

Providence preps for busy hurricane season ahead

LOCAL, 2A

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Fourth-generation stonemason John Washburn explains how he builds split granite walls.

LABOR of LOVE

Built for his grandmother, stonemason's granite wall is turning heads



John Washburn put an arch pattern within the wall he is building in Westerly.

PHOTOS BY JONNY WILLIAMS/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Jonny Williams

Providence Journal I USA TODAY NETWORK

ESTERLY — John Washburn was 6 years old when his father, a stonemason, first taught him to mix cement. ●

Now, 33 years later — and a stonemason himself — Washburn is putting that knowledge and decades of lithic expertise into what might be his most famous work: a granite stone wall at the corner of White Rock Road and Springbrook Road in Westerly.

A casual observer might not find anything remarkable about it — after all, a wall is a wall.

But Washburn's project is both a work of craftsmanship and a labor of love for his grandmother, his crew and masonry itself.

It began last winter, when the cold weather froze the ground and dried up construction work. Washburn has a crew of seven men, and he was looking for ways to keep them employed.

"I depend on them, and they depend

on me," Washburn said.
His 94-year-old grandmother, who lives in Florida, had recently bought a home in Westerly as an investment, and the fence needed work. Washburn saw an opportunity to both pay his crew and get a job done.

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POLITICAL SCENE

How Little Compton's finances fell apart

Antonia Noori Farzan

Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

For many years, Little Compton's finances seemed as neat and orderly as the white clapboard buildings that line the quaint Town Commons.

Taxes were low. The budget was small. Republicans dominated the Town Council and Budget Committee, and townspeople dutifully showed up at the Financial Town Meeting each year to vote on how much to spend on street lights and senior meal programs.

But in the spring of 2025, that picturesque vision of small-town government faded away.

Town officials revealed in May that Little Compton was facing a \$1 million budget deficit and would need to slash spending while increasing the tax levy by 12% — triple what's typically allowed under state law.

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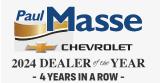
Veterans Voice
Frank Lennon
Guest columnist

'Do the hard things first': Teen cadet rises to top

Two days before her Central High School graduation, 18-year-old Emily Bolanos of Providence was promoted to chief petty officer, the highest rank a member of the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps can achieve. Sea Cadets, ranging in age from 10 to 18, serve as the youth development program for the Navy and Coast Guard.

Bolanos was "pinned" with her new rank in a June 14 ceremony at Quonset Davisville Navy Yacht Club, attended by about 70 family members, friends and dignitaries. The event also included a change of command ceremony, in which Lt. Brandi Bansemer turned

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