

# Island Opinion

## • EDITORIAL •

### Celebrating 30 years of foolishness at East Ferry

Low tide will expose a large expanse of the town beach at East Ferry this coming Saturday morning. At 9 a.m., a cannon will be fired. The beach will then begin to resemble a beehive, as small bands of people armed with varied collections of stuff, some of it resembling scrap from a junkyard, begin to construct an odd assortment of sailing vessels.

The pace, which at first appears leisurely, will quicken as the morning progresses. Traffic on Conanicus Avenue will slow as spectators gather to observe the frenzy of activity. The amateur naval architects and marine engineers will strive to have their contraptions ready to launch by 11 a.m. That's when the cannon is fired again, this time to announce the first race of the Fools' Rules Regatta.

Saturday marks the 30th year for the greatest spectacle in build-your-own sailboat racing. Every August people flock to Conancicut Island from all over for this strange and unique event. Strangers may not know much about Jamestown, but they will have probably heard about the Fools' Rules Regatta.

The regatta is famous because it is good, clean, silly fun. Participants must construct their sailing vessels on the beach the morning of the competition. They cannot use any marine (boat) related materials to build their yachts. Anything else is fair game.

For the past 30 years, sailboats have been made from just about every item imaginable. There have been old bathtubs and old poster beds. Tarps, bed sheets, and umbrellas are popular as sails. Scrap lumber, plywood, empty beer kegs, coolers, and water bottles have all found their niche as boat materials. You name it and someone has used it. There is plenty of flotsam and jetsam.

Duct tape is popular. Just about every boat-builder uses at least one roll, if not two or three. In fact, Jamestown Hardware always has extra stock on hand for the August extravaganza. Up the street, Baker's Pharmacy has a ready supply of sunscreen available. Spinnakers, Slice of Heaven and the East Ferry Deli bring in plenty of cold bottled water and other chilled refreshments to keep the sailors and spectators hydrated.

The most impressive part of the boat-building process is the imagination and creativity involved. Each year we see some truly amazing vessels.

The inspiration is great on the sand, but once the boat is built, the true test comes: will it float and for how long?

Those who were once boat-builders quickly morph into intrepid sailors as they drag, pull and carry their new boats to the starting line. The sailors then race their contraptions on a down-wind course, pitting their wits and skills against other sailors who are crewing vessels of similar size.

The crowd shouts encouragement to their favorites. At the finish line, the winners are eligible for fame and fortune.

It has been estimated that as many as 1,000 people gather at the East Ferry town beach for the annual regatta, although no one has ever really bothered to count noses. Suffice to say, the beach and seawall are usually packed.

The Fools' Rules Regatta is a cherished Jamestown tradition. Islanders and non-islanders plan their summers around it. Don't miss the Fools' Rules Regatta this Saturday. We predict another 30 years of foolish fun just ahead.

