36. OJ trial judge
37. Scottish town
39. African nation
40. Egg-shaped wind instrument
41. Mimic
42. Frees
44. In slow tempo
45. Sword
46. Related on the mother's side
47. Mars crater
48. Plant of the lily family
51. Suitable in the circumstances
52. Hillside
53. Metrical foot
54. Amazon river tributary
58. Adult male human

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# SUN RISE SCOOPS

## Sun Rise Staff Reports

### Ocean State Orchid Society

The Ocean State Orchid Society will hold its Annual Ocean State Orchid Society Auction on Saturday, April 29, 11 a.m. (Preview at 10:30 a.m.), Rocky Hill Grange, 1340 South County Trail, East Greenwich, RI, 02818. Entrance in rear of building.

Come to the auction for the chance to purchase orchids not commonly available at big box stores and house plant nurseries! The Ocean State Orchid Society will have orchids imported from Hawaii for sale. The will have a variety of orchid genera available for auction, including Phalaenopsis, Oncidium, Cattleya and many others. The starting bid for all orchids will be \$15.00. In addition to having a unique opportunity to purchase rare orchids, come speak to an OSOS member to get care instructions to help ensure your growing success! OSOS will have an Orchid 101 meeting in May to assist in the culture of your newly purchased plants. Complimentary refreshments available. Public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

### JHS Art Show

Since the arrival of Covid 19, the Johnston High School Art Department has put together their annual art shows in digital form. However, this year, on Wednesday, May 3, from 6-7:30 p.m. in the Johnston High School library, the school's artists will present their works in-person.

"Exhibition is an important part of being an artist. It gives us an opportunity to interact with viewers who bring their own unique perspectives, based on their individual life experiences," said Kerry L. Murphy, Johnston Senior

High School Art Teacher and Fine Arts Co-Chair. "That communion between artist and viewer can bring new ideas to the work and lends itself to opening up meaningful conversations."

### Coed Middle School Volleyball

Johnston students currently in sixth, seventh and eighth grade are eligible to play Coed Middle School Volleyball in this year's spring season. Students can register now. Space is limited. The fee is \$70 per individual (\$35 for each additional sibling). Checks and money orders should be made payable to JYSA. (Refunds will not be issued without a doctor's note and are subject to a partial refund.)

The dates for 5 more sessions of volleyball: May 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 (from 2:15-3:45 p.m. at the Johnston Indoor Recreation Center).

Students can register at the Johnston Recreation Office, 1583 Hartford Ave., Johnston, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. For more information call 401-272-3460 or email johnstonrec.com

### AARP Day Trips

Bronx Zoo Trip, Tuesday, May 16. Bus pickup from the Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 7 a.m., return time is approximately 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$114/person. For more information and final payment, call Maureen at 401-828-5188.

Essex Steam Train & Riverboat Trip for Thursday, June 22. Bus pickup from Exit 19 Park & Ride on Hopkins Hill Road at 9 a.m., return time is approximately 5 p.m. Cost is \$119/person. For more information call Maureen at 828-5188. Final payment is due by Thursday, May 25.



■ SCOOPS - PAGE 12

## SCOOP OF THE WEEK

# JOHNSTON 1ST ANNUAL

## GUNS VS HOSES

### Charity Basketball Game

Local 307 @ Local 1950

**May 19th @ 6 pm Tip-off**


**Johnston Senior High School Gymnasium**

All proceeds to Local 1950 and Local 307 Charitable Funds  
Previous Donations include but not limited to Local Charities and Youth Sports

Halftime Game: JPD and JFD  
JHS Teacher vs JHS Student

\$5 Entry Donation

Touch a Truck Event @ 5pm



## Johnston Guns vs. Hoses Charity Basketball Game

Local 307 Johnston Police Department and Local 1950 Johnston Fire Department will hold its first annual Guns vs. Hoses charity basketball game on May 19, 6 p.m. tip-off at the Johnston Senior High School Gymnasium, 345 Cherry Hill Rd, Johnston. Half time game: Johnston High School Teachers vs. Johnston High School Students. JPD and JFD Touch-a-Truck Event at 5 p.m. Entry donation: \$5.00. All proceeds to Local 307 and Local 1950 Charitable Funds, previous donations include, but not limited to, local charities and youth sports.

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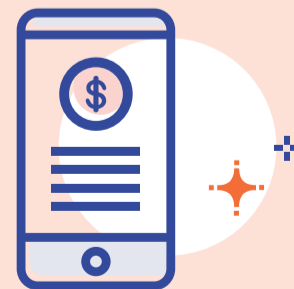
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## ■ Scoops

(Continued from page 11)

### Youth Track & Field

It's time to register for Johnston Youth Track & Field.

The Johnston Recreation Department is also looking for volunteer coaches and sponsors. Register your child and get involved in the community.

Anyone interested in signing up can stop by the Johnston Recreation Office from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The program costs \$65 per individual, and \$40 for each additional sibling. Checks and money orders are accepted (checks should be made payable to JYSA). The program is available to boys and girls currently in grades 1-8. For more information (including schedules, registration forms, and more) go to [johnstonrec.com](http://johnstonrec.com).

The season will run from Thursday, April 27 through Thursday, June 15.

### Go Hog Wild for FARA

At noon on May 6, at the Portuguese American Social Club, 32 Fenwood Ave., Smithfield, . Includes full meal with pig and sides, hamburgers and hotdogs. Tickets: \$40 per person. Free for children 12 years and under. Purchase tickets in advance or donate: [curefa.org/pigroast](http://curefa.org/pigroast).

