

COMPLIMENTARY

May 2021

The Smithfield *Times*



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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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Local Businesses Adjusting to Pandemic

By Joe Siegel

After a difficult year, local businesses are doing what they can to make it through the coronavirus pandemic. Social distancing, mask-wearing, and enhanced sanitary measures have made it possible for business owners to allow customers to return to their favorite restaurants.

Blackie's is experiencing a steady stream of patrons as more and more Rhode Islanders continue to get vaccinated. However, owner Jeanine Iannucci notes there is still reluctance among customers for a return to dine-in service due to fears of getting Covid.

"We still have a large amount (of customers) getting take-out," Iannucci said. "Many of our clientele are either worried or afraid or are awaiting their vaccinations."

Blackie's is operating on a reduced schedule, Wednesdays through Sunday, partially due to a shortage of staff. "We can't find people to work so that is the reason we are not open more," Iannucci added. "(Our schedule) will

Stephanie Mosca, owner of the A&W on Route 44, said the restaurant had a "great March" and is looking forward to even more diners as the days get warmer.

"We are doing our best during these challenging times," said Kelly Lemoine, the head of sales and marketing at Wright's Dairy Farm. "We are currently operating with curbside pickup only, but we hope to have

products and so we can keep our staff members employed."

Not every business has been as fortunate. Laura's Pleasant View Diner recently announced they are closing for good.

In a message shared on Facebook, owners Laura and Jay Dunlea wrote:

"This last decade has had many ups and downs, but none more



the store open again by the summer. Customer counts have been pretty steady for the last few months with no major changes. We are just focused on

challenging than this last year. In this last year, we have fought and clawed every step of the way. Through the constant restrictions and inspections, redeveloping our sick policies, food shortages, and the current changing and unstable job market. We are telling you this not because we want sympathy, but because we want you to know that we have worked tirelessly exhausting many different avenues and haven't reached this decision lightly. It has been such a difficult decision because the Diner has been much more to us than a restaurant. It is a place we have shared a lot of laughs and lot of tears while developing so many great relationships."



change as soon as we have enough people to work."

staying open so our customers have the opportunity to continue to enjoy our

See Local Businesses, page 5

Owner Jay Dunlea said Laura's Bar and Grill on Douglas Pike will remain open.

"I think we've just been kind of worn out over the last year," he said. "The Bar and Grill has been very successful, very busy."

Dunlea notes staffing has been a problem: "It's also been tough to hire in this market. There's a lot of people not back to work yet and that's kind of lead to shortages and us scrambling all the time."

Dunlea said it was more practical to consolidate the two restaurants and have everyone working in one place.

"We're doing really well, numbers wise," Dunlea added. "It's just a matter

of trying to keep up with everything."

For families memorializing their loved ones, the past year has been particularly difficult. Anderson Winfield Funeral Home has had to restrict the number of mourners allowed indoors at one time due to state health guidelines. Churches and other houses of worship have also imposed limits on how many people can attend services.

"We don't ever want to do that again," said Thomas Winfield, President of Anderson Winfield. "It was really horrible, it was tough to make connections. When people lose somebody, sometimes that connection, sometimes an embrace (from family or friends), means an awful lot.

There's very few people who have been properly vaccinated so we're still working towards that goal."

One of the good things to come out of the pandemic was the decision for funeral homes to provide livestreams of the services for people who live out of state.

"Some people who were not able to travel could join not only calling hours, they could also join the church services and also burial services at the cemeteries. It was a different way for people to come together," Winfield explained.

Winfield wants people to know that the proper procedures are in place to insure the safety of everyone who visits to mourn a loved one. Hand-washing and face-coverings are necessary for the immediate future.

"We have to move cautiously so we can put this behind us," Winfield added.

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Paul Vincent Palange, age 66, of Seekonk, MA, passed away unexpectedly Sunday, April 4, 2021. Paul Palange took on many challenges in his life. And he met them all head-on.

This proud Syracuse University graduate began his working career as a reporter for the *Woonsocket Call* in 1978. Paul rose up through the ranks to become managing editor and then general manager of *The Call's* sister paper, *The Times of Pawtucket*. His corporate bosses, the *Journal Register Company*, sent Paul to Norristown, PA in 1993 as executive editor to straighten out the newspaper in that town, and then Paul returned to Pawtucket as managing editor. *Journal-Register* also sent Paul to its *Fall River Herald* newspaper as executive editor. He returned to Pawtucket as publisher of *The Times* in 1999 and served in that role until 2004. Palange was called upon one more time in an executive role from 2014-2017 as general manager of both *The Times* and *The Call*, overseeing both the business and newsroom operations.

When the daily newspaper business faltered, Paul started his own monthly newspaper, the *Senior Digest*, in tandem with his wife Andria, who designed ads and pages. They were a great team. On the side, Paul kept busy, selling radio ads. He was always doing something. His final job came as development manager for the *Blackstone Valley Tourism Council*, a job he held until his death on Easter Sunday.

At heart, Paul was a newsman through and through. During his first stint at *The Times*, Paul displayed his unique talent for getting business done with business executives over lunch and challenging his reporters and editors at night while putting together the next day's product. Paul often put up an intense demeanor as he drove his newsroom to find the best stories in the community and then write those stories in time for deadline. He learned how to design pages on a computer and send them to the press room during an era when computers and new technology streamlined the newspaper operation. Paul kept up with the changing times.

Paul was a hands-on boss who knew the jobs of everyone in the newspaper because he had done them all. And when the paper had gone to press, Paul sometimes found time to go out and have a beer with his fellow workers. He led and he could also just gear down and become part of the team, laughing at work stories and moaning over Red Sox games in a neighborhood bar. Paul probably enjoyed being one of the guys more than being leader. He was a man of many loyalties, and once you earned his trust, Paul had your back forever. Paul earned the respect of community leaders throughout the Blackstone Valley. His dedication to community work first showed itself in Woonsocket during the 1980s when he became a driving force behind the newspaper's Milk Fund campaign. "Paul was very passionate about the Blackstone Valley," said Larry Berman, who worked as sports editor and then managing editor of *The Call* during the 1980s.

When he came to Pawtucket, Paul soon became deeply involved in charity promotions with the Pawtucket Red Sox. "Paul was a credit to the newspaper industry," said Mike Tamburro, president of the PawSox when Palange worked in Pawtucket. "He was an honest, straight-shooting individual who cared deeply about the community and gave back at every opportunity."

Paul fell in love with his wife Andria when they worked together at *The Times* in the 1990s. He became a role model for Andria's son, Jonathan, who grew up to be a dedicated social worker. The birth of Olivia sent Paul over the moon. He and Andria could often be seen walking with Olivia in Slater Park or at McCoy Stadium where Olivia became good friends with the PawSox mascot, "Paws." Olivia brought out the caring side of her father, cracking that stern façade he sometimes used at work. Paul was devoted to Olivia, Jonathan and Andria, and he never seemed to have enough time in the day to do all his work and still be with his family.

Paul Palange was born in Somerville, MA on Dec. 6, 1954 to Emil and Jennie Palange. He came from a big family that loved to share time together as they grew older.

Paul is survived by his wife Andria (Siniak) Palange, his daughter Olivia Palange, and his stepson, Jonathan Barry, LISW. He was also the brother of Mark Palange, and his wife Donna, Joanne Hill and her husband Don, the late Lisa Chisolm, and the late Richard Palange.

Paul was a contributing writer for the Senior Scene in *The Smithfield Times*. He was also editor of *Common Grounds* magazine and wrote many articles for the paper. He will be deeply missed by all.



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About the SHS Fashion Show

by Sophia DeJesus



As class of 2021's senior year comes to an end, students are working on the final touches for their fashion show. The senior fashion show has been a tradition for 30+ years at Smithfield High School, and is arguably one of the most exciting senior events.

As an event that once started in the school's cafeteria, it has become a tradition that is carried by the senior class. Madame Dempsey – one of the amazing world language teachers at SHS – mentioned that, “in its beginnings it started as only a fashion show, where various types of clothing would be modeled by senior students.” Madame also recounted how “the parent council became involved because they were the ones who would physically go to the stores and pick up the clothes (for students to model).” As the years went by, the students began to add small variety sections to the show,

where the seniors were able to perform and show off their talents.

The variety segments began as just a “filler” for the show, but has since taken over. As Madame Dempsey got more involved with helping the seniors put together their show, the students wanted their fashion show to be more “performance based.” So, seniors began adding themes to each year's show and it “just kind of steamrolled into becoming a lot of show, with less fashion.” With these changes, the stores became less willing to let SHS borrow their clothing pieces as smaller boutiques closed and chains took over.

The 2021 senior fashion show is scheduled to take place on Saturday, May 8th, 2021. Students have been working on creating and filming skits all year long and are excited to finally share their project. Although this year's fashion show will be a bit different due

to COVID guidelines, the seniors are still hopeful that it will live up to past years shows.

The senior class is also currently working on alternate ways to fundraise and support their class. Although the fashion show will be virtual this year, there are still ways to help support the 2021 seniors. If you are interested in donating to the senior class, there is a link at the bottom of this article that can be pasted into your web browser if you are reading this online. For readers who prefer the hard copy of this magazine, donations can still be made to the senior class by sending a check to the high school. Checks can be made out to SHS: Class of 2021, and should be sent to 90 Pleasant View Ave, Smithfield, RI 02917.

