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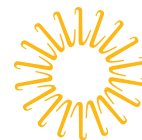


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Photo courtesy of The Ocean House

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Photo courtesy of the
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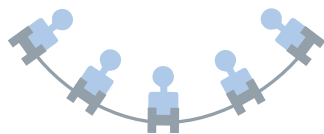


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The Scoop

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SOWING SEEDS OF STEWARDSHIP

The South Kingstown Land Trust raises funds for new facilities to expand community engagement

If you've hiked the public access trail and taken in the pastoral views of mist settling over Weeden Farm or the carefully maintained wildlife habitats, you've experienced firsthand the rigorous, though often unpublicized, efforts the South Kingstown Land Trust puts into the grounds. "During the pandemic, many people have rediscovered the essential role open space plays in the life of the community," says the land trust's executive director Julia Landstreet, noting the uptick in trail use these past months have seen. "SKLT kept all trails open last spring and many found them a treasured respite from a long gray winter and no social interaction."

But maintenance and stewardship of the 97-acre parcel of land doesn't come without costly projects managed by a nimble, mostly part-time staff, which is where SKLT's Capital Campaign – Build Now, Protect Forever – comes into play. Among other long-term stewardship functions, the main goal is to build a new facility on Weeden Farm, which will complement the area's historic sense of place in design, to house maintenance equipment and serve as a staff hub of collaborative output. "From this facility and with increased proximity to the barn, SKLT will be able to offer additional educational programs, field trips, consultation for farmers, and land stewards," says Landstreet.

Beyond offering a naturally socially distanced space for folks to escape to this past year, Weeden Farm's uses are numerous. "There are tenants who farm corn, hay, and row crops. One who pastures livestock. There are wildlife research projects, pollinator patches, managed habitat, carefully restored historic stone walls, and a public access trail," says Landstreet. She explains that SKLT also plays a critical role in local food access: "Rhode Island has the most expensive farmland in the country and we work to help farmers secure funding that helps protect the land for future generations and provides valuable capital support for their operations."

To facilitate their wide-ranging functions, having staff on-hand in an accessible, centrally located campus will help ensure a legacy of land stewardship for future generations to enjoy and foster awareness of the natural world. Through December, a generous donor is matching all gifts, up to \$100,000, raised for the Capital Campaign to help SKLT meet their \$1 million goal. And if the outdoors are calling to you, volunteers are always appreciated, too. "This winter, we hope to enlist volunteers to help us clean the invasive exotic plants from the building site and other properties in our care," says Landstreet. "Winter may be cold, but it is a great time to get outside and enjoy the beauty of South Kingstown." *To donate, visit SKLT.org/SupportSKLT/Capital-Campaign | By Abbie Lahmers*

Photo courtesy of the South Kingstown Land Trust

Rhode Trippin' to Westerly

The seaside town transforms for Christmastime with shopping, tradition, and no shortage of cheer

Some say that Rhode Islanders don't like going anywhere more than 10 minutes from home, but with the travel bug biting, many of us are now looking for in-state ideas for an afternoon, daytrip, or staycation. Each month, Bob Curley, author of *100 Things to Do in Rhode Island Before You Die*, will share about places to go within our own state border - starting this month with a place in your own "backyard" - Westerly.

The holiday season may be first and foremost about faith and family, but there's also a yearning for simpler times woven into our Christmas celebrations and rituals. When I'm in the mood for some real-world Peace on Earth, for example, I enjoy a silent night of walking the streets of Newport, with the windows of its colonial homes lit by flickering candles. But when I'm channeling Dickens - and maybe a little Ralphie Parker - I prefer to bundle up and head down to Westerly.

In normal times, Westerly comes alive during the holidays with a shopping stroll, Santa's arrival in Dixon Square, and a concert by the Chorus of Westerly. But while things will be different in 2020, even COVID-19 can't kill the spirit of Christmas.

Santa Claus will still be coming to town, but this year he'll be greeting kids in a drive-through event at the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce that will also feature a light display and an outdoor holiday market. "Westerly is committed to maintaining the magic of the holidays and salvaging every time-honored tradition that we can," says Chamber President Lisa Konicki.

As always, historic Wilcox Park will be open until 9pm nightly so you can wander the manicured grounds of the Victorian-era park to visit the town's Christmas tree - it's particularly beautiful with a dusting of snow on the ground. The outdoor Washington Trust Community Skating Rink on Main Street will be open

