

Changes in Washington could impact student loans

By TIM FORSBERG

As discussions continue about the potential dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education under the new presidential administration, concerns are rising about how such a move could impact student loans and financial aid programs.

Amy Kempe, chief of staff at the Community College of Rhode Island, and Charles Kelley, executive director of the Rhode Island Student Loan Authority, provided insights into what these changes might mean for students and families in Rhode Island.

According to Kempe, CCRI, in partnership with the governor's office, the

Council on Postsecondary Education, and the state's higher-education institutions, is closely monitoring potential changes to assess their impact on current and prospective students.

"Regardless of any policy changes, CCRI remains committed to ensuring that higher education remains accessible and affordable," said Kempe. "We encourage students and families to stay proactive, seek guidance from CCRI's financial aid office, and take advantage of all available resources to make informed financial decisions about their education."

Kelley noted that while eliminating the Department of Education entirely would be "difficult to achieve," a more

likely scenario would involve certain responsibilities being transferred to other parts of the government. But he acknowledged that uncertainty remains about the future structure of federal student aid.

For now, Pell Grants – the need-based financial aid provided to low-income students – do not appear to be facing major changes.

"Maximum Pell Grant is now \$7,395," Kelley confirmed.

One of the more significant potential shifts, however, involves federal loans for graduate students and parents.

"The most significant change we have seen is the federal government's involvement in making loans to grad-

uate students and Parent PLUS loans the parents use to fill the gap after grants and the student maxing out the student direct loan, with a maximum of \$5,500 for a traditional freshman," Kelley explained.

The financial impact of eliminating or reducing these loans could be substantial. According to Kelley, replacing or reducing the so-called Grad PLUS loans would be especially troublesome as graduate students generally do not have the income and credit history to obtain a loan on their own. He highlighted the local implications, stating that about \$60 million in Grad PLUS

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Planning Board approves asphalt company expansion

By TIM FORSBERG

The Johnston Planning Board approved a proposal from Johnston Asphalt, LLC during its February 4 meeting, granting additional approvals that were continued from the board's January session.

Attorney Andrew Teitz, representing Johnston Asphalt, reiterated the key aspects of the petition before the board.

"Last month, we had a fairly extensive hearing with several expert witnesses, reviewed everything, and answered questions," said Teitz, who noted that several board members had expressed a desire to visit the site before deciding, which led to the matter being continued.

The petitioner requested three approvals: a planning board advisory opinion to the zoning board, a waiver of site plan review, and a recommendation to the building inspector regarding compliance with industrial performance standards. Teitz explained that the advisory opinion was part of a Superior Court remand, ensuring the project met general standards for special permits.

Johnston Asphalt sought approval for two storage silos to streamline operations.

"The silos are essentially like a display case in a bakery," Teitz said. "We can prepare materials ahead of time so customers don't have to wait for a fresh batch."

PLANNING- PAGE 7



100 Years for 100th Day

Students embraced their inner centenarians as they celebrated the 100th day of school—one day late due to snow but with plenty of spirit! Dressed as lively 100-year-olds, students enjoyed a day filled with fun activities and learning. For more coverage and photos of the celebration across Johnston's schools, see page 6. (Beacon Media photos by Tim Forsberg)

Reed: Courts must hold Trump to Constitution

By IAN DONNIS
The Public's Radio and
RIPBS

The first few weeks of the Trump administration have been a whirlwind, raising alarm among Democrats and pleasing supporters of the president. U.S. Sen. Jack Reed sat down to discuss Trump's initiatives and how Democrats are responding.

Here are highlights from the interview.

On how the delegation is responding:

Sen. Reed: "I think the delegation is working extraordinarily well. On my own sake, I led the effort to prevent Secretary Hegseth from being named Secretary of Defense for reasons that at least convinced several other Republicans to join us, the

only time I've seen a real break in their ranks. And we sent a signal, I hope, to the president that his appointees, his nominees can't be superficial. They have to be people of competence, character, experience. And Senator Whitehouse has been extremely diligent with respect to his role in nominations and other aspects too. We're in a position right now where, based on our constitutional system, the courts are the best form of relief. The president's arguably breaking the law in many cases, and as a result, it's the courts that must declare that and impose the proper sanction."

On the worst-case scenario until the mid-terms:

Sen. Reed: "Well, the worst case is frankly creating such in-



U.S. Sen. Jack Reed

stitutional turmoil that the government really can't function. And there is a theory that that's one of the goals of President Trump. He likes chaos, he thrives on it, and it allows him to be unchecked, which he likes,

and also to make money, which he likes. So that's the case where this will not be focused really on reforming the government and certainly not by abiding by the law but more on self-aggrandizement and self-promotion. That would be terrible because it would lead, I think, to an aggregation of power in the White House that would be a constitutional threat.... One aspect of this too is, this is being seen throughout the world — so America is being judged now, not as a reliable, steady partner, but as this erratic function. One day you have USAID helping health care centers in a country, and the next day they're gone. What does that say about the durability and the stability of the United States?"

On how Politico described a

loss of relevance for the Senate:

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

On the ability of courts to

REED - PAGE 7

Laura M. Krohn

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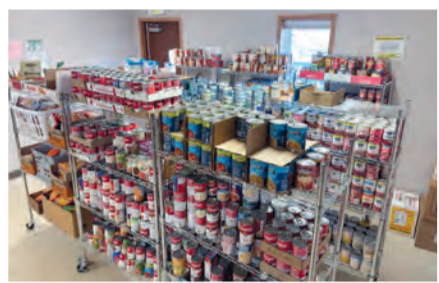
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Cardi's Collects Three Pallets of Food for OSDRI

In a display of generosity and community spirit, Cardi's Furniture & Mattresses has once again stepped up to support local veterans in need. Throughout the month of January, the Rhode Island-based furniture retailer organized a food collection drive, ultimately donating three full pallets of non-perishable food items to Operation Stand Down Rhode Island (OSDRI) for its Veteran Food Pantry.

OSDRI, a nonprofit dedicated to assisting homeless and at-risk veterans, operates a vital food pantry to provide essential resources to at risk, former service members and their families. The donation from Cardi's will help ensure that local veterans facing food insecurity have access to nutritious meals and support.



Cardi's has a long history of supporting charitable causes across Rhode Island. Local veterans and their families who rely on OSDRI's services will directly benefit from this donation, reinforcing the importance of community partnerships in tackling food insecurity. OSDRI encourages anyone interested in supporting their mission to consider making donations or volunteering to help ensure Rhode Island veterans receive the care and resources they deserve.

For more information on Operation Stand Down Rhode Island and how to get involved, visit www.osdri.org.

POLICE LOG

SUSPENDED LICENSE

Patrolman Zachary Morin was on a fixed post on Plainfield Street on January 27 at approximately 2:15 p.m. when he reportedly observed a vehicle with a rear license plate that was improperly displayed. A car stop was then initiated.

Officer Morin then approached the vehicle and observed that the rear license plate was obscured with a plastic license plate cover that was also allegedly covered in debris. Contact was then made with the driver, identified as Carlos Ramos Torres, 31, of 114 Jewett Street in Providence.

Torres reported to the officer that his license was suspended from a prior arrest for failure to submit to standardized field sobriety tests, and checks revealed the license was suspended. Torres was then taken into custody and transported back to police headquarters. He was issued a Johnston Municipal Court summons for improper display of plates. Torres was also charged with driving with a suspended license. He was arraigned on \$1,000 surety, held as a violator and then later transported to the ACI.

"I KNOW"

On February 2 at approximately 10 p.m., various patrol units assigned to the evening watch responded to the area of 1440 Hartford Avenue for a report of a single car accident.

At the scene, officers reportedly discovered an SUV that had entered the parking lot of 1440 Hartford Avenue, struck a fence and traveled over the roadway median.

Officers then made contact with the driver, reported to be Marcelino Santay, 43, of 243 Killingly Street, 2nd Floor, in Providence. Santay had no complaints of pain and refused a medical evaluation.

Officers reported that Santay was seated in the driver's seat placing shoes on his feet as he had been driving barefoot. Santay allegedly was confused and his speech was mumbled and slurred. Officers also reported other signs of impairment, as well as a strong smell of alcohol emanating from his person.

When officers advised Santay of the evidence they observed leading them to believe he was under the influence, San-

tay reportedly stated "I know."

Santay then agreed to partake in a series of standardized field sobriety tests. Based upon the officers' training and experience, it was determined that Santay was unfit to safely operate a motor vehicle. He was taken into custody and transported to police headquarters where he later refused to take a chemical breathalyzer test.

A subsequent search of the vehicle reportedly discovered four emptied Southern Comfort and tequila nips and a fifth nip which was full and sealed.

During questioning, Santay allegedly advised officers that he began drinking three to four hours prior to the crash. He also advised that he was driving around town while drinking and was unaware where he departed from. When asked where he was coming from, he stated "Guatemala."

Santay was charged with driving under the influence, first offense, refusal to submit to a chemical test, operating a vehicle with an unsealed alcoholic beverage, laned roadway violations, conditions requiring reduced speeds, and operating a vehicle without insurance, amongst other charges. He was released with a Third District Court Summons to appear on February 7, then transported to the hospital for detox.

FUGITIVE

On January 28 at approximately 9:41 p.m., several officers reported to the area of Rachella Street in an attempt to locate Johnathon Tabaras, 22, of 26 Rachella Street. According to police reports, Tabaras had an extraditable warrant from the Seekonk Police Department for intimidation/stalking.

Officers noted that they were looking for a white Nissan which Tabaras was said to be operating. A vehicle matching the description was found to be operating in the area of Pezzullo Street, and a motor vehicle stop was conducted.

Officers noted that there was no front license plate, and that the license plate attached to the vehicle did not match. Tabaras was confirmed to be the driver and was taken into custody, transported to police headquarters, and held pending arraignment. He was later issued a citation for display of plates.

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Local favorites score a touchdown on National Pizza Day



With the Super Bowl setting the stage, Johnston residents had plenty of reasons to celebrate on February 9 as National Pizza Day gave an excuse to indulge in their favorite slices. With a variety of pizzerias serving up delicious pies, it was a day to honor one of America's most beloved foods.

From classic cheese to specialty creations, local pizza places saw an uptick in orders starting as early as Friday, as families, friends, and co-workers took part in the festivities. Many local pizzerias offered special deals to mark the occasion.

"We love pizza because we can share our food with our customers and share our great pizza," said Rena who works at Espresso's Pizza.

The day wasn't just about eating pizza, it was also about celebrating the role it plays in bringing people together. Thornton School had pizza for lunch on Friday, as workplaces and parties used the weekend as an opportunity for gatherings over a fresh, hot pie. As always, which spot has the best slices is all a matter of taste.

"Pizza Palace, as I request thin sliced and it's perfect," said Patricia Dee posting about her place of choice on the Johnston Sun Rise Facebook page. "Also, The Original Italian Bakery with their famous pizza chips!"

Even former DPW Director Arnie Vecchione chimed in on the conversation, liking a post about a family sized white pizza with tomato and feta cheese. Its clear tastes vary widely, but it was a weekend where everyone was accommodated.