Here is the link to donate for virtual readers: <https://shs-class-of-2021-annual-fashion-show.cheddarup.com>

Community Giving

Chief Richard P. St. Sauveur, Jr. presents a check for \$425 to Chris Olean, Senior Class President. This check represents proceeds for SPD mouse pads and coasters created by Bryan Baron, and sold within the Community.

Photo credit: Andy Lemery



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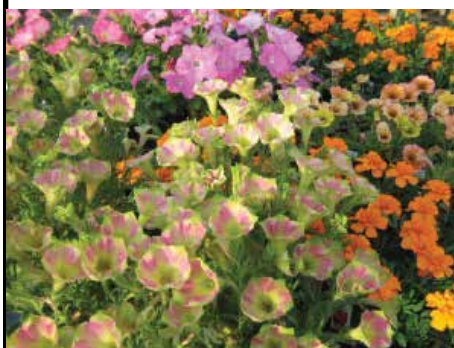
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There's Only One Place To Get Everything For Your Backyard Paradise

By Paul Lonardo

If you have traveled on Route 44 in Smithfield anytime in the last eighty-three years, you have driven by Hilltop Garden Center, nestled on the robust corner of the entrance to the Crossing in Smithfield shopping plaza. A few may remember John and Grace Francisco, who started the business in 1938 selling vegetables on the side of the road when Route 44 was a lot less busy and Route 295 did not even exist. Back then, the business was called Hill Top Stand. Many more people would be familiar with Anthony and June Francisco, who ran the business from 1964 until 1994, during which time the name morphed into Francisco's Hill Top Gardens. The couple had three children, all of whom worked in the family business over the years in varying capacities. After Anthony passed away in 1994, June continued to run the business until 2015. She passed away the following year at the age of 87, but not before helping thousands of people explore gardening over a sixty-plus year span. She always had time to offer advice about plants and little tricks to get rid of pests. While others would flock to the local beaches or head up north to the mountains, June's ideal summer afternoon was "dead-heading" petunias with a cold drink in hand. Though her absence is felt by all, John, the youngest of her three children, took over the business and is currently head of all operations at the garden center. June's middle son, Bob, is regularly at the garden center and offers over 45 years of experience in construction, masonry, and landscaping. John's own three children can be seen watering plants and being helpful when they are not in school or playing sports, so Hilltop remains very much a family business, just as it was when it all began back in 1938.

"I think my mom would have had high hopes that the 4th generation would someday be running what now is known

as Hilltop Garden Center," John says. In 2019, John began a re-branding of the business into a larger scale garden center where you could buy "everything for your backyard paradise." There is now an official company logo, a comprehensive website and a somewhat larger footprint of displays and inventory than what has been seen in prior years. Those visiting Hilltop for the first time this year will be greeted by a new, and long overdue, parking lot with marked, individual parking spaces. A beautiful, newly constructed stone retaining wall separates the lot from the masonry display area, and the name Hilltop is sprawled out in colorful shrubbery on the slope adjacent to the neighboring businesses, Uno's and Chili's.

Their current inventory includes annuals, perennials, shrubbery, roses, trees, pottery, cement and stone statues, fertilizer & controls, natural stone masonry supplies, bulk and bagged landscape materials, and much more. They are the local distributor of *All Seasons* sheds, gazebos and pavilions, and they are a distributor for *Seaside Casual Furniture*, a completely RI-based outdoor furniture company that produces the finest and most durable outdoor leisure furniture in the country. Other premium brands include *Massarelli's*, makers of fine stone garden accents and *Earth Care Farms*, who provide bagged composts and soils.

"We strive to have as many products from local artisans, growers and vendors as possible," John says. "But there are also some items we sell that come from the opposite side of the world."

During these turbulent times, as people have been taking stock of their outdoor space and improving it, Hilltop Garden Center has been there



Anthony Francisco, 1955

and will continue to be there to serve the community and their patrons from all around the region.

"We look forward to continuing to provide everything for your backyard paradise, hopefully long after things get back to normal," John says. "We will provide helpful advice and how-to techniques on everything from choosing and planting flowers to installing your own patio."

For those who need special assistance, they refer installation work to some of the finest landscape, excavation, and masonry contractors in our area.

Hilltop Garden Center's current hours are 10-5 daily, Tuesday through Sunday. They are closed on Mondays all season long and take Sundays off as well in July and August. You can find them at www.hilltopgardensri.com and on Instagram, or just stop in at 363 Putnam Pike to have a look around.



Bob and John Francisco



IMHO

by Ron Scopelliti

Low bridge, everybody down

A shortage of Grape Nuts. That will be one of my main memories of the first half of 2021. Right up there with the Biden inauguration and the COVID vaccine rollout, I'll remember the beginning of this year as a time when there was actually a shortage of Grape Nuts. Admittedly, it's been years since I've actually eaten any Grape Nuts, but I really worried that the Grape Nuts shortage was just a harbinger, and that we'd be thrust back to those days last spring when the grocery store shortages had Americans considering the option of bidets, and using moonshine as hand sanitizer. A slippery slope in my mind led me to think, "Yeah, today it's Grape Nuts, but tomorrow it'll be printer ink, and then shoelaces, and then (gasp) Pop Tarts."

My fear of impending shortages grew when I saw the traffic jam of container ships at the entrance of the Suez Canal after the ridiculously large Ever Given got stuck there. With that many ships carrying that many containers, there had to be something I desperately needed in at least one of them. The Ever Given alone has a capacity of 20,000 containers, each of which could be carrying multiple different products. If there wasn't a vital necessity aboard the Ever Given, there had to be something in one of the 200 ships stacked up behind it. If there are no Pocky biscuits on the shelf next time I go to Target, I know where I'm going to cast my accusatory gaze.

Though it's easy to make fun of the situation, I have a tremendous amount of sympathy for whoever was at the controls when strong winds and a sandstorm contributed to the grounding. As New England drivers, I'm sure we've

all got tales of being caught out by unpredictable weather, like the time in college when I spun out during a sudden ice storm on my first day back from spring break, and ended up stuck in the mud because we'd already had a week of uncharacteristically appropriate spring weather.

And when it comes to traffic jams, there's the New England phenomenon of Storrowing. For those unfamiliar with the term, Storrowing occurs when truckers try to take Storrow Drive in Boston and get jammed under one of the low bridges that cross over the road. This generally results in heavy damage to the truck, followed by a long traffic delay as its carcass is pried out from under the bridge. Looking back at a time I was driving a rental truck across Boston on a tight deadline, I understand that desperation often makes us push the limits of our vehicles. But when I had to decide whether to risk taking the truck onto Storrow Drive, either my courage gave way, or my common sense kicked in. Or it may have been the stern look given to me by the police officer stationed at entrance to the roadway.

The people I can't sympathize with are the higher-ups who let the Suez situation get so messy. If you're running a canal that allows such oversized ships, shouldn't you have a plan to clear them out if they get stuck? Maybe they need their

own stern-looking Boston cop. And if you're a ship owner, shouldn't you have a backup plan that's more effective than having your ship sit at the canal entrance until the clog is clear? Don't the satellite navigation systems on these ships know how to say the word "recalculating?"

Maybe this is an opportunity for some enterprising folks to come up with a sort of Uber for container ships. If your ship is stuck in a traffic jam you could hit them up on an app, and have some smaller ships at least take a couple of containers off your hands, and deliver them to their destinations. It would be like Dunkirk, except instead of rescuing intrepid British soldiers, the small boats would be bailing out greedy ship owners who feel the need to maximize profit by building irresponsibly large ships. It seems less attractive when I put it that way, but if the rescuers made a profit I'd consider it a win for the little guys. So this summer might find me spending my spare time at the Cape Cod Canal, waiting to offer my services to any megaship that endangers our supplies of toilet paper, AAA batteries, or slightly obscure cereal. I wonder how many boxes of Grape Nuts I can fit in my kayak.

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Erstwhile Parlance of Yesteryear

By Jim Ignasher

I recently heard someone use the expression, “he sounds like a broken record”, and it occurred to me that I hadn’t heard that term in years. For those too young to remember, a broken record was one that would get stuck and continuously repeat a word or phrase. I wondered how many of those of the younger generation would understand its meaning, for how many of them have ever owned a “record player”? Then I began thinking about other expressions that have “gone out of fashion”, “caught the westbound”, or “went the way of the Edsel”.

It’s interesting how the English language has evolved over the centuries. For example, in “days of yore”, there was the word “erstwhile”, meaning bygone, passé, or long ago. And in “Olde English”, the words “ye”, “doth”, and “puteth”, were in common usage.

Somewhere along the way people began developing colorful euphemistic expressions and slang words to address everyday situations or behavior such as advising an irritated person not to “go off half-cocked”. Synonymous expressions might include “simmer down”, “cool your jets”, “don’t get your underwear in a bunch”, “don’t have a cow”, and “take a chill pill”.

If that person didn’t heed the advice, they might be said to have “flipped their lid”, “flown off the handle”, “blown a gasket”, or “gone off the deep end”. Then they might find themselves in a legal “sticky wicket”, and “face the music” before a judge who could put them “on ice” in the “clink”.