The event will benefit the Friedrich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA) and has been organized by the family and friends of Johnston native Matthew DiIorio. The team has raised more than \$1 million to help find a cure for Friedrich's Ataxia, the illness that claimed Matthew's life.

More information on FARA can be found at [www.curefa.org/rfmng](http://www.curefa.org/rfmng) (checks to FARA can be mailed to 533 W. Uwchlan Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335; reference RFMG).

Watch for announcements of upcoming events connected to the Race for Matt & Grace fundraising effort.

### JRTC Fundraiser

The Johnston Republican Town Committee (JRTC) will hold a fundraiser at 6 p.m. on Sunday, May 7, at the Kelley Gazzoer VFW Post 2812, 1418 Plainfield Pike, Cranston.

"Join us for laughs, silent auction, cash bar and a good time," according to the JRTC. "Please bring your own food/snacks."

Tickets must be purchased online in advance (\$35 each). Silent auction winners must pay with a credit card. Tickets are non-refundable. The show is for adults 18 and over. For more information email [info@johnstonri.gop](mailto:info@johnstonri.gop).

### OSDRI Boots on the Ground

Operation Stand Down Rhode Island (OSDRI) is requesting volunteers to help for the 2023 Boots on the Ground for Heroes Memorial. Volunteers are needed for set up, weekend-of help, and breakdown. Set up days are as follows: Tuesday, May 23, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Wednesday, May 24, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Thursday, May 25, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Friday, May 26, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Their number one priority is to get the memorial up with success and in the safest and most efficient way. Please be advised that the need for volunteers and volunteering duties may be subject to change at any given moment. OSDRI will be sending any updates about the volunteering needs to the email that was registered with the volunteer online registration.

If you are a corporate office or company who is interested in volunteering- EACH person volunteering needs to sign up through the OSDRI online registration. If your company

sends out an internal volunteering portal, you will still need to sign up with OSDRI at our online portal as well. This helps us correctly account for how many people are attending to help.

Set up will be at Fort Adams in Newport. Set up duties consist of setting the boots out, cleaning up / shining boots, lacing boots, lining up boots on a pre-designed grid, attaching name placards, stuffing boots, and placing out American flags. Volunteers should be physically able to bend down/walk.

We will also need volunteers for the actual event itself. Volunteers to assist with band setup/breakdown, parking in the main lot, assisting at both the entrance and at the exit of the fort, and other miscellaneous duties. We are looking for 2-4 people to fill each volunteer shift.

The following shifts are available: Saturday, May 27, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday, May 28, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Monday, May 29, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Break down will be at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, May 30. Break down duties consist of picking up boots, storing boots, picking up tags, picking up American Flags, and other miscellaneous duties. This is also a labor-intensive activity which needs volunteer assistance.

If anyone is interested in volunteering, they must sign up through the link: [osdri.charityproud.org/VolunteerRegistration/Index/4506](http://osdri.charityproud.org/VolunteerRegistration/Index/4506). Please move the calendar to May (if it is a different month) and click on the shift desired to sign up.

Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Amanda Dean at [adean@osdri.org](mailto:adean@osdri.org) or 401-383-4730

### Johnston Historical Society Event

On Wednesday, May 31, the Johnston Historical Society will host an event exploring the Johnston connection to the "Band of Brothers," a group of World War II veterans who fought their way across Europe and were immortalized in a book by Stephen Ambrose and an HBO series.

George Luz Jr., was blessed by an early introduction to the men of Company E, 506th PIR, 101st Airborne Division, in 1965 at the 101st Airborne Reunion. Luz was nine years old at the time, and that started a journey that his father, George Luz, began in August 1942 at Toccoa, Georgia.

Although George Sr. was killed in a tragic accident in 1998, George Jr. made a promise to his father's memory that he would move forward and do everything as if he had survived. He reconnected with all his father's buddies and in true Easy Company form, they embraced him with the same esprit de corps that had brought these men together so many years ago.

George took a trip to Hershey, Pennsylvania, to visit with Maj. Richard D. Winters, the mainstay of the HBO series "Band of Brothers." Listening to Winters (as well as Wild Bill Guarnere, Babe Heffron, Don Malarkey, Frank Perconte, Shifty Powers, Earl McClung, Johnny Martin, Buck Compton and others) and the other men of Easy Company seeing the closeness they had was comforting.

Luz Jr. flew to the HBO set of "Band of Brothers" in Hatfield England; met Rick Gomez who played his dad; attended the World Premiere on Utah Beach on June 6, 2001; and went to the 54th Annual Emmys Awards in Los Angeles, when the show won for "Outstanding Miniseries" in 2002.

George Luz Sr. would have been so proud and happy about his son's tribute to his memory especially spending the time with the men that he so dearly loved.

George Luz Jr. will be delivering a presentation on his father on May 31.

The event will begin at 7 p.m. at

■ Scoops  
(Continued from page 12)

the Johnston Historical Society Museum at 101 Putnam Pike in Johnston. Call the museum at 401-231-3380, and read future editions of the Johnston Sun Rise, for more details.

**JHS 50th Year Reunion**

The Inspiration of '73 will celebrate its 50th year reunion on June 23. It will be held at the Valley Country Club in Warwick. If you are in contact with any classmates, spread the word. For more information, check out the JHS Class of 1973 Facebook page or call Donna at 401-497-9292.

