

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

We'd like to hear what you would like to read

Here at the Jamestown Press we like to think that we have the town pretty well covered. We deliver the news of the island 52 times a year. We hope you find the Press an informative read.

Every week, the Press has the news of our local government — the Town Council and the School Committee, along with proceedings from most of the town's commissions, committees, and boards.

Our intrepid Press reporters seek out interesting stories about islanders to share with our readers. Our photographers capture the memorable moments of island life.

The Press columnists cover just about everything else from gardening to senior life to humor. We keep you up to date on local events and happenings at the library and about town. Readers share their thoughts on timely matters in our letters section of the opinion page.

We also cover the news of record — life and death, police and courts, real estate sales, and building permits.

For your convenience, we've made the newspaper available on the Internet at www.jamestownpress.com. In addition to what appears in our print edition, our Web site has lately featured audio/slide shows of local happenings.

So last week when a reader suggested a weekly feature that the Press might initiate, we started wondering what other ideas our readers might have. How can we improve the Press? We want to know. More pictures? More features?

Yes, we're asking you to tell us what you'd like to read in the Jamestown Press. Please send me an e-mail at jmcdonough@jamestownpress.com. The old-fashioned way of communicating also works: just write a short note and drop it off at our office or mail it to 42 Narragansett Ave.

In the next few weeks, we'll share some of those ideas with you.

— Jeff McDonough



• LETTERS •

No more access to the beach?

On Monday, Jan. 8, there will be a public hearing and vote on reducing access to the Jamestown Shores beach by eliminating parking on Seaside Drive and the boat launch area.

When the existing parking spaces are full, anyone who wants access to the area will be forced to find a parking space more than three football fields away or face parking fines issued from police surveillance activities.

This change to the parking ordinance has been

initiated by a small group of Seaside Drive residents who are also members of the Jamestown Shores Association. Their efforts to keep out "the others" under the guise of representing the entire Shores community are clearly self-serving.

As a former president of the association, I can attest to the fact that most meetings are attended by no more than a dozen member families with the majority of them Seaside Drive homeowners. The total membership is a fraction of the 850 households that occupy the Shores.

The 50-plus year history

of the association is admirable in the way it advocated for fair treatment from the town in acquiring public services. In recent years, however, it has become more focused on serving the interests of a handful of active members.

The new parking restrictions, for example, just happens to eliminate parking in front of the home and waterfront lot of the association's president.

Not long ago, members who served on the Town's Parking committee and live on Seaside Drive voted to give the lowest priority to maintenance of the nine,

that's right nine, "public" waterfront rights-of-way along Seaside Drive.

Most of these public rights-of-way are now in overgrown condition making them unrecognizable (I challenge anyone to identify more than two.). Once found, they are extremely hazardous to walk on. A few have been modified to appear to be the abutting property owner's yard and driveway.

Consequently, the Jamestown Shores Beach is now the only easy to find and safe "public" right-of-way

Letters continued on page 11.

The news of 10 and 15 years ago is from the Jamestown Press. The news of 25, 50, 75, and 100 years ago from the Newport Daily News comes from the collection of the Newport Historical Society.

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, January 2, 1907:

On account of the slackness of building and other work on the island, more than the usual number of men are following fishing for the winter.

From the Newport Daily News, January 3, 1907:

The matinees in the Newport Opera House this week are well attended by people from this town.

From the Newport Daily News, January 4, 1907:

There is considerable speculation as to whether the deer reported in Portsmouth is not the same one that was captured recently in Dutch Island harbor and kept at Fort Greble until it became tame enough to eat from the hands of soldiers. This deer was a two-year-old buck, but shed its antlers while at the garrison. It was allowed to roam around and 10 days ago disappeared, either swimming to the Jamestown or the Narragansett shore. As wild deer are naturally very timid the tameness of the one in Portsmouth might be accounted for by its being the one from Fort Greble.

From the Newport Daily News, January 5, 1907:

The exceptionally mild weather for winter still continues and the travel on the ferry was unusually heavy for January.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, January 1, 1932:

Conanicut Grange hall was the scene of a gay and enjoyable dancing party last evening. . . . At the stroke of 12 and as 1931 made its exit, noisemakers of all kinds were distributed and attractive paper hats were donned by the dancers. The noise was deafening as all horns, whistles, rang bells and brought into play many other noise pro-



ducing articles (sic). The Racketeers orchestra gave a program of splendid music.

A contest of 25 prizes, sponsored by the Board of Trade, was held last evening at the office of Meredith & Clarke on the wharf, the entire proceeds of which will be used for the relief of those in need in Jamestown.

From the Newport Daily News, January 2, 1932:

The civic committee for the unemployed of Jamestown held a meeting Thursday evening. . . . A large amount of business was transacted but the item of interest was preparing a definite plan of unemployment. . . . It was rumored that the civic committee would pay at the rate of \$2.50 per day. This gave the wrong impression as the committee had practically decided to pay the present scale of wages for labor employed — the minimum 50 cents per hour for unskilled labor and the standard pay for any trade labor, and a vote to this effect was passed, stipulating that no one person should be allowed to receive more than \$16 in any one week.

From the Newport Daily News, January 5, 1932:

The State Board of Public Roads put 14 unemployed men to work on the roads Monday, and the civic committee under the direction of the town council gave work to 10 men who will be paid from a fund raised by the American Legion, Board of Trade and popular donations. There were also 12 of the list unemployed working at the crusher. These will be paid from the funds borrowed from the state.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, January 2, 1957:

Jamestown started the New Year with no major accidents on its icy roads, thanks partly to police warnings which kept many motorists off the highway, and partly to changes in New Year's Eve closing hours of restaurants. This helped to prevent congestion on the streets at any one time. Five persons called the police for transportation to their homes. The Town Council had granted permission to restaurants to remain open until 2:30 a.m. but most were closed by 2. . . . The bars closed at 1 and patrons started leaving soon thereafter.

From the Newport Daily News, January 5, 1957:

An appeal to President Eisenhower to investigate the "preservation of southern Narragansett Bay against the encroachment of an oil refinery" has been made by the Jamestown Protective Assn.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, January 2, 1982:

Despite a soaking easterly rain and choppy seas, about 200 Penguins took Jamestown's sixth annual New Year's Day plunge Friday noon. An estimated crowd of 2,500 watched the event.

From the Newport Daily News, January 5, 1982:

Barry Butler, assistant recreation director, announced today that the Recreation Department will sponsor the second session for gymnastics. Instructor is Lorene Ryan.

15 years ago:

The Jamestown Press was not published the week of January 4, 1992

10 years ago:

The Jamestown Press was not published the week of January 4, 1997.