

JohnstonSunRise

Thursday, May 22, 2025

2 Sections with Supplements • 15 Pages • **FREE** • Vol. 28 No. 15

Lawmakers surprised by \$15M shortfall as session winds down

By **NANCY LAVIN**
Rhode Island Current

You wouldn't suspect any opposition to proposed pay raises for state troopers and correctional officers based on public hearings on May 23.

The requisite meetings on new collective bargaining agreements held just before the holiday weekend concluded in under 10 minutes, with no public feedback on either contract. But legislative leaders are less than thrilled about the salary increases and accompanying benefits for roughly 1,250 state employees, which require \$15 million more than what Gov. Dan McKee planned for in his fiscal 2026 budget proposal.

Unlike most other state employee unions, the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers and the Rhode Island Troopers Association had not inked new deals with the administration when McKee unveiled his proposed \$14-billion spending plan in January. So McKee put in a \$30-million placeholder for the yet-to-be signed contracts.

Turns out, the agreements are actually going to cost the state \$45 million over the next two years, rather than the \$30 million McKee budgeted.

Hardly welcome news to the leaders of the Rhode Island General Assembly already grappling with a budget deficit and potentially devastating federal funding cuts just weeks before the end of the 2025 legislative session. A spending plan must be approved by the start of the new fiscal year on July 1.

"Unfortunately, the newly revealed shortfall from the administration's contract settlements is not the only issue we need to address in the budget," House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi said in an emailed statement. "It certainly worsens the situation and is, frankly, beyond frustrating."

Senate President Valarie Lawson also appeared caught off-guard by the unexpected cost hike, which she said she learned about on Wednesday.

"While this is deeply concerning, I will work with the Senate Finance Committee to address this unexpected challenge," Lawson said in an emailed statement.

Laura Hart, a spokesperson for McKee's office, defended the contract costs in an emailed response on May 23, noting that the third-quarter revenue report from the state budget office shows an extra \$60.9 million flowing into state coffers by the end of fiscal year 2025 on June 30.

"The governor encourages the General Assembly to support the contractual increases for public safety personnel using these dollars in the upcoming budget," Hart said.

● **LAWMAKERS** to page 8



The display was spread out across the grassy parade grounds at the historic fort. Operation Stand Down, based in Johnston, provides comprehensive services for veterans. *Beacon Media photos by Barbara Polichetti*



Coins left on the toes of boots have special meaning. The denomination of the coin indicates how close someone was to the armed services member.

Sea of sacrifice

Boots on the Ground honors the lives taken

By **BARBARA POLICHETTI**
Beacon Media Staff Writer

A stiff wind snapped thousands of small American flags taut Saturday as a squall rolled in over Fort Adams in Newport. The flags were guardians to more than 7,600 pairs of combat boots on display at the fort – an annual Memorial Day tribute to American troops lost in combat since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The Boots on the Ground for Heroes memorial display at the historical fortress is organized by Operation Stand Down Rhode Island, a private, nonprofit organization that supports veterans with comprehensive services and programs.

The empty boots, each pair anchored to a flag and bearing a tag with information on a fallen member of the armed services, create a moving display as they stretch in seemingly endless rows across the pentagonal parade grounds inside the historic fort.

Visitors walked silently up and down the rows, often stopping to read the name tags or secure a flag being tugged loose by the wind. Here and there, visitors had tucked yellow roses of remembrance into some of the boots.

● **BOOTS** to page 7



Navy Capt. Brian D. Heberley, commanding officer supervisor of shipbuilding, conversion and repair in Groton, CT, reminded the graduates of the important role they will play in the country's defense force. *Beacon Media photo by Barbara Polichetti*

EB welcomes graduates to ranks of sub builders

By **BARBARA POLICHETTI**
Beacon Media Staff Writer

Welcome aboard.

That was the message at an upbeat and decidedly patriotic ceremony held May 22 to celebrate more than 200 graduating high school students from across the state who are immediately joining the workforce at General Dynamics Electric Boat to build nuclear submarines.

The ceremony, held at Cranston High School East and attended by Gov. Dan McKee and members of the state's congressional delegation, also highlighted the importance of the state's many career and technical programs, which equip students with the skills to be work-

ready in a variety of professions.

"[Tonight] is celebrating you," Angélica Infante-Green, the Rhode Island commissioner of education, told the crowd assembled in the East auditorium. Noting that the state has hundreds of career and technical programs at high schools, career centers and post-secondary institutions, Infante-Green said, "Here in Little Rhody, we have what other states want – your talent."

This is the fourth year in a row that General Dynamics has held a statewide ceremony in Rhode Island to celebrate graduating high school students who have accepted job offers with its wholly owned subsidiary, Electric Boat. The company states on its website that it has

● **EB** to page 8



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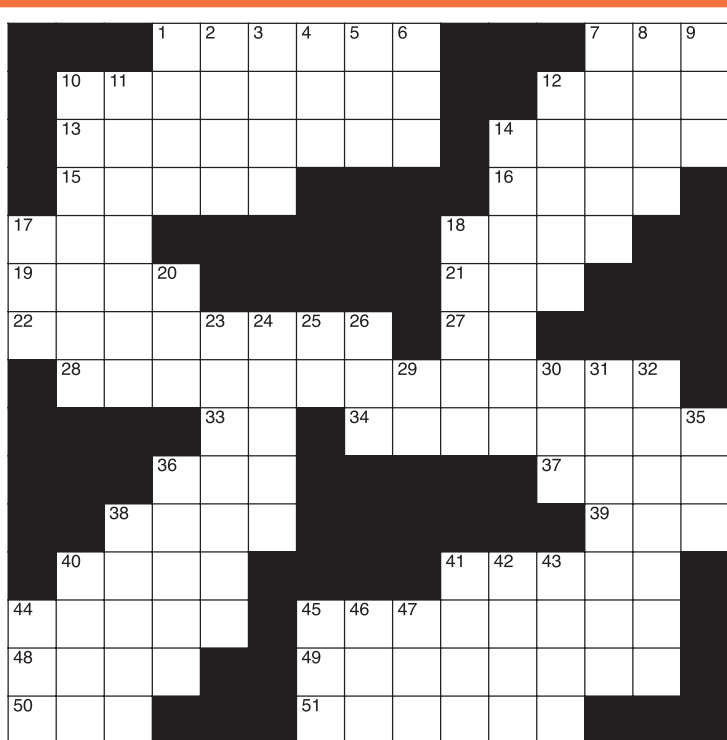
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bring up
- 7. Child
- 10. Formal written defense
- 12. Bangladeshi currency
- 13. Burial site
- 14. In the lead
- 15. Large recesses in a church
- 16. Count on
- 17. Defunct phone company
- 18. Golf scores
- 19. Afflicts
- 21. Defensive nuclear weapon
- 22. Prominence
- 27. "The Great Lakes State"
- 28. SoCal ballplayer
- 33. Location of White House
- 34. Magnificence
- 36. Hip hop songstress
- 37. Capital of Yemen
- 38. ___ Blyton, children's author

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Kitchen devices
- 2. Wings
- 3. Mythological birds
- 4. Everyone has one
- 5. Matchstick game
- 6. Bar bill
- 7. Weights
- 8. Satisfactorily
- 9. Small amount
- 10. Tree types
- 11. Small protuberances
- 12. Equivalent of 100K BTU
- 14. Type of horse
- 17. More (Spanish)
- 18. Argentinian province
- 20. A bad act
- 23. Moving in a circular way
- 24. Battery type
- 25. Atomic #58
- 26. Popular breakfast food
- 29. An alternative
- 30. Tooth caregiver
- 31. A way to conform
- 32. Disfigured men
- 35. Cool!
- 36. Genus of mosses
- 38. Body part
- 40. Kashmiri people
- 41. Round water pot
- 42. Something to purchase
- 43. Emit coherent radiation
- 44. Indicates 10
- 45. Advertising metric
- 46. Pitching stat
- 47. Head movement



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A star with stripes

Miss Rhode Island is a sergeant in the Army National Guard

By **ALYSSA WALKER**
Beacon Media Contributor

Your new Miss Rhode Island has made it her duty to serve her state while wearing both her crown and her Army uniform.

Sgt. Alexia Rodrigues, who also holds the title of Miss Warwick, was crowned Miss Rhode Island on May 11 at North Kingstown High School. After eight years in the Miss Rhode Island organization, Rodrigues clinched the crown and began spreading her two main messages: the need to recognize women in the armed forces and the desire to mend America's foster-care system.

A Rhode Island native, Rodrigues briefly left the Ocean State to attend Syracuse University, where she was involved in organizations such as Students Demand Action and the Resident Housing Association. However, the online learning environment that plagued students in 2020 proved to be unsatisfactory for Rodrigues, who didn't feel like she was making a difference while sitting at home.

In order to fulfill her desires to better the world, Rodrigues surprised her friends and family by joining the Rhode Island National Guard. Though she originally joined only part time, she obtained a job with the Guard where she could give back to the community, something that was especially important during the trying times of Covid-19.

Rodrigues' commander, Lt. Col. Jarred Rickey, had this to say about the Miss Rhode Island winner: "I have always been inspired by people that succeed when they try difficult things. Lexi is one of those

people. She is a fierce, determined, hardworking and empathic leader. These qualities are why we selected her to be a recruiter, and I am confident they helped her win Miss Rhode Island 2025. She has a very bright future ahead of her and I look forward to watching her win the Miss America pageant."

Rodrigues credits the National Guard with making her the person she is today: "The great thing about the military is that it doesn't change you, but it makes you a better version of yourself." While serving, she has worked alongside two former Miss Rhode Island winners, Col. Gloria Berlanga (Miss Rhode Island 1989) and Capt. Alexandra Curtis (Miss Rhode Island 2015).

About Rodrigues, Curtis said, "In the year in which she was in my unit, she was both influential in leading soldiers and being an influence for others." Curtis said Rodrigues "has a very bright future ahead of herself." Today, Rodrigues works as a recruiter. She is the first actively serving member of the Guard to win Miss Rhode Island.