**Amenity Aid Volunteers Needed**

We are looking for volunteers that would like to help us plan and staff community events, organize hygiene product collection drives and raise funds for Amenity Aid. If you are interested in doing any of the above or would like to be a member of our Community Outreach Committee, please contact Stacey Silva, Community Outreach Chair at Stacey@AmenityAid.org.

Amenity Aid's mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable populations by creating access to essential hygiene products. Serving all of Rhode Island, we distribute toiletry necessities to those most vulnerable through our network of direct service agencies.

**More at Mohr Library**

The library is located at 1 Memorial Ave. in Johnston. Call 401-231-4980, email info@mohrlibrary.org, or visit their website at mohrlibrary.org. Regular hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday. We offer free Notary service weeknights and Saturday mornings. Copy, print and fax services, computer help, reference and reading recommendations

Sign language classes cancelled April 19, but continuing each 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Wednesday at 1 pm, brought to us by Westbay.

Art-Smart classes starting in May, for ages 5 to 8, Saturdays at 2 p.m. and for ages 8 to 12, Wednesdays at 4 p.m. Sign up on our website or call.

Regular storytime for preschoolers will be offered Wednesdays at 10:30, now extended through May 24th.

"Read Across Rhode Island" programming to read and discuss True Biz, a bestselling book which the publisher calls "an unforgettable journey into the deaf community and a universal celebration of human connection." June 20 at 6:30 p.m. Register by calling Meg at 231-4980, and press 6 for the reference desk.

Yoga is now open to all ages. Call the library to register. Sponsored by Tri-County HEZ, this class is taught by a certified professional and is free. Mondays at 2 p.m.

Beginner's How to Draw, for Adults, Thursdays at 3 p.m.

Crocheting for Adults continues to meet on Friday at 10 a.m.

After School Activities offered nearly every day, including varied programs for middle and high-school age kids and crafts for younger kids.

Book discussion of Prince Harry's memoir, "Spare," has been rescheduled. We will poll participants for a new date. Please register.

**St. Francis Xavier Academy Scholarship Applications**

The St. Francis Xavier Academy Alumnae Association is accepting scholarship applications from Jan. 1, until July 31. Forms are available on their two Facebook pages, by mail at SXA. P.O. Box 20452, Cranston, 02920, or contact a board member.

**Johnston Senior Center Highlights**

The Johnston Senior Center is better than ever. Offering more exercise programs and trips every

week; Hi Lo Jack, Monday & Wednesday and Poker on Wednesday. Arts & Crafts, on Monday, Mar Jong on Thursday & Quilting on Wednesday, Tia Chi on Tuesday. The Senior Center also has a book Club the last Tuesday once a month. There is no charge for Senior Center activities. They offer Bingo on Thursday and Friday. Lunch is served daily at 12 p.m. (with a suggested donation of \$3).

A reminder, on May 23, the Johnston Senior Center is having a Wellness & Resource Fair Free to all. There will be Raffles, Giveaways and a Free Screening.

A Social worker/Medicare Counselor is also provided 5 days a week. Contact Madeline Ravenelle at 944-3343. Feel free to come in for a tour of the facility at 1291 Hartford Ave.

**Upcoming Senior Center trips:**

- Monday, May 8: Free Trip to Wrights Farm & Bakery. Bakery items for purchase
- Monday, May 15: Free Trip to the Christmas Tree Shop.
- Monday, May 22: Free Trip to Iggy's Choder House. Food available for purchase
- Wednesday, May 24: Lighthouse Cruise, in Newport \$40 pp
- Wednesday, May 31: Mystery lunch \$10 pp
- Wednesday, May 31: Paint & Wine 6:00pm \$20 pp
- Thursday, June 15: The Memories of Patsy, Whites of Westport Dinner & Show \$79 pp
- Tuesday, June 20: Newport Playhouse, (Spreading it around) Lobster Fest Dinner show, \$95 pp
- Wednesday, June 28: Mystery lunch \$10.00pp

**Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund**

The Johnston High School Class of 1971 is raising donations for The Soul of '71 Scholarship Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation. A generous donor has offered a \$4,000 challenge! The donor will match all gifts to the Fund up to a total of \$4,000. The Class of 1971 initiated the fund on the occasion of its 50th reunion in 2021. Each year a scholarship will be awarded to a Johnston High School Senior planning to attend a college, university, trade or technical school. Donations are tax according to your filing status. To donate, go to the following website: www.rifoundation.org/funds/soul-of-1971-scholarship-fund.

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance**

More than 1 in 4 US households struggle with their home energy bills. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help keep the heat on. The Tri-County LIHEAP Program helps to cover the cost of home heating bills for those that qualify.

Visit www.tricountyri.com for more information about the LIHEAP program, and other weatherization programs that can help to reduce your home energy bills. To submit an application for LIHEAP, or to see if you qualify, contact them at 401-519-1913. The Tri-County LIHEAP program has locations in North Providence and North Kingstown.

**Neighborhood Watch**

The 2022 season of Johnston's Neighborhood Watch has officially kicked off. This Neighborhood Watch brings together residents who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together with members of the police department. The program pairs residents with Johnston Police officers in an effort to open up communication, meet other neighbors and create partnerships that help build community resiliency.

**Editor's Note:** Send submissions to Sun Rise Editor Rory Schuler at rorys@rhodybeat.com or Front Desk Coordinator Ida Zecco at idaz@rhodybeat.com. Photos in jpg format are accepted and news can include community events, promotions, academic news and nonprofit events. Email today and see your news in our column in the Johnston Sun Rise. Please include a daytime telephone number in case we require any further information.

