

Harbor management becoming more complex

By Sam Bari

Managing Jamestown harbors during the boating season is a formidable task that involves the harbor master, the police and fire departments, and a number of town administrative personnel.

This is due to the fact that more than 1,400 private and commercial vessels in an array of sizes, shapes, and descrip-

tions, tie up to moorings around Conanicut Island each year, according to the Jamestown harbor office. Additional boats tie up to a limited number of docks and piers that are available at various marinas.

Harbor management is a monumental task because all of these boats must be identified, inventoried and properly licensed. Their

ground tackle must be inspected, and those with marine toilets require special decals indicating their plumbing and waste disposal systems meet regulatory standards.

The police department is directly responsible for the safety and management of all vessels in town waters, and oversees the harbor master position. Harbor master Sam Paterson, 58, a Jamestown resident since 1994, has held that post for 15 years. The bulk of the hands-on mooring responsibilities fall on his shoulders.

Although the Harbor Office issues permits and licenses, and collects fees, it is up to the harbor master to see that moorings, paperwork, licensing, and inspections are all in order for each boat.

Paterson said he is on the job from the middle of April until Oct. 31 of each year. He works four days a week and Assistant Harbor Master Joe Falcioni, works two days, on a rotating schedule from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A harbor master is on duty seven days a week.

He also said that the harbor-

master patrols 25 miles of coastline and two major harbors, West Ferry or Dutch Harbor on the west side of the island, and East Ferry on the east side. He claims that properly patrolling the harbors and keeping an accurate inventory and inspection of the moorings and related patrol duties could be a full-time job. He also said, "I spend 50-percent of my time in the office logging incident reports and other data into the computer and 30-percent of my time on the water."

Paterson said the remainder of his time was spent on boat maintenance and permit checking for dinghies and kayaks. "We do what we can to assist boaters when they need help, and we certainly pitch in on emergencies," he said. "But two harbor masters can only do so much from nine to five."

"We don't have power of arrest because we aren't policemen. However, we can issue citations for infractions of harbor ordinances," he said. Paterson said part of the patrol duties are keeping track of illegal use of moorings and anchorages. "That's difficult when we're only on duty

during the day. Visiting boaters find unused moorings and tie up to them at night, then leave in the morning before we go on duty. They do the same with illegal anchoring. Nobody is around to stop them," he said.

He mentioned that after five o'clock there are no harbor master services. If an incident occurs requiring a police officer, the police boat is out for repair and a harbor master isn't on duty to give the police a ride. However, Police Chief Thomas Tighe disagreed with Paterson and said that nothing could be farther from the truth.

"Anyone requiring harbor master or police assistance on the water after five o'clock can get the services they need by calling the police department at 423-1212 or in case of emergency by dialing 911," Tighe said. He explained that police have the authority to call a harbor master in to duty if they are needed, and if for some reason they can't be reached, the fire department boat, Marine One, is available.

He also said that the police are trained to operate the police boat, and trained officers are on duty at all times. The police boat is out of the water temporarily for maintenance and warranty work, but the police are fully capable of operating the harbor master's boat, the Eastern, if the situation warrants.

Paterson said that he thinks the service could be better with more help. Chief Tighe says that the harbor services offered by the town are in keeping with municipalities in surrounding areas. "We have limited resources, and we have to use them to their best advantage," Tighe said.

The police chief said extra patrols are on duty in waterfront areas at night, and if anyone requires police assistance, "we are as close as the phone." He said that illegal use of moorings and anchorages seldom occur, and that it has not been a noticeable problem. No recent reports of vandalism or theft in docking and mooring areas have been brought to his attention, the chief said, but noted, "If that should happen, we will respond accordingly."

"If the harbor master concentrates on his job and allows the police department to handle their responsibilities, we can work together to provide the best services possible for taxpayer dollars. The community has always cooperated with the police department to make Jamestown waters safe and enjoyable for boaters, and I have every reason to believe they will continue to do so," Tighe said.

Garden contest results

The Quononoquott Garden Club has announced the winners of the Jamestown 2007 Civic Beautification Contest. Judging of containers, window boxes and in-ground gardens took place in late July and ribbons were awarded this week.

In the Container Division, first place was won by Trattoria Simpatico for its lush coleus and sweet potato vines. Second place went to Jamestown Fitness for its exquisite containers of mandevilla, pink verbena, and angelonia. Island Realty won an honorable mention for its containers of variegated coleus, dusty miller, mint and basil.

Integrated Management Solutions took first place for its window boxes alive with showy coleus, verbena, and ornamental grasses, the Jamestown Press took second place for its boxes of airy pink ivy geraniums, and Chopmist Charlie's took an honorable mention for its

boxes of pink, magenta and white petunias and white alyssum.

In the In-ground Division the Bay Voyage Hotel took first place for its gardens of peach and yellow snapdragons, dusty miller and a backdrop of hydrangeas. Ken's Barber Shop took second place for its lovely seaside perennial garden. Honorable mention was given to the Jamestown Golf Course for its magenta and white petunias, dusty miller and a backdrop of grasses.

Three additional ribbons were awarded. Well Works received first place for its new garden with an original feature a bright blue water pump atop a garden pole. The Grange/Senior Center received a second place for its consistently cared-for and colorful garden and window boxes and an honorable mention went to the Narragansett Cafe for its window boxes planted with old-fashioned nasturtiums.



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