The masculine stereotypes that come with being in the National Guard have not deterred Rodrigues from competing in Miss Rhode Island pageants. In fact, they only strengthened her drive. "My femininity and my leadership skills can coexist," Rodrigues said. With the voice that comes with her crown, Rodrigues wants to spread the message that women can be in military service and that it does not make them any less of a woman.

Since the start of her pageant journey, Rodrigues's main goal has



Shown here in her Army National Guard fatigues, Alexia Rodrigues is the first active-service member of the Guard to be named Miss Rhode Island. *Submitted photo*

been to advocate for reforming America's foster-care system. Being moved around the system herself until age 7, Rodrigues has seen and experienced the many dangerous faults it harbors. She expressed how difficult it is as a child to not feel like you belong. "I wasn't surrounded by people who had an experience similar to mine," she said.

Due to this, Rodrigues has many issues that she plans to bring to light with the help of her crown and the audience it gives her. "That is my goal, to utilize the crown," she said. She wants to be a role model and educate people on the foster-care system, as she has noticed a lack of knowledge surrounding the topic.

While people tend to believe that adopting a child from another country is the best route, Rodrigues pointed out that there are more than 300,000 children in America who need a home and a family. Due to the neglect of children in the American foster system, they tend to age out of it before being adopted, leading to lives of homelessness, a lack of job opportunities and even incarceration. Rodrigues wants to advocate for policy reform and use her voice to uplift the silent.

As for today, Rodrigues has a packed schedule full of parades, events and preparations for Miss America. On top of that, she is planning to continue her education by taking online classes at West Virginia University, where she will study integrated marketing communications. Rodrigues is also writing a children's book, "The Somewhere Kid," about a child in foster care. She hopes that, upon reading it, America's youth will garner a further understanding of the foster-care system at such a young age. As she moves into the Miss America competition, she is representing our state with pride.

"Rhode Island," she said, "is small but mighty."



Alexia Rodrigues, who also holds the title of Miss Warwick, is crowned Miss Rhode Island on May 11 at North Kingstown High School. *Submitted photo*

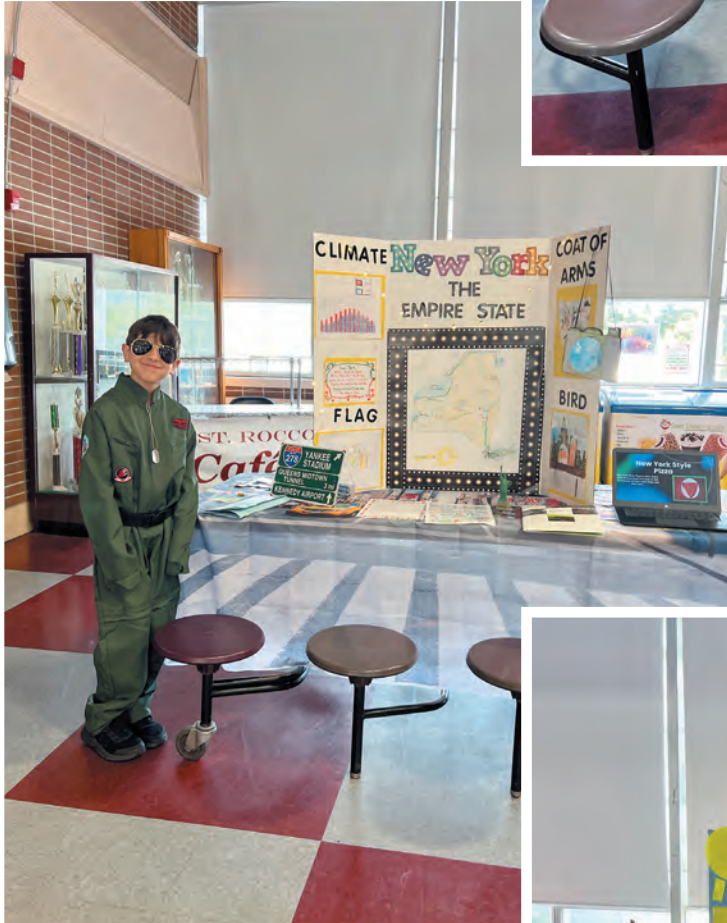
Traveling the world with class

Students at St. Rocco School made geography fun recently when they picked states to learn about and brought them to life with story boards, maps, props, and costumes. Their work not only gave them a chance to learn as much as possible about their adopted states, but also a chance to be creative.

The fourth graders, who are in Lisa Ciuncci's class, put their presentations on display in the school cafeteria last week and were ready to answer questions.



Mia Marcello had information and treats (cheese cubes) to give a taste of Wisconsin. She also donned a red and white cheerleading outfit to represent the University of Wisconsin. Photos Courtesy St. Rocco School



Aydyn Hudick made sure he was well versed in all things New York for his project. We're not sure if it was intentional, but he looks a lot like actor Tom Cruise in his flight jumpsuit – and yes, the "Maverick" actor does hail from the Empire state.



A grass skirt and lei made it clear that Milana Scarcella had invested a lot of time learning about Hawaii and was embracing her state's tropical climate and cultural warmth.



A suede Anorak and a stuffed bear showed that Mia Mercier had done her homework on Alaska, the 49th state. Like the other students she had put together a display with key facts about the state.

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Spirit Week goes undercover

Were those teachers with blazers, suit jacket and sunglasses last week at the Nicholas A. Ferri Middle School or were they Secret Service agents?

Since it was Friday, and it had been an unusual week, students had a pretty good idea that it was all part of "Stealth Spirit Week," which the middle school faculty had been having fun with.

"It's something that became popular on Tik Tok so we thought why not try it here," said Katelynn Tewksbury, Culture & Climate Coordinator at the school. Throughout the week, teachers wore costumes or unusual attire, without ever announcing that it was spirit week, she said. One day they all wore hats; another day they dressed up as their favorite holiday.

Students were a little perplexed at first, but since nothing stays secret for long in the Internet, it didn't take long for them to learn about 'undercover' school spirit week and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Tewksbury said the school works hard to build camaraderie and school spirit, and undercover spirit week was a success. From left to right are staff members Paula Ranucci, Tewksbury and Marie Contildes. Submitted photo

Education panel to vet CCRI president finalists

Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education has announced the finalists in its search for a new permanent president of Community College of Rhode Island. They are Rosemary Costigan, Ph.D., R.N. and Christopher Reber, Ph.D.

Costigan has been the interim president of CCRI since 2023, when Meghan Hughes resigned the office. Reber is the president of Hudson County Community College in Jersey City, N.J., a position he has held since 2018.

Both candidates will be participating in forums organized by the Council on Postsecondary Education in which they will meet with CCRI students, faculty and staff, as well as the alumni and foundation boards. Those meetings will be held the first week of June.

The announcement of the two finalists comes after a nationwide search, led by a diverse executive search committee and guided by AGB Search, a nationally renowned executive search firm that performs searches for colleges and universities. The nine-member committee was

co-chaired by Hon. Elizabeth Ortiz, associate justice, RI Family Court and Steve Smith, educational consultant, Steve Smith Consulting LLC.

"The process to cut the list of candidates down from 44 applicants to these two was highly competitive," said Judge Ortiz. "The diverse pool of candidates, many with formidable resumes, provided the opportunity for the search committee to choose the finalists that were indeed the best match for CCRI at this time."

"The quality of the individuals who had applied for this position was impressive, making it a very difficult decision," said Smith. "Of the eight semi-finalists, there was much discussion about which candidates had the vision and experience to lead the college through its next era. Now, the faculty, alumni, students and other stakeholders will have the opportunity to meet with the candidates and ask questions about their goals for the college and their qualifications to achieve those goals."

Opinion

EDITORIAL

In memory of humanity

In today’s highly polarized, overly politicized society, holidays like Memorial Day can stir up complicated feelings, particularly if your family has never been touched by the loss of someone in the military, and particularly if you abide by an ideology that’s averse to war. We think it’s worth exploring that inner conflict.

While we wholeheartedly support those who enter into careers in the military, and while we absolutely believe the ideals of America are worth fighting for, we can’t help but also find it troubling how many Americans (and Rhode Islanders) seem to hold the view that an aggressive sense of combative nationalism is prerequisite to being a patriotic American. Because in reality, some of the bravest souls to serve in uniform have emerged from their time in conflict advocating against all war, and fighting in general.

For example, let’s talk about Smedley Darlington Butler. Born in 1881 in Pennsylvania, he started his military career by lying about his age to receive a direct commission as an officer. By the end of his career, he would become (at the time of his death) the most decorated member in the history of the United States Marine Corps. He won the Medal of Honor twice and amassed 16 medals, including five for acts of heroism, during his 34-year military career, which continued through World War I.

Some visitors tucked yellow roses of remembrance into the combat boots that made up the moving Memorial Day display organized by Operation Stand Down Rhode Island at Fort Adams in Newport.



In his later years, he would dedicate his life to speaking out against what he viewed as opportunistic profiteering by the U.S. government in conflicts around the world. He accused the military of using soldiers to enrich large corporations.

And whether or not you agree with that critique, or you see him as a sort of traitor to the flag, it illustrates an important point — that it is possible for very patriotic, very brave people to hold simultaneously conflicting views about war, about America’s involvement in conflicts around the globe, and about the meaning of something like Memorial Day.

As we look around us today and see how different people’s views are about what it truly means to be “American,” and the things they are willing to tolerate when a member of “their” political party does them, versus a member of the “other” party, perhaps it is best that we use days like Memorial Day to reflect on the humanity behind the day and leave the labels at the door.

Soldiers who go into war don’t get to decide when the war starts or when it ends. Many times, in past conflicts, they didn’t even get to decide whether they wanted to answer the call to serve. But thousands upon thousands of men and women throughout our history have perished on foreign and domestic soils throughout our history.