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By JENNIFER COATES



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Broadway Tire & Auto Service is a longstanding tire and service station which first opened its doors nearly eight decades ago. The Hallenbeck family purchased this landmark business in 2014, retaining its brand name and pouring all the time, expertise, experience, and energy they had into it to make it the well-established business it remains to this day. At that time, Broadway Tire existed only at its 588 Broadway location in Pawtucket. Some years later, the second repair shop was opened on Warwick Avenue in Warwick, and recently, the Hallenbecks have expanded yet again, right here in Johnston.

The reputation of Broadway Tire & Auto Service has grown over time largely because of this promise: "Our goal is to become the premier tire and auto repair facility in the state with state-of-the-art facilities. We are dedicated to giving you the very best auto repair and tire service, with a focus on upfront and honest quotes, timely responses to issues, and quality parts and products." Their mantra is "Done Once, Done Right." These guiding principles are what have kept this business growing and prospering.

The success of all three Broadway Tires begins with their technicians, all of whom were hand-selected for their skill, their talent, their commitment to their work and their trustworthiness. To keep up with the ever-growing advances

in the industry, these technicians are regularly trained and taught, and then implement this knowledge using the shop's sophisticated equipment. The Hallenbecks spared no expense when they invested in top-of-the-line computer diagnostic systems.

Today, Broadway Tire & Auto Service is a one-stop destination for all your auto repair work, from tire rotations and installations to oil changes, brake repairs, wheel alignments, batteries, heating and A/C, belts & hoses, air filters ~ the list goes on and on. If you need a basic tune-up or to purchase new tires, you are all set! Need your vehicle inspection? You

are in! (Vehicles of every make and model are serviced here).

Broadway Tire & Auto Service is the former home of Midas Brakes on 1307 Hartford Avenue. To learn more, to get a quote, to check out their inventory of tires, to get helpful car care tips, and to schedule an appointment, visit them at their informative website [www.broadwaytireri.com](http://www.broadwaytireri.com). Call them at 401-450-0122. Hours are 7:30am ~ 5:00pm, Monday - Friday; 7:30am ~ 1:00pm on Saturdays.

If you live in Pawtucket, you can find them at 588 Broadway (401-725-3535) or if you live in Warwick, visit them at 1184 Warwick Avenue (401-884-2211).

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# Escaping Anxiety

## Young yogi hosts 10-week course

By RORY SCHULER

When Jenna Asselin gets nervous, she goes silent. Like many modern day students, the Johnston High School senior struggles with anxiety. It can creep into daily interactions. It can stop her mid-sentence. Few methods have worked to keep the stresses subdued. One route — the path to enlightenment via yoga — has been a game-changer.

And now Asselin's sharing her experiences, through her senior class project, organizing, planning and helping to lead a 10-week yoga course at the Marian J. Mohr Memorial Library.

"Do you know that it is a scientific fact that yoga is good for mental and physical health?" asks the young yogi. "I became interested in yoga because I have anxiety and have experienced depression. I found doing yoga helped me deal with both."

Asselin's anxiety can be crushing and frustrating.

Her aunt, Pauline Genest, a certified yoga instructor, has helped mentor Asselin in her quest for calm.

"Jenna's project was developed last fall when she had the idea," Genest said earlier this week. "She has been a truly flexible yogi — changing the classes each week to expand the scope from high school seniors to anyone who wants to try yoga."

Asselin's classes have hosted diverse audiences, partially due to a now-comical vague statement on the course's original flyer, which encouraged both juniors and seniors were welcome to join the class.

■ YOGA - PAGE 21



*Yoga is perfect to help with movement and feeling better in your body.*

— Jenna Asselin

**TRAINED INSTRUCTOR:** Asselin's aunt, Pauline Genest, a certified yoga instructor, has helped to mentor the JHS senior in her quest for calm.

**YOUNG YOGI:** Johnston High School senior Jenna Asselin designed a 10-week yoga course as part of her senior project. She hopes to share the calming habits of yoga with her fellow students, who seem to be suffering from anxiety more than ever. (Beacon Communications photos by Rory Schuler)

# Sports



**MOVIE PREMIERE:** Hundreds of locals gathered last Saturday at the Johnston Rec Center to attend the premiere of "Coach", a documentary on the life of the late Dan Mazzulla, which was created by his former player and current URI student Cam Iasimone. Pictured above are: Roger Marandola, Chelsea Marandola, Cam Iasimone, Justin Mazzulla, Kristen Mazzulla, Lois Marandola, Ana Ramirez and David Mazzulla. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)

## Iasimone's 'Coach' an instant hit

By PETE FONTAINE

Five stars plus!  
That's the rating people who review films would have given Cameron Iasimone's documentary entitled "Coach Dan - the Legacy of Daniel E. Mazzulla Jr." - that made its premiere showing Saturday afternoon in Johnston.

In fact, upwards of 300 people and perhaps more viewed the extraordinary film and had nothing less than rave reviews about the film that took Iasimone seven months to produce after he made short trips to various locations and personally interviewed 38 people.

What made the super showing special is two-fold: it came on the exact day that the late Daniel E. Mazzulla Jr. passed away after losing a battle with brain cancer back on April 22, 2022 and that the premiere was held inside the building that is now named in his honor and that he helped build.

