



THE JAMESTOWN PRESS

PRST STD
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 5
Jamestown, RI

www.JamestownPress.com

Volume 20, Issue 15

A weekly newspaper serving Conanicut Island

Thursday, August 9, 2007



A few members of the committee that planned Jamestown's 350th Celebration gathered Tuesday. From left are Rosemary Enright, Jim Rugh, Charlie Petit, Heather Minto, Jason Hamel, and Bill Hamel. The 350th Celebration gets underway this Saturday. Photo by Jeff McDonough

Islanders celebrate 350 years

By Adrienne Downing

Celebrating an anniversary is always a good thing, but honoring 350 years requires something special, which is why Jamestown is hosting a weeklong event worthy of the island's rich history.

The nine-day celebration officially kicks off on Saturday with Night for the Light, the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce's fund-raiser for the preservation of the Dutch Island Lighthouse.

Although the chamber hosts a fund-raising event every year for a non-profit organization, it is fitting that this year's event is centered around Dutch Island. The island was first used by the West India Trading Company in 1630, around the time the first settlers started leasing land on Conanicut Island to graze sheep and cattle.

"It does tie in with the 350 theme in that the event is held at Fox Hill Farm, one of the earliest farms on Jamestown," John McCauley said. "People will have fantastic views of the west passage, a view that has probably changed very little in 350 years, except for the addition of the lighthouse in 1826."

When the idea of having a 350th week was first proposed in January, a parade was one of the first things on the calendar of events. While parades on Conanicut Island may not date back 350 years, they are certainly a hometown tradition and no Jamestown celebration would be complete without one.

Coordinator Charlie Petit was a little secretive about a few of the surprises planned for the parade. See "Celebration" on page 13

Authority committed to Newport bridge safety

By Dotti Farrington

Local bridge officials called a news conference last Friday to discuss the condition of the Newport Pell Bridge and the Mount Hope Bridge between Bristol and Portsmouth. The Rhode Island Turnpike & Bridge Authority (RITBA) runs the two bridges and no others.

The authority was responding to concerns they believed their bridge users might have because of the collapse of the major highway bridge in Minneapolis.

David Darlington, authority

chairman, who hosted the press conference acknowledged the enviable position the authority was seen as having—that of only having two bridges to oversee. He admitted, "I would not want to be the DOT (RI Department of Transportation) director who has money and other constraints" as he oversees more than 700 other bridges in the state. More than half of Rhode Island bridges are rated as needing attention and repair.

Darlington noted that Jerome

See "Bridge" on page 12

New harbormaster's boat hauled for major repair

By Sam Bari

Approximately three weeks ago, the new harbormaster's boat, manufactured by Ribcraft of Marblehead, Mass., was hauled out of the water for what harbor authorities assumed was routine maintenance and warranty repairs. However, after the boat was hauled, damages caused by possible galvanic corrosion, commonly identified as electrolysis, became apparent.

The anti-fouling paint was removed from the bottom, and the glue attaching the gunnels to the hull separated in one area causing a leak. Other signs of corrosion were also found in various spots around the boat.

The hard-bottomed inflatable craft was hauled and returned to Ribcraft in Marblehead where their technicians inspected the boat to analyze the problems. Ribcraft management replied in a letter to

Police Chief Thomas Tighe and Harbormaster Sam Paterson that the problems were caused by galvanic corrosion that they suspect originated from the area where the boat was docked. Consequently, they did not feel that responsibility for the problems fell on their shoulders.

Ribcraft sent marine surveyor Joe Lombardi to Jamestown to take readings and test the water around where the boat was docked at East Ferry. Lombardi reported that electric current readings "went off the meter."

When Matt Provenzano, director of operations at Ribcraft, was asked about the testing, he said that Lombardi performed multiple tests in the water where the boat was docked and at the time of the testing, the level of electrical

See "Boat" on page 12

Island artist completes 4th commission for Ted Turner

Marine artist John Mecray of Jamestown has just finished a painting of Courageous successfully defending the America's Cup in 1977.

The work was commissioned by American media mogul and philanthropist Ted Turner, who skippered the winning defense. Turner will present the painting to the New York Yacht Club at the 30th anniversary reunion of the yacht's crew in Newport.

Courageous successfully defended the America's Cup twice — in 1974 with Ted Hood at the helm and again in 1977 with Turner driving.

Mecray attended the 1977 races, which were held on the waters off Jamestown and Newport. The acrylic on canvas painting depicts Courageous, with Turner at

the helm, and Australia just after rounding the second mark. Both yachts are under spinnaker, with Australia in a threatening position. In the background is the spectator fleet.

Mecray said Turner wanted the painting to hang at Harbour Court in Newport. The yacht club had to lower the fireplace mantle by one foot so the painting would fit, Mecray added.

Turner owns four paintings that he commissioned from Mecray and also owns a fifth work of Mecray's.

Mecray said it required about four months of work to complete Courageous, his 45th painting to be released as a limited edition print. To learn more about Mecray's work, visit his Web site at mecray.com



John Mecray, at his island studio, with his most recent painting "Courageous." The work marks Mecray's 45th painting that will be released as a limited edition print. Photo by Jeff McDonough