They didn’t do it to earn favors with a political party, to get rich or to advance their personal ideologies. Some of them died protecting civilians from the countries they were engaged in conflict with. Some of them sacrificed themselves to save their fellow soldiers from suffering the same fate, even if they held totally different views or personally disliked them. They all left permanent and painful voids in the lives of those who loved them and miss them to this day.

They all deserve to be remembered. And in a world that seems to be pulling us apart from every angle, this collective remembrance should be unifying.

We should never forget that at the end of the day, that is what Memorial Day is really about. It’s not about politics, or debating whether a war is just, or competing to show who has the most patriotic parade or who “loves America” the most. It should be a reflective remembrance of the humanity that binds us all together, and the humanity that is still worth fighting for.

SOUTH COUNTY SAYS GOODBYE TO AN OLD FRIEND...FOR A WHILE



GUEST OPINION

Foster families deserve gratitude. But they need support too.

By KAYLA DAVID

Across Rhode Island, children enter foster care every week because their homes are no longer safe — due to a range of complex factors, including family instability, abuse, unmet needs, or other family challenges. When that happens, we don’t just need shelter. We need people. We need families who can meet children where they are, offer compassion and consistency, and help them begin to heal.

The problem is that those families are getting harder to find. According to the most recent data, approximately 1,272 children under the age of 21 are in the care of Rhode Island’s Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) and living in out-of-home placements. But the number of licensed foster homes is shrinking. Too often, children wait in hospitals, residential treatment facilities, or bounce between short-term placements simply because there’s nowhere else for them to go. In some cases, siblings are separated — not because it’s in their best interest, but because no one can take them together.

Foster parents have always been asked to do a lot. But today, they are doing more than ever: caring for children who have experienced complex trauma, navigating behavioral and medical challenges, and coordinating services across multiple systems — all while parenting.

And they are doing it with less. Fewer fellow foster parents to lean on. Less access to respite care. Fewer placements to share the load. Less certainty about the resources that will be there for them tomorrow.

Despite these challenges, foster parenting remains one of the most impactful roles a Rhode Islander can play. I’ve seen it firsthand. I’ve seen teens placed in homes where they were listened to — maybe for the first time — and start to believe they matter. I’ve seen toddlers learn to sleep through the night again, and siblings reunited in a living room that’s suddenly filled with laughter.

What foster parents provide isn’t just shelter. It’s safety, consistency, and the hope of a brighter future.

And yet, we rarely talk about what these families need. We thank them in May, but gratitude isn’t enough. They need respite, mental health resources, community, and predictable support from the systems around them. They need to be treated not as temporary caregivers, but as essential partners in a child’s recovery and growth.

I’ve seen teens placed in homes where they were listened to — maybe for the first time — and start to believe they matter. I’ve seen toddlers learn to sleep through the night again, and siblings reunited in a living room that’s suddenly filled with laughter.

Policy conversations around foster care often center on recruitment — but recruitment is only part of the equation. Retention — ensuring that families stay engaged and supported

over time — requires meaningful, sustained investment. That means adequate reimbursement rates, and timely, barrier-free access to the services they need, without having to navigate a maze of referrals or red tape. We need a “no wrong door” approach and a system of care that’s easy to understand and navigate.

It also means investing in a stable workforce — one where families aren’t met with long waitlists, and where workers have manageable caseloads and the capacity to provide consistent, compassionate support. And it means ensuring foster parents themselves have access to emotional support, ongoing training, and responsive systems of care.

What’s at stake isn’t just program success — it’s the well-being of children who’ve already lost too much.

If we want foster families to keep showing up, we must meet them there — with better support, stronger networks, and policies that reflect the gravity of what we ask them to do. Because every child who needs a foster home deserves one. And every person willing to open their home deserves our full support.

This Foster Care Awareness Month, let’s not only thank foster families. Let’s stand behind them — and ensure they’re not standing alone.

Kayla David, LMFT, is vice president of the Home Division at Family Service of Rhode Island. This piece first ran in the Rhode Island Current.

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Wildfire risk and the reality of old growth forests

By JOE SHANNON

I am writing to respond to recent letters (published April 10) and comments from Nathan Cornell regarding wildfire in Rhode Island that contained inaccurate and dangerous comments.

First, I would like to highlight that, contrary to Mr. Cornell's comments, RI forests are in fact more than fire prone and are actually fire dependent. Common species in RI, like pitch pine, thrive when exposed to fire. Their seeds need the heat from a fire to release, and the bare soil that results to get established. Their trunks and buds are specially adapted to protect them from the heat and vigorously grow into new openings. According to USGS LANDFIRE data most of the forests in RI have evolved over millennia to have frequent low intensity fires (on average every 6-15 years), and drier forests in the southern part of the state expect fires even more frequently (every 0-5 years).

Like many fire-prone forests around the world, there is a correlation with experiencing drier conditions. In RI, sandy soils do not hold much water; they drain easily and dry fast, meaning that an overly dense forest can have trees fighting

each other for resources, making them weaker. These weaker trees are more likely to die in a fire, more likely to have dead branches further down their stems leading to more severe fire conditions, and more likely to have dead wood debris dried out on the forest floor, leading to hotter fires that cause more soil damage. These forest are also more susceptible to other risks such as insect outbreaks (spongy moth) and drought (summer 2022).

There are lots of reasons people care about and enjoy forests, and lots of different forest structures that people can rightfully value, including the types of dense, closed forests that Mr. Cornell seems to favor. However, the idea that all "old growth" forests match this description stems from a lack of historical and ecological context about the variety of forests throughout Rhode Island, New England and North America.

Many RI forests have evolved for frequent low intensity fires, and many areas in RI and coastal New England have been managed with fire as a tool by tribal nations for millennia. Had these forests not been converted to agriculture (and later abandoned) we would see relatively open forests that had persisted for hundreds to thousands of years under careful and guided stewardship. Those forests would not be considered "old growth" under the conditions set out in previous letters to the editor and in the problematic Old Growth Forest Protection Act (H 5294). The singular definition of "old growth" as both "untouched wilderness" and "dense, closed, rainforest-

like greenery" erases history and collapses the wonderful range of natural forests we are all so lucky to experience.

RI has a chance to lead on being ready for the fire risk that faces us as we experience longer, warmer and drier falls and springs, like this last fall with fires in the state and up and down the East Coast. RI will not be able to prepare if we choose to ignore the science, ignore the history and ignore the risk. Education and incentive programs for residents can prepare communities for increased fire risk with proactive defense and informed forest management.

I have spent 22 years studying forests and disturbance, and I work on new methods to measure the effects of wildfire and forest management on the values people hold (safety, clean water, wildlands health, forest products). As an expert in the field I submitted testimony against the Old Growth Protection Act, and urge others to oppose this bill. I would also be happy to speak in person with any state legislator who wants to learn more.

Joe Shannon holds a Ph.D. in forest hydrology. His research included how disturbances such as climate change and invasive species affect forests and what forest managers can do to preserve threatened ecosystems. A Cranston resident, he currently works for a private firm focused on the impact of wildfires, leading its efforts at quantifying and mitigating wildfire risks to water quality and quantity.

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Time for lawmakers to clean up the CRMC

By TOPHER HAMBLETT

While the beauty and value of our coastal waters and shoreline is well known to all Rhode Islanders, the state agency that regulates activities along the shore, the Coastal Resources Management Council, largely flies under the radar.

CRMC's work and the decisions it makes are extremely important to the future of our state, but years of questionable decisions by CRMC's politically appointed council have eroded public trust in the agency. It's time for the General Assembly to make meaningful reforms.

CRMC's staff of engineers, geologists and policy analysts are experts in their field and respected nationally for their work in coastal planning. Staff review thousands of applications each year from property owners along the coast for compliance with state and federal laws and potential impacts to our coastal resources. But their decisions are only recommendations to a council of volunteers who are not required to have any experience in coastal law, science or policy.

When the CRMC was first created in the 1970s, the appointed council was composed of state legislators and local elected officials who often placed the political influence of applicants above the best interests of our coastal resources. While legislators no longer serve on the council, the culture of unequal application of the law and due process remains, with a series of poor decisions recently laying bare the shortcomings of the CRMC's decision-making structure.

In 2022, the RI Supreme Court overturned the CRMC's approval of a closed-door negotiation between coun-

cil members and a Block Island marina that sought to circumvent a previous agency decision denying the marina's expansion proposal. In its ruling, the court admonished the appointed council for its lack of an "open, traceable process."

In a more recent case in January involving a proposed dredging project in Jamestown – the Dumplings Assoc. v. CRMC (2025) – the RI Superior Court noted CRMC's incorrect interpretation of its own rules, adding "it defies logic that CRMC's council doesn't understand or correctly apply its own rules."

And in North Kingstown, Quidnessett Country Club is now approaching two years of being allowed to maintain an unauthorized 600-foot rock wall that has buried coastal habitats and blocked public access along the shore. While a cease-and-desist order was issued to remove the illegal wall, the council chose to entertain a petition from the country club to change the rules after the fact. The council's actions foster a climate of "seek forgiveness, not permission," and in the case of Quidnessett, damage and lack of public access to a 600-foot stretch of coastline is allowed to continue.

Currently, three of the 10 seats on the appointed council are vacant, and it's been over five years since all the seats were filled. It is difficult to find people willing to serve on the council, and meetings are frequently cancelled due to a lack of quorum. Aquaculture permits sometimes take five or six years to approve, and there are rights-of-way to the shore that have been under review for two decades. The current structure is inefficient, which is bad for business and bad for the people of Rhode Island. Rhode Island's volunteer council de-

cision-making structure is an outlier among coastal states, and an outlier among Rhode Island's regulatory agencies. Despite having been admonished by the courts for poor decisions and a failure to follow its own rules, the appointed council has yet to be held accountable. Supporters of the council's "business as usual" approach have put forward bills that nibble around the edges of these persistent problems but do not fix anything.

