

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

We're all local all the time

Newspapers are making news as much as reporting news these days. The big metro newspapers — the dailies — are struggling with declining circulation and therefore sagging readership. These stalwart media giants are no longer the unchallenged kings of the hill.

We're surrounded with news. It is immediate and always on. Besides newspapers, we've got television, radio, and the Internet. The news now even comes on our cell phones.

The Internet, once the new kid on the block, has come of age. More people are relying on the Internet to keep abreast of the news from next door and around the world. It seems we're always connected to the 'net, whether at home, at work or on the road.

One newspaper group is even trying a novel experiment with its daily newspapers in Florida. They are eschewing the national and international news and instead focusing on local news. The newspapers have booted their reporters out of the newsroom, turning them into mobile reporting units. These reporters are filing their stories from the field via notebook computers and wireless connections. They are posting the news to their Web sites before it is printed in the newspapers.

One bright spot in this new media-scape is the community newspaper. Weekly publications across the nation report a consistent healthy growth in readership and advertising revenue. That's because the weeklies deliver the community news that people want to read.

Here at the Jamestown Press we've always known our greatest strength is community journalism. We exist solely to report the hometown details every week. That's our niche.

More than a year ago we expanded our Web site JamestownPress.com to include all the news and advertising published weekly in our newsprint edition. Your response has been astonishing. Last month, we had more than 225,000 hits to our site — that's 7,600 per day. We had 4,000 page views per day in November, with visitors averaging slightly more than seven minutes at our Web site.

That means people are reading the Press online. People are clicking on to our advertisers' Web sites.

As always, we'll continue to deliver the printed newspaper to you each week. But in the months ahead, we will be experimenting with our online edition. Click on our Web site for frequent updates on local news. And we'll be bringing you new online features in the form of multimedia slideshows and video reporting.

Now, more than ever, we're all local all the time. And we're available 24/7.

• LETTERS •

We love trees!

This letter is written in response to the article in last week's Press regarding new plantings on the corner triangle at Walcott and High streets. There is an untold story that began on May 9, 2005 with an application for the America the Beautiful Grant with permission from then Town Administrator Mark Haddad. A year and a new town administrator later, the tree-planting issue began. Two trees planned for a traffic median—one a sweetgum, fast growing to a height of 50 to 60 feet with a 30-foot spread, and a Japanese scholar, which would grow to 40 to 60 feet with a spread of 30 feet. Is this a proper planting for a small traffic island? Not until that time did we have any contact with the tree warden concerning a project that would greatly impact our water views and property values. And so the saga began — telephone calls and meetings. We were told if the trees grew too tall they could be trimmed or removed.

We thank Bruce Keiser and Emmet Turley of the town tree committee for its support and underlying concerns about random planting of trees anywhere in town without a master plan, and the application for a grant for new plantings that would directly impact taxpayers' property values without advising those residents.

The purpose of a tree warden and the tree committee is to enhance property values, enhance the aesthetics



and general quality of life on the island, and maintain the island's rural character. The tree warden was vested with "police powers" for the purpose of enforcing his duties. When the tree warden and the committee have the power to override the town administrator and taxpayers, something is amiss.

As residents and taxpayers, we have every right to apply for a position on any committee in Jamestown and the town Tree Preservation and Protection Committee is no exception. Our interest is to enhance the environment.

In answer to some negative comments by a member of the tree committee as to our not liking trees, we have exactly 32 trees of various species on our

property. Global warming? Just ride over the bridges to this beautiful island to see that Jamestown is filled with trees. We love trees when proper plantings are in the proper place, when homeowners are consulted and when a master plan is in place. Considering the taxes that homeowners with water views pay, it is important that a master plan be created for the planting of trees on the island.