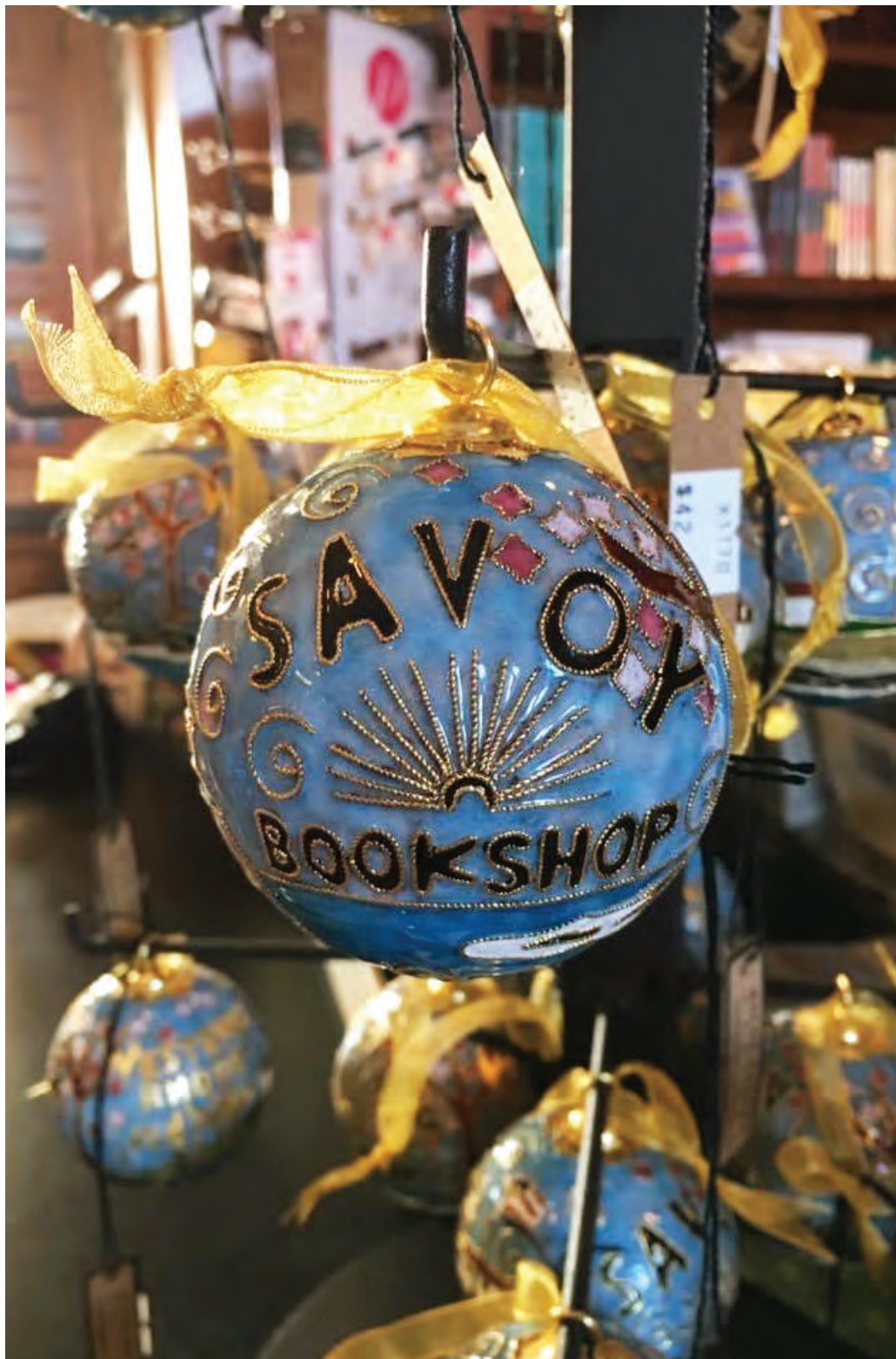


Photo by Elyse Major

Happy Holidays

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for socially distanced skating all winter long, as well. Hot chocolate is served to keep you warm between laps, or you can pick up coffee at the Savoy Bookstore & Cafe or some hot cider at Perks & Corks, both on High Street.

Downtown's compact business district is right-sized for holiday gift shopping, with favorites like Christina's Ltd. and Woodmansee's gift boutique housed in beautiful brick-faced storefronts reminiscent of an English market town. On the other hand, Westerly's grand public buildings, including the columned post office and the elegant town library, offer season's greetings from classic small-town America - perfect for a nostalgic walk on tree-lined streets lit with festive white lights.

As usual, Westerly's Ocean House - along with its sister hotel the Weekapaug Inn - is going all out for the holidays. The grand Victorian hotel in Watch Hill will raise a Christmas tree of its own on Thanksgiving weekend, kicking off a season of holiday events including classes on making gingerbread houses, Christmas centerpieces, and yule logs.

Kids can have Sunday brunch with Santa at either hotel, and special menus will be offered for a Christmas Eve Feast of the Fishes, along with Christmas Day brunch and dinner. The Weekapaug Inn's Cinema Under the Stars series will feature holiday movies like *Elf*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, and *Miracle on 34th Street*.

If ever there was a year to say goodbye to, it's 2020. The Ocean House sends the old year packing in style with a New Year's Eve dinner and New Year's Day brunch, though you'll have to book a weekend stay to join the party. Feeling hopeful about 2021? Cozy up to a dune at nearby Napatree Point to greet the sunrise on January 1 (or maybe do your own personal polar plunge?), then warm up at the Cooked Goose, one of the state's top breakfast joints.



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Howl-iday Gift Guide

As you're making your list and checking it twice, make sure to grab a special something for your pet

For most of us, our pet isn't just a pet - they're a member of the family. So when you're buying gifts for the holidays, chances are you have an extra stocking to fill with toys and treats. Skip the big-box stores and opt for any of these specialty small, family-owned retailers that put fur-babies first, selling whimsical goodies like gingerbread snacks, plush toys, and festive collars.

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Find themed treats galore like a variety of wholesome Bark Bars snack packs for Christmas or Hanukkah, like gingerbread treats made to look like Santa's milk and cookies, and latkes and applesauce-flavored ones in the shape of dreidels. *North Kingstown, AquaticsAndPetStore.com*

ALLIE'S FEED, FARM & PET

While this farm supply store is stocked with goods for equine and livestock, it also boasts an inventory of local products for both humans and their animal

companions. Around the holidays, look for red-and-green collars by Creative Works RI, Christmas dog biscuits, fluffy toys shaped like Santa and Rudolph, and even a nugget wreath for wild birds! *North Kingstown, ShopAllies.com*

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For 40 years Critter Hut has catered to every kind of pet - whether feathered, finned, or furry. Browse their collection of everyday supplies, but don't miss Christmas specials like all-natural peanut butter dog treats formed into trees and stockings. *Wakefield, Facebook: Critter Hut*

FETCH RI

This boutique pet store has no shortage of stocking stuffers: festive squeaky and plush toys, treats shaped like "lumps of coal" or flavored with pumpkin and cranberry, and even an advent calendar for man's best friend filled with a variety of goodies. *Richmond, FetchRI.com*



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BONE APPETIT

This eco-friendly dog store has toys galore for your pup: plushies with holiday sentiments (Peace, Jolly, Merry, and Believe), personalities (Naughty or Nice), and shapes like gingerbread men and elves, plus plenty of festive wholesome biscuits. *East Greenwich, BoneAppetitDogBakery.com*

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COVID-19 amplifies affordable housing crisis in RI's South County

In the higher-priced coastal areas, more people are facing housing insecurity, turning to temporary assistance, shelter beds, motel stays, and friends' couches to keep a roof overhead. Some fear the situation could get worse.

Deb moved to South County from Massachusetts two-and-a-half years ago, looking for a new start by the ocean. With a background in nursing, she decided to start a footcare business.

She made connections, had brochures professionally made, and was getting ready to launch. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and because of a pre-existing lung condition, Deb put her plans on hold out of fear of being infected. With no income, she lost the place she was renting in Charlestown.

"I didn't have a place to live," said Deb, whose full name is not being used to protect her privacy. "And so some friends drove 700 miles from Virginia and helped pack me up and took me back to their home so that I would have a place to lay my head."

Deb said she's adamant about remaining positive and hopes to soon be back in Rhode Island, where she's left her belongings with a friend. But she said her situation is shocking. As a nurse and volunteer, Deb's used to being the person who helps other people.