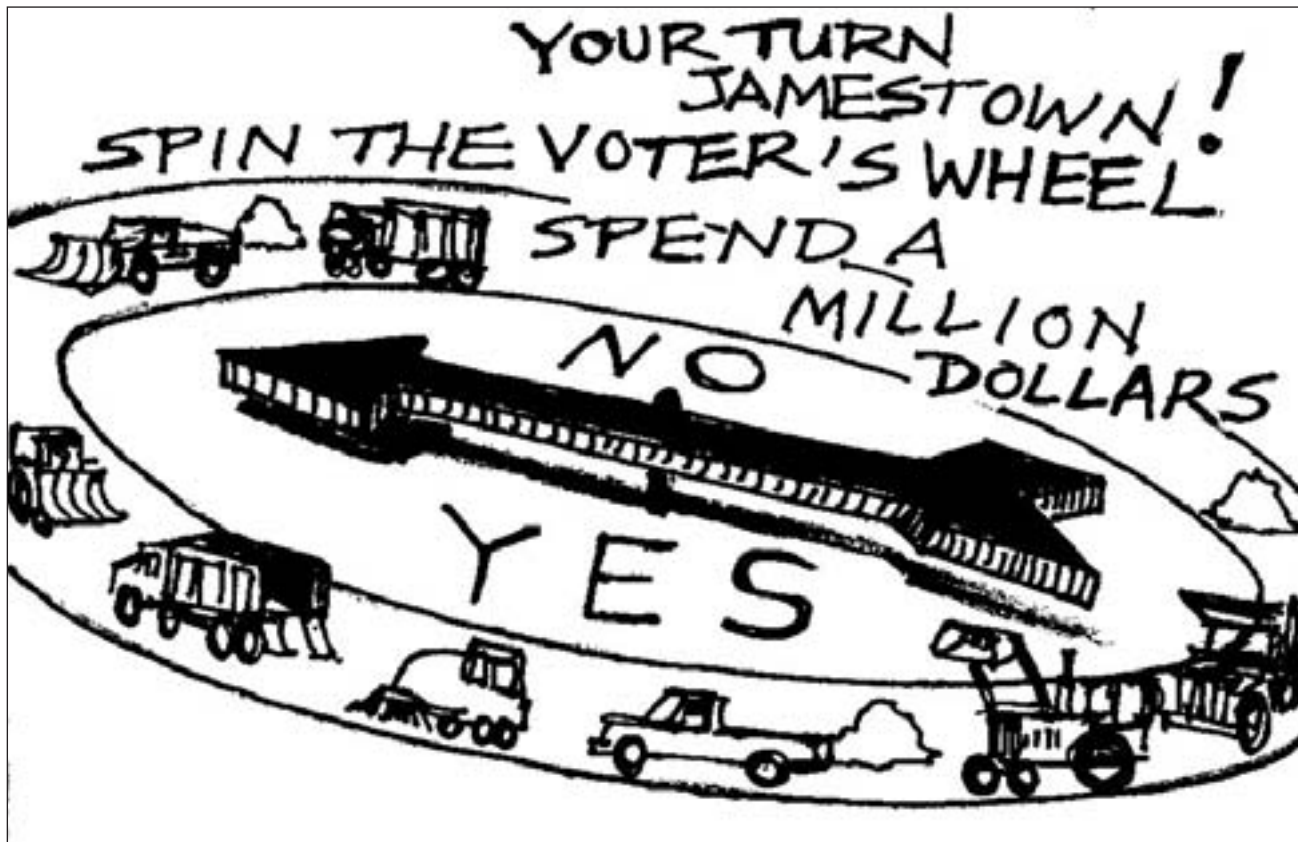
### Name calling not needed over the highway barn

The debate over where to place a new highway facility will soon peak. Tuesday, Aug. 28, is the day that island voters will decide whether the highway garage will be located adjacent to the Newport bridge.

Until the special election is held there will continue to be plenty of rhetoric flying. In addition to the letters to the editor and the newspaper ads, we've seen flyers and sandwich boards. Hopefully, voters will be able to make some sense of it all.

We do believe it is important that everyone be respectful. Name-calling is not necessary, nor is it constructive. Let's keep it civil, folks.

— Jeff McDonough



### Taylor Point a better choice

By David J. Long

I would like to share my reasons for Jamestown to support the Town Council vote locating the highway facility at the upper Taylor Point location.

As stated the night the council voted, I believe both Lot 47 and Taylor Point are suitable, justifiable locations. Both have equalizing advantages and disadvantages. Both are relatively the same cost. Both would get the job done. It is also no secret that for the past eight years I have supported locating a facility at the north end. I have also consistently made clear my opposition to, and distain of, the tactics of the North End Concerned Citizens in thwarting that location. So why do I con-

clude upper Taylor Point is the better choice? Let me explain.

The landfill remediation must be finished before any facility can be built on Lot 47. In order for the town to complete the remediation and comply with state and federal regulations, the town may need written permission from two of the North End Concerned Citizens abutting the landfill in order to upgrade drainage onto their property. There is no guarantee from DEM that those signatures will be mandatory. Both abutters have said they will not sign if the garage is on Lot 47. They cannot be forced to sign. That would bring the project to a standstill.