Rita Antine,
Anthony Antine,
Walcott Avenue

Debris cleanup needed

I am writing in regards to the storm of Saturday, Oct. 28th, the letters to the editor by Dr. Richard Robin (Nov.2)

and Mr. Waller (Nov.9). At present, my concerns are very elementary. There has been debris, broken fences, and trash strewn along Beavertail Road at Mackerel Cove since that storm. Were this litter to be on Conanicus and Narragansett Avenues I am sure it would have been removed by now.

Are we waiting until Jan. 1—the Penguin Plunge, when we have visitors, to clean these shores?

I disagree with Mr. Waller that we can congratulate ourselves that the eelgrass held and therefore do no other conservatory measures to protect Mackerel Cove and the evacuation route as Dr. Robin suggests. This storm was not

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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, December 4, 1906:

The pupils who attend high school in Newport returned home today on the 10:30 trip of the ferry, it being so cold in the building that school was dismissed.

Today is by far the coldest of the winter, as the thermometer in the most exposed positions in the town registered 5 above zero early in the morning.

From the Newport Daily News, December 11, 1906:

Several parties of hunters are on the island today after rabbits.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, December 4, 1931:

As an experiment, the Carr school is commencing its afternoon session at 1 o'clock instead of 1:15 as heretofore.

The monthly practice meeting of the Jamestown fire department was held last evening when the new apparatus was given a trial.

From the Newport Daily News, December 7, 1931:

The Holy Ghost Society hall was well filled with dancers Saturday evening, when a masquerade ball was held, many from Newport, Providence and Fall River attending. The Monponsette orchestra from Newport, which made its first appearance in Jamestown, furnishing excellent music for dancing.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, December 4, 1956:

A joint meeting of the Jamestown Town Council, the Recreation Commission and representatives of civic

This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden
Week of December 7

groups was held last night to discuss the future of organized recreation on the island. . . . It was voted to open the Center and Alfred V. Richardson was voted custodian. The Council in cooperation with the Recreation Commission will try to obtain the services of a trained director.

The Council last night voted to close Beavertail area for the season.

From the Newport Daily News, December 7, 1956:

Formation of a boys club to be affiliated with the Boys Club of America Inc., was discussed yesterday afternoon in the Recreation Center

From the Newport Daily News, December 10, 1956:

The Keep America Beautiful Committee met Saturday at the Jamestown Recreation Center to consider entering the "Cleanest Town Contest."

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, December 7, 1981:

Conanicus (sic) Island was beginning to come to life this morning after a weekend storm dumped about 15 inches of snow and knocked out power on much of the island. Some homes still were without electricity and heat this morning.

(The building inspector issued five building permits.)

From the Newport Daily News, December 8, 1981:

Sen. John H. Chafee was told Saturday that the town's most pressing problem was the size of the proposed new Jamestown bridge and connector road.

From the Newport Daily News, December 9, 1981:

Christmas lights went on all over the downtown village of Jamestown Tuesday night during festivities at East Ferry Green. Christopher Powell was the coordinator. Although the snowstorm caused a two-day delay of the traditional lighting, the snow added to a real New England scene. The event was sponsored by the Jamestown Rotary Club and the Junior Women's Club.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, December 5, 1991:

The new cross-island road cannot be much smaller than what state plans now call for without going below the criteria used by highway designers. . . . Council members want the new bridge-connector road to have a slower speed limit and narrower median than the road the state proposes to build.

The Town Council, after getting a preview of next year's budget. Monday night, decided to hold five workshops on the 1992-93 spending plan beginning Jan. 4.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, December 5, 1996:

Voters at Monday's special financial town meeting approved spending \$114,843 of the town's budget surplus to buy land for the golf course and complete major renovations at the Senior Center. . . . Some 112 of Jamestown's 3,921 registered voters attended the meeting, which ended 10 minutes after it began.

Members of the Jamestown VFW and the American Legion posts will observe the 55th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor at 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 7, at East Ferry.

The annual lighting of the Village Christmas Tree this Saturday evening will be the final event of a day filled with festive island holiday activities.