The live speaking program was brief and included Iasimone, who issued a warm welcome to the Daniel E. Maz-



**FAMILY EVENT:** Cam Iasimone is joined by his parents, Ray and Michele, as well as his sister Ariana.

COACH - PAGE 17

## Iasimone honors a great, inspires community

This past weekend, former Johnston basketball player and current URI student Cam Iasimone premiered his self-made documentary called, "Coach" in honor of the late Dan Mazzulla, who passed away in 2020 after a battle with brain cancer.

Mazzulla is a legend in the Rhode Island basketball community, enjoying hall of fame careers for both the Panthers and Bryant as a player and became arguably the best coach in Johnston High School history.

The documentary covered his early playing days all the way until the years just before his passing. The project received rave reviews from those in attendance and I think

### My pitch



by ALEX SPONSELLER  
SPORTS EDITOR  
ALEXS@RHODYBEAT.COM

that it is important to bring more stories like these to the community.

This is special because there are two stories within one. Mazzulla gets his due after passing away during the time of the pandemic, when everything was somewhat of a whirlwind. The other

PITCH - PAGE 19



**FAMILY FUN:** Stephen Mandarelli and his wife Alicia and sons Jaxson and Gianni were among the many families who took part in the Kids Fishing Derby in Johnston. (Sun Rise photos by Pete Fontaine)

## Kids Fishing Derby enjoys big outing

By PETE FONTAINE

Whether or not they caught a rainbow trout or sunfish, really didn't matter; the fact was the 2023 Johnston Kids Fishing Derby drew a record crowd and featured prizes galore for anglers ages 4 to 12.

After all the fish were weighed, Coordinator Nicole Cournoyer - the popular assistant Johnston Recre-

DERBY - PAGE 17



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## Coach

(Continued from page 16)

Mazzulla Memorial Indoor Recreation Center, introducing Dan's son Justin Mazzulla, now an assistant basketball coach at the University of Rhode.

Justin was among those in the documentary and issued a welcome and thank you to everyone that came to the premiere and loved a mighty man who people will tell you is "the best athlete to ever come out of Johnston."

Likewise, Lois Marandola – Dan's sister – said: "on behalf of my family I first and foremost would like to thank everyone for attending this heartwarming ceremony honoring my brother."

"The turnout was absolutely amazing!" Marandola said, her voice cracking with emotions of joy. "Even after three years since Dan passed people still remember him. It shows the respect and

love people in Johnston had for Dan. I've received countless calls and texts regarding how great the event was."

Marandola then added: "Dan was a tough but fair person in all aspects of his life. Growing up you could see the love he had for basketball from his days at Johnston Recreation, JHS, Bryant College then playing professionally in Chili. As he grew older and followed in my father's footsteps (as recreation director) he came to love the children of the town."

She paused, then added: "But nothing was more important than his children and grandchildren; he followed them to all sporting events no matter where it was. I know he made my mother and father proud of the man he became; we love you Dan!"

Joe Mazzulla, Dan's son and Boston Celtics head coach, said during film: "His biggest gift and something he really want my family to have the mindset he always peached. The ability to han-



**FAMILIAR FACE:** lasimone with his former coach Kyle Norigian.

dle adversity, the ability to continue to work when stuff doesn't go your way and the thing I'm most grateful for that he left my family with his ability to navigate life."

Said Justin Mazzulla: "When he as sick to see him with brain cancer not being able to move and barley being able to form a sentence and still show up at work and still show up at places you don't need to be, showed how dedicated and how much of

a hard-working person he was. He felt some kind of way when he knew his employees were at work and he wasn't there with them. Like my brother said: that's one of the many things I'm grateful for."

To which JSC Executive Director Richard J. DeFino Jr., who played basketball with Mazzulla at age 7 and played when his father coached us, declared "Danny was the greatest athlete to ever come out of Johnston."

Thus, he added: "We were great friends through the years. Our families became friends; my son Richard and Joe were friends and classmates and went to school together; my son David had a special bond with Dan my son David through the recreation department."

Said Town Councilwoman Linda Folcarelli: "I had known Danny since high school. I went to all the basketball games and he was a fantastic player. I am very close friends with his sister Lois; I

would not have missed seeing this documentary in honor of Danny. He will always be remembered."

To which Town Councilwoman Lauren Garzone offered: "Thank you to Cameron Iasimone for this memorial tribute to Dan Mazzulla. Dan had boundless determination, energy and compassion for which we are all grateful for. Dan has left and indelible legacy in the Town of Johnston and State of RI. I would also like say "Thank You" to his family for sharing him with all of us!"

So Cameron Iasimone, who is still receiving rave reviews and made his parents proud, thanked everyone that came to the premiere and offered: "Like coach Dan always told me, it's not going to be easy, you to keep working."

And as people predicted, there's no doubt Cameron Iasimone and will without question do just that on his way to making it professionally in a big way.

## Derby

(Continued from page 16)

ation Director – announced that "our 2023 Grand Champion of the Fishing Derby is Breonna Carlton, age 12!"

When asked what criteria is used to determine the Grand Champion Cournoyer smile and replied: "Catching the most fish!"

Carlton, who was accompanied by her father Roger Carlton, reeled in seven trout that weighed at least 1 pound as well as many of the small sunfish that made kids smile throughout the three-hour fun-filled fishing tournament.

"Today was a huge success," said Cournoyer, daughter of now retired Johnston School Facilities Director David Cournoyer. "Children were fishing everywhere around the pond."

