



JAMESTOWN PRESS

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Permit No. 5
Jamestown, RI

www.JamestownPress.com

Volume 20, Issue 16

A weekly newspaper serving Conanicut Island

Thursday, August 16, 2007

Town Hall dedication draws enthusiastic crowd

By Michaela Kennedy

“Architects say, ‘Great buildings are because of great clients,’” William Burgin said while standing in front of his newly-constructed design on Sunday. The great building referred to was the new Jamestown Town Hall, which was dedicated on Aug. 13.

Town Council members stood with municipal workers, residents and visitors as a color guard marched forward to the new entrance. Town Council President David Long introduced Burgin fondly as the “mad architect” of the project. He also introduced Richard Pezzuco, the builder. “I’m sure I can tell you how happy I am to be here,” Long said. “This has been in the works for a long time.”

The complex combines the old town hall structure with a new, larger building and a connector between the two. Town administrator



It’s official!

Barbara Szepatowski, Sen. Jack Reed, Arlene Petit, David Long, Julio DiGiando, Rep. Bruce Long and Michael Schnack were among the officials who cut the green ribbon, formally dedicating the new town hall on Sunday.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

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Talent tryouts weather the storm

By Sam Bari

Not booming thunder, pelting rain, or driving winds kept the talented from strutting their stuff at the 18th Annual Talent Show, “350 Years: Then and Now,” tryouts at the Jamestown Community Center on Monday and Tuesday nights.

They danced till their feet hurt, they sang their hearts out, they told stories and jokes, and played the piano. The promise of “something for everyone” was evident in the enthusiastic performances of the participants and from the supportive audience cheering for their favorites. Both new and repeat performers were passionate in their efforts to impress the judges, outperform the competition, and entertain all who would watch, listen, and applaud.

During the tryouts, Victoria Griffis, 19, a ballet dancer visiting her grandparents who summer in

Jamestown, wowed the audience and judges with a spectacular dance performance that had to impress the judges. Griffis is a sophomore at Fordham University in New York where she is majoring in business. She has been dancing since she was three years old.

Pianist Janet Grant’s “Summer Song,” an ensemble of male and female jazz singers, entertained the audience with complex harmonies and swinging melodies that drew oohs and ahhs from all who attended.

John Biddle, 82, did a comedic dance with daughter Sophie that brought smiles, laughter, and warm applause from the audience and judges alike. Biddle was one of the original producers of the annual talent extravaganza and has been as-

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Keiser gives straight talk on highway barn site

By Tom Shevlin

In a lengthy presentation at Tuesday’s town council meeting on the location of the town’s proposed highway barn facility at upper Taylor Point, Town Administrator Bruce Keiser sought to provide residents a “clear vision” of what lay ahead should voters approve an Aug. 28 referendum to finance construction of the barn.

Expanding upon a synopsis written for the Jamestown Press last week, Keiser reaffirmed the town’s commitment to maintaining the aesthetic appeal of Taylor

Point while providing a suitable facility for the town’s highway personnel.

However, after exhaustive debate, Keiser acknowledged that questions still remained in the community over certain aspects of the plan.

Keiser first rejected concerns over a perceived desire on behalf of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA) to wield final authority over the project as simply untrue. He did how-

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School panel votes in new administrative team

By Donna K. Drago

The School Committee approved several new hires, including a special education director, at a special meeting, held Tuesday night.

By a 4-0 vote, with William “Bucky” Brennan absent, the committee voted on several personnel issues, which included four resignations, three requests for leaves, six new hires and nine appointments of current personnel to additional roles.

Robert Fricklas was named to the position of director of student services, which heads up the Jamestown district’s special education department. Fricklas was introduced to the audience by Principal Kathleen Almanzor, but was already recognized by

some since he served in the same position in Jamestown from 1985 to 1990.

“He’s not a stranger,” Almanzor said about Fricklas, who has most recently served as the director of special education for the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, and is also its assistant director. Fricklas has worked for several Rhode Island school districts including North Smithfield and the Charho regional district, Almanzor said.

“It’s like coming home,” a beaming Fricklas said about his new job. He added, “I’m glad to be aboard.” Fricklas will officially begin his stint in Jamestown on Sept. 5, he said.

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And the band played on

The Jamestown Community Band marched in Sunday’s parade in honor of Jamestown’s 350th anniversary. This Sunday, the band will play the final summer concert of the season at East Ferry Square, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten