

Let the Good Times Roll at the Providence Artisans Market

By Jeffrey Folker



With something for everyone, it is really hard *not* to have a good time at the Providence Artisans Market. Bring the kids, bring the picnic blankets, and bring the family dog. If you are bold, even bring the ol' guitar and earn a few bucks on the side.

From the best organic beef, local scallops, City Farm produce and herbs, honey from Pharmacy Herbs, pastries from Seven Stars Bakery, samples from Narragansett Creamery, produce from Arcadian Fields, to some of the best locally made crafts from Upcycled Glass (focused on making vases, cups, and jars from recycled glass), natural soaps from the Stella Marie Soap Company (“natural soap with a quirky flair”). Tack on some stalls selling one of a kind jewelry, paintings, photographs, and furniture, and you get the Providence Artisans Market.

Perhaps the most interesting crafts came from Conanicut Sheepworks, who was selling fashionable anchor-shaped necklaces from sliced walnuts. Check them out on facebook for more information

There was even a hairiest dog competition...



Ok, not really, but here is a picture of some REALLY hairy dogs that were at the park, drinking in all the attention.

Seriously, those dogs look like bears.

The Providence Artisans Fair runs every Saturday through October 16 from 10 am to 2pm at Lippett Park, at the intersection of Hope Street and Blackstone Boulevard. For more information or to apply to become a part of next week's market, search PVDArtisansMarket on Facebook or check www.mikebryceart.com/PVD_Artisans_Market.html

MotifTV June 19 - 26

95.5 WBRU Summer Concert Series: Torn Shorts

By Jeffrey Folker

June nights: not too hot for a stroll in the park, not too cold for an Awful Awful from Newport Creamery. Growing up in New Jersey, three miles from the Atlantic Ocean, summer has always been the time of year to relax, hit the beach for a tan, and grab an ice cold beer at the local establishment. Now living in Providence, summer has a new meaning: 95.5 WBRU's Free Summer Concert Series.

In the heart of downtown Providence, catchy beach-y, blues-inspired, indie rock (that's a mouthful) tones filled the scenic Waterplace Park on June 14th, as over 1,000 spectators sat, laid, or danced - enthralled by the musical talents of local band Torn Shorts and a night of good, clean fun. Lead by front man Josh Grabert, Torn Shorts has taken the New England music scene by storm after winning WBRU's 2013 Rock Hunt.

According to Michael Christofaro, (Marketing Coordinator and Photographer for the City of Providence), early June has a reputation among city event planners for rather unpredictable weather- in past years, rainouts have pushed the concert series indoors (to Lupo's). After a rainy morning on Friday, by mid-afternoon, the weather had cleared enough to keep the concert outside.

If nothing else, people-watching entertained many, as vendors sold the usual Waterfire wares, kids as young as 1 sat with families, punks, grandparents, and even a handful of dogs, PVD Pudding Pops sold

their... well, pudding pops, Dunkin Donuts handed out free samples of their newest coffee line (which was phenomenal!), and kayakers floated lazily down the Providence River, drinking in the sounds of the city.

WBRU's Free Summer Concert Series continues this Friday, June 21 with The 1975, and runs every Friday night, concluding with Cold War Kids on July 12th.

Stay tuned for video!

Building Bridges, Severing Ties



Delays in the construction of the Barrington Bridge were the most public display of bad blood between the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the contractor for the project, Shire Corporation of Cranston.

But that was only the tip of the iceberg, according to a lawsuit Shire filed against the state in 2009. The suit claimed the DOT had an ongoing vendetta against Shire and made a concerted effort to freeze the company out of future state projects, including a bid to replace the Union Avenue Bridge back in 2005.

The lawsuit, in its fourth year, already cost taxpayers at least \$1.5 million in legal fees. So late last year, the state quietly settled, shelling out another \$2 million in taxpayers' dollars to make it all go away. When *The Hummel Report* inquired about it more than a year ago, the DOT's Michael Lewis declined to talk about the suit, the roots of which began long before he became director.

He recently answered our questions, including: why the settlement?