As National Pizza Day came and went, one thing remains certain, Johnston's love for pizza is strong year-round.



That's amore! No matter the location in town, Johnston's pizzerias were fired up for the weekend, with the Super Bowl falling directly on National Pizza Day. Clockwise from top: Rick Caron, owner of Hometown Pizza and Subs, was ready to put on any topping that a customer wanted on their pizza. Vito Orrego, owner of Bella Pizza, had pizza boxes ready to go to meet this weekend's demand. And Rena of Espresso's Pizza was ready to take on a white pizza made to order. (Johnston Sun Rise photos by Tim Forsberg)

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Perfect Attendance All Stars



Thornton Elementary School is beaming with pride as these dedicated young scholars achieved perfect attendance for the entire month of January! Showing up every day, rain or shine, these students demonstrated commitment, perseverance, and a love for learning—qualities that will take them far. Their dedication did not go unnoticed, as they were celebrated with well-deserved recognition from their teachers and school staff. Keep up the great work, and let's see even more shining faces next month! (Submitted photos)

Exciting Events Coming to Mohr Library this February

The Marian J. Mohr Memorial Library has an exciting lineup of events this February, offering something for all ages. From genealogy research to interactive children's programs, the library continues to serve as a hub for learning and engagement.

Discover Your Family's Story
 For those interested in exploring their roots, library assistant Patrick Wood will present *Researching Your Family History with FamilySearch* on Saturday, February 15, at noon. Attendees will receive an introduction to FamilySearch, a free genealogical database, and learn about some of the fascinating individuals Patrick has uncovered in his own family tree. The program will also highlight research resources available at the library and through Ocean State Libraries. No registration is required, and attendees may have the opportunity to form an ongoing genealogy group.

Weekly Adult Programs
 Adults looking to sharpen their creative skills can join Meg's Drawing Class every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. Participants will learn basic drawing techniques in a relaxed setting.

The library also provides assistance with basic computer tasks, accessing electronic books, and finding information on a variety of topics.

School Vacation Week: Fun for Kids and Families
 While the library will be closed for President's Day, Monday, February 17, but it will host several engaging children's programs during school vacation week.
Saturday, February 15 at 10:30 a.m. – Snowmen Storytime: Ms. Cailey will lead a fun-filled session featuring stories, songs, fingerplay, and puppets about snowflakes and snowmen for children ages 3 and up with a caregiver.
Tuesday, February 18 at 10:30 a.m. – Fiddle and Fun: An interactive music program with Mr. Joel for children of all ages. Registration opens on February 14 at 9:30 a.m. and is required for participation. Sponsored by the Friends of Mohr Library.

Tuesday, February 18 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. – Wildlife Explorers: Children ages 5-8 can join Ms. Cailey to learn about nature through stories, crafts, games, and activities. Caregivers must remain in the library.

Wednesday, February 19 at 10:30 a.m. – Kittens and Mittens: A delightful story time featuring mischievous kittens, songs, fingerplay, and puppets for children ages 3 and up with a caregiver.

Wednesday, February 19 from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. – Fun with Art: Ms. Melyssa will lead a creative art project for children ages 5 and up, accompanied by a caregiver.

Thursday, February 20 at 11 a.m. – STEM Challenge: Kids ages 5 and up can join Ms. Melyssa for an exciting hands-on STEAM project that encourages curiosity and innovation.

Thursday, February 20 at 6:30 p.m. – The Great Baldini Magic Show: Families will be amazed by The Great Baldini's lively magic and comedy performance. Registration opens February 14 at 9:30 a.m. on the library's website. Sponsored by the Friends of Mohr Library.

Friday, February 21 – Power of the Pen: Young writers can develop their creativity through storytelling, games, and activities with Ms. Shay. Two sessions are available: 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. for ages 5 to 8, and 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. for ages 9 to 12.

With such a diverse range of programs, be sure to visit and take part in these exciting activities.

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Opinion

EDITORIAL

Snow brings out the best in us

Why does everything just seem a little less dark when it snows?

There's actually a scientific reason for that. Snow is really great at reflecting light, so any time there is a covering of it — on the ground, on rooftops, beautifully plastered onto the branches of trees and dressing the top of cars — it serves as a large, uniform surface area for all surrounding light sources to bounce off and reflect back into the world around it. Essentially, the snow is creating a big mirror.

This phenomenon becomes especially apparent at night, where even normally dim light sources, like the moon or moody porchlights, supply enough luminescence to become supercharged by the surrounding ice crystals. We're sure you have memories of walking around a snowy neighborhood at night after a fresh falling. The sounds are dampened (snow is also a great insulator of sound), and an almost ethereal kind of light fills the air. It's enough to make even the most hardened New Englander feel poetic.

But in addition to creating a physical mirror for light, we think it's also quite magical how snow holds up a kind of mirror to us and demonstrates our innate desire to be decent to one another.

Snow presents a shakeup from our usual routines. It presents an unavoidable obstacle for us to overcome. We have to prepare for it, deal with it, physically remove it from our roads, walkways, cars and porches. There's no point arguing about snow. It's there, and it needs to be handled.

When we see snow around our communities, we also see a lot of communal behavior. Those who are physically stronger will shovel an elderly neighbor's sidewalk. Those with snow blowers will spare the aching backs of 10 of their neighbors by clearing their driveways in addition to their own.

Snow provides the opportunity for families to reconnect away from screens. Any nearby hill becomes a communal gathering spot for smiling sledders. It reaffirms the importance of our public parks and parcels of open space, even in the off season when they are less traversed.

There is no denying the uniting power of a good snowstorm. It has brought New Englanders together for centuries — out of necessity, out of camaraderie, and out of what we believe to be an innately human desire to let our inner warmth overcome the cold.



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

GUEST OPINION

RI takes low road on Medicaid, creating a crisis

By Michael Wagner, MD and John Fernandez

Rhode Island's health care system is in crisis, and it cannot be ignored any longer.

As many Rhode Islanders can attest, booking a doctor's appointment has never been more difficult. A recent poll conducted by SocialSphere found that more than half of Rhode Island respondents reported facing at least one health care access challenge in the past year. As leaders of our state's largest health care systems, we, along with our talented clinicians, experience this every day. The shortage of primary and specialty care providers forces patients to seek routine care in the emergency departments, where they face overcrowded waiting rooms and long waits. Chronic workforce shortages and clinician burnout add to the difficulty for patients to get the care they need.

The root cause of this crisis lies largely with Medicaid in Rhode Island. As the public health insurer for low-income individuals and families, Medicaid in Rhode Island reimburses hospitals and physician groups far less than the cost of care. The State of Rhode Island allocates significantly less funding toward Medicaid than our neighboring states. Rhode Island has among the highest percentage of Medicaid enrollment in New England, and our provider reimbursement rates are the lowest in the region. For example, a hip replacement in Massachusetts is reimbursed up to \$7,670 by Medicaid. In Rhode Island, our state's Medicaid program reimburses us \$1,800 for the same procedure. That doesn't even cover the hip implant itself, which costs about \$4,700.

Severe underpayment by the State of Rhode Island translated to a combined FY2023 and FY2024 loss of \$138 million at Brown University Health and a \$84.2 million loss at Care New England for patients on Med-

icaid. This is a health equity issue: we're reimbursed the least to care for patients who often need care the most.

The impact of these funding shortfalls is far-reaching. Low reimbursements severely hinder our ability to recruit, retain and compensate talented physicians, nurses and the entire health care team, while we also manage rising costs of technology, supplies and infrastructure. Patients lose access to care when there are too few doctors to see them and too few nurses to staff hospital beds. Financially distressed health organizations in Rhode Island will continue to have to lay off staff. Essential programs and the ability to provide a social safety net to the most vulnerable are at risk of reductions or closure of patient programs, as we have seen other health systems do.

Fortunately, our state legislators and government officials have the power to fix our health care crisis by maximizing the federal funding for Medicaid. Most of Rhode Island's Medicaid budget comes from the federal government, which matches \$2 for every dollar the state puts in. In other words, a \$90-million state investment brings an additional \$180 million in federal Medicaid funds to Rhode Island, injecting \$270 million into our health care system. If we fail to act, this potential funding will go to other states, leaving Rhode Island to fall even further behind.

Investing in Medicaid will ensure all Rhode Islanders receive the care they need. It will help retain our compassionate and talented doctors and nurses and ensure our facilities are equipped to meet the needs of our patients. It will keep care and jobs in Rhode Island. The time for action is now. Our state leaders must act to save health care in Rhode Island.

Michael Wagner, MD, FACP, is president and CEO of Care New England. John Fernandez is president and CEO of Brown University Health.

JOHNSTON Sun Rise

John Howell, Publisher Emeritus

Publisher Joy Fox - Publisher@BeaconMediaRI.com	Advertising Representatives Melissa Miller - MelissaM@rhodybeat.com Suzanne Wendoloski - SuzanneW@rhodybeat.com
Editor Tim Forsberg - TimF@BeaconMediaRI.com	Credit Manager Lynne Taylor
Reporters Barbara Polichetti - BarbaraP@beaconmediari.com Rosegalie Cineus - RosegalieC@beaconmediari.com	Bookkeeping & Circulation Leslie Paz Andujar
Sports Editor Alex Sponseller - AlexS@rhodybeat.com	Production Manager Lisa Bourque Yuettner - LisaB@rhodybeat.com
Advertising Director Donna Zarrella - DonnaZ@rhodybeat.com	Production Staff Monique Rice - MoR@rhodybeat.com
Classified Advertising Ida Zecco - Classifieds@rhodybeat.com	Spotlight Profile Writer Jennifer Coates - JenniferC@rhodybeat.com

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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



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Waste, fraud and reaction to Trump's orders

STORY OF THE WEEK: Everyone talks about waste and fraud, but no one does anything about it. That may sum up the view of many, if not most, supporters of President Donald Trump as his administration quickly moves to drastically reshape the federal government. "He campaigned on these promises and now he's following through," Rhode Island Senate GOP Leader Jessica de la Cruz (R-North Smithfield) said last week in an interview with my colleague Luis Hernandez.

But Trump also distanced himself during the campaign from Project 2025. Now, the architect of that plan, Russell Vought, will lead the powerful U.S. Office of Management and Budget, despite sharp opposition from U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse and other Senate Democrats.

For supporters, the alacrity with which the Trump administration is making big changes marks a welcome contrast from how generations of pols have cited the ambiguous catchall "waste and fraud" when asked how to trim government spending. The Government Accounting Office estimates annual government losses due to fraud to be between \$233 billion and \$521 billion.

But there's a difference between cutting fraud and remaking the government with disregard for local control, fewer checks and balances and a vast expansion of executive power – all with a leading role for the world's richest man, who wields enormous influence in his unelected post and is rife with potential conflicts of interest due to his extensive government contracts.

