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FEBRUARY 2022

The Smithfield Times



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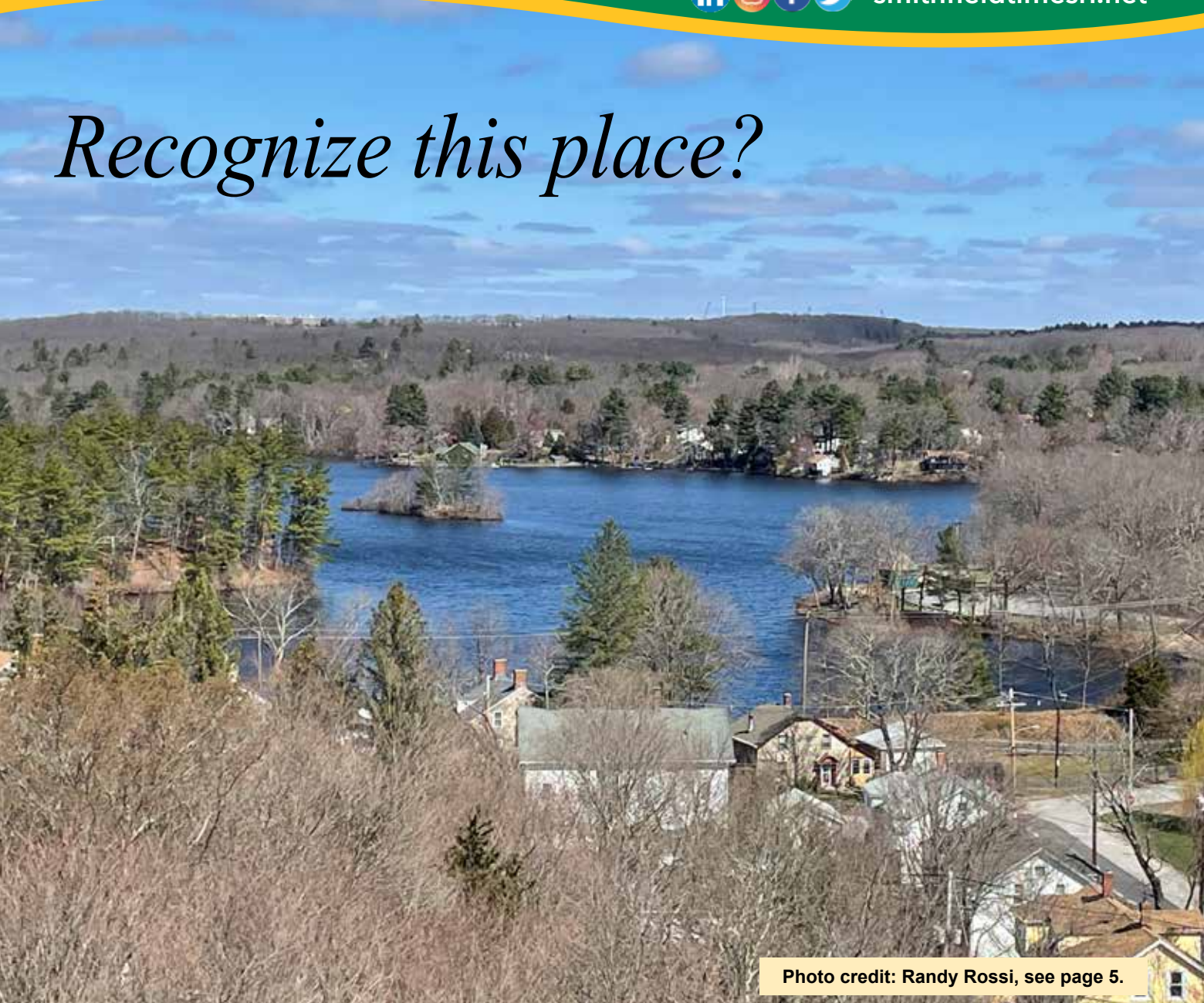


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Medicaid is a state administered program that is funded to a great extent by the Social Security trust fund. It provides for payment of medical services and long term nursing home care for those who qualify.

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care, both the federal and state governments periodically amend the Medicaid statutes and regulations in order to further limit eligibility for the program.

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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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In Our Community

This picture was taken during the height of Covid. It is Tess and her twin sister's three favorite stuffed animals, (Piggie, Lambie and Kiki) which she'd posed in our Smithfield backyard. With all the talk of children homeschooling, and mask wearing, missing school events and the myriad of restrictions these kids were facing, it seemed very representative not only of the resiliency of children, but also of their ability to create beauty and joy and to find sunlight even during the darkest of days.



Submitted by: Jennifer Beauchamp
and her daughter, Tess. (2021 Smithfield Times Photo Contest)

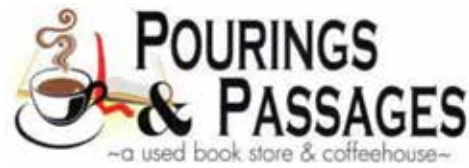


The first snow of 2022
on January 7 gave the
kids a great day of
sledding at Deerfield Park!



Jimmy's Shangri-La

By Harry Anderson



“Pourings & Passages” is the eye-catching name Jim Weigel gives to his book store at 103 Main Street, Danielson, CT. Ten months ago, when the Trinket Shoppe, a purveyor in clothing and prom gowns and tuxedo rentals for fifty years, went out of business, he bought the five-room building, liking its spaciousness more than the one down the street where he had been a book-seller since retiring in 2011 from a thirty-seven-year career as the librarian at the Killingly Intermediate School.

“That move was something to behold. In two days volunteers carried 175 bookcases and about 500 boxes of books from there to here. We opened on April Fools’ Day, 2021.”

Jim is native to Danielson, a village of Killingly, where in 1965 he graduated from St. James’ elementary school and in 1969 from Killingly High School before going on to Notre Dame to earn a degree in American literature with a minor in Japanese. Remaining loyal to the St. James school, he is not only helping its librarian four hours each week but is giving every cent of proceeds coming in to Pourings & Passages to the school.

“I do not pocket any of the money! We have about 25,000 books here, and all have been donated. On average we sell between 500 and 1,000 of them each week. My job is to make sure that they have been gently used before I price them at 1/8 of their original cost and sort them according to genre.”

To compete with the likes of Amazon

and Netflix, Jim displays in bins CD’s and DVD’s and even vinyl records; and on tables greeting cards, earrings, necklaces, and various knitted items – all hand-made by the nuns of St. James. A popular amenity is the small café beyond the cozy reading room. Patrons may look out a large window as they sip cups of coffee or tea and nibble at fruit bars. On Saturday mornings he sits in a circle of kids, aged two to five, and reads to them.

“The ladies you see out there, they’re all volunteers. They’re the true workers here. They know what I want – a clean, friendly, comfortable store. After telling them this, I then keep out of their way, and they deliver.”

The interview at this point shifts to Jim himself, and I ask if he has a favorite book. “Sure do,” he answers. “James Hilton’s *Lost Horizon*. I re-read it every year. Every time, it’s when the main character ... wait a minute, his name will come to me.”

“Conway.” Recognizing the man with the answer, who just stepped into the room, Jim says, “That’s it, Ray. Look, take a seat. The FedEx guy just came in and I have to sign something. Be right back.”

As Jim races off, Ray exclaims, “Look at that man move! We’re both the same age, seventy. Went to grade school with him. He reminds me of Puck, that elfin character from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Really, Jimmy is the most extraordinary man I’ve ever known. He has an amazing mind. It’s truly wonderful what he’s doing here.”

When Jim returned, Ray had gone. I tell him that his friend would cast him as Puck in a production of Shakespeare’s play and add that he has the attributes of an actor. He smiles and tells me that he’s appeared in more than a hundred plays at the Bradley Theatre in Putnam.

“It all began twenty-seven years ago. I tried out for a role in *Fiddler on the Roof* and got cast as Avram, ironically a book seller. A role that still delights me was playing a nun in *Nunsense*. Why, I even had to dance!”

He apologized for having to end the interview. His volunteer ladies had reminded him of things he had to do. Asked to sum up everything, he said that he has a guardian angel. He says that he was admitted to Notre Dame – the last of six to be accepted – only because his father, uncle, and a cousin were alums, and no one thought him capable to get a degree; that working with Lola Knight from Foster, Killingly High’s librarian, for a summer job; that studying a year in Japan ... “That was my angel’s doing.”

He avers that every day he does exactly what makes him happy.

“In college I wrote a paper on ‘Hope’. It is having hope that makes all the difference. I told you that *Lost Horizon* is my favorite book, but not why. It’s because Conway found Shangri-la, a secret place in the Himalayans, a place of peace and immortality. It’s not an actual place, of course. It’s Hilton’s allegory for a state of mind. Pourings & Passages is my Shangri-la.”



You're right if you guessed Georgiaville Pond. Our cover photo this month features another of our **2021 Photo Contest** submissions. This photo was taken by Randy Rossi, who is a Smithfield resident and also the Smithfield Town Manager. He titled this photo: Overlooking Georgiaville Pond.

Local Singer Making Her Mark in the Music Industry

By Paul Lonardo

Lainey Dionne is a local musical talent that many people in the area may be aware of, but it probably won't be long until the entire country knows about this young indie pop singer/songwriter from Smithfield. Lainey graduated from Smithfield High School in 2012 before going on to attend Berklee College of Music, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude, receiving her bachelor's degree in Music Business with a minor in Music Production and Engineering.

Last August, she released a well-received 12-song album, *Self Titled*, bringing in over 130,000 streams on Spotify and earning national and international radio play. Among the many accolades, she recently received the "Best in State: Rhode Island" honors at the 2021 New England Music Awards, along with four other nominations including Song of the Year, Songwriter of the Year, Female Performer of the Year, and Pop Act of the Year.

"*Self Titled* is about my self-worth discovery through toxic relationships," Lainey says. "I chose 'Self Titled' as the name for my album because I am not defined by my exes; they do not represent my name, but they did shape me into the person I am today through the good and the bad- and now that I've come out the other side, I feel entitled to myself again." You can listen to *Self Titled* on iTunes, Spotify, or any other streaming service.

