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Review Your Trust Annually To Protect Your Assets



It is part of my regular practice to prepare living Trusts to both avoid probate of a client's estate and protect their assets from nursing home costs during their lifetime. I also review and update those Trusts, and similar Trusts prepared by other attorneys upon request.

If you are concerned about possible long term care expenses and would like to discuss your concerns with me, please call my office for an appointment. There is no fee for the initial consultation.

— George M. Prescott

Courtesy of:

George M. Prescott
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The Rhode Island Supreme Court licenses all lawyers in the general practice of law. The Court does not license or certify any lawyer as an expert or specialist in any field of practice.

Oh Christmas Tree

By James Gass

Christmas trees are so etched in our collective conscience that it's almost impossible to imagine the holiday without them. But the tradition of bringing a living tree inside during the winter did not originate with Christmas. Long before Christmas or even Christianity, ancient pagan people in the Northern Hemisphere celebrated the winter solstice by hanging evergreen boughs in their homes, often over the door. To them, evergreens were a symbol of the continuity of life, because it was one of the only plants that stayed green during the lifeless months of winter.

The practice of having a living tree in one's house at Christmas started in medieval Northern Europe, in what is now Estonia and Latvia. Later, in early modern Germany during the Renaissance, Lutherans had decorated evergreen trees in their homes (it is thought that Martin Luther was the first to add lit candles to a Christmas tree). From there the custom spread throughout Europe during the later part of the 19th century, mostly amongst the well-to-do and nobility, then to the rest of the world. For a long time the Catholic Church frowned on having a Christmas tree because it was a Protestant practice, but as it gained world-wide popularity, the Vatican relented. But the traditional Christmas tree as we know it today, an evergreen decorated with candles (later lights), ornaments, and maybe some sweets, originated in 16th century Germany.

Christmas trees can be living or artificial. Live trees are typically a spruce, pine or fir. Frasier firs are a popular choice because they are attractive and long-lasting. Other trees that you can choose from include balsam fir, Colorado blue spruce, concolor fir, Scotch pine and Douglas fir. Modern artificial trees are



Henry's Tree Farm in Hope, RI. Photo by James Gass

made from a variety of materials, but the first ones originated in Germany in the late 1800's and were made from bird feathers. They were produced due to concerns about deforestation (it makes one wonder how many birds were slaughtered to save some trees).

There is an ongoing debate about which is better, a live tree or an artificial one. There are pros and cons for each. Many people prefer an artificial tree because it can be used every year without having to cut down a live one. You don't have to water it and there are no messy needles to clean up. It's also less of a fire hazard. Others prefer a live tree because they enjoy the tradition of going to a tree farm every year to pick one out with their family. They also smell good. Artificial trees may prevent the killing of living trees, but they are made overseas from non-biodegradable plastics and metals. Living trees are a sustainable, renewable, recyclable resource. Christmas tree farms protect open space in Rhode Island and provide wildlife habitat for a number of species. They also

help protect watersheds from runoff and erosion. And by buying a live tree at a local tree farm, you are helping to keep a Rhode Island farmer in business. Most if not all environmental organizations, including The Audubon Society of Rhode Island, support the harvest of local, live Christmas trees.

For a list of tree farms in Rhode Island, check out the Rhode Island Christmas Tree Growers Association's website at: www.richristmastrees.com.



Vintage Gardens offers fresh cut Christmas trees and lots more

By Paul Lonardo

Vintage Gardens on Putnam Pike in Greenville is fully stocked with all the flowers and plants you are looking for this holiday season, including a variety of Christmas trees in all sizes, from tabletop to ten-footers. The nursery is owned and operated by Gina and John Polseno Jr, a husband and wife team, along with their son Matthew and daughter-in-law MacKenzie. Gina brings a cornucopia of experience with her to Vintage Gardens, having worked for a local garden center for nearly thirty years. Her goal of opening her own garden center was realized this past winter when they bought the property on which the

old M.D. Rounds Antique barn has long stood.

After the challenging spring and summer we all endured, Gina is looking forward to the opportunity of providing the community with their Christmas trees and other seasonal flowers and plants, including poinsettias, decorated wreaths, holiday boxwood trees and Christmas memorial baskets.

They opened the weekend after Thanksgiving and will be in service through the New Year. Business hours are 9 AM to 6 PM on the weekend, and

10 AM to 6 PM Monday through Friday. So come on over to Vintage Gardens and enjoy a free hot chocolate as you search for the perfect Christmas tree for your family, or check out the variety of gift items inside the greenhouse. In the Spring, be sure keep them in mind, when Vintage Gardens will be offering spring flowers, Easter plants and arrangements.

Vintage Gardens is located at 733 Putnam Pike. Call 401-499-1283 with any questions you may have.



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Smithfield Designated Recovery Friendly Workplace

By Joe Siegel

On October 6, the Town of Smithfield was officially designated as a Recovery Friendly Workplace by Governor Gina M. Raimondo.

Town Manager Randy Rossi explained Covid-19 has accelerated the problem of addiction and mental health. The state has reported a 33 percent increase in drug overdose fatalities when comparing to last year (on par to see 400 deaths by the end of this year).

“It really creates a safe environment for our employees to work in,” Rossi said. “(A recovery friendly workplace) gives them a safe zone to be able to talk about it and get any necessary help that they need. You don’t want to ever have the feeling that you’re alone, especially when you feel that every door has closed on you or feel that you’re being shunned or whatever it might be.”

“Our goal is to promote prevention and recovery in a confidential, judgement-free workplace environment,” Rossi wrote in a September 24 letter to town employees. “All staff are invited and encouraged to join me in this initiative through future health training and resource programs. Together we can foster change, remove barriers, and reduce the stigma associated with substance abuse disorders. Please do not hesitate to ask your Director, Human Resources Department, or me for support or additional information.”

“Drug and alcohol misuse have been an ongoing issue in this country for many years,” said Jonathan Goyer, Director of Providence-based organization RI Recovery Friendly Workplace.

“Rhode Island saw a peak in drug overdose deaths back in 2016, resulting in 336 deaths. Through the work of the

Governor's Prevention and Intervention Taskforce, we were able to see slight declines in this number year-over-year, having seen only 308 overdose deaths in 2019,” Goyer said, noting Smithfield “has committed to supporting their employees who have been impacted by addiction.”

Goyer explained the Governor's Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative aims to work with employers to help them in identifying their role, and provides guidance and support to assist them in fulfilling that role.

Rossi also acknowledged the efforts of former State Senator John Tassoni in helping the town become involved with the program.

See Recovery Friendly, page 7



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“We provide EAP (Employee Assistance Program) that connects them whether they need mental health help, substance abuse help working with support groups, or just having somebody to talk to to help facilitate either the needs of themselves or someone in their family. It’s definitely a great step forward for the Town of Smithfield,” Rossi added.

For more information about the Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative, visit www.RecoveryFriendlyRI.com.

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Need for foster families on the rise as struggles intensify due to COVID-19

By Brittni Henderson

Foster care agencies across the country are struggling to find placements for children in need as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to surge across the United States. Here in Rhode Island, it is no different. Pauline Awosika, a Recruiter and Trainer for Community Care Alliance's Therapeutic Foster Care program, works with her team, in conjunction with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families, to find and train families who can provide safe and secure homes for children who enter the child welfare system.

According to Awosika, the people that CCA serves are some of the most vulnerable in RI, and some of the guidelines, while for the safety of all, make it even harder for these families to survive.

"Stay at home orders are effective in helping control the spread of COVID-19, but they also continue to have a negative impact on many families," she says. "Support systems are essential to the social, financial, and psychological wellbeing of the individual and families, but access

to these supports is limited under the current circumstances."

Domestic abuse has also been on the rise, as quarantine conditions are associated with alcohol abuse, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms. With the rise of these issues in the community, it is not difficult to see the correlation it has with the uptick of children entering the child welfare system.

"Prior to COVID, these issues existed with-in our communities, but they have intensified. Placing a child in a foster home is never a simple process, but it has become even more difficult post COVID. Finding and retaining families willing to foster has become more challenging now that everyone is understandably on edge about exposure to COVID-19," Awosika shares.

