

Warren Times-Gazette

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Town faces fiscal crisis after \$8M settlement

With no Town Manager or Finance Director, Town calls in Auditor General for help

BY ETHAN HARTLEY

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A court case that has been a reoccurring feature on executive session agendas for the Warren Town Council for over a year and a half came to a conclusion last Tuesday night — but the long-term fiscal impact of that result for the Town and its taxpayers is still to be determined.

In the case of “Pereira v. Town of Warren,” Town Solicitor Anthony DeSisto told the Town Council during their meeting last week that through a settlement agreement with the plaintiff, the Town of Warren had agreed to pay \$8 million; broken up into one initial lump sum of \$5 million, and three, one-time payments of \$1 million over each of the next three years.

DeSisto told the council that, after many discussions with their insurer (the Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust), as well as consultants and other attorneys, the conclusion to accept the settlement deal was made to avoid a possible worst case scenario



JULIE FURTADO

See **SETTLEMENT** Page 8

John Hanley was voted in by his colleagues to resume his role as Town Council President during the Dec. 12 Town Council Meeting; the same evening where the announcement of an \$8 million settlement was made.

Power outage at Town Hall delays two developments

Tree limb took out power in the downtown after storm raged all Monday

BY ETHAN HARTLEY

ehartley@eastbaymediagroup.com

Two developments under the microscope of the local Warren community were delayed another two weeks from any kind of decision after a power outage beset Town Hall and the downtown area on Monday evening.

The Warren Planning Board was literally just a minute or two away from convening at 6:30 p.m. to discuss the proposed development from the East Bay Community Development Corporation (East Bay CDC) called Penny Lane, located at 581 Child St., where 40 affordable rental housing units would be constructed and dispersed among about a dozen town houses.

Second on the agenda was the ongoing discussion regarding the Liberty Street School development, where local developers John

Lannan and Ron Louro were set to present a revised plan that appeared by submitted documents to have shrunk the development in size and reduced the total number of units from 25 to 20 units; which had been a unanimous request among residents and members of the Planning Board in prior hearings.

But with the lights out seemingly elsewhere in the town, and no lights coming back on after a half hour wait, Chairman Frederick Massie officially called the meeting off, and said the two teams would have to reconvene on Wednesday, Jan. 3 in the New Year.

Reached Tuesday morning, Fire Chief James Sousa said the outage was caused by a tree limb falling down onto power lines on Barton Avenue, which caused outages all the way up through Child Street and into the downtown area.

DPW Director Brian Wheeler said that a backup generator located within the Town

See **STORM** Page 7



ETHAN HARTLEY

Warren Planning Board members read through materials via phone flashlights as members of the public waited in the dark to see if the meeting would be able to resume. It would not.



From their table to yours

Amaral's Fish & Chips holds what was said to be biggest holiday dinner yet



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POLICE REPORT

Police make one arrest, storm takes down a tree

Monday, Dec. 11

Police helped out a resident on Asylum Road who had locked their infant in a car at 11:06 a.m. The child was freed without reported incident.

Police were called and asked to do a wellness check of a deer on a neighbor's property on Bradford Street at 12:03 p.m. The animal control officer said the deer seemed fine.

A utility pole caught fire near Barton and Manchester Avenues at 4:55 p.m. It was extinguished shortly afterwards and Rhode Island Energy restored power to the area.

Police intervened on an issue from Napoleon Street at 5:27 p.m. involving a woman keeping money from a man.

Tuesday, Dec. 12

Loose horses were reported on Maple Road at 2:16 p.m. They were gone when units arrived in the area.

Police received a report that vehicles were not stopping at a stop sign on Seymour Street and were driving erratically at 4:15 p.m.

A woman on Federal Street reported at 8:46 p.m. that her vehicle had gone missing after parking it a friend's house.

Wednesday, Dec. 13

A dog bite that occurred prior to the report at 11:08 a.m. was logged on Touisset Road.

A man on Kelly Street reported to police at 6:12 p.m. that he had been receiving threatening phone calls from people claiming to be with "the cartel" while he was away in Colorado.

Thursday, Dec. 14

Police assisted Barrington PD at 3:54 p.m. after receiving a report of an attempted shoplifting from that town. Police were able to determine that the

alleged suspect had been to the Cumberland Farms on Market Street, and said they would continue to monitor the area.

Police dispersed a man from Main Street at 7:04 p.m. who was reportedly trying to purchase food from the drive-thru while on foot.

A Kathleen Drive resident called police at 7:22 p.m. after two male juveniles allegedly tried to gain access to their bulkhead. Police looked for the two juveniles but didn't find them.

Friday, Dec. 15

A construction company working on behalf of Rhode Island Energy reported at 8:37 a.m. that they had damaged a natural gas line on Metacom Avenue.

A Child Street resident reported at 9:19 a.m. that they had been assaulted by their landlord.

A package was reportedly stolen from Federal Street at 5:09 p.m.

A customer of a shop on Metacom Avenue reported that their purse had been stolen while it was sitting inside a car at 5:23 p.m.

Lucas M. Parker, 30, of 302 Metacom Ave., Apt. #1, Warren, was arrested at 10:33 p.m. after an incident on Metacom Avenue. He was charged with second degree child abuse, disorderly conduct, and domestic violence (disorderly conduct, first offense). He was arraigned and released early the following morning.

Saturday, Dec. 16

A Metacom Avenue resident reported damage to their fence at 9:50 a.m.

A caller reported a cyclist was weaving in and out of traffic on Metacom Avenue at 10:19 a.m. He wasn't found by police.

A caller reported that a vehicle traveling south on Water Street struck their mirror and didn't stop at 11:51 a.m. A BOLO was sent to Bristol PD as a result.

A caller reported that a cemetery basket had been stolen at 2:44 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 17

A caller reported hitting a stone wall after trying to avoid a collision with a deer near Touisset and Shell Roads at 1:20 a.m.

Monday, Dec. 18

A Serpentine Road resident reported at 6:22 a.m. that a large tree had fallen across the road, taking out power in the area. The tree reportedly completely took down two telephone poles, which blocked the roadway. Rhode Island Energy and the DPW Director were advised.

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PHOTO BY CHRISTY NADALIN

One of the Seastreak ferry boats spotted in Bristol over the weekend will soon begin transporting people from Providence to Bristol on Wednesday. **RIGHT:** The schedule for ferry service from Bristol to Providence and from Providence to Bristol.

Capacity	Ferry	Depart Bristol	Arrive PVD	Depart PVD	Arrive Bristol
505	1	6:00 AM	6:35 AM	6:45 AM	7:20 AM
320	2	6:30 AM	7:05 AM	7:15 AM	7:50 AM
298	3	7:00 AM	7:35 AM	7:45 AM	8:20 AM
505	1	7:30 AM	8:05 AM	8:15 AM	8:50 AM
320	2	8:00 AM	8:35 AM	8:45 AM	9:20 AM
298	3	8:30 AM	9:05 AM	9:15 AM	9:50 AM
505	1	9:00 AM	9:35 AM	9:45 AM	10:20 AM
320	2	9:30 AM	10:05 AM	10:15 AM	10:50 AM
298	3	10:00 AM	10:35 AM	10:45 AM	11:20 AM
Break					
505	1	1:00 PM	1:35 PM	1:45 PM	2:20 PM
320	2	1:30 PM	2:05 PM	2:15 PM	2:50 PM
298	3	2:00 PM	2:35 PM	2:45 PM	3:20 PM
505	1	2:30 PM	3:05 PM	3:15 PM	3:50 PM
320	2	3:00 PM	3:35 PM	3:45 PM	4:20 PM
298	3	3:30 PM	4:05 PM	4:15 PM	4:50 PM
505	1	4:00 PM	4:35 PM	4:45 PM	5:20 PM
320	2	4:30 PM	5:05 PM	5:15 PM	5:50 PM
298	3	5:00 PM	5:35 PM	5:45 PM	6:20 PM
505	1	5:30 PM	6:05 PM	6:15 PM	6:50 PM
320	2	6:00 PM	6:35 PM	6:45 PM	7:20 PM
298	3	6:30 PM	7:05 PM	7:15 PM	7:50 PM

Ferry service from PVD to Bristol launches today

Those looking for a way to bypass Washington Bridge now have an option by sea

BY CHRISTY NADALIN

Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti announced on Monday that the anticipated ferry service, intended to help commuters

impacted by the closure of the Washington Bridge westbound, would begin at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 20.

Three ferries have been enlisted to provide departures from both the State Street dock in Bristol and the India Street ferry dock in Providence, every half hour from 6 a.m. until 10 a.m., followed by a break period from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and then resuming each half hour until the last ferry leaves Bris-

tol at 6:30 p.m., and Providence at 7:15 p.m.

The ferries will be able to provide transportation to 1,000 people per hour, according to Alviti. There will be no fee charged the passenger; the estimated \$5 million cost will come out of the DOT budget. The provisional plan is to operate this service for the duration of the bridge closure, but officials will monitor numbers and alter the service if it is being underutilized.

Passengers are asked to park at Colt State Park and take a RIPTA shuttle to the ferry dock at State and Thames streets in Bristol. For passengers originating in Providence, there is parking at the India Street ferry dock.

There will be RIPTA shuttles from the dock to Kennedy Plaza and Providence Station. Bikes and scooters will reportedly be allowed on board as well.

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Tito's Vodka
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Amaral's 11th Annual Holiday Dinner said to be biggest yet

Amaral's Fish & Chips held their 11th Annual Holiday Dinner on Sunday, bringing in a crowd of people throughout the day to enjoy a hearty, home cooked meal at no cost. The family, consisting of current owners Tony and Donald Amaral, sisters Dot (Amaral) Valenzuela, Lubella Amaral, Lucy (Amaral) DaSilva, and brother Gil Amaral, as well as Sherry Amaral, Brian Amaral, Meghan Amaral, Josh Ama-

ral, Shawn Amaral, Chelsea Vieira, Hector Valenzuela, and Holly Amaral, all pitch in to make the event a special occasion for the hundreds who benefit from their generosity.

"Everyone here at the restaurant is so happy to do this for those who need a dinner," said Lubella Amaral in a piece previewing the event. Those on hand said that they felt this year's event was the biggest they've had yet.



RICHARD W. DIONNE JR.

Theo Amaral helps his father, Brian, stir gravy.



Tony Amaral removes a tray of stuffing from the oven.



Don Amaral delivers meals to customers.



ABOVE: Tony Amaral removes a tray of stuffing from the oven. LEFT: Amaral's staff line trays with holiday meals as a steady flow of customers fills the dining area.

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News deadline Noon Monday
Advertising deadline Noon Monday

Two new CTE programs approved at Mt. Hope High

A/V Production and Graphic Communication Design will be offered beginning Fall 2024



Two new CTE programs will be offered beginning in the Fall of 2024 at Mt. Hope High School.

BY ETHAN HARTLEY
ehartley@eastbaymediagroup.com

The Bristol Warren Regional School District (BWRSD) announced last week that they had received approval from the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) for two new accredited career and technical education (CTE) pathways at Mt. Hope High School.

Beginning in the Fall of 2024, students will be able to begin an educational track in Audio & Video Production and Graphic Communication Design. Once those begin, Mt. Hope will have a total of five CTE programs available for students. The three existing programs are Business & Finance, Architecture & Construction, and Engineering.

According to a press release sent out by the district, Mt. Hope currently has 306 students enrolled in the existing three CTE pathways. Interviewed about the new additions on Friday, STEM Department Chair Wayne Lima said that existing student interest in the courses helped make it an easy decision to pursue the two new tracks for full

RIDE accreditation.