In the short term, taking a chainsaw to the federal government probably resonates with many Americans. Ronald Reagan got a lot

TALKING POLITICS



by
IAN DONNIS

of mileage with his line about the nine most terrifying words in the English language. (He nonetheless presided over a big boost in federal spending.) But Musk's might is helping to galvanize Democrats, courts are blocking some of Trump's envisioned changes, and people sometimes develop a different view of government when they realize it helps to promote health and wellness.

THE RESPONSE: A coalition composed of Indivisible RI, Climate Action RI, the RI Working Families Party, Common Cause of RI and Black Lives Matter RI attracted hundreds of people to gather outside U.S. Sen. Jack Reed's Providence office on Saturday, Feb. 8, "to call on Rhode Island's federal delegation to use every tool at their disposal to stand up to Elon Musk's illegal takeover of the U.S. Treasury." According to a news release for the event, "The United States is in the midst of a five-alarm fire. Elon Musk has illegally taken over the mainframe of Treasury's payment systems, and in doing so is seizing the means of cutting off

spending to any federal program. He can delete the file that controls your Social Security payments, or the payments to your kid's Head Start program. He can unilaterally shut down an agency's funding or cut off all benefits to blue states like Rhode Island. This is an unimaginably dangerous crisis."

THE RESPONSE, PART II: Here's a look at how some of Rhode Island's Democratic elected officials are reacting to Trump initiatives and nominations.

***Sen. Whitehouse voted no on RFK Jr's nomination to be Health and Human Services secretary. In a statement, Whitehouse said, "Mr. Kennedy has not come remotely close to providing adequate assurances that he will follow the well-established science on vaccines, nor remedy the ways CMS [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services] hurts Rhode Island, so I cannot support his nomination."

***Attorney General Peter Neronha joined a coalition of 20 AGs urging the Senate to seek more answers from FBI nominee Kash Patel. With 14 other AGs, Neronha was also part of a group issuing a statement on protecting access to gender-affirming care.

***U.S. Rep. Gabe Amo criticized a shrinking commitment to scientific research. He asked Rhode Islanders to share how they are being affected by the new administration.

***U.S. Sen. Jack Reed signed on to a letter calling the Trump administration's "deferred-resignation" offer deceptive, legally dubious and a threat to important services.

***U.S. Rep. Seth Magaziner helped organize a protest against Elon Musk and DOGE and raised a flag about an apparent cut-off in funding for local health centers.

RI transgender and non-binary protections

The Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights affirms its commitment to the enforcement of laws protecting those who live in, work in or visit Rhode Island against discrimination on the basis of gender identity/expression.

The commission enforces state antidiscrimination laws in the areas of employment, housing, public accommodations and credit.

Rhode Island has long been a leader in protecting and advancing the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. The state legislature amended the state's antidiscrimination laws in 1995 to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and in 2002 to explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity/expression.

The commission will continue to enforce these laws by accepting, investigating and deciding allegations of discrimination against transgender and non-binary individuals.

Regardless of changes in federal policy, the law in Rhode Island is clear that employers, housing providers, places of public accommodation and credit providers may not discriminate against people based on their gender identity/expression. Our office is committed to ensuring that Rhode Island remains a safe and supportive place for non-binary and transgender people. We are proud to do this work on behalf of all Rhode Islanders.

Anyone who believes they have been discriminated against is encouraged to reach out to our office as indicated below:

For discrimination in housing: richr.housing@richr.ri.gov

For discrimination in employment, public accommodations or credit: richr.info@richr.ri.gov

For general information about the Commission, visit: www.richr.ri.gov, or call 401.222.2661, Voice Relay 7-1-1

LEGAL NOTICES

JOHNSTON ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW AGENDA

Tuesday, February 27th, 2025 6:00 P.M.

Jonston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave.,
Johnston, RI 02919

- I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL
- II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- IV. OLD BUSINESS

ZBA File 2022-2-Petition of Johnston Asphalt LLC, Applicant for 100 Allendale Ave. AP 36 Lot 77. Zoned industrial. This petition has been remanded by the Superior Court for a new hearing.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Petition of Amanda Saucedo 25 Pinewood Ave AP 9 Lot 78, Zone R15. Requesting to construct an attached garage with living space above. 30ft.x20ft. 600 sq.ft.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The Zoning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at <https://clerkshq.com/johnston-ri> or Monday through Friday

between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.

• Items not heard by 9:00 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.

• Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

2/13, 2/20/25

Town of Johnston Planning Board REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, March 4th, 2025 6:00 P.M.

Johnston Senior Center
1291 Hartford Ave.
Johnston, RI 02919

- I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- III. OLD BUSINESS

PB 24-42 – Forest Drive Solar AP 46 Lots 103, 171, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212 and 213- Zoned R-40. Owner: Shore Holdings, LLC. Applicant -Revity Energy. The Petitioner is seeking A Public Hearing on the Master Plan Application of a Major

Land Development and Special Use Permit applications pursuant to Unified Development Review to develop two 0.5 MW solar arrays and one single-family residential lot. Behind 3 and 17 Forest Drive.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

PB 24-12-Wendy's Restaurant -1386 Atwood Avenue AP Lot 359 Zoned B2. Applicant John Marth. Petitioner is seeking A Public Hearing for a Master Plan with Unified Development Review.

PB 25-01- Advisory Opinion on the request to Rezone 183 Shun Pike AP 43 Lot(s) 264&265 from R-40 to I-Industrial. Applicant: Bachar Sasa.

PB 25-02-Advisory Opinion requesting amendments to Section 340-16 Industrial Performance Standards of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the covering of dirt mounds.

PB 25-04- Petition 2024-CP-173 requesting to change the zoning AP 8 Lot 14 from B-2 and R-20 to R-7. Applicant Mohamad Yaser & Rhonda Sasa.

PB 25-05 - 1515 Atwood Avenue AP 20 Lot 77. A Public Hearing for a Master Plan with Unified Development Review for a new restaurant.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT & SPECIAL ITEMS

PB 25-03- Affordable Housing – Review DRAFT Plan, listen comment, recommendation action to the Town Council

PB 22-57 – The Comprehensive Plan. Future Land Use Maps

PB 23-35 – Zoning Update. Discussion and review of draft zoning ordinance. Major restructuring of the ordinance was required because of the changes and the failure to update the ordinance over the past years when changes were made to state law.

• The Planning Board Agenda and Minutes are available for review at <https://clerkshq.com/johnston-ri> or Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Planning Office, 100 Irons Avenue, Johnston.

• Items not heard by 9:00 p.m. may be continued to the next Regular Meeting or a special meeting at the discretion of the Board.

• Facilities are handicap accessible. Interpreter services may be requested from TTD (401) 792-9642 at least 72 hours in advance.

2/13, 2/20/25

Monsignor DeAngelis Manor is now ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR TWO BEDROOM APARTMENTS

Msgr. DeAngelis Manor, is located on Wakefield Street in West Warwick, centrally located on the bus route and nearby stores. Financed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the elderly and disabled 62 years old and over.

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■ Planning
(Continued from page 1)

Teitz argued that the addition would improve efficiency without significantly altering the site. Additionally, the company requested a waiver of a site plan review, as the silos met zoning requirements and did not exceed size limitations.

"These aren't major changes—just two silos that conform to all requirements," Teitz emphasized. He added that the installation might reduce truck congestion, as drivers would no longer need to idle while waiting for materials.

The board also considered the project's compliance with industrial performance standards. Teitz requested that the board recommend approval to the building inspector, ensuring a streamlined process.

When the meeting opened for public comment, no community members spoke on the proposal. Planning Board member Robert Pingitore, who has long been involved in the asphalt paving business, voiced support.

"This is bringing [this business] up to



Attorney Andrew Teitz, representing Johnston Asphalt, reiterated the key aspects of the company's petition before the Planning Board during this month's meeting. (Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg)

standard with what everyone else has," Pingitore stated. "Silos like these improve efficiency and traffic flow, reducing the number of trucks idling and waiting for batches."

With no opposition presented, the

Planning Board unanimously granted the requested approvals in three separate motions, allowing Johnston Asphalt to move forward to the next step with its project.

In other matters, a proposal to address

a solar farm, Forest Drive Solar, was continued to the March 4 meeting.

Town Planner Thomas Deller also addressed the board in regards to the town's affordable housing plan. He stated that the town's affordable housing plan needed to be updated in the town's comprehensive plan to comply with regulations. He presented to each member of the board a packet with plan details for review.

Deller stated that the town is looking to be in compliance with recent state law changes that mandate at least 10 percent of a municipality's housing stock be designated as affordable for low and moderate income households to promote equitable housing opportunities.

"We are looking at our compliance with the 10 percent law," said Deller. "We've only added about 50 units since 2004. Under the present regulation we're required to have about 1,270 affordable units and there are only about 980 to 990, somewhere in that realm."

Deller said he would like to have a comprehensive draft available for the next month's meeting to review with the board once they have time to review the provided documentation.

■ Reed
(Continued from page 1)

prevent Trump's excesses:

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

On whether there's something to Trump's talk about cutting government waste:

Sen. Reed: "Well, it's somewhat ironic. They are proposing to literally gut the IRS and a great deal of that fraud comes through the in-

come tax system. People not paying their taxes – and not the working people because it's deducted from your pay – but people who have high-level incomes and find incredibly complicated tax schemes. And yet he's going to take away all that money from the IRS to go out and enforce what is probably, in many respects, one of the major forms of lost revenue to the federal government or misspent revenue. So, this is not about cracking down on corruption. This is about cracking down on his political enemies or people he perceives as his enemies. It's also about trying to eliminate, in large part, the federal workforce, which for many, many years has served with great dedication and great diligence.

On the cumulative effect if Trump succeeds in eliminating or greatly curtailing government agencies, significantly downsizing the CIA and replacing thousands of Civil Service employees in the federal government with loyalists:

Sen. Reed: "It will be a disaster. Let me just give you an example. Cutting off foreign aid: Right now

the Israelis and the Lebanese forces are trying to maintain the cease-fire in Lebanon, and we cut off all foreign assistance to Lebanon. We should be actually putting more resources in there to stabilize that government, which for the first time in a long time is a non-Hezbollah government. And that would hopefully maintain the cease-fire. In addition to that, Trump has said through his Cabinet he's going to eliminate the Cybersecurity Commission, in the Homeland Security Department. That's the agency that goes after disinformation, particularly from foreign countries like Russia, and China, and Iran. That's going to flood the airwaves with incredible disinformation that will confuse and conflict Americans. Then he's also stopped enforcing sanctions on Russia and their oligarchs, and that's sending a signal to Putin, 'Hey, you know, I'll help you. You know, give me a face-saving deal in the Ukraine.' So, after a while, if you don't have an intelligence capacity, you can't anticipate what's going to happen, you can't react."

■ Loans
(Continued from page 1)

loans were issued in Rhode Island for the 2023-24 academic year alone.

Similarly, Parent PLUS loans – federal loans taken out by parents to help cover college costs – play a significant role in financing higher education.

"There were \$103 million in Parent PLUS loans made for the 2023-24 academic year in Rhode Island. If those are eliminated or curtailed, RISLA will need to step up and help fill that gap," Kelley said.

