

# Year in Review

## Islanders remember the old bridge

In honor of the demolition of the old Jamestown Bridge this year, the Jamestown Historical Society held a Bridge Memories contest, asking residents for their best stories about the old bridge. The 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 in all. All memories are displayed on the society's Web site, [www.jamestownhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.jamestownhistoricalsociety.org), and placed in the historical society archives.

## Major changes in school administration

Beginning in January, the School Committee began talks to change the school's administrative structure to cut costs in light of declining enrollment.

At the time, Superintendent Katherine Sipala supported the idea of a full-time principal at the Lawn Avenue School, knowing that it might reduce the role of the superintendent to part time. She said that her dual role as both head of schools and principal at Lawn Avenue did not al-

low her "to focus on instructional leadership, teacher evaluation . . . and program implementation" because her focus was on management of the district.

In June, Sipala announced her resignation as superintendent of the Jamestown district to take the comparable position in the town of Narragansett, which has about 1,600 students.

At its June 15 meeting, the school board decided on a new administrative structure that would carry the district into the post-Sipala future. The board decided to hire a part-time superintendent and have both a principal and an assistant principal to run both schools.

Melrose Avenue principal Kathy Almanzor was tapped to take over as principal of both schools. Mike Franco was named assistant principal in July.

On Aug. 3, the School Committee named Dr. Robert Power to the job of part-time superintendent. Power retired in 2005 as assistant superintendent for the city of Newport. He was hired to work 90 days per year at a per diem rate of \$500 with no benefits. His salary is less than half of what the town paid a full-time superintendent.

## Post office receives top customer service ranking

In March, the Jamestown post office earned a five-star rating as part of the U.S. Postal Service's new Five Star Customer Service Program.

Ratings are based on surveys sent to local customers by the Gallup polling organization. The local post office was rated on efficiency, accuracy of delivery, consistency of delivery and waiting time in line.

Jamestown scored 11th out of 18 post offices in the southeastern New England district for postal quarter one.

"I am proud of the service that our employees provide to our customers, and this is a tremendous validation of their efforts," Postmaster Charles Burns said.

## Plan to offer healthy lunches pursued by school board

Last spring when the Press delved into the world of hot lunch at the Jamestown schools the featured item on the menu that day was "Double Dogs," two hot dogs on a plate, with a pile of tater nuggets on the side.

Kids seemed to be happy with the choice, but lately members of the School Committee have been pursuing healthy alternatives to the standard fare.

In September, the School Committee formed a sub-committee to look into healthy lunch alternatives. They met with consultants, the food services representative from the state Department of Education, and with Kids First, an organization trying to change the culture of lunch in the state from minimally nutritious to only nutritious offerings.

On Dec. 14, the school board invited food vendors to come to a pre-bid conference to give them a sense of what kind of healthy food offerings would be available to the school at a cost-competitive rate.

Four vendors showed up. The School Committee said it hoped to put out a request for bid proposals in January and will begin the new lunch service in Sept. 2007.

## New addition to fire department fleet

In April, after four years of budgeting and planning for it, the Jamestown Fire Department final-



### Great Creek osprey

Two baby osprey were in the nest with a parent at the Great Creek in this photo from the June 22 issue of the Press. They are siblings to the now-famous Conanicus, born last year, who wears a device that allows him to be tracked by local raptor enthusiasts. Photo by Deb Seger-Pini

ly got the newest member of the fleet — a shiny, red Engine 1.

Captain LeRoy Richardson and Deputy Chief Howie Tighe, who was captain of the old Engine 1 before becoming a chief last spring, spent many hours designing the set of specs they put out to bid for the new truck. Former Chief Bob Bryer oversaw the design of the new engine, the two firefighters noted.

The new Engine 1 cost the town \$373,000, Tighe said, noting that the town budgeted money in each of the last four years to pay for it. The fire department awarded the bid to build the Engine 1 to a company called E-One of Ocala, Fla.

The fire department expects Engine 1 to serve the town for about 30 years, Tighe and Richardson said.

## Jamestown tops for Democrats

"If you give money to the ACLU and the Sierra Club and yearn for the good old days when former Democratic Governor Bruce Sundlun was firing at raccoons and saving the day, then you'll find good company in Jamestown."

So said the September edition of Rhode Island Monthly magazine, which listed Jamestown as the best place for "The Donkey" to live.

The magazine story profiled Rhode Island towns and suggested what types of residents you'd

likely encounter in each community.

Jamestown, the magazine said, has twice as many registered Democrats as Republicans, and that Jamestowners hold the record for most "Kerry/Edwards" bumper stickers on their Volvos.

## New bridge director hired

The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority has named Earl "Buddy" Croft of Cranston as its new executive director in July.

David Darlington, chairman of the board at RITBA, said that Croft was one of 41 applicants for the job that was vacated last winter. Of those applicants, seven were interviewed by the entire RITBA board, Darlington said, noting that Croft was "by far the most outstanding candidate."

Richard Dragon, the chief financial officer for RITBA, served as the interim director after the departure of Kenneth Bianchi. Croft began work at the toll plaza headquarters on July 31.

Prior to being at the Bridge Authority, Croft served as chief of staff for Rhode Island Family Court Justice Jeremiah Jeremiah. Croft has also been a social studies teacher.

Croft said upon his hiring that it was a "wonderful opportunity" to work with such a "quality board and dedicated staff."

He recognized how important both the Newport/Pell Bridge and the Mt. Hope Bridge are in the state's economy, and he planned to keep offering "good services and safe services" to those that use the bridges, Croft said.

## "I had a Change of Heart!"



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