

Land trust uses cows to help spread message

By Dotti Farrington

Roadside signs are announcing a \$4 million, two-month fund-raising effort. The money will be used toward the \$11 million purchase of development rights of 160 acres of farmland.

Islanders and visitors this week found a major thoroughfare lined with cowboards - life-sized, black and white, wooden, livestock cut-outs with messages. For those old enough to appreciate their nostalgia, the signs recall the era of Burma Shave ads that lined roadways, starting in 1925, until superhighways and billboards sped them into extinction after the 1950s.

Just as the Burma Shave signs combined ads, humor and calls for driving safety, the Jamestown cowboards combine a message and a mission.

“For 350 Years”

“These Fields Have Been Pasture.”

“Let’s Keep It That Way.”

“Forever.”

“Help Save The Farms.”



Archie Clarke, Steve Goslee and Mike Swistak were among those erecting the new cow signs along North Main Road.

Photo by Vic Richardson

These are the messages on the five belted Galloway beef cow cut-outs along the pasture of George and Martha Neale on North Main Rd. just north of Great Creek; and on the five Holstein cow cutouts, facing southbound traffic, along the pasture of Joseph and Jessie Dutra, also along North Main Road.

The reason for the signs is that Jamestown Director of Public Works Director Stephen Goslee took matters into his own hands when he heard about the major fund-raising that the Conanicut Community Land Trust has suddenly undertaken.

Goslee conceived the idea, bought the three-quarter inch plywood, jigsawed out the cow silhouettes, painted half as Neale

cow clones and the other half as Dutra cow clones, and installed them - all on his own, according to Quentin Anthony, Land Trust president. Goslee instantly got himself appointed and installed as artistic director for the Land Trust, Anthony announced.

The information the Land Trust does not want you to miss are the phone numbers on signs one and five: 423-1858 on the belted cows for Arthur and Martha Milot, special associates of the Land Trust; and 847-1008 on the spotted cows, the office number for Anthony.

The two phone numbers are for callers to learn what the ballyhoo is all about. Anthony is working with Craig Amerigian, Land Trust vice president; Michael Swistak, community activist; and several

other farmland preservationists who will be identified as the effort continues.

The Land Trust leader explained that the fund-raising evolved rather suddenly, even though the town and its open spaces and farmland preservationists have been working at least two years to pull together a multi-million dollar project to buy the development rights to the

farms of the Neales, the Dutras and Peter Ceppi.

Anthony said the total package involves about \$11 million, of which the town will ask voters to approve a \$3 million bond issue, and federal, state and non-profit sources are committed to \$4 million. However, he reported, the deal could fall apart if all funds are not in place by the end of September because the federal commitment will lapse then.

“This is, or could be a crisis situation,” Anthony said. “We believe we can get the funds committed by Sept. 30,” he emphasized.

The Land Trust president said that timing of the fund-raising occurred because of the evolution of the talks on the preservation project. He said it was not purposely timed to coincide with the town’s 350th anniversary celebration in August. “It is just what is. This land was bought 350 years ago for pasture. I’m sure the Native

Americans also used it for agricultural purposes. We just want to keep it pasture forever.”

The Land Trust workers have created a PowerPoint presentation to detail the points about what will be preserved, how nature trails will be set aside and what residents can expect. “We also have some surprises, but they won’t be surprises if I tell about them now,” Anthony commented.

He said many people on the island are committed to preserving the land for the farms they are and for the vistas they provide. He said he expected he would have enough response to give weekly reports as he and his colleagues work toward the Sept. 30 deadline.

The fun little Burma Shave signs were replaced by huge, unsightly billboards. Anthony and his team do not want to see Jamestown’s farms replaced with development of any kind.

Like to poke around ?

Sun-dresses
Anklets
Toe Rings
Head Bands

Tara ★
twinkle, twinkle, little star

Clothing, Jewelry, Candles, Swarovski Crystals, Suncatchers
Bags, Tapestries, Frames, Incense, Oils, Aromaburners etc.
Egyptian Goddess Oils always in stock
593 Kingstown Rd. Wakefield, R.I.
Open 7 days a week. Sunrise hours - open to 5p.m. on weekdays (thru' Labor Day)

Gold Lady JEWELERS

20% - 70% OFF

EXPANSION SALE

NOW, EVEN MORE SELECTION AT GOLD LADY JEWELERS

A good thing just got better. Gold Lady Jewelers is expanding their Wickford store to offer you even more diamonds, bracelets, pendants, watches, and giftware. And, for a limited time, their having a sale to kick off the celebration. So inflate your expectations and visit Gold Lady Jewelers, a name you can trust.

Gold Lady JEWELERS

SERVICE, SELECTION, SATISFACTION SINCE 1980

One Brown Street, Wickford, RI, 401-294-4695
Open Tues. - Sat. 9:30-5:30 Visit us at: www.goldladyjewelers.com

Newport
GRAND SLOTS

Free Entertainment

Bandstand Revue
Get ready to dance!
Friday, July 27th - 9pm

The **Band of Brothers**
back by popular demand
Saturday, July 28th 9pm

\$9.95 All-You-Can-Eat Italian Buffet
Friday & Saturday 5-8pm

Open Daily 10am-1am - Located at the Base of the Newport Bridge
Must be 18+ to enter - 401-849-5000 - www.newportgrand.com