Lainey's musical career began when she was 6-years old and started taking piano lessons. It was something she continued throughout high school, and it was what she auditioned on when she was later accepted into Berklee College of Music. But Lainey possesses other musical



Lainey Dionne

interests and talents. She also plays the violin, guitar and the cajon, among others.

"The piano and guitar are my main instruments," Lainey says. "But I also have a mandolin and a ukelele. I can play pretty much any string instrument."

Performing in front of an audience seemed to come natural to the Smithfield native. She participated in Smithfield High School's annual Spring Fest and Fall Fest every year, but it wasn't until her senior year that she was recognized as having genuine vocal talent when she was selected for the Rhode Island All-State Choir her first year of chorus. Singing was something she always loved, though she had never had any professional training. With a strong belief in herself, after her first semester at Berklee, Lainey switched from piano to voice, being reaccepted into the prestigious music school, with

a focus on singing. Lainey credits her family for encouraging her exploration of music.

"There's always been music in my family," Lainey says. "My dad was in a work band and was always practicing 70's guitar licks in the basement. The whole side of his family, whenever they get together, they all harmonize."

Lainey got professional inspiration from the performers and bands she admired, particularly Paramore, a national rock group.

"They got me to want to be in a band," Lainey says. "That's what really sparked my original interest, because when I first started out, I was writing songs in the rock genre. I then moved to folk, because I really liked Ingrid Michaelson, among other folk artists like Vance Joy and The Head and the Heart who I ended up opening for in Providence."

It was a folk-inspired EP titled *Can't Refuse* that got her noticed by Atlantic Records. A subsequent meeting with the mega record label got her an artist development deal in Nashville.

Since then, Lainey has played at over 90 venues in Rhode Island and has opened for renowned artists such as Drake Bell, The Head and The Heart, Chase Rice, and Ronny Cox. Restrictions during the pandemic haven't slowed her down. While live performances have been severely limited, Lainey made good use of this time by setting up multiple sync deals, including one deal writing for shows on Amazon Prime and TLC. A sync deal involves the use of an artist's

See Local Singer, page 7

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Local Singer, from page 6

music, which gets played in the background of films and television/streaming shows, ads, video games, etc.

"I have been writing specifically for Amazon Prime and TLC right now," Lainey says. "Also, my tracks are up for five other sync deals."

Upcoming for Lainey, she will be playing a Valentine's Day dog adoption event at The Guild Brewery, and also at the Black Oak in Coventry in March. She also has a residency at Smithfield's Kountry Kitchen every summer, so you will be able to see her perform there every weekend.

"I am very lucky to have a residency at Smithfield's own Kountry Kitchen throughout the pandemic to keep playing music during this tough time," Lainey says. "I've also had the pleasure of playing at some of Rhode Island's most famed venues such as The Strand, The MET, Bold Point Park, Greenwich Odeum, Newport Film Festival, Newport Blues Cafe, Providence Folk Festival, and PVD Fest."

Lainey is currently working on her next full-length album; You can get updates on her music, live streams, performances, and more on www.laineydionne.com.

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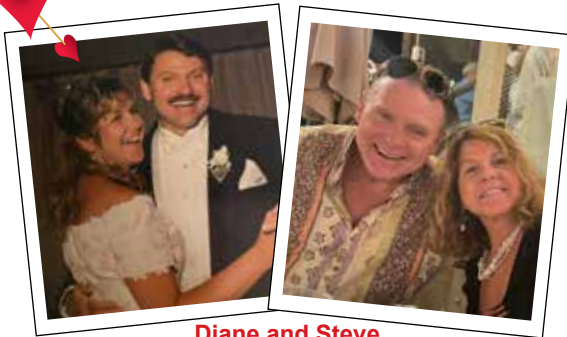
Cupid Hit His Marks With These Two Devoted Couples

By Brittini Henderson



We've all seen the winged baby who adorns cards, posters, and boxes of candy in the month of February. As Roman mythology tells us, Cupid is the son of Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. The family lineage surely played a part in his role of allegedly having the mystical powers of love himself. His golden-tipped arrows possess a magic that ensure its recipients fall in love with one another.

There are certainly times in our lives when we feel like there must be some other power at play when we encounter someone who we would never have crossed paths with on our own. Do we all have our own personal Cupids guiding us, or are we destined by something else?



Diane and Steve

Diane continued focusing on her career. Over a decade later, Steve and Diane reconnected at a mutual friend's party. He was no longer married, and she was in a dark place because her mother was very ill.

"We had always been connected, had lots in common, including being the same age," Diane says. "We found we thoroughly enjoyed one another's company. It was a short time later when we both acknowledged that we were one another's others true companion."

Diane and Steve were engaged on Christmas a year later and married the following August. They

celebrated 25 years of marriage last year.

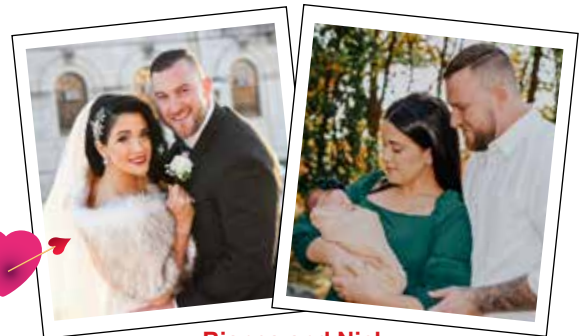
Couples everywhere come together on February 14th to celebrate their love stories, and it is no different for these two Rhode Island couples. Despite neither knowing the other, and being separated by a number of years, their tales have many parallels. The foundations of their respective relationships are built with the same materials and are maintained by the same tools. Their outlooks on love are genuine, hopeful, and true. Both couples shared their love stories with *The Smithfield Times*.

Diane and Steve first met in 1983 while working together at a long-term care hospital. Their relationship was friendly and platonic for six years, until their careers took them in different directions. Steve married and had one son, while

"It has been an amazing life, full of love, laughter, tears, joys and sorrows! I would not have missed it for the world!" Diane gushes.

She believes the greatest gift of their marriage has been their friendship. They have at least one good laugh every day. They enjoy many shared interests and activities, including biking and beaching together. Their Valentine celebrations usually consist of having a quiet homemade dinner together and chocolate is a must.

"We believe in celebrating as much as possible!" Diane says.



Bianca and Nick

Bianca and Nick do not have the same number of years under their relationship belt, but mirror many of Diane and Steve's experiences. The couple first met in 2015 at a cookout that neither of them expected to attend. A month or so later they reconnected and began casually dating. The two were engaged in December 2017 after both realizing they were both each other's person. They celebrated their nuptials in December 2019 surrounded by family and friends. They have two cats and a beautiful baby girl together.

Bianca and Nick believe in communication, partnership, and growth. The pair prides themselves in spending time together and listening to what the other has to say. Dates can be anything from a ride to get coffee to a night out on the town – every moment is sacred. When it comes to holidays, they agree that it

doesn't need to always be fancy – the time spent together is the most important celebration.

Another absolute for them? Getting through the hard times together.

"We never go too long after a disagreement without apologizing and

See Cupid, page 9

Cupid, from page 8

talking about what went wrong and how we can fix it,” Bianca shares.

Diane and Steve agree, adding that they never go to bed angry with each other, even if they cannot resolve the issue at night.

“We will kiss each other good night and say I love you every day,” Diane says. “When times get difficult, and they do, try to remember what attracted you to your partner in the beginning and focus on what you love about them.”

The most important tip both couples share is to cherish and value your partner for who they are and remember how much you love them.

“As a dear friend advised me who is married 50 years,” Diane shares, “if you keep focusing on the wart on his or her nose, it only grows! Do your best to focus on the positive attributes of your partner and in your life. Remember to keep some romance in your life and go out on fun dates together as much as you can. Most importantly, never ever give up on love, no matter how old you are – it is truly life’s greatest adventure!”



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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!



Re-doing a Ceiling - Better To Go Over Existing or Start From Scratch?

There are a number of reasons why someone may want to replace a ceiling. Perhaps their existing ceiling has some type of texture to it that is overly annoying to them. Maybe they have a large section of the ceiling that is damaged (think – someone falling through a ceiling while putzing around in the attic!). Or they may have an old calcimine ceiling that gives them a fit every time they go to try to fix some peeling paint on it and the paint seems to keep peeling and peeling and peeling ... no matter how thoroughly they prep the ceiling before painting it.

Whatever the reasoning, once the decision has been made that the ceiling needs to be redone, there are two different ways of doing so.

One method is to go over the existing ceiling with a new ceiling. In the Northeast, where blueboard and plaster – particularly in residential settings – is king, the general approach would be to hang new 3/8" blueboard over the existing ceiling and then plaster over the blueboard to whichever finish one desires (smooth, swirl, textured, etc.) over it. If there is crown molding that surrounds the room, a ceiling fan, certain types of light fixtures, or the like, they may have to be very carefully removed prior to the ceiling being hung and then properly re-installed (or have an updated version installed) after the ceiling has been completed.

The other method is starting from scratch.

This method entails, literally, taking down the existing ceiling in its entirety, hanging a new ceiling – again, assuming the Northeast typical residential construction approach – in this instance with 1/2" blueboard and then plastering over the blueboard to whichever finish one desires (smooth, swirl, textured, etc.) over it.

In both methodologies, one can certainly substitute sheetrock (vs. the blueboard) and its accompanying process of taping the seams and joint compounding the seams and screw holes and the entire process that is involved with this particular procedure.

Most often, however, in this part of the country, blueboard and plaster is what

is utilized for this type of project the majority of the time.

If there is an existing "bow", even a slight one, with the existing ceiling, if going over the ceiling with a new ceiling, the bow will most likely NOT disappear as the new ceiling will simply follow the contour of the old ceiling once the new ceiling is hung over it (whereas taking down the ceiling in its entirety clearly provides an opportunity to possibly correct what may be causing the bow behind the ceiling).

With this all being said, which angle is "better"? As with many things, there are pros and cons to each.

The biggest con with hanging a new

See Ask an Expert, page 11

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.

ceiling over the existing ceiling is one will lose about a ½” of ceiling height (which for some folks is a big deal, for others not so much).