This is why the state's attorney general, Save The Bay, the RI Saltwater Anglers Association and others are calling for the passage of a bill that would abolish the politically appointed council. This legislation would bring Rhode Island in line with most of the other coastal states and bring our coastal agency in line with other state agencies such as the Department of Environmental Management, where decisions are made by a director appointed by the governor with advice and consent of the Senate.

At a time when our coastal agency is dealing with increasingly complex issues like sea level rise, coastal erosion, public access and offshore wind, it's time to modernize the CRMC to deal with these challenges more effectively. Eliminating the politically appointed council would lead to better decisions, increase efficiency, reduce costs and improve transparency and accountability. It's time for the General Assembly to act.

Topher Hamblett is executive director of Save The Bay, a local nonprofit dedicated to protecting and preserving Narragansett Bay. Since 1970, the agency's vision has been a fully swimmable, fishable, healthy Bay, accessible to all.

SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones





Four officers from the Navy Officer Development School in Newport spend time at the memorial. From left, Zachary Drake, Bill Drake, Wayne Forton and David Dereyfus. *Beacon Media photos by Barbara Polichetti*

● **BOOTS** from page 1

Tom and Brenda Fayed said they were glad they took the time to stop at the fort and found the display profoundly moving. “We lived in the area for years, but this is the first time we’ve come to see it,” Brenda Fayed said. “I’m glad we did. It means a lot to see this.”

Operation Stand Down, which is based in Johnston, launched the Boots on the Ground display in 2016 at Roger Williams Park in Providence. Three years later it moved the display to the 6.5-acre parade ground at Fort Adams, where it is open and free to the public for the entire Memorial Day weekend.

The logistics of the display and setting up thousands of pairs of combat boots is a testament to a determination to “never forget” and also to an army of volunteer supporters.

Hundreds of volunteers were stationed at Fort Adams days in advance to



Tom Fayed bends down to right a flag that had been toppled by the wind. This is the first time and he and his wife, Brenda, have visited the memorial, which they described as profoundly moving.

secure the boots in place. Each pair has a placard with the name and a photo of the U.S. service member, along with biographical information. The memorial is updated every year to include any service members killed on the ongoing “Global War on Terror,” Operation Stand

Down states on its website.

The boots are organized alphabetically and by state and U.S. territory to make it easier for visitors. There is also a special circle for Rhode Islanders, with the state flag anchored in the center. The boots there are desert tan, while the other boots throughout the memorial are black.

Some boots, particularly those in the Rhode Island circle, had coins placed atop the toes. The denomination of the coins carries significance, and the practice stems from a military tradition that arose during the Vietnam War era. A quarter is the most significant coin to leave and indicates that the visitor was with the service member when they died. A dime means the visitor served in the military with the deceased, and a nickel means they spent time together in training.

A penny is simply a way to mark someone’s visiting the memorial and wanting to leave a tangible symbol of gratitude for national service and ultimate sacrifice.

This year’s Boots on the Ground for Heroes sponsors included AMGEN, the Tilley Family, Seasons Corner Market, Cardi’s

Furniture & Mattresses, Corvias, IGT, Dave’s Fresh Marketplace, Flood Ford, Riverhead Building Supply and Brown Medicine/Brown Physicians Inc.

A team from Operation Stand Down Rhode Island was at the memorial all weekend, ready to answer visitors’ questions. George Luttge of OSDRI said the organization is grateful to all the volunteers who helped make the display possible but also to the thousands of visitors who took the time to reflect on the losses on a busy holiday weekend.

“Those represent are our brothers and our sisters,” he said, gesturing toward the grassy field of boots and flags. “It means a lot to us to see people stop by here and remember them.”

Legal Notices

Public Auction Legal Notice

To: Jorge A. Acosta 24 Wilson Ave Johnston, RI. Westlake Financial Services PO Box 997592 Sacramento, CA. A public auction will be held at 775 Hartford Ave Johnston RI on June 14, 2025 at 900 am. The vehicle a 2019 VW 3VWG-57BU3KM002878 belonging to the above. The auction being held is to satisfy towing and storage fees.

5/29/25

Obituaries

Paul J. Fox, Jr.

Paul J. Fox, Jr., 73, of Cranston peacefully passed away at home surrounded by his family on May 21, 2025. PJ, as he was affectionately known, was the husband of Wendy (Baltzer) Fox for 49 wonderful years and was the son of the late Paul J. and Marian E. (Halligan) Fox.

He was a graduate of Our Lady of Providence, Class of 1970 and Providence College, Class of 1974. He worked with his dad, PJ Fox, Sr., at the family business, the PJ Fox Paper Company, and eventually took the reins as president. Later in his career, he worked in insurance and finally at the Internal Revenue Service.

PJ was a member of many civic, professional and religious organizations, including the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and Sons of Irish Kings. He was a former commissioner of the Cranston Redevelopment Agency. He was also a member and past President of the Rotary Club of Providence and the first president of the board of the Genesis Center in Providence. He received the Paul Harris Award from Rotary International. He was a lifelong communicant of St. Paul Church.

PJ and Wendy first met in Kindergarten at ES Rhodes Elementary School before going their separate ways for nearly two decades. They were married for nearly five decades, during which they supported each other’s careers and volunteer efforts, and raised five children in the Edgewood neighborhood of Cranston. For the last 6 years, Wendy was his most loving and constant caregiver during his battle with Alzheimer’s. It was through their example – always and during this challenging time, in particular – that their children learned the power of love, humility, humor, and hard work rooted in faith.

PJ was the loving father to Joy, PJ III, Molly, Tim and his wife, Ami, and Hannah. He was the loving “G-pa” to Luke, Lennon, Madeline, and Declan.

PJ is also survived by his siblings, Mary Simas (Paul), Cathy Fox, Kevin Fox (Mary), Mike Fox (Ginny), Annie Stringfellow (Jon), John Fox (Kathy), Bridget Bugbee (Kevin), Ginny Byrnes (Brian), Joe Fox (Debbie), and brother-in-law Carl Hjerpe. He is predeceased by his brother Jimmy Fox and sister Susie Hjerpe. He will be sincerely missed by his many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

Being able to care for PJ at home would not have been possible without the tremendous support of family and friends. The Fox family is deeply grateful for an amazing team of CNAs, especially Daniel and Dolores, and the care professionals of Hope Hospice.

His funeral was held on Saturday, May 24, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. from the Barrett & Cotter Funeral Home, 1328 Warwick Avenue, Warwick, with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated at 10 a.m. in St. Paul Church of Edgewood, One St. Paul Place, Cranston. Visiting hours were Friday, May 23, 2025, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. The burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in PJ’s memory may be made to St. Paul Church, One St. Paul Place, Warwick Avenue, Cranston, RI 02905 or Sophia Academy, 582 Elmwood Ave, Providence, RI 02907.



Some visitors tucked yellow roses of remembrance into the combat boots that made up the moving Memorial Day display organized by Operation Stand Down Rhode Island at Fort Adams in Newport.

Obituaries

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

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

– Thank you

ANIMAL

TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local♥️Adoptable♥️Loveable



Photo credit: RI Feline Rescue

Gilbert

ME-WOW!! Meet Gilbert, Gil, Mr. Gilbert, Gilly, Silly Gilly he's got so many nicknames! Just like his many playful traits, he's got a name to match them all! Gilbert's coat is as smooth as silk and his amazing eyes sparkle with excitement! He is a young kitten with a zest for life! He loves playing with his toys and has a loud purr when he gets his head scratched! He is currently in a foster home with a dog and they are best friends! Please contact our friends Rhode Island Feline Rescue for more information about Gilbert. Email: apply@rifeline rescue.org
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● LAWMAKERS from page 1

Retroactive cost-of-living hike for state police

Both contracts call for annual cost-of-living adjustments starting at 5% in year one, with a 4% second-year bump and a 3% adjustment in the third year — identical to the incremental scale adopted for 4,000 other state employees under contracts finalized last fall.

So how did McKee mess up the math?

For one, the raises for 255 state troopers start earlier than expected: the 5% pay bump is retroactive to Nov. 1, 2023, rather than the July 1, 2024, start date for other state union workers, including correction officers, said Karen Greco, a spokesperson for the state Department of Administration. The tentative agreement, reached Feb. 28, also features a “uniform allowance” not accounted for in the governor’s budget projections, Greco said.

Erik Jensen, president of the state troopers union, acknowledged but did not offer a response to questions about the agreement on May 23.

Richard Ferruccio, president of the Rhode Island Brotherhood of Correctional Officers, remained unsatisfied with the terms of the 1,000-member union’s new state contract, which was finalized on May 14 after months of arbitration.

“I don’t want to sound ungrateful,” Ferruccio said in an interview Friday. “But I still feel somewhat frustrated



House Speaker K. Joseph Sherkarchi
Beacon Media file photo

● EB from page 1

been the primary builder of submarines for the U.S. Navy for more than 100 years.

Many of the students accepting EB’s new jobs this spring will work as welders and pipefitters at its Quonset Point hull fabrication facility in North Kingstown. GDEB operates its main shipyard in Groton, CT, and has engineering offices in New London, CT, and Middletown, RI.

The only other company in the United States with the capability to build nuclear submarines is Huntington Ingalls Industries’ Newport News Shipbuilding, located in Newport News, VA.

With a 125-year history, Electric Boat has built hundreds of submarines for the Navy, and the company states its current work includes construction of Virginia class fast-attack submarines as well as next generation ballistic-missile submarines, called the Columbia class.

In addressing the graduates, Mark Rayha, President of GDEB, congratulated them on their new good-paying, skilled careers which will give them opportunities to grow.

But more importantly, he said, “You will do something that a lot of other people can’t do: Protect our nation.” He said that the United States is well equipped to “flex back” when pressed by adversaries. “Thank you,” he said to the students and their families. “We need you.”

