

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Island trail system takes step forward

This week the Jamestown Town Council gave the green light for work to begin on development of a mid-island walking trail network.

The trail system has been made possible by easements that were recently made available to the town on the Dutra and Neale farms. Plans call for the north to south trail through the farms to extend through the Great Creek marsh to link with the walking trail in the Conanicut Island Sanctuary. The town has a \$50,000 grant to aid in the development of the trail network.

We've long talked about such a trail network in Jamestown. Islanders have volunteered to help with the project and the money is available. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work!

Register on-line for breaking news alerts

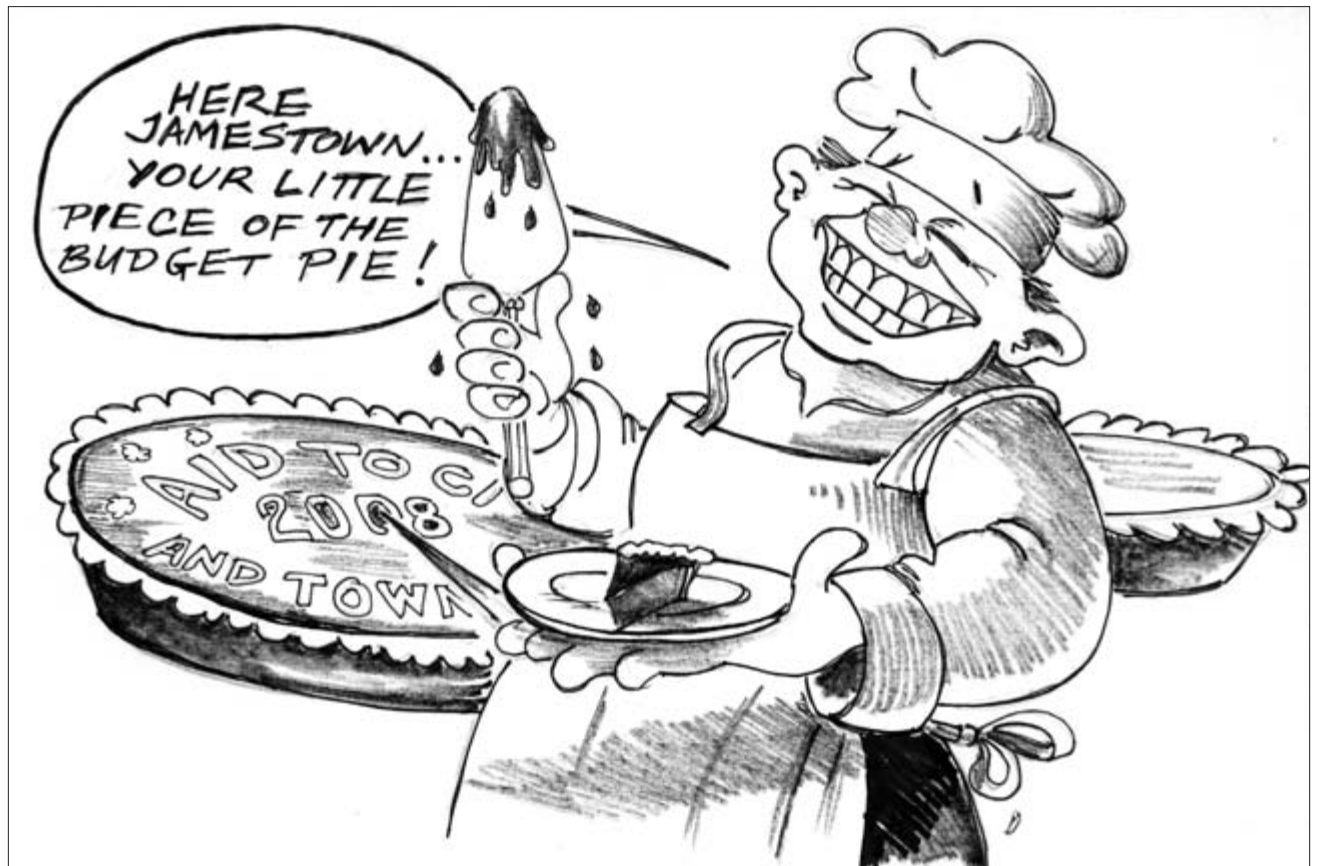
Most of our readers are familiar with this newspaper's Web site. You can find us on the Internet at www.jamestownpress.com.

Our on-line edition has all the news, features, pictures, advertisements and classifieds found in the weekly print edition of the Press. That's just the beginning. Many islanders have commented on the short local video features that we frequently put on-line. You can now also order re-prints of pictures that appear in the newspaper. And you can place classified ads through our Web site.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the Press Web site is that we can report breaking news as it happens. That way you don't have to wait on the next print issue of the Press to get the latest news on important island events.

If you'd like to have e-mail notification of breaking news reported by the Jamestown Press, just go to our home page. You'll find a box in the upper right corner of the page where you can register for the e-mail update.

— Jeff McDonough



Island fleeced in land deals

As stated in the Press of Feb. 7, 2008, Jamestown stands to lose \$31,000 in state aid as part of Governor Carcieri's plan to reduce Rhode Island's budget deficit. To avoid an increase in our taxes, we must look for other sources of revenue. Luckily, unlike many other towns, we own several income-producing properties that third parties would like to lease such as West Ferry, East Ferry and the golf course. Two weeks ago, West Ferry was leased for \$12,500 annually, which can be used to offset the reduction in state aid.