"I actually consider myself very privileged," she said by phone. "I never expected to be in the position that I'm in. There's only one place left and that's up."

In the months since the pandemic hit, stories like Deb's have become more common.

On a recent weekday, Hattie Fairbanks, housing navigator at the WARM Center in Westerly, read over a list of people who have come to the homeless shelter and social services agency for emergency housing assistance.

"Almost everyone here says lost wages? COVID, lost wages? COVID," Fairbanks said. "We have [a] mother and two children in a hotel. She lost her income due to COVID. We have a young couple. Both lost their jobs because of COVID. There's a tremendous COVID impact on the list that I'm looking at."

Fairbanks spends her days searching for affordable apartments, working with landlords who have helped her clients in the past, placing people in motels, and connecting clients with assistance programs.



She said she sees one to two new cases every day and already has a list some 500 cases long.

"I would say, right now, we're up by 20 percent in the numbers of people that we're seeing who are at risk of becoming homeless or who have become homeless," said Russ Partridge, executive director of the WARM Center.

[DISCLOSURE: The author's wife serves on the WARM Center Board of Directors.]

Partridge said more people are struggling to make rent because of cuts to the tourism and service industries, economic drivers in South County.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, between March 9 and September 12, more than 2,600 Washington County residents previously employed in the leisure and hospitality sector filed for unemployment insurance.

"These are people who are new," Partridge said. "So they're coming in really frightened that A: they may not get the answers that they need and get the resources that they need, but

in the end, they may become homeless."

Sarah Cote, of the Jonnycake Center social services agency in Westerly, said the COVID-19 pandemic is "exacerbating a situation, as it relates to affordable housing, that I think has already existed in this area, and we're just seeing it more acutely now."

Excluding Block Island, all Washington County towns are short of the state's goal of having 10 percent of a municipality's housing stock qualify as low-and moderate-income housing, and a majority of towns are below six percent.

"All of the communities in South County are well above what people can afford," said Brenda Clement, executive director of HousingWorks RI.

A major problem is the fact that many property owners can get more renting to college students during the school year and vacationers in the summer.

Alice Buckley, executive director of the Washington County Community Development Corporation, said the current housing sales boom has also made it harder for her organization to buy

new properties to create more affordable units.

“The availability is just not there,” Buckley said. “The prices are quite high and they sell pretty quickly. You really need to have a seller who is somewhat passionate about affordable housing.”

Last month, the CDC issued an eviction moratorium through the end of the year, but renters need to submit a declaration to their landlord to be protected, continue to make what payments they can, and pay back rent when the order expires.

With uncertainty around a government stimulus package and the possibility of a COVID-19 resurgence looming, some worry the situation could get worse for people facing housing insecurity.

Charlene Traynum, of South Kingstown, says

she can empathize with people struggling, because she’s faced her own housing challenges.

On a recent weekday, she toured her backyard with a reporter, pointing out vegetables growing in the garden.

“We have corn this year. We have red cabbage, regular cabbage,” she said.

Traynum lives with her husband and kids in a single family house with a big yard in the back for her dog to play in.

But, last year she was scrambling after her landlord decided to sell the home she’d been in for 11 years. Rental prices elsewhere in town were high, and she spent months trying to find a place she could afford.

In the end, she signed a lease on a new place, but, at nearly \$1,800 a month, it’s about \$450 more than she was paying. Still,

she says, she’s grateful.

“I’m happy. I’m secure. I’m in a good place,” Traynum said. “Hopefully, from this point, I’ll be able to go into purchasing my own [home]?that’s the goal. We don’t ever want to have to do this again. It’s the worst feeling in the world.”

Traynum said her experience has also inspired her to push for changes that could help other people in South Kingstown.

“I’m just becoming a stronger advocate,” she said. “I need to make a difference. I need to help somewhere. To change it, you got to be involved in your community. You have to know what’s going on in your community.”

Earlier this year, Traynum joined the South Kingstown Housing Authority. She has several goals, and one is to push for more affordable housing in the town.



Photos by Alex Nunes

The WARM Center homeless shelter and social services agency in Westerly

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Scott Groome
The Artist

THE MUST LIST

5 essential events happening this month



For a statewide listing of events visit us online! HeyRhody.com

December 5-6:

Bosgraaf Stained Glass Studio's **Holiday Sale** will feature festive, colorful glass works by student artists, with a portion of proceeds benefiting the Jonnycake Center. *Peace Dale, BosgraafStudio.com*

Through December: Downcity strolls for **Open Air Saturdays** continue through the holiday season, with even more craft vendors, live entertainment, and a pop-up beer garden at Grant's Block. *Providence, InDowncity.com*

Through December: While the Polar Express will stay at the station until next year, the **Search for Santa river ride** is a new, socially distant holiday experience aboard the Blackstone Valley Explorer. *Central Falls, BlackstoneValleyPolarExpress.com*

December 4: Stroll through shops among lit luminaries at Tiverton Four Corners during **Holiday Bright Night**, and take in their festive re-Tree art installation in the village through December 18. *Tiverton, TivertonFourCorners.com*

December 6, 13 & 20: Peruse wares made by some of New England's finest artisans at the **Providence Artisans Holiday Show**, which takes place in the open space of Hope Artiste Village. *Pawtucket, Facebook: Providence Artisans Market*

Photos courtesy of Bosgraaf Stained Glass Studio




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Jamestown. Unique approach to contemporary coastal design. Expansive views of Narragansett Bay are highlighted by floor-to-ceiling windows. The home is bright & airy, with soaring 16' ceilings and spacious floor plan. An open kitchen and second butler's kitchen offer ease in entertaining. Custom details including Valor fireplace with steel surround, floating stairs, and 3 car garage with glass & steel doors. Beautiful 1.35 acre grounds. \$2,750,000 (MLS #1260455)




Jamestown. Just up the street from Mackerel Cove beach and town. The renovated contemporary interior features a first floor en suite bedroom, sleek kitchen, great room with vaulted ceiling and gas fireplace. Four additional bedrooms, including 1 en suite, are on the second floor. The finished basement has a full bath and separate entrance. The expansive rear deck overlooks a pastoral backyard. Oversized 2 car garage and outdoor shower. \$1,795,000 (MLS #1264714)

4 East Ferry Wharf, Jamestown ~ 401.423.2200 ~ islandrealtyri.com

RHODY GEM

STEMS Flower Shop

We're on the hunt for Rhody Gems! Every neighborhood has that secret, hidden, cool and unusual, or hole-in-the-wall spot that locals love. Email or tag us on social media using #RhodyGem to suggest yours, and we might just feature it!