“Both of them are, in a way, existing pathways for us. There are already classes associated with these two programs, so for us it wasn’t a very big lift to get them approved,” he said. “So we already had 90 percent of the requirements

in place, with the most important one being student interest. These classes have been running for years not under a CTE program, but with high student enrollment each year.”

According to the release, there are already 105 students enrolled in classes associated with the new

pathways, which includes courses such as Digital Audio Recording, Video Production and Media Communication, and various levels of graphic design.

Maureen Gauthier, CTE Coordinator for the BWRSD, said that students will be able to learn how to

utilize in-demand pieces of software, such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Premiere, through the coursework, which will provide them with skills needed for many jobs either right out of high school or as they advance towards a post-graduate degree. She said that students could also earn professional certificates in tools such as Photoshop, and will have a variety of work-based learning opportunities throughout the courses to test their skills and provide real-world experience going into the job market.

As the district looks ahead to the construction of a new Mt. Hope High School, Lima and Gauthier said that envisioning the classroom spaces for these CTE programs is front of mind for administrators and teachers at the school.

“That’s going to be the exciting part,” Gauthier said. “Where we will get the teachers of the courses as well as our industry partners to really help us design our classrooms in order to meet industry standards...It’s so important to make sure we have the programs in place before we build the new school.”

Lima said that the district was already looking ahead at two more programs that could potentially be added to the accredited CTE offerings next year.

“Stay tuned,” he said.



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Opinion

Page 6 Warren Times-Gazette December 20, 2023

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Are we asking the right questions about massive wind farms?

To the editor:

There are generations of commercial fishermen in my family. I have more than 25 years of professional marine experience working as a crew member and captain on small passenger vessels, and I remain an active boater, diver and fisherman on Rhode Island's waters.

Construction is underway to build thousands of huge wind turbines from New Jersey to Maine. From an average Joe's perspective, this process feels extremely rushed, and there are dozens of unanswered questions. Getting legitimate answers is proving to be difficult – at times it feels like there is no information, and at others it seems like we are drowning in thousand-page reports full of jargon. I think every Rhode Islander should keep in mind that the fundamental priority of every offshore wind developer is profit. Whether a huge corporation like Orsted is developing renewable or fossil fuel energy, their primary obligations are not to Rhode Islanders, the fishing community, or the environment. They answer to shareholders.

Here are a few questions that should be considered.

1. Substations. The turbines produce DC power, which must be converted to AC. This is done with liquid-cooled transformers. This means seawater is pumped through the substations, heated, bleached, and returned to the ocean. Did we not learn from Brayton Point?

2. Pile driving. Offshore wind construction will require years of driving massive pilings into the seafloor for each turbine. It's like poking the side of a fish tank a thousand times a day. Is this in any way a

factor in the spike in whale and dolphin fatalities? What effect will it have on other fish stocks?

3. Fishing grounds. Some of the turbines are being installed in some of the most fertile fishing grounds in Rhode Island, including the renowned fisheries at Coxes Ledge. Must we allow offshore wind to disrupt access to the grounds that are vital to fishermen? Is there no way to avoid placing turbines in such important fishing grounds?

4. Independent impact studies. Developers have filed impact studies completed by researchers in their employ. To ensure unbiased factual studies, shouldn't the entities completing the studies be independent?

5. What will happen when turbines fail? One fact that cannot be disputed is that all machines fail, especially those that are soaked in salt water. Whether physically or economically, some of the turbines will fail. As the captain of a small passenger vessel, I once ran a trip in the Gulf of Mexico. We passed through an area with what looked like hundreds of oil rigs. It resembled a small city. Unfortunately there were dozens of abandoned rigs rotting into the sea. Apparently, it was cheaper for the oil companies to claim bankruptcy, reopen under a new name and move on than it was to responsibly decommission old rigs. Is this a possibility off our coast with the thousands of turbines and pilings?

Even if you don't know a commercial fisherman, you probably know someone who makes a living servicing the industry. They need our support.

Joe Silva

51 Fatima Drive

Warren deserves better developments

To the editor:

It saddens me to see developers basically destroying small towns in America. These constructions serve mainly the developers by trying to fit as many apartments as they can in a piece of land.

Just look at the development at Nobert Street on your way from Barrington to Warren. They are cramped in there. The garages are literally

in front of each other without much room to move. Not to mention the neighbors lack of privacy with these buildings on top of them.

I would love to know who authorized such construction and why. The price is ridiculous too.

Warren doesn't deserve this.

Clo Melo

10 Ivy St.

COMMENTARIES

Senator Whitehouse's Gaza blind spot

BY STEPHEN FORTUNATO

It is fair to ask why Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse has not called for a ceasefire in Gaza. Since entering the United States Senate in 2007, Senator Whitehouse has been a voice for ethical and legal conduct by government officials as well as those who wield power in business and civic life. In advocating for legislative solutions to address climate change and curtail corporate and judicial transgressions, among other things, and in three books he has written, Senator Whitehouse supports his positions with references to moral principles.

In fact, one of his books is titled "On Virtues: Quotations and Insight to Live a Full, Honorable, and Truly American Life." And yet, he has been conspicuously silent about Israel's military campaign in Gaza, which since Oct. 8 of this year has caused the death of at least sixteen thousand civilians, more than six thousand of whom are children, as reported by Doctors without Borders, Oxfam, the Red Cross, and others.

Where is the senator's well-honed moral sensibility regarding this brutality against the innocent men, women, and children of Gaza? Why has he not joined leading parliamentarians from democracies around the world in calling for a ceasefire?

Senator Whitehouse has a considerable legal background, including terms as a United States Attorney and Rhode Island Attorney General. He knows international law governing the protection of civilians during hostilities, and he knows that when his predecessors in the United States Senate ratified the Geneva Conventions of 1949, this humanitarian legislation became part of federal law. Under these laws, the war crimes committed by Hamas against Israel on Oct. 7 do not legitimize Israel's violent retribution against civilians, destruction of residences, refugee camps, schools, and hospitals, or the forced relocation of Palestinians.

Senator Whitehouse's legislative duties have led him to examine war crimes in the past. In

his book "On Virtues," he noted that he used a 1938 speech by Winston Churchill "to argue against the Bush administration's tolerance of torture." And at senate hearings in September of 2022 and March of this year, he rightly accused Vladimir Putin of "crimes against Ukraine and humanity"; moreover, he insisted that the United States assure that evidence of these crimes be preserved so that at some future date Putin can be prosecuted in the International Criminal Court. Why doesn't he call for the same treatment of Benjamin Netanyahu?

At a Sept. 28, 2022, hearing, Senator Whitehouse denounced Russian "harms and atrocities" and was aghast at "the scale of [Russian] conduct." Has he considered that in eighteen months, from Feb. 24, 2022, to Aug. 20, 2023, Ukraine reported 503 children killed, while in eight weeks' time since Oct. 8 more than 6,000 Palestinian children have lost their lives, according to UNICEF?

Any viable legal system prohibits collective guilt and collective punishment. Articles 33 and 50 of the Geneva Convention IV of 1949 declare that a person may not "be punished for an offense that he or she has not personally committed" and that "no general penalty ... shall be inflicted upon the population on account of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly and severally responsible." The indiscriminate bombardment of Gaza and the blocking of water and fuel shipments is injuring and killing thousands of civilians who are in no way responsible for the actions of Hamas commandos.

Senator Whitehouse's voice and moral force backing a permanent ceasefire is needed at this dangerous and painful moment in time. He should revisit what he says is a favorite verse from the Book of Common Prayer: "render no one evil for evil."

Warren resident Stephen Fortunato served for 13 years as an Associate Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court.

The Finer Things

BY FREDERICK MASSIE

Starlings swarm winter trees. Animating the bare branches.

Fluttering and settling. A chattering chirping canopy.

Rising in swirling murmuration. Tracing flowing geometric patterns in the early morning sky.

Cloud bank mountains loom above distant shoreline hills. Outlined by a red marbled dawn.

Amplified and mirrored in the still water. Lost horizons.

Rippled by a regal white swan couple's angular wakes. Sailing out of sight.

Small floating sand-grain islands suspended by surface tension. Forming fragile archipelagos.

Dissolving and sinking in the paddle blade's wash.

Into the island's shallows. Where ghostly growths glow pale white among the underwater stones and shells.

Illuminated by the shimmering reflection of a bright round sun.

Golden coin of the aquatic realm.

Transcendental currency.

WARREN TIMES-GAZETTE

Established in 1866

Matthew Hayes, Publisher

Ethan Hartley, Editor

R. S. Bosworth Jr., Publisher Emeritus

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The Warren Times-Gazette encourages all citizens to comment publicly on the events and times in which we live. We will print any letter sent to us, adhering to guidelines for taste, accuracy, fairness and public interest. Letters must be signed by the author and must include telephone number and street address. Letters are limited to 500 words. Direct letters to: Warren Times-Gazette, P.O. Box 90, Bristol, RI 02809. Letters may also be sent to us on the Internet at: ehartley@eastbaymediagroup.com

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We adhere to the highest standards of accuracy, fairness and ethical responsibility. If you feel we have not met those standards, please notify us. We will correct all errors brought to our attention or that we discover ourselves. They will always appear on this page.

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BUTCH LOMBARDI



RICHARD W. DIONNE JR.

High tide brought tidal flooding to low-lying areas of town, such as Jamiel's Park.

Market Street was flooded in the afternoon as the tide rose.

STORM: Flooding occurred at usual spots, tree takes down pole on Serpentine

From Page 1

Storm causes flooding at high tide, downs trees

Hall had a malfunction due to what they believed was a faulty fuel filter, "that we are trying to fix as we speak," he said.

Chief Sousa said that Rhode Island Energy was already in the Touisset area at the time and quickly worked to restore power within an hour or so, but by that time the meeting had already been continued and adjourned.

Reached on Tuesday morning, John Lannan said the outage causing another delay in the process of trying to get their development approved at the former Liberty Street School was unfortunate, but found humor in the moment all the same.

"I'm disappointed that we didn't go forward, but it's nobody's fault," he said. "Maybe the project is haunted, I don't know."

While Warren did not suffer the same amount of outages as the surrounding towns of Barrington and Bristol, Wheeler said that crews were out throughout the day clearing debris from trees. Flooding, caused by the combination of the storm surge and high tide, beset the usual areas where flooding has become common under such conditions.

"We were out late last night re-opening Serpentine Road from a tree that took out a pole early in the morning yesterday," Wheeler said. "That was our last 'blocked road.' We also had habitual tidal flooding on Water Street, Market Street (in the area of Redmond Street), and Child Street. These areas were closed during high tide yesterday. Today is cleaning up the debris left over throughout the Town."



BUTCH LOMBARDI

The Town Beach was completely underwater by mid-day.

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SETTLEMENT: As of last report, Town had less than \$8M in cash reserves

From Page 1

that could have, in his words, “bankrupt the Town.”

“If this case went to trial, the risk of damages, the exposure to the town, would be multiple times that [\$8 million settlement],” DeSisto said during the meeting. By agreeing to the settlement, DeSisto explained, the Town’s involvement in the case was finished.

Other details involving the case are under confidential seal in Rhode Island Superior Court, as they involve a juvenile as a plaintiff and because the case is still ongoing. The plaintiff also sued the manufacturer of a car-seat following the original incident, which involved a Town vehicle and which DeSisto characterized as a “very horrific accident that resulted in some severe injuries” to a one-year-old child in his statements to the Town Council.

“I can tell you it is probably the most difficult case I have ever been involved with in 39 years of practicing law,” he said.

DeSisto confirmed in a phone call on Friday morning that the Town had already paid for the \$5 million portion of the lawsuit — as well as \$183,426 in associated legal and consultancy fees during the course of the settlement negotiations — from the Town’s unassigned fund balance.

The settlement puts the Town in a precarious position for a number of reasons.