"This along with the fact that some level of home schooling has become a requirement for the majority of Rhode Island children has created an alarming shortage of foster homes in the state."

CCA's Therapeutic Foster Care team has been actively working with DCYF and the nine other private foster agencies to help address this need. They are all hoping to spread the word about how the pandemic is affecting these vulnerable children in our communities who need immense support in these complex and trying times.

"It is our duty, as a community, to respond to the needs of these children who are often over looked and underserved," urges Awosika. "We are looking to find homes, especially for teens and children who identify with the LGBTQ+ community, and teen parents."

CCA's Therapeutic Foster Care program utilizes a team-based approach to help foster parents meet the emotional and behavioral needs of the children placed in their homes. It provides diverse training opportunities and support to licensed foster families. These families are then able to provide a structured and therapeutic family environment for children and youth who can safely be placed in the community but who cannot live with their biological families.

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Past, Present and Future Converge in Renovated Landmark Building in Greenville

By Paul Lonardo

Like the clock on the building in the iconic *Back to the Future* films, the clock on the old Smithfield Exchange Bank in Greenville is an instantly recognizable feature of the landmark structure, built back in 1856. Last year, the former bank and fire station was purchased by local businessman, Jerry Haggarty, who owns and operates Alliance Business Products in Smithfield. He has always been impressed with the property and its importance to the community, and when he saw that it was for sale, he seized the opportunity.

“The building itself has a really amazing history,” the new landlord says. “Greenville was the center of Smithfield. It’s where everything started, around the bank and Waterman Tavern. Many prominent local families conducted business here and helped the growth of the town.”

After acquiring the historic brick edifice located at 595 Putnam Pike, Haggarty embarked on an extensive renovation project to create unique, centrally located commercial office space for local businesses. He knew what he was getting into, not expecting the refurbishing project to be an easy one. He wanted to maintain the historical integrity as much as possible while updating and modernizing the interior for both aesthetic purposes and to ensure safety.

“Over the years, various owners and occupants of the building made changes, leaving a behind a mishmash of style and décor from different eras,” Haggarty says. “We tried to preserve as much as we could, but there wasn’t much left of the original construction.”

The bottom floor suffered past water damage and had been completely gutted, requiring much of the interior to be taken down to studs. The electrical wiring and plumbing all needed to be replaced. Brand

new heating and air conditioning systems were installed as well.

“We replaced the fluorescents with new lighting, including chandeliers,” Haggarty says. “We restored the entranceway, inside and out, adding some features and accents to make it look more in line with the period that it was built.”

The exterior clock is also functioning again, it’s hands no longer frozen in time but moving resolutely into the future. “Getting the clock working was the first thing I did,” Haggarty says. “It doesn’t say ten after four anymore, as it had for years. The clock on the inside, above the door, also works now.”

Renovations were completed this past spring to include three suites on three levels, all with separate utilities, their own kitchen area, and private bathroom facilities. The lower level offers approximately 1,200 square feet plus some storage with direct access from the rear parking lot. The main level unit contains about 1,800 square feet of space, soaring ceilings, detailed architectural features, large windows, and a spacious private office or conference room with a built-in bookcase and a fireplace. The top-level features one suite that is dividable into two smaller suites. The building is fire coded, handicap accessible and boasts an ample, newly paved parking lot with a dedicated traffic light onto Putnam Pike, where up to 20,000 vehicles pass every day. Haggarty says the property is ideal for a mortgage company, accountant, counseling, attorney, real estate office, or financial



planner, but any type of business can be accommodated.

Jerry Haggarty did a remarkable job overseeing the refurbishing of the 150-year old building. To look at it from the outside, it appears almost exactly as it did a century and a half ago, but to walk inside and see the layout of the modern business suites, it’s like stepping into the future.

In August, we relocated our *Smithfield Times* office into the old bank building, leaving a couple of suites available for immediate occupancy. If you are looking for new office space for your business, contact Don Morash, broker and owner of Abbott Properties, LLC at 401-529-3985.

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Cranston woman creates unique clinic for children, families with Autism Spectrum Disorder

By Brittini Henderson

Some say that a crisis is a terrible thing to waste. For Giana Gray, she took one look at the COVID-19 crisis and created something that would ensure that the livelihood of children with Autism would not fall to the wayside. When the pandemic shook the entire world at its core, Gray was steadfast in her plan to start her own clinic. She was unable to open it in an inside space, so instead she set up an outdoor tent and opened Assent Applied Behavior Analysis in her hometown of Cranston, RI.

The mission of Assent ABA is to work toward the best possible outcome for each individual and their family. Given the spectrum, this yields very different out-comes for all. At Assent, the goal is for each member of the community, including youth, families, and therapists, to grow together as they improve the quality of their lives by gradually gaining independence, accepting differences in ability, and building meaningful relationships.

“If you’ve met one child with autism, you’ve met one child with autism,” Gray says, adding that each family and child has unique learning strategies, cultural backgrounds, family dynamics, and a lifelong disorder that affects both the individuals and their families. Her inspiration behind opening Assent ABA

was the fact that during the COVID-19 shutdown, telehealth and distance learning became major strains on families. She also pays tribute to her own children, sharing that she learns so much from them everyday.

Despite having over 19 years of experience in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorder, she feels that she is just scratching the surface on how families and children experience ASD. For her, the work is to continuously learn from these individuals and to provide them with care best suited to their individual needs.

“In March, the families I served went from 50-60 hours of necessary support each week to nothing,” Gray says. “Many agencies needed to shift their workforce to accommodate the needs of adults living in congregate care. This had an unfortunate effect by needing to lay off those working with youth and families providing home-based care.”

The outdoor clinic opened in June 2020 and serves youth and families Monday-Friday from 8:30am-3:00pm and offers home based sessions 1-2 times per week. Assent offers Applied Behavior Analysis treatment. The dedicated team of professionals shows up late and stays



early, and is committed to serving this population with integrity.

“This is a critical time for our youth and families as our population is medically vulnerable and in many cases are not able to safely attend school,” Gray says. “Being in an outdoor clinic allows us to adhere to social distancing measures, as well as acknowledge that is less likely to contract COVID-19 in the open air. This service also allows parents to remain employed during this difficult time.”

As far as funding is concerned, Gray states that in 2012 commercial insurance companies were mandated to fund this medically necessary treatment. Unfortunately, it can sometimes take months credentialing and insurance claims to be paid, and for this reason, they are seeking fundraising and grant opportunities to allow them the ability to keep the service going.

For more information visit the Assent ABA page on Facebook or email Giana at gg@assentaba.community.

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Auld Lang Syne, as you've never heard it before.

By Jim Ignasher

It just wouldn't be New Years Eve without Auld Lang Syne being sung at the stroke of midnight, and while most of us are familiar with the words, "Should old acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind ...", one may be surprised to learn that there have been other versions which have faded into obscurity.

The musical notes are centuries old, and trace their origin to an ancient Scottish folksong, which by the way, had nothing to do with celebrating a new year. In fact, the song didn't become associated with New Year's celebrations until the 20th century, but more on that later.

The words "Auld Lang Syne" are of the Scottish language and translate in English to "old long since" referring to times gone by.

One of the earliest versions of the song was published by James Watson in 1711, which goes in part: "Should Old Acquaintance be forgot, and never thought upon; the flames of love extinguished, and fully past and gone."

The version we're most familiar with today was written by Scottish poet Robert Burns in 1796, but he wasn't the only one to pen Auld Lang Syne.

Some examples honor fallen warriors such as the following words dating to 1822. "Should gallant heroes be forgot, and never called to mind; who fought to free our native soil, In Auld Lang Syne." Another example from 1824 pays homage to French general Lafayette which goes in part; "In Auld Lang Syne did Lafayette, kneel humbly at our shrine;



then shall we brethren e're forget, the days of Auld Lang Syne. Know by these grateful hearts which glow with liberty divine, 'til death shall lay our order low, we'll think of Auld Lang Syne."