What it is:

Specializing in build-your-own or florist-made bouquets, browse seasonal flowers, plants, and succulents, along with gifts, candles, and cards.

Where to find it:

Watch for the quaint storefront along Boston Neck Road, just north of Bonnet Shores in the heart of the Narragansett beach community.

What makes it a Rhody Gem?

In a shop with a motto of "pick your own happiness," there are plenty of blossoms to choose from to create your own bouquet. Owner and master gardener Laura Reilly set out to create an experience beyond your typical trip to the florist by outfitting the shop in clusters of individual seasonal stems to arrange along with pre-styled "Grab n' Go" bouquets. A DIY floral centerpiece makes a great personalized hostess gift for the holidays, along with plenty of hand-crafted gifts and cards available to choose from. "I love to support the local artists that sell their goods here, and the shoppers love the small town vibe the shop has to offer," Reilly explains. "There's no corner untouched by some plant or gift that can be shared with others." While safety procedures are in place inside, folks are also welcome to call ahead to have an arrangement made and ready to pick up curbside.

STEMS

1171 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett
StemsGansett@gmail.com
StemsRI.com • @StemsGansettRI



Photo courtesy of STEMS

To submit your Rhody Gem, please email Abbie@ProvidenceOnline.com

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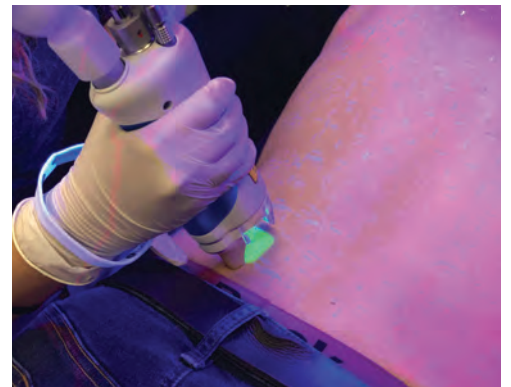
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MAKING MERRY

By
Elyse Major

This holiday season relies on
creativity, bundling up, and
thinking outside the box

Let's not pull any punches;

it's been a rough year. But December doesn't know that - it just knows that it has a page on the calendar preloaded with special days. First comes Hanukkah, then Winter Solstice, then Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; Kwanzaa begins, and finally there's New Year's Eve. And while we're advised that our in-person gatherings should be limited to only the people we live with, many holiday activities and events will be held outdoors - some for the first time ever - thanks in large part to Take It Outside grants, a statewide initiative totaling \$3.1 million in awards to help businesses increase outdoor activity while reducing the transmission rate of COVID-19.

Rhode Island Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor stated, "We were encouraged by applicants' creativity in proposing so many clever and practical ways to help businesses overcome COVID- and climate-related challenges. We thank all of the organizations that applied and are finding ways to take it outside and keep commerce going." The awardees were selected following a request for proposal bidding process in which Commerce received 85 applications. In addition to the grants awarded, select intermediary organizations like Chambers of Commerce were awarded funds with increased flexibility to meet the unique needs of the business communities.



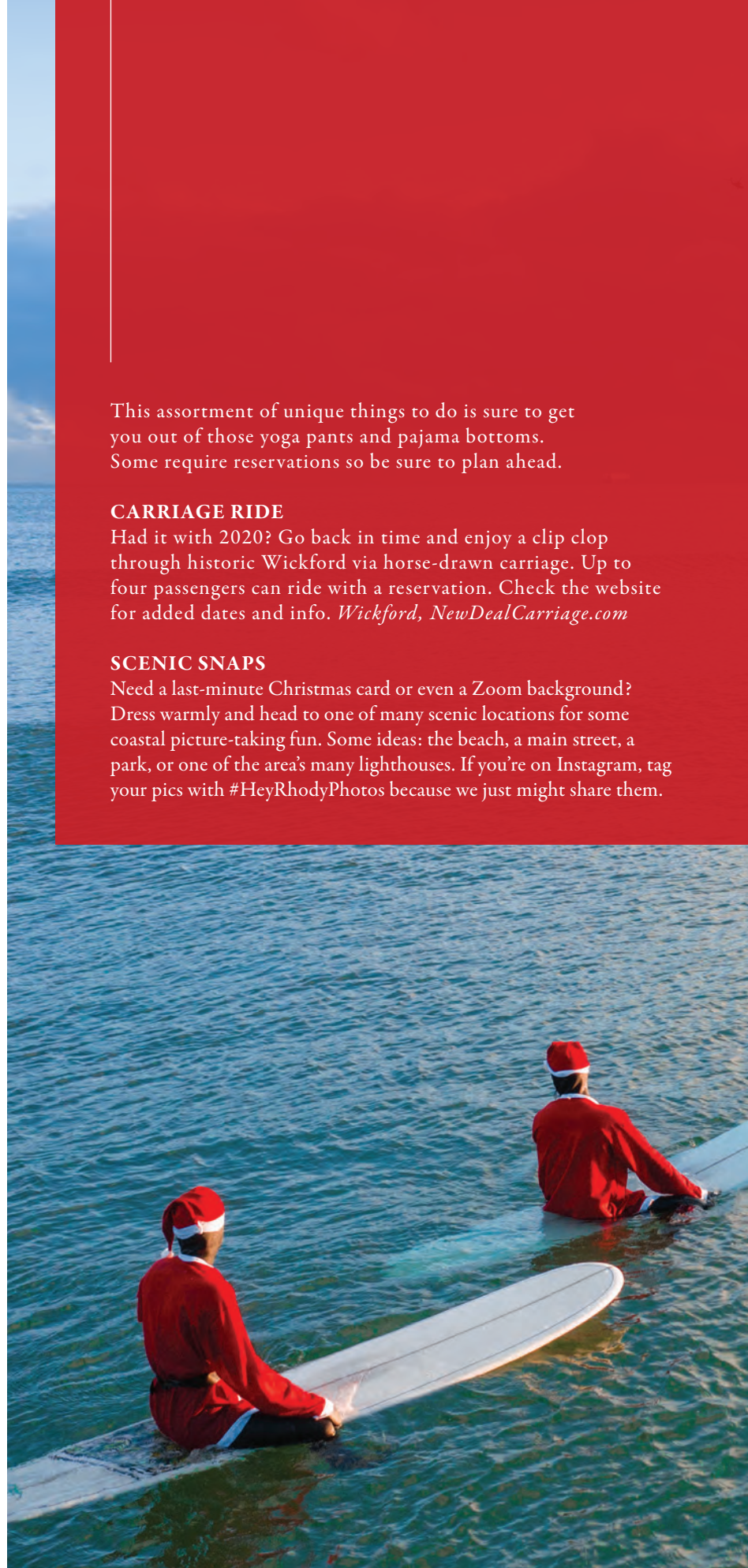
This assortment of unique things to do is sure to get you out of those yoga pants and pajama bottoms. Some require reservations so be sure to plan ahead.

