

# Island Opinion

## Another view from the north

The following letter was sent to North End Concerned Citizens and copied to the Press:

I received your "Important Notice" letter regarding the location of the town highway facility and the potential hazards of the Jamestown landfill.

I know it is safe to say that a great majority of the properties that you represent were purchased and built upon while and after the "Jamestown Dump" was in service. No one ever tried to hide the dump from view, and many of you took your refuse there.

I am sure that every one of you purchased your properties with knowledge of the dump location. If you did not, shame on you. Prior to purchasing your properties, you had an obligation and certainly the opportunity to evaluate the risks versus the advantages of the choice that you made. You all had access to any knowledge and research available for dump sites around the country. Granted, there has been more research done on the subject, and now you may have concerns that you did not have before. You all chose to buy, build, and move to the north end.

I would guess that during the life of the Jamestown Dump it serviced an average of 3,500 people yearly. For most of its service, the dump was simply a pile of trash. Then we had to bury the trash. As I recall, that was because it was safer. One of the downsides was that we could no longer shoot rats. We don't have a mountain of refuse. Now might just be the time for all of us to own up to our mess and move it to someone else's back yard. That

seems to be the American way. Jamestown has an opportunity to improve its situation by allowing and insisting on proper remediation. If that means we need to spend a great deal of tax dollars, then so be it.

The North End Concerned Citizens attitude is very reminiscent of people who buy a house at the end of an airport runway because of price, view, or proximity and then complain about the noise of the planes.

I live on the north end. My neighbors' leach fields are too close to my well, and their wells are too close to my leach field. Maybe my water is even affected by the dump site. I have two wells that don't provide decent water nor very much of it. My water is very acidic, has iron and a list of other goodies that I would be better off without. I have filters, chemical feeders, and a reverse osmosis system, and still my dog will not drink the tap water but he will drink from a muddy puddle. Could there be a message there? You might not believe this, but I had the water tested before I moved in. I knew what I was getting. If the quality of the water gets worse, I have to be willing to assume responsibility for my mistake. I suppose I could move.

Those people who are concerned with their safety could move. After all, that would be the intelligent thing to do if you feel that your location is untenable. The bottom line is: if you don't like living near the dump, you should not have moved there. Most of the people who lived in the Love Canal moved out. That all came about in 1978. The Love Canal residents did not know the risk they faced. You moved in by your own choice!

The dump property is the logical location for a highway

## • LETTERS •



barn. Let us hope we build a quality facility. The majority of the voters believe that to be the case. I certainly understand why you might not want a town facility in your area. Who would? Everything that the town owns is in horrendous condition. Maintenance is unheard of. Finishing a municipal project seems rare. If that is what you are really concerned about, you should just say so and get on with it.

I am very certain that my opinion is not to your liking, and the truth is often painful.

Sincerely,

Bar Wharton  
Jamestown

## A political, NIMBY issue

The following letter was sent to W. Michael Sullivan, director of the state Department of Envi-

ronmental Management, and copied to the Press:

I am a resident of Jamestown who lives near the old landfill. I am sure that you are aware of the huge controversy going on in town concerning the proper closure of the landfill and the plans being discussed to locate a new a 13,000-square-foot highway barn on the property along with other DPW-type activities.

The landfill was never properly closed when it was converted to a transfer station and plans to do a proper remediation have dragged along slowly over the past 15 years. The town, however, has continued to use the site on a very active basis. A few years back the DPW spread lead paint chips that were left over from sandblasting a water tower all over the top of the upper landfill. I believe they were forced to

remove it. They also tried to spread treated sewage over the same areas and that was forced to be halted. They continue to drive heavy equipment over the landfill and to do all manner of work on the site. If this is okay with DEM, why bother to remediate the site at all!

Water Tests! All of us who live up here had our water tested when we moved in because it is part of real estate due diligence and you need to have your water tested to get most mortgages. The water up here is not good so we all have some sort of filtration system. Some wells in the area showed very small amounts of unwanted elements but not above the limits of safe drinking water. Now after all the disturbance at the landfill over the years, some wells are starting to show higher concentrations of unsafe materials. This is extremely troublesome.

The Town Council now is thinking about putting the new highway barn up here as well. The plans that I saw showed that huge disturbances were to occur in the site work, in the construction of the barn, and in operations planned for the site. The plans that GZA and DEM presented were the minimum of protection with no assurance that we could get a new water supply if our wells are further corrupted. The cost of doing a proper closure would cost the town more for site work than the building of the barn!

This issue is entirely political. It is a NIMBY issue. There are other good sites for the barn that are safe and have town water and sewers. Most of the work of the DPW is done in and for the south end of town. There is no one protecting us up here. The Town Council, GZA, and a couple of your people won't help us. We need a new barn, but why take the risk with both health and

finances.

Please help us if you can.  
Respectfully,

David King  
1180 North Main Rd.

## Week of the Young Child

There are more than 35 million children from birth through age eight in this country. The early years are a crucial time for their growth and development, and a time when we help children prepare to succeed in school and in life.

April 2 through 8 is the Week of the Young Child, a time to recognize the needs of young children, and thank the adults involved in their education and care. Parents, teachers, caregivers, and other adults play important roles in the lives of young children, and the Week of the Young Child celebrates their efforts.

Early education programs — including child care, Head Start, preschools, and elementary schools — provide crucial learning experiences for many young children. Supporting these programs is the right choice for children.