Yet another example was sung at Boston's Fourth of July celebration in 1832. "Companions, fill your goblets round, in foods of ruby wine; we'll drink to those who fought for us, in Auld Lang Syne."

See Auld Sang Syne, page 19

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Dear Smithfield residents:

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who supported me throughout the campaign. I look forward to serving every single resident in town with transparency and dedication.

Thank you for your support, your trust, and your vote.
Happy Holidays!

- Angelica Bovis



Auld Lang Syne, from page 18

An 1840 version goes as follows: "Should brave old soldiers be forgot, should patriots fail to twine; wreaths, glorious wreaths, for those who fought, in days of Auld Lang Syne."

The melody to Auld Lang Syne was even used in the 1836 presidential campaign of William H. Harrison who ran against incumbent Martin Van Buren. It went in part; "Now here's a cup to Harrison, here's to that hero bold; guide faith I can – an honest man, is better far than gold." Harrison lost.

A re-worked version titled "Harrison's Song" sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne was published for Harrison's 1840 bid for the presidency. That time he won.

And some versions simply came from the writer's heart such as the following from 1825. "Oh! Sing no more of lightsome days, the winsome days lang syne; for lingering fond remembrance stays, around the dear lost shrine!"

In 1845 an unknown poet wrote a version of Auld Lang Syne on the walls of a crumbling church in Blandford, Virginia, which read in part: "And sadly sighs the wandering wind, where oft in years gone by; prayer rose from many hearts to Him, the highest of the high. The tramp of many a busy foot, which sought thy aisles is o'er; and many a weary heart around, is chilled forever more."

The music of Auld Lang Syne was perfect for reunions as evidenced by the following version published in 1884 under the title "San Jacinto Remnant", honoring those who fought at the battle of San Jacinto in Texas. "Though few remain of us who stood, in San Jacinto's line; we cling to Veteran brotherhood, and days of Auld Lang Syne. Our ranks are thinning year by year, yet all the closer join; the fewer left, to each more dear, the remnant of Lang Syne."

So, how did Auld Lang Syne come to be the traditional song for New Year's Eve? We can thank Guy Lombardo and his orchestra. In the early 1920s Lombardo and his orchestra worked in western Ontario, Canada, where there was a large population of Scottish descent, so ending each performance with Auld Lang Syne seemed the natural thing to do, and it became his trademark.

In 1929 Lombardo and his group moved to New York City where they performed their first New Year's Eve concert at the Roosevelt Hotel. The music was broadcast on live radio, and it was the first nationwide broadcast of a New Year's celebration in U. S. history. The public loved it, and Lombardo continued his yearly nationwide radio (and later television) New Year's Eve broadcasts into the 1970s, earning him the nickname "Mr. New Year's Eve". And to this day Auld Lang Syne is played in New York City's Times Square on New Year's Eve.

Happy New Year!

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The Chief's Corner

By Robert W. Seltzer, BSEE, EFO, MPA
Smithfield Fire Department Chief

The holiday season is upon us once again. Although 2020 has been a crazy year with an unheard of pandemic, various groups around the country demanding change for equality for all in our country, and an unprecedented presidential election with its share of protest, hopefully we can all find solace during this time of year that typically brings joy for many.

To that end, we usually celebrate the holiday season by decorating our homes to show our participation in celebrating the “most wonderful time of the year”.

It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart.

Live Christmas Tree

When you purchase a live tree, make sure it's fresh. Needles should be green and springy to the touch.

- Cut 1 to 2 inches off the bottom of the trunk before placing the tree in the stand. A fresh cut allows the tree to absorb water. Place the tree in water right away.
- Fill the tree stand with water every day.
- Make sure the tree is at least 3 feet away from any heat source, like floor vents, fireplaces, radiators, candles or lamps. A heat source too close to the Christmas tree causes 1 in every 4 winter fires.
- Make sure your tree is not blocking an exit.
- Always turn the tree lights off or unplug them before going to bed or leaving your home.
- Use lights that are approved by a national testing organization like UL.
- Replace lights that have worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections.

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands you can safely connect. Make sure you are using the right lights for indoors or outdoors.
- Remove your tree immediately after the holidays even if you think it is not dry. Inspect holiday lights each year before you put them up. Throw away light strands with frayed or pinched wires.

Candles

- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles. If you do use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be knocked down easily.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens.
- Always use non-flammable holders.
- Keep candles away from other decorations and wrapping paper.
- Place candles where they cannot be knocked down or blown over.

Snow

Artificial snow sprays can irritate lungs if inhaled. To avoid injury, read container labels; follow directions carefully.

Decorating the House

- Place decorations that are breakable or have small parts out of reach of small children.
- Christmas novelties are not toys, even if they resemble them, and they do not have to comply with toy safety regulations. Give careful thought to where you display them.
- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety. Identify these by the label from an

independent testing laboratory.

- Carefully inspect each electrical decoration. Cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections may cause a serious shock or start a fire.
- Turn off all lights on trees and other decorations when you go to bed or leave the house. Lights could short and start a fire.
- Check packaging to determine the maximum number of strings that may be linked together.

General Rules for Holiday Safety

- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of the reach of children.
- Avoid wearing loose flowing clothes – particularly long, open sleeves – near open flames – such as those of a fireplace, stove, or candlelit table.
- Plan for safety. Remember, there is no substitute for common sense. Look for and eliminate potential danger spots near candles, fireplaces, trees, and/or electrical connections.

Working Smoke Alarms

Working smoke alarms give you early warning if there is a fire. Make sure your home is protected.

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Place smoke alarms inside and outside of all the sleeping areas.
- Make sure all of your smoke alarms work. Test them each month.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years old or older.

Give your family the best present of all ... a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season!

*Best wishes from all of us at the
Smithfield Fire Department.*



A View From the Cheap Seats

There's a New Day Dawning for Sentinel Strikers

by Dan Pieroni

When you have gone 0-31-1 in your last 32 games, it's hard to be optimistic.

There's always a bright side to futility though when you have a group of players that have grown together through all the losing. Players are always focused on breaking the snide and hungry for that first taste of victory. For the Smithfield High School Boys soccer team, the streak finally ended with an impressive early-season victory over division one powerhouse Classical High School.

After such a long losing streak, it would be tempting to rest on your laurels and savor the meaning of the victory for what it was, but not this feisty team. The Classical game was used as a catalyst to forge a strong start in division 2 play, as key wins over Pilgrim and Tollgate followed. Before anyone knew better, the Sentinels were 5-2 and marching towards their first playoff appearance in years.

So what changed between this year and last?

Longtime coach Steve Votolato believes he now has a veteran squad of four seniors and three juniors who have become comfortable playing with each

other over the last few years. Coach Votolato also believes that the addition of former Sentinel all-stater Mark Gilchrist to the coaching staff has made a difference as he has introduced a series of shooting and possession drills that the players have responded positively to.

Vatolato adds that even though the team has had difficulty scoring, he has been impressed with the team's defense. "If we don't give up any goals we can't lose," he says. He specifically cited the work of Senior captain Rob Squillante as a stabilizing force on team morale.

Squillante's leadership qualities and willingness to listen to his teammates' input has made the team happy and motivated to play their best. Squillante himself told me he could sense a change in tempo during the Classical game as he felt that passing was much crisper as the team grew more comfortable in passing towards the sidelines and not just through the middle of the field. He credits coaches Votolato and Gilchrist for setting a consistent lineup that compliments each other well.

Squillante believes his main role with the team is to influence the attitudes

by remaining positive and partaking in as many team building activities as allows. Even though the team has slipped somewhat with late-season losses to Mount Hope and Pilgrim they remained second in their conference as the season wound to a close.

Now, as the playoffs loom, Votolato and Squillante remain confident that they can be a sleeper favorite for the state championship if they continue to focus on the fundamental drills and team camaraderie that have been fundamental to team success. The dark days of consistent losing are over as they have been replaced by rays of sunshine predicated on strong defense and a commitment to fundamentals

Perhaps those are the ingredients that will push this team towards playoff and make all those lessons learned through losing worthwhile in the end.