Who’s flying the plane?

Of immediate concern is the fact that Warren is currently operating without a Town Manager or a Finance Director.

Kate Michaud, who assumed the role of Town Manager in late 2019, departed from the

position abruptly last month after taking a job with the newly-elected District 1 Congressman, Gabe Amo. Michaud did not respond to a request for comment on this story.

Fung Chan, Warren’s finance director since November of 2018, also departed without much fanfare in early October. Her replacement, Michael Nolette, also departed from that position last week, less than three weeks after taking the job on Nov. 27. Chan could not be reached for this story, and Nolette didn’t respond to an email requesting comments on his sudden departure.

In addition to working with the Town’s auditing firm (Hague, Sahady, & Co.) to prepare the annual fiscal audit that each municipality must conduct, DeSisto said they had already called in the Auditor General for further assistance, and to alert them of the settlement and the Town’s situation. However, he stopped short of saying that the Auditor General was conducting a fiscal audit into the Town’s financial status.

“The Town is reviewing its finances at this time,” he said. “I don’t think it’s accurate to say that there is any audit going on other than the normal annual audit that a town would perform. Is that audit going on? Yes.”

DeSisto said that in addition to their own auditing firm and the assistance of the Auditor General, the Town was working with James Lombardi, an attorney, CPA and former Treasurer for the City of Providence.

Even still, DeSisto said the Town would likely need to seek an extension from the deadline to submit that annual audit, which is coming up at the end of December.

Some napkin math

Such a large settlement will, at the very least,

change Warren’s financial outlook and its ability to be flexible with its “rainy day fund” — the money a municipality has on hand that isn’t tied up into specific endeavors or restricted from use; essentially their free cash — for years to come.

The most recent authenticated financial information that is readily available to the public stems from the Town’s FY2022 Audit Report, which covers a period from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. The report indicates that as of June 30, 2022, the Town had around \$7.9 million in its unassigned fund balance.

However, there is likely less than that amount in the fund as of today, since the Town approved the use of \$180,000 in unassigned fund balance in both the 2022-23 budget from last year and the current 2023-24 budget that was approved in May.

With at least \$5 million more of that gone, and another \$3 million coming in the next three years, it remains to be seen what measures the Town can and will take to prevent a complete wipeout of their free cash reserves.

On Friday afternoon, during a special meeting of the Town Council with only Interim Town Manager Roy Borges, Town Council President John Hanley, and Councilmen Joe DePasquale and Brandt Heckert in attendance, the Council approved a request to authorize the transfer of the Town’s remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the general fund.

Hanley said the move was vetted by DeSisto and outside consultants as an allowable use of that funding. It was unclear as of press time how much of that money would be utilized to address the situation, as Hanley said in a text message that “depended on how much we needed.”

The Town has already utilized ARPA funding to plug budget holes caused by lower than expected revenue from taxes and fees in previous budgets; including \$225,000 in FY23 and \$225,000 in the current FY24 budget. It was unclear as of press time how much of the ARPA funds were left (the town received \$3,141,808 total in ARPA funding).

Not time to sound the alarm yet?

Without key personnel in place, DeSisto and Town Council President John Hanley both admitted that the Town is currently in a place of financial uncertainty. However, Hanley stopped short of sounding alarm bells.

“I wouldn’t say [residents] should be concerned at this moment,” he said. “We’re waiting to get a full, complete grasp on this, and obviously without finance directors and without a Town Manager, it’s making it a little difficult to get a full assessment of where we’re at. I don’t think we need to pull the fire alarm at this time, but until we get a firm grasp of where we are, I can’t really say which way the future is going to go.”

DeSisto said it was prudent to wait to get verified numbers before speculating on what the financial health of the Town was moving forward.

“The Town is in the process of sorting this out,” he said. “We do have some very good help on this from the Auditor General, our auditors, and we hope to have some other consultants help us out in addition to Mr. Lombardi. As soon as we have an accurate picture of the Town’s finances, that will be shared with the public.”

When asked if the Town was considering

See **FACING PAGE**



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SETTLEMENT: Council President said residents should not be concerned

From **FACING PAGE**

halting all purchases and spending until the situation was better understood, Hanley seemed to indicate that was the case.

"We are keeping a very tight ship on any capital expenditures that aren't mandatory at this time, that's for sure. But until we get a full grasp of exactly where we are, it's difficult to make those decisions," he said. "But we have reigned in any capital spending at this point in time that's not already committed. But until we get a full understanding of exactly where we are, I don't really want to take any actions that are not required or will be required."

What about the school bond?

Not to be lost in the shuffle of this is the recently approved \$200 million bond to build a new Mt. Hope High School and fix up school buildings throughout the Bristol Warren Regional School District.

The Town of Warren is responsible for about 38% of the annual debt service accrued through bonds secured for the purpose of

school construction. No bonds have been taken out yet, and the total reimbursement rate for the district has not yet been finalized (although RIDE has previously indicated that the district should be on track for an 82% reimbursement rate).

According to the math provided by the school district, Warren could eventually see an annual debt service in the area of \$800,000 for its share of the bond. Council President Hanley said that he was hopeful those bond payments wouldn't be coming due until after the settlement is fully dealt with.

"I'm hoping the majority of the school bonds don't come due to be paid until the \$1 million for the next three years is gone," he said. "I think the bulk of that school bond will come due in 2027/28, and that should be just about when we get done with paying off the settlement."

DeSisto said that the Bristol Warren School District was "aware of the situation."

"I think they're with everybody else. They just want to know what the exact situation is," he said. "We're still in the fact gathering process."

OBITUARY

Jeanne Therese Patterson

Jeanne Therese Patterson passed away surrounded by her large, loving family on Dec. 10, 2023 at Rhode Island Hospital, 18 days before her 92nd birthday. She was born with her twin sister, Joan, to Armand and Jeanette (David) Campeau on Dec. 28, 1931. She was joyfully married to her dance-partner and sweetheart, Charles E. Patterson, until his death on Dec. 29, 1995.

Jeanne's legacy of 12 children, 20 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren will live on for generations to come. Our mom/mémé epitomized love, compassion, patience, joy and kindness. No matter what was going on, she always had a smile on her face. As a devout Catholic, she was always giving things away to help others; she shopped and cooked just so she could give things away. Furthermore, she closed and locked her bedroom each day for an hour to pray and meditate; her kids and Charlie knew better than to interfere with that time. Her patience was unwavering and unmatched, as she taught us all to wait our turn. With 12 kids, it was excellent advice.

Mom was an avid reader; she read anything she could get her hands on. She was especially fond of prayer books, newspapers, home remedies and autobiographies. But really, she'd read anything that was available.

Mom was a singer on the radio in the '50s, along with her twin sister, Joan. She sang in her home constantly. We all wanted to be held and rocked by her as she sang, as she was an expert rocking chair enthusiast. So too, she taught us the joyful and universal language of music, passing on her musical gifts of singing and playing instruments, especially percussion, to her children. We will honor every Christmas with her favorite songs of "Away in the Manger," "Silent Night" and "Deck the Halls," which was also our Dad's favorite.

Our dad, Charles E Patterson, was the love of Mom's life. They danced like Ginger and Fred Astaire, and emanated love and devo-

tion anytime they were together. Our parents taught us how to waltz and swing dance along with the Lawrence Welk show. We will always be in awe of their fluid dancing skills. We are happy they have been reunited and can dance again in heaven. Together, they taught us the sweet name of Jesus and all his works. We are forever grateful to them for passing on their faith to us.

Along with her husband, Mom was predeceased by her son Leonard C. Patterson. She is survived by 11 children: Alan C. Patterson and his wife, Jill, Anne Marie Motta and her husband John, Rose Marie Sylvia and her husband Jim, Thomas C. Patterson and his wife Susan, Timothy C. Patterson and his wife Dawn, Kathy Sarasin, Janet Mello and her husband Jim, Charlie Patterson and his wife, Britt, Theresa DeRiso and her husband, Stephen, Nancy George, and Tina Avila and her husband Mike. She is also survived by 20 grandchildren: Lana and Derek Patterson, John Sousa, Marie George, Bruce and Michael Patterson, Tara and Courtney Patterson, Patrick, Christopher, and Michelle Sarasin, Colin and Jacob Mello, Allyson and Isabella Patterson, Joé and Sophia DeRiso, Malerie George and, Alyssa and Zachary Avila. Additionally, she leaves seven great-grandchildren: Corey, Lorenzo, Landon, Rowan, Carissa, Logan, and Thiana. She also leaves sister, Annette Roy, and was predeceased by her twin sister, Joan, and sisters, Dorothy Smith and Constance Nobrega. Lastly, she leaves two brothers-in-law, Robert and Kenneth Patterson, along with many loving nieces, nephews and countless family friends. We were all truly blessed to know her.

Services were with Smith Funeral & Memorial Services, 8 Schoolhouse Road, Warren, where the family received friends for Visitation on Sunday, Dec. 17. The Funeral was held Monday, Dec. 18, in the funeral home, followed immediately by a Mass of Christian Burial in St. Mary of the Bay Church, Warren. Burial was held at St. Jean the Baptiste Cemetery, Warren.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in Jeanne's memory to St. Mary of the Bay Church, 646 Main Street, Warren, RI.



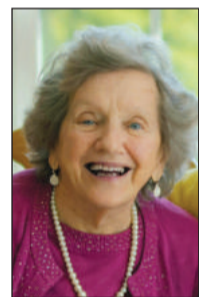
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Wishing you a Merry and Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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PHOTOS BY JULIE FURTADO

Mt. Hope gymnasts get reps during Injury Fund meet

While the whole team did not perform, a couple of Mt. Hope gymnasts got in some important reps at an Injury Fund meet held at the Newport YMCA on Sunday, Dec. 17. They faced off against competition from fellow East Bay competitors in Portsmouth and Barrington, as well as schools from throughout the state. **ABOVE LEFT:** Sarah Sustakowsky performs a stunt on vault while competing in the Injury Fund meet at the Newport YMCA, Sunday. **LEFT:** Head coach, Nicole Daniello spots Natalia Quezada-Grant as she competes on vault. **ABOVE:** Sarah Sustakowsky dismounts from the beam while performing her routine at Sunday's Injury Fund meet.



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There are more automobile crash fatalities during holiday periods than during non-holiday periods due to increased travel time, more alcohol use, and excessive driving speed.

You can request our quarterly newsletter, *CommunityNews*, at mursini@townofwarren-ri.gov & please like us on Facebook.



warrenprevention.com



Churches are celebrating Christmas with carols, candlelight

Candlelight, carols and special music are among the highlights of church services as area Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ.

First United Methodist Church of Warren & Bristol

25 Church St.
245-8474

<http://umcwarrenbristol.org>

On Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24, the service is at 5 p.m. This service is in lieu of the 10 a.m. worship service and will feature readings, special music, poinsettias, candles and carols.

Radiant Christian Church

The Rev. Larry Mangone
895 Main St.
245-1486

St. Alexander's Church

The Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Upton
221 Main St.
245-6369

www.saintalexanders.com

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, Sunday, Dec. 24, Mass is at 9:15 a.m.

On Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24, Mass is at 10 p.m.

On Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25, Mass is at 9:15 a.m.

On Sunday, Dec. 31, Mass is at 9:15 a.m.

On New Year's Day, Monday, Jan. 1, Mass is at 9:15 a.m.

The Baptist Church of Warren

Main and Miller streets
245-3669

www.baptistchurchinwarren.com

On Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24, the Baptist Church of Warren congregation will join the First Baptist Church in Swansea, 21 Baptist St. The service will begin there at 7 p.m.

St. Thomas the Apostle Church

500 Metacom Ave.
The Rev. John E. Abreu
245-4469

For the fourth Sunday of Advent, the Masses are on Saturday, Dec. 23, at 4 p.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 24, at 8 (Portuguese) and 10 a.m.

For the Solemnity of Christmas, the Masses are on Sunday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m. and on Monday, Dec. 25, at

8 a.m. (Portuguese) and 10 a.m.

There will be no Mass on Dec. 24 at 7 p.m.

Confessions will be heard on Friday, Dec. 22, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the chapel and on Saturday, Dec. 23, from 3 to 3:30 p.m. in the church.

Stone Coast Community Church

at Highlander Charter School
360 Market St.
Pastor Sean Smith
508/989-9784

On Saturday, Dec. 23, a Christmas candlelight service is at 6:30 p.m. There will be live music, free hot chocolate, a dramatic reading and an Advent candle lighting.

St. Mary of the Bay Church

645 Main St.
The Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Upton
245-7000

www.stmaryofthebay.org

On Saturday, Dec. 23, a Vigil Mass is at 4 p.m.

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, Sunday, Dec. 24, Mass is at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

On Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec.



24, a family Mass is at 4 p.m. (There is no 6 p.m. Mass).

On Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25, Mass is at 10:30 a.m.

On Sunday, Dec. 31, Mass is at 8

a.m. and 10:30 a.m. (No 6 p.m. Mass).

On New Year's Day, Monday, Jan. 1, Mass is at 10:30 a.m. (No 8 a.m. or 6 p.m. Mass).

AROUND TOWN

'20 Years/40 Artists' exhibit at Imago Gallery

Imago Foundation for the Arts (IFA) is bringing together the artistic contributions of 40 current and former IFA exhibiting artists and community members now through Dec. 23 at Imago Gallery, 36 Market St.

The exhibit is in honor of IFA's 20-year anniversary and recognizes the talent of the artists who participated as artist members throughout the years.

IFA exhibiting artists and community members participating in the exhibit include David Clarke, Eileen Siobhan Collins, Mary Dondero, Elwood Donnelly, Vivian Eyre, Stephen Fisher, Philip Gruppuso, Gary Heise, Carl Keitner, Lenny Rumpfer, Mike Marino, Eileen Mayhew, Linda Megathlin, Rina Naik, Mercedes Nuñez, Kathleen Reaves, Anne Marie Rossi, Howard Rotblat-Walker, Howard Windham and Meredith Wolf.

Former IFA exhibiting artists participating include Jeanne Arthur, David Pinkham, Damian Bellotti, Ellen Blomgren, Chuck Boucher, Douglas Breault, Sue Butler, Linda DiFrenna, Rose Esson-Dawson, Charles Francis, Betty Harrington, Kathleen Hemenway, John Irwin, Lisa Legato, Lindsay Mac, Nicole St. Pierre, Michael Somers, Anita Trezvant-Lopes, John Udvardy and Pat Warwick.

Gallery hours are Thursdays from noon to 3

Middle school chorus to perform tonight

The Kickemuit Middle School Music Department will offer one more concert this month.

The KMS Chorus, directed by Andre Arsenault, will perform on Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 7 p.m. in the KMS auditorium. Music selections will include "Candles in the Window" by Dave and Jean Perry, "Your Holiday Song" by the Indigo Girls, and "Christmas Tree Farm" by Taylor Swift.

Doors will open to the general public at 6:45 p.m. Donations to support the KMS music program will be accepted at the door.

p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from noon to 6 p.m., and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m.

Small Works Show, Holiday Story Night

The Collaborative is at 4 Market St. Gallery hours are from 6 to 9 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, from 3 to 9 p.m. on Saturdays and from 3 to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

The second annual Small Works Show features 2D and 3D artwork under 8 inches from 30-plus artists through Dec. 31. Sales from this

community group exhibit go directly to support local creatives.

The Youth Artist of the Month is Jane Bryant.

The Collaborative will take a break from hosting workshops in December to take the opportunity to evaluate its programs and return in January with figure drawing, creative writing and Art from Scratch, a four-week workshop series that will be free to the public.

Stay tuned for more updates.

Duckpin bowlers needed for Sundays

A mixed duckpin bowling league is in need

See more **AROUND TOWN** Page 12



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School vacation week fun planned at Audubon

Take a break from the holiday rush in December and enjoy some time in nature at the Audubon Society of Rhode Island's Nature Center and Aquarium at 1401 Hope St., on the Warren/Bristol town line. The Nature Center and Aquarium is open to the public daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The trails and pollinator garden remain open from dawn to dusk.

Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, \$4 for ages 4 to 12, and free for children under 4 and members.

Unless noted, registration is required for all programs. Register online and view a complete listing of programs around the state through the events calendar at www.asri.org/calendar.

■ **Morning bird walks** are offered for ages 14 and older from 9 to 11 a.m. on most Wednesdays. The walks are in small groups with naturalist Laura Carberry. Each week a new birding destination is chosen.

Advance registration is required. Locations are determined weekly. The fee is \$10; \$5 members. Register through the events calendar at asri.org.

■ **School vacation week activities** are from Wednesday to Friday, Dec. 27 to 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Special programs and activities are available each day and are free with admission. Registration is not required.

There will be nature crafts each day, as well as a nature story at 10 a.m., and animal interviews at 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Special programs for children are available at 1 p.m. They are recommended for children ages 6 and older and space is limited. Descriptions are below:

— Wednesday, Dec. 27: Owl presentation. Meet one of their owl ambassadors and learn all about these amazing creatures, their habits and habitats.

— Thursday, Dec. 28: Fairy fort building. Head outside to the woods at the nature center to build tiny forts and shelters for fairies and other small critters.

— Friday, Dec. 29: Winter nature hike. Weather dependent.

■ **"ReWilding: A Call to Nature," an exhibit of art and photography** by Jennifer Moore, is open through Dec. 30 during regular center hours. The multimedia artist specializes in sculpture. She has a BFA from Lyme Fine Art Academy and has trained with the Florence Art Academy. Free with admission.

Pictured (at right) is a barred owl in the forest. During school vacation week, there will be an owl presentation on Wednesday, Dec. 27. Meet one of their owl ambassadors and learn all about these amazing creatures, their habits and habitats.



PHOTO BY PETER GREEN

AROUND TOWN

From Page 11

of a few more bowlers on Sundays at 6 p.m. at Dudek Lanes in Warren.

It's a fun night out with cash prizes, special monthly events and bonus cash prizes during the year.

They also have a Christmas Party, Pizza Party and a banquet at the end of the season. Call Dave at 254-9779 for more information.

Food pantry open at St. Mary of the Bay

The St. Mary of the Bay Food Pantry is open on Tuesdays from 3 to 6 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9 to 11 a.m. downstairs in the church hall at 645 Main St.

They offer Client Choice, where guests can choose their own food items. They also have meat and dairy items, fresh produce, bread and pastries, as well as non-food items, such as toiletries or paper goods.

They also offer pet food every other week.

If you or someone you know needs food, come by or call them at 245-7000, ext. 19. The only qualification is your need for food. The church hall can be accessed by the ramp on the left side of the church.

Domestic violence support services

The Women's Resource Center has free and confidential domestic violence support services every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 624 Main St., Warren. Just drop in. Or, call the 24-hour hotline at 800/494-8100.

Art pop-up display now inside Federal Hill Pizza

The Warren Arts and Cultural Commission (WACC) has installed its eighth pop-up shop display featuring eight Warren artists inside Federal Hill Pizza at 495 Main St.

All the art is for sale, and 100 percent of the proceeds go to the artist. Prices and contact information for the artists are displayed beside the art. Local artists participating in the display are Treva Bice-Kilcoyne, Jennifer Charleson, Deborah Green, Richard Kaiser, Butch Lombardi, Deidra Rici, Ann Thomas and Buddy Roberts. Their artwork is on display until Dec. 31, when a new pop-up will take its place.

The program provides opportunities for local artists who are not affiliated with a local gallery. Local artists who would like to participate in future displays can contact WACC at

warrenartsandculturecommission@gmail.com.

Imago calls for art for 2024 'Big Show'

Imago Foundation for the Arts (IFA) is calling for art for its upcoming 2024 community exhibit, "The Big Show." First-, second- and third place cash prizes will be awarded in recognition of IFA's 20th anniversary.

Artwork will be displayed at Imago Gallery, 36 Market St., from Jan. 13 to Feb. 3 with dropoff on Friday, Dec. 29, from noon to 3 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 30, and from noon to 5 p.m.

A free, public reception for the participating artists is on Saturday, Jan. 14, from 5 to 8 p.m.

All media, except for video or screen works, will be accepted. All art submitted must be for sale and must not have been previously shown at Imago. Artists must be at least 18 years of age. See rules and submission information under the "Events" tab on the website at www.imagofoundation4art.org.

The submission fees are \$15 for one, \$30 for two or \$40 for three works of art. IFA will take a 30 percent commission on all sales. Pickup of artwork at the conclusion of the exhibit is Sunday, Feb. 4, from noon to 3 p.m.

Paper submission forms and in-person payment also will be available during the dropoff times listed above.

Volunteers needed for tax filing assistance

East Bay Community Action Program's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is recruiting volunteers in the East Bay area to assist local residents with income tax filing. After successfully passing a background check, volunteers will receive online IRS training. They will then provide free tax help for low- to

Christmas will change news deadlines

Because of the Christmas holiday on Monday, Dec. 25, the deadline for community news is at noon on Friday, Dec. 22.

To submit community news —

■ Email your news to lrego@eastbaymediagroup.com

■ Mail it to Lynda Rego, Warren Times, Community News, P.O. Box 90, Bristol, RI 02809

moderate-income individuals and families who need assistance preparing their tax returns.

For additional information, call EBCAP's Office of Volunteer Services at 435-7876, ext. 1137, or email kwetherald@ebcap.org.

East Bay Community Action Program is a private, non-profit that provides an array of health and human services to the residents of Rhode Island's East Bay. For more information, visit ebcap.org.

Blood center urgently needs donations now

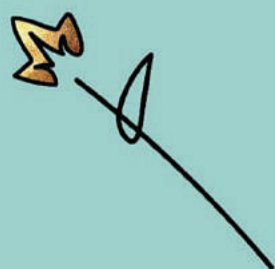
The R.I. Blood Center is in need of blood and platelet donations. Local drives are sparse; but, the donor centers around the state are open and you can make an appointment to donate blood at your convenience.

All types are needed; but, there is an additional need for blood types O, O-, A-, B-, AB-.

To find a local blood drive and/or schedule an appointment, visit donate.ribc.org or call 453-8360. The closest center in the East Bay is the Aquidneck Donor Center in Middletown.

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-Wayne Dyer



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LIC. #67

AT THE LIBRARY

Dungeons and Dragons

Ages 11 and up are invited to play Dungeons and Dragons. Players of any experience are welcome.

Ages 11 to 13 meet at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. Ages 14 to 20 meet at 5:30 p.m. on Mondays.

Registration is required. Sign up at the library or call to request a spot.

Thursday Tech Help

Weekly Tech Help is back from 2 to 4 p.m. on Thursdays. To make an appointment, call 245-7686 or mail reference@georgehail.org using the subject heading "Tech Help Appointment." Include a brief description of what you'd like to cover during your appointment. If they are unable to help with your problem, they will send you off with a referral.

Winter storytime

A winter storytime is on Friday, Dec. 22, at 4 p.m. Celebrate the beginning of winter with a special winter-themed storytime. Youth Services librarian Michaela will share winter stories and songs and also lead a simple craft. Online registration opens on Dec. 15.

Closed on Christmas

The library is closed on Christmas, Monday, Dec. 25.

Family Christmas movie

A Family Christmas movie is on Tuesday, Dec. 26, at 1 p.m. in the Youth Services room. They will provide a small snack. Bagged lunches are welcome. Visit during the two weeks prior to the movie to cast your vote for what you want to see.

