

Meet the island's School Committee candidates

Editor's note: All of the candidates for Jamestown School Committee were invited by the Press to submit a 250 word statement giving some biographical information and to share their concerns and plans for the next four years. In order to allocate the same amount of space to each, some statements were edited to meet the maximum length requirement. Here, the candidates are presented in alphabetical order.

Melissa Burrows-Republican



I am a first time candidate running for the Jamestown School Committee.

As a fourth generation Jamestown resident, I lived here all my life.

I am fortunate to be able to raise my family in our wonderful town. Ed and I are very fortunate to have two great children, and glad that they are able to benefit from our fantastic schools here in Jamestown. Jessica, 16, is a junior at North Kingstown High School, and Andrew, 13, is an eighth grader at Lawn Avenue School. Both of our children are special to us, of course, but they are also special as they both have Asperger's Syndrome (autism).

I used to work as a teller in a bank and then part-time as a rural

mail carrier. I was nervous about running for School Committee, but thought with all the interaction I have had with the school and all the things I have learned about my children, that it would be a benefit to us all.

I currently do not work outside the home, but do computer work, repair, instruction, etc., as people call me. I help and/or volunteer with the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association, the North Kingstown Fraternal Order of Police, The Cub Scouts, and The Autism Project of RI.

We have a wonderful school system here in Jamestown and I would like the opportunity to help it to maintain and grow as our town does. I would like to see Jamestown have more of a voice in regards to the North Kingstown High School as we send most of our children there.

Julie Kalfelz-Democrat



I am a graduate of Cornell University and served as an officer in the US Navy before joining a local high-tech company, directing its hiring and training efforts. I now have my own marketing and recruiting business. I have lived in Jamestown since 1994 and have served on the School Committee

since 2003. I serve as a lector and Eucharistic minister at St. Mark Church, am a youth soccer coach, and am a member of Rolling Agenda, a local biking advocacy group. An avid sailor, runner, biker, and beekeeper, I live on Green Lane with my husband Andrew and my daughters Emily and Eliza, both of whom attend the Jamestown School.

The most important issues facing Jamestown's schools revolve around funding and the challenges associated with being a small school district. Because of its size, Jamestown has a limited ability to absorb the steady stream of unfunded state and federal mandates, which also absorb an increasing amount of our administrators' and teachers' time. We are also faced with new state legislation (RI Senate bill 3050) that ratchets down property tax growth each year through 2013.

If elected for another term, I will continue to contribute my skills, experience, and commitment to an excellent education for Jamestown's students and a strong return for Jamestown's taxpayers. I will work within the district toward innovation and efficiency, with other districts on opportuni-

ties to collaborate, and at the state level for systemic change that will support our district's goals of educational excellence and cost effectiveness.

Bruce J. Whitehouse-Democrat



I am a candidate for the School Committee, age 52, who is better known as B.J. I moved to Jamestown in 1989. A relative newcomer to politics, I am

no stranger to the Jamestown community or to education. Currently, I am the director of the Jamestown Community Chorus and the Men's Chorus of Jamestown, and have been part of the Community Band and Community Theatre over the years as well. In addition, I was part of the Jamestown Fireworks Committee, a.k.a. Rocket Dawgz, for twelve years.

I have worked as a teacher in Little Compton for 18 years and before that, on Block Island for

four years, so I am very familiar with the strengths and challenges of small schools. I hold a master's degree in teaching from Rhode Island College, and am the Mentor Coordinator for the Little Compton School Department.

I believe the challenges facing education in Jamestown and throughout Rhode Island have to do with funding. Between the Paiva-Weed bill that shrinks the amount of taxes that communities can levy to fund municipal services, shrinking state aid and the unfunded federal mandate of the No Child Left Behind legislation, towns like Jamestown will feel the pinch. In addition, younger families with children will find it more and more difficult to find affordable housing on Jamestown so the school children will have fewer and fewer parent advocates. Since kids can't vote at the town meeting, I will be an advocate for funding quality education in our schools.

I live with my wife, attorney Christine Ariel, on Steamboat Street.

Dramatic reading program on 'American dream' at library

On Sunday, Oct. 21, at 2 p.m., the Friends of the Jamestown Library are pleased to present "Living Literature," a group of dramatic readers who will perform a program, including staged readings of written work by various authors. In 2004, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities commissioned Living Literature to investigate the nation's founding principles by exploring "The Pursuit of Happiness: What is the American Dream?" They started with Theodore H. White's essay, "The American

Ideal," in which that author says, "The story we celebrate is the story of how this idea [as outlined in the Declaration of Independence] worked itself out, how it stretched and changed and how the call for 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' does still, as it did in the beginning, mean different things to different people."

Joining Artistic Director Barry Press, are Sharon Carpentier and Nehassaiu deGannes, who will perform a 50-minute, program that includes readings from fol-

lowing authors: Sherman Alexie, Bebe Moore Campbell, Sandra Cisneros, Allen Ginsberg, Langston Hughes, Frank McCourt, Pat Mora, Dwight Okita, Grace Paley, and R. A. Sasaki. It is intended that the ideas and issues on what the phrase "the American Dream" means to different people will generate a brief discussion following the presentation.

Now in its eleventh year, Living Literature is an association of performing artists in the Rhode Island area, celebrating the written word through performances of non-dramatic literature in schools and community venues throughout southeastern New England.

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Ad paid by the Jamestown Democratic Town Committee, Mary Meagher, treasurer

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LEGAL TIP

A personal injury plaintiff does not have to present specific evidence of how her earning power was permanently damaged in order for a claim of permanent impairment to go to the jury, the Kentucky Supreme Court has ruled.

The plaintiff was injured in an auto accident and, after recovering from the other driver, filed an underinsured motorist claim with her own insurance company. Two doctors testified that the plaintiff suffered permanent injuries, but the only evidence that her injuries affected her future earning power came from the plaintiff, who testified that the pain from sitting for long periods forced her to drop out of school and subsequently lose several jobs.

The insurance company argued that the plaintiff failed to provide evidence that her injuries affected her future earning power and won a direct verdict. The Supreme Court disagreed and said her testimony was enough and no specific evidence was required.

The Supreme Court licenses all lawyers in the general practice of law. The court does not license any lawyer as an expert or specialist in any field of practice.

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