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Ask an Expert

My name is Tom Lopatosky. I'm the President of LOPCO Contracting (www.LopcoContracting.com) and I'm honored to have the opportunity to talk to you about home improvement on a monthly basis.

I love answering your questions! Please send them to tom@LopcoContracting.com or call 401-270-2664. Thanks in advance for taking the time to read this column!



What is the best way to remove old wallpaper?

When it comes to working on Clients' homes, there are two things that I absolutely personally despise doing more than any other ...

One is re-glazing old windows. The other is removing old wallpaper.

I am very fortunate that I have been able to surround myself over the years with some very hard working, talented people that are able to relieve me of what for me are the most pains-taking of painstaking tasks.

Of the two, taking down wallpaper is obviously the one that is the more interior-oriented.

'Arduous' is one word that many use to describe this "fun" activity and I think it hits it right on the head.

Elbow grease is essential in taking down wallpaper.

Over the years, we have found there to be a few other tools however that may be able to assist in the process (once the wallpaper is perforated so that these tools will be truly effective) ...

- Wallpaper steamers can be very helpful. Clearly not everyone has a wallpaper steamer kicking around their home. If you are able to borrow or rent one, although a little cumbersome to set up and clean up, many find them extremely useful.

- Concentrated or ready mix wallpaper removal solutions from the local hardware, paint, or box store we have found to work to varying degrees depending on the type of wall-paper situation that is being stripped (vinyl or paper-backed, paste or adhesive, how many layers, etc.).
- A home "remedy" that you may find on the Internet (fabric softener or vinegar mixed to differing concoctions with boiling hot water as one example) could possibly be an alternate type of way of approaching things.

Taking down wallpaper is not an easy task whatsoever. Many times it is a process of trial & error to see what the best methodology is with a specific wallpaper removal situation.

Out of the numerous possibilities, believe it or not, our best wallpaper guy for years has sworn by just using boiling hot water!

No matter how you cut it, the process is the same: perforate wallpaper, apply "solution" (steam, wallpaper removal solution, home remedy, hot water, etc.), use a putty knife or scraper to take off wallpaper, use a sponge to help remove as much of the adhesive residue as possible, and repeat until everything is all off.

At the end of the day, there is no magic button. Good old-fashioned hard work is the most essential part of the entire process and there is no escaping that!

Good luck!

About Tom Lopatosky

Tom Lopatosky has run his own RI-based carpentry and painting business since 1995; LOPCO Contracting – the "Personable, Particular Professionals" – specializes in carpentry and exterior & interior painting. Recently LOPCO Contracting was named 'RI's Finest Painting Contracting Company' by ShopInRI Magazine. In 2013, Tom was named "Humanitarian of the Year" by the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America (PDCA) and a "40 Under 40" award winner by Providence Business News. He is a member of both PCA (Painting Contractors Association) and RIBA (Rhode Island Builders Association). Tom has often had weekly 'Home Improvement Tips' that have aired on the radio on 630 WPRO AM and on television on WPRI 12.

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Answers to Word Search on page 42.

SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



Tim Jones
Cartoonist



IMHO | by Ron Scopelliti

Number 37

So there I was on November 5, celebrating Guy Fawkes Day by playing dystopian computer games and trying not to obsess over incoming election results. It wasn't working. No matter what I did, I kept wandering back to Newsy and fixating on the number "270." I just couldn't get the number out of my head, so I decided on an obvious solution: find another number to fixate on.

Luckily, about a week earlier I was prematurely packing summer clothing into storage bags when I found a polo shirt with the number 37 on it. I remember buying it years ago because I liked the color, and then speculating about why it might have had the number 37 on it, since it didn't seem to be associated with any sports team. I thought that it might have been a reference to the 37th state, then realized I didn't know which state that was. At the time, I guessed that it might be Iowa, and decided to write a column about Iowa, even after finding out that the 37th state was actually Nebraska.

But for some reason, I never took my examination of the number 37 any deeper. So on November 5, I decided to find something fascinating about the number 37, and write about it. And, I'm telling you, I couldn't have picked a more boring number to fixate upon. I found some things that might have been interesting to others, or even to me during a different time in my life, but none that truly captured my imagination while offering a psychological respite from political strife.

Sure, there was the fact that Richard Nixon was President 37, but that wasn't going to help me escape my angst. Nor was the fact that it was 1937 when FDR proposed a court-packing plan that would

allow the President to add judges to the Supreme Court. All that hit way too close to home. I tried delving into auto racing history, and found that a car with the number 37 has ever won the Indy 500. The Daytona 500 has also never been won by a number 37 either, but who really cares about NASCAR anymore?

My dive down the rabbit hole would have come up completely empty had I not remembered a tidbit about Hannibal. When you mention the name Hannibal, four things things generally come to mind: fava beans and Chianti, or elephants and Alps.

Though the 37 in question had nothing to do with Hannibal Lecter, it did start me thinking about what a convenient and unlikely coincidence it was that a guy named Hannibal would end up being a cannibal. It's pretty damn hard to find a first name that rhymes with a criminal atrocity. If you go to last names, you have a few more choices, though the only one I could come up with off the top of my head was Fowler the Disemboweler.

But I digress. It's the other Hannibal that the number 37 is connected to – the Carthaginian general who invaded Rome after leading 37 elephants over the Alps. I only recently learned that there was a clear consensus on how many elephants were involved in the journey to Rome. To me, 37 seems like a reasonable number of elephants. If you tried to take more

than 50, that would be overreaching, and if you only took four or five, it probably wouldn't be worth the effort.

But what bothers me is that Hannibal's army included as many as 30,000 men and 9,000 horses, and all anybody ever talks about is the elephants. They even overshadow the general himself. You hardly ever hear Hannibal's last name, which was Barca, and the fact that he had two brothers gets completely buried. I haven't seen any mention of sisters in the Barca Bunch, but I like to think he had a sister named Jan who resented the attention all the elephants got. "Elephants, elephants, elephants!"

My escape from the present came to a sudden halt when I realized how much time I was now spending thinking about elephants, and finally made the political connection to the animal, which should have been obvious to me from the start. I should have known that looking to history to escape from my angst would be futile. Instead, I decided to turn to music, and replace Hannibal's 37 elephants with The Alarm's "68 Guns" or Traffic's "40,000 Headmen." Now there's an idea for a grisly character – how about a novel featuring Steadman the Headman ...

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Senior Scene

by Paul V. Palange

Longtime musician wants more shows for Christmas

Despite my advanced age, I continue to enjoy giving and receiving Christmas gifts. The process of figuring out what to buy people on my list and spreading a bit of joy with a present is satisfying, and unwrapping a box or opening a bag and finding an item I really wanted or need is still cool.

While the thrill isn't gone, my wish list has changed a little and for 2020, and the entries are more along the line of one my sources – Alvaro 'Al' DeAndrade Jr. The 84-year-old DeAndrade is a well-known trumpet player who would perform 250 or more gigs back in the day, and in 2019, he had 100 shows. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he's had a mere two performances this year. What he wants for Christmas, his favorite time of year, is simple: "Playing more music like we used to."

My guess is that getting back to normal is on millions of wish lists. Al and a few of his colleagues will get a taste of normalcy when they perform at Garden City in Cranston from 6 to 8 p.m. on Nov. 28 and Dec. 5 and 12. Al will be playing holiday tunes as a member of a Paul Borrelli music band along with Tom Rotendo, also on trumpet; Dick Parente, trombone; and Kevin Kane, horn.

"If my father wasn't a musician, I never would have been exposed to music," DeAndrade said, explaining there were no music programs in the Central Falls' schools and Rhode Island College (RIC) when he attended. He started to learn how to play the trumpet and read music at the age of 9 under the tutelage of Alvaro Sr. Al Jr. said before a motor vehicle accident in the 1970s in which he suffered a

severe lip injury, he could "blow the walls down," and that in the ninth grade, he was recruited to fill in for a trumpet player in the University of Rhode Island Marching Band for three football games.