A haughty person might have to “come down off his high horse”. Some people engage in “horse trading”, which makes good “horse sense”, but one should never “look a gift horse in the mouth”. A person

in a bar might “see a man about a horse”, and the saying that there “were more horse’s rear-ends on the road than horses” was once a popular lament.

Some expressions fade into obscurity with the passing of time. For example, in the roaring twenties they said “twenty-three-skidoo”, drank “bathtub gin” and “hooch” in “speakeasies” while out for a “toot”, and “painting the town red”. “Flapper’s” wore risqué short dresses called “knee dusters”, and the “new fangled” Charleston (dance) was considered the “bee’s knees” among the younger crowd. Illicit booze was brought in by “rumrunners”, and organized crime “gangsters” “rubbed out” the competition with “street sweepers” and “Chicago pianos”, a.k.a. machine guns. Those on the receiving end were adorned with “pine overcoats” as they made their way to the “bone orchard”, or “cement shoes” if they wound up in “the drink”.

Twenty years later World War II brought new color to our dialogue. There was “Fubar”, an acronym for “fouled up beyond all repair”, and “Snafu”, another acronym meaning “situation normal, all fouled up”.

Getting “flack” from someone referred to disrespect, and the expression came from WWII bomber pilots who had to fly through anti-aircraft fire, (flack), while bombing the enemy.

When things were going well people were said to be “cooking with gas”, “living the high life”, “pleased as punch”, or “living the life of Riley”.

If one was “flush” with “clams”, “lettuce”, or “dough”, it meant they had money, and could “have it made in the shade”, and be “living on easy street”. Those without money could be “poor as a church mouse”.

The 1950s had “hep-cats” and “kittens”, “beatniks” and “greasers”, who “burned rubber” in “souped up” “hot rods” that either had “three-in-the-tree”, or “four-on-the-floor” shifters.

In the 1960s nobody would have known what a “flat screen” was, for they had “boob tubes”, “idiot boxes”, and “rabbit ears”, and everyone knew what “don’t touch that dial” meant.

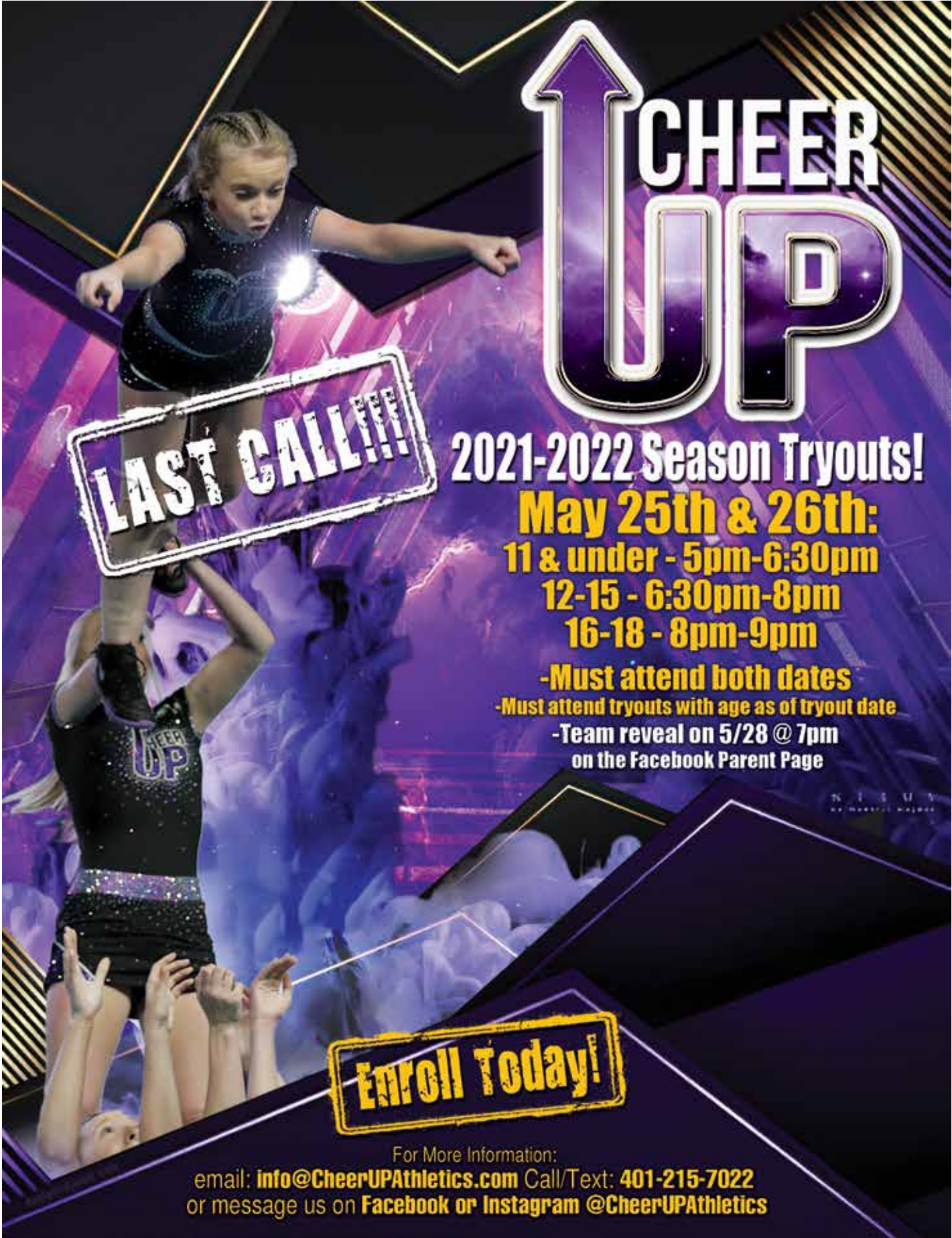
We “mind our P’s and Qs”, “roll with the punches”, and “take it all in stride”. Sometimes we “pull out all the stops” and throw in “everything but the kitchen sink” to get something done “in the nick of time” instead of “beating around the bush”. We hear things “through the grapevine”, “a little birdie”, and even “straight from the horse’s mouth”. We might “get on a soapbox”, “stand in the limelight”, or tell someone to “put a sock in it”. At the end of the day we “hit the hay”, “jump in the rack”, and “sleep tight”.

There are literally thousands of the slang words and expressions, and newer, “cooler”, “hipper”, “groovier”, “far out”, “dope”, “sweet”, “sick”, “g.o.a.t” (greatest of all time), ones are being invented every day. “Can you dig it?” “Right on!”

“See you later alligator” was once answered with “after awhile crocodile”, but these were replaced with “I’m off”, “catch you on the flip side”, “later days”, “take it easy”, and “smell you later”.

Broken records aside, it seems some expressions will always have “staying power”.

“Elvis has left the building. Thank you, and goodnight!”



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Health Awareness

Coming Out of the COVID Life

by Diane L. Marolla, LICSW

It's been one year and two months since our lives changed on a dime. As each day goes by, more and more Rhode Islanders have been vaccinated. As we all know, there have been many bumps in the roads with the state's overall vaccination plan. Hopefully the bumps, and sometimes potholes will continue to be worked through by the new leadership in the Governor's Office and existing health officials. The stringent restrictions on businesses are being lifted. Some individuals who have been telecommuting all through COVID are going back to their offices. Children in many communities have gone back to the classroom. I doubt that any of us will be the same post COVID. We are still trying to understand what our new normal will be going forward. Many folks are still struggling physically, mentally, and financially. There are still many unknowns.

With all that said, I wanted to reflect on how COVID has impacted me. I do feel different physically, mentally, and spiritually in 2021. There were times in 2020 that I did cry about COVID. Initially, during the virus, I would read everything I possibly could. I would also listen to the radio every day for updates. There were times I was afraid. Would I get sick? Would I lose someone I love to COVID? I missed seeing my friends. My monthly dinners with my sister and brother-in-law came to an end (each month we would pick a different RI restaurant to go to dinner). I recall when I heard the news that we were in a pandemic, that I went food shopping. I mindlessly shopped thinking how am I supposed to prepare for this? What am I supposed to stock up on? Is this like a snowstorm? I remember thinking that it would last two weeks tops.

But through it all, for me, I made the

best of what I could. I have to say, that throughout COVID, I did make lemons into lemon aide. Here is how I did:

- **I made the shift of doing what I love for work**

For years, I had put off strictly doing outpatient mental health counseling. It is now my full-time job. When COVID hit, I was working full time in an administrative role at one of our health centers and doing counseling part time. Last summer, I made the decision to leave my administrative role. I also started teaching courses to other mental health clinicians.

- **I focus on my own self care**

Because I was working two jobs, I was spending less time on my own self-care. Now, every day, I make sure I nourish myself physically with exercise, mentally with my quiet time with my dogs, and spiritually through daily prayer and meditation. I love my quiet mornings where I watch the sun rise and sip on my coffee before the day starts.

- **I'm eating healthier than ever**

Because I was always working, I would eat "on the run". Little by little, I gained 20 pounds. I'm happy to report that during COVID I lost 25 pounds. I also order my food online and have it delivered. I have always disliked going food shopping.

- **I appreciate everything more**

I've always been an appreciative person. Something, about COVID made me appreciate and value things more, especially my health, my family, and my friends. I also learned not to put things off.