The biggest con with demoing an existing ceiling when replacing it, is the demo process can be a bit more cumbersome and messier (as well as costly if you are hiring someone to do this for you) than simply going over the existing ceiling (even when taking into account any crown molding or fixtures that might have to come down and go back up with the process involving going over the existing ceiling).

The biggest pro of hanging a new ceiling over the existing ceiling is it is a bit easier than having to trudge through the messiness involved in taking down a ceiling in its entirety.

The biggest pro in completely removing a ceiling is that no ceiling height is lost.

With me, the optimum choice is truly situational.

While some folks may be more strongly opinionated than others on this topic, I believe there are some times when going over the existing ceiling makes more sense and there are other times when taking down the ceiling in its entirety and starting all over again might be the better way to go.

If you have a ceiling that is bothering you to no end and you are hemming and hawing over which path to travel down, feel free to reach out to our office and set up some time to chat on the phone, we would love the opportunity to dive into a deeper conversation regarding your specific situation with you!

Smithfield Senior Center, YMCA Awarded Grants

By Joe Siegel

Two local nonprofits are among the organizations selected by the Rhode Island Foundation to receive COVID-19 relief grants through the federal CARES Act. The funding covers the cost of housing, behavioral health services, health care, job training, food pantries and child care among other uses.

The Smithfield Senior Center received \$30,000 and the Smithfield YMCA received \$20,000. They are among more than 100 nonprofits statewide that will share the funding.

“I think it’s a fantastic opportunity for our residents,” said Town Manager Randy Rossi. “I’m glad that our grant writer and our Senior Center Human Services Director went after these funds. It’s a part of helping those in need to get through these difficult times. We’re very lucky to have (the Rhode Island Foundation) open up this round of funding.”

The Senior Center will be partnering with Target to purchase Stop and Shop gift cards for their clients. Food insecurity and heating assistance are major problems in the community, according to Katie McAdam-Prickett, who serves as Assistant Director and as Programs and Activities Coordinator.

The YMCA will now be able to hold its after-school programs at Pleasant View Elementary School.

“We were only licensed here at the Y due to our size to 37 participants,” explained CEO Shawna Lewis. “We had a very large calling for child care. We’re able to serve a lot more families in need that are working and need safe and reliable child care so it’s a win-win for us.” 103 children will now be served at the new location. “We’re using the grant money to pay for rent at the school,” Lewis added. The remainder of the funds will be used to pay for busing costs for the previous year.

The Rhode Island Nonprofit Support Fund II at the Foundation was established in partnership with Governor Dan McKee through the Rhode Island Pandemic Recovery Office. Statewide, the grants average more than \$32,000 and target services or direct assistance that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic impact on vulnerable individuals or communities.

The Rhode Island Foundation is the largest and most comprehensive funder of nonprofit organizations in Rhode Island. The Foundation raised \$68 million and awarded a record \$87 million in grants in 2020. Since its centennial five years ago, the Foundation has awarded more than \$284 million in grants and has raised more than \$328 million. For more information, visit rifoundation.org.

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Al Gagne of the Okinawan Temple Karate performed at Smithfield High School

Thanks to Gym Teachers, Mark, Frank, John and Nicole, for inviting me back to the Smithfield High School again. I enjoy sharing my experience and training in Okinawan Karate with the students. Especially educating them on the differences between American and Japanese education systems. Conduct, Etiquette and Respect are the most important lessons in elementary schools in Japan.



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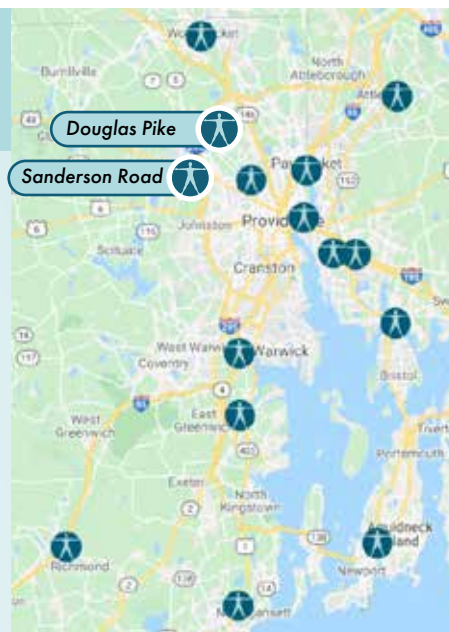
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Young Smithfield Entrepreneur Provides Signs For Your Times

By Paul Lonardo

Alex Brown only graduated from Smithfield High School in 2018, but he has already taken on his second small business, a remarkable accomplishment for anyone regardless of their age.

Alex says that from a young age he's always had the goal of being an entrepreneur, something he credits to his upbringing and his family, having several uncles who own their own businesses. At around 11-years-old, Alex started DJing, which started out as a fun hobby, providing entertainment for family and friends.

While attending Smithfield High School, Alex was a member of the Academy of Finance Program, which is a business and finance technical program at the school where students focus on this subject matter for a future in the field. This early concentration gave him a really good background as well as college credits.

Alex says, "As I got a little bit older and started taking some business classes in high school, that's when I



saw the potential my DJing had as a legitimate business and part-time job."

He began to advertise, upgraded his equipment, and providing additional services to attract more customers, such as photo booths, and he ultimately fulfilled his dream of owning and

operating his own business. Although he DJs and provides services for any event or occasion, weddings have become a specialty over the years.

In May of 2021, upon graduating from Johnson & Wales University, where he studied business administration, Alex was faced with the grim reality of seeking employment in the midst of a pandemic. Fortunately, he was prepared, thanks to his natural entrepreneurship and schooling.

"Based on what was out there in the job market, I decided that it would be worth it for me to focus on the DJ business," Alex says.

Then, in the fall of 2021, Alex began looking around for businesses that were for sale, preferably something in a related field which would complement or expand his already established DJ business. When he became aware that ItsLIT was for sale, he knew right away that this was exactly what he was looking for.

"After talking with the owner, I made the decision that it was a really good, perfect really, addition to all that I was doing with my DJ business."

ItsLIT, a small company that provides rental marquee lettering for private and corporate events, was a business that Alex was already familiar with, having done DJing at several events for which ItsLIT had provided marquee letters. Alex bought the business and kept the name, and now ItsLIT is technically an addition to DJ



Alex Brown Entertainment. Now, Alex can provide any combination of his services – DJing, photo booth rental, audio/visual equipment rental and marquee letter rental – to customers.

Marquee lettering for many people may bring to mind movie theaters in which plastic letters are affixed to a lighted background. The principal is similar, but ItsLIT consists of individual letters, numbers, and symbols, which are illuminated with LED bulbs and customizable to whatever customers would like them to spell out. ItsLIT marquee letters can do more than just a static color.

"We are the only company in RI to offer remote control color changing LED bulbs," Alex says.

The names of individuals and corporations can be spelled by arranging or stacking the letters to form whatever a customer is seeking. The letters are available in two sizes, 3 feet and 4 feet.

As society begins to emerge from the pandemic, Alex is staying pretty busy, and he sees bigger things for the future with regard to the growth and expansion of ItsLIT, in particular.

"Part of the reason why I wanted to purchase ItsLIT is because I see it as a much more scalable business opportunity than something like

See Entrepreneur, page 19

DJing,” Alex says. “Because these are rentals, they can be set up at multiple sites in a day, and then collected later that night, or next day, when the events are done.”

When demand for his business reaches a point where he can no longer do the job alone, Alex looks forward to taking ItsLIT to the next level and take on as many employees as needed.

ItsLIT doesn't just cater to weddings. If you're looking to make a statement, literally, for any type of special event, whether it's a wedding, birthday, bridal shower, baby shower, corporate event, holiday party, school dance, marriage proposal, and literally any other use you could come up, contact Alex at 401-248-4224 and look for him on social media. <https://djalexbrown.com/> and <https://itslitri.com/>



Recovery TV Expands to another Local TV Channel!

John J. Tassoni Jr., President of The Sentinel Media Group, and Host of *Recovery TV* announces the expansion of RECOVERY TV on another broadcast Television outlet. “Recovery TV” is a 30-minute Television show that features host John Tassoni discussing the issues pertaining to the addiction epidemic, along with information and guidance on services that are available.

Recovery TV will be airing special editions on WNAC FOX Providence (Ch 11) on Sunday January 23rd and 30th. Then starting Sunday February 20th, Recovery TV will be airing every Sunday on WNAC at 11:30 am! Additional airings will be moving to Saturday evenings at 10:30 pm on MY RI TV Channel s 15 and 21 and on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. on Providence's CW Channel 9. All three Channels are affiliates of WPRI TV Media group in Rhode Island.

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Is There Courtship in Your Backyard?



By James Gass

Valentine's Day is approaching and love is in the air. Hopefully you will be with the one you love that day and that you will be together, always. Humans are monogamous, but did you know that some animals are too? Monogamy is a relationship in which an individual mates with only one partner, sometimes for life. In Rhode Island, animals that mate for life include beavers, eagles, barn owls, Carolina wrens, northern cardinals, and all geese and swans. Coyotes may also stay with the same mate for several years.

Mute swans are one of the most enduring symbols of love, grace and romance in western culture. These elegant birds adorn Valentine's Day cards and are featured in art and literature such as the Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Anderson and Tchaikovsky's famous ballet, Swan Lake. Mute swans are also associated with courtship. Part of their courtship ritual sometimes includes entwining their curved necks into the shape of a heart. Male swans are known as "cobs," females are "pens." They are called mute swans because they are

less vocal than other swan species.

Like other swans, mute swans are known to grieve for a dead mate or cygnet (young swan), even going through a lengthy mourning period. If a mate is lost or killed, the remaining bird will either stay where its partner lived, or join another flock. Should one of the parents die while raising the cygnets, the surviving parent will raise the young.

Mute Swans are a protected species in Scotland. It is illegal to kill or harm a swan or disturb their nests, but that's not the case here in Rhode Island. Found throughout the state, mute swans are considered an introduced, non-native species. They displace native waterfowl and damage aquatic habitat by overgrazing vegetation. They can be aggressive during the breeding season and will chase off other swans, ducks, geese, gulls, dogs and even humans. As such, their populations are managed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. But I like mute swans anyway. I think they're majestic.