CARRIAGE RIDE

Had it with 2020? Go back in time and enjoy a clip clop through historic Wickford via horse-drawn carriage. Up to four passengers can ride with a reservation. Check the website for added dates and info. *Wickford, NewDealCarriage.com*

SCENIC SNAPS

Need a last-minute Christmas card or even a Zoom background? Dress warmly and head to one of many scenic locations for some coastal picture-taking fun. Some ideas: the beach, a main street, a park, or one of the area's many lighthouses. If you're on Instagram, tag your pics with #HeyRhodyPhotos because we just might share them.



BOOK SMART

Avoid the brown box and opt for a brown-handled paper bag instead. Bookstores could really use your patronage this season and South County has some real gems: The Book Garden, Wickford; Books on the Pond, Charlestown; Island Bound Bookstore, Block Island; Savoy Bookshop & Cafe, Westerly; and Wakefield Books.

SEASONAL INSPO

Mask up, follow the arrows, and enjoy wandering the enchanting greenhouse displays at The Farmer's Daughter. You are sure to leave with ideas on how to use greenery in your holiday decor indoors and out, and most likely with a gift or three as well.

SWISS TREAT

With their inventive Fondue Village, the Ocean House has created a private dining experience sure to satisfy any wanderlust. More than just the communal pot dish of melted chocolate or cheese you might expect, picture a cluster of fully restored vintage ski gondolas outfitted in cabin-meets-glam style, serving private four-course meals with a personal server. *Watch Hill, OceanHouseRI.com*

BRIGHT SPOTS

Love to cruise around and look at lights? Head to Downtown Westerly for their drive-thru Holiday Light Trail. Leave the car and wander Wickford for their Dickens-inspired Festival of Lights, or Bowen's Wharf in Newport.

MIDDLE EARTH

Imagine Bilbo Baggins of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* has invited you to the Shire for a meal, only it's in Richmond (not Middle Earth) and instead of Elevesens, you're being served a five-course meal complemented with Maker's Mark bourbon. It all happens behind a round wooden door nestled into a hillside, but you can't just barge in – you need to make a reservation. *Read more on page 53. Richmond, PreserveSportingClub.com*

TREE FARMS

What's a near-perfect outdoor shopping experience? Heading to a Christmas Tree Farm. Not only will you enjoy some fresh air and quiet, but you'll also be supporting local agriculture. If you're a fresh tree fan, you may already have a favorite farm, but if not visit the Rhode Island Christmas Tree Growers Association website for listings. *RIChristmasTrees.com*

PRIVATE SCREENING

Feel like a celebrity when you book the Odeum for a private movie screening for up to 15 people. Packages even include a marquee message up in lights! *GreenwichOdeum.com*

Santa's Helpers sightings in Narragansett? Visit @p.ee.j on Instagram for peeks.
Photo by PJ Dougherty



The Rhode Island Hospitality Association used their grant to launch the #BYOBlanket campaign. “For those customers who enjoy outdoor dining but don’t love the cooler temperatures, we hope these blankets and additional supplies will encourage them to continue to enjoy al fresco dining well into the fall, and that the extension of the outdoor dining season provides much-needed relief to restaurant operators throughout the state,” says Dale J. Venturini, President/CEO of RIHA. The group astutely partnered with Ocean State Job Lot to purchase blankets and hand warmers at a significant discount, allowing them to stretch the dollars they received.

“People are loving the BYOBlanket once we explain how it is supposed to work to them,” says Karen Recene, manager of The Pub in Matunuck. “We have given out a ton of blankets.” Kate Sheridan, owner of The Shanty restaurant in Warwick, is also a fan of the program. “In an uncertain time for everyone, the campaign has brought a little normalcy back to our guests and staff. We get to continue to serve our spin on comfort food in an atmosphere guests are most comfortable with right now,” she says.



#BYOBlanket: Martha Sechio and Jennifer Farley Braica enjoying a brisk night out on the patio of The Shanty
Photo courtesy of Alyssa Botelho



The Pub in Matunuck
Photo courtesy of The Pub



Fondue Village
Photo courtesy of The Ocean House



Once you're back inside, this round-up of cozy fun offers ways to keep traditions going and perhaps start some new ones.

ZOOM BACKGROUNDS

Spending time with friends and family via Zoom this year? Infuse a little cheer with a Rhody Rhody Rhody background from URI (Web.URI.Edu), Providence murals (TheAvenueConcept.org), or upload your own photo and follow instructions at Support.Zoom.US.

VIRTUAL STORYTIME

The Louttit Library in West Greenwich has a YouTube channel (LouttitLibrary) where you can get snuggly with the kids and listen to Storytime with Miss Stephanie any time. Visit OSLRI.org for links to libraries all over the state and see what they're offering, which could even be take-away craft kits **with instructions**.

CLASSICS FROM THE COUCH

Not even a pandemic can end Trinity Rep's 43-year history of presenting *A Christmas Carol*. The company has created an online version offered free of charge to everyone this month. The Gamm Theatre is collaborating with The Public's Radio to co-produce and bring back *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* for broadcast over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. This special production will be performed once again as a 1940s radio play, but recorded for actual broadcast. TrinityRep.com; GammTheatre.org

WRAP WITH LESS WASTE

In this year's wrapping mix, consider buying yards of light-weight fabric to bundle presents in a very green way; use ribbon for hand-tied bows to complete the look. Check out *Inside Style* in South Kingstown, *The Remnant Shop* in Hope Valley, and *Sew Op* in Wickford for supplies.