The role that the newly signed employees will play in defending the country was a point stressed by many of the evening’s speakers. “You will protect our sailors and defend your freedom,” said Charles Montalbano, vice president of Quonset Point Operations for GDEB.

U.S. Senator Jack Reed congratulated the students via video message,

and he and Congressmen Seth Magaziner and Gabe Amo credited the graduates with mastering their skills and signing up for jobs that serve their country.

Magaziner said that the nation’s submarine fleet, which he described as the finest in the world, is the cornerstone of its defense systems and a key deterrent to aggressors. “They can be anywhere at any time,” he said of the submarines. “And they can respond in a moment’s notice.”

Working in a shipyard can seem far from the depths of the ocean, but Navy Capt. Heath Johnmeyer — commanding officer for the pre-commissioning unit of the District of Columbia sub, which is still under construction by Electric Boat — reminded the new hires that their service is as important as that of the sailors who serve on the vessels they build.

“You may not be wearing uniforms, but you are part of the submarine service now,” he said. “You are a critical resource to our country.”

The newly hired graduates repre-

sent more than 35 public high schools, career and technical centers, and charter schools in Rhode Island as well as about a dozen secondary schools in nearby communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts. All of the high schools in Warwick, Cranston and Johnston — as well as the Warwick Career and Technical Center — have students who have been accepted for skilled work at Electric Boat.

Tavian Banta-Cain of Johnston Senior High School will join the ranks at the shipbuilder after graduation.

Looking out at soon-to-be graduates, Cranston School Supt. Jeannine Nota-Masse praised them and GDEB — the students for their hard work and Electric Boat for its continued support of skills-based high school programs.

She also added levity while still underscoring the importance of the careers the young adults are about to embark on. “No pressure,” she said. “But the defense of the United States is in your hands.”



Ready to work. Even before they don mortarboards for their high school graduation ceremonies, these skilled students received their hard hats from Electric Boat. Beacon Media photo by Barbara Polichetti

with it.”

His main grievance was not with the annual cost-of-living increases but accompanying benefits that would make the union better able to attract and retain officers. Staffing woes at state Department of Corrections are well-documented, and costly; the 117 open positions as of March 22 are projected to lead to a \$42.9-million overtime cost for the full fiscal year 2025, according to a presentation to state lawmakers in April.

Ferruccio blamed staffing shortages on uncompetitive benefits relative to other local law-enforcement officers and neighboring states, where officers can reach the “top step” of pay in a shorter period of time.

“There are only a handful of people that really want to get involved in any type of law enforcement,” Ferruccio said. “When you look at other local police departments, they have a significantly better situation with the top step than we do.”

He had hoped to lower the seniority requirement for union officers to reach maximum pay from its current 14 years to six years, matching the policy offered for correctional officers in Connecticut. But the compromise struck with the state cuts the length of service to 10 years beginning this June, and eight years starting in June 2026. The agreement also includes a 2.5% pay raise for anyone who stays at least 20 years.

The governor’s budget did not account for the costs associated with these changes, either, Greco said.

But Ferruccio said the final price tag should not have come as a surprise, noting that the changes to top step and retention benefits were longstanding asks by the union.

“I think the governor was given bad information by DOC,” Ferruccio said. He pointed to the grossly underestimated cost to close the state’s minimum security facility — initially pegged at \$1 million in McKee’s budget when a study found it would actually cost \$67 million to \$71 million — as an example of miscommunication by the corrections department.

J.R. Ventura, a spokesperson for the state corrections department, declined to comment when contacted on May 23.

State worker contract costs are not the only expense McKee underestimated in his fiscal 2026 budget proposal. The state will also have to make up a \$24-million shortfall in education aid to local school districts in its fiscal 2025 and 26 budgets due to corrected data on the number of students in poverty.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

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By JENNIFER COATES

For home and business owners throughout New England, there is no better find than a trustworthy, professional, and reliable painter and paint supplier for all their interior and exterior paint jobs. With the region's fickle and often harsh weather conditions, those paint jobs (both inside and out) are more frequent than in many other parts of the country. This makes it very important that ALL paint jobs are done correctly the first time.

Enter Bill McGuirk and Mike Sturdahl, the longtime owners of Cranston Paint & Wallcovering on Atwood Avenue. Bill and Mike have been in the paint industry their entire careers, spanning over thirty years. If there is anything this dynamic duo knows about, it is paint.

Bill McGuirk and Mike Sturdahl met in 1987 and later opened their first brick & mortar retail store on Atwood Avenue in 1995. In 2012, they purchased and moved into their current location on the same busy avenue in Cranston.

As of 2025, they have served hundreds and hundreds of satisfied customers. Over the years, they have steadfastly built a thriving business that has grown and evolved over time ~ and their reputation for excellence has done the same.

Today, Cranston Paint offers a huge selection of paint and stain products for the professional painter and DIY'er alike. You can find literally everything you need at the store for that weekend warrior project, from paint brushes to tools (and everything in between).

While the store is an excellent "go-to" destination for all painters, Cranston Paint has evolved into one of the most reliable paint companies in the state. With their hard-earned reputation of dependability, reliability, and quality workmanship, they have emerged as true experts in this specialized work. They have very high standards of excellence and demand it of their employees. In fact, they are regularly praised for their



This familiar sight on Atwood Avenue, as well as these signature trucks, all remind home and business owners about Cranston Paint & Wallcovering - owned by Mike Sturdahl (left) and Bill McGuirk (right). Call them for your exterior & interior paint jobs!

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This year, Cranston Paint & Wallcovering is celebrating THIRTY years of supporting and beautifying the residences and businesses of Cranston, and well beyond. Come in today and see why this business has grown and prospered for over three decades.

Cranston Paint & Wallcovering is located at 386 Atwood Avenue in Cranston and is open Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 4:30pm, and Saturdays from 8:00am to 11:30. To learn more, visit them at www.cranstonpaint.com or call 401-265-5095 (Bill's direct line) or 401-946-5070.

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Sports



Johnston's Bella Boudreau at bat. *Beacon Media photo by Alex Sponseller*

Panthers beat Eagles in 10 innings

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Johnston softball team traveled to Barrington and won 5-4 in 10 innings in the opening round of the Division II playoffs on Tuesday night.

Tied 4-4 in the top of the 10th, Bella Boudreau and Kalyn Foster reached second and third base, respectively, and Maddie Campano came through with the game-winner as she singled to center to bring home Boudreau with two outs.

The Eagles responded in the bottom of the inning by getting two runners on, but Johnston pitcher Haley Boudreau shut the door by striking out the final two batters.

The Panthers built a 4-1 lead but Barrington used a three-run fifth to tie the score.

Bella Boudreau finished the day with two RBI while Foster also knocked in two runs on two hits. Haley Boudreau racked up 20 strikeouts in the circle.

Local track athletes make noise at class meet

By ALEX SPONSELLER
SunRise Sports Editor

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League Class Championships were held last weekend and a few Johnston athletes made some noise in the Class B competition in Portsmouth.

Jayden Ponte won the shot put for the Panthers. Elias Milhouse took third in the 100 meter dash while Ponte took third in the discus throw. Melvin Wilson took eighth in the 100 dash.

Nicki Aucone took ninth in the shot put and 10th in the discus.

Here are some of the results from the event:

The Bishop Hendricken outdoor track and field team went on to win its 48th consecutive Class A Championship over the weekend when it edged rival La Salle. Pilgrim finished in fifth place as a team and Cranston West took eighth.

North Kingstown took the girls team title, as West finished fifth and Toll Gate eighth. West was led by Reece Vitale, who won the 300 hurdles and the triple jump for the Falcons.

The next stop for these teams will be the upcoming RIIL State Championships, which will take place on Saturday, June 7 at Brown University.

BOYS

Hendricken's David Hayes won the 1,500 run while teammate Jack Moretta took first in the 3,000. Pilgrim's Brandon Wolfenden won the discus and shot put, and Hendricken's Carson Dean took first in the pole vault.

Pilgrim's Hunter Schobel won the triple jump and Hendricken's Jakob Reyes won the high jump. Schobel also finished second in the long jump.

Hendricken's Tristan Jordan finished second in the 110 hurdles while teammate Colby Flynn placed second in the 1,500 run. BJ Kerachsky finished second in the 3,000 run for the Hawks. Dimitri Johnson finished second in the hammer throw for the Hawks and teammate Alexzander Prado took second in the shot put.

Hendricken's Michael Shah placed second in the triple jump.

The Hendricken relay team of Rylan Barbato, Shepherd Butler, Justin Stockford and James McCar-

● CLASS to page 12

Panther duo starts strong at golf states

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The opening round of the Rhode Island Interscholastic League Golf State Championships took place at Cranston Country Club on Tuesday and some of Rhode Island's best golfers made the trip.

Among those were Johnston's Elizabeth Kue and Kamryn Kue, who both got off to strong starts in the girls side of the tournament.

Elizabeth, a sophomore, shot a 75 which placed her in third place heading into the final round. Moses Brown junior Adriana Eaton took a commanding lead as she shot a 66, which was a new record for the girls tournament.

Elizabeth had a breakout year as a freshman in 2024, earning All-State honors from the Rhode Island Golf Coaches Association. She looked to make a run toward the top on Wednesday and is likely to repeat as an All-State selection.

Kamryn, a freshman, finished the day in 11th place as she shot an 89.



Johnston freshman Kamryn Kue tees off at the state championship on Tuesday. *Beacon Media photo by Alex Sponseller*



Kamryn Kue and Elizabeth Kue with Johnston coach Jason Corsini. *Submitted photo*

USA Gymnastics Championships returns in June

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Nearly 2,000 Olympic-level athletes, top gymnasts, and up-and-comers from around the country will gather in Providence for the USA Gymnastics Championships June 16-21, and tickets are now on sale to watch the competition live!

The USA Gymnastics Championships is the national championship event for athletes in the rhythmic, trampoline and tumbling, and acrobatic disciplines. Spectators are invited to watch elite athletes, including Olympians and World champions, compete at the Amica Mutual Pavilion for national titles and a spot on the 2025-26 Senior and Junior National Teams. The Rhode Island Convention Center will house all developmental action.