Owls that nest in our state include great horned owl, barred owl, screech owl and barn owl. Owls tend to be monogamous, but barn owls are known to mate for life. They use the same nest site every year and have elaborate courtship rituals including various calls and offerings of food to the female. The male also has a display flight called the "moth flight" in which he momentarily hovers in front of the female while dangling his legs. Once established at their nesting site, the pair engages in mutual preening and cheek-rubbing as a form of bonding.

Out of approximately 5,000 species of mammals, only about 3 to 5 percent are known to mate for life. This includes beavers and gray wolves. European beavers mate with a single partner for life, but North American beavers, although monogamous, might occasionally mate outside their bonded partner. Beavers form familial colonies. Young beavers ('kits') are born precocious with a full coat of fur and remain with their parents for up to two

See Courtship, page 21

years. It takes a while for them to learn how to construct dams, lodges and canals.

Why do some animals mate for life? Scientists think that an important advantage of long-term monogamy or mating for life is that young animals will always have both parents around to help raise and protect them. The parents can take turns finding food while the other stays behind to guard the young. Another possible reason is that many animals spend a lot of time and energy finding mates and performing complex courtship rituals every mating season. Having a single, reliable, long-term partner that provides offspring ensures energy won't be wasted going through the same process every year.

But this begs the question; do animals experience emotions, even love? As New Hampshire Public Radio blogger Dave Anderson points out, "this red rose has two thorns: projecting human traits or emotions on to animals (anthropomorphism), and we also don't understand languages animals use to express the way they feel." Perhaps animals do feel emotions, just not in a way that we humans can understand. As Shakespeare once said, "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet".



Photo by Sandra Achille



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50-years Ago – February 1972

by Jim Ignasher

Navy Seaman George Gilmore of Greenville was serving aboard the U.S.S. Milwaukee taking part in training exercises off the coast of Maine.

Marine Corporal Patricia E. Darby of Esmond was serving at a military air station in El Toro, California.

Carl Ackroyd of Esmond was promoted to Airman First Class in the United States Air Force. He was serving with the 87th Fighter Interceptor Squadron.

On February 3 snow began falling in the country of Iran, which over the next six days accumulated in some areas to the incredible depth of 26 feet! The weight of the snow collapsed buildings, and when it was over an estimated 4,000 people had perished.

On February 5 the Ecology Club at Gallagher Junior High School sponsored a paper recycling drive. Residents were asked to drop off tied bundles of newspapers and magazines.

It was also announced that on April 8th a recycling center for glass and paper would open behind "Rocco's Corner" at Rt. 44 and Rt. 5. It would be operated by the organization known as "Ecology Action of Smithfield". The group also petitioned the Town Council to designate the Week of April 15-22 "Smithfield Ecology Week".



On February 12 the first annual antique show and sale was held at the Greenville Grange Hall which was once located on Austin Avenue.

It was also on this date that a Valentines Day dance was held at the Elks Lodge.

In February of 1972 Connecticut began a state lottery, and advertisements in Rhode Island newspapers stated where lottery tickets could be purchased in Connecticut towns bordering Rhode Island. A spokesman from the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office announced that while it was not illegal to purchase the tickets, or to collect any winnings, it was illegal to possess such tickets within Rhode Island borders. A first offense could lead to one year in jail and up to a \$500 fine. This also included tickets of the New Hampshire State Lottery and the Irish Sweepstakes. Rhode Island didn't institute its own lottery until 1976.

Local business were advertising gifts for Valentines Day. A bottle of "Max Factor" spray mist cologne could be had for \$1.75. A "skinny dip special" included a bottle of cologne and perfumed talcum powder for \$1.99, and a bottle of "Emorauder, L'Aimant, or "Arpege" perfumes were \$3.00 each.

See 50-years Ago, page 23

The Smithfield Times Wants to Hear From You!

Many of our readers enjoy reading Jim Ignasher's "50 Years Ago" column each month. Jim goes back to simpler times some of us remember as "the good old days."

If you or someone you know has a fond memory or a local story, or if there is an individual you would like to recognize within our community, please reach out to us so we can reminisce together in a **NEW** feature story each month called *Those were the Days!*

A 20 oz. bottle of mouth wash, if one felt it was necessary, was just eighty-eight cents.

On February 19 an "Ice Ball" was held at the Elks Lodge on Farnum Pike to raise funds for the newly appointed "Smithfield Ice Rink Committee", which was charged with generating interest for the construction of an ice rink in town.



It was also on this date that the sit-com television show "All in The Family" first aired.

The Cranford Club of Greenville entertained patients at Zambarano Hospital. Mary Flynn, Agnes Jorden, Mildred Morin, Edith McDermott, Ida Suppich, Jeanette Fournier, and Viola Glasheen organized the event.

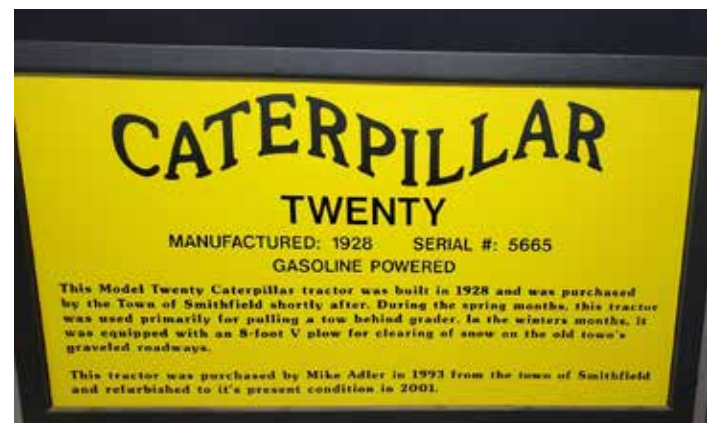
A proposal was put before the Smithfield Town Council to develop the former Latham Farm situated between Farnum Pike and Log Road into Wionkehiege Valley Estates. The original proposal included condominium and commercial properties, walking trails, and a nine-hole golf course. However, public opposition to certain aspects of the project led to a significantly scaled down version of the plan.

The Federal Communications Commission enacted new rules for cable television. Each cable network now had to have at least twenty channels.

Smithfield received a \$237,600 grant from the state Economic Development Administration for construction of a new police station. As such, the taxpayers only had to pay \$59,400 to complete the project.

Snow mobiles were becoming more popular by the early 1970s and based on photos and an article which appeared in *The Observer*, there was a group of enthusiasts in Greenville known as "The Easy Sliders" that wore a custom-made round patch on their snowsuits. If anyone happens to have one of these patches, would you please e-mail an image of it to the *Smithfield Times*?

Finally, last month it was mentioned in this column that in January of 1972, the town had auctioned the D.P.W.'s first piece of mechanized equipment, a 1928 Caterpillar tractor which had been named "Nelly Belle". It has since been learned that the tractor still exists, and has been fully restored and maintained by the Adler family of Greenville. They also have the grader that the town owned that this Dozer pulled, and it is believed that this grader was also used behind animals to grade the roads before they purchased the tractor.





The Queen of Hearts ...

did not reside just in Alice's Wonderland, but just up the road in Worcester, MA. The Queen of Hearts In the US, that is. Esther Allen Holland and her brother Charles are largely responsible for your late night foray on February 13 to find a card, trinket or bouquet to present to your loved on as a token of your affection, and your need to avoid "the look of the forgotten" on the morning of February 14. But in fairness to the Hollands, there are centuries of religious and folklore tales that have led to the \$19.2 billion that Americans are expected to spend this year on candy, fancy dinners, flowers and other token this Valentine's season.

While Christmas is still the most popular holiday for couples to get engaged, Valentine's day offers a second romantic opportunity supported by many historical legends. The Feast of St. Valentine, for example, was established by Pope Gelasius I in 496 to honor Saint Valentine of Rome who died on February 14 almost two hundred years earlier.

By the 14th and 15th centuries expressions of love were common among the more wealthy, with a theme reflecting not only love, but the recognition that the coming spring was a time of rebirth of the land. Doves, affectionately known as love birds were a common symbol, together with hearts and images of Cupid. These hand-made Valentines often included sentimental expressions of affection, and not always original.

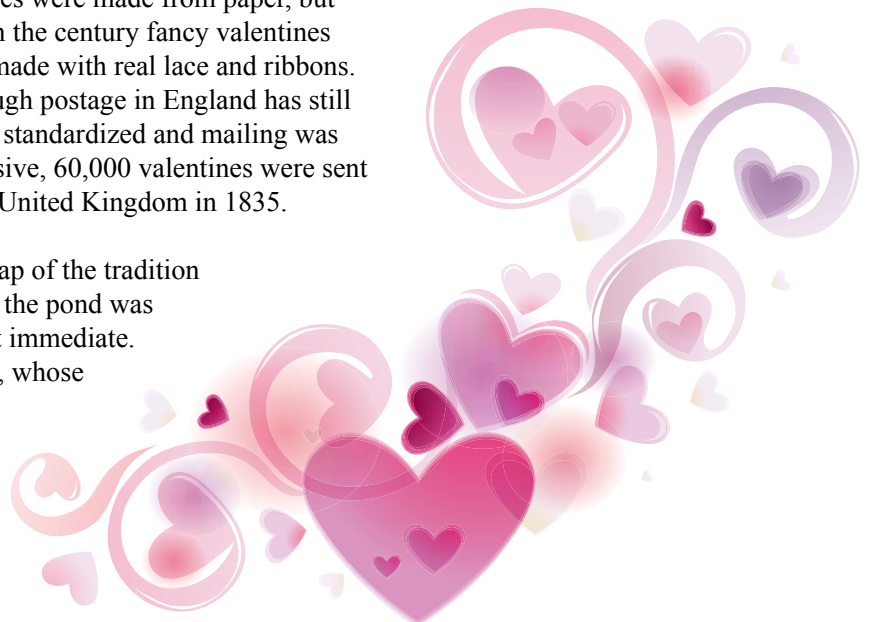
The celebration of St. Valentine together with romantic themes is credited to Chaucer's poem about "Valentine's Day" written on the engagement of King Richard II to Anne of Bohemia, both 15 at the time. The poem included the lines "For this was on Saint Valentine's Day when every bird comes there to choose his match ..." Mention of Valentine's Day appears in other literature of the era, including Ophelia's comments in Hamlet the "Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day/All in the morning bedtime,/And I a maid at your window,/to be your Valentine."

