

# Island Opinion

## • EDITORIAL •

### Ground breaking for a new Town Hall

Sometime next week, if all goes as planned, history will be made when island earth will be officially broken for the new Town Hall on Narragansett Avenue.

The construction of a new town hall has been talked about for two decades or more. The new facility will combine the offices of the old town hall with those town offices now located on Southwest Avenue. The new building will also feature a meeting room for the Town Council and archival storage for town records.

The ceremony is expected to attract the usual array of elected officials, town officials, and representatives from the construction company that will build the new complex. They will don hard hats and pose with shovels for the pictures that the Jamestown Historical Society will treasure.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the event will be the razing of the former planning and recreation office on West Street. It won't take long to flatten the building that ought to have been demolished years ago.

The historic old Town Hall will, however, be moved and renovated as part of the new facility.

As of our news deadline on Wednesday, there had been no definitive word on the date or time of the ground breaking. We will keep our readers posted by updating the home page of our Web site at [jamestownpress.com](http://jamestownpress.com) when we have the complete details.

Of course, we'll cover the event and publish the story and photographs in the next issue of the Press.

Progress! Who knows, maybe we'll soon be covering the ground breaking for a new highway barn.



Architect Bill Burgin penned the design for the new Town Hall.

## • LETTERS •

### Sad to see public treatment of Bolles

I have lived and have had a business in Jamestown for 23 years. Although Becky and I may not be considered genuine Jamestowners, our children have grown up in Jamestown and attended school here, and all four of us have been involved in various community activities.

Although I read the Jamestown Press every week, I have never written a letter to the editor, and although I am interested in town politics, I never have become very involved. However, the time has come when I must speak out. I

feel I would be letting down one of my Jamestown community members if I didn't add my letter to the ones that already have been written on his behalf.

What has happened in Jamestown? Where have I been that I only recently noticed that some people here have become so heartless that they think that it is all right to speak out publicly and write about others in such a harmful way without regard to one's feelings, in this case a town employee? Do people, especially elected officials, need to let our entire community

know when we are irritated by someone, and then when the accusations turn out not to be true, have we forgotten about manners so we don't make a public apology for the humiliation we have caused? Would we let our children get away with such behavior?

Of course, I am referring to the treatment of Matt Bolles, our present director of parks and recreation. How two Town Council members even could think that making negative comments in public is acceptable is disturbing. We are not a large city where many

people are unfamiliar with our employees. Matt has been a valued worker and resident of Jamestown for many years. Even if there are individuals who are upset with him, how could any decent person, much less Town Council members, criticize him publicly?

Why is it that the majority of people who have come in contact with Matt on the job are so shocked by the treatment he has received? It is because they love him. Matt has worked hard and has done an excellent job for a long time, and those

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*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, October 15, 1906:

A large number of fishermen were on the rocks at Beavertail yesterday blackfishing. Messrs Commerford and Kirwin were high hook, with a catch of over 100.

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 17, 1906:

William S. Todd has sold to the Narragansett Oyster Company a tract of land with buildings and other improvements thereon.

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 18, 1906:

A football team styled the "Berkshires" visited the island this morning to play the local grammar school team. The visitors were victorious by a score of 16 to 8.

#### 75 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 20, 1931:

The extension course covering program work to be given at Brown University beginning October 24, was discussed (at the Parent Teachers' Association meeting) and it was regretted by Superintendent Trowt and members that none in Jamestown would be able owing to the inability to return to Jamestown the same evening.

Through the kindness of the J.T. O'Connell Hardware Company, a radio was loaned to the Thomas H. Clarke School Monday morning, when the pupils heard the remarks of Senator Swanson of Virginia in Yorktown, and also the address of President Hoover.

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 21, 1931:

A dental clinic was held at the Carr school today, and one will be held next Wednesday from 2 until 4 o'clock.

#### 50 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 15, 1956:

Traffic was reported unusually heavy on the Jamestown ferry over the balmy Columbus Day weekend, which ended yesterday with a welcome burst of Indian Summer weather. On the holiday, a total of 3,197 passengers and 964 autos were carried, with the ferries running every 30 minutes.



### This week in Island history Compiled by Sue Maden Week of October 19

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 18, 1956:

The anti-litter committee, Jamestown's branch of Keep America Beautiful, Inc., met Monday night at the Recreation Center to map plans for a civic improvement campaign.

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 20, 1956:

The Progressive League for Jamestown was organized last night by 65 citizens at the Jamestown Recreation Center. . . . The purpose of the league is to sponsor and promote projects of public interest to the town for the benefit of the community as a whole and for civic advancement and betterment.

#### 25 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 14, 1981:

The water situation in Jamestown is critical, according to a report by Town Engineer Richard Zimmerman. Zimmerman told the Town Council Tuesday that his calculations show that there is only 19,350,000 gallons of water left in the North Pond Reservoir. That amounts to a 90-day supply of water.

Two Jamestown artists will open an exhibit Oct. 23 at the Art Association of Newport. Evelyn Rhodes will display 40 pastel landscapes that depict changes in weather, light and foliage in the Beavertail area. Catherine Morris Wright will inaugurate the Wright Gallery this year with a retrospective exhibition.

Forty-five building permits were issued during September for a total of \$336,285 with fees of \$700.

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 15, 1981:

The R.I. Public Transit Authority plans to install a bus shelter on the island.

Last month's revenue from the Newport Bridge was more than \$75,000 ahead of the amount collected in September 1980.

#### From the Newport Daily News, October 16, 1981:

Taxpayers are facing a possible 27 percent increase in tuition costs for students attending North Kingstown High School. . . . The present tuition per pupil is \$1,814.87. The increase would be between \$500 and \$550 per pupil. Jamestown has 216 students enrolled at North Kingstown. The total increase would be between \$108,000 and \$118,000.

#### 15 years ago

#### From the Jamestown Press, October 18, 1991:

Plans to demolish the former state highway garage on Narragansett Avenue to make room for a parking lot were stalled by a depleted budget during Tuesday night's Town Council meeting. The council went so far as to open bids on demolition work, which ranged from \$13,000 to \$25,000, but voted to delay the project. Town Administrator Robert Sutton said the town was "operating from a cash-poor position."

Concerned parents and taxpayers last week voiced opposition to state school regionalization after hearing officials defend the proposal.

#### 10 years ago

#### From the Jamestown Press, October 18, 1996:

The Town Council Tuesday voted unanimously to spend \$75,000 to buy two parcels of formerly privately-leasued land to keep the current configuration of the town-owned golf course intact. In a related action, the council voted to advertise for public comment on the form of its invitation to bidders interested in leasing the links from the town.

(Photo caption) GO! It was a bit crowded at the start of the annual Jamestown Rotary Club's around-the-island bicycle race Monday when 105 riders took to the road.

Town officials are proposing an amendment to the town laws that would allow taxpayers 65 or older with limited incomes to defer up to 60 percent of their property taxes.

Faced with nearly 100 suggested names for the recently completed \$24 million cross-island highway, the Town Council Tuesday put off making its choice until its Oct. 28 session. (A list is included of the suggested names.)