Carriage Rides in Wickford



“We’re thrilled to be awarded this grant as we will be able to help many businesses purchase items that help defray their unforeseen costs of operating their business outside due to the pandemic,” said Kristin Urbach, Executive Director of the North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce, which has been awarded a \$100,000 state grant in support of two programs. The first will serve as an intermediary for Chamber members and non-member local businesses to apply for the procurement and purchasing of eligible expenses - things like chairs, tables, heat lamps, tents, and PPE - to expand their outdoor dining and operations outside. Second, the grant will help fund an Open-Air Holiday Market in Wickford Village.



Beavertail in wintertime
Photo by PJ Dougherty

Lobster Trap Tree on Block Island
Photo by Harold Hatfield





Light displays in Westerly are sure to enchant all ages
Photo courtesy of Lisa Konicki

SPECIAL EVENTS

Here are events that were confirmed as we wrapped up this issue a few weeks ago. Always be sure to check websites and social media for updates, and your local Chamber of Commerce for new events being added. Wear a mask and we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!

THROUGH DECEMBER

Seal Tour and Nature Cruises: Bring your own binoculars to spot migrating harbor seals and take in the seasonal sights along the Pawcatuck River or Newport Harbor on Save The Bay's naturalist-led cruises. *Westerly and Newport, SaveBay.org*

THROUGH DECEMBER 22

Small Works Holiday Art Show: Find affordable fine art created by Wickford Art Association members. *Wickford, Wickford.Art.org*

DECEMBER 2

Holiday Stroll & Luminaria: Hayrides with Santa, strolling carolers, and sidewalks lined with luminaria. Enjoy a complimentary cup of hot chocolate and a cookie to warm you up while shopping at local stores running special promotions. *Downtown Westerly-Pawcatuck, OceanChamber.org*

DECEMBER 4-6

Narragansett Holiday Fair: In place of the traditional Festival of Lights, a spread-

out and outdoor event will host vendors and food, along with a virtual Jingle Bell Run and tree lighting on Sunday. *Facebook: Narragansett Chamber of Commerce*

DECEMBER 5, 12 & 19

Jamestown Holiday Shopping: Watch for festive holiday shopping and special events each Saturday before Christmas, including special markets, sales, and happenings. *Facebook: Jamestown, RI Chamber of Commerce*

DECEMBER 5-6

Holiday Sale: Peruse glass art by over 30 student artists, with a portion of proceeds to benefit the Jonnycake Center. *Peace Dale, BosgraafStudio.com*

DECEMBER 7

Jamestown Holiday Stroll: Presented by the Jamestown Chamber, this annual event continues with storefront window decorating contests along with many local businesses participating in various ways. *JamestownRIChamber.com*

DECEMBER 13

The Geminid Meteor Shower: Head to Frosty Drew to marvel at the most merry and bright meteor shower of the year, outshining even the moon with a greenish hue. *Charlestown, FrostyDrew.org*

DECEMBER 19

Cinema Under the Stars: Enjoy a movie outdoors with fur heated blankets, thermos cocktails, and a three-course bento box dinner at Weekapaug Inn. *Starts at 6pm, reservations required: 888-974-7613.*

DECEMBER 23

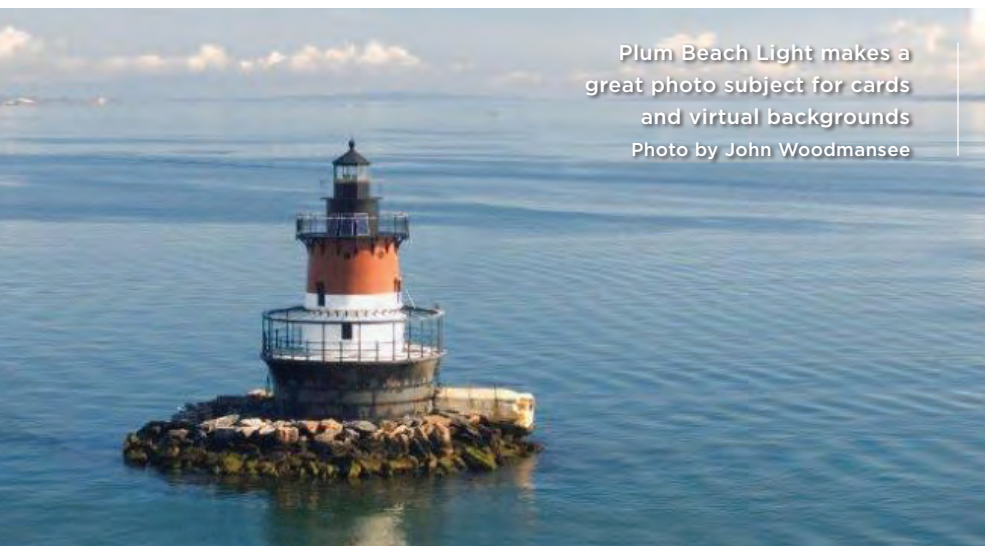
Yule Log Workshop: Make a reservation to join the Ocean House Pastry Team in their Center for Wine & Culinary Arts to learn how to prep a festive yule log at home. *OceanHouseEvents.com*

SATURDAYS

On Saturday mornings rise and shine to stock up on fresh produce and more at the South Kingstown Farmers Market (25 W. Independence Way, Kingstown) and Coastal Growers Farmers Market held at Quest Montessori School (1150 Boston Neck Road, Narragansett).

Festive Westerly

Photo courtesy of Lisa Konicki



Plum Beach Light makes a great photo subject for cards and virtual backgrounds
Photo by John Woodmansee

At press time, not all details for special events were confirmed, but keep your eyes open all over South County for happenings. Watch for holiday markets in Wickford, Westerly, and Narragansett; live performances on a new outdoor stage at South Kingstown's Pump House; outdoor heated dining in Hopkinton, Matunuck, Richmond, and more; and glowing igloos popping up in East Greenwich. Most of all, let's bundle up while we keep our collective chins up, grab a hot cocoa, look up at the stars, and be glad we live in a state that is showing its independent spirit by being so inventive. **SO**

Holiday Gift Show

In the Gallery through December 23rd
and virtually at westerlyarts.com



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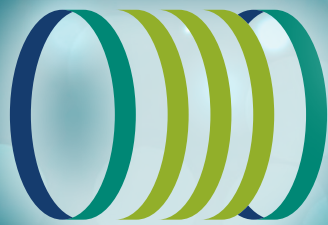
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All is Calm

A historic East Greenwich home is renovated for today's busy family life

Paul and Katie Vespia were living in Providence when they decided to head to the suburbs to start a family. The couple initially moved to East Greenwich, close to North Kingstown, and while that location was an ideal setting in many respects, the pair found themselves missing a city style of life. "Specifically, the walkability," says Paul. "We began to reevaluate where we should live and started to look in the Hill & Harbor District of East Greenwich."