Yet, it was once again the Victorians who turned Valentine's Day into a budding commercial enterprise, and like the Christmas tree, soon exported the tradition to America. Assisted by the publication of The Young Man's Valentine Writer, published in 1797, young lovers no longer had to be creative in the expressions. Valentine's, some assembled in early factories were made from paper, but later in the century fancy Valentines were made with real lace and ribbons. Although postage in England has still not been standardized and mailing was expensive, 60,000 Valentines were sent in the United Kingdom in 1835.

The leap of the tradition across the pond was almost immediate. Esther, whose

father operated a book and stationery shop, stocked a few of the European fancy cards. Not to be deterred, Esther began importing paper, lace and decorations to create her own versions by 1847. When she had made about three dozen, Brother Charles took them to Boston and New York, hoping for \$200 in orders. He received thousands, and Esther went on to hire four more women to copy her designs. She began advertising her cards in the Worcester Spy and soon had established an assembly line of workers to produce "elaborate and costly Valentines of which satin and silk formed a part."

Her entrepreneurial efforts also included the publication of The Sentimental Valentine Writer, described as a "cheat sheet that gave tongue-tied lovers appropriate phrases with which to woo their love interests."



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It's Never Too Late

By Diane L. Marolla, LICSW



There Are No Guarantees With Insurance

“A knot of problems with Amazon’s system for handling paid and unpaid leaves has led to devastating consequences for workers.” A quote in the New York Times article Inside Amazon’s Worst Human Resources Problem.

Many years before I became a therapist, I worked in Human Resources. My responsibilities included: new employee orientation, enrolling employees into their health and pension plans, managing leaves of absences, and helping people retire. I was also responsible for processing all TDI and unemployment claims. At that time, these functions were done in-house. The only function that was outsourced was determining an employee’s pension. Today, these functions are often outsourced to a third-party administrator.

For this month’s topic, I wanted to discuss what I am seeing as a therapist when a client needs a temporary leave of absence from work due to mental health reasons. First, we are very fortunate in RI to have RI Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI). Many of us, pay into TDI as it is a tax that comes out of our paychecks. TDI is a safety net that is provided if we become ill or if we need to care for someone who is ill. From my experience, the Department of Labor and Training (DLT) is doing a good job of approving my clients TDI forms. It is a one-page form that needs to be filled out. At times, they will request records, which are immediately faxed over. TDI however, does not guarantee someone’s full pay while they are out on a leave. At best, you will receive approximately 60% of your pay each week.

Applying for TDI however, if you need a leave of absence is no longer the only thing as an employee you need to do, however. Unfortunately, most of you now work for companies who outsource the management of your leave of absence process. I have witnessed the bureaucracy and the discriminatory practices of companies such as Cigna, New York Life, The Lincoln Group, and The Reed Group when an individual has a mental health and or a substance abuse/use disorder. Many of you might be familiar with these companies. Why? Because your employer hires them to manage the process. Your employer may have touted these companies as providing a great benefit to you. Hopefully, you have been healthy, and have not had to use them. Since the pandemic started in March of 2020, I have had to fill out volumes of paperwork for these companies for clients who needed to take a leave of absence due to mental health issues. In working with these companies, these have been my experiences:

- The companies have “case managers” who are not licensed clinicians managing the leave of absence. They are trained “box” checkers.
- It is next to impossible to get a case manager on the phone to ask them a question. No matter what time day or night, the call immediately

goes to voice mail.

- In a recent incident with The Lincoln Group (which is now being appealed), their case manager’s denial letter contained multiple errors in it. The error stated that the individual did not have a diagnosed mental health condition, yet their MD prescribed an antidepressant. The case manager had to be taken off the disability case after I complained, and the client complained.
- New York Life, who manages disability claims for Amica, sends calls overseas. The individuals have a great deal of difficulty understanding me, and I certainly can’t understand them. I have yet to reach a case manager in the United States. In my opinion, at a local and a national level, nobody outside of the United States should be part of a call center. These rich insurance companies do this for two reasons: It is cheap labor, and they know you will hang up on them.
- The Reed Group is used by Lifespan. They denied a claim because of the lack of accurate documentation from the client’s Primary Care Physician. They based their denial solely on the one time the Primary Care Physician saw the client, versus the six months of my notes that I had

See No Guarantees, page 27

given them. It still perplexes me why, since I am a Qualified Healthcare Professional. Whereas I am not a doctor, my documentation is relevant when it comes to demonstrating someone's behavioral health disorder and their progress. In fact, PCP's make referrals all the time to licensed therapists when they deem their patients having underlying mental health conditions. That is the standard of care.

Just as the health insurance companies are in the business of denying claims, these short- and long-term disability companies are as well. The denial of claims and benefits and the collecting of premiums from you and your employer are the way these companies stay rich and happy. The process is not user friendly, and their denial letters contain pages of information that the average worker cannot understand. As a former Human Resources professional, a former manager, and a former health insurance professional, I do my best in trying to help guide my clients with the process, but more often than not, their leave of absence gets denied (when they are already on it) and benefits are never paid out to them by these companies.



Photo by Sandra Achille

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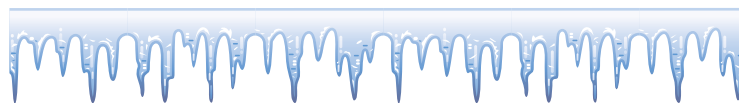
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Historic Wild Weather



By Jim Ignasher

There's an old New England saying that goes, "If you don't like the weather – just wait a minute." This holds partially true, for New England's climate can vary greatly depending on location and which weather patterns happen to be in control at the moment. And it seems whenever we get a bad weather system we compare it to ones that have come before.

Here in Rhode Island we compare snowstorms to the Blizzard of 1978; hurricanes to those of 1938 and 1954; and flooding to the "Biblical Floods" of 2010. Yet these storms, despite their impact, were not necessarily the worst the state has seen.

We tend to think of extreme weather as being a modern occurrence, partly because the National Weather Service has only been keeping official records since 1870. Yet earlier "unofficial" records were recorded in personal diaries and vintage newspapers.

Take for instance the Gale of August 15, 1635. According to one account, "It began in the morning, a little before day, and grew not by degrees, but came with great violence in the beginning, to the great amazement of many."

Massachusetts bore the brunt of this powerful storm, for Rhode Island wasn't founded by Roger Williams until the following year, but it's the earliest known record of a severe hurricane striking the New England coast.

The true realization of the storm's damage comes about when one considers what it took to construct a home in the 17th century.

Another devastating hurricane struck in October of 1761, during which the steeple of Trinity Church in Newport was blown down. The Newport Mercury

reported in part that the steeple fell to the southwest, "... upon the adjacent house of Mr. John Hadwen, went through the roof and garret floor, and broke the summer (summer beam) of the chamber floor where it lodged." Fortunately none of the home's occupant's were injured.

The storm surge flooded the first floors and basements of numerous shoreline structures, and several ships were driven ashore.

Perhaps the worst Hurricane to strike New England was the "Great Gale of September, 1815." The ferocious winds ripped away roofs and blew down structures all across the state, and the unprecedented storm surge carried away docks and buildings with helpless people trapped inside. Many ships were driven ashore, and in some cases were carried hundreds of feet inland. The death toll was estimated in the hundreds.

The storm also blew down thousands of acres of timber. The downed trees were later milled into lumber, and the wood from those trees was used to rebuild the devastated communities. It's likely that many historic homes dating to that period contained lumber salvaged from this storm.

In April of 1840 heavy rains led to a dam failure in Johnston. The resulting deluge carried away buildings and homes and killed twenty people. The Providence Evening Herald declared, "This is the most terrible disaster by flood that has ever occurred in this state."

Unfortunately that record didn't hold for long, for an even greater flood occurred three years later in April, 1843, when heavy rains led to dam failures along the Blackstone River, which carried away bridges, factories, and private homes. Ironically, the summer of 1843 brought

severe drought conditions to southern New England, and the Blackstone River reportedly dropped to its lowest level in years.

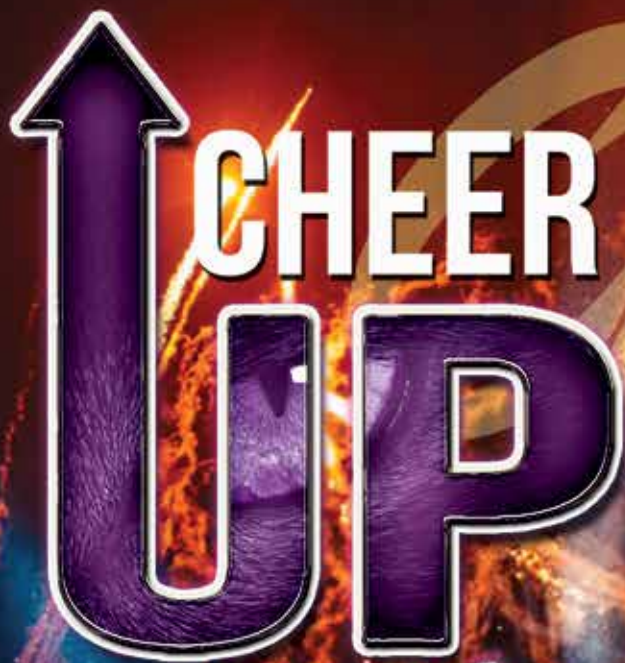
Drought conditions in early New England caused severe consequences, for the economy was largely reliant on water. Besides being necessary for drinking, watering livestock, and tending crops, many industries relied on water power to stay in business. If wells ran dry and crops withered, a family could starve, and lack of water could also mean the necessary slaughtering of livestock. Furthermore, low water levels could force mills to shut down leaving people out of work, which in turn created a shortage of goods and merchandise, which could then lead to inflation.

This is evidenced by a news item that appeared in *The Providence Journal* in 1835 that stated, "Many of the manufacturing establishments have stopped for want of water, and should there be no rain within a week, nearly one half of the factories will be compelled to suspend their business."

Severe and prolonged droughts affected Rhode Island in 1749, 1835 and 1838.