Every adult in this community has opportunities to make a difference, from volunteering at a local program to supporting efforts that help more young children benefit from quality early education. Week of the Young Child is a good time for all of us to acknowledge the needs of children, and work together to build better futures for all children.

At the Jamestown Early Learning Center, we will be celebrating with family activities, including a Kick Off Breakfast, as well as a celebrity guest reader and a buddy program pairing preschoolers with toddlers.

Terri North,  
director, Jamestown  
Early Learning Center

The news of 10 and 15 years ago is from the Jamestown Press. The news of 25, 50, 75, and 100 years ago from the Newport Daily News comes from the collection of the Newport Historical Society.

### 100 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 26, 1906:

An opposition ferry between Jamestown and Newport from present indications seems assured. This morning steam lighter Archer of Fall River unloaded spiling on Knowles' north dock and later Mr. Stillman Saunders' steamer Gypsy with a spile driver arrived. . . . This makes it doubtful if a dock is to be built at this point after all, as no information is forthcoming from Mr. Saunders other than that he will establish an opposition ferry as near at the foot of Narragansett avenue as possible.

A party from Jamestown will attend the hearing in Providence tomorrow on the harbor line of Jamestown.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 28, 1906:

The burning of steamer Plymouth made a brilliant spectacle at Jamestown, the alarm and the brilliant illumination awakening a large proportion of the townspeople in the east part of the town and many others who were farther away, near the west ferry. The local volunteer firemen, especially the younger members, express regret that they were not given a chance to show their appreciation of the services rendered by the Newport firemen at the Caswell hotel fire, a dozen years ago, and more recently, when in response to an appeal for aid from an unknown person, when a small fire was discovered on Narragansett avenue, the Newport department quickly assembled on Market square to render assistance to the neighboring town.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 29, 1906:

The local poultry market should be well supplied during the coming summer, as an unusually large number of extensive plants, and all report good hatches owing to the mild spring.

### 75 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 27, 1931:

(At the town council meeting a number of persons) petitioned the town council to have a sum of money appropriated at the financial town meeting for the purpose of construction of a stone road on Eldred avenue and to run in a westerly to direction to the westerly boundary of Cedar cemetery, on Eldred avenue.

A permit was granted William H. Weicker to operate a miniature golf course and auto services station, with 1,000 gallon



capacity storage tanks; also construction of above, with the necessary features, caddy house or buildings, etc. to conduct business in an efficient manner, on his property on Green lane

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 28, 1931:

The two-act play, "Around the Blue Wigwam," was presented by the Dramatic Club of the Thomas H. Clarke School in the school hall last evening.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 30, 1931:

The students of the eighth grade of the Thomas H. Clarke school, went on a hike Saturday, their objective being the Gilbert Stuart house. They were chaperoned by Miss Clare Weicker, teacher in the Clarke school.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 31, 1931:

The four ponds at the Beavertail Country Club are full to overflowing and add materially to the already beautiful setting of the course.

### 50 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 28, 1956:

Five employees of the Jamestown Ferry Authority, all over 70 years of age, are allowed to continue employment another year under a bill passed by the General Assembly yesterday and sent to the Governor Roberts for signature.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 29, 1956:

Continued opposition to introducing a bill for a police court setup in Jamestown was expressed yesterday by Sen. Alton Head Jr., Jamestown Republican. He said that of the 33 Jamestown arraignments in Newport District Court in 1955, all but possibly one were made under Rhode Island statutes, which meant that the fines went directly to the state. . . . Of the 33 arraignments, 22 were for parking law violations under the motor vehicle code, six were for breaking and entering, two for assault, two for larceny and one for reveling.

### 25 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 25, 1981:

Revaluation may be coming up in a few years for this island community. The Town Council was told Monday night about methods used to revalue property in Scituate, a town similar in size and rural geography to Jamestown. . . . Michael W. Sands, manager of SLF Inc. from Scowhaegen, Maine, whose firm recently did the revaluation in Scituate, explained methods used by his firm and steps to be taken to complete a revaluation. Twelve months is the normal time.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 26, 1981:

The Town Council endorsed a bill to change the state flag at the request of a Jamestown resident at this week's meeting. . . . If passed the bill would make the Revolutionary War regimental flag the official state flag.

#### From the Newport Daily News, March 30, 1981:

Participants in the third annual Youth Choir Celebration were given a standing ovation Sunday afternoon at St. Matthew's Church by the congregation which packed the church. . . . The music represented the seasons of the church from Advent to Easter.

### 15 years ago

#### From the Jamestown Press, March 28, 1991:

The Town Council wants the state Department of Transportation to allow bicycle and pedestrian travel on the new Jamestown Bridge. In a 4-0 vote, the council Monday night passed a motion to send a letter to the DOT asking them to reverse their decision to restrict bridge use to vehicle traffic only.

Further plans were made to address the future of the Jamestown Golf and Country Club at Monday night's Town Council meeting. Council President Victor Calabretta presented plans to form a Country Club Committee. The committee will research and recommend action on the country club's second floor, and address long-term ownership issues of the properties and the building.

### 10 years ago

#### From the Jamestown Press, March 28, 1996:

North Pond reservoir is full and all restrictions on water use have been lifted. Public Works Director Steven Goslee said Tuesday that water was trickling over one corner of the reservoir's spillway. Last September, with only 34 inches of consumable water left in North Pond, town officials declared a water emergency and banned all outdoor water uses.