- **I went off social media for good**

I wrote about my journey kicking

social media to the curb. For me, there is no going back. I am more relaxed and spend time reading versus filling my brain with scrolling. I call people on the phone when I can the old-fashioned way.

- **I drove less**

I really don't like driving at all. I'm even contemplating selling my car and getting a three-wheel bike like one of my neighbors has. He puts his two dogs on it and happily takes bike rides. I could get used to doing that!

- **I connected with old friends**

I connected with four old friends. One from high school, two from Bryant University, and one from Women & Infants' Hospital where I used to work many years ago. I occasionally co-host a Podcast with my old colleague and friend from Women & Infants' called Savopedia. I've always wanted to do some type of radio show all my life. We talk about serious topics and fun topics as well. Steve and I laugh now that when we met, we were both in our early twenties. Now we are in our fifties which is hard to believe. We reminisce about the old days which is fun too.

- **I spend money locally as much as I can**

This is a practice I have done for about the past 10 years or so. It was heartbreaking to see so many businesses struggle. Some unfortunately, have gone out of business.

I don't know for sure, but I really do think COVID has changed me. Initially it forced me to slow down. Now, I just take one day at a time. When somebody asks me about the future, my response always is, I'm focused on today.

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 the heck is Artillery Fungus?

Do you have mulch in your yard?

Do you have small, black, hard spots that look like specks of tar over certain portions of the exterior of your home?

If you answered yes to both questions above, chances are you have something that is called Artillery Fungus affecting your home.

Artillery Fungus is a wood-decay fungus that likes to live in moist landscape such as mulch. It is important to note that this fungus is aligned with all different grades of mulch and is not just limited to growth in and around “cheaper” grades.

Many times when Artillery Fungus is present it tends to end up on areas around the mulch. These areas could be the exterior of your home – including the glass on your windows – and your car if it is parked close to an affected area of mulch.

Unfortunately, because Artillery Fungus is so arbitrary in where it appears, there is no way to really prevent it other than utilizing alternative forms of ground cover (stone, etc.).

Once it has affected your home, your options to get rid of it are VERY limited.

If you have a painted home, you can prep and paint over the affected areas and you should be ok.

Artillery Fungus can be scraped and cleaned off of windows with the help of a razor blade or window scraper.

If the Artillery Fungus hits vinyl siding or your car however, you are in a very challenging scenario.

Artillery Fungus cannot simply be “powerwashed” off or cleaned with some type of special cleaner (regardless of what may be read about it!).

Literally, the best that can be done is for the hard portion of the specks to be gently picked off. An annoying stain will be left behind that will not be able to be washed off. The stain left behind might be removed with an ink eraser, but this is certainly not guaranteed and should be tested in a small area first to make sure the finish of the substrate you are attempting to remove the stain from is not affected!

Artillery Fungus is a phenomena that has made homeowners scratch their head for years as they have tried to figure out what exactly it is and how they should get rid of it.

Although there may not be a perfect solution for your situation if you indeed have been affected by this, at least you will hopefully now know somewhat of what you are up against and how to possibly maneuver through this type of nuisance situation.

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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Virtual Book Chat

Thursdays, May 6 & 20 at 6:00 pm

Join us for an informal virtual meeting to discuss what books you are currently reading. Share your great read and discover a new one! We meet virtually via Zoom. Please register online on our event calendar at greenvillelibraryri.org or by calling 401-949-3630. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Home Sweet Home Book Club

Monday, May 24 at 6:30 pm

Join us from home for our Zoom book club. Each month, a book will be selected that is also available as an ebook in Hoopla, our streaming media service that provides access to ebooks with no holds or wait times. You must have a Greenville Public Library card to access this service. Visit hoopladigital.com to get started. Copies of the book will also be available in the library for checkout. For more information and to register, please visit our event calendar at greenvillelibraryri.org or by calling 401-949-3630.

2021 Poetry Contest Virtual Poetry Reading

Saturday, May 1 at 10:00 am

We will be honoring the contestants for our 2021 Poetry Contest on Saturday, May 1 at 10:00 am. Join us via Zoom for a virtual poetry reading where contestants will

read their submissions and we will announce the winners from our three age groups: children, teen, and adult. Winners are selected by the Woodland Whispers Poetry Committee. Please register by visiting our event calendar at greenvillelibraryri.org or by calling 401-949-3630.

Community Garden Space Available

Are you interested in starting a garden but don't have the space? Love to garden but need a low maintenance option? We currently have two spaces available in our raised garden beds. The bays are approximately 4ft. by 3ft. They are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Please contact Cassie at greenvilleasstdirector@gmail.com or 401-949-3630 ext. 117 for details.

Audubon Discovery Hike

Monday, May 10 at 10:00 am

Join us for a visit to the Audubon Society Powder Mill Wildlife Refuge for a guided tour. An Audubon educator will walk us through the refuge, teaching attendees about the native plants and species that inhabit the area, a great natural resource right here in Smithfield! May is peak migration and we will hope to see some interesting birds along the way. Space is limited to 14 attendees and registration is required. Attendees should wear comfortable clothes and shoes. The terrain can be uneven and is not suitable for strollers. Please register by visiting our event calendar at greenvillelibraryri.org or by calling 401-949-3630.

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The Nature of Things

by James Gass

They Carry the Sky on Their Back

Photo by Mike Tucker



Now that May has arrived, many colorful songbirds including warblers, orioles, grosbeaks, and buntings will be returning to southern New England to breed. But the eastern bluebird, perhaps the most striking of all, the one “that carries the sky on his back,” as Thoreau once wrote, is already here and raising a family.

Bluebirds typically wintered in the southeastern U.S. or Mexico and then returned to our area in late March or early April to nest, but due to climate change (warmer winters), many are now year-round residents. I have seen them in December and January at several local places.

Eastern bluebirds are a familiar harbinger of spring, but that was not always the case. By the mid-twentieth century, numbers of these magnificent members of the thrush family had plummeted by as much as ninety percent, by some estimates. Today, their populations are stable and increasing, thanks to some timely hands-on conservation by concerned citizens.

A few weeks back, I decided to take a morning stroll along the grounds of the Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge in Smithfield to look for bluebirds. Along the way, I hoped to find any other early migrants or familiar local characters. I didn’t have to go very far.

As I made my way along the orange trail that goes through a large white pine grove, I almost overlooked the presence of pine warblers, which had dropped in around Easter. I am so used to hearing their melodic trill there later in the season that when I heard it for the first time this day, I almost thought nothing of it. I watched one flit about in the treetops, silhouetted by the mid-morning sun.

An emphatic “fee-bee, fee-bee-ee?” deep in the woods from somewhere off to my right belied the presence of an eastern phoebe, a species of flycatcher. Across the field I heard the song of a

See The Nature of Things, page 21

Carolina wren, but this one wasn't saying "tea-kettle-tea-kettle-tea-kettle," it was saying "cheese-burger-cheese-burger-cheese-burger." I couldn't help wonder if it was an offspring of the birds that nested at the refuge house when I lived there fifteen years ago (probably not).

Along the trail that borders the lower meadow, I finally heard the soft "churr-wi" call of a male bluebird, mixed in with the chatter of tree swallows. Several swallows were harassing him while he was inspecting one of the twenty nest boxes that were built by an Eagle Scout several years ago. Bluebirds are cavity-nesters, which means they build nests in abandoned woodpecker holes or other natural cavities in trees. They also readily use man-made structures. I hoped bluebirds would nest in that box, but if swallows did instead, that would be fine too. Tree swallows are voracious consumers of mosquitoes, and the more mosquito-eating machines around, the better. Bluebirds don't eat mosquitoes.

Once a site is selected, the female bluebird builds the nest, which consists of loosely woven grasses and pine needles lined with finer grasses. She then lays two to seven powder blue eggs. She may have multiple broods over the course of the season. Located in open fields, meadows or power line easements, these areas provide bluebirds with a handy source of food items such as crickets, beetles or caterpillars, which they catch by dropping to the ground from a nearby perch.

I squinted against the noonday sun to get a better look at the bluebird, and suddenly there he was, a bolt of electric blue streaking across the meadow. The deep azure of the male is so vivid, so unearthly, it almost defies description. You really have to see it in person to appreciate it. Photographs never quite do it justice.

During farming's heyday in America, eastern bluebirds were a common sight, nesting in apple orchards or in holes in wooden fence posts that lined country lanes. But the Great Depression drove thousands of New England farms into bankruptcy, many either being simply abandoned or sold to developers. The abandoned farms reverted to forest, becoming unsuitable bluebird habitat. Aggressive competition for nest sites from introduced species such as house sparrows and European starlings, and the wide use of pesticides, made matters worse. These living gems were in danger of disappearing from the New England landscape forever.

The North American Bluebird Society was formed in 1978 to counteract this catastrophic decline. Through

man-made nest boxes, "bluebird trails" and a national campaign to educate the public on the importance of this species, eastern bluebirds have been yanked back from the brink of extirpation.

The return of bluebirds to the fields and farms of southern New England is one of conservation's most remarkable success stories. And it was accomplished by regular people, like you and me.

