

Letters

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able housing in Jamestown infuriated me.

I can only hope that his point of view finds itself in the minority here. I wonder what Mr. Salvatore proposes the senior citizen who has lived and worked here all his/her life, unable to keep up with the cost of living, should go now that he or she doesn't deserve to live here anymore? Or the handicapped person who was unlucky enough to be born here, unable to support himself outside of the small amount of money he gets from the government? He needs to go.

Maybe we could take them over to the pier in front of Mr. Salvatore's mansion and toss them into the ocean so they can float over to a community that has more sense than money.

Mr. Salvatore's elitist island of millionaires and mansions who import their labor from elsewhere is disheartening. I have never been prouder to be not rich and refined.

**Diane Hodrick,
Jamestown**

Compassion missing from writer's letter

I wish to address the warmly written letter from Mr. Salvatore in last week's paper. His compassion for our fellow Americans is just overwhelming! All those peo-

ple out there working an average of 55 hours a week, doing jobs we wouldn't even consider, just looking for hand outs - who knew?

**Keri Reardon,
Jamestown**

Support the special education budget

We are writing to urge the Jamestown School Committee to support and approve the Jamestown School's Special Education program budget proposal for the 2007-08 school year.

As members of SELAC (Special Education Local Advisory Committee), and parents of special education children, we are deeply grateful for the dedication and commitment to excellence demonstrated each day by the Special Education Director, Ms. Elizabeth Pinto, the superintendent, Dr. Robert Power, Principal Kathy Almanzor, and the entire talented staff in the special education program in the Jamestown schools.

We are also grateful for the time, energy and attention we receive from School Committee member Julia Held, who is the appointed liaison to SELAC.

A few reasons why we urge passage of the Special Education budget and continued support for the program at present levels:

1. Integrated Classroom Model is a Success: The goals of the program here are centered around an integrated classroom experience for special needs students. There is

substantial research and clear anecdotal evidence that supports the idea that this approach is the most beneficial to the students. In simple terms, it means general education students, side by side with special ed students, are providing role modeling for the special ed child. Such a child absorbs certain activities, use of language, and modes of behavior that can best happen child to child. Prominent educators also believe school systems that don't offer a proper integrated, or inclusion model, and rely too heavily on separated classrooms for special ed, are setting the student up for failure. Again, there is research to substantiate that lower test scores and performance levels are found where the self-contained classroom is used for special needs students rather than the integrated classroom. Research also suggests the inclusion model has a direct impact on long-term outcomes, affecting a students' chances for success long after the school years.

SELAC understands and appreciates that integrated classrooms are a big commitment, both in terms of finances and staff size. But we remind the whole community that all students benefit from the integrated classroom because it dictates that a secondary teacher, or the co-teaching team, be present in the classroom. There is also research to suggest this model is producing results across the board, among the general education students, not just among the special ed students.

2. Budget Growth is Sustainable: Next year's Special Education budget is 16.3 percent of the overall school budget, and has stayed at or around that level since 2003. That would seem to indicate a responsible and accountable program that grows at a sustainable rate.

Furthermore, it should be noted that there are no out-of-district placement students from Jamestown from pre-K through grade 7 next year. Let us recognize that it is much more cost-efficient to educate your students within their own community, sending them off island to an out-of-district school program for services is always more costly. To have not one special ed student, pre-K through grade 7, needing to be sent out speaks volumes for the success and correct approach being done here.

Special ed can seem like a mystery to those in general education or in the community at large. It can seem a hodgepodge of foreign teaching techniques, an alphabet

soup of terms (I-E-P, O-T, P-T, PECS, etc.), and frankly, it can seem that way for the parent of a special ed child when one first begins this journey. What will all this mean? we so often ask ourselves.

Let us suggest this same sense of unraveling a mystery is what every day can seem like for many special ed children, often on the autistic spectrum, who struggle greatly with the simplest forms of language and human communication.

Please remember, in the end, this process is all about them. Helping those kids unravel this mystery which confounds them and so profoundly challenges their families.

The leadership and members of the School Committee have shown diligence and fairness in consideration of Special Ed budgets in the past and SELAC urges the same support this year and urges passage of the 2007-08 Special Education budget.

**Donna Perry, co-chair,
Anthony Rafanelli, co-chair,
SELAC 2006-07**

Paving the landfill is dangerous

Think "pothole, pothole, pothole"! Councilor Kelly says pave the landfill with asphalt and/or concrete so surrounding wells will never get polluted. Worst possible solution!

GZA, the town's engineers, have explained how garbage in a landfill will hump and heave so extra maintenance would be needed to prevent fissures (potholes). Potholes are dangerous because rainwater surges down through the garbage forcing pollutants into the aquifer.

And, as I drive out of my driveway on my way for morning coffee in the Village, and hit North Road, no one can convince me that potholes would never be a problem.

**Phil Willis,
1191 North Rd.**

End politics of highway barn

This is in response to Lisa Tyre's letter in the Feb. 8 issue of the Press. "Voters spoke on highway barn."

The writer may be another victim of the misinformation campaign that has been spread by various petitions and letters concerning the landfill and property surrounding the landfill.

First...the letter writer states Lot 47 was purchased to erect a highway barn. This is simply not

true. Council documents clearly state Lot 47 was purchased to act as a buffer for the landfill and as having the potential to be a future site for a highway garage. With the controversy surrounding the protection of drinking water all over the island, common sense dictates Lot 47 should remain as a buffer zone.

Second... the letter writer states, voters reaffirmed by a 2-1 vote to place the highway barn on or near the landfill and since this is a democracy, democracy should rule. She further states, "What gives anyone the right to disregard this clearly voiced will of the people." These statements are also not factual, the voters authorized the town to spend \$75,000 to determine the feasibility and cost to place a highway garage on the former landfill property. The voters have never voted to place, or not place, the highway garage at any location in the town, they have voted strictly to spend or not spend various sums of money.

I would also like to remind the writer that a larger than 2-1 majority of Jamestown, as well as the Town Council, voted to place a large oil refinery at the north end of Jamestown. The few residents who opposed this large refinery, I believe it was eight, were vilified in the press and by the voters for their opposition to that refinery. Thank God this group had the foresight, wherewithal, and fortitude to oppose the majority... the majority isn't always correct.

Third... The writer, as well as Councilman Kelly in a separate letter to the editor, indicated the highway barn could be a potential polluter of surrounding wells, or the reservoir, if built on Lot 71, which is behind the soccer field (near Eldred Avenue). This lot also happens to be in their neighborhood. Ironically, both condone building the barn on top of or abutting a landfill proven to contain various levels of known carcinogens. Carcinogens that several experts, with credentials exceeding Mr. Kelly's, feel could migrate into surrounding wells if the landfill were disturbed.

The further irony here is, a north end minority must again step forward with foresight, wherewithal, and fortitude to protect itself from those willing to accept a risk to north end well water that they would not tolerate in their own back yard.

It's time to end the politics and build the highway barn where it should be built...at the sewage treatment plant. Not at Taylor Point, but between the sewage treatment plant and the Newport Bridge, where enough land is available, where it cannot be seen from the bridge, where it can be screened from Bayview Drive, where sewers are available to treat runoff and potential pollutants, and which allows for future treatment plant expansion.. This location also makes the most economic/operational sense because of its central location. Additionally, a recent design study indicates the highway barn would fit quite nicely there.

Over the last five years, the town has spent several hundred thousand dollars trying to force-fit this project into areas it doesn't belong. It's time to eliminate the politics and put the same effort into placing this "potential polluter" in the only location that makes economic and environmental sense.

**Raymond Iannetta,
1219 North Main Rd.**

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