For students seeking additional financial aid, Kelley pointed to other scholarship opportunities, emphasizing the importance of applying for local funding.

"Go to the College Board for national scholarships and RIScholarship.org to find and apply for local scholarships. You generally have a much better chance of being awarded a local scholarship, even if they are relatively small," he advised.

Beyond the discussion of potential policy changes, Kelley acknowledged the growing national concern over student loan debt, which now totals about \$1.6 trillion. He noted that this massive loan portfolio makes the Department of Education "one of the largest banks in the country," which has led to discussions about moving student loan management to the U.S. Treasury. However, he added, "they may not want it."

As students and families navigate this evolving landscape, Kelley encouraged them to make informed financial decisions to minimize their reliance on loans.

"I understand it is unpopular to suggest this, but students and families should seriously consider making difficult choices to reduce the amount of debt they must incur," he said. "Many students go on to graduate school and should not overload themselves with debt for their undergraduate degree."

While the future of federal student loans remains uncertain, RISLA and other state-based loan providers may play a crucial role in filling potential funding gaps. For students and families planning for college, Kempe and Kelley say staying up to date and exploring alternative funding sources will be key in the months ahead.

"While no changes have been made yet, it is critically important for borrowers to stay informed, maintain communication with their loan servicer provider, and families planning for college financing should file their FAFSA to apply for aid as early as possible," said Kempe.



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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.

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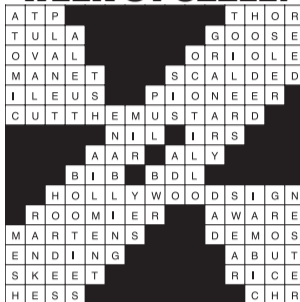
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ANSWER TO THIS WEEK'S PUZZLE:



Students celebrate 100th day of school a day late, but with lots of spirit

Despite Mother Nature's attempt to put a freeze on the fun, Johnston students proved that a little snow couldn't dampen their school spirit. Johnston schools delayed their 100th day celebrations by one day due to inclement weather.

Originally scheduled for Thursday, the 100th day of school was officially celebrated on Friday, with students across the district dressing up as centenarians—complete with gray wigs, suspenders, canes, and even a few stylish glasses.

Classrooms were filled with themed activities that highlighted the importance of reaching the. Students

participated in different exercises, crafts, and storytelling sessions that reinforced the significance of growth over the past 100 days. Teachers incorporated creative lesson plans centered around the number 100, including writing prompts and math challenges to reinforce their numerical skills.

In addition to the fun, the day served as a reflection on how much students have learned since the school year began. Teachers and staff praised their students for their hard work and dedication, encouraging them to keep striving for success as they move toward the remainder of the school year.



COMEDY LUNCH/DINNER SHOWS

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STARRING DOREEN COLLINS & CHARLIE HALL

- Sat. Feb. 15- RIVER FALLS, Woon. 4:30
- Sun. Feb. 23- NEWP. PLAYHOUSE (matinee)
- Sat. Mar. 1- CROSSROADS PUB, Warren 12
- Sun. Mar. 2- 579 BENEFIT. Pawt. 2:30pm
- Sat. March 15- COURTHOUSE CNTR, King
- Sat. April 5- O'ROURKE'S, Cranston 5pm
- Sun. April 6- CHELO'S, East Providence 12
- Sat. April 12- BELLA, Glendale 5:30
- Sun. April 27- CHELO'S, Providence 12pm



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Vehicle courtesy of Hurd Auto Mall, Johnston

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ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local  Adoptable  Loveable



Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

ZUKO

Words can't describe Zuko! I know when you look at him you just go "Wow, he's gorgeous!" But when you meet him, you will also say "Wow he's fabulous!" He's just a young pup at only ten months old so he's got some puppy energy, he loves to run and play! If you have a fenced in yard that would be his dream come true!! He might also like to have a doggie friend so contact the rescue if you'd like to set up a meet and greet! Zuko's coat is snow white and silver and his eyes are a stunning light gray, you have to see him in person! Please contact Rhode Home Rescue via email: rhodehomerescue@gmail.com or visit www.rhodehomerescue.org to fill out an application now, you don't want to miss out on this fun boy!

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

Shy Guy Soiree Adoption Day

Come meet some of our shy pups. All intros will be slow and quiet. We ask that you wait outside the training room until you are asked to come in and meet the pup you are interested in.

Saturday 2/15 10-Noon

Layne Louise

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Johnston Senior Center Showcases Talented Crafter

The Johnston Senior Center continues to welcome members of the senior community who possess a talent or craft specialty and would like to showcase and sell their handmade products at the center. Recently, Arlene Lima, a creative and skilled artisan, shared her beautifully crafted wreaths and other seasonal decorations with fellow members. Her latest collection featured a festive Valentine's Day theme, with heart-shaped designs, vibrant red and pinks, and creations that captured the spirit of the holiday. The Senior Center encourages more members to take advantage of the center's opportunities to share their talents and creativity with the community. (Submitted photo)

Tri-County HEZ and WRWC Partner to Host Green Labs Workshops on Environmental Health

The Tri-County Health Equity Zone (HEZ) and the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) are proud to announce an innovative partnership to deliver a series of Green Labs workshops aimed at educating local residents about the health impacts of environmental hazards and empowering them with practical solutions.

This initiative is funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health's (RIDOH) Environmental Health Risk Assessment Program (EHRAP) through a mini-grant opportunity.

The Green Labs workshops will take place at the Tri-County HEZ, 104 Greenville Ave, Johnston, and offer North Providence, Smithfield, and Johnston residents hands-on learning opportunities to better understand environmental risk factors affecting their health and the health of their communities. These interactive sessions will focus on identifying hazardous chemicals in the environment, assessing their public health implications, and exploring actionable solutions to mitigate exposure.

The Tri-County HEZ Green Labs series offers interactive, family-friendly workshops focused on environmental learning. On Monday, February 19, "Gardening & Greenway History" 5 PM will explore the history of the Centredale section and WRWC's restoration efforts, with a hands-on Live Staking activity to help restore riverbanks. Later that day, "Residential Green Infra-

structure" 6 PM will show homeowners how to manage rainwater and improve their landscapes sustainably. On Wednesday, February 21, at 11 AM, "Water Education & Filtration Fun" will engage families in fun experiments demonstrating how pollution affects rivers and how water can be filtered clean again.

"As a community-focused organization, Tri-County HEZ is dedicated to addressing social determinants of health and ensuring that every resident has access to the knowledge and tools they need to lead a healthy life," said Lisa Kennedy, HEZ Director. "By partnering with WRWC, we can bring environmental health education directly to those who need it most."

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, known for its longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship and public education, brings a wealth of expertise to the project. "We are excited to collaborate with Tri-County HEZ to help community members understand and address environmental hazards," said Alicia Lehrer, Executive Director of WRWC. "Together, we can empower residents to make informed decisions that promote both personal and environmental well-being."

Workshop Details

Each Green Labs workshop will cover key environmental health topics, including:
Identifying hazardous chemicals

in local waterways and neighborhoods

Understanding the link between environmental toxins and public health

Learning practical ways to reduce exposure and improve home and community environments

Exploring community-driven solutions for environmental resilience

The workshops are designed to be engaging, accessible, and informative for all residents, with a special focus on inclusivity and community participation.

About Tri-County HEZ: The Tri-County Health Equity Zone serves Johnston, North Providence, and Smithfield, working to create healthier, more connected communities by addressing barriers to health such as lack of access to healthcare, affordable food, and safe living environments. Through community engagement and collaboration, Tri-County HEZ empowers residents to take an active role in improving public health.

About WRWC: The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council works to restore and sustain the Woonasquatucket River and its surrounding communities through environmental advocacy, education, and sustainable development. With a strong history of environmental education and community engagement, WRWC plays a crucial role in advancing environmental justice and public health initiatives in Rhode Island.

RhodyLife

Serving up good feelings

'Future of hospitality business is in the word itself'

By J. MICHAEL LEVESQUE

Hospitality. That's the most important word to Dino Passaretta, when he talks about the key to the success of his five Rhode Island restaurants.

And he can be quite circumspect about the word when he talks about the industry in general.

"The future of the hospitality business is in the word itself. There are a lot of restaurants that lack hospitality. Hospitality is also what's lacking in the world today. Restaurants are bringing back that feeling of what people grew up with."

He then laughed and said, "robots will never be in my restaurants!"

I joined him for lunch recently at Vanda Cucina in the Apponaug section of Warwick (which was full as usual — try getting a reservation for dinner — best to call well in advance), he was quite surprised when we counted the years that he's worked in the industry. It has been 40 years.

He started with the glamorous position of dishwasher at Mianelli's Restaurant on Chalkstone Avenue in Providence in 1984 at the age of 14.

His career would take him through the various positions in the industry, including bussing tables at the iconic Capriccio Restaurant in Providence.

His first full time job in the industry was at the opening of another legendary restaurant — Café Nuovo, where he waited tables and learned the business from a unique perspective, as they quickly catapulted into one of Rhode Island's busiest and sought-after restaurants.

■ DINO - PAGE 18



Dino Passaretta at Vanda one of his five Rhode Island restaurants. Submitted photos by Mike Levesque



Vanda is located in the Apponaug section of Warwick.

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Jain's Laundry

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By JENNIFER COATES



Kaushal Jain is a steady and familiar face at Jain's Laundry, the family-owned business that she and her husband Sripal have operated for over 32 years.

The great and iconic French impressionist painter Vincent van Gogh is attributed with coining the phrase: "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." These words could accurately describe the years of small things that have added up to create a 32-year success story for the local, family-owned business, Jain's Laundry. Small things that have made life so much easier for the hundreds of patrons who have been bringing their laundry to this longtime business in Johnston for years and years.

Small things like automatic front doors so customers don't have to prop a door open every time they come in and out of this convenient laundromat. Small things like a vending machine of detergents, softeners and laundry bags for those who needed more than they thought. Small things like a change machine on-site, newly installed high-capacity dryers, a comfortable seating area to wait between loads and rows and rows of machines so there is never any need to "take a ticket!"

Best of all, but hardly a "small thing," is the presence of Kaushal Jain who came to America with her husband Sripal Jain from Meerut, India many decades ago. Through hard work, dedication, and sacrifice, they have truly fulfilled the American dream of small business ownership. A testament to their diligence is also their remarkable son, Akshay, who obtained a Master's degree in Bio-Technology at Harvard University. Through small things come great and remarkable results.

Jain's Laundry is a self-serve laundromat, but it also offers all the convenience of a wash-fold, same-day service. Here, the rates for this wash-fold service are unbeatable. For an incredible .89/pound, Kaushal will wash, soften, dry, and

even fold your laundry – all in one day. This recession-busting price also covers the cost of the softener, bleach, soap and hangers! The math is simple enough – ten pounds of dirty clothes, dropped off in the morning and ready to go by day's end – all for less than \$7.00. In our cost-conscious world, these prices are unmatched.