For more information on bluebirds including how to make a nest box, check out The North American Bluebird Society at <http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org/>

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Payne's Picks

May 2021

By Sarah Payne



Movie Releases

A Quiet Place Part II– May 28

John Krasinski's sequel to his 2018 hit "*A Quiet Place*" was initially scheduled for release at the end of March last year. COVID-19 hit, of course, and now we finally get to see this film on the big screen Memorial Day weekend. The first film follows the Abbott family as they fight for survival in a post-apocalyptic world where mysterious creatures are invading Earth. The only way to evade the creatures is to be completely silent. This continuation of that story "has all the thrills and spills and scares that the first one had," Cillian Murphy told FilmIsNow in an interview last year. Murphy's character Emmet "represents where the heart of the world lies right now, which is: finally feeling like they've all given up," he said in an interview with Total Film. And while the audience might finally learn more details about what happened to the world, "the movie is not about the creatures. It's about humanity and how humanity survives," Emily Blunt told CinemaBlend.

Movie Review

The Dig (Netflix)

If you're in the mood for a quiet historical drama, you might like Netflix's "*The Dig*," starring Carey Mulligan, Lily James, and Ralph Fiennes. The film is based on a novel that reimagines the events of the 1939 excavation of Sutton Hoo in the U.K., the site of two early medieval cemeteries. Mulligan plays Edith Pretty, the widowed owner of the land where the famous artifacts are found, and Fiennes plays Basil Brown, a self-taught excavator who begins the initial dig. The first half of the film focuses on their working relationship, but when a larger team arrives to help with the dig, the focus turns to archaeologists Peggy Piggott and her husband Stuart Piggott. The ensuing love triangle feels like an unnecessary distraction from the main story about the dig. I suppose the purpose is to add a bit of drama for the viewer, but I still find the film to be a bit sleepy – not enough action for me.

Yes Day (Netflix)

As a mom of two girls under the age of five, I found the premise of "*Yes Day*" intriguing. Jennifer Garner and Edgar Ramirez play a husband and wife who are tired of always saying "no" to their kids. So they decide to give their kids one "yes" day where the only rule is they have to say "yes" to all of their kids' requests (within reason). Chaos ensues, of course. There's nothing earth-shattering about this film, but it's a cute one you can watch with the whole family.

Nobody

This is such a fun action thriller to continue celebrating my return to the movie theater. Bob Odenkirk plays Hutch Mansell, a seemingly ordinary family man who accidentally gets mixed up with a Russian mob. The film is directed by Ilya Naishuller, a Russian musician and filmmaker. Here's a random fact: Naishuller directed the music video for The Weeknd song, "False Alarm," in 2016. Another treat that I wasn't expecting in the film was an appearance by Christopher Lloyd, who plays Hutch's elderly father. There are lots of car chases, explosions, and shoot outs – three things that make a killer action film. Those are also three things that caused several critics to question the glorification of "toxic masculinity" in the film. My take: there's no hidden meaning in this film. It's pure fun fantasy to imagine what it would be like for an ordinary man tired of the monotony of his routine to let out some aggression and do whatever it takes to protect his family.

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The Smithfield Times

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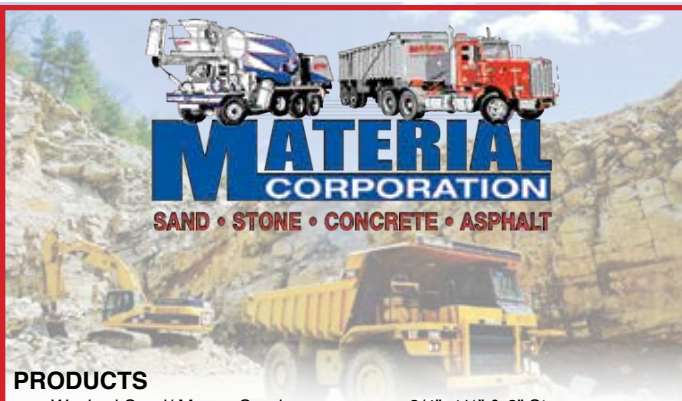
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A View From the Cheap Seats

Dan Pieroni



An Unappealing End for an NHL Official: Are Sports Officials Finally Accountable For Their Poor Decisions?

It seemed like a good idea at the time. After all, if you were refereeing a game in an area known to be frequented by people with passionate loyalties towards their team who are prone to displaying anger towards officials when things do not go their way, wouldn't you be tempted to placate them?

While the above question would no doubt be posed by an attorney representing a referee in a wrongful termination suit, we cannot be certain that those were indeed the true motives in promoting equitable treatment among teams.

Recently fired National Hockey League referee Tim Peel would beg to differ.

During a March 23rd game between the Nashville Predators and the Detroit Red Wings, Peel was caught on an open microphone attached to his uniform admitting that he wanted to call a penalty against Nashville early in the game likely because he feared the hostile reaction he would receive from the Red Wing fans if he continually ignored rules violations that were committed against the home team. His comments were subsequently broadcast over the air where many television viewers could hear them.

The reason for Peel's comments is just pure speculation on my part, but it does bring to light the importance of fairness and integrity in sports among all participants involved. Therefore, who could blame NHL Senior Executive Vice President of Hockey Operations Colin Campbell for quickly announcing the next day that Peel will not be working NHL games now or in the future? In a statement released the morning after the game,

Campbell said that nothing was more important than ensuring the integrity of the game, and that Peel's conduct directly violated that principle.

I think Tim Peel ignored two cornerstone principles of common decency.

First, as someone who studied broadcasting as an undergraduate, a cardinal rule of radio broadcasting is that you should always be aware of your actions on air. You never know who is listening. If you think anything you say or do over the air could be construed as offensive or inappropriate, do not say it or wait until you close all your microphones to say it.

One time when I was working the morning shift at the college radio station, I began to sing along with the record I had just begun playing. It seemed odd to me that the audio in my headphones was suddenly muffled. It had never sounded that way before.

When I glanced down at the console that controlled all the audio, I quickly realized to my horror that the red light that controlled my microphone was still in the "on" position, that explained the muffled audio in my headphones.

While I am certain the coffee drinkers and commuters of the South Shore of Massachusetts had a good laugh over my atrocious singing voice, this was a teachable moment that stressed the importance of always being aware of the positioning of your microphone.

Likewise, had Tim Peel been aware that he was speaking into an open lapel mic, he probably would not have paid the ultimate

price of losing his job.

Secondly, Tim Peel showed a blatant disregard for both the rules he was paid to uphold and virtue of integrity that represents the foundation those rules are built on.

Every official worth his weight has made a mistake that has cost a team a game, but few have the gall to openly admit they have made a judgment call to avoid backlash and foolishly attempt to ensure equity on a hot mic.

Now that Tim Peel has been punished for his misdeed, it begs the question of will officials finally be held accountable for their actions when they overstep their boundaries?

Will we continue to see an NFL official give a long-winded explanation of a penalty call, on a hot mic, or will they be reluctant to overshare out of fear they may lose their jobs for admitting their biases?

Will baseball umpires be more relaxed in their interpretation of the rules and not use the media as a safeguard to admit they blew a crucial call after the fact. What is clear is now there is a precedent for sports officials who chose to be ignorant of integrity and equity for the good of the game. Technology has advanced to such an extent that every eye can see, and every ear can hear what goes on.

If precautions are not taken to protect the privacy of open biases against teams by officials, severe consequences will result.

Tim Peel now knows this all too well.

Joyce's Happy Road

By Harry Anderson

"I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree." Thus opens Joyce Kilmer's beloved poem. In her back yard stands an oak, straight and strong, and Joyce Cook almost each morning hugs it. She is asked why. Her answer: "Because it's there and it's alive."

Before her death in 2016, Joyce began each day by hugging Bill. They had been married for 41 years. She also has out lived Willard, her first husband (aka Mac), who had wooed her away from Westerly – her home town – when she was but 18. Altogether, Joyce reared six children and two step children. Whereas Mac, a Lieutenant in the US Navy, had moved his family up and down the east coast of America and to Spain during his naval career, Bill, in 1976, heeded Joyce's plea to settle down in Rhode Island. They purchased an acre of wooded land in Scituate and erected a post-and-beam house that to this day Joyce continues to occupy.

Her story really begins two years ago when, on a pleasant spring morning, this writer made his first visit to the new Farm Stand Café located in the south end of the Fredrickson building at the intersection of routes 101 and 102. Its raw, freshly milled pine paneling and open space with walls towering at least twenty feet to the ceiling emulate yesteryear's country barns. On planks above a lengthy glassed-in freezer where the likes of meat pies and uncooked pizzas are displayed perches a nineteenth century one-horse-open-sleigh, evoking an image of Ethan Frome's lonely rides down Starkfield's snow-bound lanes. Beyond, an array of sweets behind glass tempt a wayfarer.

Too fair a day to enjoy his coffee and Eccles cake indoors, this writer sat at

one of the ice cream tables randomly placed on the café's patio. Almost immediately the woman he had spotted sweeping the floor of the nook where local farmers spread out for sale their asparagus and spinach and whatever else comes up in the spring approached him and laid a couple of paper napkins on his table.

"Thought you might need these."
"Very nice of you. Thanks." There was something inviting in her pale-ish blue eyes that begged me to ask her name.

"Joyce Cook, and if you want to know what in the world is an old woman like me doing standing here with a broom in her hand, I'd say I'm working. This is Wednesday, right? Every Wednesday I work here. And the fact of the matter is I also work every Monday and Thursday as well, from eight to one o'clock. Now I better get a move on or else Mr. Fredrickson might fire me."