Photos by Norman Joshua Photography, courtesy of Hill & Harbor Design+Build



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While East Greenwich is indeed a town, in fact the eighth oldest in Rhode Island, it has a Main Street filled with restaurants, cafes, and all kinds of small businesses. The Vespas found just what they were looking for in a Cape Cod/Colonial built in 1870, still with many period details and hardwood floors, tucked in a quiet neighborhood just minutes by foot from downtown. “We chose the home we live in now as it was ideal for a family with small children and two parents working from home.

Layout, yard, separate work space,” says Paul. After renovating and selling a number of historic homes in the Hill & Harbor District, the Vespas purchased this home in July 2019 and began work a month later after going through the approval process with East Greenwich Historic District Commission to add a significant addition to the property. As the owner of Hill & Harbor Design+Build, a design-focused firm known for navigating the approval process in historic districts

Blue counter stools infuse subtle color to the expansive kitchen while providing comfortable seating; a trio of banded globe pendants bring panache

around the state, Paul had a strong sense of how to implement what they wanted for the home. “For us it’s more about working with the existing elements. Like with all of our clients’ projects, we strive to preserve characteristics of an existing home by highlighting the



Photos by Norman Joshua Photography, courtesy of Hill & Harbor Design+Build

charm of the past while integrating modern enhancements that complement today's lifestyle, making them feel seamless."

Structural updates included opening up the first floor with an expansive kitchen and separate mudroom and kids' playroom. "This helps us to keep the space clean, especially with all our children's belongings," says Katie. The master suite now has a relaxing sitting area, walk-in closet, and large bathroom courtesy of an addition to the garage. "We really wanted to play off the modern farmhouse idea. Our vision was to create something sleek and modern without feeling cold. I think we captured it perfectly," Paul says.

When it comes to decor, both Paul and Katie describe their collective sensibilities as transitional. "It's a mix of traditional and modern," Paul explains. "A mainly neutral color palette and a mixture of material textures, with a hint of mid-century modern." Katie adds, "Keeping the home neutral helps us to easily change the feel of the home or evolve our design. It's warm and inviting."

GET RHODY STYLE

Even if a home remodel isn't on your list for Santa, use ideas from Paul and Katie Vespia on making the most of where you live.

SUPPORT SMALL

The Vespias enjoy walking to Main Street and list the following as top spots to patronize: Besos Kitchen, Main Street Coffee, The Patio, and Twisted Pizza. Visit EastGreenwichChamber.com for updates on which businesses are open and for holiday happenings.

PURPOSEFUL DESIGN

With a mudroom and playroom, there's a good chance that muddy boots and toys aren't ending up in the Vespia kitchen. The takeaway: rethink areas and designate for specific uses. This can be as simple as moving a table under a sunny window to create a work zone.

FESTIVE TOUCHES

Keeping spaces neutral makes them ready for seasonal switches with colorful textiles, like pillows, and other accents.

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Solstice Soiree

Grab the plaid for a cabin-inspired Christmas dinner under the stars

Remember that snowy day before Halloween when the Governor announced gatherings would be limited to 10 due to an uptick in COVID cases? For many looking forward to hosting friends and family, there was a collective knowing sigh. But, there's plenty of ways to turn even a small soiree into something special. Drawing inspiration from the Take It Outside initiative, we've assembled ideas for turning an outdoor space into a moveable feast – all it takes is a ready attitude, seating, layers of color and lighting, bottomless thermoses of hot drinks, and perhaps some friendly spirits and wine.

COZY

There's nothing like a fire pit to keep things toasty on a winter night, so be sure to stock up on dry wood and kindling. Small non-permanent fire pits are available, start at around 24 inches, and don't require any digging – just a flat nonflammable surface. However, if a fire pit isn't in the cards, an alternative focal point can be made by filling a group of mason jars with tealights to emit flickering light, or wrapping logs with string lights. Keep the chills at bay with thermoses always topped off with hot cider and cocoa, along with plenty of mugs. Consider having a basket of hand warmers available, too.

COMFY

Pile up blankets and pillows and use them to add color, pattern, and softness to lawn chairs. Invite guests to bring their own blankets, too. Stock up on extra masks, mittens, gloves, and caps. Morse likes to assemble a “comfy crate” for each guest, complete with a lantern, blanket, and pillow.

GLOWY

Use lanterns to infuse ambience and additional light. Solar path lighting, strings of lights, votives in jars, or paper bag luminaries are among other effective methods.



FOODIE

"Red wine, cheese boards, apps, and s'mores are perfect for a socially distant campfire night," says Morse. If planning on serving a full dinner, consider setting up a buffet indoors where guests can load plates one at a time and six feet apart before heading back outside, or pick up a tailgating buffet kit that includes aluminum pans, wire rack, and Sterno brand cooking fuel, which is non-toxic and biodegradable. Another route is to prepare individual bowls of layered holiday dinner faves ahead of time (think: mashed potatoes, turkey, cranberry sauce, and gravy) ready to hold and enjoy outside. Hot soups and chilis are also good bets.

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Handmade Holiday

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from makers – places like Peter Pots Pottery where you can visit the showroom, housed in the historic Glen Rock Mill, nestled in the woods. There's also Fayerweather House, that white cottage you might have noticed at the traffic light en route to URI where inside wares range from jewelry, apparel, candles, jams, and more, all made by members of the Fayerweather Craft Guild. Sometimes you'd rather make something yourself and that's when places like Create! Color Studio comes in handy. Open for limited in-studio painting by reservation, enjoy the process while making something to give... or keep for yourself (we won't tell).



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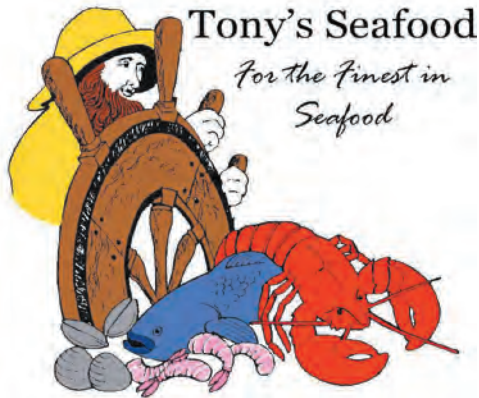
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In a hole in a ground there lived a hobbit – well, not exactly, but it's easy to imagine when you lay eyes on an oversized round door set into hillside boulders. This is The Preserve Sporting Club's latest venture, an enchanting private dining experience that transports patrons from Richmond, Rhode Island to Middle Earth.