"In any kind of litigation there's risk," Lewis told us. "We think the risk was low, but the Department of Administration and the Department of Transportation legal offices determined that it was in the state's best interests to settle that out for the value that it was, and put that chapter behind the state."

For the better part of a decade, Shire Corporation was the public punching bag for problems on the

Barrington Bridge project, as higher-ups in the DOT blamed the contractor for delays and cost overruns.

But we learned last year that a Department of Administration official, called in to referee, put the blame for delays squarely in the DOT's lap and ordered it to pay Shire \$5.3 million in taxpayer money. The DOT did not admit liability, and Shire's president, Tom Gammino, in an interview last year with *The Hummel Report*, said the order angered some of the higher-ups in the DOT, prompting them to go on the warpath against Shire, which regularly bid on large state construction projects.

The heart of the 2009 lawsuit filed against the DOT and eight people in their state positions says the state delayed awarding the Union Avenue project to Shire because of the ongoing dispute between the DOT and the company, even though Shire was the low bidder.

Hummel: It's taxpayer money and when you're crying poverty, then to have to pay a \$2 million judgment, what do you say to the taxpayer about that?

Lewis: It was a settlement position that was in the best economic interests of the state. To stop paying legal fees, to remove any risk of any settlement adverse to the state. A decision was made; there were a lot of people involved.

Hummel: No admission of responsibility in the suit, though?

Lewis: No, no.

Hummel: So it's \$2 million to make this go away?

Lewis: Again, there is risk in any lawsuit and that was a judgment that was made by a number of people involved in the state to make that determination that it was the right thing to do.

Hummel: When somebody files a suit, if it's absolutely a frivolous suit with no merit at all, your lawyers are going to go in there and a judge...you're going to make a motion to have it dismissed based on a false set of facts or it's not holding up. So to me, the fact that it moves forward, a judge says it moves forward and you ultimately decide to settle shows, whether you want to admit it or not, some type of liability or admission by the state. You know what? Maybe we did do it wrong. Do you not agree with that assessment?

Lewis: There were a lot of parties involved. We did go for summary judgment on the case and the judge ruled in our favor in eight out of the 10 counts on summary judgment. There was an appeal to that. We are going to continue to pay legal fees and these can become very high.

What Lewis didn't say is that the remaining two counts were the heart of the case involving the Union Avenue Bridge, and an allegation the state and the Federal Highway Administration worked together to keep Shire from getting what eventually turned out to be an \$8 million job, which was awarded to Aetna Bridge of Pawtucket.

When you add up the Barrington Bridge project and the costs associated with the lawsuit and settlement, taxpayers have ponied up nearly \$10 million for the state's disputes with Shire.

But no admission by the state in the Shire suit of liability.

Hummel: Any discipline, any change of position, anybody lose their job, anybody lose a paycheck?'

Lewis: Jim, this is not what this interview was about. I go back and look at that at those issues. A lot of people who were involved in the work, including the Barrington Bridge, that led up to this lawsuit are no longer employed in the Department of Transportation.

But Lewis would not elaborate and insiders, both at the DOT and within the construction industry, tell *The Hummel Report* that many key people who had their fingerprints on the Shire debacle remain.

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Motif TV For June 13-19

Ethics Trouble for Gordon Fox?



He is one of the highest-profile politicians in Rhode Island. And, as Speaker of the House, the most powerful.

But it's Gordon Fox's work as a private attorney for a troubled Providence agency over much of the last decade that caught the attention of a federal agency as part of a top-to-bottom review of the (PEDP) - a taxpayer-funded business loan program that had an exorbitant default rate under former Mayor David Cicilline.

Cicilline paved the way for Fox to make tens of thousands of dollars as the closing attorney on dozens of loans for an agency that operated largely under the public's radar.

A Hummel Report investigation shows that for five years, Fox did not list that income on his Rhode Island Ethics Commission financial disclosure form.

We do know from post-closing filings Fox made on behalf of PEDP that he handled approximately 80 loans. But the city could not tell us exactly how much Fox made because he was paid by Joshua Teverow - PEDP's longtime legal counsel, who Cicilline told to send some legal work Fox's way.