“The 2025 USA Gymnastics Championships will open the new Olympic quad with the sport’s top rhythmic, trampoline and tumbling, and acrobatic athletes and rising stars,” said USA Gymnastics’ Chief Programs Officer Stefanie Korepin. “We are very excited to have the championship return to Providence and know that the community will come out to welcome and support our gymnasts during the event.”



A look at last year’s event. Submitted photos



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Special Olympics Summer Games return

More than 1,000 Special Olympics Rhode Island athletes from across the state will experience the thrill of competition, the joy of inclusion, and the power of community at the 2025 State Summer Games, taking place Friday, May 30 through Sunday, June 1. This signature three-day event – Special Olympics Rhode Island’s largest sporting event of the year – will unfold across two venues: the University of Rhode Island’s Kingston campus (May 30–31) and St. George’s School in Middletown (June 1). Athletes will compete in a variety of sports including bowling, powerlifting, soccer skills, Unified soccer, track & field, and swimming.

The excitement begins with the Opening Ceremony on Friday, May 30 at Meade Stadium at URI. Highlights include the Parade of Athletes featuring 36 teams, the arrival of the “Flame of Hope” carried by law enforcement officers in the Torch Run Final Leg, and the official lighting of the Special Olympics Cauldron to mark the start of the Games.

“Summer Games is more than just a sport-

ing event – it’s a celebration of courage, perseverance, and the limitless potential of our athletes,” said Ed Pacheco, President and CEO of Special Olympics Rhode Island. “This is their moment to shine, to compete with heart, and to show the world what inclusion truly looks like. If you’ve never witnessed the energy and emotion of Summer Games, I invite you to join us. I promise, you’ll leave inspired and forever changed.”

The Games are made possible by the dedication of more than 1,200 volunteers, including individuals, corporate teams, and members of Rhode Island law enforcement. Officers from the Law Enforcement Torch Run not only help raise awareness and funds for Special Olympics Rhode Island throughout the year, they also help create special moments for athletes by cheering them on from the sidelines and presenting medals at Summer Games. Their run with the Flame of Hope from the State House to the Opening Ceremony is a cherished tradition that symbolizes unity and support.

Beyond competition, the Summer Games experience includes:

- Olympic Village: A fun-filled area featuring activities like coconut bowling, soccer darts, a dunk tank, and appearances by professional wrestlers from the Renegade Wrestling Alliance.
- Healthy Athletes Wellness Village: Free health screenings in vision, hearing, dental care, and fitness, plus massage therapy for athletes.
- Athlete Business Showcase: A platform where athletes promote and sell items from their own businesses.

This year’s Summer Games are powered by generous community support from dedicated sponsors who help make the event possible. URI Greek Life serves as the Presenting Sponsor, with student members raising an impressive \$70,000 to support the athletes of Special Olympics Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Shriners are proudly supporting the event as the Opening Ceremony Sponsor, helping bring the excitement and pageantry of the Games to life.

● CLASS from page 10

thy finished third in the 3,200. Hendricken’s Fred Russell placed third in the 1,500. Flynn finished third in the 800 run for the Hawks.

Cranston West’s Ryan D’Errico finished third in the 200 dash and Hendricken’s Emmitt Rattney took third in the 3,000 run.

Hendricken’s relay team of Andrew McCarthy, Jamel Flomo, Jeremiah Sans Couci and Barbato took third in the 1,600. West’s Logan Lavimodiere finished third in the discus.

GIRLS

Vanessa Jones took first in the discus for Toll Gate and Pilgrims’ Lia Wasilewski won the javelin throw.

West’s relay group of Kristen Fountaine, Annelisa Joyce, Sophia DeLuca and Lilliana Prendergast finished second in the 3,200.

Vitale later took third in the 100 meter hurdles for the Falcons while Jones took third in the hammer throw for the Titans.

