



## Middletown basketball players making transition to football

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# The Newport Daily News

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# A WAKE-UP CALL FOR BOAT SAFETY?

## Sailboat hit by motorboat raises serious concerns

**Scott Barrett**  
Newport Daily News  
USA TODAY NETWORK

NEWPORT – They never really saw it coming.

Rob and Pat Connerney, along with two others, were aboard their 30-foot sailboat competing in a regatta when a larger powerboat approached from behind at a high rate of speed. The Connerneys and crew members Ed and Meredith Adams, all Middletown residents, could only brace for the contact as they were little more than sitting ducks on Narragansett Bay.

The powerboat, estimated to be traveling better than 30 knots by Rob Connerney, collided with the sailboat, ripping off the bow and rendering it disabled. Had the powerboat arrived a fraction of a second later, the consequences could have been devastating.

“We came within 6 feet of getting killed, the four of us,” Rob Connerney said. “There was no way we were going to be able to move to get out of his way. He was going way too fast. It’s like a pedestrian getting hit by an automobile. There’s no ability to get out of the way.”

The two couples aboard the sailboat, a Shields sloop, were competing in the Aloha Cup regatta organized by the Ida Lewis Yacht Club on Aug. 21. The gun had just gone off to signal the start of a race, and their boat — nestled between Gould Island and Naval Station Newport, north of the Newport Pell Bridge — was in front when the powerboat made its way toward a fleet of roughly 10 sailboats.

“Part of my concern is the powerboats seem to point straight at you, and they don’t seem to understand the sailboat is kind of worried,” Pat Connerney said. “They don’t know if the skipper is watching or not watching. In this case, the guy wasn’t watching.”

“We didn’t have a lot of lead time,” she explained. “We saw him only moments before he hit us because we were racing. Surprisingly, we didn’t hear him further out, but that wouldn’t have mattered.”

Rob Connerney said there were 11 people aboard the powerboat and

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From left, Pat and Rob Connerney and Meredith and Ed Adams stand aboard their boat after it was hit by a powerboat on Narragansett Bay on Aug. 21.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY BRAD READ

**“We came within 6 feet of getting killed, the four of us. There was no way we were going to be able to move to get out of his way. He was going way too fast. It’s like a pedestrian getting hit by an automobile.”**

**Rob Connerney**, who was aboard his sailboat when it collided with a large powerboat



The broken bow on the sailboat after it was struck by a larger powerboat.



Steve Brownell, father of Island Adventures co-owner Nicholas Brownell, stands behind some of the electric bikes available for rent. SCOTT BARRETT/NEWPORT DAILY NEWS

## Newport seeking advice on regulating e-bikes

**Savana Dunning**  
Newport Daily News  
USA TODAY NETWORK

NEWPORT – The City Council voted 5-2 in favor of a resolution to ask the city solicitor for advice on drafting an ordinance to regulate electric bicycle rentals on Wednesday.

The resolution, co-sponsored by Councilors Kathryn Leonard and Elizabeth Fuerte, seeks to solve a wording loophole in the current City Code which defines bicycles as “human-powered,” and doesn’t acknowledge the existence of motor-assisted pedal bikes. This makes it difficult for the city to establish any differences between electric bicycles of any type and traditional bicycles when it comes to issuing rental licenses.

Three companies in Newport currently advertise rentable e-bikes on their websites: Island Adventures, Ten Speed Spokes and Scooter World. Discussions on Leonard’s proposed resolution began earlier in the meeting during the hearing for a Island Adventure’s bicycle rental license. The business, which rents out electric bicycles and regular bicycles, had an initial license hearing in June and began operating in July until they were informed of issues with certain requirements of the license, which brought the owners back to City Hall on Wednesday.

Fuerte said the fact that there are other businesses in Newport renting e-bikes which didn’t have to go through the same process Island

See **E-BIKES**, Page 2A

# Gov. McKee runs on his handling of COVID, economy

**Katherine Gregg**  
Providence Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

PROVIDENCE – The biggest star on Gov. Dan McKee’s campaign trail might not be the man himself.

It might be his mother.

No one McKee encountered while knocking on doors on a sunny Saturday – or during his lunchtime visit with the elderly residents of Winslow Gardens in East Providence last week – had a single question for him about what he’s done, or plans to do.

They did, however, tell him how much they “loved, loved, loved” the star turn by his 94-year-old mother, Willa McKee, in his first TV ad of the cam-

paign, in which she says of his record:

“Not bad for a governor that lives with his mother (pronounced Motha).”

The campaign aide traveling with him that day is sporting a blue-and-white T-shirt with an image of Willa in her oversize sunglasses under the words: “Willa ya vote for my son?” And lots of folks want to talk about her.

“That commercial with your mother is fantastic,” said retired RIPTA bus driver Manny Fernandez.