That all changed in April 2010, when the Taveras administration made Fox register directly with the city. Records show he then made \$40,000 closing on 29 loans. Fox began reporting the PEDP income on his ethics form in 2010. Fox declined our request for a sit-down interview, so we caught up with him after a House session last month.

Fox: I'm not commenting because it has nothing to do with me being Speaker; it has nothing to do with my public office. It has to do with me being a practicing lawyer who happens to be the Speaker of the House.

Hummel: I understand that, but you're also in public life and it's a public agency.

Fox: And a lot of those funds were paid for by private people.

What Fox didn't say is that in most cases, those closing fees came out of the taxpayer-funded loans, many of which were never repaid. One business complained to us that he had to pay 10 percent of a \$50,000 loan in legal fees.

What is unclear is who set Fox's rates for the closings and how much he charged businesses, many of which came to the city because they couldn't get loans anywhere else. In a review last year, the federal agency providing much of the loan money cited excessive legal fees. The program was in such disarray that the city suspended issuing new loans pending a federal review.

We emailed Teverow to find out how much he paid Fox over the five years. Teverow, who was replaced as PEDP's legal counsel after Angel Taveras became mayor, did not return our repeated emails or a follow-up phone message.

Last fall, Cicilline told the Providence Journal Fox's leadership role at the State House - and his personal and political relationship with the former mayor - had nothing to do with his getting Fox the legal work at PEDP. Rather, Cicilline was quoted as saying Fox was "clearly a very competent lawyer."

Fox confirmed that he was questioned by an agency about his legal work, but would not elaborate.

The Hummel Report also learned that Fox was the registered agent for at least three of the companies that got PEDP loans, while closing on those loans for the city. They included a company owned by Michael van Leesten, a political contributor to Cicilline.

Peter Margulies, who teaches Legal Ethics at Roger Williams Law School, says being a registered agent poses a potential conflict, depending on how the attorney handles it.

"That's certainly a red flag if you're engaged in a transaction with someone else on the company's behalf, but you're also representing that other party to the transaction," Margulies said. "That's probably not the best thing to do and certainly, at the very least, what you have to do is be transparent about it." Fox continued to deflect our questions, specifically about being a registered agent on the other side of the loan transaction.

Fox: There's nothing to hide, but I'm not going to say something on record that's going to somehow implicate a look at, or whatever, because I don't really know what's being asked.

Hummel: We haven't been able to pose the questions to you.

Fox: Well, maybe I'm not the right guy to pose the questions to. Maybe you need to pose them to somebody else.