DeAndrade said he's concentrated on playing the big band and Dixieland genres – "society music and show tunes" as he calls them. He played his first New Year's Eve gig with his father and one of his brothers at the age 10, and he's performed with many musicians and orchestras, including Duke Belaire, Ralph Stuart, Tommy Dorsey, Gene Milton, Oliver Burton and the Howie Winograd Orchestra.

Even though he's an accomplished musician and earned a significant income as a trumpeter, Al is a family man first. As such, he needed fringe benefits not available to most performers so he taught grades 3 to 6 for more than three decades in Central Falls. He juggled his teaching and music careers for years. On many Friday afternoons when school ended at 3 p.m., he would drive to T.F. Green Airport and catch a 4:30 plane and fly somewhere around the country to play for the weekend.

He served as president of the Central Falls Teachers Union for 26 years and is the longtime vice president of the Providence Federation of Musicians. Unions are necessary, he said, to protect the rights of employees and prevent or reverse wrongful firings. As president of the Federation, Al has organized and staged dozens of Cavalcade of Bands events at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston to help musicians in need of financial assistance, and he's also active



with the Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame in Pawtucket, forwarding nominees deserving of recognition.

In addition to being a gifted musician, Al is a talented athlete. He was inducted into RIC's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2008 for basketball and soccer, and he's slated to be inducted into the Central Falls High School Athletic Hall of Fame as a member of the 1955 Rhode Island Class B Championship basketball team.

He played basketball in adult leagues until the age 81, when he had a pacemaker implanted in his chest, and he was in three softball leagues. He plans to play in one league in 2021, and he thinks he will hang up his glove and bat after turning 85.

Al met his wife Roberta (Joseph) while they were attending RIC, which was called Rhode Island of College Education at that time. They have two children – Alyssa, who is a captain on the Providence Police Department; and Brian, a retired mental health counselor.

You know Al will keep playing the trumpet as long as possible because he enjoys performing too much to retire. Let's hope he gets what he wants for Christmas – along with the rest of us.



Health Awareness

It's That Time of Year

by Diane L. Marolla, LICSW

In times of great stress or adversity, it's always best to keep busy, to plow your anger and your energy into something positive.” *Lee Iacocca*

It is December 2020. This time of the year is about celebration, family, office parties, and gift buying. Certainly, the holidays can also be stressful. This year it will be different because of COVID. COVID cases are on the rise in RI, and the Governor has put new restrictions and a curfew. Nationally, cases are rising. We have a new President in 2021. For some that is a relief, for others, it is a disappointment.

As I talk to my clients, as well as to friends and family, everyone is concerned about the holidays and how it will be for them. My comment to the “worry” is typically the same, which is why we need to take one day at a time, stay in the present, and focus on what we can control versus what we can't. We cannot control this virus. We can only live with it for now.

During COVID, for me, growing up in the 70's and 80's has helped me manage living with this virus. During those years, I was used to a very simple life. I walked a lot. I couldn't do what I wanted when I wanted. I couldn't buy what I wanted. I couldn't see my friends whenever I wanted. Memories of holidays were simple too. My holidays growing up are the best memories as they were simple. Do I remember what I got for a present or didn't get? The answer is no. What I do remember is being with my family, eating the best holiday cookies, and loving the Christmas lights. I also loved waiting for my favorite Christmas song to come on FM radio. I also remember being loved. As I became a teenager and went to college, I loved creating holiday traditions with my friends too.

As you prepare for the holidays this

year, your holiday traditions will be altered in one way or another. If you grew up like me, and remember simple being wonderful, perhaps some of the old traditions can be new and fun again. Remember, focus on what you can do versus what you can't this year.

- Perhaps make a new tradition of driving around different communities and looking at holiday lights. You can do this with your children, you can do this as a couple, or perhaps invite a friend you have been consistently seeing during COVID. Pack some goodies in the car, put on some Christmas music, and maybe sing in the car to make a new tradition or memory.
- We all know the restaurant industry is suffering during COVID. Perhaps order some or all your holiday dinner from a local restaurant. You will be helping this industry during their toughest year, and you will be able to relax more.
- Have Christmas movie nights. Do you know I have yet to see it is a Wonderful Life?
- Play board games. Maybe you saved some of your old board games. I remember my favorite game to play was Battleship. That was the only game I was good at. I'm not sure why.
- Take nature strolls in RI. Winter is a beautiful time of year. Truth be told, it is my favorite time to go to the beach. I love walking on Narragansett beach in the winter. I love bundling up and having the whole place pretty much to myself and walking my dogs Marox and Winnie. I think of the line of a poem I wrote in college about going to the

beach. It began with the words “here you can think.” I felt that way then and feel that way now. I feel peace when I am walking on a beach in the wintertime.

- Be sure to stay connected to your loved ones through technology. How about arranging holiday Zoom calls? Or plain just call someone and let them know you have been thinking of them and miss them. Tell people you love them.
- Do random acts of kindness. It will make you feel good, and someone else feel good. We have a lot of folks, who won't be able to see family this year, so maybe take some cookies over to that neighbor who is alone. We have folks who are suffering financially, so maybe a gift card, or a small gift for someone who lost their job.
- Adopt a family in need. Social service agencies this year will have a high demand this year. Our social service agencies are the ones who get the phone calls when someone can put food on their table or buy gifts for their children.
- If you can have a holiday dinner with family, start a tradition where everyone says what they are grateful for this year. Focus on what is good in your life, versus what may be difficult.

As I close my last article for 2020, I want to say to all of you thank you for reading this article each month. It is such a privilege for me to be able to talk with all of you. I also want to wish you all the happiest of holidays. May the holiday season bring you and your family peace, joy, good health, prosperity, and love.



'Tis The Season to Stay Socially Distanced

by Sophis DeJesus

As the weather gets colder, our favorite holidays begin to grow closer and closer. It's important to remember that amongst the craziness of the ongoing pandemic, this is still a time of love, family, and togetherness. The holiday season will no doubt be a little different this year, but that's okay. Our town, as well as our schools, have been doing everything they can to make this year feel as normal as possible. The National Honor Society students from the Smithfield High School have been working hard with their advisors to create events that will bring the same holiday cheer, while still keeping everyone healthy and safe.

In my November article, I mentioned that the NHS students were working on a few projects. The most recent was the "Sentinel Army." Each member of the society created two scarecrows and

placed them around the town at select locations. This made for a total of 101 scarecrows. At each location there were scannable QR code that correlated to an organization to be donated to. With this, there were also collection sites for canned goods.

In doing these projects for the town, the NHS was hoping to keep the holiday spirit alive. This is the season of giving back, and just by donating to a few organizations or sparing a few canned goods, our community is helping those in need.

Co-secretary/treasurer of the Honor Society, Caitlyn Cacador, believes that, "we need a little holiday spirit now more than ever. If we can do something that will make one family's holiday season a bit brighter, then we should."

Now that December is here, the NHS has been thinking more about a possible holiday reverse parade. Similar to the one the Smithfield police department hosted on Halloween, families will simply drive through Deerfield park and admire the decor. This is a fun and safe way for families to experience a festive activity while staying socially distanced! The idea is still in the works, so again, be on the lookout for any updates on this event.

Though we may be limited with our traveling and family gatherings for the holidays, there are still ways to stay connected with one another. Take the opportunity to send a card to a loved one or give them a call. FaceTime or a form of video-chat is a good option as well. Be sure to spread love to those in your household and hold them close this holiday season.



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50 years Ago – December, 1970

By Jim Ignasher

Navy Chief Petty Officer Paul E. Piggott of Greenville was serving aboard the submarine U.S.S. Tullibee.

Chief Warrant Officer Louis G. Therock of Esmond was serving in the Rhode Island National Guard and received an Army Commendation Medal.

Army Specialist Allen H. Uttley of Greenville was promoted to SP/5 while serving in Korea.

Air Force Major Vincent R. Suppich of Greenville was awarded his third air medal while serving with the Strategic Air Command.

A new Boy Scout troop was established in Greenville – Troop 14. The scout master was George H. Vallee.

On December 5th St. Philip's Church held a Christmas Ball at the Kirkbrae County Club. Music was provided by the Tommy Masso Orchestra.

