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Keiser dispels increased salary myths

By Adrienne Downing

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser spent a good portion of Monday night's Town Council budget workshop clearing up the confusion about salary increases for municipal department heads. Several questions had been raised about what many town residents thought amounted to a 30- to 40-percent increase in salary for the positions.

"These are not new funds that we are asking for this year. These

amounts were listed as a line item in the fiscal year 2007-08 budget," Keiser said. "When we introduced the 08-09 budget on March 3, we had a column that listed the salaries as they were approved at last year's Financial Town Meeting next to a column with proposed expenditures for this year. The funds that were approved in 2007 at the Financial Town Meeting for the salary increases were listed as a separate part of the budget because we had not yet done the

study on pay comparability."

The 2007-2008 budget was approved at the FTM on July 1, but the comparability study was not completed and salary increases were not given until Oct. 1.

"Based on the pay comparability review, salary adjustments for the 9 department heads amounted to \$38,000. These funds were approved in the FY2007-08 budget under the Personnel account. In the proposed FY2008-09 budget, the salary adjustment fund-

ing appropriated in the current year budget was shifted from the Personnel line item to the respective department salary accounts. The proposed budget for department heads is limited to a COLA increase of 3.25 percent over the funding provided in the current year," Keiser said.

Road paving and sealing

The high cost of fuel and materials is taking its toll on Jamestown roads. A paving study showed that if \$4 million were allocated to

bring all substandard roads to an acceptable level it does not guarantee that all of the island's roads will be in perfect condition.

"As we bring all of those roads into acceptable condition over the course of four years, other roads are then falling into the fair to poor category. Basically, to just stay in a holding pattern, we need to spend \$50,000 more because the costs just keep going up,"

See "Budget" on page 10

Work session addresses coyote and deer issues

By Sam Bari

Biologist Numi Mitchell, Ph.D., and Lori Gibson, from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, presented their coyote and deer management programs respectively at a special workshop, which preceded the March 24 council session.

Mitchell is the lead scientist and project director of the Conservation Agency Coyote Management Study, and Gibson is a supervising wildlife biologist with RIDEM.

Mitchell began the workshop by saying that coyote management has two main components: science and education, and cited education as the key to success. She explained that coyotes are the only species that manage their birth rate based on the available food supply. She also said that limiting the amount of available food will dictate the number of pups in each litter, adding that coyotes can produce as many as 13 young in one litter.

"After three years of leading the Narragansett Bay Coyote study, I can definitely say there are two kinds of coyotes: good ones and bad ones. The good ones eat mice, rabbits, woodchucks, geese, deer fawns, and other naturally occurring foods. The bad ones eat Kibbles and Bits, cats, small dogs, and do not run away – and may even approach when they see you.

"A good thing about good coyotes is that, if they are established or live in a pack, they defend their territory and keep out other coyotes. This is important when they are keeping out bad coyotes. If you

See "Coyote" on page 10



Spring planting

The community no-till seeder was put to work Saturday at the Jamestown Community Farm. On hand for the demonstration were, from left, Phil Larson, John Kalooski, George Neale, Bob Sutton, Don Minto, and Melissa Minto. For details about the community seeder, see the editorial on page 6.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

Teens rally for renewal effort in Mississippi

By Michaela Kennedy

Last month, two young Jamestown residents, Jacqueline Weixel and Philip Twombly, spent a week with classmates in storm-ravaged Hattiesburg, Miss. The high school students saw firsthand how devastation from Hurricane Katrina still affects lives in the South.

Weixel and Twombly joined a dozen other students from Rocky Hill School to help reconstruction efforts by Habitat for Humanity, a non-profit housing ministry.

The teen volunteers flew to Mississippi the week of March 17. Weixel, a senior at the private school in East Greenwich, returned to help for the second

year in a row. When they landed in Hattiesburg, a slab of concrete on the ground greeted them. "People went into it not knowing what to expect," Weixel said about the service trip. "We started out with a foundation. A week later we had built a house."

Twombly, a junior, joined the volunteer operation for the first time. He expressed amazement at the region upon arrival. "I thought, wow, there's nothing here. Everything is dead," he said. Already having some background in construction through his older brother, Twombly was ready to roll up his

See "Teens" on page 9



Allison Rooney, left, Jacqueline Weixel and Jordana De La Cruz went to Hattiesburg, Miss. to build a home for Habitat for Humanity with the Rocky Hill School Katrina relief team.