If you are more the "do-it-yourself" type of person, you will also find a room full of coin-operated washers and dryers. There are large capacity machines available for all size loads, from 25 pounds to 65 pounds. The top loading machines are available here for only \$2.25 per load

compared to \$2.50 in most other places.

Jain's Laundry also has dryers that spin both clockwise and counter-clockwise. This prevents items such as blankets and comforters from bunching up in the middle and stops them from getting tangled up, twisted and wrinkled.

Jain's Laundry is found in the Plaza 44 shopping plaza on Route 44. It is open seven days a week - from 8:00am to 9:00pm, Monday through Friday, and 7:00am to 8:00pm on Saturday and Sunday. For more information, call 401-231-7019.

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Sports

Jaguars wrap up playoff run

Ferri boys reach quarters

By **ALEX SPONSELLER**
Sports Editor

The Ferri boys basketball team enjoyed another big campaign this winter, finishing the regular season undefeated and earning a playoff win in the preliminary round of the postseason before falling in the quarters.

The Jaguars had one of the most experienced rosters in the state with 15 eighth graders. Leading the way for Ferri was Jordan Diclo, who emerged as one of the state's elite middle school players as he averaged 30 point per game.

The Johnston High School boys team is going through a rebuild in its first season in Division I, and Ferri coach Mike Iafrate is excited to establish a feeder system in the town's basketball programs



Ferri's Michael DeAngelis (left) and Jordan Diclo (right) in a recent game. *Beacon Media photos by Alex Sponseller*

FERRI - PAGE 15



Martins, Sharpless take 2nd

Johnston senior captain Logan Martins continued to roll in his historic season, competing at the Rhode Island Interscholastic League Division II and III Championships last week and taking second place at 132 pounds. Teammate Luke Sharpless then took home second place at 157 pounds for the Panthers.

Ferri grapplers shine at states

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Rhode Island Interscholastic League Middle School Wrestling State Championships took place in North Kingstown and several local grapplers made noise on the biggest stage.

Ferri wrapped up a top-20 finish as a team and was led by Cameron Regnault with a second-place finish at 70 pounds. Ferri's Lucas Rappa took fifth at 75 pounds and Walter Borden placed sixth at 94 pounds. Janae Nyan finished first in the girls 140-pound class for



Ferri's Janae Nyan, who took first place. *Photos by Leo van Dijk/rhodyphoto.zenfolio.com*

STATES - PAGE 15

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Let NOAA do its job, climate impacts hurting fish

By CAPT. DAVE MONTI
Special to the Herald

The tactics reportedly used last Tuesday, Feb. 4 by the Trump Administration's Elon Musk Department of Government Efficiency team at the National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland were extremely hard to read about. NOAA is responsible for fisheries.

"They apparently just sort of walked past security and said: 'Get out of my way,' and they're looking for access for the IT systems, as they have in other agencies," said Andrew Rosenberg, a former deputy director of NOAA, told the Guardian. I have visited NOAA's national office in Silver Spring, Maryland many times. The security is tight, very much like an airport. Visitors, pocket books, packages and briefcases are all scanned with a three or four person security team at the entrance.

Project 2025, written by several former President Trump staffers, has called for NOAA to be "broken up and downsized", claiming the agency is "harmful to US prosperity" for its role in climate science.

This attack on climate science and our nation's fisheries continues to heat up the issue of climate ready fisheries. The fact is climate is having a big impact on the fish we catch today. The fish are vastly different in type and abundance due to warming water, sea level rise, acidification, shifting stocks, changing bait/forgo profiles and other climate impacts.

Healthy fisheries are an economic driver for our nation and states. According to Fisheries Economics of the US recreational fishing in Massachusetts has a \$912-million sales impact on the economy annually and in Rhode Island recreational fishing has a \$419-million impact annually.

January 2025 was the warmest January on record. Warming water has been proven to impact fish reproduction in a negative way, science also tells us when fish do not like warming

water, they will move if they can to deeper cooler water and further north. We simply do not have as many fish to catch, eat and or release as we have had in the past

The world's warming is due to emissions of greenhouse gases that heat the planet and are produced primarily through the burning of fossil fuels. In a BBC report this week (<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwyjk-92w9k1o>), Gavin Schmidt, director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies at NASA, said, "The basic reason we're having records being broken, and we've had this decades-long warming trend, is because we're increasing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere,"

We need to leave NOAA alone, let it continue to research the atmosphere, oceans and the fish that live in the ocean so our nation can be better prepared for climate impacts such as wild fires, intense storms, sea level rise and the negative impacts warming water and other climate impacts have on habitat and fish.

It is the Constitutional right of Congress to determine funding for agencies like NOAA and not the right of the President. Anglers, commercial fishers and all the people of the United States of American must put pressure on Congress to do their job and not dismantle NOAA but provide it with full funding it needs, particularly to do climate science.

Send your congress person an email or call them and let them know they need to take action, you can find the names of House members at <https://www.house.gov/representatives>, contact information for Senators at <https://www.senate.gov/states/statesmap.htm>.

Coastwide speed zone put on hold, still have Seasonal Management Areas

On Jan. 15, 2025, NOAA Fisheries formally withdrew a proposed rule to amend the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule, which published in the Federal Register (87 FR 46921) on August 1,



Black sea bass (in photo), a warm water fish, are here in our waters and cold water fish like winter flounder and lobster have left. Who knows where the fish will be in the future? Submitted photo

2022. NOAA Fisheries had insufficient time to finalize this regulation due to the scope and volume of public comments received against the proposed rule. Commercial vessels would have been subject to a ten mile an hour limit coastwide which would have doubled the time ferries take to get to Nantucket, Martha's Vinyard and Bock Island. Additionally, fishers felt

the rule was a bit overreaching as it would have blanketed the entire coastline with the rule rather than implement speed zones when right whales were in the area.

We still do have mandatory right whale speed zones in our area. For example, NOAA Fisheries announced the annual opening of a Seasonal Management Area (SMA) in Cape Cod Bay to protect North Atlantic right whales which started on January 1, 2025.

All vessels 65 feet or longer must travel at 10 knots or less in this area to reduce the threat of vessel collisions with these endangered whales. The Cape Cod Bay SMA is in effect through May 15, 2025. Because vessels of all sizes can strike and injure a right whale, NOAA Fisheries also encourage vessels less than 65 feet in length to slow down to 10 knots or less within active SMAs.

North Atlantic right whales are on the move along the Atlantic coast of the U.S. If seen, remember that approaching a right whale closer than 500 yards is a violation of federal and state law.

Endangered North Atlantic right whales are approaching extinction. There are approximately 360 individuals remaining, including fewer than 70 reproductively active females. Human impacts such as vessel strikes and entanglements with fixed fishing gear such as lobster pots and fish traps continue to threaten the survival of this species.

Details and graphics of all vessel strike management zones currently in effect can be found at Reducing Vessel Strikes to

North Atlantic Right Whales | NOAA Fisheries.

Where's the bite?

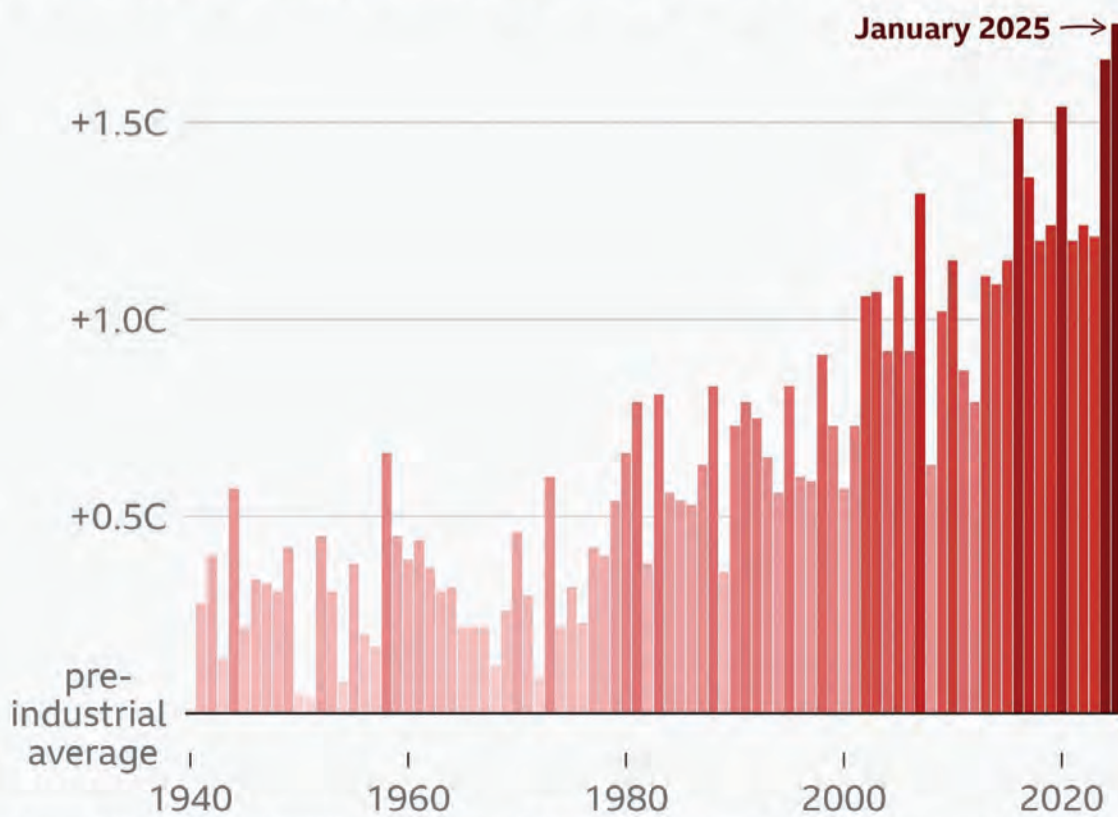
Cod. Party boat fishing and a few smaller charter boats continue to fish for cod south of Cape Cod and off Rhode Island waters. Fishing Machine Charters, Pt. Judith, RI at www.fishingmachinecharters.com has been hooking up with cod in the Cox Ledge wind farm area and is running open boats so you might be able to get a single spot on the vessel. Larger party boat vessels generally sail between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. and return in the afternoon. Visit www.islandcurrent.com and www.francesfleet.com. Full day rates for party boat vessels are generally \$130 to \$135 per adult and around \$80 for those under 12 years old.