The Blizzard of 1888, also known as "The Great White Hurricane", stormed from March 11th to the 14th, and buried Rhode Island under nearly five feet of snow, bringing everything to a standstill. There were no orange D.O.T. trucks to plow the roads in those days, and snow drifts of up to forty feet high were reported. The storm is said to have killed 400 people.

As of this writing in early January, the Rhode Island winter of 2021-22 has been nearly devoid of snow, but that will likely change – just wait a minute.



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The Nature of Things

The Superstars of Sachuest Point

by James Gass

While my daughter was home for the holidays, we decided to take an afternoon walk at Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge in Middletown, RI, one of five properties in Rhode Island managed by the USFWS as part of the National Wildlife Refuge Complex. It's a beautiful coastal refuge that provides an important stopover and wintering area for many migratory birds. We hoped to see at least two species in particular.

From the 1600's to the 1900's, Sachuest Point was used for farming and grazing sheep. During World War II, the Navy used it as a rifle range and communications center. Later, it became a municipal dump. The process of creating a national wildlife refuge there began in 1970, when the Audubon Society of Rhode donated 72 acres of salt marsh. In 1984, a final exchange of land between the Town of Middletown and the USFWS established the present refuge. It totals 242 acres.

As we arrived at the visitor center, there was a steady stream of cars entering and leaving the parking lot which was almost completely full. This was an unusually large amount of traffic even for a weekend, so I knew that at least one or both of the birds we hoped to see were there.

We stepped out of the car and grabbed our binoculars. Sachuest can be windy during the winter with a chill that goes right through you. But today was sunny and mild, great weather for a walk. "The owl is that way," a woman told us, pointing to the trail that leads to the area called Island Rocks. Bingo! One of the two superstar species we hoped to see

was here: a snowy owl.

Snowy owls live on the tundra in the Arctic Circle and do not show up regularly in southern New England. When

they do, it's usually at places that resemble tundra, such as farm fields or coastal areas. When their populations explode or their favorite prey items such as lemmings become scarce, they wander into the northern U.S. looking for food and suitable habitat. Most of the owls that show up at Sachuest are juveniles, which tend to wander farther than adults. Juveniles and adult females have dark barring or flecking on their chest and back. Adult males are completely white.

We walked down the trail until we reached the boulder-strewn shore, passing many people along the way. I looked around and didn't see anything at first. As I peered out over the water towards Island Rocks, there it was, a bright white spot on the middle island. We walked over to the observation deck that was across from the islands. There were dozens of people on the deck and at the shore clambering to get a better look. Fortunately, they were too far away from the owl to disturb it.



Male Harlequin Duck. Photo by Sandra Achille

I looked through the telescope bolted to the deck and got a great view of the owl. It was sleeping with its head tucked under its wing, facing away from us. Every once in a while it would wake up and look around, then go back to sleep. A photographer with something that looked more like a howitzer than a camera eventually left, frustrated that the bird wouldn't turn around and give him a decent shot after being there for over two hours. We were just thrilled to catch a glimpse of this unusual visitor.

We decided take the Ocean View Loop towards Sachuest's southernmost tip to try to find harlequin ducks, a rare species and the other star attraction we hoped to see. Sachuest is home to the second largest wintering population of harlequins on the Atlantic coast, though their numbers have been dwindling.

See The Nature of Things, page 31

Along the way we saw flocks of black scoters diving down to catch mussels. We also saw common eiders and a juvenile northern gannet; a good sighting, since these large seagoing (pelagic) birds rarely come near the coast.

We finally spotted a male and female pair of harlequins. They were busily diving to catch crabs, snails or mussels. Good, they're still here, I thought. Further down, we saw another pair. Then another. But as we reached the southern tip it occurred to me that we had only seen six harlequins. By this time we should have seen 15-20, even 30 birds. They also show up at Beavertail State Park in Jamestown, so it's possible that they're there. But this seemed to be an ominous sign. Still, we enjoyed seeing these colorful and rare ducks. Walking back to the parking lot along Sachuest Bay, we saw several common goldeneyes and many buffleheads, all diving down to catch clams, snails and other mollusks.

Snowy owls and harlequin ducks will be at Sachuest Point until March. So grab a warm jacket and your binoculars and make the trip. It's worth it!

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Wildlife around SHS

Student members of Smithfield High School's National Honor Society are required to create an Individual Service Project (ISP) as part of their commitment to the community and academic experience. This provides students with an opportunity to explore an area of interest, while helping the community. Senior, Claire Dancause is working with NHS faculty advisors, Mr. Zibelli and Mr. Snow on a unique ISP that will have an impact on the wildlife surrounding the SHS campus. Her project aims to catalog and protect the avian wildlife near campus, while educating the Smithfield High School community about how to coexist with these tiny friends. Claire was thrilled to share more information about her project when we connected over winter break.

Q: Is this directly affiliated with the National Honor Society or did you decide to do it on your own?

A: Yes and no. When I entered the National Honor Society, I knew I would have the opportunity to make a difference in our community, so it was already at the back of my mind. Then, when Mr. Zibelli and Mr. Snow informed us that we would have to lead and complete an Individual Service Project, and or ISP, I knew that I was going to help the birds on campus. If and when the plan is finalized, it will be a NHS project and the credit will be to the NHS, for that is the only way I can really put this into action. It will most likely be under the environmental initiative of the NHS, of which I am a co-chair.

Q: Why did you decide to take on this project? What led you to want to have it happen in Smithfield?

A: Ever since I came to Smithfield High School, my family and I loved to see the Killdeer nest on the fields. However, the thing about Killdeer is that they are not very bright, so I was always scared that when the landscapers mowed the lawns, that their nests and eggs would be demolished! Therefore I had always wanted to do something to help make sure they, and the other birds on campus, are safe. And it is not just Killdeer, last year there was a nest of baby Bluebirds right above one of the exit doors on the school. There are also other local birds like Robins, Chickadees, Bluejays, and Cardinals. They bring me so much joy to watch them fly from the windows and hop about on the grounds, that I want to make sure they are cared for and protected.

Q: Once you conduct your research, what are your steps from there?

A: It is not set in stone, and I'm still working out the process with Mr. Zibelli and Mr. Snow. The general idea is that, after researching nesting habits and other general information on the species that inhabit the area, I will develop a way to contact and inform the landscapers and other outdoor maintenance workers, as well as the outdoor sports teams about how to not disturb the birds, and what to do if there is an issue with the birds. I also want to talk with the RI Audubon society to confirm my research and

possibly provide assistance with any potential issues with the birds.

We are fortunate at Smithfield High School to have a campus that is surrounded by forests and green space. Students and teachers alike take advantage of the trail that leads through the forest and connects our campus with Deerfield Park. Some teachers will take their classes on walks through the forest to observe the natural habitat, and we have frequent visitors to our center courtyard like bees and birds. In addition, we have opportunities to bring the 'outside in' by visiting Mr. Lenore's Japanese Zen Garden, complete with a fish pond and lots of vegetation. Thanks to Claire's project, we will continue to have opportunities to connect with and preserve our campus wildlife. "Essentially, I just want to make sure the birds on campus are happy, and that the people who cohabit the area are aware of how their actions affect them." Claire concludes. She has promised to keep us updated over the next few months.



Beef Stew

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup all-purpose flour. **
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 pound beef stewing meat, trimmed and cut into inch cubes
- 5 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 cup red wine (optional)
- 3 ½ cups beef broth, homemade or low-sodium canned
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 vedia medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 5 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch rounds
- 2 large baking potatoes, peeled and cut into 3/4-inch cubes
- 1 cup tomato juice or Hunts tomato sauce
- 2 teaspoons salt



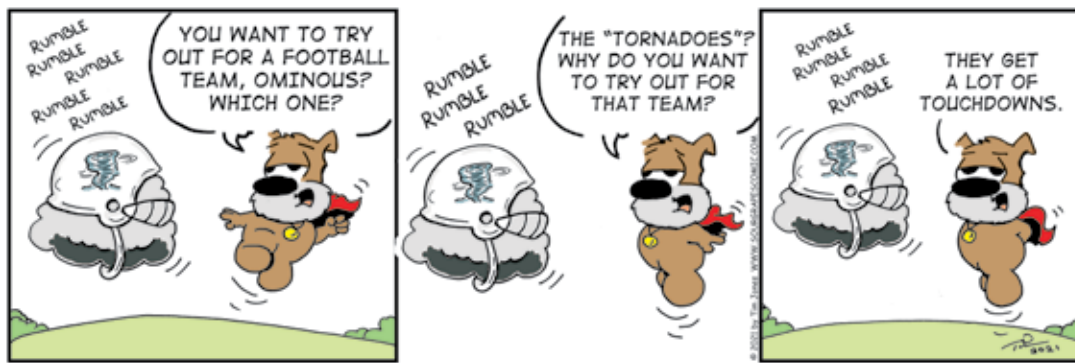
Instructions:

1. Combine the flour and pepper in a bowl, add the beef and toss to coat well. Heat 3 teaspoons of the oil in a large pot. Add ½ the onions and cook slowly until soft, then add beef a few pieces at a time; do not overcrowd. Cook, turning the pieces until beef is browned on all sides, about 5 minutes per batch; add more oil as needed between batches.
2. Remove the beef from the pot and add the vinegar and wine. Cook over medium-high heat, scraping the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits. Add the beef, beef broth, tomato juice or sauce and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a slow simmer.
3. Cover and cook, skimming broth from time to time, until the beef is tender, about 1 ½ hours. Add the remainder of the onions and carrots and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Add the potatoes and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes more. Add broth or water if the stew is dry. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Ladle among 4 bowls and serve.

**Cornstarch can be substituted for flour for a gluten-free stew, provided the beef broth is also gluten free.

SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



Tim Jones – Cartoonist



A View From the Cheap Seats

Dan Pieroni

Mr. Brown Is Through in Tampa, Are You NFL?

Let us not believe for a moment that the sports world doesn't believe in giving misbehaving athletes more than a second chance.

How many chances did Major League Baseball give Steve Howe to kick his drug habit? How many chances did once prized outfielder Josh Hamilton get after his issues with drugs and domestic violence?

Latrell Sprewell choked his own coach during a practice, escaped to New York on a multimillion dollar deal, then after wearing out his welcome there had the nerve to be quoted in a Sports Illustrated piece by Rick Reilly that the \$30 million dollar contract the Minnesota Timberwolves gave him was not enough money to feed a family on.