In my subsequent visits to the café – always on Wednesday – Joyce revealed bits and pieces of her life. On the second visit, for example, I learned how it came about, her going to work for Mr. Fredrickson. She said that, when the racket of chain saws and an earth-mover passed through the woods and echoed in her abutting yard, she investigated and often throughout construction of the rustic looking building she hiked uphill along the shoulder of heavily traveled route 101 to view the project's progress.

Near its completion, Joyce and Brenda and Howard Fredrickson were on a first-name basis.

"What about it, Joyce? Would you like a job?" "Are you crazy? I'm old enough to be your grandmother!"

Brenda won the argument, and on opening day Joyce Cook not only was keeping the café tidy but also was greeting customers with smiles and chit-chat, verifying her claim to be a lover of people. To get her from walking the dangerous highway to work, Howard blazed a trail through the woods from his building to her back yard, and she dubbed it "Joyce's Happy Road."



Joyce Kilmer

A smile wrinkles her cheeks as she says, "There are exactly 315 steps from here to there."

Other things this writer has learned about Joyce: She knits and gives away baby blankets; she does not go to the senior center because "those people drool"; she glues together completed jig saw puzzles and tacks them to the walls of a closet. And, most poignantly,

See Joyce on page 29

she has lost a daughter.

"I still grieve, but I want to be happy. I do the best I can by trying to pull joy out of every minute of every day. If you asked me to describe myself, I'd put it this way. I'm just a humble, feisty, little thing who loves people and want to make them smile."

Over my desk hangs a framed picture of flowers and ferns ablaze with bright shades of yellow, green, pink that she had meticulously rendered with coloring pencils. Beneath it hangs a hand-written poem that comes from her heart:

*I have to live the life I have
I have to find inspiration in the struggle
And pull joy out of the hardship.
All I can do is carry the sorrow when I have to
And absolutely savor the joy whenever I can.*

Come a certain morning in July she will awaken to her ninetieth birthday. If it should be a Monday or Wednesday or Thursday, she will hug a tree and walk 315 steps along "Joyce's Happy Road" to the Farm Stand Café to make someone smile.

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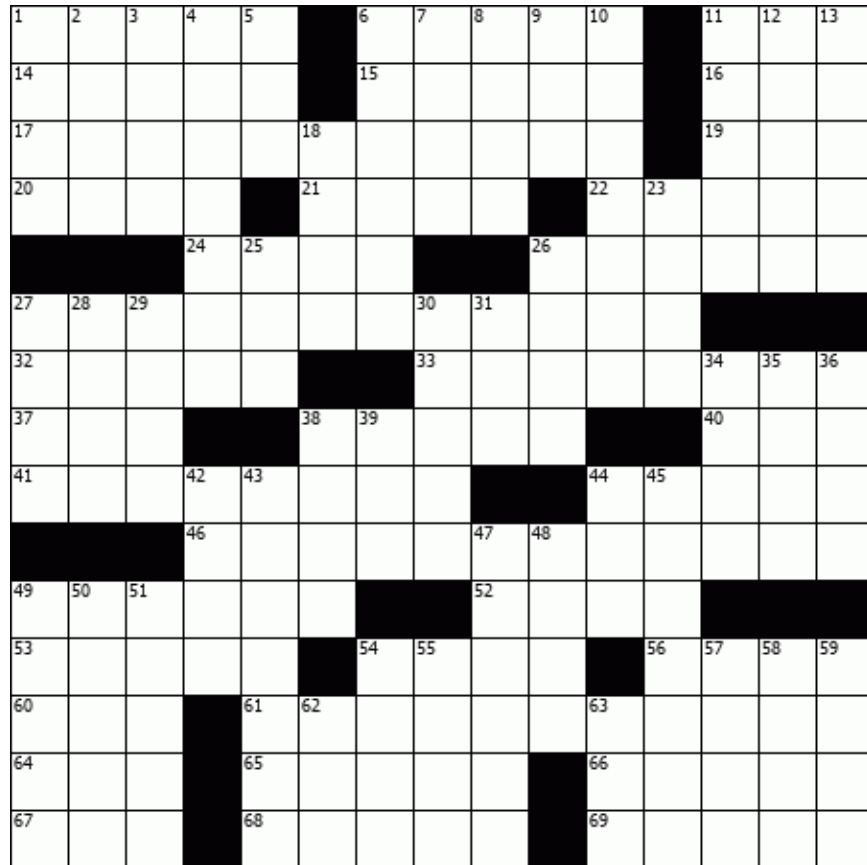
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Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. Jane Goodall subject
6. City of Light
11. Impress tremendously
14. Mirage subject
15. Single-handedly
16. Summer shade?
17. Now!
19. Part of a jack-in-the-box
20. Division in many leagues
21. College that spawned a jacket
22. Tonsorial offering
24. Admitting a draft
26. Waited for the laughter to die down
27. Now!
32. Waited for the light to change
33. Certain storage space
37. Menagerie
38. AKC classification
40. Draft drink
41. Barbary Coast resident
44. Tuckered out
46. Now!
49. Minty cocktails
52. It may be feathered
53. Product requirements
54. Word with fire or white
56. President that sat on the Supreme Court
60. Kind of wrestling
61. Now!
64. Portmanteau
65. Deli side
66. River's end, often
67. Gene Autry's "___ Faithful"
68. Works the land
69. Clobbers with snowballs



Down

1. Sheep shelter
2. Sardonic response
3. Goddess of ancient Egypt
4. Slip-up
5. "___ Love You" (Beatles)
6. Prune danish, e.g.
7. Countertenor
8. Speckled steed
9. Quaint quarters
10. Cast off
11. Road scholar's book?
12. Forgo
13. Pulled the plug on
18. Shipshape
23. Humble dwellings
25. Jethro's uncle
26. Trudge
27. Vincente's daughter
28. Some worship it
29. Blockage
30. Speedy notetaker
31. Pym's creator
34. Corridor
35. Charles Lamb's pen name
36. Claim otherwise
38. Drill accessories
39. Shout from the stands
42. Container of pre-plumbing days
43. Swindles
44. They can get personal
45. Rabbit food
47. Except on the condition
48. Angered (with "off")
49. Type of shrimp
50. Kind of suspects
51. Jumping-off point
54. Show signs of life
55. Polite interrupter
57. Fratricide victim
58. Without fizz
59. Change for a hundred, perhaps
62. Gun lobby, briefly
63. Alley of old comics

Answers to puzzle on page 42



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It was a long journey for this sweet boy. He struggled with the stress of shelter life but it certainly paid off. The dedication of Almost Home Rescue is unmatched. Aside from actually finding him a home, they did everything possible to give Trunks the best life possible until his "happily ever after" moment. Field trips, daycare, sleepovers, all requiring early morning pick ups and long transports. These incredible women are so dedicated to their dogs and are nonstop! We are so grateful for them and the new life Trunks has in front of him. I couldn't think of a better way to celebrate the start of spring than this beautiful new beginning.

The
Smithfield Times

Recipe Swap!



Parmesan Spring Chicken

Prep: 10 mins

Cook: 10 mins

Easy

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 egg white
- 5 tbsp finely grated parmesan
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 400g new potatoes, cut into small cubes
- 140g frozen peas
- good handful baby spinach leaves
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 2 tsp olive oil

Directions

Step 1

Heat grill to medium and line the grill pan with foil. Beat the egg white on a plate with a little salt and pepper. Tip the parmesan onto another plate. Dip the chicken first in egg white, then in the cheese. Grill the coated chicken for 10-12 mins, turning once until browned and crisp.

Step 2

Meanwhile, boil the potatoes for 10 mins, adding the peas for the final 3 mins, then drain. Toss the vegetables with the spinach leaves, vinegar, oil and seasoning to taste. Divide between four warm plates, then serve with the chicken.

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SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



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Tim Jones – Cartoonist





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Inside The Brown Bag

By Peg Brown

The CAKES of our lives ...

In “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” the poet, T.S. Eliot, famously stated that he “had measured out my life with coffee spoons,” suggesting that his life was a series of discrete, mundane, repetitive and precise small moments. If I had to pick a food group that measured out the moments in my life, I would pick ... Cakes! Most of the pictures in the family album documenting important life moments have cakes as their centerpieces – weddings, anniversaries, holidays, engagements, first communions, christenings, confirmations – and, of course, birthdays. Looking through these photos evoked several nostalgic moments, and a certain sense of sadness, as these “cake celebrating” images did indeed reflect the important markers in our dwindling family’s lives.

For most of this baby boomer’s life, cakes were home-made, most often with a boxed mix, decorated with rock-hard frosting, and topped with plastic imitations of pink flowers holding the appropriate number of candles. There was only one bakery in my small town, and a “purchased” cake, except in the case of family weddings, was considered an unnecessary extravagance. That was, of course, when most of these celebrations were held at home, perhaps in the back yard, and not in a “venue.” The cakes were often lopsided, with crumbs peeking through the frosting and, much to my disappointment, cut across the middle, then in slices to ensure getting the most servings possible.

Little did I know that we had to again credit the ancient Greeks with originating

a tradition centered around a cake. One historian noted that Greeks would bake a round cake to honor the births of their gods. In the case of the celebration of Artemis, the round cake (symbolizing the moon) was decorated with candles to simulate the light reflected by this celestial body.