Freshwater fishing. Check ice conditions with local cities and towns to make sure ice is safe for fishing or skating. For a complete list of trout stocked ponds in Massachusetts visit Mass Wildlife at Trout stocking report | Mass.gov. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) stocked thirteen waterways last week for updates visit Designated Trout Waters | Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

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

January 2025 hottest on record

Global average January temperature by year, compared with the pre-industrial average for January, 1850-1900



Source: ERA5, C3S/ECMWF, Darker reds reflect greater warming



Super Bowl shakes up NFL landscape, future

The Super Bowl that no one wanted provided a result that excited the masses. Most viewers, myself included, rolled their eyes two weeks prior when the Kansas City Chiefs and Philadelphia Eagles won their conferences to set the stage for Sunday. The Chiefs were ready to go for their third straight title while the Eagles would be making their third Super Bowl appearance in seven years. The two teams battled just two years ago and the consensus was these teams were overplayed and no longer interesting. Sure, the Chiefs going for what would be the NFL's first ever threepeat provided some discussion, and yes, the Eagles were a fun, smash mouth team that never really earned the respect of the fans outside of their home city. However, it was really hard to be geeked up over the same old teams. Well, the Eagles stayed true to them-

selves, punched Kansas City and Patrick Mahomes in the mouth, and ran away with a total blowout victory for their second Super Bowl win ever. Although the game was essentially over by the halftime break, it turned out to be pretty exciting thanks to plays like Cooper DeJean's pick-6 and Jalen Hurts' monster touchdown pass to Devonta Smith. It was entertaining despite it being uncompetitive. The Chiefs felt inevitable. I picked them to win this game with little doubt they'd get it done. Mahomes is the best quarterback in the league and has enjoyed an early career that is shockingly similar to Tom Brady's. Andy Reid's system appeared to be flawless, the Chiefs' defense was underrated all season long. Something about this team and the run it had been on the past few seasons gave little reason to doubt that it'd get the job one more time.

My pitch



by ALEX SPONSELLER
SPORTS EDITOR
ALEXS@RHODYBEAT.COM

The Eagles ended the NFL's latest dynasty in spectacular fashion, leaving fans wondering what's next. Now, those rejoicing and saying Mahomes' best is officially in the past are overreacting. His resume took a hit with the loss, but he will only be 30 years old next season. Brady was also 3-2 in Super Bowls at that age, keep in mind. Mahomes is not Brady and will likely never be, but it's too soon to count him out. Quarterbacks these days remain elite well into their 30s and Mahomes is still the best

in the league, like it or not. However, where does Kansas City go from here? It's clear that its offensive line was deficient, and as great as Mahomes is, it was evident that he could have used better playmakers around him. Travis Kelce looked old and slow, as did DeAndre Hopkins. Xavier Worthy is someone they can build around as a youngster, but there is more work to do that meets the eye. The Mahomes versus Brady debate is now on the shelf, at least for another year. As for the Eagles, they proved that you can win a Super Bowl in the modern game by taking an outdated approach. All season, the Eagles were overlooked because they didn't have a high-flying offense. They relied on the offensive line to bully teams up from and allowed Saquon Barkley to handle the rest by rushing the ball. Hurts was real-

ly only called on when needed, he rarely faced the pressure to put the team on his back. Then on defense, everyone mocked the Eagles over the past few seasons for drafting defensive lineman after defensive lineman. Sure, it's important to have a sturdy defensive front, but how far could a group of defensive tackles carry a team? We saw the answer on Sunday. Philly used a four-man rush, blitzed a remarkable zero times, and still managed to give the Kansas City offense fits. The only momentum the Chiefs gained was in the second half when the game was out of reach. All of a sudden, these teams without top-5 quarterbacks have hope. There now is a way to win a title without needing to find "the guy" and boast a juggernaut offense. You really can win by simply dominating the trenches and not making mistakes, playing clean and conserva-

tive. You can already see the effects this game has had on the way analysts, fans and journalists view the sport. Last week, every mock draft had the Titans and Giants taking quarterbacks in the first round. Now? It's defensive linemen like Penn State's Abdul Carter and Michigan's Mason Graham. It's offensive lineman like Will Campbell and Kelvin Banks. This Super Bowl may have not been the one we wanted to see, but it feels like the one that the NFL needed. In many ways it felt like a reset. The Chiefs are beatable, there's more to building a team than just the quarterback and defenses can win championships. It feels like the clock was just set back 20 years and I say that in a good way. This pass-heavy culture needed to be dialed back. We will remember Sunday for a long time.

Ferri (Continued from page 13)

and to help replenish the Panther roster next winter with guys like Diclo. "It's very exciting. We have seven or eight kids that played a lot. That should help rebuild the high school team. Jordan Diclo is a kid that can start next year as a freshman. He's one of the best players in the state. Ezekiel (Sonaik), Ethan Archambeault and (Michael) DeAngelis can help the team right away as well. We have a really good group of eighth graders that we're hoping will stay together at the next level," Iafate said. Much of this year's Ferri team has played together for several seasons, which created a strong bond on the court. The experienced lineup also allowed multiple players to have breakout seasons. "It was the chemistry between the players and the coaches. It was never just one guy. All five of our starters came together and we had

a few key guys off the bench. The chemistry worked well all season along with the hard work and dedication," said Iafate. Although Ferri will be losing a significant portion of its roster next season, Iafate is confident in the returners and feels that the Jaguars are not going anywhere. Notable returners will be Eric Ferrara, Torin Kalnietis and Michael Iafate. "I hope that we can go undefeated again. We have the pieces to do that, we have the pieces to win the division," Iafate said. Members of the 2024-25 Ferri team included: Sonaik, DeAngelis, Diclo, Ariel Castillo, Ferrara, Archambeault, James Smith, Michael Iafate, Dante Ferranti, Cory Veitch, Kalnietis, Gio Labbadia, Joseph Wayne, DeMartino Petit Homme, Ryder Calabro, Jake Schroer, Patrell Hamilton, Domenic Keenan, Cam Hubbard, Ethan Patnaude, Galilea Guzman Vaca, Steve Heredia and Brendon Reed. Coaches were Mike Iafate, TJ Leomensah and Mike Carlino.



Ferri's Cameron Regnault, who took second at 70 pounds.

States (Continued from page 13)

the Jaguars. Park View's Joseph Colardo took first place at 88 pounds and teammate Lucas Santo placed first in the 150-pound class. Santino Gaglione finished second at 100 pounds while fellow

Cobras Jaiydeh Cruz and Joseph Marchesseault each finished third in their divisions. Western Hills took 13th overall as a team. McKenzie Bowry led the Cobras on the girls side by taking second place at 70 pounds. Peter Fontes (94 pounds) and Benjamin Taute (133 pounds) wrapped up titles for the Warwick Vets while Anna George and Hailey

Hayes also earned their first state titles for the Hurricanes as well. Winman's Sofia George and Payton George also captured championships to help Warwick cement its place as one of the top wrestling communities in the state. The Hurricanes saw 19 grapplers place in their respective divisions by tournament's end.

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Locals lead RIC to 3rd place at Coast Guard Invitational

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Senior Samantha Sainristil (Cranston) won both the weight throw (15.99m) and the shot (12.24m) as the Rhode Island College women's track and field team finished third (eight teams) at the Coast Guard Winter Invitational on Friday afternoon.

RIC finished third (eight teams) with a team score of 84.0. Coast Guard won the meet with a team score of 122.0.

Junior Haley Oliver (Coventry) won both the mile (5:18.85) and the 800m (2:26.34). Oliver also finished second in the 4x200m relay (1:52.88).

Junior Tayshia Cary (Wakefield) finished second in both the 4x200m relay (1:52.88) and the 55m dash (7.51) and third in the 200m (27.30).

Freshman Quiana Pezza (Cranston) finished second in the 4x200m relay (1:52.88), third in both the 55m dash (7.60) and the long jump (5.02m) and fourth in both the 200m (27.64) and triple jump (10.35m). Freshman Bendu Kamara (Pawtucket) finished second

in the 4x200m relay (1:52.88), sixth in the 400m (1:05.59) and 15th in the 200m (29.25).

Freshman Funmilayo Mclin (Providence) finished sixth in the weight throw (12.47m). Junior Sasha Sainristil (Cranston) finished seventh in the triple jump (9.60m) and 11th in the long jump (4.41m).

Freshman Grace Lane (North Smithfield) finished seventh in the 800m (2:44.53). Sophomore Shirley Portillo (North Providence) finished ninth in the 800m (2:45.89).

Junior Milana Melvin (Johnston) finished ninth in the shot (10.05m).

Junior Bethanie Jean-Philippe (Cranston) finished 10th in the triple jump (9.02m) and 18th in the long jump (4.04m). Sophomore Lexie Zakrzewski (Taunton, Mass.) finished 11th in the 400m (1:08.91).

RIC men take fourth at Coast Guard

Freshman Owen Schenck (Warren) finished first in the mile (4:34.10) as the Rhode Island College men's track and field team finished fourth (seven teams) at the Coast Guard Winter Invitational on Friday evening.

Rhode Island College finished fourth (seven teams) with a team score of 58.0. Coast Guard won the meet with a team score 116.0.

Schenck also finished second in both the 800m (2:03.19) and the 4x800m relay (8:44.14). Sophomore Gabriel Dosunmu (Providence) finished first in the long jump (6.81m) and 10th in the 200m (24.10).

Sophomore Enrique Edjang (Providence) finished second in the weight throw (15.70m). Sophomore Andrew Frezza (Johnston) finished second in the 4x800m relay (8:44.14) and sixth in the 3,000m (9:29.09).

Junior Benjamin Lockwood (Saunderstown) finished second in the 4x800m relay (8:44.14) and third in the 800m (2:04.76). Freshman Scott Pakenham (Portsmouth) finished second in the 4x800m relay (8:44.14) and fifth in the 800m (2:05.26).

Freshman Jack McEntee (Foster) finished fifth in the 55m hurdles (8.60), eighth in the 400m (53.69) and 20th in the 200m (24.52). Senior Garrett Jones (Beacon Falls, Conn.) finished fifth in the long jump (6.08m).

Junior Shamus Culhane (North Kings-

town) finished sixth in the weight throw (14.68m). Freshman Nick Lamoureux (North Smithfield) finished eighth in both the high jump (1.75m) and the 200m (23.96).

Sophomore Trevor Morgan (Smithfield) finished eighth in the weight throw (13.97m) and 29th in the shot (9.94m). Junior Isiah Briggs (Providence) finished ninth in the long jump (5.91m).

Freshman Brody Shiels (Wakefield) finished 12th in the 400m (54.73) and 27th in the 200m (24.91).

Sophomore Giovanni Monteiro (North Providence) finished 12th in the 800m (2:10.66). Freshman Matt Coburn (Cumberland) finished 15th in the 800m (2:13.10).

Freshman Ravi Kapadia (Lincoln) finished 15th in the weight throw (12.76m) Sophomore Antonello Lucchetti (Cranston) finished 19th in the 200m (24.52).

Freshman Devin McCaffrey (Lincoln) finished 19th in the weight throw (12.27m) and 21st in the shot (10.89m). Freshman Steve Rodrigues (Burrillville) finished 22nd in the 200m (24.73).