Which brings us to Antonio Brown. You remember Brown? The one-game Patriots wonder who contributed to a 43-0 blowout win over the Dolphins by catching a touchdown pass then decided to send intimidating text messages to one of the three women who were accusing him of sexual assault. Not surprisingly, the Patriots cut him loose two days later ending an era that had a shorter shelf life than Krispy Kreme's stores in Rhode Island. This, mind you, was far from the first time Antonio Brown's misconduct cost him a job.

The Steelers decided they had enough of Brown's antics after he skipped practices leading up to a pivotal divisional game against the Bengals in 2018 and subsequently getting into a heated verbal altercation with quarterback Ben Roethlisberger. Oh, did I mention that before all that, Brown had been found guilty of reckless driving on a Pittsburgh

freeway, and according to Kevin Fowler of ESPN.com threw furniture out of his 14th apartment in anger that nearly struck a toddler on the patio below? Brown reached a settlement with the child's mother worth an undisclosed amount of money. Amid all the headaches Brown was traded to the then Oakland Raiders where trouble followed right behind him. Brown produced in Oakland but was fined by Raiders General Manager Mike Mayock for missing two mandatory practice sessions. CBS Sports' Will Brinson later reported that Brown confronted Mayock, threatened to hit him, and angrily punted a football towards Mayock daring him to fine him for those actions. Soon afterwards, Brown was indeed fined and the guaranteed money in his contract was voided. The Raiders chose to release him before his salary for the following season became guaranteed.

After the brief stopover in New England, it appeared Brown's time was up in the NFL. How much longer could he go on alienating the establishment?

Enter Tom Brady: loyal, friend, model teammate, and NFL legend. It was Brady after all that convinced the Patriots to take a chance on Brown in the first place. When the Patriots decided that Brown was a bigger headache than they anticipated, it likely caused the solid foundation that had existed between Brady and the Patriots to crack and may have been the impetus for Brady to take his talents to Tampa.

Despite Brown's insurances on social media that he was retiring and the league deciding to suspend Brown for the first 8 games of the 2020 season for violating the personal conduct policy, he got another chance. Brady's likely obsession

with winning and putting a super team behind him convinced the Bucs to sign Brown to a contract.

Brown contributed to a title team, and for most part stayed out of trouble until two incidents this season.

First, Brown was suspended for falsifying a vaccine card. Then, on January 2nd, he performed the most wretched act of defiance I've ever seen on a football field. Brown refused coach Bruce Arians repeated requests to go into the game and stripped down to his t-shirt while leaving the field. What would possess a grown adult athlete to be that defiant?

Several amateur neurologists on social media have claimed Brown has CTE, but until a formal diagnosis is given by a professional it is nothing more than conjecture.

I believe two things are clear. First, Brown's mental health is severely compromised, and he needs prompt medical attention before things become about life and death. Secondly, he has proven that he can no longer be trusted to be a model citizen and role model for his teammates and the community at large. Therefore, the best thing the league can do for Brown is to suspend him indefinitely and remove access to enablers who will use him for his talent, not his character.

Since Brady was the catalyst who brought to him Tampa, maybe he should be the bigger person and pay for his friend to receive the treatment he desperately needs. If not, this will sadly become a matter of life and death rather than good mental health over glory.



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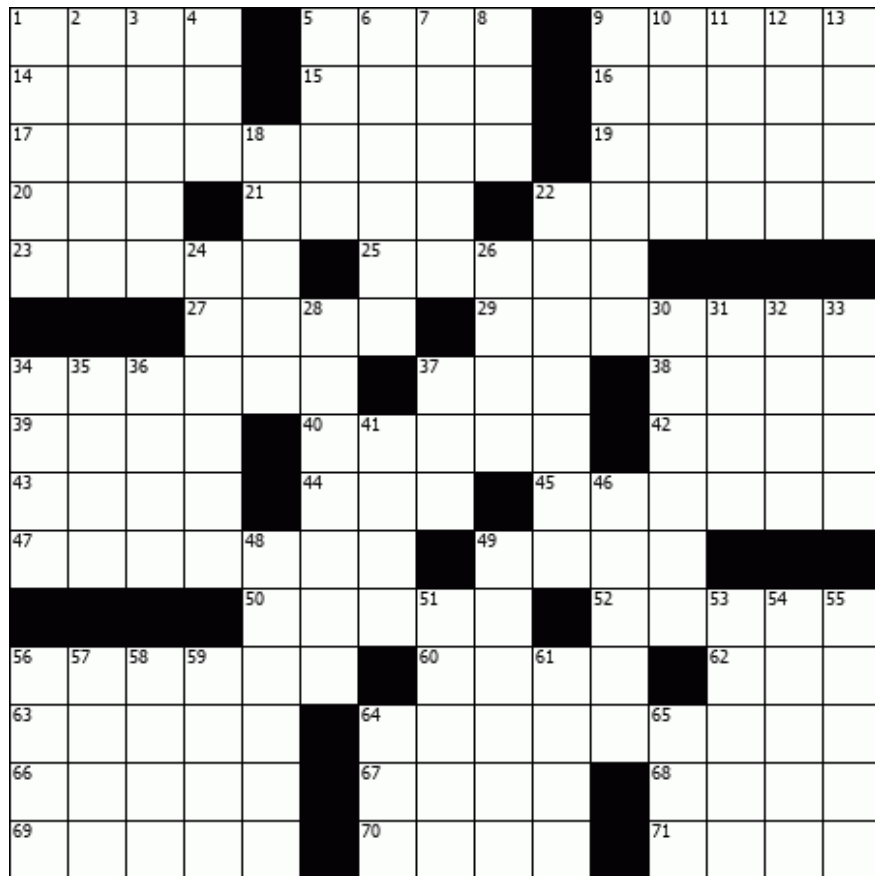
HOME SAFE HOME Kids' Safety Zone Coloring Page



Crossword Puzzle

Across

1. Majority
5. ____ Ness monster
9. Airborne
14. Related
15. Dayton's state
16. Monte ____
17. Quail's kin
19. Atlantic or Indian
20. Caustic liquid
21. Voyaging
22. Tops of waves
23. School assignment
25. Criminal burning
27. Crowd's sound
29. Popular pasta
34. Embellishes
37. Evergreen
38. Possible prince?
39. ____ vault
40. Prepares copy
42. Green citrus fruit
43. Nights before holidays
44. Situate
45. Delighted
47. Paraphrase
49. Stiffly proper
50. Farm buildings
52. Acquire knowledge
56. Language of Syria
60. Mama's spouse
62. Cow's cry
63. Hooded snake
64. Choice
66. Actress ____ Burstyn
67. Tentacles
68. Knowledgeable about
69. Acts
70. Movie personnel
71. Velvety growth



Down

1. Syrup tree
2. Approves
3. Fathers
4. Explosive inits.
5. Reporter ____ Lane
6. Distress cry (2 wds.)
7. Groucho Marx's prop
8. Weeding implement
9. Squirrel's treats
10. Delicate fabric
11. Mineral deposits
12. Tire mishap
13. Coal measures
18. Silklike cloth
22. Less refined
24. Nab
26. Narrow cut
28. Germ-free
30. On fire
31. Sand
32. Alaskan port
33. Matured
34. Mimicker
35. Peace symbol
36. Spanish cheers
37. Healthy
41. Sword fight
46. Pale purple
48. Chinese, e.g.
49. Biblical songs
51. Verdi work
53. Kind of acid
54. Sources
55. Forbidden items (hyph.)
56. Scored on serve
57. Actor's desire
58. Skillful
59. Raised, as animals
61. Irritant
64. Defunct USAF branch
65. Actor ____ Robbins



Answers to puzzle on page 42



Payne's Picks

By Sarah Payne

February 2022

Movie Releases

Blacklight – February 11

Few things in life are a sure bet like going to see a Liam Neeson film and knowing you'll have a good time. In *Blacklight*, Neeson plays Travis Block, a government operative (of course, with a special set of skills) who discovers a plot targeting U.S. citizens. The film is directed by Mark Williams, who produced 2020's *Honest Thief* (also starring Neeson) and 2016's *The Accountant* (starring Ben Affleck).

Movie Review

The Lost Daughter

In Maggie Gyllenhaal's directorial debut, a middle-aged college professor, Leda (Olivia Colman), takes a solo vacation on a Greek island where a young mother (Dakota Johnson) reminds her of her own pained memories as a young mother (Jessie Buckley). When the film premiered at the Venice Film Festival last fall, Gyllenhaal spoke about reading the novel by Elena Ferrante, which the film is based on. She said she was taken aback by how much she related to the main character: "And then I realized that many people have this experience and nobody talks about it. These are secret truths about a feminine experience." To be clear, Leda's central struggle is that she regrets having children. The film portrays an affair she had as a young mother and how she had no regrets leaving her husband and young children for three years. Both Colman and Buckley deliver perfectly creepy and uncomfortable performances as the older and younger Leda. But as a mother myself, I was struck by the hollowness of the film – and the overall lack of gratitude for the experience of parenting. Clearly Leda went through some kind of trauma as a child, which makes it difficult for her to maintain relationships with others, even her own children. I do wish the film (or perhaps the book) gave a bit more context to explain some of Leda's neurosis and dysfunction.

TV Review

And Just Like That... (HBO Max)

By now you've probably heard about the *Sex and the City* reboot on HBO Max. The show has made several headlines over the past few months – the first was because of a shocking incident with a Peloton (I won't spoil it you haven't heard). The second was because of Kim Cattrall's noticeable absence as Samantha. The third was for allegations of sexual assault against Chris Noth (who plays Mr. Big). I'm starting to wonder if all these headlines are actually all a big ploy to draw attention away from how cringeworthy *And Just Like That...* actually is. Nearly every plot line centers around gender fluidity or racial inclusivity, as if the actors and creators are tripping over themselves to prove how woke they are. Except I'm not sure they realize their target audience really isn't looking for a P.C. lesson. I suppose most people are like me, just wanting an escape into the world of fluff and nonsense the original show provided. Alas, this reboot does not deliver.

