



# JAMESTOWN THE PRESS

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Historical Society officers Vice President Harry Wright, President Rosemary Enright, and Treasurer Marion Pierce.

## Island's history keepers prepare for the future

By Donna K. Drago

The Jamestown Historical Society has released a long-range plan of action that will allow them to modernize their policies and procedures and better preserve their collections.

The plan, approved by the society's board on March 9, was written by society Vice President Harrison Wright, along with members John Horton and Ken Newman.

Wright said the "very ambitious" plan would ensure that historical artifacts and documents would be properly stored, catalogued, and eventually made more accessible to the general public.

One of the items that the plan outlines is a partnership with the schools.

Wright said the historical society hopes to establish a classroom at the Lawn Avenue School by September that would both store documents and be a place where students and teachers could research island history.

There is an interest by the school administration to have "more education dedicated to studying Jamestown," Wright said.

"The most urgent matter" the plan addresses is that "our collection has expanded beyond our capacity to take care of it," Wright noted. The collections are currently housed in multiple locations, including the museum building on Narragansett Avenue, the library, and in the homes of society members, Wright said.

The museum building is not heated or cooled and is only open during the summer — a situation "that seriously increases the likelihood of deterioration of collection items," the plan states.

The plan states the historical society voted to install insulation, air conditioning, and heat into the museum building by May 2007.

Wright said a climate controlled museum would allow the society to hold more events, and to display its collections over a longer period of time.

The society is also looking to raise funds to establish an archive at the new town hall. Storing important manuscripts and historic documents in a vault at the town hall will ensure that they are properly preserved, which is the society's primary mission, Wright said. Allowing the general public daily access to the documents is also one of the society's major goals.

Talks are underway by the society's board for a year-long capital campaign and to find ways to increase membership in the society, Wright said. Membership in historical societies everywhere "tends to be older," he said. He'd like to see interest and volunteers come from a younger population as well.

Volunteers provide all of the labor to catalog and maintain the society's collections, Wright said. For all of the long-range plans to come to fruition, more volunteers will be needed to help with computer entry, scanning photographs and with general collection management activities, he added.

"It's time we take the society into the 21st century," Wright said.

## Wells are safe!

'Human error' blamed for wrong test results on north end water wells

By Dotti Farrington

The four private wells on North Main Road in the former landfill area reported in early March to be polluted are not polluted, according to preliminary reports of retests received Friday.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser told the Town Council Monday that he was awaiting written reports to confirm those findings.

Keiser said the unusually high reading — about 26 times a safe level — for cobalt in Philip and Norma Willis' well was the result of human error in hand transferring computer data by a laboratory technician who did not place a decimal point correctly.

"I prayed it would turn out to

be a decimal problem. Some of us are taught to pray for very specific answers," Norma Willis remarked privately Monday. She told the council and the audience of about 30 people that she was delighted with and relieved by the new test results and with the new information about the original test. "I forgive the technician," she said. "It was a mistake and anyone could make a mistake," she added.

She and her husband originally were "terrified" both about the findings, and about GZA's advice that the water is safe. It was Keiser who advised caution and non-use of their water until the retests were completed.

### DEM order

In December, the town was ordered by the state Department

See "Wells" on page 12

## Town Council completes budget preparation

By Dotti Farrington

Council President David Long reported a remarkable development in taxpayer spending last week. He is going through his seventh town budget as a multi-term council member.

Every year in the past that he has served, he observed, the town and school budgets represented about a third of the money for the town and about two thirds for schools. "This year, the split is 41 percent for the town and 59 percent for the schools. This is a good thing," Long emphasized.

### Bonding practice

Another new feature that seems to have developed is the

See "Budget" on page 14



State DOT officials say it will take three explosive "events" to demolish the old Jamestown Bridge. This aerial photo was taken Monday evening by Nate Bousquet.

## Countdown begins to bridge explosion

Three major blasts will demolish old bridge

By Sam Bari

State Department of Transport Deputy Chief Engineer Frank Corrao stood before a packed house at the Melrose Avenue School March 22 and confirmed that the center span of the Jamestown Bridge is scheduled to come down on Tuesday, April 11.

At the special public meeting hosted by the DOT, Corrao made a Powerpoint slide show presenta-

tion detailing the impact the demolition will have on the surrounding area as well as the scheduling, methodology, and costs of the work and disposal of the bridge. The dropping of the center span on April 11 is the first scheduled event.

On that day the first of three explosive events requiring the closing of the new Jamestown Bridge and evacuation of the immediate area is highly dependent on safe weather conditions. Consequently, Wednesday and Thursday, April 12 and 13, were

scheduled as alternate days. High winds, heavy rain, or fog could postpone the event to alternate days, Corrao said.

Approximately 75 pounds of linear shaped charges of controlled explosives placed at v-notches cut in strategic places will be used to drop the bridge's 1,100-foot-long center span, Corrao explained. He also assured residents living close to the bridge that the charges were all above ground and would not even slight-

See "Bridge" on page 19