Real Estate Transactions

ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE	ADDRESS	SELLERS	BUYERS	DATE	PRICE
COVENTRY									
11 King Philip Rd	Houle, Daniel	Jones, Crystal	1/23	\$220,000	148 Stone Ave	Manning, Thomas	Xiong, Samantha and Kue, Tou G	1/21	\$480,375
16 Alexandre Rd	Faiola, Jessica and Faiola, Aaron	Macandrew, Katy A	1/21	\$318,750	15 Welch Rd	Rock, Sean M and Choup, Keophimean	Leroy, Ray and Leroy, Amy M	1/17	\$530,000
6196 Flat River Rd	Bleecker, Matthew and Bleecker, Tobe M	Viall, Henry and Viall, Katherine	1/21	\$624,900	165 Vaughn Ave	Sorgel, Bonnie A and Oliver, Betsey	Hadfield, Ryan J	1/17	\$425,000
85 Sisson Rd	L & P Hm Renovations LLC	Birkett, Lisa C and Birkett, Jason J	1/22	\$727,500	165 Weeden Dr	Verrecchia Const Mgmt LLC	Gaumitz, Rebecca L	1/17	\$530,000
CRANSTON									
1106 Derbyshire Dr	Ferrara, Robert M and Ferrara, Karen R	Gentile, William J	1/23	\$565,000	169 Bartlett Dr	White, Caitlin	Nemirow, Philip and Bjorn, Robyn	1/22	\$385,000
111 Bartlett Ave	Gray Jr, Thurston L	Lu, Cau M and Bifsas, Evridiki	1/16	\$680,000	193 Reynolds Ave	Bradshaw, Patrick A and Mathews, Tiffany M	Breen, Michael and Breen, Sandra	1/22	\$521,500
125 Tallman Ave	Ogden, Nicolette	Connor, Melissa and Connor, Evan	1/16	\$500,000	206 Riverside Ave	Brannigan, Tyler J	Bulut, Mutlu	1/22	\$363,450
133 Columbia Ave	Patigian, Jules B and Schwartz, Faye H	Haynes, Angela and Haynes, Jeffrey	1/17	\$985,000	22 Mia Ct	Belakonis, Jacob D and Marzilli, Vanessa L	Arruda, Amber and Madison, Dylan	1/15	\$540,000
135 Western Promenade	Lois-Belle Crankshaw Art and Correllus, Lynne	Taylor, Laura	1/17	\$320,000	233 Miantonomo Dr	Allen Dennis L Est and Allen, Cheryl L	Merriam, David H and Desjarlais, Christine	1/22	\$571,000
173 Lyndon Rd	Mccartney, Kelly	Rodriguez, Eduardo and Carela, Genesis	1/16	\$430,000	24 Michelle Cir	Rego Ft and Rego, Antonio C	Parekh, Bimal and Parekh, Yamini	1/16	\$858,000
19 Coulters Rd	Ferri Jr, William A	Aung, Min M and Kyaw, Aye T	1/23	\$392,500	28 Cameron Ct	Duggan, Ryan J and Profio, Bethany F	Mjb Prop LLC	1/17	\$303,000
192 Holland St	Kashner Mildred A Est and Porter, Linda J	Noriega, Dario G	1/23	\$350,000	294 Miantonomo Dr	Batthey Gregory C Est and Batthey, Gregory M	Walsler Hldg LLC	1/21	\$315,000
214 Mapleton St	Cross, Kimberly	Sparke, Brian and Sparke, Emily R	1/17	\$450,000	32 Martingale Dr	Pollock, Richard S and Pollock, Cheryl A	Gurulyan, Karo and Gurulyan, Amanda	1/22	\$845,000
33 Belcrest Rd	Alice Saint John RET and Saint John, Alice	Carbone, Robert K and Carbone, Annmarie P	1/22	\$300,000	4 Vera St	Michael W Grossi Relt and Grossi, Francesco	Turner, Candy L	1/21	\$285,000
33 Case Ave	Perry, Joseph D	Perry, Joseph S and Perry, Meihua C	1/21	\$405,000	62 Gorham Ave	Hogan Jr, Francis M	Marshall, Douglas R and Brown, Sarah L	1/21	\$390,000
39 Doane St	Robert B Cahill Relt and Cahill, Robert B	Petrozzi, Nicholas P	1/17	\$479,000	62 Gorham Ave Lot 225,	Hogan Jr, Francis M	Marshall, Douglas R and Brown, Sarah L	1/21	\$390,000
435 Scituate Ave Lot B4,	Cocozza, Julia R	Haskins, Donna J	1/23	\$350,000	65 Contour Rd	Huot, Jeremie S and Huot, Meghan E	Nielsen, Max and Nielsen, Sarah	1/17	\$787,500
494 Wellington Ave	Lopez, Gregorio	Acevedo, Julio and Roa, Carlos	1/21	\$600,000	65 Greene St	Travers, Lawrence T	Galligan, Ryan T and Galligan, Abigail C	1/15	\$415,000
82 Red Hawk Dr	Brian & Francine Trainor and Trainor, Brian	Manion, Tessa L and Deciantis, Thomas M	1/17	\$810,000	72 W Shore Rd Lot 104	Padeni, Scott and Padeni, Lori	Moreau, Jeffrey S	1/17	\$205,000
EAST GREENWICH									
13 Lillian St	Botelho Arlene P Est and Mistretta, Anthony	Enos, Daniel	1/21	\$340,000	81 Valentine Cir	Iannotti Jr, Robert A and Iannotti, Kim D	Johnston, Pamela and Johnston, James	1/17	\$1,200,000
20 Frybrook Dr Lot 20	Robert L Dicolo RET and Dicolo, Robert L	Campbell, James D and Campbell, Kathy M	1/17	\$1,100,000	82 Fox Ridge Cres Lot 82	Brackenbury, Lori J	Perrone, Joelle and Perrone, Carl	1/15	\$329,900
2390 Division Rd	Costantino, Claudia	Costantino, Ralph W	1/15	\$500,000	925 Halifax Dr Lot 925	Medeiros, Bruce J	Matteson, Michael R	1/15	\$216,000
60 Deerfield Dr	Birkett, Jason J and Birkett, Lisa C	Chase, Rebecca and Creighton, Tyler	1/22	\$771,000	WEST GREENWICH				
JOHNSTON									
1287 Central Ave	Baldwin, William J and Bk Of Ny Mellon Tr	Mako LLC	1/22	\$410,000					
WARWICK									
11 N Shore St	Theroux, Norma	Souffrant, Marie N	1/15	\$395,000	330-B Plain Meeting House Rd	Lily Of The Valley LLC	Smith, Sandra and Smith 3rd, Rehuben B	1/24	\$620,758
111 Brightside Ave	Tafro, Robert	Prytchak, Yuriy	1/22	\$335,000	WEST WARWICK				
111 Brightside Ave Lot 253	Tafro, Robert	Prytchak, Yuriy	1/22	\$335,000	122 Trellis Dr Lot 122	Macera, Rachel and Macera, Blake	Hogan, Thomas	1/27	\$300,000
114 Covington Dr	Pietros, Stanley V	Amen, Joseph and West, Owen	1/16	\$350,000	26 Kulas Rd	Washington Jr, David E and Figueriredo, Miranda K	Delfino, Jeremy and Slade, Heather	1/24	\$475,000
1247 Greenwich Ave	Rogers, Samantha	Macgregor, Arelys	1/17	\$324,000	27 Turner Dr	West Warwick Town Of	Dori, Kassondra and Gregelevich Jr, C	1/23	\$1,736
					34 W Warwick Ave	Smithco LLC	Castro, Miguel M	1/28	\$515,000
					53 Andrews Ave	Gomez, Lou B	Castillo, Robert	1/24	\$485,000
					92 Pawtuxet Ter	Harrington Const Inc	Delbonis, Jaryd N and Couture, Faith M	1/24	\$420,000

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Dave's Fresh Marketplace celebrates being named IGA's USA Retailer of the Year. Pictured, from left, are Senior Vice President of IGA Doug Fritsch, Leann Cesario, Owner David Cesario, General Manager and Owner Bill Hogan, Joann Hogan and John Ross, CEO of IGA. (Beacon Media photo by Tim Forsberg)

Dave's Marketplace owner named IGA's top grocer

By TIM FORSBERG

David Cesario, owner of Dave's Fresh Marketplace, has been named the 2025 USA Retailer of the Year by the Independent Grocers Alliance.

This prestigious honor recognizes Cesario's leadership, dedication to the community and excellence in the grocery industry.

The Retailer of the Year award is the highest distinction IGA bestows upon its members, highlighting independent grocers who demonstrate remarkable service and innovation in their communities. John Ross, IGA's CEO, emphasized the importance of this honor.

"It is our highest award, and in the United States there are 2,200 IGA stores. Worldwide, there are 6,600 IGA stores. Only eight of these awards will be given out, and Dave's has already won our big award," Ross explained. "We consider the Retailer of the Year to be the most prestigious thing that an independent grocer can win. It's the best of the best markets, not just in the United States, but worldwide."

Cesario humbly credits the award to the 1,600 employees who are the backbone of his operation.

"My name is David. This is Dave's. It's just me, it's a name. Dave's Market is about the people," Cesario said. "They gave me the award. It's a great honor, but I have to be humble, and I have to share it with them because they're the ones that earned it with me."

Ross explained the critical role independent grocers like Dave's Fresh Marketplace play in their communities.

"Independent stores do what the big chains can't. Big chains are all about scale, efficiency and homogenous retailing," Ross said. "Local chains are exactly the opposite - they can connect with all these incredible local vendors. The money the shoppers give them stays in the community, with farmers, honey producers, ranchers and all the associates they hire. But even more than that, they're mega-employers, and those employees who start as teens often go on to executive roles in the grocery industry."

Cesario will be honored at the IGA Awards of Excellence Ceremony on Feb. 24 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Since starting with a single truck selling fresh produce on a Warwick street corner in 1969, Cesario has built 10 unique grocery stores in seven Rhode Island communities. Serving more than 140,000 customers weekly, Dave's Fresh

Marketplace is the largest independent grocer in the state.

"I never thought we'd get this big. It would never have happened without the people who kept returning to shop and kept working here," Cesario reflected.

Susan Budlong, director of communications and marketing at Dave's Fresh Marketplace, emphasized the collective effort behind the store's success.

"It started with him, and it started with that culture that he created and manifested," she said, sharing memories that reflect Cesario's kindness and generosity. "Over the years, all the conversations I've had with people who have said, 'I remember Dave when ...' and it always comes back to 'he helped me, he gave to me, he gave someone a job.'"

Cesario's philosophy of treating employees and customers with respect has been key to his success.

"Treat them like human beings, let them do their jobs. For my customers, my philosophy has always been to give thirteen to a dozen and seventeen ounces to the pound and make people happy," Cesario said.

Ross praised Dave's Fresh Marketplace for its innovative approach.

"If you walk around this store, it's all about freshness, it's about innovation, it's about making the food look heroic, and it's about authority in food," Ross said. "It's exciting to come in here - it makes you hungry."

Beyond business, Cesario's generosity and dedication to communities have left its mark.

