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Fire department's looking for good men, women too

By Donna K. Drago

This Saturday the Jamestown Fire Department will hold an open house in hopes of recruiting new volunteers.

Training Lieutenant Melissa Hicks said that while the department used to have 75 volunteers on staff right now there are only 60. "We're short" of people, Hicks said. In recent years, a lot of young people joined the department, Hicks said, adding that many of them have gone off to college or moved off the island.

The open house will run from noon to 2 p.m. at the fire station and be a good opportunity for residents to meet the department's volunteers, learn about the individual pieces of firefighting equipment, and ask a wide range of questions about all aspects of firefighting.

There will be refreshments

and activities for children as well, Hicks said.

Hicks said that she'd love to see citizens in the 30 to 60 age range show an interest in applying as volunteers. "The older volunteers bring a different skill set" to fire safety training and are often more stable and likely to stay on the island for a while. But, she said, she is not trying to discourage young people, who are welcome to the department at the age of 16.

The youths are put into the fire academy and rotate serving on each piece of fire apparatus for three months, she said. At the age of 18, the teens can be voted into the department by the full membership.

"We'd also like to see more women," Hicks said, adding that about 10 of Jamestown's firefight-

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Sing along

Kathy Fitzgerald leads a sing-along for pre-school children Wednesday morning at the Jamestown library. Photo by Jeff McDonough

Painting next for new water tower

By Dotti Farrington

Public Works Director Steven Goslee told the Town Council, sitting as the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners Monday, that the contractor, Fisher Tank, capped the new water tower on Howland Avenue Friday and would be staging and encapsulating the tower in preparation for painting during the next few weeks.

In response to questions from the councilors, Goslee reviewed the impact the second tower's additional one million gallons would have on the municipal water system, which currently has only one tower with a one million gallon capacity. The new \$1 million tower will essentially double the water pressure in the municipal system.

Council President David Long said, "That was the reason for building it."

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Rec commission idea nixed by council

By Dotti Farrington

Town councilors last week turned back a recommendation from the town administrator on rules for a new commission to oversee the town Department of Parks and Recreation.

The council basically said the proposed rules took too much responsibility away from the staff and gave too much authority to what would be seven appointed members.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser presented a draft of his commission plan, based on a similar arrangement followed in South Kingstown, where Keiser was assistant town executive before coming to Jamestown a year ago.

The councilors said the rules would give appointees too much involvement in budget and personnel matters instead of assigning advisory tasks about program policies, needs, and options.

Council members have been looking into town recreation activities for several months, in part because of problems housing a teen program. The council study, triggered by Councilman Michael Schnack asking about recreation policies, led to interpretations that he was criticizing Matt Bolles, the recreation director for 17 years. The talks led to a swell of residents' defense of Bolles' work.

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Priest's home heavily damaged in Saturday night fire



The fire started in the kitchen at 265 Highland Drive. Photo courtesy Jamestown Fire Department

By Donna K. Drago

The home of an elderly monsignor is now unlivable after a Saturday night fire that heavily damaged the house at 265 Highland Drive.

Fire Chief Jim Bryer said when the first truck arrived to stem the blaze, the south side of the house was completely engulfed and flames were shooting out the exterior south wall.

"It took about 10 minutes to get the flames under control," Bryer said, adding "this was a good stop for my guys." All units of the Jamestown Fire Department responded to the call, Bryer said.

No one was at home during the blaze that started about 7 p.m., but a cat had to be rescued and given oxygen by the JEMS team. The cat survived, the fire chief said.

Bryer said he is personally acquainted with Monsignor William Carey and that he was out

to dinner with friends when the fire began.

It appeared that either a small appliance on the kitchen counter or the plug the appliance was plugged into was the cause of the fire. The fire was electrical, Bryer said, and it was likely smoldering for a long time before the first flames appeared.

The kitchen was destroyed, Bryer said, and the rest of the one-story house has heavy smoke and heat damage. To illustrate his point, the chief showed a smoke detector that was taken off the ceiling on the far side of the house that was melted, blackened and misshapen.

The fire was called in by neighbors who saw the flames, Bryer said.

Bryer said the monsignor is now staying with a brother in

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