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Snow and ice from the Valentine's Day winter storm made the morning routine difficult for many islanders. Dan Dicecco (above) scrapes the windshield of his car before heading to work. Below, Barry Holland braved the weather to purchase a bouquet of flowers for his valentine at the Secret Garden.

Photos by Andrea von Hohenleiten

Winter storm leaves icy mess

By Sam Bari

This week islanders prepared for a coastal winter storm and were greeted by a mixture of snow, sleet and rain.

Early Wednesday a few hardy snowflakes were discernable in the streetlights. An hour or so later, barely audible clicks of sleet could be heard bouncing off skylights and car tops. School children and teachers, who were anticipating a snow day, awoke to calm winds and a dusting of white that promised to blow away at the first hint of a breeze. All in all, Jamestown was spared from the perils of winter that paralyzed many northern cities across the country, especially in upstate New York.

However, all was not lost for the teachers and students. Drop-

See "Storm" on page 12



Island historical society seeks funding for future

By Michaela Kennedy

The Jamestown Historical Society recently kicked off a major fund-raising effort to support expansion, upgrades, and maintenance of its facilities.

The society is home to a wide collection of historic documents, artifacts, and other memorabilia that relive the yesteryear of Jamestown.

The Capital Campaign Committee, co-chaired by John Murphy and Anne Livingston, was formed this past fall with the intent to raise \$500,000 to implement goals of the long-range plan adopted by the historical society in March 2006.

"We have three bricks in the water," said Murphy, referring

to the three capital projects to be funded.

The first and most urgent objective on the list is the restoration of the Jamestown Museum at 92 Naragansett Ave.

The second objective is to build a secure location to keep the town's most fragile and prized heirlooms.

The third goal is the creation of a JHS history room for instructing school-age children in and outside Jamestown about the island's history and its interconnection with the history of the state and the country. With the funds remaining, the society plans to create an endowment, with a professional

See "Campaign" on page 13

Lead paint spurs new debate over lighthouse keeper's home

By Dotti Farrington

Lead paint contamination inside the Beavertail Lighthouse keeper's quarters and around the perimeter of the tower have led to a renewed controversy over control of the facility, and its use for affordable housing, according to talks at Monday's Town Council meeting.

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser was assigned to bring more information to the Feb. 26 council session. The councilors also said they would like a representative of the U.S. Coast Guard, which owns the seven-acre historic site, to meet with them.

Town Solicitor J. William W. Harsch cautioned town officials that the recent notice about exterior lead contamination and added documentation about interior lead

paint "puts the town on notice for the first time" about the existence of the pollution and about the potential liability for its removal.

Harsch also raised concerns about the responsibilities of ownership superceding any disclaimers that might be included within a transfer deed.

In a written memo, Associate Solicitor A. Lauriston Parks said that the lease renewal between the town and Coast Guard "appears to be satisfactory." He added, "I have the distinct impression that we will be allowed to use the quarters (for affordable housing) if the lead paint problem has been abated."

Keiser told the council that the Coast Guard has indicated that it would accept responsibility for the removal of soil contaminated by

See "Apartment" on page 15

Harsch calls action by Town Council illegal

By Dotti Farrington

Three Town Councilors Monday said they had reached a preliminary consensus in a Feb. 5 closed-door session to discuss the selection of a new town solicitor. They said they were tentatively prepared to select Peter Ruggiero of Warwick and associates for most town work and current Assistant Town Solicitor Carolyn Mannis to continue criminal prosecutions for the town.

Town Solicitor J. William W. Harsch told the councilors that such talks behind closed doors were illegal. He said they were in jeopardy of being called to task by any resident who might wish to pursue such action by filing a complaint with the state attorney general.

Harsch spoke at length about his previous rulings on the state Open Meetings Act and the right of the public to know about government, and the benefits to both the public and government when there is full openness. He said he had continuing concerns about the lack of need to hold some sessions in secret, especially about the town public works barn.

The councilors, who described their roles in the Feb. 5 session, were Vice President Julio DiGiando, William Kelly, and Michael Schnack. Council President David Long was absent Monday, and no one spoke about his role in the questioned session.

"Learning curves"

Councilor Barbara Szeptowski, who was not at the Feb. 5 ses-

sion, said she was confused. She asked her colleagues what happened to the agreement at the open meeting the previous week. She reminded the other councilors that they agreed to recall some candidates for second interviews, and to interview Harsch since he had been unable to keep his appointment for an interview because of a bout with a seasonal illness. She also recalled that she and the others talked about not wanting "to pay for learning curves" of lawyers not familiar with town matters.

Szeptowski complained that the decision should have been made with all councilors present. "I know I am not one of the boys," she said, "but I do expect us to do as we said and to have all the information before we decide."

The three councilmen acknowledged there had been a plan as she described. They said they did not take any vote Feb. 5 and each described his being willing to resume the plan. Then each said he favored Ruggiero, who has been a labor negotiator for the town.

Some councilors said they had concerns about candidates who might not be able to attend usual council meetings on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Szeptowski said she was reluctant to hire a firm that was unfamiliar with Jamestown. She said the town should not have to go through a "learning curve" as new solicitors learned about local issues and concerns. Others agreed

See "Councilors" on page 12

Holiday newspaper deadlines

On Monday, Feb. 19, we will observe Presidents' Day. Next week's issue of the Jamestown Press will be published as usual on Thursday. However, the holiday will affect the following deadlines:

- Display Advertising**
5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 16
- Classified Advertising**
Noon on Tuesday, Feb. 20
- News Items**
Noon on Tuesday, Feb. 20

The Press office will be closed Monday in observance of the holiday.