

Letters

Continued from page 7

I am continuously evaluated by other teachers, department heads, and principals. My school requires progress towards continuing education and completing professional development training in all areas of teaching. Not one teacher in my school is exempt from these requirements regardless of years taught or degrees earned.

I urge you to bring pressure on the General Assembly not to pass bills that will hurt teachers. Restricting teachers' bargaining rights, contracts, and salaries will not help to improve student learning.

**Tim Smith
Jamestown**

What's the point, really?

A few weeks ago the Press published a point-counterpoint article written by myself and Town Administrator Bruce Keiser. Since some of my points have morphed beyond "the point," there's a need for clarifications.

First, because my original letter regarding the budget was over 2,000 words I asked the Press to consider publishing it as a "Viewpoint" article. They agreed under the condition that I reduce it to 1,000 words.

Somehow the town administrator heard about the article and called the Press for an opportunity to respond and that's how the point-counterpoint article happened.

My 1,000 word article was finalized before Mr. Keiser wrote his and I didn't have the opportunity to edit or clarify my comments after his was submitted.

So to start with, I truly believe our town office employees are hard workers and an asset to the community. Over the past 12 years, with frequent Town Hall

visits, I have developed great respect for their services.

When I indicated that the opportunity to have lunch at the beach was a job benefit, I did not mean our employees take advantage of it, nor would they be derelict in their duties if they did. The inference by Mr. Keiser's argument is misleading and inflammatory in nature.

My primary objection with this year's budget strategy is the idea of seeking the maximum increase allowed by law, as was done last year. I believe the goal should be to strive for reductions or at the very least no increases.

It doesn't matter if the "stuffing" comes from salary increases or anywhere else. I just want to know that we are doing everything we can to avoid tax increases wherever possible.

Large increases in department head salaries jumped out at me because of the way they were presented in this year's budget. Last week, a few hours before the budget hearing, Mr. Keiser acknowledged to me something my research had uncovered, the large wage increases in this year's budget were actually applied last year.

As he explained, in the 2007/2008 budget there was a \$45,000 line item for overall salary increases titled Salary Study Adjustment. There was no column in this year's budget that explained who, when and how much was used from those funds, so they appeared as increases for 2008/2009.

That's right, in his counterpoint article Mr. Keiser was defending something he had already received Council approval for last year and done.

My call to arms over the jump in wages has now become mute because they are officially part of last year's budget and all future budgets.

The lesson learned here is, had there been more than a handful of

tax payers attending last year's budget hearings, chances are someone would have asked what a \$45,000 line item titled Salary Survey Adjustment was. Then we could have had the discussion about fair wages and comparative salary studies before it became set in stone and perhaps it would have been phased in over several years to reduce the overall impact.

The Personnel Board explained they did not make a recommendation to the Administrator nor complete a benefits comparison study. I've reviewed the salary study Mr. Keiser used to justify his wage adjustments and found it to be somewhat narrow in scope.

Even though the wage increases have been applied, rather than toss my research in the trash, I have posted additional analysis on my Web site along with the study that lists the 2007 salary comparison for each department head. Feel free to visit www.SavRI.com. For those who don't have access to the Internet, I will be happy to mail it out. Call me at 423-3595.

In brief, it's my opinion that with the exception of the Finance Director, our department head salaries were not out of line with those communities studied of similar size. Eleven of the 15 towns reviewed had budgets, populations and staff more than twice the size of ours, but were used as comparisons because they had the same form of administrative structure.

This year's budget review process will be finalized on Monday, April 28. The budget is available on line at www.JamestownRI.net and at the Town Hall. Please give it a once over, maybe you'll discover something this year that should be scrutinized further.

**Sav Rebecchi
Jamestown**

THE BIG BAG SALE

20% OFF

Whatever you can fit in your bag!

1 day only

Saturday, April 19th



True Value.
START RIGHT. START HERE.™

5 Narragansett Avenue • 423-2722



Prime Rib
Friday &
Saturday Nights

'Seaworthy Fare'

Dinner for Two \$19.95

with a Bottle of Wine

5 - 9 p.m. Sunday thru Thursday

This Week's Features:

ORANGE GLAZED GRILLED CHICKEN
EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA • TILAPIA PROVENCALE
PORK OSSOBUCO • CORNMEAL CRUSTED CATFISH
MAPLE MUSTARD GRILLED HAM STEAK • POT ROAST
SAUSAGE & BROCCOLINI RAVIOLI IN PINK VODKA SAUCE

Not Available for Take-out

40 Narragansett Avenue • 423-1020
Open For Lunch & Dinner

It's 'Farm Kids' time at Watson Farm

Farm Kids is a six-week outdoor after school program that starts Friday, April 25. It offers children in grades 5 and 6 the opportunity

to explore and experience the various habitats that make up the 265-acre Watson Farm.

Woodland, wetlands, shoreline, farm fields and barnyard are all parts of this working historic farm. "Farm Kids" will get a chance

to see life on the farm through the change of seasons, and at the same time develop nature observation skills. It is an exciting time on the farm with Sheep Shearing Day, gardens being planted and the birthing of lambs and calves.

Most importantly the children will become a part of the farm community while learning about the history and future of agriculture on Conanicut Island.

The program is on Fridays from 3 to 5:30 p.m., starting April 25 and

running May 2, 9, 16, and 30. Registration fee is \$40 for members of Historic New England and \$60 for non-members. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. For more information, contact Heather Minto at 423-0005.

YES, COMPUTERS ARE COMPLICATED!
A phone call can simplify things.

- > installation and setup of your computer hardware and software.
- > degunking of your computer for better performance.
- > building or helping you build web pages and get them on the internet.
- > helping you learn how to use Microsoft® Windows and Windows programs.
- > providing scanning services and digital photography and show you how.
- > creating custom programs for Microsoft® Windows Environment.

WILLIAM A. LEONARD
General Consulting for Individuals & Small Businesses
(401) 423-2809 • WWW.WAL1.COM

Take It Off For Spring
10% Off Any Waxing Service



Ocean Essence Spa
Sanctuary for the Tranquil Arts

Open Daily
401.423.9830
123 Narragansett Ave
Jamestown, RI 02835

Trees...

- Flowering Trees
- Shade Trees
- Exotic Trees

Shrubs...

- Flowering Shrubs
- Border/Hedge Shrubs
- Ground Covering Shrubs

& Flowers.

Ready for you now... at the farm.

SCHARTNER FARMS
North Kingstown/Exeter Line 294-2044/885-5510
Open 8:00am to 7:00pm