It seemed as though every available area around the picturesque pond was filled with parents – even grandparents – for the Kids' Derby which was sponsored by the generosity of Citizens Bank, ageless Johnston Community Center Association, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and of course the Johnston Recreation Department.

Even the island, that is in the center of the park pond, was filled with anglers ages 4 to 12 who took home valuable prizes like fishing poles, tackle boxes and impressive accessory fishing kits.

In the end, 24 children – who finished in either first, second and third place for the most fish caught, heaviest fish caught, longest fish caught, and smallest fish caught – were awarded prizes that many adults concurred "all adds up to the best kids fishing derby around."

Here are some of the results from the event:

**Grand Champion of Fishing Derby**  
1st place – Breonna Carleton, age 12

**Most Fish Caught**  
4 – 7-year-old division  
1st place – Stella Iemma, age 7  
2nd place (tie) – Gabriella Garcia, age 5 and Jaxon Mandarelli, age 5  
3rd place (tie) – Ty Rodgers, age 7 and Gianni Mandarelli, age 7  
8 – 12-year-old division  
1st place – Marie O'Neill, age 9  
2nd place (tie) – Cameron Regnault, age 9 and Gavin Smith, age 10  
3rd place – Martin O'Neill, age 11

**Heaviest Fish Caught**  
4 – 7-year-old division  
1st place – Luca Gray, age 5  
2nd place – Bennet Gray, age 6  
3rd place – Alex Bucci, age 6  
8 – 12-year-old division  
1st place – Andre Slink, age 9  
2nd place – Dante Grosso, age 12  
3rd place – Jackson Gray, age 9

**Longest Fish Caught**  
4 – 7-year-old division  
1st place – Stella Bucci, age 4  
2nd place – Arlen Brehm, age 6



**CLASSIC CATCH:** "This is the first fish I ever caught," Dante Grosso, 12, was saying Saturday about this 1.2 pound rainbow trout he reeled in.



**AWESOME ANGLER:** Roger Carlton holds a 1-pound-plus trout – one of seven his daughter Breonna caught to being crowned Grand Champion. (Submitted photo)



**SPECIAL SMILE:** Marie O'Neill, 9, is all smiles as she holds up one of many sunfish she caught.

3rd place – Desmond Charest, age 7  
8 – 12-year-old division  
1st place – Anthony Brooks, age 11  
2nd place – Logan Bucci, age 8  
3rd place – Jazz Smith, age 9

**Smallest Fish Caught**  
4 – 7-year-old division  
1st place – Bianca Burns, age 6  
2nd place – Lucas Gerzevitz, age 4  
3rd place – Nathan Cherubino, age 4  
8 – 12-year-old division  
1st place – Claudio Amaral, age 11  
2nd place – Susan Gerzevitz, age 9

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AT THE NET: Johnston's Dylan Robbins last week. (Photo by Alex Sponseller)

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# Defending champs off to roaring start

By ALEX SPONSELLER

The defending champion Johnston boys volleyball team picked up right where it left off last spring, jumping out a 5-0 start this spring and already appearing to be the favorite to repeat as Division III champions. The Panthers not only are 5-0, but have won all 15 sets played.

With returners like Joshua Philbrick, James Guilmette and Samuel Cambranes in the mix, as well as newcomers Anthony Corsinetti and Dylan Robbins, the Panthers feature an athletic lineup that has filled the gaps left by last year's seniors.

"They have a lot of momentum right now. We have two new athletes in Anthony Corsinetti and Dylan Robbins and they are super athletic and do add a lot of energy. That helps for sure. We have a couple of spots that are empty because of (graduates). We are coming up against a lot of good teams in the coming weeks, so I'm looking forward to seeing how the rest of the season plays out," said Johnston coach Greta Lalli.

Although the Panthers recognize their place as the defending champions, they are not focused on last year's success as much as they are looking to have fun and take each game one at a time.

"I think in the back of their minds that there is a lot of pressure, but they're not bringing it onto the court. They're not uptight; they're just having fun like they did last year. They're all friends and they work together well. They know when they can have fun, they know when they have to be serious, they know what they're doing," Lalli said.

Lalli credits her senior leaders for welcoming the new players and helping the transition from last season be a seamless one.

"The new kids are athletic which is half the battle and they have the background knowledge. The boys are very willing to help out, these seniors are absolutely amazing. They're so helpful, nice, accepting," said Lalli. "They're everything that a coach could want and they make the new guys feel right at home."

## Pitch

(Continued from page 16)

er story is that a young kid found success in making a passion project dedicated to his former coach. It is a feel good story on a tough topic.

Again, although there was plenty of coverage and praise for Mazzulla's career at the time of his passing, it all happened rather quickly. Now that the dust has kind of settled and our lives have returned to almost normal, this film came out at a great time and it is amazing to see the community gather to celebrate

the late coach.

I also think there is an inspirational aspect to this whole thing as well. It shows that you don't need to be a big-time filmmaker to create something special, impressive, and resonates within the community. Iasimone is clearly on his way to a successful career and to put together a project this extraordinary at such a young age, it is outstanding and something that will be remembered for years to come.

For high school and college kids with big dreams and aspirations, let this be a reminder that you do not have to wait until

your diploma is in your hand to get your career started. You are always better off starting a step early than a step late, and age does not matter if you put your heart into what you are doing. It will radiate just as the passion did in Iasimone's piece, which by the way, is available online.

So here's a shout out to Iasimone for a job well done. I hope he continues to create more content because he clearly has a knack for it. To the Mazzulla family, I'm thrilled to see you have another piece to remember and to celebrate regarding your legendary name.