Mario Kart Tourney

A Mario Kart Tournament is on Tuesday, Dec. 26, at 6 p.m. Go by the

Youth Services room for the library's second Mario Kart Tournament. The winner will receive two teen-friendly true crime books. For ages 12 to 18 only. Register online.

Elementary event

A stuffed animal workshop is on Wednesday, Dec. 27, at 3 p.m. Make your own stuffed animal. When you register you can choose a polar bear (x3), snow leopard (x3), husky (x3), penguin (x3), moose (x3) or reindeer (x3). Spots are limited. Online registration is open.

Junior Chess Club

The Junior Chess Club will meet on Thursday, Dec. 28, at 4 p.m. The club is open to anyone interested in chess, from brand new players to those on their way to Grand Master status.

Members will learn from and sharpen their skills via a variety of

sources including the youth services librarian, videos, other club members and experienced chess players.

The club meets every other Thursday. No registration required. For kids ages 7 to 13.

Take & Make craft

A Take & Make New Year's craft is all day on Friday, Dec. 29. Drop by the Youth Services room anytime during the day for a New Year's craft to go. While supplies last.

Socks in a Box drive

Participate in the library's charity drive, Socks in a Box, during December. They are accepting new socks of all sizes to be donated to those in need this winter.

Look for the wrapped Socks in a Box boxes on the main floor and the youth services room at the library. Help your neighbors this holiday season.

Knitting group

A knitting group meets in the Reading Room every Tuesday from 6 to 8 p.m. No registration or skill required.

Museum open Thursdays

The Charles Whipple Greene Museum is open on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

George Hail Library is at 530 Main St. Hours are Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you have a disability and need special accommodations, contact the library 24 hours prior to an event so they can assist you. For more information, call 245-7686 or visit www.georgehail.org.

SENIORS

Concert on Thursday, closing early Friday

The Warren Senior Center is at 20 Libby Lane. Visit the center on Tuesdays to Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 247-1930.

Membership is open to anyone 55 years of age or older or those disabled at a cost of \$7 a year. Membership fees help to support the many programs and classes held at the center. For a membership application, or more information, contact Kyra at 247-1930.

Celebrate the holiday season with a concert by Doug Botelho on Thursday, Dec. 21, at 1 p.m. Bring your dancing shoes, your clapping hands, your attentive ears or all three for a

time full of fun, music and fellowship.

The senior center and Warren Café will close at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 22, and be closed on Christmas Day, Monday, Dec. 25.

The Book Club is canceled for December. However, there will be two club meetings in January — on Wednesday, Jan. 3, and Wednesday, Jan. 31. Call the center for the book titles.

The dining room is open with hot lunches on Monday to Friday. The suggested donation is \$3. Lunch reservations can be made between 9 and 11 a.m. daily.

Senior bus transportation is available Monday to Friday at no cost to Warren residents 60 and older for shopping, medical appointments, pharmacy visits and transportation

to the senior center for lunch and activities.

For more information, or a schedule, call Kyra at 247-1930.

Senior Health Insurance Counseling (SHIP) is available Tuesday mornings by appointment with a qualified SHIP counselor who offers assistance with health insurance options, retirement options, prescription drug plans, prescription assistance programs and eligibility. Call 247-1930 to schedule an appointment.

Ongoing events

Recreational bowling is at Dudek's

Bowling Alley on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. It is \$4 per member, which includes three games of bowling and shoes. Sign up with Kyra.

Bingo is on Fridays at 1 p.m. with a variety of games with cash prizes (\$20-40) and refreshments. Arrive by 12:30 p.m.

The Walk With Ease group is on Mondays and Wednesdays at 9 a.m. Join them for some stretches and a fun group walk now through Nov. 20.

Functional Fitness classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. Classes are offered to members for \$1.50 a class.

Ceramics is at 12:30 p.m. on Tues-

days. Knitting/crocheting is at 1 p.m. Tuesdays. Mah jongg is played at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays. New players welcome.

Play Rummy 500 at 1 p.m. Tuesdays, high-low-jack at 9 a.m. Thursdays and cribbage at 1 p.m. Thursdays and 9 a.m. Fridays.

Crafts are with Joan Allen on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. No experience necessary. Sign up with Kyra.

Chair yoga is at 9:15 a.m. on Wednesdays with Patricia Fox. It is \$1.50 a class for members.

Strength training and balance is on Fridays at 9:30 a.m. It is \$1.50 a class for members.

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LEGAL NOTICE

TOWN OF WARREN PROBATE COURT
514 MAIN STREET 9:30 A.M.
PROBATE JUDGE, ANTHONY DESISTO
PROBATE CLERK, SANDREA J. SPERONI, CMC

Szeliga, Ruby K. a/k/a
Szeliga, Ruby Kai Est. #23-66
Petition for Name Change to be heard on December 28, 2023
December 6, 13 & 20, 2023

Forcier, III, William. #23-65
Delores Dupras has qualified as Administratrix of the estate. Creditors must file their claims in the Clerk's Office in the time required by law beginning December 20, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Monafo, Vincent P. Est# 23-64
Anthony Monafo has qualified as Executor of the estate. Creditors must file their claims in the Clerk's Office in the time required by law beginning December 20, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Ellenwood, Corianne Rose a/k/a Bailey-Assem, Corianne R.. Est# 23-61
Robert Ellenwood has qualified as Administrator of the estate. Creditors must file their claims in the Clerk's Office in the time required by law beginning December 20, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Afonso, Denia Alexandra Est. #23-62
Petition for Name Change to Denia Alexandra Ferreira was granted on December 14, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Rezendes, Claudia. Est # 23-52
Sandra Rezendes and Emanuel Rezendes have qualified as Co-Guardians Creditors must file their claims in the Clerk's Office in the time required by law beginning December 20, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Penkala, Joseph Edward Est. #23-51
Petition for Name Change to Joseph Edward Penkala, JR was granted on December 14, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Lombardi, Louis M. Est# 23-63
Susan A. Conti has qualified as Executrix of the estate. Creditors must file their claims in the Clerk's Office in the time required by law beginning December 20, 2023
Dec 20, 27, 2023 & Jan 3, 2024

Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the Town Clerk's Office at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting. 245-7340 or "via RI Relay 1-800-745-5555" (TTY).

LEGAL NOTICE

TOWN OF WARREN BOARD VACANCIES

The Warren Town Council is seeking applications for the following Boards. Applications may be obtained in the Town Clerk's Office or on the Town Website www.townofwarren-ri.gov. Applications must be filed in the Town Clerk's Office, 514 Main Street, Warren, RI, no later than Friday, December 29, 2023, by 4:00 PM. Interviews will be held at the Town Council Meeting on January 9, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers.

- Bristol Warren Regional Joint Finance Committee**
- Conservation Commission**
- Economic Development Board**
- Juvenile Hearing Board**
- Planning Board**
- RI 250th Commission**
- Voluntary Historic District Committee**

Sandrea J. Speroni, CMC
Town Clerk
December 20 & 27, 2023



PHOTOS BY RICHARD W. DIONNE JR.

East Bay Coach Brie Rondeau speaks to the team during their game against Mount St. Charles at Portsmouth Abbey on Thursday.

East Bay Eagles open season with 1-2 record

Co-op team skates past Warwick, 5-2

The East Bay Eagles co-op girls ice hockey team opened the season with a 5-2 victory over Warwick.

Arden Wilkes scored two goals for the Eagles and added an assist for three points. Sydney Olson also finished with three points, on a goal and two assists. Margaux Boneu and Ruby Turgeon scored goals, and Cayden MacQueston, Addyson Whittet and Eleni Drosnios each tallied assists in the victory.

East Bay, which features players from Barrington, Mt. Hope and Portsmouth, lost 9-1 against Mount St. Charles. MacQueston scored the Eagles' lone goal, off an assist from Grace Turillo.

LaSalle also defeated East Bay by a 9-1 margin. Mia Phelps scored for East Bay, and Boneu notched the assist.

Nadia Albritton has been in net for the Eagles in all three games.



Eagles' goaltender Nadia Albritton (left), Addyson Whittet and Cayden MacQueston defend the goal.

LEGAL NOTICE

"2024-2025 BUDGET" PUBLIC HEARING

**WARREN TOWN HALL
TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS
514 MAIN STREET**

**Public Hearing
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
7:00 PM**

Individuals requesting interpreter services for the hearing impaired must notify the Town Clerk's Office at least forty-eight (48) Hours prior to the meeting. 401-245-7340(voice) or "via RI Relay 1-800-745-5555" (TTY).

Dec. 20 & 27, 2023

LEGAL NOTICE

**TOWN OF WARREN
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The Town Council of the Town of Warren will hold the second reading for the following Ordinance Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 7:00PM in the Town Council Chambers, 514 Main Street, Warren, RI

Proposed Ordinance:
Chapter 9-Garbage, Trash and Refuse, Article III. Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling, Section 9-59. Leaf, lawn, and garden matter.

The proposed Ordinances can be reviewed on the Town Website www.townofwarren-ri.gov or at the Town Clerk's Office, 514 Main Street Monday - Friday 8:30. A.M.-4:30. P.M.

Per Warren Town Council
Sandrea J. Speroni, CMC
Town Council Clerk
December 20, 2023

To Submit Community News

BY E-MAIL (PREFERRED):
lrego@eastbaymediagroup.com

BY MAIL: Warren Times, Community News,
P.O. Box 90, Bristol, RI 02809

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 253-6000, ext. 107
Or stop by our office at 1 Bradford St., Bristol.

Photos are encouraged. Email us a high-resolution jpg or tif and send it as an attachment.

DEADLINE: Noon on Mondays

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much value and through an exciting design process called "Re-Direction," Peter can transform these items into an entirely new piece of jewelry. These "Legacy" pieces are always an attractive and affordable way to leverage what you already own. Call or come into the Shop today for a free assessment of your old jewelry. Peter will identify what stones and diamonds are genuine and identify what type of

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THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

Ben Shaw: Musician, artist, modern-day renaissance man

This multi-talented singer, songwriter and musician believes music can save the world

BY MICHAEL KHOURI

Ben Shaw is a modern-day renaissance man. He has taken on the weighty role of singer, songwriter, guitarist, saxophonist, pianist, jazz/classical composer and author. Alas, like so many artists and musicians, he holds a day job to pay the bills – toiling as a landscaper. But in a poetic twist, the Portsmouth native's vocation projects a metaphor for his artistic interests and imagination, all of which cover widespread amounts of terrain, possi-

"Music is storied, it's mystery, it's magic. I want to examine life and music and experience it totally and find ways to express that to people."

■ BEN SHAW

bly more than can be explored, unearthed, seeded and nurtured by one cultivator in one lifetime. But the artist is determined to fulfill his aspirations before sunset.

Recently, on a crisp, clear fall afternoon, I caught up with Shaw at the Portsmouth Public House. Over a pint (or two) we chatted for the better part of an hour and a half. Articulate, intense and engaging, he was a perfect gentleman, who spoke in constant unbroken orations, seemingly planning and dreaming out loud. As he bubbled over with thoughts and ideas, one after another, he would now and again stop cold in his speech to edit for clarity and exactitude. A talented young man with a promising artistic future who, eerily, appears to have one eye on the clock.

"I grew up here two minutes down the road. I went to Portsmouth Middle School and Portsmouth High. It's a nice town, but it didn't have a big arts scene," said Shaw. "What they did have was good school band programs under the direction of Ted Rausch. He was a great guy who helped me see that music could be the thing for me. I played the saxophone. He must have seen something in me because even before that I somehow knew I was going to pursue music as a life-long goal.