Real Estate Transactions

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE	ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
COVENTRY					EAST GREENWICH				
1 Lane 7	Michael Oconnor T and Oconnor, Heather	Fitzgerald, Cynthia	5/7	\$86,000	71 Brookfield Dr	Napiorkowski, Krysia	Criner, Catherine E	5/5	\$455,000
11 Dell St	Navas, Nathaly and Rosado, Kin L	Silveira, Jamieson and Silveira, Adrienne	4/25	\$438,000	72 Riverfarm Rd	Brackley, Margaret	Duguay, Justin	5/9	\$196,000
1107 Main St	Prais, Joshua K	Lacroix, Joseph A	4/29	\$450,000	80 Stone Dr	Lurgio, Michael V and Lurgio, Denise A	Hickey, Patrick and Hickey, Carolline P	5/9	\$408,500
12 White Rock Rd	Watts Jr, Dale	Watts Jr, Dale	5/1	\$60,000	EAST GREENWICH				
131 Fairway Dr Lot 131	Leuropa, Steven D and Leuropa, Cheryl A	Leuropa, Chris S	4/23	\$142,527	2265 Division Rd	Wright, Jefferson T and Wright, Lorraine A	Wright, Jefferson T and Hurley, Allison	5/5	\$700,000
14 Liena Rose Way	Lemos, Susan	Downey, Florinda A and Downey Jr, James R	5/2	\$187,000	830 Carrs Pond Rd	Schoonmaker, Brian J and Schoonmaker, Lucinda L	Miller, Henry	5/6	\$625,000
143 Bowen Hill Rd	Duquette, Maureen M	Agudelo, Lani and Agudelo, Jalixa	4/23	\$474,500	JOHNSTON				
15 Remington Farm Dr	Phillips Jr, Fred A and Phillips, Diana A	Murphy, Christopher	5/5	\$520,000	11 Durante Ave	Atwood Properties LLC	Fafard, Amber	5/8	\$385,000
16 Lane 6	Nault Eugene J Est and Deojay, Felicity	Zheng, Wenzhen	4/28	\$67,000	1114 Central Ave	20 Jones LLC	Jael LLC	5/9	\$275,000
172 Pilgrim Ave	Belleville, Roger A	Janovsky, Jasmine S and Janovsky, Hunter D	5/9	\$347,000	117 Scenery Ln Lot 117	Nannarone Maria S Est and Paschola, Christine	Potenza, Betty J and Potenza, Stephen	5/9	\$325,000
189 Twin Brook Ln	Dowding, Jason and Dowding, Jessy	Gagnon Jr, Normand and Gagnon, Lily	4/25	\$550,000	1185 Central Ave	Aldana, Arnoldo R and Aldana, Norma A	Hebert, Michael A	5/12	\$585,000
198 Knotty Oak Rd	Dourado, Mason	Vidal, Steven	5/6	\$400,000	135 Brown Ave	K Barry & A Pezzullo Jret and Barry, Kevin D	Mcgee, Christopher J and Mcgee, Robin L	5/13	\$715,000
21 Anthony St	Council Of Giants LLC	Arnold, Jordan R	5/8	\$448,000	21 Kensington Way Lot 21	Atwood Ave Condos LLC	Bacon, Samantha E	5/9	\$449,900
23 S Glen Dr	Elmwood Realty LLC	Nowak, Declan	5/9	\$415,000	25 Kensignton Way Lot 25	Atwood Ave Condos LLC	Sammartino, Nicholas and Kirby, Haley	5/13	\$460,000
255 Log Bridge Rd	Grimes, Sean E and Grimes, Casey M	Docouto, Nicholas C and Docouto, Michael	5/1	\$440,000	27 Kensington Way Lot 27	Atwood Ave Condos LLC	Matarese, Deborah and Matarese, Robert F	5/8	\$449,900
28 Sheltra Ave	Charpentier Joan M Est and Charpentier, Mark	Hiddenfelter, Sean P	4/29	\$400,000	29 Rollingwood Dr	Lavoie, Thomas P and Guliano-Lavoie, Deana	Salem, Joseph N and Salem, Larissa M	5/13	\$710,000
29 Enzo Dr Lot 29	Robinson Jr, Michael T	Heelon, Lucy A	5/7	\$475,000	32-34 Buchanan St	Vasquez Properties LLC	Tiniguez, Irma C and Hernandez, Jacinto M	5/9	\$630,000
31 Sherwood Valley Ln	Coyle Jr, Thomas E	Tkacs, Joyce M	5/7	\$183,200	326 Simmonsville Ave	Proia, Mary L	Downey, Jordin L	5/12	\$610,000
350 Hill St	Appiah, Harry K and Delave, Jamie	Appiah, Samuel K	4/24	\$460,000	79 Winfield Rd	Brown, Marina L	Ascenzi, Damon	5/12	\$325,000
36-38 Wood St	Hevenor, Sean	Niduaza, Roma	4/28	\$462,500	9 Johnson Ave	Sor, Lechang and Cerdena, Moana M	Leconte, Manouka M	5/7	\$315,000
4 Hunters Crossing Dr	Delaney, Tammy and Delaney, Darren	Laverty, Laurie J	4/25	\$555,000	WARWICK				
4 Paul Sprague Dr	Hilario, Bryan	Shaw, Bradford and Shaw, Nancy	5/9	\$800,000	104 Ethan St	Davis, Vireder	Brown, Kerri A and Hennessey, Vincent I	5/2	\$456,000
41 Meeting St	Randall, Jennifer A	Goon, Tara	4/29	\$421,000	106 Landon Rd	Holmes, Cynthia J	Damico, Angelina M	5/2	\$400,000
42 Airport Rd	Buontempo, Scott and Buontempo, Rudolph	Hannigan, James and Wahl, Melvin	5/9	\$129,000	14 Center Ct	Celtic Roman Grp LLC	Dailleader, Miles	5/2	\$385,000
5 Reservoir Rd	Confreda, James W and Confreda, Lauren	Studley 3rd, John E	4/29	\$225,000	152 Sleepy Hollow Farm Rd	Iadeluca Jr, Gerald and Iadeluca, Nancy H	Shapiro, Gregory S and Ahle, Samantha L	5/2	\$940,000
504 Waterman Hill Rd	Wright, William D	Henderson, Shane P	4/24	\$369,000	164 Wood St	Rooke, Robert R	Straight, Alexandria L and Franco, Joseph J	5/2	\$319,900
53 Roundway Dr	King, Andrew R	Fredette, Alyxandria	5/2	\$375,000	200 Post Rd Lot 226	Kane Sr, Terrence J	Castillo, Alex	5/6	\$260,000
556 Washington St	Botti, Brooke	Baptista, Mharlisse	4/30	\$415,000	200 Post Rd Lot 223	Bullett, Teresa M	Kessler, Mitchell and Kessler, Cheryll	5/7	\$258,500
6 Bentley Ln Lot 6	Apponaug Properties Inc	Trask, Edward and Trask, Erin	4/28	\$750,000	22 Center Ct	Celtic Roman Grp LLC	Dailleader, Miles	5/2	\$385,000
6 Dodd St	Mochrie, Susan M	Barnett, Kevin M and Barnett, Brittany M	5/9	\$375,000	28 Cameron Ct	Mjb Prop LLC	Sousa, Jason	5/2	\$405,000
6 Lisas Way	Wahl, Melvin and Hannigan, James	Girard, Celia	5/9	\$255,000	35 Community Rd	Xu, Xun	Armada, Rachel	5/2	\$348,000
7 Sand St	Briggs, Charles A	Lively, Sean and Spencer, Mckalyn	4/23	\$413,000	3524 W Shore Rd Lot 902	Bodzioch Stephen Est and Bodzioch, Michael	Bhakarchi, Joseph and Murphy, Kevin	5/5	\$220,000
8 Lane 4	Cook, Matthew	Zito, Zachary	5/8	\$12,000	46 Dallas Ave	Bacani, Deborah	Bacani Flt and Bacani, Deborah H	5/6	\$255,000
841 Plainfield Pike	Pacesetter Group LLC	Scholfield, Nathan R	5/2	\$283,500	47 Arlee St	Rogers, Genna M	Musard, Brian and Catelle, Haley	5/7	\$383,000
86 Sunset Lake Cir Lot 4	Westwood Const Inc	Storybook Homes Inc	4/30	\$230,000	52 Northampton St	Campbell Lucy W Est and Whitney, Dale C	Machie, Cody M and Machie, Heather E	5/7	\$395,000
88 Sunset Lake Cir Lot 45	Westwood Const Inc	Storybook Homes Inc	4/30	\$230,00	64 Errol St	Centurion Prop Grp LLC	Murphy, James P and Cafferky, Virginia A	5/6	\$360,000
CRANSTON					68 Arnolds Neck Dr	Rodericks, Brian	Martin, Donald	5/5	\$306,000
10 Abbott St	Vance, Terri D	Plunkett, Alison M and Lake, Zachary E	5/5	\$525,000	68 Greene St Lot 1	Melwick Bldrs LLC	Rodrigues Azza, Cynthia L and Azza Jr, Louis J	5/7	\$422,000
10 Abbott St Lot 1540	Vance, Terri D	Plunkett, Alison M and Lake, Zachary E	5/5	\$525,000	7 Holt St	Vickers Robert A Est and Vanasse, Debora	Zarella Dev Corp	5/2	\$147,000
112 Scenic Dr	Natale, Joseph J	Lavoie, Kyle T and Messier, Lauren R	5/9	\$495,000	73 Dundas Ave	Bolvin 3rd, Richard L	Burke, Gabrielle and Burke, Dylan	5/2	\$640,000
116 Stony Acre Dr	Mcdonnell, Dennis A	Hudgins, Breonna M and Pedrotti, Nicholas	5/7	\$410,000	73 Dundas Ave Lot 189,	Bolvin 3rd, Richard L	Burke, Gabrielle and Burke, Dylan	5/2	\$640,000
123 Blackamore Ave	Lanigan, Carol and Sturks, Arnold	Eidson, Linda S	5/6	\$186,800	WEST GREENWICH				
125 Rockwood Ave	Boucher Geraldine M Est and Yeadon, Dean	Global Sales Group LLC	5/8	\$265,000	01 Wickaboxet Dr	Wang, Ke F	Cipolla, Daniel and Cipolla, Shelby C	5/5	\$524,000
15 Kensington Rd	Bernard H Larivee Lt and Larivee, Bernard H	Barry, Leslie A and Jodkin, Kerry E	5/5	\$1125,000	17 Dayna Dr	Deady Jr, Robert E and Deady, Nancy S	Vittori, Matthew and Poulin, Jillian	5/6	\$595,000
18 South St	Marshall, Jeffrey A and Marshall, Pauline	Sharoubim, Bishouy and Armanious, Caroline	5/7	\$435,000	WEST WARWICK				
195 Bay View Ave	Palmer, Sarah J and Salvati, Cameron P	Greene, Addison I and Greene, Mark R	5/5	\$372,000	1027 Providence St Lot 4B	Mccann, Margaret M	Vinson, John N	5/13	\$392,000
20 Koster St	Fabbri, Priscilla A	Kd Prop LLC	5/6	\$333,000	4 Governors HI Lot 4	Girard, Celia A	Debearadis, Amanda L	5/9	\$262,000
234 Lake Garden Dr	Pennacchia, Carmella M and Pennacchia, Michael	Villari, Rachel L	5/7	\$420,000	47 Birchwood Ln	D & Joyce Beutler Irt and Myers, Laurie A	Majo, Lisa A	5/12	\$435,000
288 Farmington Ave	Simonelli, Assunta	Flores Sr, Pedro A and Flores, Rosa	5/8	\$360,000	650 E Greenwich Ave Lot 5-102	Biondo, Linda P	De La-Torre, Jesus M	5/7	\$301,000
307 Smith St	Martinez, Tomas E	Weah, Titus G	5/9	\$417,000					
31 Hilltop Dr	Rotella, Thomas F and Rotella, Stephanie J	Hicks, Raymond E and Lyons Hicks, Patricia M	5/9	\$570,000					
36 Loomis St	Maria T Iannotti Relt and Bowman, Mary J	Wargary LLC	5/5	\$430,000					
367 Laurel Hill Ave	Tafiaferri, Robert A	Brianna Prop LLC	5/6	\$500,000					
40 N View Ave	40Ihomebuyers LLC	Bracho, Romer	5/9	\$523,000					
43 Bailey St	Cruz, Ramon A	De La Cruz, Ysabel	5/8	\$165,000					
51 Alto St	Brown, Brenda	Durand Transportation LLC	5/5	\$232,000					
60 Tomahawk Ln	Sintra Seven LLC	Eldb7 T	5/5	\$780,000					
7 Briar Hill Dr	Washburn, Joyce B	Taylor, Deborah	5/6	\$711,500					

South Fork Wind creating ‘reef effect’

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI
Special to the SunRise

The South Fork Wind Benthic Monitoring Program released a visual survey earlier this month conducted at South Fork Wind (SFW), an offshore wind farm located 16.5 nautical miles southeast of Block Island, Rhode Island in the Cox Ledge area. The survey shows that the project has had minimal environmental impact on the surrounding marine ecosystem and has created a positive “reef effect.”

Similar “reef effects” have been documented by peer reviewed studies at European wind farms and during a seven-year study at the Block Island Wind Farm, which showed there was a greater amount of Atlantic cod and black sea bass in the wind farm area compared to two control areas outside the wind farm, and all other species abundance was even.

Simply put, so far at 18 months out, South Fork Wind is yielding new habitat and fish.

James Riggs, a recreational fishing representative on the Fisheries Advisory Board (FAB) of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), said, “The enhanced ecology that I clearly see will only compound with time and become more and more prolific. It gives me hope that we can see a real benefit from what is already structurally out there and will be for a long time. There may be opportunities to enhance or improve on existing and or proposed marine infrastructure projects.”

Key findings of the study include no detectable changes to the biological communities on the seafloor surrounding the turbines; marine life is using the wind turbine foundations as habitat; and the project is already creating a reef effect, providing habitat for commercially, recreationally, and ecologically important marine species.

South Fork Wind’s comprehensive benthic (seafloor) monitoring program includes target visual studies at pre-construction, construction and post- construction time periods, which is something that fishermen advocated for. Comprehensive monitoring, like this study, is a requirement and aims to protect valuable marine resources and habitat.

To meet this requirement, independent science teams have conducted extensive visual monitoring surveys of the wind farm pylons, scour protection at the base of pylons, and cabling and bolder relocation areas.

Pictures speak louder than words

The good news is that SFW benthic surveys have not detected demonstrable change in the biological community or benthic functions associated with pylons, cable routes or bolder relocation. Striking video and still images taken before, during and after construction show extensive blue mussel growth and fish at pylons and in the surrounding area. See videos and still images at South Fork Wind Benthic Monitoring Program.

“I was very surprised with the mussel growth on pylons that has



Fishing Machine Charters, Pt. Judith, hooked up with cod, pollock and cunner in the Cox Ledge area wind farm. Submitted photo

occurred so quickly. The video footage clearly showed the creation of life on the pylons and at the base of the pylons on the scour protection,” said Fred Mattera, executive director of the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island, which represents nine commercial fishing-related organizations in Rhode Island.

Wind farms add new structure to the marine environment that marine invertebrates attach to and grow on. The new habitat and availability of food resources brings shellfish to the area attracting small and large fish.

Mattera said, “These structures are creating new habitat and life. The amount and variety of fish captured on video footage is incredible.”

This summer and winter there were numerous fishing reports from charter captains and anglers catching tuna, cod and an abundance of mahi-mahi at South Fork Wind.

“Simply put, my position is neither for or against offshore wind development, but if there is a way to improve marine habitat and strive for the goal of fish abundance I am all for it. I will do my best to advocate for recreational fishermen’s interests whenever I can,” said James Riggs of the FAB.