The Sex Lives of College Girls (HBO Max)

In 10 bingeable, 22-minute episodes, creators Mindy Kaling (*The Office*) and Justin Noble tell the story of four freshman suitemates at Essex College in Vermont. *The Sex Lives of College Girls* is far less raunchy than you would imagine. Kaling said her and Noble "wanted to tell a story of four passionate, bright girls in college. The romantic stuff just felt like a good hook." Each of the characters brings a unique perspective to the show, from the student-athlete to the girl on scholarship, and the hopeful sorority sister. And even better – the show has already been renewed for a second season. Time to start binging!



The Legend Of Laura Sherman

By Thomas D'Agostino – www.tomdagostino.com

New England is full of incredible legends and stories that add to the magic of the region. There is one certain legend that resides near the Tri-State border of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

At the crossroads of Wakefield and Croff in Burrillville, Rhode Island, one will find the remains of a small burial lot. If it were not for the sign that marks it as Rhode Island Historical Cemetery # 1, visitors may never know it is actually the Sherman family burial lot.

Raised up from the road by a stone wall, the unmarked plot holds the remains of five members of the Sherman family and what looks like the remains of a cellar hole where perhaps their cabin once graced, or the last remnants of a family mausoleum. Buried in this lot are Caroline Sherman, born 1837- death unknown, Clark Sherman, born 1831- death unknown, Ellen Sherman, birth and death dates unknown, Laura Marsh Sherman, born September 24, 1803- died 1870, and Squire Crandell Sherman, born July 1828 and died April 21, 1879.

The only trace of gravestones is the base of Laura Sherman's monument. The others have nothing left but mounds rising from the earth to show of their being buried there. Legends states the rest of the stones were stolen to perform some sort of rituals. More than likely, they were field stone markers long sunken into the earth or stones that were carried away for some other re-purposing. This would seem easy to do as the lot is located in an isolated area along the woods of Buck Hill.

The lack of death dates on record would indicate that the Clark family buried their own and never bothered to record exact dates of death with the town. Some claim that Caroline and Ellen may have been the wives of Clark Sherman, but it is the grave of Laura Sherman, the oldest of them all, that is of interest in this narrative. Laura may have been the matriarch of the family, who even in death, still watches over her loved ones.

It has been passed down from generation to generation that Laura haunts the lot. If you visit on a full moon and dance around her grave thirteen times, she will appear and answer your questions. It is a local legend that has been attempted many times. Some have fled in fear as Laura Sherman materialized out of a wisp of smoke, keeping her part of the bargain for their toil, while others swore the whole story is nothing more than an urban legend created by the local boy scout camp at Buck Hill.

There are other stories of people who swore Laura Sherman watches over the graveyard. Many of the Burrillville residents say that they have been startled, or even frightened by what they believe is the ghost of Laura standing at the edge of the plot looking at the road as they drove by. When they would look back, the ghost would be gone.

One account relates to a small group of high school students



who decided to call forth the spirit of Laura. One of the girls circled the grave thirteen times while the small throng waited anxiously for the ghost to appear. After a while, they felt deceived by the spirit and left the lot. While driving away, the people in the other car noticed an old woman sitting in the back seat of the car driven by the girl who tried to summon Laura from her eternal rest.

If you decide to visit the cemetery, it is advised to do so for historical purposes only and be thoughtful and courteous to both the living and the dead. The neighboring houses keep watch for vandalism or unruly behavior.

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Adult Events

Mystery Book Club

Tuesday, February 1 at 1:30 pm

Picnic Table Reads Book Club

Thursday, February 17 at 1:00 pm

Virtual Book Chat

Thursdays, February 3 & 17 at 6:00 pm

Coffee & Books

Wednesday, February 9 at 10:30 am

Home Sweet Home Book Club (Zoom)

Monday, February 28 at 6:30 pm

An Evening of Astronomy with Sandi Brenner

Thursday, February 23 at 7:00 pm (rescheduled from January)

Children's Events

Preschool Storytime with Miss Babs (YouTube Channels)

Thursday, February 10

Toddler Storytime with Miss Patty (YouTube Channels)

Friday, February 11

Valentine's Day Program (Zoom)

Tuesday, February 8 at 4:00 pm

Share a Story Book Discussion Group

Tuesday, February 15, 4:00 pm

Snowman Wreath Craft Take and Make

STEAM Video with Miss Ana

Monday, February 28

Teen Events

Young Writers Workshop (Grades 6-12)

Virtual Program: Saturdays, February 5 & 12, from 10:00-11:00 am

Teen Take & Make: Valentine Origami (Grades 6-12) (Zoom)

Let's Play Chess (Grades 6-12)

Virtual Program: Monday, February 14, from 6:00-7:00 pm

Two's Day Take & Make: Agamograph Art (Grades 6-12)

Kits Available on Tuesday, February 22

STEAM Take & Make: Mars Helicopter (Grades 6-12)

Graphic Novel Book Club (Grades 6-12)

Virtual Program: Saturday, February 26, from 10:00-11:00 am

The Middles: Marshmallow Engineering Challenge (Grades 4-6)

Virtual Program: Monday, February 28 at 6:00 pm

Virtual Community Service Hours (Grades 6-12)



Photo by Sandra Achille



Frosty Trails, Owls and Ales!

February 2022 Highlights from the Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Visit the events calendar at www.asri.org/calendar for fee information and to register for programs.

Wednesday Morning Bird Walks Locations Across Rhode Island

Audubon offers small-group Wednesday Morning Bird Walks with naturalist Laura Carberry. Each week a new birding destination will be chosen. Advance registration is required. Location will be sent to registered participants in advance.

Let's Take a Walk! I've Got a Rock Audubon Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield, RI *February 1, 2022; 10:00 – 11:00 am*

Nurture your child's curiosity about geology through play with rocks. Children will examine rocks from private collections and then go outside on a rock scavenger hunt.

Snowshoeing at Fort Refuge Audubon Fort Wildlife Refuge, North Smithfield, RI *February 12, 2022; 10:00 am – 12:00 pm*

Explore the beauty of the Fort Wildlife Refuge in winter. Look for tracks and other signs of wildlife. If there is no snow, there will be a guided hike on the trails. If the grounds are too icy, the program will be canceled. You must provide your own snowshoes - pairs can be rented from REI if needed.

Owl Prowl at Powder Mill Ledges Audubon Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge, Smithfield, RI *February 17, 2022; 7:00 – 9:00 pm*

Visit Powder Mill Ledges on a winter night to search for owls. An Audubon naturalist will call for different species as we walk through the forest. We never know if we'll hear or see an owl, but participants will learn a lot and have a great night hike. Please dress for the weather, wear sturdy walking shoes, and bring a flashlight. Hike will be cancelled in the event of inclement weather or icy trails. Advance registration is required.

February School Vacation Week with Audubon

at Audubon Powder Mill Ledges Wildlife Refuge
12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI
February 22 – 25, 2022

Hector the Misunderstood Snake: Story and Meet Live Snake

February 22, 2022; 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Snakes are smooth and slinky and amazing animals. Come hear a story and a live snake visitor.

See Audubon, page 41

Contact: Hope Foley, Media Relations • Audubon Society of Rhode Island • 401-486-1503 • hfoley@asri.org

12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, RI 02917-2600

Phone: (401) 949-5454 • Fax: (401) 949-5788 • www.asri.org • email: audubon@asri.org

Audubon, from page 40

Turtles are Terrific!

February 22, 2022; 2:00 -3:30 pm

Turtles are amazing, armored beasts! Learn about these creatures and meet some live turtles.

In Grandpa's Sugarbush - Story and Maple Activities

February 23, 2022; 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Listen to a maple sugaring story and try some maple activities!

Colonial Candlemaking

February 23, 2022; 2:00-3:30 pm

Learn about the use of beeswax and bayberry in old-time candles and create your own hand-dipped candle to take home.

Grandmother Spider Brings the Sun - Story and Spider Craft

February 24, 2022; 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Enjoy a story of how the sun came to the animals, then create a spider craft to take home.

Build a Bluebird House

February 24, 2022; 2:00-3:30 pm

You can help bluebirds survive in your area by providing them with a nesting box to use. Come learn all about bluebirds and other cavity-nesting birds, build a nesting box, learn when and where to place it and how to care for it.

Hawk Encounter

February 25, 2022; 11:00 am-12:00 pm

Learn about these amazing raptors and meet Audubon's live hawk ambassadors.

Who's Been Here? Animal Signs

February 25, 2022; 2:00-3:30 pm

Come to Audubon to search for signs of local wildlife and make a plaster animal track to take home. Dress warmly to go outside for part of the class.

Enjoy some beautiful wildlife photos taken by our staff photographer, Sandra Achille.



Obituaries



Colette L. Gagnon
January 2, 2022
TuckerQuinnFuneralChapel.com



Beverly Votta
January 3, 2022
www.nardolillofh.com



Jacqueline "Jackie" Parisen
January 4, 2022
www.andersonwinfield.net



Faith Anne Rivet
January 4, 2022
www.andersonwinfield.net



Shirley A. Rainville
January 6, 2022
www.andersonwinfield.net

Answers to Crossword Puzzle from page 36.

M	O	S	T		L	O	C	H		A	L	O	F	T
A	K	I	N		O	H	I	O		C	A	R	L	O
P	A	R	T	R	I	D	G	E		O	C	E	A	N
L	Y	E		A	S	E	A			C	R	E	S	T
E	S	S	A	Y		A	R	S	O	N				
			R	O	A	R		L	A	S	A	G	N	A
A	D	O	R	N	S		F	I	R		F	R	O	G
P	O	L	E		E	D	I	T	S		L	I	M	E
E	V	E	S		P	U	T		E	L	A	T	E	D
R	E	S	T	A	T	E		P	R	I	M			
			S	I	L	O	S		L	E	A	R	N	
A	R	A	B	I	C		P	A	P	A		M	O	O
C	O	B	R	A		S	E	L	E	C	T	I	O	N
E	L	L	E	N		A	R	M	S		I	N	T	O
D	E	E	D	S		C	A	S	T		M	O	S	S

The Smithfield Times

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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 overalls, stands in a workshop. She has a respirator mask hanging around her neck. The background is a grey wall with some tools and materials visible. The entire image is framed by a thick orange border.

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