Some suggest that the placing of candles on birthday cakes was expanded by German families in the 13th century, as candles, which signified the “light of life” (one for each year and one for continued life), were traditional. The theory was that when one blew out the candles, the smoke would carry a wish toward heaven.

It is no surprise that advances in technology, economic upheavals, times of war, and the impact of waves of new Americans brought changes in our cake culture and preferences. As late as the 18th century, cakes were considered a true luxury as sugar, chocolate and spices were very expensive. The Industrial Revolution, new inventions such as temperature-controlled ovens, and advances in agriculture and distribution techniques made ingredients more accessible and less expensive.

The Civil War eliminated many sugar plantations, resulting in molasses being used as a sweetener. Both World Wars of the 20th century led to creativity in baking as most ingredients such as butter, flour and sugar were rationed. This led bakers to experiment with using mayonnaise and apple sauce in place of oil, developing recipes reminiscent of



“cowboy cakes” that were made without eggs, and using more nuts for flavor.

Each new immigrant group brought new flavors and favorite recipes. Regional favorites emerged such as coconut cake and Lady Baltimore cake from the South, Tres Leches Cake from Mexico, tortes from Italians, and gingerbread and Shoofly Pie (named for a circus mule) from our Pennsylvania Dutch settlers. Those same frugal Pennsylvania Dutch bakers are said to have invented the Angel Food Cake because they couldn’t bear to waste the egg whites left over from making noodles.

About 25 years ago, I made a tape to be played at my parents’ 50th wedding anniversary, just before they cut their cake. Many of the images were indeed moments in their lives that had been marked with cakes as the centerpiece. My father, a stoic, non-demonstrative World War II veteran watched it play surrounded by his family and friends. As the film ended, I glanced up from the podium and saw tears streaming down his face. Faced with a very awkward moment, I brightly announced, “Well, you can see that this family just loves cake—so let’s cut this one.” We all took a deep breath, clapped, and the honored couple moved with smiles to the cake table.

See Inside The Brown Bag, page 35

Fun Cake Facts:

- The phrase “take the cake” is said to have originated in the South where strutting competitions were held. The couple who demonstrated the best style in the cake walk won the cake as their prize.
- An 1847 news story entitled “Quarter Horse Race in Kentucky” used the phrase “the winning horse takes the cakes.”
- The top flavors of choice: yellow, followed by white, then devil’s food.
- 1948 – Pillsbury introduces a white layer and chocolate fudge cake mix, one year after General Mills released their own version.
- 1949 – Pillsbury hosts its first Grand National Bake-Off. (By 1996 they were offering \$1 million as top prize.)
- 1960’s – Julia Child introduces the nearly flourless cake.
- Today – our interest in organic and seed-to-table cuisine has led to experimenting with natural foods such as beets to add sweetness to our confections.

And, if you’re tired of being creative, Anne Byrn, cake guru and an author of baking books, several of which I consulted, offers 450 pages of creative ways to fool your dinner guests, using – you guessed it – cake mixes! (the Cake Doctor, 150 luscious desserts with honest-to-goodness from-scratch taste, Anne Byrn, 1999.)

HELP WANTED

Part-time Custodian Needed. Duties include general custodial work and sidewalk snow removal in winter. The individual would also be responsible for the setup of classrooms and parish events. The ideal candidate will have the flexibility to work additional hours to accommodate parish activities when needed. Applicants should submit a letter of interest to: Saint Michael’s Church Attn: Bill Bowden, 80 Farnum Pike, Smithfield, RI 02917 or via email at: bbowdstmikes@cox.net 401-231-5120



James M. "Jake" Poland, Jr.
April 5, 2021

James M. "Jake" Poland, Jr., 59, of Chopmist Hill Road, Scituate, passed away peacefully on Monday, April 5, 2021 at Hope Health Hultar Hospice Center in Providence. He was the son of the late James M. and Mary (Holland) Poland.

Born in Providence, Jim had lived in Scituate all his life. He had worked as a stone mason for 35 years. He was also a music teacher at Killingly School of Music in Connecticut and a musician who performed throughout the community.

Jim is survived by his sister, Nancy Esau of North Providence and his nieces. He was the brother of the late Maureen Poland and Karen Fitzgerald.

A celebration of his life will be held at a future date.





Stargazing

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

A Meteor Shower and a Look at Venus and Mercury

For decades I have been informing local stargazers about astronomical events through my monthly columns. How many times have you read that I never tire of watching “burning rocks” blazing across the sky, no matter what time of the year? At least a couple of hundred I would estimate.

While the “burning rocks” description may seem appropriate, the outer surface of a meteor is actually being vaporized as it slams into the Earth’s atmosphere at many miles per second. That’s the glow or streak we observe as a shooting star. Some meteors may explode into fragments and continue to vaporize until they are completely annihilated. Once in a while a piece may survive its plunge and fall to the ground as a meteorite.

During the first week of May, we will be treated to the annual meteor display called the Eta Aquarids. This year the peak of activity occurs on the night of the 5th to the early morning of the 6th with perhaps 15 swift and yellow meteors radiating from the constellation of Aquarius (hence the name of the shower). The Earth will be sweeping

through a stream of particles shed by Halley’s Comet long ago. The meteors comprising this meteor shower enter the

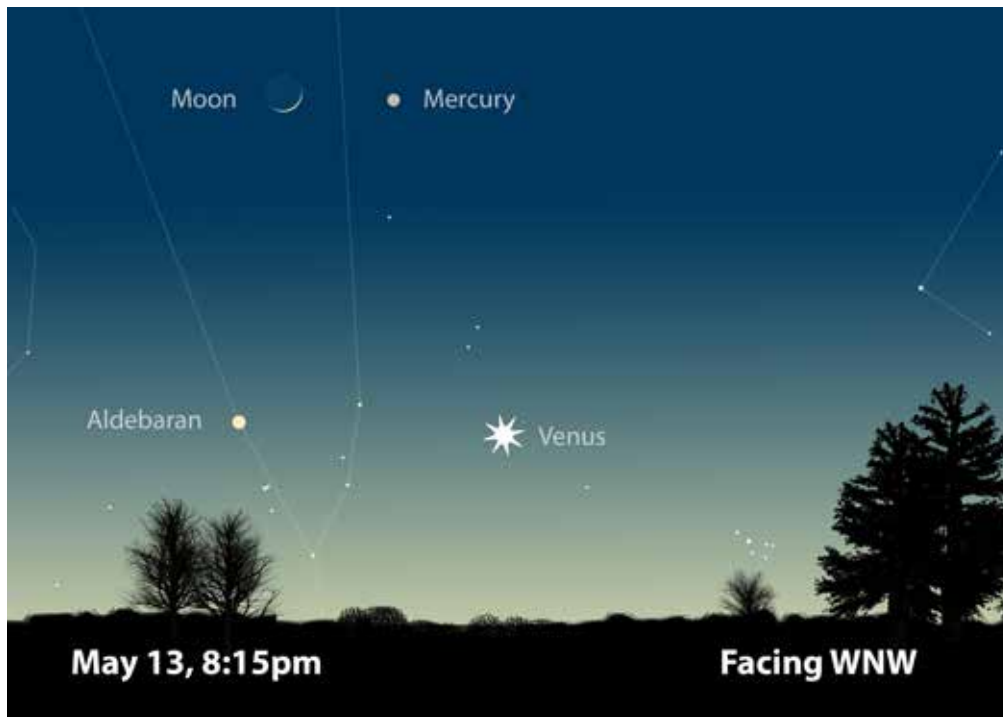
with observing as many meteors as possible in a dark sky away from light pollution. In fact, with the radiant so low

in the sky you might even see some earth-grazers, meteors that skip along the top of our atmosphere like stones being skipped across a pond.

If you don’t identify it right away, wait for the evening of May 13 during deepening twilight around 8:15 p.m. when a slender waxing (growing larger) crescent Moon will be just

about two degrees to the south (left) of Mercury. On this evening, or perhaps on the evening or two before, note a brilliant object below and slightly to the right of Mercury. This beacon will be Venus. As each night passes, Venus will rise higher into the night sky. On the night of the 17th Mercury will be at its highest elevation above the horizon. It will then begin to sink lower towards the horizon each night.

At the same time, Venus will continue to rise until it is in conjunction (close together) with Mercury on the 28th. The two worlds will be only one-half of a



Earth’s upper atmosphere head-on at 41-miles per second.

To locate Aquarius, look about 12 degrees above the east-southeast horizon around 4:00 a.m. The shower’s radiant point is in the Water Urn asterism (looks like a Y-shaped group of stars). While the meteors emanate from this region of the sky, scan around the entire sky to maximize your chances of observing one.

This recommendation is especially advisable, since a slender waning crescent Moon will also be residing in Aquarius just 14 degrees away from the radiant point. Regardless, this circumstance should not greatly interfere

See Stargazing, page 37

degree (angular size of a Full Moon) apart in the sky. Plan your observing location in advance, as this sky scene will only be about ten degrees above the west-northwest horizon. Mercury and Venus will be easy to view with the unaided eye, but binoculars or even a small telescope will enhance the view. Good luck.

