

Are we confused yet?

According to our crack research team, the Googlamaniacs, congress allocated \$522 billion for defense spending this year. To put that in perspective, the entire planet, not including the U.S., allegedly budgeted slightly over \$600 billion for the same purpose. This means that our country spends almost as much as the rest of the world put together to make sure we are safe.

However, do not for so much as a nanosecond believe that defense spending is actually limited to that meager amount. As situations arise, congress keeps allotting more of our hard-earned tax dollars to meet the demands of our war machine. Now don't misunderstand me, I am a veteran, and I am grateful that our government takes the necessary steps to protect us, but I am rather disturbed that we have so many enemies.

Don't you occasionally wonder how a country that requires such a huge military budget to defend



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

itself against its adversaries, also claims to have immigration concerns because everybody from every corner of the globe wants to live here? That doesn't make much sense to me. Is life everywhere else really that bad?

We also hear constant complaints about how our standard of education is drastically slipping when compared to the rest of the world. These latest Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) statistics rank us twenty-fourth in mathematics and twentieth in problem solving. That's pretty sad for the

wealthiest country in the world. To further exacerbate the situation, our national education budget was slashed by \$3.5 billion this year.

Nonetheless, our government is not the only one shirking its responsibilities. Governments around the world are falling far short of the mark. For instance, \$19 billion is the annual shortfall to eliminate starvation and malnutrition globally. \$12 billion is the annual shortfall to provide education for all kids on earth—just to make them literate. And \$15 billion is the shortfall for providing clean water and sanitation facilities.

In other words, human beings can afford to spend over a trillion dollars a year so they can kill each other, but they can't afford to spend slightly over four percent of that money to feed, educate, and provide clean water for their planet's inhabitants.

When you look at those statistics, can you really wonder why the space guys watch us but don't want to land on earth and let their presence be known? We must be the most confusing life form in the entire universe. They probably think we're crazy.

This column started out to poke a little fun at our system by citing a few statistics so we could ask why we have such a huge defense budget, immigration problems, and are drastically slipping in the area of education. Since we claim to be the most technologically advanced country on Earth, you would think we'd have the highest standard of educated citizens to support the

high-tech lifestyle.

At first glance, the premise had the makings of a slightly humorous subject until I reviewed the necessary info. It's not funny at all. The stats are downright frightening. However, we all might want to seriously consider these facts because we won't survive as a species if we continue in the direction

we're going.

Anyway, the column lives up to the headline — "Are we confused yet?" You betcha. These are just a few more reasons why I firmly believe we live in a system we can't understand. I'll try to be funny next week.

Bluesman to play café benefit

The celebrated blues group, James Montgomery Blues Band, will perform a concert to benefit the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) on Sunday, Aug. 12, at the Narragansett Café in Jamestown. The band will take the stage at about 8:15 p.m. Tickets are \$12 at the door.

"I'm a big fan of GSO," said Montgomery, who has played two previous benefit shows for the respected oceanography program and has established a scholarship fund to support its students. "I know a

number of professors and I'm familiar with the important work they're doing, so I wanted to help support them and their students."

Montgomery formed the James Montgomery Blues Band in 1970 while attending Boston University, and through the years he has toured with many major artists, including Aerosmith, Bruce Springsteen, the Allman Brothers and Steve Miller. He has shared the stage with such noted artists as B.B King, John Lee Hooker, Laverne Baker and Patti LaBelle.



Free Entertainment

Dueling Pianos!
Get ready for FUN!
Friday, August 10th - 9pm

The Chowda' Heads
back by popular demand
Saturday, August 11th 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

Did you know?

We – the voters – have a choice of where to put the Highway Barn.

What will happen if we reject the Taylor Point Highway Barn on August 28?

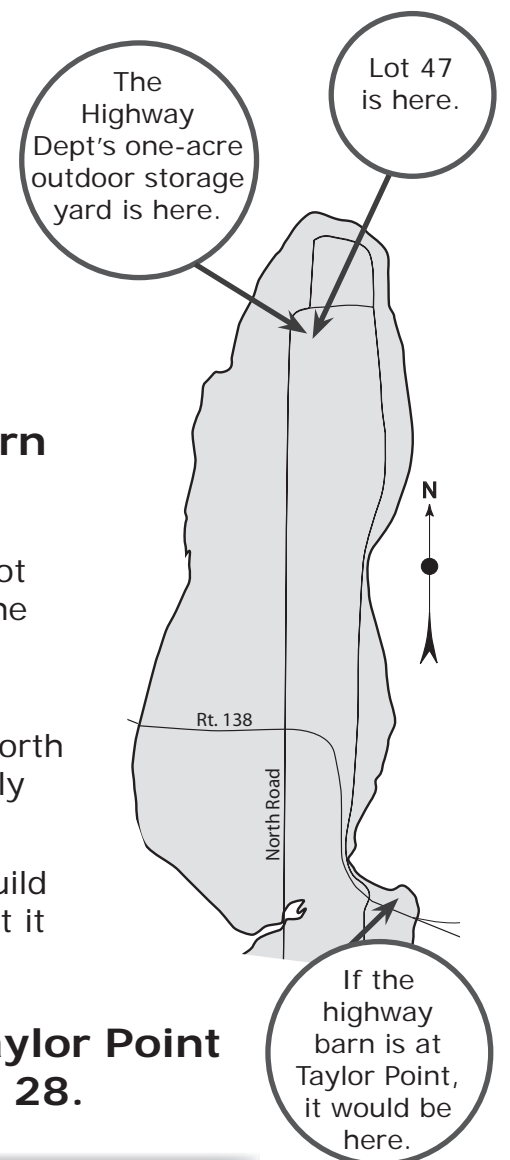
- The Highway Department operation is messy and unsightly and needs a big building with a lot of outdoor space. Taylor Point is too small for both the building and the outdoor storage.
- Why not just fix up the old barn? One reason is because it has no outdoor storage. So why build a new one that has no outdoor storage?
- We bought Lot 47 for the highway barn: it has no buried trash. A highway barn on lot 47 will not threaten anyone's water.

So why don't we put the barn at Lot 47, where it will be right next to the existing outdoor storage?

Trying to avoid a frivolous lawsuit (the rumored lawsuit from some north end residents) seems to be the only answer for not putting it at lot 47.

If we submit to fear and vote to build the barn at Taylor Point we'll regret it for years.

So vote to REJECT the Taylor Point Highway Barn on August 28.



If the highway barn is at Taylor Point, it would be here.

Let's give ourselves a chance to vote on Lot 47 in November.

You have a choice. Vote reject August 28.