The South Fork Wind benthic visual surveys document the reef effect and reveal numerous commercially, recreationally and ecologically important species. Black sea bass, lobster, and flounder were documented near the structures. Other species observed included Atlantic cod, scup, cunner, barrel fish, flounder, butterfish, jack, mahi mahi, trigger fish, Bermuda chub, winter and summer flounder, sculpin, spotted and red hake, ocean pout and the Atlantic rock/Jonah crabs.

Other studies being conducted as part of the South Fork research and monitoring plan include gillnet and fish pot surveys, a ventless trap survey, a beam trawl survey, mechanical jigging study, and acoustic telemetry studies. Most of these stud-

ies are still underway. Visit the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation at South Fork Wind Farm Fisheries Monitoring — CFRF and an article on the Marine Fish Conservation Network blog for details on the South Fork Wind research and monitoring plan.

Where’s the bite?
Striped bass/bluefish. “Striper fishing is spotty. The are scattered. East Bay still a good bet,” said Nick Krajewski of Quaker Lane Bait & Tackle, North Kingstown.

Ryan Collins of My Fishing Cape Cod, said, “For boat anglers there’s been some awfully large striped bass caught in Cape Cod Bay and Buzzard’s Bay.”

Declan O’Donnell of Breachway Bait & Tackle, Charlestown, said, “Striped bass fishing remains productive, with a good variety of sizes being caught. Bluefish are still present, and there have been reports of some good-sized ones.”

Tom Olson of Ponaug Bait & Tackle, said, “The striped bass bite is better in the East Passage, however, anglers are catching fish in the Greenwich Bay and West Passage area too.”

“Last week I caught a 32” and three smaller bass at Narrow River, Narragansett on an incoming tide. Used my burgundy color fly that caught some hickory shad as well,” said Ed Lombardo, fly fishing expert and instructor.

Tautog season closed May 31. Anglers have filed fewer reports as the spring season comes to an end.

Black sea bass, summer flounder (fluke) and scup. Last week I caught small keeper fluke north of the Jamestown Bridge on American Ledge.

Angler Matthew Haczynski reports fishing Block Island Monday, “After a lot of slow fishing all of a sudden we loaded the cooler ending with all anglers on the boat limiting out. The tides nearest to slack produced best.”

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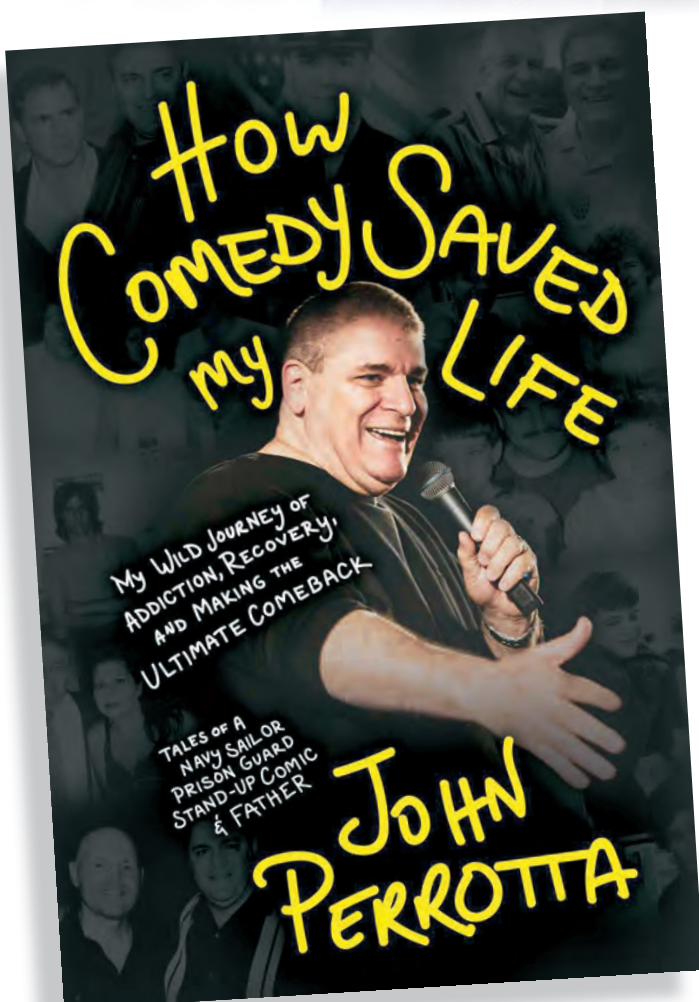
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Lifestyles



Rescued by Comedy

By MATTHEW LAWRENCE



The cover of John's book. Submitted photo from John Perrotta

John Perrotta likes to stay busy. The Cranston native spent decades building a comedy business at night while working as a correctional officer by day. He did all this while living a reckless lifestyle that nearly ruined him on more than one occasion. Now 67, Perrotta has just released an autobiography, *How Comedy Saved My Life: My Wild Journey of Addiction, Recovery & Making the Ultimate Comeback*.

The story is largely unhappy, beginning with a difficult childhood. "My father was an alcoholic and had depression," Perrotta says. "In the sixties he had shock treatments. I was an only child. Because of my father, I swore that I'd never drink, but I started in eighth grade. And I was an alcoholic from day one. It was crazy back then. You could walk into a liquor store at fourteen years old and nobody blinked an eye."

The same was true of Lincoln Downs, the old Greyhound racing track. "I just walked in at fourteen, fifteen. Nobody cared," he said. Gambling became an issue thanks to a friend with a bookie father. "I lost a thousand dollars in one week," he says. "I didn't have a thousand dollars! I thought they were going to break my legs."

In high school, Perrotta discovered drugs. "Back then, between City Hall and Cranston East you could get any drug you wanted," he says. "Coach [Michael] Traficante wanted me for the football team because I was a big guy, but I wanted nothing to do with it. I was behind the Park Theatre drinking beer and smoking pot."

Living with two alcoholics was rough on Per-

rotta's mother. At sixteen, he voluntarily went to Marathon House, a drug and alcohol program for adolescents, and he lived there for six months. The effects didn't last.

The night after Perrotta finished high school in 1976, a group of graduates went to Scarborough Beach and spent the night on the sand. "At six in the morning I opened a can of beer. I looked around, and everybody on either side of me was passed out. I never wanted to stop."

"The seventies were nuts," he says. "It took until I was in my fifties to get the seventies out of me."

After high school, Perrotta enlisted in the Navy, visiting 25 countries. In Egypt he smoked opium and stole a horse despite not knowing how to ride one. The women in Mallorca were so much fun that he missed his ship leaving. In New York, he happy I'm dying," his father told him. That was hard to hear, especially as his own life was crumbling at the time. His rocky second marriage was dissolving, and his wife took out a restraining order forbidding him from seeing his children. He discovered crack cocaine and moved into a hotel on Hartford Avenue.

A year after his mother died, he hosted an event at Stitches Comedy Kafe, a club that was briefly located in Providence Place Mall. Snorting lines backstage between acts, Perrotta suddenly felt that something was wrong. Heart racing, he stepped outside for air. "I thought I was having a heart attack in the parking lot of the Providence Place Mall. Imagine a worse place to go!"

COMEDY from page 15

He recovered but cites that as another instance of hitting bottom.

At that point, he'd been booking comedy shows throughout southern New England for over a decade. "Putting shows together keeps me busy. I do everything, soup to nuts," he says, from working with venues and booking acts to managing table reservations and frequently performing himself. As a comedian, Perrotta says he mixes jokes with crowd work. "I'm fast on my feet," he says. "I'm a ball buster. Don Rickles was my idol. I loved Rodney Dangerfield."

"I didn't sleep much," he says of that period. "And some days I was a little hungover. It wasn't easy being an addict. How did I keep my job?" He was still a guard at the ACI, where he remained until he retired in 2018.

When Terry, his second ex-wife, became very ill, Perrotta drove out to Cleveland, where she received a life-saving double lung transplant. Reunited, the pair decided to remarry. "My second wife became my third wife," Perrotta says.

In 2014 he quit drinking again for about three and a half years. Then he was back at Twin River for one last weekend bender. Drinking, drugs, and gambling were a package deal for Perrotta.

After that, he quit for good. His doctor

told him that he would have only made it for a few more years if he kept going.

Now he stays focused on comedy. "Sometimes I book two shows a week, sometimes it's five," he says. "In the nineties I once booked eight shows in one night and I performed at five of them, one after the other." He regularly produces, hosts, and performs at venues around southern New England, like his regular All You Can Eat, All You Can Laugh events at Lemongrass in Warwick.

"We've got a good comedy community in Rhode Island," he says.

Perrotta's new book is published by Legacy Books, an imprint started by his son David. "Comedy saved your life, Dad," David told his father, the family now reunited. The younger Perrotta is a dating coach and influencer who has published five books teaching men how to attract women.

"My son made me realize my life was really different from a lot of people," Perrotta says. The book ends at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, where Terry presents Perrotta with a coin for eight years of sober living.

Perrotta hopes his book might reach readers who are in recovery, or who want to be.

"I don't have the urge anymore," he says about drugs and gambling. "I lost a grand every time I went to the casino. I went bankrupt twice. It's like there's a switch. As long as I keep the switch off,



David with his dad John. Submitted photo from John Perrotta

I'm a regular guy. I'm not proud of everything I went through, but I'm proud of the book. I've had a pretty good career. Now my high is being with my grandson."

The June 14 book launch is a dinner buffet and comedy show at 39 West in Knightsville (39 Phenix Avenue). Perrotta will share the stage with local co-

medians Carolynn Gifford, Tyler Hittner, and Stephen Turgeon. Tickets are \$60 for dinner and the show. Books are sold separately.

He'll sign copies of the book before and after the show. Those who can't make the show can stop by after 9:30pm for the book signing. Reservations can be made by calling (401) 639-7726.



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