On May 26 there is a total lunar eclipse, but unfortunately it will not be visible from Rhode Island. The May Full Moon, which Native Americans called the Full Flower Moon, is also the second supermoon of three for 2021. Since it will be closer to the Earth it may appear a little larger and brighter than a regular Full Moon. Technically the penumbral phase, when the Moon slides into the Earth's lighter shadow, begins just before moonset from our location, in bright morning twilight. If you wish to observe more of this lunar eclipse you will have to travel much farther westward to do so.

You'd have to venture out to Wichita, Kansas to get a look at some part of totality. Or farther west to Pueblo, Colorado to observe all of totality. Coastal California will observe from the first penumbral shading through the end of the outgoing partial phase after totality. To experience this lunar eclipse in its entirety you'd need to be out in Hawaii.

I want everyone to be prepared for the June 10 sunrise partial solar eclipse beginning at 5:15 a.m. As the Sun rises above the horizon on that morning the eclipse will already be in progress. While we often observe sunrises and sunsets through the dense atmosphere on the horizon, don't be tempted to stare at the partially eclipsed Sun without those special solar eclipse glasses.

Next month's column will be exclusively about this absolutely beautiful phenomenon.

Keep your eyes to the skies. David A. Huestis

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50 years Ago – May, 1971

by Jim Ignasher

Tec. Sergeant Kenneth E. Bessette of Esmond was serving in the U. S. Air Force at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

Second Lieutenant James L. DeStout was serving as a pilot with the U. S. Air Force.

The Georgiaville Baptist Church held its annual candlelight memorial mass for all deceased war veterans of Smithfield.

Roy Andrews of Stillwater was installed as the Exalted Ruler of the Smithfield Elks Lodge No. 2359.

On May 8, NASA launched its Martian probe, Mariner 8. Its mission was to orbit and photograph the planet Mars, but five minutes after the launch a malfunction prevented it from achieving earth orbit. Two days later the Soviet Union launched a Mars probe of its own, and it too failed. Later in the month both countries launched second probes aimed at Mars. Both successfully reached the red planet, but the Russian probe crashed on its surface. This was the first time in history man-made objects had gone to another planet.

A flowering cherry tree was donated to the Greenville Grange by the members of the Apple Blossom Garden Club. The tree was placed on the grounds of the grange as part of a beautification program. Members of Girl Scout troops 101 and 882 assisted with the planting.

The historic grange hall stood on Austin Avenue just in from Putnam Pike. Unfortunately, both the building and the tree are no longer standing.

On May 9, the tenth annual Apple Blossom Queen Pageant was held at the Smithfield High School. The event was sponsored by the Rhode Island Fruit Growers Association, and the Rhode Island State Grange Agriculture Commission.

Local young ladies who participated included Debby Dupointe, Ellyn Thurber, Betty Dolbey, Bonnilyn Dobson, Cheryl Place, Janet Hill and Janice Hill.



The winner was Linda Bertrand of Newport.

A controversy arose when a local businessman petitioned the town to approve the operation of an outdoor flea market next to the Apple Valley Mall. The Town Council met on May 28, and numerous residents came to protest the plan. Some objected to the types of goods that could be sold, others spoke of unsold goods and trash being left behind, while others claimed property values would be lowered, and traffic in the area would increase. The Council denied the plan.

If one went to the movies in May of '71, they might have seen "Support Your Local Gunfighter", a comedy starring James Garner who is mistaken for a notorious gunslinger in an old-west mining town. Two competing factions try to hire him to drive the other out of town. And thus the hi-jinx began.

Another popular move that month was "Escape from the Planet of the Apes", a prequel to the 1968 movie, "Planet of the Apes."

On May 16, the price of mailing a letter in the U. S. rose from six to eight cents.

Voters at the annual Town Financial Meeting approved funding for a new police station. Up until this point the police station had been located in the Town Hall, and the department had outgrown the space.



See 50 Years Ago, page 39

Charles Sandner of Greenville was presented an award for his service as Cubmaster of Cub Scout Pack 43 of Greenville. He had been associated with scouting since 1954, and Cubmaster since 1966. Pack 43 was sponsored by the Greenville Baptist Church.

On May 22 the Smithfield Police held its annual policeman's ball at the St. Michael's Church parish hall. More than 300 people attended.

On May 28 the Rhode Island Heart Association sponsored a "balloon dance" for 7th and 8th grade students which was held at the Greenville Grange Hall. Radio personality Joe Thomas of WPRO served as master of ceremonies and DJ.

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Deadline to submit is June 1.

For more information on the photo contest
check out our website at
smithfieldtimesri.net/photo-upload





Gardner Lake's Ghostly Piano

By Thomas D'Agostino
www.tomdagostino.com

Here is a story from the latest book, *Strange New England* by Arlene and I. New England is full of fantastic stories and people. There is always an interesting legend or tale of someone or something of the more eccentric type around every turn. This next account is no exception. It is a true story that resonates to this day deep below the surface of a Connecticut lake.

Gardner Lake is situated on the border between Bozrah, Montville, and Salem in southeastern Connecticut. The lake is a beautiful scenic body of water with an average depth of fourteen feet but run be as deep as forty plus feet in

certain areas. The portion of the lake in this story happens to be in the town of Salem.

In February of 1895, a local grocer by the name of Thomas LeCount bought a parcel of land on the opposite side of the lake directly across from his modest but spacious estate. He decided to move his family to that piece of property, as it was much nicer than where he lived at the time. He also decided to move the house, but rather than dismantling and rebuilding it, he waited until the middle of winter when ice would be thick enough to support the family abode. His plan was to slide

the home across the lake to the new portion of land he had just acquired.

The home was lifted and dropped on sleds with oxen yokes attached. The oxen began to slowly pull the sled with the family home toward the south side of the lake. The venture went pretty smooth for a while but daylight waned quickly and before he could get to the other side, the home slid into a large snowdrift on the ice. With the advent of the dark night against him, he decided to leave the house where it was and tackle the problem in the light of morning. In the meantime, local mill

See Gardner Lake, page 41

operators, unaware that the house was resting on the ice, opened a flood gate, draining some of the water from the pond for powering their enterprises. The space between the water level and the ice caused the house to crack through, pitching it at a steep angle.

Unfortunately, the home could not be moved and everything that could be carried out of it was taken. There it sat until spring when the thaw caused it to sink in about fifteen feet of water. For years the second story and attic remained above water. People fished from it, investigated it and even skated through it in the winter. Over time, the house sank, becoming completely submerged under water.

Many of the large items, such as furniture, stoves, and an upright piano could not be removed and sank with the home. Now, years after the building has settled into its watery grave, divers have attested that the house and its contents are still in a remarkable state of preservation, especially the upright piano that is still leaning in its original place against the parlor wall.

The instrument seems to be possessed by something no one, even divers cannot explain. Fishermen and others who have ventured out near the vicinity of the sunken house have heard the eerie echoes of soft piano music filling their ears. The muffled music breaks the tranquil silence but does not come from the shore, rather from directly below. Deep below. No one has ever been able to explain how or why the piano plays. Many fishermen or recreational boaters have returned from the area of the house scratching their head in astonishment, relating the sudden occurrence of faint piano music that sounded like it was emanating from where the house rests all but quietly at the bottom of the lake.

Take a visit to Gardner Lake and listen for yourself. Perhaps you may hear the muffled sound of a piano rising from the water. If you are an experienced scuba diver you may want to venture down into the house and catch a glimpse of the instrument maybe even discover who may be tickling the ivory of the sunken ghostly piano.

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3/27/21
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www.andersonwinfield.net



Sandra D. Davignon (Spitznagel)
4/1/21
www.kbarrettandcotter.com



Carol S. Passano
4/1/21
www.robbsfuneralhome.com



Anne E. Greeleaf (Monzert)
4/2/21
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Answers to Crossword Puzzle from page 30.

C	H	I	M	P		P	A	R	I	S		A	W	E	
O	A	S	I	S		A	L	O	N	E		T	A	N	
T	H	I	S	I	N	S	T	A	N	T		L	I	D	
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O	L	E			F	A	R	M	S		P	E	L	T	S

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595 Putnam Pike, L3-N, Smithfield, RI 02828
401-232-9600 • smithfieldtimesri.net

Thomas J. Lopatosky, Jr. – Owner, Operator
Tom@LopcoContracting.com

Ann Marie Donahue – Executive Editor
amdonahue@smithfieldtimesri.net

Elaine S. Amoriggi – Creative Director, Design
eamoriggi@smithfieldtimesri.net

Advertising and Sales


Camilla Spliid – cspliid@smithfieldtimesri.net
Grace Genereux – grace@smithfieldtimesri.net

Writers

Harry Anderson
Peg Brown
Thomas D'Agostino
Sophia DeJesus
Jane Fusco
Jim Gass
Brittni Henderson
David Huestis
Jim Ignasher
Bea Lanzi
Paul Lonardo
Diane L. Marolla
Sarah Payne
Dan Pieroni
Ron Scopelliti
Joe Siegel

Albert Tavakalov – Photographer
Sandra Achille – Photo and Creative Contributor
Tim Jones – Cartoonist

The *Smithfield Times* does not assume any financial responsibility for typographical error in advertisements that have received final approval or are submitted camera ready.

A woman with brown hair, wearing a blue beanie, a red long-sleeved shirt, and brown work overalls, stands in a workshop. A respirator mask is hanging from her neck. The background shows a workshop environment with a dark blue tarp on the left and a workbench with paint cans on the right. The entire image is framed by a thick orange border.

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