“It’s been a tough two years for everybody, so it is nice to bring a smile to everybody’s face,” McKee said later on his way to his next event.

See **MCKEE**, Page 5A



Gov. Dan McKee chats with resident Lauryn Harper on Aug. 20 as he canvasses in the Smith Hill district of Providence with Jo-Ann Ryan, left. At right, Jenny Shaw brings out daughter Nora to meet the governor. DAVID DELPOIO/PROVIDENCE JOURNAL



**War games:** Russia to hold sweeping military drills with China. 5A

### Prescott Hall flooding concerns

Pell Bridge realignment could add nearly 3 million gallons to the problem. 3A

### Weather

High 81° | Low 72°  
Sunny. Forecast, 2A

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**WEATHER**

**Coastal Rhode Island**

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 81. South wind 8 to 13 mph. Tuesday Night: A chance of showers and thunderstorms before 5 a.m., then a slight chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 72. South wind 7 to 9 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Wednesday: A chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 11 a.m. Mostly sunny, with a high near 83. Southwest wind 10 to 14 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%. Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 65. Northwest wind around 9 mph.

**Extended**

Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 79.

West wind 9 to 13 mph. Thursday Night: Clear, with a low around 59. North wind around 10 mph. Friday: Sunny, with a high near 76. North wind 6 to 9 mph becoming south in the afternoon. Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 62. South wind around 6 mph. Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 78. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south in the morning. Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 66. Southwest wind around 9 mph. **Tides, etc.** Tuesday's low tides: 3:42 a.m., 4:05 p.m. High tides: 10:28 a.m., 10:42 p.m. Tuesday's sunrise: 6:10 a.m. Sunset: 7:24 p.m.

**MUNICIPAL MEETINGS**

**MIDDLETOWN**

Wednesday  
 ● Technical Review Committee, 9 a.m., Town Hall  
 ● Planning Board, 6 p.m., Town Hall

**TIVERTON**

Tuesday  
 ● Harbor Commission, 9 a.m., 169 Riverside Drive  
 ● Economic Development Commission, 9 a.m., 169 Riverside Drive

**E-bikes**

Continued from Page 1A

Adventures is currently undergoing shows a need for standardized regulation.

"There are folks out there that have a license for renting bicycles and they are renting e-bikes," Fuerte said. "It's not to stop them or prevent them from being on our streets, it's to regulate, so that everyone is doing the same thing, the way it's supposed to be, and we know what you guys are doing and what everyone else is doing."

During Island Adventure's license hearing, Leonard raised concerns over the number of different types of vehicles in the city and asked to continue Island Adventure's license hearing until the city was able to adopt an ordinance regulating e-bikes. However, Councilor Angela McCalla said she did not want to pre-penalize the company ahead of having an ordinance drafted and Charlie Holder said they should look at the use of e-bikes and other modes of transportation rather than how they're rented out.

"I think the bigger issue is the personal aspect of the e-bikes and other forms of transportation being used," Holder said. "As for rental companies, they're doing their due diligence as best they can on who they give the bikes out to and so on and so forth, but what's to stop any kid from getting an electric bike and cruising along the sidewalks and streets or wherever they want to go."

McCalla was one of the two votes against the resolution, alongside Councilor

Jamie Bova.

McCalla wanted more information on how regulations could impact the way disabled people get around Newport and questioned how these new regulations could fit into the incoming Transportation Master Plan.

"I would be open to more understanding," McCalla said. "I think, personally, we need to understand the classifications of the different ways and different systems before we actually regulate them to see what all types are out there."

Additionally, both Bova and McCalla said the city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee was already working on a review of city ordinances that govern bicycling and questioned the need to involve the City Solicitor's office before getting advice from the committee.

Leonard said she would rather have the solicitor's office look into the legal possibilities of regulating e-bikes first because she believes the committee would take on an advocacy role in favor of e-bikes, rather than examining the safety concerns Leonard has. However, Bova said the work BPAC has been conducting already examines the issues Leonard is concerned about.

"With BPAC, yes it's advocacy, but part of advocacy work is safety, and they have been reviewing these bike ordinances to give a recommendation to the council on all of this stuff and (it's) really broader than just the rental of e-bikes," Bova said. "I think that we should be utilizing these—we always talk about how we have these volunteer boards and commissions—let's use them."

**Hardware issues force NASA to scrub Artemis I's first launch**

**Emre Kelly**

Florida Today  
 USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA



The new NASA moon rocket is seen on Saturday on Launch Pad 39-B at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla. BRYNN ANDERSON/AP

Back-to-back technical issues with NASA's Space Launch System rocket forced managers to call off its debut launch early Monday, leaving open the question about timing for the next attempt.

The liftoff from Kennedy Space Center, originally planned for 8:33 a.m. EDT, was scrubbed just two minutes after the two-hour window opened at pad 39B. Teams ultimately ran out of time to resolve multiple hardware issues — namely, chilling the four main engines using hydrogen — with the 322-foot rocket.