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Bruneau & Co. Auctioneers  
Cranston, RI

carded *Star Wars* action figure displayed all the available characters on the back of the card. Hence the collector terminology of “12 back,” (starting in 1978), all the way up to a “92 back” in 1984-85 with “The Power

of the Force” toy line. Just like with all collectibles, condition is the most important with *Star Wars* and factory sealed is always best. There is value in loose figures too, but who kept their toys sealed? Odds are even if you told a child their toy would be worth big bucks someday if they never opened it, they would’ve torn into it anyways – the toys were just too fun to ignore, and that’s why near-mint factory sealed “12 backs” sell for thousands of dollars today when professionally graded!

If you have nothing to do on Saturday, May 6th stop by and visit Bruneau & Co. in Cranston. We are hosting a cataloged auction focused on professionally graded comic books, video games, and toys – including a large collection of *Star Wars* action figures, and even some CAS 85 graded 12 and 20 backs! It might blow your mind to watch what was once child’s play hammer for serious money today.

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**Yoga**  
(Continued from page 15)

While she meant high school eleventh and twelfth graders, both young students and senior citizens arrived for a lesson. Genest and Asselin welcomed them all. Seven weeks later, three classes remain, and anyone's welcome to join.

"I have always been active," Asselin recalled. "When I was younger, I was in gymnastics and on a cheer team. When I started doing yoga it was easy because I was flexible. More importantly, it was calming. Yoga let all the stuff I worried about get released and let me see how much moving my body does for me."

Each weekly class installment has a different theme. "I asked local studios and wellness companies to help support the program with educational information, as well as equipment and special gifts for weekly raffles," Asselin explained. "I chose a yoga program because it helps with depression and anxiety. I read a recent Pew study that found that 70 percent of teens experience anxiety and depression. In fact, according to the CDC, 'teen girls are experiencing record high levels of violence, sadness and suicide risk.'"

The CDC report was released in early 2023 and echoed the anecdotal experiences of most parents raising increasingly isolated children through the twin pandemics of Covid and the spiritual ills of social media.

"I believe Covid is a big part of why this is happening," Asselin hypothesizes. "The pandemic started when I was a freshman and lasted for over two years! My peers and I were isolated like everyone else, but social media was our biggest escape. While we were isolated, many started to feel insecure and there was a lot of body shaming. We all were comparing ourselves to people on Instagram. It made being isolated worse. Plus, because we were at home we weren't getting out and exercising."

Asselin said she hoped creating an active, health-minded senior class project, would also "get people off their phones and out of their houses."

"Yoga is perfect to help with movement and feeling better in your body," she said. "I believe this program will help my peers get healthier both physically and mentally."

Each week has been sponsored by the Tri-County Community Action Agency's Health Equity Zone (HEZ). Asselin has created an Instagram page for the class (jhsfreeyoga).

Although she was unable to utilize a space at the school, the Johnston library staff was very accommodating, providing a space downstairs next to the children's reading room.

The project has recently expanded to the University of Rhode Island, where next week, she'll hold a free class on the Kingston campus quad.

"The research I have been doing as part of my project, had opened my mind to thinking yoga will always be a part of my life," Asselin said. "I have realized that yoga is much more than just physical activity. In fact, learning about meditation has been very helpful."

A long list of sponsors have helped Asselin provide the full yoga experience. Carina e Dolce, Specialty Cakes & Cookies, of Cranston, provided snacks. Yoga at the Point at Conimicut Point Park in Warwick provided essential oils — the energizing peel of peppermint and a soothing blanket of lavender opened and closed last Monday's class.

Gravity Yoga Center and Phoenix Rising provided free classes, straps and mats for raffle giveaways. Second Wind Health pitched in yoga mats. And Twisted Root poured some kombucha.

"I am so happy that I found sponsors for my project. People have been generous with gifts such as mats and meditation cards," Asselin said. "These raffles make the classes more fun. I really thought I needed the prizes to get kids to come to class, but I now see that having a space to do yoga together and experience its benefits as a group is why people keep coming back."

Through the tasks of creating the 10-week program, Asselin realized how much yoga and meditation were helping.

"When I am meditating, I feel my problems disappear for a little bit," Asselin writes for her senior project. "I really like how I feel when I meditate and have learned that it's not done only on the mat or by closing your eyes. For instance, I color in adult coloring books or play chess as part of my meditation routine. In fact, I meditate before my schoolwork. I find it helps me to not stress out and just give up. I have ADHD so it's hard to

stay still and concentrate. It's surprising that yoga has helped with this."

Asselin hopes new students show up for the final three classes (held at 2 p.m. on Mondays at the Johnston public library).

"My goal after this 10-week program is to go to the school department and try to make it a permanent after school club," she said. "I wish every school offered a yoga program because lots of kids may feel as I do. Like me, they may not know what to do with their anxiety. Also, they may not know how to ask for or are afraid to ask someone for help. I know how that used to feel."

For Asselin, the yoga experience goes far beyond the gong baths and smelly oils.

"I know I was told my anxiety and depression was just in my head for a long time and it made me feel worse," Asselin wrote. "I know this has happened to many other people my age. Being told the depression or anxiety isn't 'real,' doesn't help — it just makes a teen feel more hopeless. Having free programs where students get together and just relax will give an opportunity for peers to help each other. When I graduate, I think I am going to try to get certified to teach. My long-term goal is to help my peers get healthier both physically and mentally. Namaste."