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Immigration Reform

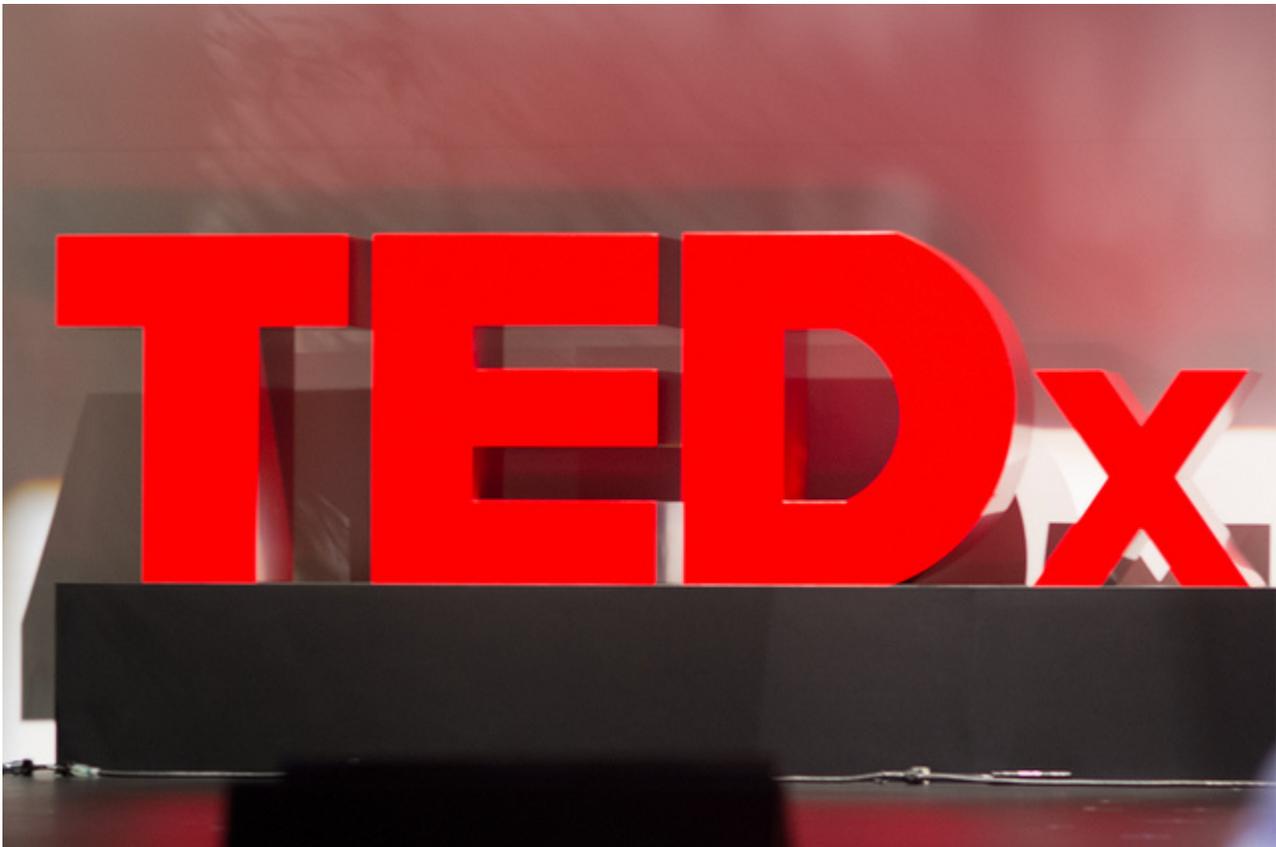
Gio and Jonathan examine immigration reform.

the-path-to-the-american-dream by Giovanni Calise

debunking-the-republican-myths-on-immigration-reform by Jonathan Jacobs

Motif TV May 22

TED xpresses Ideas in Providence



TED talks have helped define viral video with their characteristic format. If you have email and a pulse,

you've been forwarded at least a few TED talks over the last several years. Their "Ideas Worth Sharing" places experts and thought leaders — often people you might not have heard of, sometimes in fields you didn't realize existed — on a large, round red carpet in front of an audience, and lets them talk.

Presentations are kept brief, topping out at 18 minutes. Often informative, sometimes intriguing, these pieces of video have been known to change the way people think about major issues. To encourage outside-the-box thinking, TED opened up regional offshoots called TEDx. Rhode Island's took place on May 11.

Three segments presented local experts in arenas of social enterprise, arts and culture in our society, and gastronomy. The talks should be available on video soon.

Look for wise words from state poet Rick Benjamin and Rasoi creator Sanjiv Dhar, and learn about the origins of AS220 in a rousing anecdote by founder Bert Crenca. Waterfire founder Barnaby Evans describes the origins of that esteemed art event, and Davide Dukceovich has a charming and funny presentation on the wonders of gourmet ham.

Educationally, Khalil Fuller makes math fun and describes proven methods for engaging kids to learn practical math skills, while Angela Jackson discusses her involvement with the Global Language Project, which expands students' horizons with foreign language education. Terry Nathan talked about creating jobs that are also art at the International Yacht Restoration School, and Hilary Jones talked about empowering and educating girls through Girls Rock!

There were presentations on the importance of being connected to your food, and to having it connected to natural and local processes — in the earth (by Emily Jodka) and in the sea (by Sara Schumann), and a remarkably well-spoken and self-possessed teen (Cassandra Lin) who created a community grease recycling program. Lisa Raiola shares a compelling personal story that led to the creation of an innovative commercial kitchen at Hope & Main in Warren.

In the realm of social enterprise, Meg Wirth described Maternova, a company bringing safer obstetric care to developing areas. Andy Posner described the Capital Good Fund, a program that helps combat poverty by connecting smaller investments with those who can leverage them.

Motif TV May 16 Episode