The newly completed community room at the Greenville Manor was used to host the Manor's first Christmas party.

Mrs. T. Frank Fogarty of Georgiaville returned from Hollywood, California, after appearing in a film segment for the television show "This Is Your Life" which would air in January of 1971. The show was paying homage to actress Ruth Buzzi of "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-in" fame. Mrs. Fogarty was a dance teacher,

and Miss Buzzi was one of her former students.

On December 11th and 12th the Smithfield Players performed the play, "The Tender Trap" at the Smithfield High School. Joseph Janake played the character Earl Lindquist, William Johnson played Sol Schwartz, and Thomas Tobin played Charles Reader. The production was directed by Calt Calvo.

On December 12th a memorial mass was held at St. Michael's Church for Smithfield police sergeant Norman Vezina who died in the line of duty on December 10, 1968 while attempting to rescue a 5-year-old boy who'd fallen through thin ice.

On December 14th to the 16th Senator F. Monroe Allen of Greenville attended a conference on ways to cut air pollution held at Colby College in Waterville, Maine.

Dr. Thomas A. Manion of Greenville, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Bryant College, represented the college at the annual meeting of the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools held in Boston.

The Georgiaville Volunteer Fire Department held its annual meeting to elect officers for the upcoming year. Edward Horan was elected President; Fred Andrews, Jr., Financial Secretary and Treasurer; Donald Brown was elected Deputy Chief, Harold French, Captain, Ronald Patterson, Rescue captain, and Edward Horan, Lieutenant.

Edward Kocielniak, Roger Desnoches, and Henry Tremblay, Sr., were elected delegates to various Rhode Island fire leagues.

The movie "Love Story", starring Ali MacGraw and Ryan O'Neal, was released by Paramount Pictures on December 16th.

A local electronics retail store was advertising Sylvania 25 inch color TV's for the "low, low, price" of \$559.95 as part of a pre-Christmas sale promotion. For those too young to remember, a 25 inch TV screen was considered massive in 1970.

A local car dealership was advertising a 1968 Ford Mustang with a "vinyl roof". (Remember those vinyl roofs?) The car was also equipped with power steering and a V-8 engine. If it had a set of wings it could have flown, and it could have been yours for a mere \$1,895.00.

The Smithfield Jaycees held a toys-for-tots drive for underprivileged children.

On December 23rd a Christmas Ball was held at the high school for the juniors and seniors and their dates.



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The Nature of Things

Hibernation is Not for Everyone

by James Gass

As the air gets colder, the nights grow longer and the days get shorter, are you feeling more sleepy than usual? Do you have trouble getting out of bed in the morning? In fact, do you want to just lie there and hibernate through the whole winter? Humans can't do that unfortunately, but many, though not all, mammals do.

Hibernation is a state of deep sleep, where an animal's respiration, temperature, and heart rate become drastically reduced in order to conserve as much energy and body fat as possible until warmer weather returns. But most furbearers in Rhode Island do not actually hibernate. Among the mammals in our area, only woodchucks, bats and jumping mice truly hibernate. All others, including deer, rabbits, bobcats, mice, coyotes, squirrels, bears and members of the mustelid family (otters, fishers, minks and weasels), remain active throughout the season. Chipmunks, raccoons and skunks sometimes go into dens and become dormant during periods of severe weather, emerging once conditions improve.

Woodchucks spend the summer months building up body fat for their long winter nap. They dig burrows up to six feet deep with tunnels as long as forty feet, having a den for summer and another for winter. The summer den is usually dug in an open field, but the winter den is excavated in nearby woods. The winter den has a hibernation chamber which the 'chuck enters in early November. Once there, it goes into a deep sleep, not waking until February or March. And no, woodchucks do not emerge from their winter den and go back to sleep for six weeks after they see their shadow.

Little brown bats and big brown bats both overwinter in Rhode Island, but big brown bats are the ones more likely

to hibernate in your attic. Both species hibernate in colonies. Little browns prefer caves, abandoned mines or other natural settings, sometimes flying great distances to find suitable sites. Northern long-eared and tricolored bats are also known to hibernate here.

When bats are disturbed in their hibernacula, they may wake up and fly off to another spot. Unseasonably warm weather may also bring them out of hibernation, causing them to use up precious energy in search of insects, which are no longer available.

The Aeolus Cave in Dorset, Vermont used to be the largest bat hibernaculum in the northeastern United States, and is where most of our little brown bats overwintered. A deadly European cave fungus discovered in New York in 2006 called white nose syndrome (WNS) found its way into the Dorset cave, and it caused mass mortality among bats hibernating there. It kills bats by causing them to wake too frequently, which uses



Hibernating bats. Photo courtesy of USFWS

up stores of fat and energy. WNS has also been found in all known hibernacula in Rhode Island. The northeastern population of little brown bats, once the most plentiful of the "mouse-eared" species, has decreased by over 95 percent. They went from being listed as a Species of Least Concern by the IUCN in 2008 to Endangered in 2018. Northern long-eared bats have also been listed as a Federally Threatened Species due to WNS. Fortunately, little brown bat numbers appear to be increasing, as some individuals may be immune to the fungus.

See Hibernation, page 37

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Stargazing

by David A. Huestis,
Historian, Skyscrapers, Inc.

The Geminid Meteor Shower: and the Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn

2020 has been disastrous for the local observatories. Seagrave and Ladd have been closed since mid-March due to Covid-19, thereby preventing stargazers from enjoying splendid views of the heavens from these great facilities. In addition, for me the pandemic forced my retirement from teaching astronomy labs at Bryant University after a great ten-year run of enlightening students about basic astronomical concepts.

While my monthly columns can only highlight a couple of interesting astronomical events, there are many websites out there that can provide something of interest for practically every night. Here are a handful to get you started (some may require you to input the current year):

<http://www.seasky.org/astronomy/astronomy-calendar-2020.html>
<https://in-the-sky.org/newscat.php>
<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/sights-to-see.html>

December has three major events on which I would like to focus. First up is the annual Geminid meteor shower on the night of December 13-14. The Earth sweeps through a stream of debris deposited in the orbital path of a two-mile-in-diameter hybrid “rock comet” named 3200 Phaethon. And this year the Moon will be in its New phase and will not interfere whatsoever with observing as many meteors as possible.

If the weather cooperates, the dark moonless night will permit stargazers well away from interfering

light pollution to observe 60+ meteors per hour at peak sometime between 10 p.m. and dawn’s early light. While the Geminids appear to radiate from Gemini near its brightest stars, Castor and Pollux, scan around the sky as much as possible. As the night progresses and Gemini moves across the sky towards the west, your scan should move as well. At around 2:30 a.m. Gemini will be on your north/south meridian, just south of zenith. The number of meteors per hour should increase throughout your observing session.

The Geminids are fairly bright and moderate in speed, hitting our atmosphere at 21.75 miles per second. They are characterized by their multicolored display (65% being white, 26% yellow, and the remaining 9% blue, red and green). Geminids also have a reputation for producing exploding meteors called fireballs.

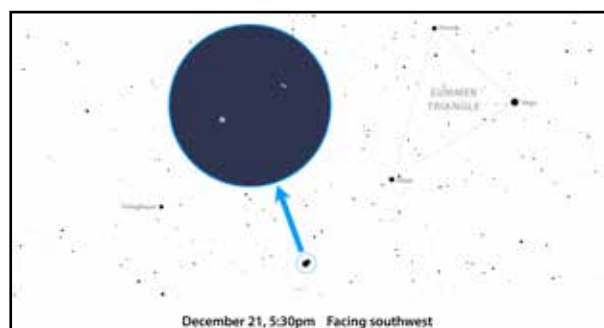
Keep in mind that the Geminid meteor shower is one shooting star display that can be observed before the midnight hour. In fact, earlier in the evening of the 13th, you might spot a few Geminid earth grazers as they skim tangentially across the top of Earth’s atmosphere and parallel to the horizon.