Due to Katrina, federal,

state and local authorities have re-examined and restructured emergency management. Centralizing and coordinating all facets of police, fire, rescue and DPW is considered crucial to effective response, be it a snowstorm, hurricane or any disaster. Accordingly, our police chief, Tom Tighe and emergency management coordinator, Fred Pease, recommend Taylor Point, as does the RI Emergency Management Agency.

Also recommending upper Taylor Point are Town Administrator Bruce Keiser and Town Engineer Mike Gray. Among their reasons are central location, water and sewer hook-ups and expedient project completion. Town solicitor Peter Rug-

giero also advocates Taylor Point, citing less permitting and legal obstacles incurring even more time and expense. Fire Chief Jim Bryer, Town Planner Lisa Bryer and - especially significant - Highway Department Supervisor Kevin Deacon also endorse Taylor Point.

Regarding my opinions of the North End Concerned Citizens, I would not, nor do I have any right to, prohibit any citizen from disagreeing with town policy or expressing their opinions. I do, however, take great exception to anyone using fear tactics and misinformation to frighten others into supporting their cause. I believe the highway facility could have been built on Lot 47 years ago. Since that time (due, in large part to the NECC), the town has hemorrhaged hundreds of

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## • VIEWPOINT •

The news of 10 and 15 years ago is from the Jamestown Press. The news of 100 years ago from the Newport Daily News came from the collection of the Newport Historical Society.

**100 years ago**  
From the Newport Daily News, August 14, 1907

The height of the season has been reached and perhaps never before have so many of the cottages been occupied at one time during the summer months. The numbers at the hotels, however, are not up to expectations.

**From the Newport Daily News, August 17, 1907**

Several young men of the summer visitors gave a cotillion in the dance hall of the Gardner House last evening. The hall was prettily decorated for the occasion.

There was a good sized gathering to listen to the band concert on the boardwalk at Shoreby Hill last evening, but those without thick clothes were kept on the move as the north wind made standing still long too cool for comfort.

**75 years ago**  
From the Newport Daily News, August 12, 1932

(At the Town Council meeting it was voted) that the salary of the life guard at Mackerel Cove beach be increased \$2 per week for extra duty as alley boy; owing to the lack of business at the west counter, it was voted that the salary of the clerk at said counter be reduced to \$10 per week; and that there will be no discounts on any bath houses rented before July 15. It was voted not to pursue any additional chairs or a stretcher for the beach this season.

**From the Newport Daily News, August 16, 1932**

George B. Heilner was high hook Monday at Mackerel Cove beach, when he captured two beautiful silvery



### This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden  
Week of August 16

fish having long streamers of a purplish color. They are about the size of a silver dollar, and swim on edge, being evidently natives of tropical waters, and far from their natural habitat.

**50 years ago**

**From the Newport Daily News, August 12, 1957**

A full program of events to celebrate Jamestown's 300th anniversary began Saturday and will continue through this week. Formal opening exercises were held Saturday morning in the recreation hall, followed by a dance in the evening. Special observances marked services in all the churches yesterday with drilling by four corps in competition in the afternoon. A buffet luncheon at the old windmill on North Road at noon, and an outdoor concert at the Jamestown Elementary school at night are today's features.

**From the Newport Daily News, August 13, 1957**

The Jamestown Town Council last night directed the town solicitor ... to prepare an ordinance making it unlawful for an open well, cistern, or other such open hazard to be maintained.

**From the Newport Daily News, August 15, 1957**

Jamestown's tercentenary celebration, blessed with good weather yesterday for its parade and other features, went ahead in rainy weather today, Governor's Day, with all the scheduled events being held. ... Yesterday was Patriot's Day in Jamestown. ... More than 4,000 persons thronged the streets to view the colorful parade of eight divisions. It was the largest crowd ever to come to the island at one time.

**From the Newport Daily News, August 19, 1957**

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