I asked Shaw what and when was his first exposure to music

"My first memory of music is when I heard Elvis sing 'Heartbreak Hotel.' Right there something kind of lit up in my being. I was about four years old," said Shaw. "From that point on it's a bit of a blur, but that feeling I got when I heard Elvis sing stayed with me. I didn't grow up in a musical household; it was my own solitary thing. I didn't have people in my life that were musicians, I didn't know musicians. I didn't grow up with anyone really in the arts. My mom did reveal to me later in life that as a young girl she would write poetry. But in my youth no one around me was into anything creative."

What made music so special to you and what drew you to it?

"I'd hear music and be fascinated by it, the



EVAN ST. MARTIN

Ben Shaw, who grew up in Portsmouth and played in his school band, today plays multiple instruments, sings and writes his own music.

workings of it, how it came to be, the magic of it," said Shaw. "Even when you start to learn all the parts of music on your instrument, be it the chords or the notes, there is still something inexplicable, something indescribable. I guess what draws me to it is the pure mystery of it."

I wondered when Shaw began to write and arrange his own music?

"When I was in the boy scouts, to earn a music merit badge you had to write a melody. I was playing saxophone at the time, but I didn't know how to write. When you're learning your instrument, you have to play your scales and play what they tell you to play. I had never done anything like that before, so I just played around and came up with a melody," said Shaw. "It occurred to me that I could create a melody out of nothing, just pull it out of thin air. When I learned that you could create music and codify it into a melody, make up songs, write them down and compose, that's when things changed for me, what set in motion what was going to happen."

From jazz to rock

How did you get into Rock and Singer/Songwriter while you were playing mainly band and jazz saxophone?

"I played in the high school band, which was a great experience, just learning how to work with other musicians. After high school I went to URI for jazz composition. The teachers there were great. It was an excellent music program. I got involved in as much as I possibly could. I was in all the ensembles that I could be in," said Shaw. "While in college, I was listening to all kinds of music. There, I formed a band. It was a hip hop/funk/rock and roll band. I was writing that kind of stuff, as well as singer/songwriter stuff. Even though the class was jazz composition, the professors were very opened minded. They let me bring in whatever I wanted, even though it was strictly a jazz composition class. Their attitude was, it doesn't matter. There are no boundaries. It's all music as long as you're intentional and serious about what you're playing."

Do you prefer working with other musicians or working as a solo artist?

"I enjoy both equally. No one in my college band wanted to sing, so I stepped up and became the singer. The more I sang the more I enjoyed it. It was tiring trying to book a band, having to work around five or six people's schedules, so I decided to quit the band and become a singer/songwriter. It was easy

to book, easy to put together, self-contained. It was then that I experienced firsthand what I already knew – that the power of a single voice and a guitar can move mountains."

Music as math

My dad is an engineer and my mom's a teacher. Not that he's not empathetic, but I think I got my mom's value of empathy in trying to understand other people and trying to meet them where they are," said Shaw. "And my dad's brain is always trying to figure out everything. How does it work? He sees a door swing both ways and wants to know exactly what that function is. So, for me, music is a way to connect with people and understand the human experience, but also music is math. I have my Dad's head for math. I can break it down into chunks and understand it clinically as well as artistically."

Shaw explained to me that the roll of any musician or any artist is to take what they see in normal life and reflect it back to the audience in higher contrast in better or different colors to change their perception of it. To see how complex, beautiful, weird, and how ill-defined human experience is.

"Music doesn't exist, but it does exist. It's like in between worlds. It's just vibrations in the air. It lives in space and time. It's so different for everyone, yet so universal," said Shaw. "Some folks have trouble connecting to, for instance, Jazz and classical music because there are no words, just music alone without lyrics, but that can be just as moving and expressive and can affect you, just like seeing a beautiful sunset. No words are necessary. It can move you in ways that you might not even understand."

Playing locally

These days Shaw plays a wide variety of music and venues. An East Bay favorite, he has played The Galactic Theater and Warren Kouse of Pizza on Main Street in Warren as well as the Warren Folk Festival. Statewide, he runs a jazz jam at the Parlour in Providence the first Sunday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m. There Shaw plays sax in the house band. Other venues include The Graduate Sessions - an intimate setting for original songs and storytelling - at The Poindexter Café in Providence, and Askew Prov, where he plays guest sax for Funky Submarine. He has also appeared at Boston's famed Club Passim.

Shaw's recorded works are stylistically diverse. At the risk of hyperbole, it's astounding how one artist can be so magnificent in so many different musical arenas. Imagine singer, songwriter James Taylor playing jazz saxophone or jazz legend Charlie Parker as a singer, songwriter? Well, imagine no more. Shaw's EP "Seven Songs" is singer/songwriter, "Five Preludes for Solo Piano: No. 1" is classical, and "DIA" is jazz. All three digital albums are performed with such depth, breadth and feeling that one wonders why this artist isn't a household name.

And then there is his bohemian art piece, "Madeline."

A story through song

"Madeline is a concept album of nine songs that I believe flow well to tell a story. When I conceived the album, I started to create an over arcing narrative. This was during the pandemic," said Shaw. "I had already gotten

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JANET MOSCARELLO

Ben Shaw plays music year-round at a number of local venues, and he runs a jazz jam monthly in Providence.

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MUSIC: He writes, sings and plays multiple instruments

From Page 1

into short story writing, so I wrote a 17,000-word novella that compliments the music. If you buy the book you get the album along with it. I have physical copies and digital copies of the book. It's a limited run of 100 copies physically. But you don't need to read the book to understand the album."

Madeline is the saga of a beauty queen who seems to have her best days behind her. Working in a late night gas station off the highway, she struggles to find a minimum of dignity and purpose in her life. As Shaw's website explains, "... this is a story about ruined dreams and renewed possibility, of the life we imagined and the reality we find ourselves in, and the beautiful, complicated mess that is getting through a single day. This is for all who struggle to survive, who strive for a better life, and to those we've lost along the way."

"We did the album and show at the local Pawtucket art gallery, Machines with Magnets, and it was a great performance. The show was in the round. I had my friend Christine Treglia, a local actress at the Wilbur Theatre, prerecord some of the dialogue in the book. She imbued the character of Madeline. The dialogue came over the PA before the musicians and I played each song to assist in framing the story. People told me that they had never seen or heard anything like this. It was done with dedication, care and focus. In a sea of musicians playing locally and nationally, I wanted to separate myself with ideas that are more intense and different."

As we were concluding the interview, I asked Shaw if he had any last words or thoughts.

"Music is storied, it's mystery, it's magic. I want to examine life and music and experience it totally and find ways to express that to people. I've been reading a lot about loneli-



Ben Shaw is comfortable playing or writing jazz, rock and roll or a wide range of musical styles.

ness lately," said Shaw. "There's an epidemic of it in this country and across the world. Young and older people feeling alone, feeling cut off, and I think music is one of those great things that can bring people together and raise their voices in unison. That's what church does. People sing together in church because sharing music is profound and moving - as to be part of a greater spiritual whole. It could save the world."

Follow Ben at benjaminshawmusic.com.

Michael Khouri is a Barrington resident writing occasionally about the Rhode Island music scene. Reach him at mkhouri@cox.net.



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This feature is written by Hazel Bradley, a Kickemuit Middle School student. It offers pets for adoption from all East Bay shelters.



The Tides*

	HiAM	HiPM	LoAM	LoPM	Sunrise	Sunset
Wednesday, Dec. 20	1:42 (4.3)	2:05 (39)	8:01	7:53	7:06	4:19
Thursday, Dec. 21	2:42 (4.4)	3:06 (3.7)	9:23	8:49	7:06	4:20
Friday, Dec. 22	3:44 (4.5)	4:09 (3.6)	10:23	9:36	7:07	4:20
Saturday, Dec. 23	4:45 (4.6)	5:09 (3.7)	11:14	10:20	7:07	4:21
Sunday, Dec. 24	5:41 (4.7)	6:03 (3.8)	11:59	11:02	7:08	4:21
Monday, Dec. 25	6:31 (4.8)	6:52 (3.9)	12:42pm	11:44	7:08	4:22
Tuesday, Dec. 26	7:18 (4.7)	7:38 (3.9)	—	1:21	7:08	4:22
Wednesday, Dec. 27	8:02 (4.6)	8:22 (3.9)	12:28	1:56	7:09	4:23
Thursday, Dec. 28	8:45 (4.4)	9:05 (3.8)	1:14	2:29	7:09	4:24

New Moon Jan. 11 — Full Moon Dec. 26

* Information is based on tides in Bristol Harbor.

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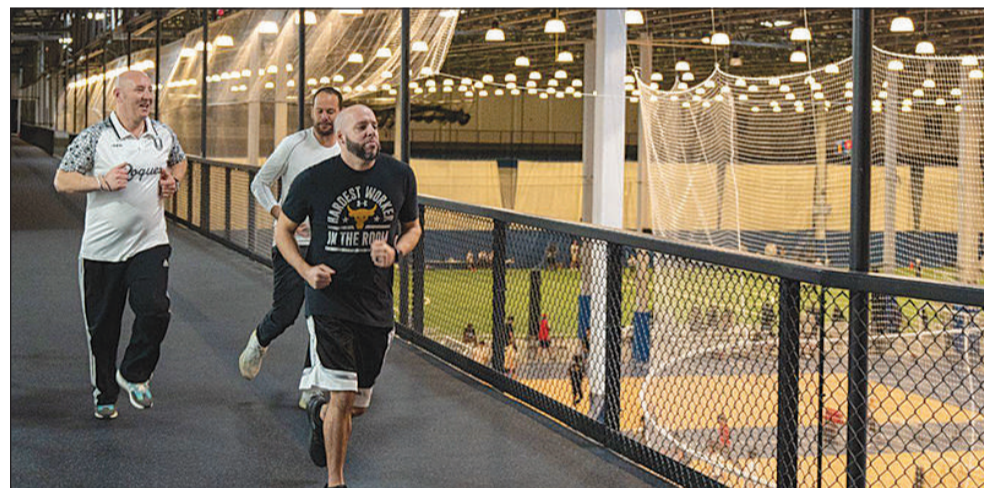
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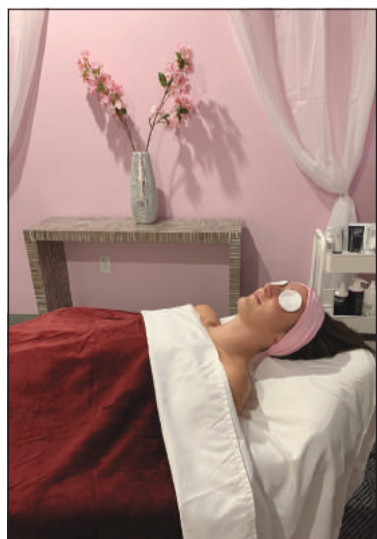




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TALKING POLITICS

Accountability and leadership in the I-195 crisis

STORY OF THE WEEK: The emergency closing of the westbound part of the Washington Bridge put Gov. Dan McKee — and how he performs during a crisis — under a microscope. McKee was initially out of sight as state officials prepared to close the bridge in one direction at 5 p.m. last Monday, leading Globe RI columnist Dan McGowan to assert he “is at his best in the easiest moments of being governor.” By Tuesday, McKee joined DOT Director Peter Alвити during a briefing with reporters and the governor remained visible for the remainder of the week.

On Wednesday, McKee exhibited a tendency familiar to political reporters when he said it was “out of line ... beyond the pale” for WJAR-TV’s Brian Crandall to ask if changes had been discussed involving DOT, including the possible resignation of Alвити. A day later, the governor struck a more conciliatory tone, calling oversight for the work of state officials welcome. It helped that bypass lanes on the

eastbound Washington Bridge, to allow the resumption of westbound traffic, opened early Friday.