While the close approach of Mars to the Earth two months ago was exciting, two other planets wanted to share the

spotlight in 2020. I’m talking about the Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn on night of the 21st. Throughout the year these two planets have been moving closer to each other in the sky from our Earthly perspective. On the night of the 21st they will be so close that they will appear as one object to the naked-eye just after sunset 15 degrees above the southwestern horizon. In reality, Jupiter will be approximately 551 million miles from the Earth, whereas Saturn will be approximately just over one billion miles away. This “Great Conjunction” will be the closest these two worlds have been since 1623, and will be a spectacular phenomenon to behold.

To observe this event, you’ll need to find an observing location that commands an unobstructed view towards the southwest. If you have a telescope by all means use it to focus in on this beautiful sight. Use medium-to- high power and you’ll observe both worlds in their glory in the same field of view. Jupiter’s four Galilean moons will be visible, with Callisto, Io and Ganymede on one side of the planet’s disk, while Europa all by itself on the opposite side. Saturn’s ring system will be very stunning, and his largest moon Titan will also be visible.

Keep your eyes to the skies.
Happy Holidays!
David A. Huestis



Hibernation, from page 35

When they hop, jumping mice look something like miniature kangaroos. The species that occurs in our area is the meadow jumping mouse. It has a body about 3-4 inches in length and a scantily haired tail about 6 inches long. It is a common and widespread mouse and can be found throughout southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. As its names implies, it is found in fields and wet meadows. Jumping mice are “profound hibernators,” fattening up for two weeks before going into their burrows in late September for a deep sleep that can last all the way until April or May.

Black bears, though they are not true hibernators in Rhode Island, are deep sleepers in the extreme northern part of their range. There they may sleep uninterrupted for up to six months, but they do not do that here. While snoozing in its winter den, a black bear’s heart rate drops from around 50 beats per minute to 10, and its oxygen intake is cut in half. Its body temperature drops only a few degrees however, so if a sleeping bear is disturbed it can wake up fairly quickly. Although Rhode Island has few resident bears, young, wandering males sometimes show up in the northern part of the state. Since bear populations are currently expanding in neighboring states, we may be seeing more of them.

A great way to discover what animals are around in winter is to look for their tracks in the snow, which is the focus of next month’s column. See you then.

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Inside The Brown Bag

By Peg Brown

The Ghosts of Christmases Past – with apologies to Charles Dickens

And, with apologies to you. I did not want to reflect on past holidays during these challenging times. It seemed somehow “inappropriate.” Yet, a stroll through Home Depot, Michaels and the Dollar Tree hints as though Christmas will be “business as usual.” In our collective 2020 hearts, we know this is pure fantasy – or, perhaps, more optimistically, a sign of our resilience and hope.

In that spirit, join me as I tuck the Grinch back into the hands of Dr. Seuss, and call upon some ghosts of my Christmases past ... which may resemble yours.

The First Sign ... that Christmas was approaching was the arrival of the Sears-Roebuck Christmas catalogue. (A 1942 exact reprint is available from PBS). Keeping in mind that department store shopping was limited in our small, rural town, the Sears catalog was our internet to the latest trends. Parents and children spent hours scanning the pages, making lists and clearly indicating preferences and wishes by dog-earring the appropriate pages – assured that somehow those preferences would reach Santa’s ears.

The First Purchases ... for Christmas were made in January, when merchants marked down their left-over inventory of paper, ribbon and cards. Choosing the right card was a process, as was keeping the Christmas card list updated and current. Cards that were imprinted with the name of the sender were regarded as evidence of laziness, typed labels never appeared, and in my early childhood no stamps were necessary if the flap was not sealed. Christmas cards were also an important part of home décor, as each card received was carefully scotch-taped at just the right angle around every doorway in your house – your popularity measured by how many archways would be completely trimmed during the season.

The Tree ... was always the star of our

Christmas decorations. Choosing the tree involved nothing short of a high-level family conference as we tramped from one tree lot to the other – evaluating size, fullness, which side was good, and which side would be best hidden in a corner. We could always count on one thing – somewhere between the lot and our living room the tree turned into a Sequoia, requiring Dad to once again use a rope to anchor the tree to the nearest window casing. Boxes were dragged out from under the eaves; my sister and I charged with untangling and testing the lights. (Remember, if one light went out, the whole string went out!)

We were a “large colored bulb” family – and much time was spent moving bulbs so not too many of one color illuminated a branch. Next, strings of foil were added, together with glass, fabric and paper ornaments, each of which evoked a story or stirred a memory of some Kindergarten project or special moment – most lovingly preserved for decades. The last touch was always those thin strips of “tinsel” which Mother insisted must be hung individually and precisely. The final touch was a white bedsheet draped around the base (often falling in the water-filled stand) reminiscent of snow.

While I don’t remember many of the Christmas gifts I received (which reminds me that traditions are what are really important), I do remember receiving annual telegrams from Santa in advance of his arrival and a reminder to leave “milk, cookies, and a carrot for Rudolph.”

The Town ... Outdoor displays, especially in front of businesses, especially funeral homes, sometimes included plastic Christmas characters like Santa and Frosty – but often, lit replicas of the Nativity. There were absolutely no balloon type figures so popular today; most homes displayed lit candles in each window; and the current trend for using

the tiny-white-light-dripping-icicle motif so popular today was still several decades away.

Christmas Specials ... were a relatively new industry. We had rather primitive cartoon programs, including “The Little King” and “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” Most Christmas “specials” were variety shows that featured crooners like Perry Como, Andy Williams, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. Occasionally clips of Bob Hope’s annual holiday visits to soldiers stationed around the world were aired. Perhaps the most memorable special for all of us was “A Charlie Brown Christmas” which debuted in December, 1965, and is credited with being the precursor of annual holiday favorites including “The Grinch” and “Frosty.”

The Music ... which perhaps more than anything else evokes nostalgia at this time of year. As a child of parents of the Greatest Generation, it is not surprising that Bing Crosby’s “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” and “White Christmas” were the Christmas anthems of my youth. At the height of World War II, phrases such as “Please have snow and mistletoe/And presents under the tree,” spoke to soldiers fighting on all sides as memories of their own childhood traditions tugged at their hearts.

I can count on one hand the number of times I saw my mother cry before her death at age 92. The last time I saw her shed uncharacteristic tears was at a Christmas performance by the Boston Pops at PPAC on one Sunday afternoon when I had sprung her from assisted living. As the Pops played “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas,” mother turned her head to hide her tears. As a popular lyric suggests, we may forget, “but the song remembers when...” I am sure that sometime this December, I may be shedding a few tears of my own, as there will always be our long-remembered – ghosts of Christmases past.

The Indian Maiden's Eternal Search

By Thomas D'Agostino
www.tomdagostino.com

In the Tarklin area on the border of North Smithfield (once a part of Smithfield) and Burrillville, the ghostly voice of a woman occasionally echoes in the midnight air crying, "Where is my necklace?" Sometimes her apparition is spotted roaming among thicket just off Horse Head Trail as if frantically searching for something. The actual story has become embellished over the years to make for a more romantic tale. It is that version presented here, but the actual deed that led to the haunting is both tragic and true.

Nineteen-year-old Hannah Franke was a housekeeper to the Warmasley family who, along with Hannah, were Nipmuc. The Nipmuc Indians and the white settlers co-existed peacefully in this bucolic neck of the woods.

A peddler from Vermont named John Burke frequented the area selling his wares

to the villagers. One day he ventured to the Warmasley home where he met Hannah and immediately fell in love. Soon the couple began courting and every time Burke made a visit to the village, he came with a special token of affection for the young and beautiful Hannah. The Warmasley brothers became outraged over his visits and frequently threw him off their property. This did little to deter the couple who secretly met in the village, much to the disdain of the two brothers. One particular visit, he bestowed upon her a special shell necklace that she constantly wore around her neck as her most prized possession and a symbol of their love.

In September of 1831 John Burke came calling upon Hannah once more and asked her to be his bride. She eagerly accepted his proposal and although Amasa E. and Thomas J. Warmasley were outraged by the imminent union, they pretended to be elated and bade all to sit and have a few drinks for celebration. They made much merriment and the libations flowed until

the young lovers had more than their share of liquor. John Burke and his bride to be left the Warmasley home on September 18, 1831 to begin their journey to Vermont.