"Now more than ever, travelers are seeking an escape from reality," says Daniel A. Hostettler, president of Ocean House Management. "The Maker's Mark Hobbit House is unlike anything else that exists."

The storybook feel continues inside with a massive hearth, candlelight, wooden chairs, scattered pillows and faux fur, and custom

table. For a price, parties up to eight can reserve the Hobbit House for an immersive evening of chef-prepared courses and cocktails made with Maker's Mark specialty bourbon. The menu is just as inventive as the setting it's served in: wild game sausage and local cheeses, bourbon glazed quail, and a winter berry cobbler baked in iconic Le Creuset cast iron. Each course pairs nicely with a particular whiskey, including Maker's Mark's exclusive Preserve Reserve, which is the final pour of the night as patrons settle around the fire-pit under the stars. Even Tolkien might have raised a glass to that. PreserveSportingClub.com | By Megan Schmit

Photo courtesy of Preserve Sporting Club

The Fries the Limit

From pizza to poutine, Dan's Place serves up comfort food right when we need it most



"It's been hard," Dan Hebert, owner of Dan's Place, tells me over the phone. Over nine months have passed since we met in person at Hebert's restaurant in West Greenwich. That was before COVID-19 turned the economy, and Rhode Island's restaurant industry in particular, topsy-turvy. When the pandemic hit, Hebert shut down in-person dining but continued doing takeout. "We began online ordering in January, right after the holidays. That definitely helped us out, we were able to work out the kinks before COVID hit."

The restaurant reopened its dining room at the end of July at 66 percent capacity. They've done everything possible to keep customers

and staff safe, including adding UV lights to the HVAC units. His customers appreciate the extra precautions. There are up to one-hour waits at peak times for in-house dining and takeout. (Pro-tip: arrive or order before 4pm or after 7pm to avoid the wait.)

A former Marine, Hebert nearly joined the Rhode Island State Police but fate intervened. A few days after he turned in his application to join the force, Hebert saw a pizza place for sale. He called the police department and told them to rip up his application. One month later, he opened Dan's Pizza Place - a small pizzeria in a strip mall on Victory Highway.

Demand was such that Hebert built the current restaurant in 2009. The original location wasn't big enough to do much more than the standard pizza, pasta, and calzones. So when he expanded to the 4,400 square foot location, the larger restaurant meant an expanded menu featuring over 192 base items.

Throughout the pandemic, even working with a skeleton staff, Hebert never cut down their extensive menu, which includes the perfect comfort food for our pandemic times: poutine. Crisp French fries are smothered in peppery gravy (Hebert uses a combination of chicken and beef). The fries are topped off with cheese curds and then



Order off the menu or
build your own pizza

the dish goes in the oven until the cheese gets gooey and stringy.

According to Hebert, the curds make all the difference. Cheese curds, usually made from cheddar, are the by-product of the cheese-making process. Unlike cheddar cheese blocks, curds are not aged, which also makes them nearly impossible to find outside of a dairy farm. The curds Dan's Place uses come from Wisconsin, the American cheese curd mecca. (Canadian curds prove too much of a border-crossing challenge.)

"You want curds that squeak between your teeth," he tells me, handing me one to try. It's

surprisingly springy and light in texture with a mild cheddar flavor. And, yes, it squeaks.

A firm believer in giving back, Hebert raffles a brand new motorcycle every year, displayed over the bar, for charity. Because of coronavirus, this year's raffle raising money for suicide awareness was postponed to June 2021. Hebert may be West Greenwich's Pizza Guy, but Dan's Place transcends his mighty pie.

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A Retro Spread That's Hard to Beat

Rosie's Deviled Eggs brings a taste of nostalgia to any gathering



Photo courtesy of Rosie's Deviled Eggs

Making a comeback from the era of chilled hors d'oeuvre platters garnished with green olives and carved radishes, deviled eggs have been popping up on appetizer menus with some esteem over the past few years. In Schuyler TenEyck's family, though, the paprika-dusted finger food never went out of style. "Our retro deviled eggs have a way of bringing a smile to those who taste them," she says, "whether it be for the first or the 20th time." Based in Warwick, TenEyck started Rosie's Deviled Eggs to share her family's fine-tuned recipe with Rhode Islanders - keeping the nostalgia in classic flavors always at the core.

The name comes from TenEyck's great-grandmother Marion Rose Stevens, an entertaining prowess whose deviled egg recipe was the star of family gatherings and

described as "nothing fancy, but sure tasted good." But in between Grandma Stevens' picnic pick-me-up and the founding of TenEyck's business, her dad's deviled eggs were passed around at tailgating parties while rooting for the Pats. "Some of my best memories come from going to these tailgates with my dad during which food was not only important but also unifying," TenEyck recalls. "I knew I wanted to get these special eggs out to more people, but I also knew it wouldn't be easy."

The timing was finally right earlier this year. Armed with a recently earned degree in communication studies from URI and a slew of egg taste-testers in the form of family and friends, TenEyck took her COVID-19 lockdown daydream to food incubator Hope & Main to officially launch

Rosie's Deviled Eggs. She started with classic mayo-based spice-filled delicacies - all gluten-free and keto-friendly - before expanding into bacon-topped and spicy jalapeño varieties, plus decadent charcuterie boards. Dozens of farmers market appearances and pop-ups later, and with some help from younger sister Laurel, Grandma Stevens lives on in TenEyck's perfectly curated platters. According to TenEyck, "Deviled eggs are a labor of love, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

Bring a little nostalgia to a holiday spread or a snack to your fave outdoor bar this month with ready-made eggs available in six-packs, trays, or seasonal charcuterie boards. Shop online for pickup and follow along on Instagram @rosies_deviled_eggs for pop-ups and events. RosiesDeviledEggs.com

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South County Scenes



ABOUT LINDA
@lll_images

Based in Westerly, I was born and raised in Newport. Photography has been a favorite hobby of mine since high school. I love to be outdoors, and over the past few years, I have developed an interest in photographing the natural beauty of our area.

“Happy Holidays!”

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