A backup opportunity is available at 12:48 p.m. EDT Friday, Sept. 2, but that will depend on engineers diagnosing and fixing the problem. Mike Sarafin, Artemis mission manager, told reporters after the scrub that teams are working toward that day.

"Friday is definitely in play," Sarafin said. "We just need a little bit of time to look at the data but the team is setting up for a 96-hour recycle."

Teams will take the rest of Monday to rest, then reconvene Tuesday to review the data and options for moving forward. Engine problems are typically serious, but Sarafin said the scrub is likely related to the chill process and not the RS-25 main engines themselves.

"Right now, the indications don't point to an engine problem," Sarafin said. "It's in the bleed system that thermally conditions the engines."

Weather for a Friday attempt, however, looks questionable: Space Force forecasters said conditions during the two-hour window that runs to 2:48 p.m. EDT will hover around 40% "go."

SLS was already "no-go" several times during Monday's countdown, which was predicated to be 80% "go."

Another opportunity is available at 5:12 p.m. EDT Monday, Sept. 5, but it will be the last shot before the rocket has to be rolled back to the Vehicle Assembly Building for testing the self-destruct system used in the event of emergencies. Sarafin cautioned that too little is known right now to assume a guaranteed Friday or Monday attempt at this point.

"I am very proud of this launch team," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said. "They have solved several problems along the way and they got to one that needed time to be solved."

"This is a brand new rocket and it's not going to fly until it's ready. There are millions of components to this rocket and its systems," he said.

Among the 25,000 guests like VIPs and employees that showed up to watch the launch from inside KSC's gates was Vice President Kamala Harris, who arrived at the former Shuttle Landing Facility around 8 a.m. EDT.

**Boat safety**

Continued from Page 1A

perhaps the driver was distracted.

"The captain of a boat has to have command of his vessel and has to operate it in a safe manner," he said. "This guy wasn't paying attention. He wasn't looking where he was going. He hit us going 35 mph, and if he hit us 6 feet back in the boat, we'd all have been dead."

According to Michael Healey, spokesperson for the state Department of Environmental Management, the Coast Guard responded to the incident, which occurred around 4 p.m. on Aug. 21.

"The next day, both the powerboat owner and sailboat owner filled out accident report forms as required by law and submitted them to our Division of Law Enforcement," Healey wrote in an email to The Daily News. "There were no injuries, only property damage, and now the matter is between the parties' insurers. At this point, there's no need for further investigation."

The Connerneys said they never came face to face with the man in the other boat, who was about a quarter-mile away when he finally came to a stop. The couple stressed they didn't want to make it a powerboat versus sailboat issue, but rather "start a dialogue" about boating safety.

**Narragansett Bay has significant 'user conflict'**

Part of the issue, according to Sail Newport Executive Director Brad Read, is "user conflict" on Narragansett Bay and Newport Harbor. Whether it's recreational powerboats, regattas, commercial fishermen, the annual Save the Bay swim or The Ocean Race, the waters off Newport are busy during the summertime.

"All of those different events can lead to user conflict," Read said. "There is a communication gap that exists within the marine community, and maybe it's not just us. It's probably all around the country."

Read touted the work of Newport Harbormaster Stephen Land for trying

to quell some of that conflict, but ultimately, "people need to know what's going on."

The Aug. 21 collision came nearly three years to the day after the death of Sandra G. Tartaglino. The 60-year-old Tiverton resident was helming a catamaran in the Newport 100 Regatta when a powerboat struck her vessel. Both crashes occurred in nearly the same location on the bay.

**Better Bay Alliance established to educate boaters**

In the wake of Tartaglino's death, three sailors — Steve Prime, David Lusier and Michael Keyworth — established the Better Bay Alliance to help educate boaters and perhaps shrink the communication gap mentioned by Read.

At betterbayalliance.org, boaters can find several resources, including a calendar of events, notices to sailors, weather conditions and, perhaps most importantly, educational tools.

Prime, speaking to The Daily News, said there are some 24,000 boats registered in Rhode Island, and there has to be an "understanding that we all share the water."

One aspect that could be improved on a statewide level is mandatory licensing. Prime, a Middletown resident, said those born before Jan. 1, 1986, are not required to have an operators' license, and "the people who can afford these bigger boats were all born before that."

"So it stands to reason that licensing needs to be expanded and, along with it, boating education — the rules of the road," he said. "We're trying to convince the boating public that the continuing education on the topic of boating only makes your experience better and safer for everyone around you."

Pat Connerney, once a member of the U.S. Sailing team, said since the crash, she can't stop thinking about it. She replays it in her head and knows just how fortunate she and the other members of the crew are to be able to tell the tale.

"It's hard to stop realizing how close we came" to being seriously injured or worse, she said. "You can't believe how fast he was going when he hit us."

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