Ensuring the smooth operation of roads and bridges is a basic function of government, and when things go wrong — with gridlocked traffic and hours-long travel times — it becomes very tangible. But if the worst of this is now over, the political fallout could be minimal. McKee and Alвити maintain the state averted a catastrophe, and they say the damage that forced the partial closing of the bridge was not evident during an inspection in July. If that account holds up, McKee can trumpet how the state faced a crisis and made significant progress in addressing it within a few days. (For views on this issue from R.I. House GOP Leader Mike Chippendale and former GOP gubernatorial candidate Ken Block, read on to Takes of the Week.)

STATEHOUSE: House Speaker Joe Shekarchi remains guarded about his political future, using standard bromides about how 2026 is a long way away (not really) and he doesn’t aspire to be speaker in perpetuity (we get it). But during a year-end interview, Shekarchi made clear that he does not share the traditional view of the speakership as a terminal position. That leaves unanswered for now whether the Warwick Democrat will bide his time, seek a different office in the next statewide election or pursue the more typical option of a return to the private sector.

ON THE ISSUES: Not surprisingly, Speaker Shekarchi is tamping down expectations about expansive spending, now that the gusher of federal COVID funding is over. After consecutive budget surpluses, something that would have been unimaginable a decade ago, “We’re going to learn to live — when I say we, the state, is going to learn to live like every other Rhode Islander within the means of its budget.” On housing, Shekarchi attributed a lack of progress to how the many bills meant to help address the crisis do not take effect until Jan. 1. The speaker said he believes the life-sciences has real potential as a new economic sector in the state.

Shekarchi, who met a few weeks back with Attorney General Peter Neronha to talk healthcare and hospitals, said he is awaiting a Rhode Island Foundation report on how the state may address long-running concerns about reimbursement rates and related issues: “I’m going to work, continue to work with the Department of Health, continuing to work with the governor, to identify problems we can fix in the short term. But you are correct. This is a long-term sustainability issue. And we need to look with our partners. This is going to affect everybody in Rhode Island. Healthcare is our number one employer statewide. And we have two hospital systems that are least stable at the moment and are in the black. However, we don’t know what’s going to happen in the long term. The reason they’re stable in the black right now is they deferred a lot of maintenance. And that’s not necessarily a good thing.”

PROSPECT: On a related note, Neronha’s office and the Health Department this week deemed complete an application by the Georgia-based Centurion Foundation to buy CharterCARE, parent of Roger Williams Medical Center in Providence and Our Lady of Fatima Hospital in North Providence. The two state agencies now have 180 days to review the proposed deal. CharterCARE is owned by Prospect Medical Holdings, which has faced regulatory action from DOH and the AG’s office for draining money from its Rhode Island hospitals. But United Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents workers at Roger Williams and Fatima, remains critical about a lack of communication from Centurion. “More than six months ago, the UNAP gave Centurion officials a written proposal, asking them to agree to basic commitments that would ensure protections against layoffs, hospital closures, and termination or reduction of services,” UNAP President Lynn Blais said in a statement. “To this day, they have failed to make these basic commitments. Centurion can not expect the Attorney General and Department of Health to approve their application to buy these healthcare facilities when they can’t even commit to the most basic obligations to patients, families, and healthcare workers. And they certainly can not expect the UNAP or our members to support this transaction in the absence of these basic commitments.”

MEDIA: Providence Business News, co-founded in 1986 by Roger Bergenheim, has been sold to Dubuque, Iowa-based Woodward Communications. In a news release, Bergeheim said he agreed to the sale since

Woodward is committed to its employees and plans to keep PBN’s staff locally based, with AnnMarie Brisson, who started as director of sales in 2015, stepping in as publisher. “It’s been an honor to serve the business community for the past 37 years,” said Bergenheim, who is retiring and will continue to consult for one year. “I’m immensely proud of the staff at PBN and am grateful for the support of our loyal readers, advertisers, and contributors, throughout this incredible journey.” Among its other attributes, PBN is well known as a training ground for such notables as Patrick Anderson of the ProJo, Alexa Gagosz of Globe RI, Nancy Lavin of the RI Current, and Eli Sherman and Ted Nesi of WPRI, and David “Little Papi” Ortiz, now with Orsted North America.

PARTISAN BALANCE: Secretary of State Gregg Amore, a Democrat, is also a longtime former history teacher with an appreciation for civics. Considering that, I asked him on Political Roundtable to diagnose why Rhode Island Republicans are struggling to win more offices. His response: “I think Gerry Leonard is a good example of the type of candidate that Republicans should start to put forward in Rhode Island. I would call those old New England Republicans or Chafee Republicans. The national playbook does not work here in Rhode Island for Republicans. And what, what has happened is Republicans in Rhode Island, and many of my former colleagues in the General Assembly don’t fit this bill, but Republicans in Rhode Island have kind of taken on the talking points of the national party. And that really is not a recipe for success in Rhode Island. Look, we’re, we’re so much better off with a strong two-party system, both nationally and here in Rhode Island, it creates a better democracy, more debate, more competitive elections. That’s healthy. I would say that the Republican Party needs to shift back toward the center, and back toward its New England, Republican roots.”

PAYDAY: Efforts to cap interest on payday lending cleared the RI House this year, on a 66-2 vote, and then died in the Senate. Rhode Island remains an outlier on payday lending in New England. Now, U.S. Sen. Jack Reed is co-sponsoring a bill, modeled on the Military Lending Act, that would cap interest on consumer loans at 36%. “The MLA’s success demonstrates a feasible framework that protects consumers while preserving access to credit,” Reed said in a statement. “Our service members and their families should not lose important consumer protections simply because they retire, separate from honorable service, or lose their loved ones. Frankly, no American should be subject to such exorbitant interest rates. As such, our legislation would extend the MLA’s protections to veterans and Gold Star families as well as ensure that all Americans are shielded from predatory loans.”

TAKES OF THE WEEK — a mix of views from various Rhode Islanders
RI House GOP Leader MIKE CHIPPENDALE of Foster: “The I-195 bridge closure is

See **FACING PAGE**



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Ken Block: The government needs to restore our trust, not demand it

From **FACING PAGE**

devastating in so many ways to Rhode Island. We are blessed that the failure didn't lead to catastrophic loss of life. As the state works to address the immediate public safety and commuter horrors, I wish to commend Mayors DaSilva and Smiley — and all mayors in affected municipalities — for their rapid response and efforts to ease the pain of commuters. However, the negative impact of this closure on public safety, commerce, scholastic sports, education, daily commuters, and people desperately trying to get to a hospital or doctor will be long lasting and severe.

"I call on state leadership to break from tradition and demonstrate intrepid innovation to overcome this devastating blow to our infrastructure and economy and fix this problem quickly. It is imperative that without interfering in the emergency response to the bridge failure, we immediately begin the oversight process in the House to determine how such a devastating failure could have occurred without our inspectors discovering it, and how we must change our demonstrably inadequate inspection system. The administration's insistence that they are not to blame, rather heroes for shutting it down — coupled with their violent pushback to anyone questioning accountability, is completely out of line and answers must be given.

"How many other bridges underwent the same 'inspection' process? How many other bridges are on the verge of collapse? How do we go forward with any faith in the transportation experts in our state?"

VIMALA PHONGSAVANH, senior director for external affairs at Planned Parenthood Votes! Rhode Island: "This week the U.S. Supreme Court announced it would hear arguments in *Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine et al v. U.S. Food and Drug Administra-*

tion et al. This case centers around the anti-abortion movement's effort to end FDA's approval of mifepristone, a safe, effective medication that has been used by over five million people in the United States for over two decades. It is imperative that the court rejects this calculated effort, recognizing it as part of a long-term strategy by anti-abortion groups to use the court system to ban abortion nationwide. This case not only endangers abortion care but also sets a precedent that could jeopardize the entire drug approval process, putting all approved medications at the mercy of political agendas.

"The intentional chaos and confusion generated by this case undermines accessibility to a medically approved and decades-old medication, posing a direct threat to patients' autonomy to make their own private medical decisions. Planned Parenthood Votes! Rhode Island remains steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that all individuals have access to essential health care they need on their terms. The Planned Parenthood health center in Providence continues to provide medication abortion as an option for eligible patients seeking abortion care in Rhode Island and as always, will follow evidence-based standards to provide safe, high-quality abortion care consistent with all state and federal regulations.

"As this case continues, elected officials must continue to prioritize protecting access to abortion and reproductive health care. This fight extends beyond the courtroom; it is an urgent call for bold action to safeguard the fundamental right of individuals to make their own health care decisions."

Businessman and former GOP gubernatorial candidate KEN BLOCK: "The emergency closure of the 195 West bridge in Providence and the state's messaging during the crisis has been many things: shocking, incon-

venient, maddening, and outrageous, for just a few. I want to add ironic. RhodeWorks — the hugely expensive Gina Raimondo-era road maintenance program that state officials have described as a shining example of government working well — was supposed to rid our state of poorly maintained roads and bridges. How did this program miss the failing 195 bridge — for the better part of a decade? More importantly, how did the DOT not see this catastrophic, and nearly deadly, failure coming?

"Their job is to proactively protect the public and our infrastructure, not sever critical arteries because they could fall if more than one ambulance crosses at a time. The press conferences have been a disaster. Gov. McKee skipped the first one that announced the emergency, but his campaign posted photos of the governor schmoozing it up at a pizza joint just an hour before. The leadoff to each press conference has been a simpering stream of acknowledgments and thanks to individuals and groups working on the disaster. At the same time, over 100,000+ people try to decide if they should hit the road at 5:30 am or 5:45 a.m. to make what should have been a 20-minute trip in less than an hour — and thousands of people who left after 6:00 am suffered two, three, and four-hour gridlock. School buses in East Providence had police escorts with flashing lights to help cut through the traffic jams.

"Worse has been the continuing message by state officials, from the governor on down, congratulating themselves for preventing a fatal failure. Apparently, failing at doing their job to ensure the safety of our roads and bridges is just fine, as long as nobody dies. Why are our elected and appointed officials wasting our time spinning a message that most people — especially those sitting for hours in their vehicles — know not to be true? In a crisis, shouldn't those managing the crisis

simply be concerned about conveying crucial information and critical updates on how to cope and when things will get better? Stop the spin! It comes across as desperate. Maybe it is.

"Across several years of inspection reports that the DOT has slowly provided over this week, what is clear is that the steel in this bridge has been disappearing for quite some time. Critical components are described as having lost half of their original material — in reports dating back several years. The bridge's failure should have surprised no one tasked with maintaining it. With all of the spin, deflection, and aggression displayed by the governor and director, it is hard to determine why we have arrived at this place. We deserve a full accounting of what happened and where the failure lies — not in the bridge itself, but with the government entities tasked with ensuring that our bridges do not disintegrate mid-air.

"It is the government's responsibility to restore lost trust, not angrily demand that trust. Our transportation infrastructure and the Department of Transportation are not covered in glory. And now, we have a massive reminder of just how terrible our infrastructure remains. Do these public officials not understand how incidents like this shake the public's trust and confidence to the core? I'll take my pizza without spin, please, governor."

COMING UP I: The General Assembly resumes action on Jan. 2.

KICKER: Happy holidays to all and best wishes for a happy New Year! My column is taking a break for two weeks, but I'll be back in early 2024.

Ian Donnis can be reached at idonnis@the-publicsradio.org.

The Lobster Pot

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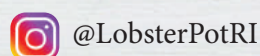
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'Holiday Lights Spectacular' at the zoo

The annual spectacular transforms the 40-acre zoo into a mesmerizing display of over 3.5 million illuminated lights. Guests can revel in the joy of the season amid larger-than-life displays, radiant reindeer and sparkling snowmen.

