

# Island Opinion

## • EDITORIAL •

### The first step in controlling herd size

After several years of endless debate, deer hunting at Beavertail State Park finally got underway this week.

Only bow hunting is permitted.

The Town Council's decision to allow the bow hunt has survived its first court challenge from animal rights activists. Hunting locally has proven to be a polarizing topic and the council should be commended for making the hard choice.

The Beavertail deer hunt is not a panacea. The hunt is not expected to quickly alleviate the many problems caused by the island's rapidly expanding deer herd. But the hunt will help reduce the number of deer on the island and, hopefully, encourage private property owners to allow hunting on their lands.

Jamestowners are increasingly concerned about the Lyme disease threat the large deer population poses. The disease can cause many serious long-term health problems.

Other islanders are upset over the continuing property damage, saying that their gardens and landscaping have been ravaged by deer.

A growing number of deer are also involved in collisions with motor vehicles. Often fatal for the deer, such an accident can cause serious injury to the vehicle's occupants.

The island's deer herd is growing unchecked because of the limited hunting that has been allowed in Jamestown. The deer have no natural predators here and there is an almost unlimited supply of food. Opening public lands for deer hunting is an important first step to checking the population growth.

The town should, however, continue to evaluate alternative means of reducing the size of the deer herd. Humane methods that are proven effective and affordable could help further limit the number of deer in Jamestown.

### Political wisdom of our founding fathers

Last week, this nation's voters opted to shift the balance of power in Congress, putting the Democrats in control of both the Senate and the House for the first time in years.

The war in Iraq loomed largest among many issues confronting voters. What were considered "Red" states became "Blue" as the electorate put the Democrats in charge not only on the national level, but in many state governments as well.

The pendulum of politics has again swung, but for how long remains to be seen. The task ahead of the Democrats appears Augean. The nation will watch closely as these new leaders take on the mess in Iraq while also tackling foreign policy, trade, terrorism, immigration, education, health care, and Social Security.

Can our nation be made safe while restoring our image on the world stage? Will the growing national deficit be brought under control? Is there time to repair the damage to our environment before we experience cataclysmic climate change?

Finally, can we safeguard our society so that everyone has access to a good education and quality health care?

The election serves as a reminder of the lasting effectiveness of our Constitution. More than 200 years ago, the founding fathers created a simple, but elegant outline for a government that continues to operate on a self-correcting course. No single party rules forever. The delicate balance and separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches remain effective as long as this nation's citizens choose to exercise their right to vote.



#### Learning from the pros

Sen. Teresa Paiva Weed and Rep. Bruce Long gave a lecture on the workings of state government to Maureen McGuirl's grade 8 civics class last week at the Lawn Avenue School. Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

## • LETTERS •

### Deer hunt is about the money

The Town Council gave their approval to hunting at Beavertail Park last Monday evening. After hearing that the Jamestown Town Council was irritated by their "no show" the week before despite being on the agenda, the DEM brought their two top administrators with them to be sure that they got the approval of the Town Council. The Town Council

did allow Chris Savastano to speak as chairman of the Town Council-appointed Wildlife Committee. He was adamantly opposed, and questioned the validity of the information being presented. Mr. Frank Meyer of the Beavertail advisory committee was also allowed to speak, and he also was opposed. He quoted legal issues which contradict such an action without the

"consultation" of this group and the DEM, which did not occur. I guess this did not matter to the Town Council.

More than 50 residents came to this meeting, most of them opposed to hunting at Beavertail, but they were not allowed to ask any questions of DEM. The Town Council heard the DEM acknowledge that there are probably less than 20 deer

in this area (compared to the 400 or so island wide), and that this would most likely be an annual event. Not once in the presentation did the DEM mention Lyme disease, one of the two reasons given to the National Park Service to get permission to have this hunt. (The DEM knows that killing a small number of deer will do nothing to prevent Lyme

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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, November 14, 1906:

The annual roll call of the Central Baptist Church took place in the church last evening with a large attendance.

The regular fall target practice with sub-caliber guns at Fort Adams commenced today. The target is anchored off Potter's Point, and those living along the water front and passengers on the Beaver Tail watch the shooting with interest.

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 16, 1906:

Blackfish are leaving the shores of the island, only a few being caught at present. Codfish, however, are still biting in large numbers and fishermen are turning their attention to the latter.

*75 years ago*

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 16, 1931:

The football game at Head's field Sunday afternoon between Jamestown and Westerly resulted in a scoreless tie. Ralph Clarke of Jamestown was the outstanding player.

The 4-H "High Flyers" Cooking Club held its meeting Saturday afternoon. The members then experimented in cooking vegetables (potatoes and cabbage) in parchment paper and also in the regular way, in water, and decided that the former was the better, as the flavor of the vegetable was retained.

*50 years ago*

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 13, 1956:

Armistice Day was observed in Jamestown yesterday with a parade under the auspices of the Arnold-Zweir Post 22 American Legion at 10:00 a.m.

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 14, 1956:

The Jamestown Council last night approved the pier which the Commerce Oil Refining Corp. has outlined in an application to the state Department of Public Works.

The J.M. Cleminsaw Co. of Cleveland will be asked to start the work of property revaluation for tax purposes by



**This week in  
Island history**  
Compiled by Sue Maden  
**Week of November 16**

Feb. 15 next, to be completed by Aug. 31.

A two weeks vacation was authorized for highway employees who have served two years in the department.

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 17, 1956:

Toll rates on the Jamestown Bridge will be reduced Feb. 1. ... The (Jamestown Bridge) Commission authorized (John B.) Foley and the treasurer, LeRoy Meredith, to work out a lower rate schedule to be reported at the December meeting. The most previous reduction was in March 1955 when the \$3 commuter's 12-trip ticket was reduced from \$8 to \$6.50.

After 83 years, the Town of Jamestown has gone out of the ferry business. Directors of the town-owned Jamestown and Newport Ferry Company last night ordered payment of the last bill outstanding against it and closed its books. The state purchased the ferry company's assets for \$270,000 last August and is operating the 261-year old ferry system, one of the oldest in the country.

*25 years ago*

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 17, 1981:

The U.S. Senate Monday night approved a narrower width than the state wants for the proposed Jamestown Bridge. (An 88-foot-wide bridge had been considered at one time. The state wanted a 79-foot-wide bridge. The federal government wanted a bridge 69 feet wide.) Statistics that planners point to include the 12,000 cars a day using the Jamestown Bridge. Traffic swells to 18,000-20,000 (vehicles) a day in the summer.

#### From the Newport Daily News, November 19, 1981:

Taxpayers are facing a 33 percent increase in tuition for students at North Kingstown High School. The

History continued on next page.