

# Winners of 'bridge memories' announced

The Jamestown Historical Society Bridge Memories contest ended March 31 with four winners selected.

First prize went to Chris Crawford of Jamestown for his reminiscences about living at the foot of the bridge in the 1950s. Nancy Crawford of Jamestown received second prize for her story of bringing her newborn daughter across the bridge in 1981. Third prize was shared by Judy Garlick of Jamestown and Marion Galvin of Newport. Garlick's winning entry related a practical joke played on the toll takers, and Galvin told of delays caused by farm animals on the bridge.

There were 70 entries. The judges were Donna Drago, Dick Allphin, and Ed and Barbara Morinho. Submissions are still encouraged. Memories will be displayed on the society's Web site ([www.jamestownhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.jamestownhistoricalsociety.org)) and placed in the historical society archives. Other publishing options are being explored. Those interested should send their bridge memories to the Jamestown Historical Society, PO Box 156, Jamestown, RI 02835 or e-mail to [SDMaden@aol.com](mailto:SDMaden@aol.com).

## First prize

The Crawford family bought an abandoned house on Seaside Drive in the '50s when it was a single-lane dirt road with six houses on its entire length. The property along the water was regularly cut down by Mr. Gladding as they were marketing the lots for \$2,500 each.

It provided us seven Crawfords and a million other kids who stayed with us (my dad always volunteered for Big Brothers) a phenomenal playground on the water where we played hours of baseball, golf, football and volleyball everyday as soon as we rolled out of bed. We had the equivalent of a dormitory chock full of beds and every meal was

family style. My dad refused to get a phone as we always welcomed anyone who stopped in and he could avoid calls from work.

A big part of growing up was the bridge. My dad would drive down the hill on the Saunderstown side and hit his horn, which we could clearly hear at the house. Remarkable considering the volume of cars (and noise) that cross it today. We would run up to the old motel on Eldred Ave. and then he would let one of us kids drive the car home. We always swam out and fished off the piers and once saved a jumper.

Manny Matoes one night was in the toll booth (often quiet at night with few cars) and was watching a lightening storm and thought he saw our house which stood out to be hit. He called the fire department, which sent out a car to check it out. Before they could even get there he was calling them back telling of the fire that quickly mushroomed consuming every board in the house as the department struggled to get the pumps in place from the rocky shoreline up to the house. We lost everything but never forgot his efforts to alert the fire department.

The toll booth collectors saw everyone and knew everyone by name, as you had to buy your book of tickets from them. I am sure they were valuable eyes and ears to the police department year around and were definitely part of making Jamestown a welcoming place.

— Chris Crawford

## Second prize

Late (in) January 1981 I was bringing my daughter Kerry home after being born several days earlier at Kent Hospital in Warwick.

We had an old car back then and lived in a small cottage in view of the bridge in Jamestown Shores. The car broke down just before the main span of the

bridge, coming to a slow stop. It was a cold, windy day and the bridge was deserted except for us. As my husband frantically looked under the hood for a quick answer, a small sports car pulled up and offered to help out. It was decided that this couple would bring me to our house and I would call a tow truck from there.

Now I am so afraid of heights that the thought of stepping onto that bridge was terrifying. What my husband failed to tell the helpful young couple was that I also had a newborn baby with me . . . their eyes popped out when he handed them the baby first! I had to be coaxed out of the car and into theirs.

When we arrived at our house our beloved Newfoundland "Mutley" was there to greet me, unfortunately he was not so enthusiastic about the helpful couple. So I hobbled to the door with baby in my arms only to discover I had the wrong key! Back into the car and to the bridge where a truck had pushed the car off and into the parking lot of the old motel. Keys were exchanged and at last we were home! When my husband arrived later, the house was dark. The baby was asleep in the "home from the hospital" bunting and I was having a post-partum meltdown on the couch.

We have laughed about this story every time we told it since and it was written into her baby-book. Three children later none had such a coming home story to tell!

(P.S. Kerry is grown up, works

in Disaster Preparedness for the government in Washington, D.C. and does not share her mom's fear of heights)

— Nancy Crawford

## Third prizes

• When there was still a toll on the Jamestown Bridge, my father, Frank Garlick, went on a business trip in a hearse to Connecticut with Art Washburn, who had a funeral home in Jamestown. On the way back my father rested in the back of the vehicle. On reaching the toll booth he sat up quickly and nearly scared the toll collector to death.

—Judy Garlick

• For many years I had season tickets to the "Tent" (Warwick Musical Theater) and we traveled each week, early on via the ferry, later the Newport Bridge to reach there.

One particular night, on our way to see Liberace, as we reached the top grate of the Jamestown Bridge, we found traffic in front of us stopped all the way down the Bridge to Saunderstown. Three black and white cows were coming up the Bridge towards us at a good pace. State and local police were on the scene, and we had to wait until a farmer and his truck arrived to corral the errant cows back to their field.

Needless to say, we were late for the show, but had already seen a great one anyhow!

— Marion L. Galvin

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