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Administrator reflects on first year on the job

By Dotti Farrington

After a year as management chief for Jamestown, Bruce Keiser of South Kingstown considers himself "one of the luckiest town administrators around." He did not apply when the job first opened in 2004, but a year later, when it reopened, Keiser felt a move then would be part of the natural progression of his career.

"I'm very fortunate to be here, not only because of the numbers of people who are able to become involved with local government, but also because of the very capable staff as well as the supportive Town Council and the enthusiastic residents who volunteer and are

extremely helpful. All this has been gratifying to me."

Keiser came to Jamestown with a reputation and record of being a "people person" throughout his career. He has been recognized for the community outreach he has performed. That trait has played out in good form here.

"I enjoy people who are creative and open-minded. I look for and believe in the positive nature of people," he said in an interview Friday.

The evolution of the search for a town administrator, and some unofficial reports about the selec-

See "Keiser" on page 5.

Teen center taking shape at Community Center

By Donna K. Drago

There are no official activities scheduled for teens during the month of January. So says Teen Coordinator Melissa Minto, who has her hands full with trying to turn a section of the Community Center into the new headquarters for island teen activities.

Minto said that she is working with Town Administrator Bruce Keiser and local architect Ron DiMauro to come up with a plan for the space.

The basic idea is to tear down a couple of walls in the former harbor-master's office at the northeast corner of the building, Minto said. In addition to the office space, a couple of large storage closets will be included in the teen center plan,

Minto said, noting that the area for teens will be about 29- by 45-feet.

Among the features of the center will be a lounge with seating and a television for watching movies, and the other side will include a computer station and quiet area for doing homework and other projects, Minto said.

"It's a cool area," she said, adding, "It's not big, but it will be a good base," for teen activities.

DiMauro has volunteered the services of his Jamestown architectural firm and is currently working on evaluating the space to come up with a design, according to Keiser. Input was solicited from

See "Teen Center" on page 12



If it quacks like a duck

This trio of ducklings felt right at home on the soaking wet day of the Penguin Plunge.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

31st annual plunge a soaking success

By Sam Bari

Well over 600 swimmers braved pouring rain and bone-chilling temperatures to jump into the frigid waters of Narragansett Bay and participate in the 31st annual Penguin Plunge on New Year's Day.

Mike McGovern, the executive director of the Rhode Island Special Olympics and organizer of the event, was pleased with the turnout at the town beach at Mackerel Cove to raise funds for the organization.

"Although the crowd of observers was a bit thin compared to past years, we had as many

participants as ever," McGovern said. "We collected over \$72,000 today and I have every confidence that we'll reach our \$85,000 goal as pledges continue to come in," he added. The rain slowed down the T-shirt sales, but he expected to sell some on the Internet to participants and supporters alike who want to commemorate their involvement and help in raising funds for the Special Olympics, McGovern said.

Although the rain was relentless, swimmers stripped down to the bare necessities and hud-

See "Penguin Plunge" on page 12

Septic system application denied in Shores

By Dotti Farrington

The state Department of Environmental Management's Division of Water Resources last month denied the Thurston application for 16 variances to build an individual septic disposal system for a two-bedroom house on a 7,000-square-foot lot in the environmentally fragile Jamestown Shores section of town.

The rejection was reported Friday by Town Administrator Bruce Keiser, who listed ongoing progress to protect the Shores' ecological needs as a major accomplishment of the town and Shores officials during his first year as administrator here. Town residents and officials are working to soon present an update to the town's groundwater protection ordinance. They are also working with state officials to strengthen state rules that impact ground water.

"The state advised me that

they had found the Thurston application unacceptable," Keiser reported in December. Town officials, including town councilors, working in co-operation with Jamestown Shores officials were preparing to discuss the local position on the Thurston application to the DEM.

David and Marina Thurston of Saunderstown have applied to install a septic system on Lot 12 on Seaside Drive and Frigate Street in Jamestown, near the town beach there. The Thurstons have been seeking a number of variances since 1998, according to the DEM. Their application was previously deemed unacceptable by DEM, but the Thurstons continued to submit variance proposals. At one point, the town failed to give required notice to the Thurstons that the council would be discussing their application, and the Thurstons won a court order preventing the town

from commenting on that application pertaining to a freshwater wetland on the property.

The Jamestown Shores Association, currently under the leadership of Charlotte and F. John Zarlengo, have monitored the state involvement and alerted town officials when they believed town actions and objections to the application were needed.

Last month, the Zarlengos updated the Town Council on the need for the town to file objections again. "The applicant is requesting many variances on this small, environmentally sensitive wetland. As abutters, as well as members of the Jamestown Shores Association, we have worked tirelessly with the town, our state representative, and our state senator to develop rules and policy to protect the fragile environment in the Shores. Approval of this (Thurstons) ISDS would

See "Shores" on page 12



Doctor's office damaged by car
Damage to Jamestown Family Practice on Southwest Avenue was extensive after a car drove into it. See story page 3. Photo by Jeff McDonough