The two lovers traversed down Horse Head Trail towards Log Road. When they reached the intersection, Amasa and Thomas sprang from the woods and attacked the couple, beating them mercilessly. Burke was able to break free, and in a desperate attempt to lure the two from Hannah, began running up the trail on the opposite side of Log Road. The brothers caught up with him and sealed his fate.

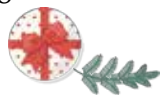
They then returned to Hannah who was trying to escape. It was reported Amasa "finished her off with a single blast of his shotgun." During the attack, the beloved necklace was torn from her neck and lost somewhere in the woods. Hannah crawled to the southwest side of a large pine tree. According to Indian lore, a tree is symbolic

See Indian Maiden, page 41

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Holiday Cookies



From Jane E. Fusco

Chocolate Chip Christmas Cookies

8 tablespoons salted butter melted
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 2/3 cups all purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup white chocolate chips
1/4 cup red and green sprinkles



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Pour the melted butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar in a large mixing bowl and beat until well combined.
3. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract.
4. Add the flour, baking soda, and salt. Mix until combined. Dough will be soft.
5. Stir in the dark and white chocolate chips and the sprinkles.
6. Portion dough into 1 inch 9 balls of dough.
7. Bake for 11-13 minutes depending on your oven. Do not overbake. Cookies may look a bit underdone, but they will set up as they cool.
8. Let cookies set on the baking sheet for at least 5 minutes before eating.
9. Store, tightly covered, for up to 5 days.

Snowball Cookies



1 cup softened butter
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 cup powdered sugar
2 1/4 cups flour
1/4 tsp salt
1 cup finely chopped pecans
or walnuts
Powdered sugar for dusting



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees .
2. Cream together butter, vanilla, and 1/2 cup of the powdered sugar. Stir in flour, nuts, and salt. Mix till well combined. Roll dough into balls, about 1 tablespoon wide, and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Bake at 350 for 14-15 minutes. Do not let them brown.
4. Roll hot cookies in powdered sugar. Roll again when cookies have cooled.



Cherry Sugar Cookie Macaroons

1 roll Pillsbury™ refrigerated sugar cookie dough
3/4 cup chopped macadamia nuts
3/4 cup coarsely chopped dried tart cherries
1 bag (7 oz) sweetened flaked coconut (about 2 1/2 cups)
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup red tart cherry preserves



Heat oven to 350°F. Line large cookie sheets with parchment paper. Let cookie dough stand at room temperature for 10 minutes to soften.

In medium bowl, break up cookie dough. Add nuts, cherries, coconut and vanilla. Mix with wooden spoon or knead with hands until well blended. Shape rounded tablespoonfuls of dough into balls. Place 2 inches apart on cookie sheets.

Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until edges are light golden brown. Cool 3 minutes. With back of teaspoon, make indentation in center of each cookie. Spoon 1 teaspoon preserves in each indentation. Cool completely, about 20 minutes. Store in covered container.



Payne's Picks | By Sarah Payne

December 2020



Movie Releases

Nomadland – December 4

In a year that's been plagued with delayed movie releases, it's looking like Chloé Zhao's *Nomadland*, starring Frances McDormand as Fern, is this year's top Oscar contender. The film is based on the book, "Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century," by Jessica Bruder, and won the Golden Lion at this year's Venice Film Festival. Many of the characters featured in the film, with the exception of McDormand, are not professional actors, but people featured in the book. In a review for Entertainment Weekly, Leah Greenblatt stops short of calling the movie's arc "uneventful." She writes that the majority of the film is "... mostly episodic; small, naturalistic scenes whose scale vacillates between intimate and grand: Fern squatting to pee by a fence post in the driving rain, loading crates of potatoes into a processor, pouring fresh coffee for her fellow campers at daybreak." None of these moments seem particularly grand, but they make sense given the subdued trailer, which is just a one-take shot of McDormand walking through a campsite.

The Midnight Sky – December 23 (Netflix)

Here's a cheerful way to spend your holiday: watching George Clooney live out

his last days on a post-apocalyptic Earth that's been consumed by "widespread illness, environmental collapse, political strife," according to Vanity Fair's review of *The Midnight Sky*. The film is directed by Clooney and based on the book, "Good Morning, Midnight," by Lily Brooks-Dalton. Though it certainly doesn't seem to be a rosy escape from the reality that is 2020, it's a welcome turn away from Netflix's typical original content – which seems to be more and more throwaway content geared toward multitasking teens scrolling on their phones.

Movie Review

Let Him Go

As a mom to a toddler, *Let Him Go* really hits home for me. Diane Lane and Kevin Costner play grandparents on a mission to save their three-year-old grandson from the Weboys, the abusive family their daughter-in-law married into after their son passed away. The film is set on a farm in Montana, which makes for breathtaking shots of expansive, open land and intimate, small town streets. I really love Lane's character – headstrong, loving, and loyal. She will stop at nothing to protect her grandson, dragging her husband along with her, even as he argues that they're "not young" to be taking care of a toddler. The plot is a bit of a slow burn, but builds to a dramatic climax at the end that will break your heart – in a good way.

Holidate (Netflix)

According to Glamour magazine, Netflix will release 28 new holiday movies and TV shows in 2020. I noticed the titles started popping up on my home screen immediately after Halloween and was curious how good these movies could be considering the seemingly frenetic publication schedule. I'm disappointed to report *Holidate* is likely the first and last Netflix original holiday film I'll waste my time with on. Netflix seems to be in competition with the Hallmark channel for the number of cheesy storylines it can churn out in a seven-week time frame. Emma Roberts plays a single woman in her late twenties who is sick of getting questioned by her family as to why she never has a boyfriend to bring to family holiday parties. So she meets a guy who agrees to be her date for Christmas, then New Year's, and then every other holiday you can possibly imagine throughout the year. She even brings him to Easter and Mother's Day. Since when do people bring dates to those holidays? This is a major leap in the script that's obviously just a ploy to show evolution of the "no strings" relationship through the course of a year. Because – who saw this coming? – the two obviously develop feelings for each other and live happily ever after in the end. Come on, Netflix, do better. Just give us *To All the Boys 3* already.

Indian Maiden, from page 39

of life and when a person passes, they go to the southwest where a land of abundance and peace awaits them. It is there that she passed away, on the southwest side of the large pine tree.

After the couple was discovered, they were buried near the spot where Hannah's body was found. The graves were marked by four roughly fashioned field stones. Irving Sweet of Harrisville cut down the large tree and marked the site as a memorial to the couple.

Some of the villagers had noticed Amasa wandering around the village two days after the murders with blood on his shirt, when asked what happened, he had given conflicting stories about the stains. The two brothers were questioned and later arrested for the murders. The trial brought out full confessions and both were found guilty. Amasa was served justice on June 1, 1832. Thomas was given life in prison for his role in the tragic event.

Although justice may have been served, Hannah's spirit has not rested ever since

the fateful day. She is still seen searching the woods endlessly for her lost love and her necklace. She may also be searching for the tree that connected her with her last mortal moments on this side of the veil. Residents have seen Hannah's ghost wandering the edge of the woods near Horse Head Trail and Log Road at all hours of the day and night.

If true love is eternal, then Hannah will not rest until she finds her soul mate and the gift that he bestowed upon her; a gift that was created of love and is now legend.

Obituaries



Kathleen E. Scully
October 14, 2020
www.robbsfuneralhome.com



Anita R. (LaVallee) Dupont
October 30, 2020
www.robbsfuneralhome.com



John J. "Joe" Baxter
November 4, 2020
www.boyleandsonfuneralhome.com



Marilyn L. (Campbell) Fair
November 4, 2020
www.robbsfuneralhome.com



Achille A. "Archie" Laflamme
November 5, 2020
www.andersonwinfield.net



Vincent J. O'Connell, Jr.
November 10, 2020
www.boyleandsonfuneralhome.com

Answers to Word Search from page 28.



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