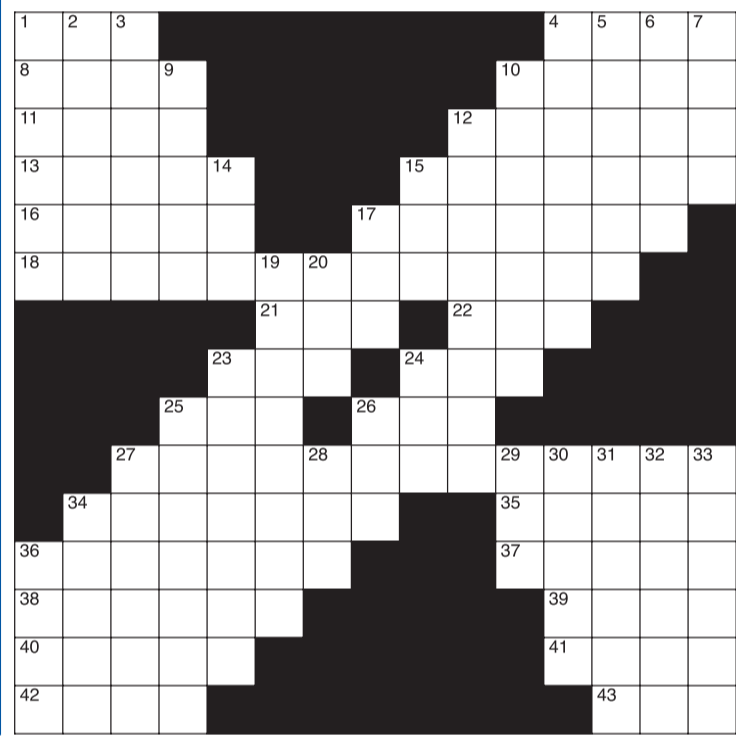
"A lot of people are in need. A lot of people need things that they don't have. Whatever we can give, we can. Even if you don't have money, I'd rather you come in and tell me you don't have any money. I'd give it to you rather than have you steal it from us," Cesario said.

While Cesario expressed gratitude to countless individuals, he emphasized the role his family has played.

"I can't pick any single person out because there are so many people to thank. You don't have enough room to write all the names of the people I want to thank. But on the top of my list would be my wife," he added.

The Retailer of the Year honorees are also in contention for the IGA International Retailer of the Year award, which will be announced during the Las Vegas ceremony. For more information about Dave's Fresh Marketplace and the Independent Grocers Alliance, visit www.iga.com.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE CORNER



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Racquet sport group (abbr.)
- 4. Norse god of thunder
- 8. Russian industrial city
- 10. What's good for the ___
- 11. Round-ish shape
- 12. Baltimore MLBer
- 13. French modernist painter
- 15. Burned with water
- 16. Intestinal issue
- 17. Take the lead
- 18. Prove oneself worthy
- 21. None
- 22. Tax collector
- 23. Swiss river
- 24. Gymnast Raisman
- 25. Baby's dining accessory
- 26. Canadian beer distributor
- 27. Iconic American tourist destination
- 34. More expansive
- 35. Alert

CLUES DOWN

- 36. Popular boots Doc ___
- 37. Showings
- 38. Conclusion
- 39. Share a common boundary
- 40. Shooting sport
- 41. Popular side dish
- 42. Global energy firm
- 43. Chronicles (abbr.)
- 12. Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
- 14. A pituitary hormone
- 15. Female sibling
- 17. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
- 19. Empowering
- 20. Space station
- 23. Disorder
- 24. State of fuss
- 25. Footwear for babies
- 26. Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
- 27. Drove
- 28. Affirmative
- 29. Male parent
- 30. Utter obscenities
- 31. Type of verse
- 32. Unpleasant person
- 33. One who settles down
- 34. Founder of source-based history
- 36. A way to snarl

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Dino with Hugh Clements, Jr., former Providence Police Chief and now Director of the US Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.



Dino with Joe Mazzulla, Boston Celtics head coach and Hendricken graduate.



Dino with his daughter Liliana. Submitted photos

Dino
(Continued from page 11)

Three years later, the kid who grew up in the Mount Pleasant area of Providence (son of Orlando and Teresa, who both immigrated from Italy), moved to Boston to work for one of the city's most famous restaurateurs, Frank DePasquale, who owns many North End restaurants.

He quickly become manager at one of DePasquale's then newest launches - Fratelli, which is now located in the Encore Boston Harbor.

He would then manage restaurants for other legends including Seth Greenburg, who has years of experience acquiring and developing hotels, restaurants, and nightlife properties in New York, Boston and Miami.

He also worked for Scott and Rande Gerber. The Gerbers landed on the map with the opening of The Whiskey in the Paramount Hotel in New York City. Rande is also married to former super model Cindy Crawford.

Dino moved to a warmer climate and landed a dream job as manager of the then, reportedly, number one restaurant in the country - Tantra in South Beach, Florida, where he would work for three years.

But as you know (borrowing a line

from Don Henley of the Eagles), in Rhode Island you can check out any time you want, but you can never leave. Dino returned home and first opened with partners Moda on South Water Street in Providence. It was a restaurant he designed and built from soup to nuts. He also cleverly enlisted the talents of famed Rhode Island chef Jules Ramos.

First solo success

In 2007, he opened his first restaurant on his own, "Liliana's" in South Kingstown. The restaurant was named after his daughter. This new restaurant, Dino said, "literally made me."

The location was perfect, near the intersections of Route 1 and 138 on the way to the beaches. The spot, located in the Holiday Inn, was so successful that he was approached with a deal to buy the restaurant. He couldn't refuse it.

So, he sold the restaurant but kept the name. For a time he owned restaurants in the Westin Hotel (now the Omni) in downtown Providence, as well as one in the Hilton Hotel adjacent to the Amica Pavilion.

Still not satisfied, and unwilling to rest on his laurels, in 2018 Dino opened what he described as his passion project, Vanda Cucina in Apponaug. The restaurant was named after his mother.

On any given day or night, you might see celebrities and people from all over Rhode Island and nearby states.

His mother's kitchen

Dino lights up when he talks about Vanda.

"I designed the restaurant to represent my mother's kitchen," he said. "My mother had plants all over the house, and most of the décor is from her kitchen and living room. It is a testament to her. She was an amazing cook, and I recall how mostly Italian was spoken in the house." Dino speaks fluent Italian.

He now owns five restaurants - Vanda in Warwick, Locanda in South Kingstown, Seacraft in Narragansett, Public Kitchen and Bar in the Renaissance Hotel in Providence, and the new hot spot - Viola in Barrington.

I asked the obvious question, how do you manage five restaurants?

"Only one way. It's the people who work with you," he said. "I don't micro-manage. It's why I'm able to do it. I have general managers who have worked for me for years."

Walk into any one of his restaurants and you will find management and staff seamlessly working together, going overboard to try to accommodate their guests.

Asked how difficult it is to open a new restaurant in Rhode Island, Dino thought for a moment.

"It could be easier ... the fees are ridiculous and there seems to be more permits required (than other states), but the most important part is hiring the right people," he said. "It's really not difficult to find employees once people know that you are established and are a good employer. People want to work for you."

Finally, I asked about retirement.

"Being in this business for 40 years, you can't retire when you're old," he said. "If you can't pass the torch to someone younger, then you're in the business for the wrong reasons. One of the people I will pass the torch to is my Chef at Vanda - Gina Pezza."

What about daughter Liliana? She's now 19 and studying at college in Boston.

"No interest yet."

I bet he hopes that changes. He also left our luncheon conversation with a little teaser.

"There might be something special coming to the Capital City, where I was born. Tune in to find out when," he said.

I think it's a safe bet to assume whatever that is, there will be no robots involved.

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COUNCIL ROUNDUP

The Council Roundup is a digest of hearings, ordinances, licenses, and other proceedings from the Johnston Town Council's February 10 meeting. All members were present.

STATUS ON PUBLIC HEARINGS

Zone Map Changes:

Mohamad Yaser and Rhonda Sasa submitted a petition to rezone Assessor's Plat 8, Lot 14 on Morgan Avenue from mixed R-20 and to R-7. This was held awaiting the Planning Board's advisory opinion.

Bachar Sasa petitioned to rezone Assessor's Plat 43, Lots 264 and 265 on Shun Pike Avenue from R-40 to Industrial. This was sent to the Planning Board for review.

Ordinance 2025-2, which amends the "Industrial Performance Standards" of the Town of Johnston Code of Ordinances and sets requirements to cover dirt mounds was also held awaiting the Planning Board's advisory opinion.

ORDINANCES

The following ordinances were read and will be taken up again during a future Town Council meeting.

Ordinance 2025-4: Seeks to amend Article IV, section 340-16 of Chapter 340 entitled "Industrial Performance Standards" of the Town of Johnston Code of Ordinances regarding noise. This was sent to the Planning Board for review.

LICENSE APPROVALS

The Town Council unanimously approved the fol-

lowing licenses:

Smart Cookie LLC: Doing business as Stitches Branded Apparel, based at 554 Killingly Street, John Flynn was granted for an embroidery and screen printing license.

Alliance Mobile, Inc: A business operating license for Neshwan Khami at 1450 Hartford Avenue, for sales of AT&T wireless, fiber plans, and related equipment.

Cara Burgess: At 1524 Atwood Avenue, Unit 41, offering therapeutic massage.

LIQUOR LICENSE COMMISSION

Casa Noble, LLC: Doing business as Casa Noble Restaurant located at 761 Hartford Avenue, was approved for a Class BV-full liquor license for a restaurant.

NEW BUSINESS

Petitions and Resolutions:

Resolution 2025-11 was approved, authorizing the mayor to enter into an agreement for engineering, surveying, and permitting services for the recently acquired land near the Public Facilities building. Approval recommends awarding the agreement to Fuss & O'Neill in the amount of \$83,400.

Resolution 2025-12 approved an additional increase of \$80,000 between the Town of Johnston and DiPrete Engineering for identifying the town's catch basins and comply with the Rhode Island Clean Water Act.

Resolution 2025-13 was approved and authorized the mayor to enter an agreement with the Rhode Island

Commerce Corporation for the acceptance of \$250,000 for landscaping and beautification projects around town hall.

Marie Michael petitioned to purchase a parcel of land from the town known as Assessor's Plat 33, lot 23 was referred to the Planning Board.

Mary Neahrng's appointment to the Johnston Senior Citizens Advisory Board to fill a District 1 vacancy was granted.

Nyhart gave a presentation of The Town of Johnston actuarial valuation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024. Segal also presented the Town of Johnston Police and Firefighters Pension System actuarial reports and schedules as of June 30, 2024.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON ORDINANCES

Ordinance 2025-1 authorizing the borrowing of up to \$300,000 for financing the planning of improvements to stormwater facilities and authorizing the issuance of general obligation notes or bonds for such purposes was approved.

A petition submitted by Valerie McGuire, Ordinance 2025-3, changing the zone map for Assessor's Plat 157, lot 170 on Hartford Avenue from mixed B-2 and R-40 to B-2 was approved.

CLAIMS

Claims from Frank Orabona on behalf of Monica Arroyo and Kitanalee Adorno, and a claim from Jeffrey Sowa on behalf of Health Benefits Advisors were referred to the town solicitor.

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