**ANIMAL TALK**  
By Karen Kalunian  
Local Adoptable Loveable



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**SEEKING CALM:** Participants stretch and mediate through Johnston High School senior Jenna Asselin's 10-week yoga course at the Marian J. Mohr Memorial Library. Three weeks of the course remain. Classes are at 2 p.m. on Mondays. (Submitted photos)

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## Strong, Stylish Spring Home Upgrades

### 5 renovation projects where brick takes center stage

**FAMILY FEATURES**

Springtime is a perfect opportunity for homeowners to begin planning renovations to enhance the interior and exterior of their living space. Because of its strong performance capabilities, low maintenance and design flexibility, brick is a popular building material choice when looking to improve or refresh your home in time for warm-weather hosting season.

Often selected for its functional benefits, brick is available in a wide array of colors, textures and sizes that can match varying design styles, from modern to traditional and almost everything between. If you're considering adding brick to your home's aesthetic, consider these five projects to tackle this spring from the experts at Glen-Gery, one of the largest brick and stone manufacturers in North America.

**Basement or patio bar** - As homeowners spend more time at home, they often look to maximize livable space. One way to take advantage of unused living space is building a basement or patio bar, which provides an area for entertaining. Using an exposed brick wall can help designate the bar area and separate it from the rest of the basement, or lining a bar counter with brick can create a rustic contrast against the bar's seating.



**Fireplace** - To change the look and feel of a room almost instantly, you can use brick to give a fireplace a facelift or make it a focal point of your home. Available in a variety of colors and textures, Glen-Gery's diverse, premium portfolio of more than 600 brick and stone products can elevate your living room's style in a big way and create a more inviting area to share with family and friends. An outdoor fireplace is another option for extending livable space in a cozy way that can be used throughout the year.

**Accent wall** - Create a statement in or outside your home with a brick accent wall. Accent walls can help bring color, texture and beauty to homes by breaking up the monotony of monochromatic color or decor, creating visual interest and dimension. While brick in a running bond pattern is expected, you can spice up rooms with an unexpected bond pattern like a stacked bond for modern appeal or herringbone for a rustic look.

**Kitchen backsplash** - One of the most overlooked areas of kitchen design is the backsplash. While its job is to protect your kitchen walls from the never-ending assault of kitchen splatters, there's no reason it can't look good, too. Brick backsplashes

can accommodate most home designs and styles thanks to the versatility of shapes, colors, finishes and sizes available.

Black or white glazed brick works well with more modern kitchens while irregular brick containing an abundance of texture and a messy mortar application can complete rustic farmhouse kitchens. An option like Glen-Gery's virtual design tool, Picture Perfect, can help you visualize projects in your home to see what fits your style and needs.

**Brick skirt** - For added curb appeal, consider adding a brick skirt around the foundation of your home. Given its resilient, durable and energy-efficient qualities, brick can help provide better insulation and protection while also adding visual appeal to the exterior of your home through texture, color and contrast. The skirting can also continue through to the front porch floor and steps, helping balance out the elevation of your home.

For more inspiration for your next home renovation project, visit glengery.com.

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# Chores to Tackle to Get Your Home Ready for Spring

**FAMILY FEATURES**

After months spent largely indoors while harsh elements battered your home's exterior, many homeowners are throwing open the windows and embracing spring's arrival.

Every home requires ongoing maintenance to ensure it's living up to its aesthetic and functional best. This checklist can help you create a comfortable home setting for enjoying the warmer months.

**Check gutters.** During the colder months, debris can accumulate in the gutters, which can be problematic when spring rains arrive. Clogged gutters prevent water from flowing efficiently away from the roof and house. When they're backed up, they can cause water damage in a short amount of time. Faulty guttering can also cause slow leaks that lead to damage you may not discover until major repair work is needed. Properly functioning gutters are clear of debris, flow freely and are securely attached to the home.

**Inspect the roof.** Your roof takes a real beating in all kinds of weather conditions. Making it a common practice to carefully inspect the roof with the change of seasons can help you identify potential problems while they're still in early stages, before a big storm hits and major damage occurs. Some roof issues can be addressed with simple repairs you can do yourself while others may require a professional. A roofing expert can help you determine whether any trouble areas can be patched or if a more complete restoration is in order.

**Replace the dryer vent.** Upgrading your dryer vent is an opportunity to conserve energy and prevent flammable lint build-up in your dryers. One option for updating the exhaust system is a paintable version of InoVate's Prime DryerWallVent. Engineered for both vent replacement and new construction, the vent includes features such as a gravity-assist damper, integrated magnets and a drip edge to provide extra protection from the elements as well as pests. A large, clean opening and lightweight angled damper promote exceptional airflow efficiency.

**Service air conditioning units.** Your heating and cooling system works hard to keep your indoor climate comfortable when extreme temperatures make the outdoors unbearable.



That's why it's important to have your systems serviced by a professional, and spring is a smart time to do so before they're hard at work throughout the warmer months. Service can correct problems and ensure everything is operating efficiently, which can lead to money savings as well.

**Repair window screens.** Throughout the winter, your home's window screens can accumulate a layer of dirt and grime that isn't just unsightly; it blows indoors when you open the windows to welcome a fresh breeze. What's more, if your screens have rips and tears, pesky bugs and other critters can make their way into your home more easily. Cleaning and repairing your screens can make your home more secure and help protect your indoor air quality.

Find more information to help get your home ready for spring at DryerWallVent.com.



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