But suppose that the town administrator had decided to lease that property for zero dollars, after all it's less than one acre. Would citizens de-

mand an inquiry? A ridiculous supposition you say, no one would ever squander the town's assets in such a manner. If you thought that, then you would be wrong. On Jan. 14, 1980, the town council signed a lease with the state's Department of Environmental Management for the town's 20 acres on Beavertail for 80 years for zero dollars based on the remote possibility that Jamestown would receive part of the gate receipts should there ever be an admission fee to the park. Jamestown had owned those beautiful 20 acres of water front property since 1973, seven years before there ever was a state park.

See the lease on page 611

• LETTERS •

Vol. 75 of the land evidence records.

Is such a lease even legal, where the lessee gets everything and the lessor gets nothing, not even the symbolic \$1? Sounds more like extortion to me. Have we given up, de facto, sovereignty and ownership of those 20 acres like we have the 1.62 acres, aka Newport Street, that defined the boundary between the federal, later state, property at the northwestern border of Fort Wetherill? There the state didn't even bother to draw up a worthless lease. In an inter-office memo of Aug. 25, 1988, the DEM ordered the removal of that part of Newport Street. This confiscation was without

any compensation to the taxpayers of Jamestown. Only a couple of Jamestowners, who used to bicycle down that street, questioned this destruction which gives a new meaning to the term highway robbery.

That part of Newport Street can be seen on Plat Map 10. The map was recently changed to depict that street as a paper road, but still the property of Jamestown. When I made a copy, it was still shown as a normal road. Most of it is still shown on Google Earth.

The survey points that define the exact boundaries of Fort Wetherill are listed in the Quit Claim Deed, Vol. 66, page 821 of the land evidence records and depicted on the survey map from the National Park Service on

Letters continue on page 10

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

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, February 10, 1908

Dutch Island harbor was almost closed to navigation Monday. A force of men from Newport at work at Saunderson walked across ice from West ferry to the government dock at Fox Hill, the ferryboat being unable to get into her wharf.

From the Newport Daily News, February 11, 1908

All the icemen have filled their houses except at Conanicut Park, where the pond is small and another cutting will be necessary.

From the Newport Daily News, February 13, 1908

The sport of roller skating which has been revived in many of the nearby cities has materialized here and next week the dining room of the Gardner House will be the scene of the first party.

Yesterday being flag day exercises were held in the public school. After the exercises the schools were addressed by several war veterans and dismissed at noon for the day.

From the Newport Daily News, February 15, 1908

A special meeting of the town council was held Thursday evening for the purpose of granting Mr. P. H. Horgan the privilege of moving a building through Clinton avenue and High street from Knowles court to Walcott avenue.

From the Newport Daily News, February 17, 1908

The work of moving the Whitewood cottage was resumed today and by night it will have reached Narragansett avenue, where it will be necessary to remove the telephone wires and one small tree to get the building into the street,

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, February 11, 1933

Walter E. Bollons, who was awarded the contract for



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

Week of February 14

building the wrought iron gates to be placed on the west side of the Four Corners cemetery, as a gift to the town from the Jamestown American Legion, reports that they are nearing completion and will soon be placed in position.

The young people are enjoying the skating on the ponds about the island.

From the Newport Daily News, February 13, 1933

A large crowd saw the Jamestown town team defeat the Argonauts of Newport, 36-25, in the Holy Ghost hall, Saturday evening. The high scorer for the local team was Joe Perry and P. O'Connell was high man for the visitors. Many stayed for the dancing after the game.

Many of the young people were coasting Saturday and Sunday, enjoying the exceptionally good sledding.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, February 11, 1958

The Jamestown Town Council last night by motion of Councilman Harold J. Shippee took steps to consider the merits of a biennial town election.

From the Newport Daily News, February 13, 1958

The Jamestown Republican Town Committee last night requested John DeMott regional post office director in Boston to consider Jamestown in the federal two billion dollar expansion program. ... Jamestown's post office is located in a wooden structure on Narragansett Avenue and is leased. A tentative budget of \$9,500 to be presented to the Town

Council budget committee was approved at a meeting of the Jamestown Recreation Board last night at the Recreation Center, Clifton Moran presiding. Winthrop Wilson presented to the board the detailed plan for use of the Fort Getty area as a recreation area for next summer.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, February 15, 1983

The Town Council will ask taxpayers to approve a proposed budget of \$3.7 million that would increase taxes by about \$2 per \$1,000 if approved at the financial town meeting March 7. ... Taxpayers also face a one-time increase of \$1.17 in the tax rate to pay for the state-mandated re-valuation this year.

From the Newport Daily News, February 16, 1983

The Zoning Board of Review Tuesday night ruled that 10 parking spaces would be required to convert the theater building at 34 Narragansett Avenue into a mini-mall.

From the Newport Daily News, February 17, 1983

A last minute decision by the General Services Administration has indefinitely put on hold the sale of a 7.6 acre parcel of land next to Fort Wetherill. The GSA recently declared the land as excess and was to set to auction it at fair market value Friday.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, February 11, 1993

Council members Monday voted 4-1 to hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the town's Harbor Management Ordinance that opponents say, if adopted, could cause locals to lose their mooring priorities.

The town may be able to acquire four condemned houses in the cross-island highway corridor for use in its affordable housing program without having to pay even one dime.

Ten graduate students have begun making an in-depth look at downtown Jamestown's problems and potentials in

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