WHAT: Holiday Lights Spectacular

WHEN: Through Dec. 31 from 5 to 9:30 p.m.

WHERE: Roger Williams Park Zoo, 1000 Elmwood Ave., Providence

COST: \$12 to \$14

MORE INFO: Tickets online only at www.rwpzoo.org/holiday-lights

December school vacation week fun

Nature crafts are each day, a nature story is at 10 a.m., and animal interviews are at 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Special programs for children are at 1 p.m. for children 6 and older. Space is limited.

— Dec. 27: Owl presentation. Meet one of their owl ambassadors and learn all about these amazing creatures, their habits and habitats.

— Dec. 28: Fairy fort building. Head outside to the woods at the nature center to build tiny forts and shelters for fairies and other small critters.

— Dec. 29: Winter nature hike. Weather dependent. WHAT: School vacation week activities

WHEN: Wednesday to Friday, Dec. 27 to 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Audubon Society of Rhode Island's Nature Center and Aquarium at 1401 Hope St., Bristol

COST: Free with admission; registration is not required

MORE INFO: www.asri.org



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|  | Woodbridge (All Type)
1.5L \$9.99 |  | Barefoot (All Type)
1.5L \$9.99 |
|  | Mezzacorona (All Type)
1.5L \$10.99 |  | |
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| Beringer (All Type) 1.5L..... | \$8.99 |
| Cavit (All Type) 1.5L..... | \$10.99 |
| Clos du Bois (Chardonnay) 1.5L.. | \$15.99 |
| Bread & Butter (All Type) 750ML | \$11.99 |
| Apothic Wine 750ML..... | \$9.99 |
| CupCake (wines only) 750ML..... | \$7.99 |
| Kendall Jackson Grand Reserve Pinot Noir 750ML..... | \$19.99 |
| Meiomi Pinot Noir 750ML..... | \$17.99 |
| Black Box (All Type) 3L..... | \$16.99 |

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750ML \$64.99 |
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| Ruffino Prosecco 750ML..... | \$11.99 |
| Martini Asti 750ML..... | \$11.99 |
| Lamarca Prosecco 750ML..... | \$15.99 |
| Mionetto Prosecco 750ML..... | \$12.99 |
| LES ALLIES BRUT 750ml..... | \$6.99 |
| 90+ Prosecco 750ml..... | \$8.99 |

SPIRITS (GIFT SETS AVAILABLE)

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|  | Bacardi Superior Light
1.75L \$19.99 |  | Jack Daniel's
1.75L \$40.99 |
|  | Casamigos Blanco
750ml \$37.99 |  | Baileys Irish Cream Original
1 750ML \$24.99 |
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| Jim Beam Bourbon 1.75L..... | \$28.99 |
| Captain Morgan Spiced Rum 1.75L..... | \$23.99 |
| Svedka vodka (All Type) 1.75L.... | \$16.99 |
| Makers Mark 750ml..... | \$29.99 |
| Evan William 1.75L..... | \$24.99 |
| Dewars White Label 1.75L..... | \$29.99 |
| Jameson Orange 1.75L..... | 2 For \$50 |
| Smirnoff Vodka 1.75L..... | \$19.99 |
| Ketel One Vodka 1.75L..... | \$29.99 |
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750ML \$22.99 |
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| Macieira Brandy 1.00L..... | \$13.99 |
| JP Red 750ML..... | \$5.99 |
| Aveleda vinho verde 750ML..... | \$5.99 |
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East Bay Real Estate

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East Bay Real Estate December 20-21, 2023

Charming home nestled in Riverside, overlooking Narragansett Bay



This charming home sits high on a bluff overlooking Sabin Point and Narragansett Bay.



The primary bedroom, with cathedral ceiling and jacuzzi tub, facing out toward the water.



The family room has a gas fireplace, water views and sliders to the back yard.



The view from the back yard, looking over Narragansett Bay.

On the market in Riverside is a charming home overlooking upper Narragansett Bay. A modern kitchen with black stainless appliances purchased four years ago and mosaic floor tiles opens to a family room with a gas fireplace, two sliding glass doors, and a large window with panoramic water views.

The first floor also features bamboo flooring, a living room, and a half-bath.

The upstairs includes a bedroom with cathedral ceilings, a primary bathroom with a stand-up shower, jacuzzi tub, and radiant floor heat, and a laundry area. Step through the sliding glass door off the bedroom to a large aluminum deck perfect for entertaining, enjoying picturesque sunsets, or scenic dining.

The fenced-in backyard and fire pit overlook Pom-

ham Rocks Lighthouse, downtown Providence, and Cranston's Edgewood marina. The bottom of the bluff is protected by a stone retaining wall. Pilings are positioned with the potential for the new owner to build stairs for direct access to the water. Perched on a bluff, this home is not within a flood plain.

The home also has a new central air-cooling system and on-demand hot water.

By the numbers

\$599,900

1 bed

1.5 baths

1,156 sq. ft.

4,720 sq. ft. lot

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BRISTOL
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BRISTOL \$699,900
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One level charmer w/ eat-in-kitchen w/ granite, SS appl., hardwood flooring, sunroom.
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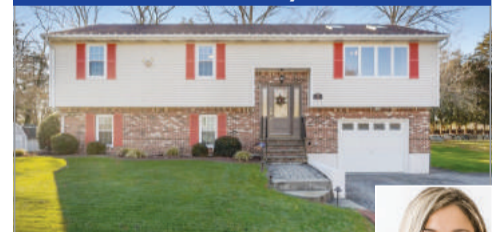
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BRISTOL
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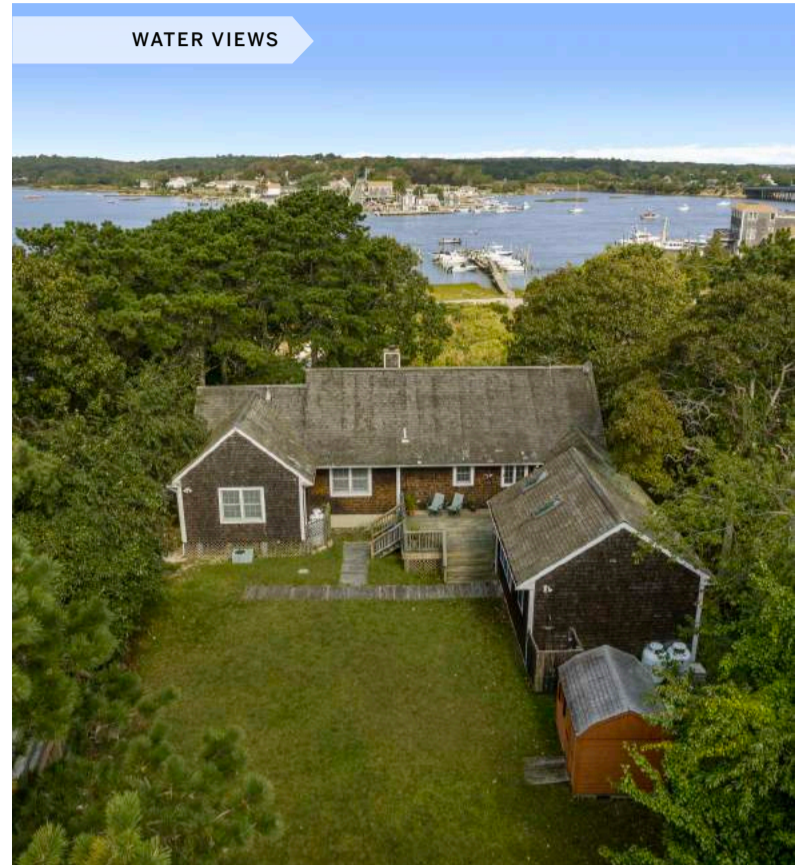
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Bristol: Waterview 3 bed, 1 bath, 2nd floor apartment. Close to shops and beaches. No smoking or pets. Available starting Dec 1. \$2,200/month+ utilities. T.L. Holland Real Estate 401-624-8469

East Providence: \$1,750 2 bed 1.5 bath 1,372 SF first floor duplex for rent. Large eat-in KIT, SS appliances, freshly painted w/ lots of natural light, private front & side entrance. BROOKE BUCKETT 401-523-8596.

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Little Compton: Winter Rental - Near South Shore beach with 3 beds/2 full baths and exterior deck with amazing water views

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833 Hope St	Michael J. Kelly	Elizabeth C. Robinson Est. and Henry Robinson	\$486,000
224 Wood St	Mario and Alicia Martins	Sophie A. Sousa	\$400,000
25 Tobin Ln	J. F. Jones R.E.T. and Jennifer Jones	Christine S. Browne	\$640,000
670 Metacom Ave	David J. Ramos	East Bay Hldg & Rlty LLC	\$250,000
3 Brian Dr	Broomhead Pro Inc.	Sharon Francis	\$245,000
673 Metacom Ave #51	Andrew J. Gonsalves	Marie Zielenski T.	\$260,000
105 Kickemuit Ave	Stephen Payne and Mary Morris	Caromile Construction LLC	\$792,500
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51 Bristol Ave	Nichole Neves and Janet Andrews	Monika C. Wilson	\$279,900
148 Burgess Ave	Fernande Berard	Mario and Cynthia Campbell	\$332,000
19 Larchwood Dr	Nathan J. Fortes	Daniel and Janet Landry	\$620,000
41 Lena St	Jiesaliz R. Carmenatty	Richard and Ronald Faria	\$325,000
49 Breeze Ave	Tracy E. Keller	John E Deaton R.E.T.	\$470,000
112 Grosvenor Ave	Rosangela C. Tavares	Rosangela Tavares and Ara Yaghsizian	\$35,000
263 Warren Ave	Mac-Clen Pierre	Rose Realty Co.	\$245,000
21 Elmwood Dr	Janet and Daniel Landry	Jay and Elaine Newman	\$375,000
LITTLE COMPTON			
28 John Dyer Rd	Robert Magown and Peter Prasinios	Donna L. Gardella Est. and Hanorah Tyer-Witek	\$310,000
Oliver Ln	Little Compton Agricultur	J. R. Ratcliffe and Edith T. Ratcliffe	\$830,000
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6 Vitruvian Ln	Roso Inv Realy T. and Joshua Camara	Joshua Camara and Devon Degrazia	\$130,000
29 Alicia Cir	Krzysztof Chorzepa and Amanda Van Der-Heiden	Kathleen A. Malmgren T.	\$742,000
WARREN			
92 Harris Ave	Margaret Quick and Michael Mello	Robert Caron and Barbara Heim	\$350,000
31 Serpentine Rd	Jonathan and Jillian Cornell	Merton and Melanie Caton	\$400,000
581 Child St	East Bay Cmnty Dev. Corp.	Theresa P. Catalano R.E.T. and Gina Catalano	\$800,000
WESTPORT			
27 Christine Dr	Stacy and Brian Boutwell	David Fournier	\$492,000
171 Gifford Rd	Richard and Laura Mundy	R & D I.R.T. and Ryan Landry	\$500,000
204 Main Rd	Deanna Lockard	Michel & J. A. Duval I.R.T. and Michael Duval	\$615,000
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In order to be considered for the position an application form, resume and cover letter must be received at the Warren Town Clerk's Office. More detailed application information and description of duties and qualifications is available on the town's website, www.townofwarren-ri.gov, or in the Town Clerk's Office, 514 Main St., Warren, RI 02885, between the hours of 8:30 A.M to 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday.

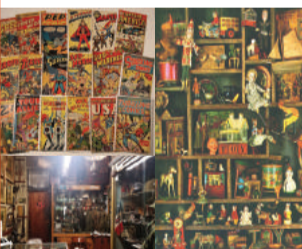
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