

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Honor our heroes this Memorial Day

Each spring on the morning of Memorial Day, Jamestowners young and old gather along Narragansett Avenue for a parade.

Our Memorial Day parade is a festive time. There are many colorful balloons. The kids are thrilled with the cotton candy and exciting floats. The Jamestown Community Band provides the proper parade music. Veterans proudly wear their uniforms. Boys and girls march and there are sirens and firetrucks and antique cars. Everyone waves the American flag.

Some call the annual parade our island's "gateway to the summer."

And so it is.

But our Memorial Day parade has somber side. At the foot of Narragansett Avenue the parade stops at the Veterans Memorial Square. There all is quiet as we honor those men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The ceremony is simple. There are a few speeches. Guns are fired in salute. Then a lone bugler plays Taps, quite possibly one of the world's saddest melodies.

Memorial Day was originally referred to as Decoration Day. The holiday was created to honor our nation's many Civil War dead.

Memorial Day was first observed in May of 1868 when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. The Civil War was a terrible time for our nation and many lives were lost on both sides of the conflict.

The Decoration Day observance grew state by state over the years. After World War I, the observance was expanded to include all of those who died in U.S. wars.

It wasn't until 1971 that Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday. The day is legally observed on the last Monday in May. The traditional observance is May 30.

Today, we remember and honor all who have died in our nation's service. For most of us, this Monday is a holiday from work. We will play in the great outdoors. Families and friends will gather for cookouts. A few of us will stop to think that a dear price had been paid for the freedom we enjoy.

American men and women continue to go in harm's way in the service of their country. Right or wrong, our country is this moment fighting battles in far away lands. U.S. soldiers and civilians are dying every day.

Have fun this weekend. But remember that Memorial Day is a time to honor our nation's real heroes.

Animal shelter needs your support Tuesday

Animal lovers pay attention: the Jamestown Town Council will have a workshop at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27, to discuss establishing a permanent animal shelter on the island.

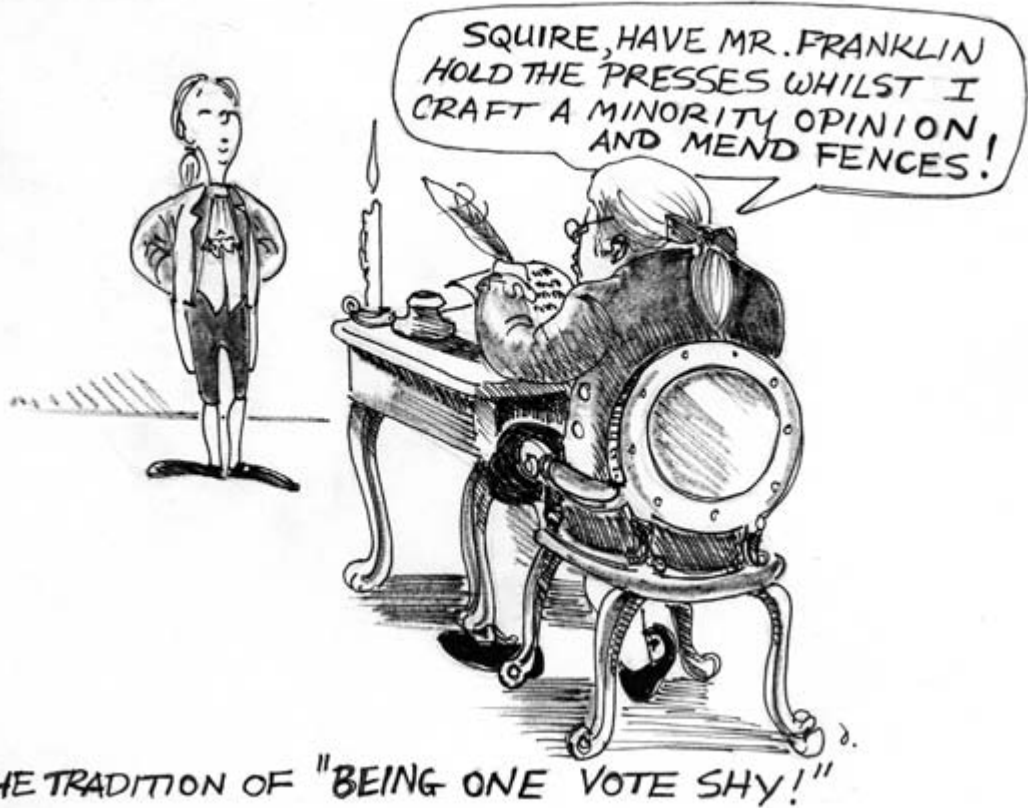
For several years now Town Council member Barbara Szepatowski has led the effort to create a shelter for Jamestown's pets.

Barbara says it's time to give those stray, neglected and unwanted pets a home. The question is where to place the animal shelter and how to pay for it.

Barbara asks that all animal shelter supporters attend Tuesday's council workshop at the Town Hall.

The island's cats and dogs will thank you.

— Jeff McDonough



Kelly spewing more hot air

Town Council member William Kelly's "Viewpoint" regarding the school budget is once again stirring up anxiety with our community. Two years ago, Mr. Kelly voiced the same opinion. I went to that meeting at the library, and missed a night putting my daughter to bed. Mr. Kelly arrived an hour late, had nothing to say when asked, and the vote went through. I have to say that I found this very insulting.

This year, I am sorry to say, Mr. Kelly's stance on the school budget seems like more hot air. Moreover, his reasoning on the issues is without logic. By all means, commission a survey! I think the facts will oppose his ideas. Question: how much will the survey cost?

I believe most parents, teachers and children would

agree that the co-principals work well for our schools. Kathy Almanzor and Carrie Melucci are wonderful, wise, compassionate people. Our community is incredibly fortunate to have them. I do not understand Mr. Kelly's suggestion that one principal could split the day (with "a golf cart") between the Melrose and Lawn schools. Would he like to ask the teachers and students to confine their problems to a particular time frame? I haven't really seen that being possible with children, but maybe that's just me.

I believe most parents, teachers, students, and studies on the issue of class size would agree that small class size is beneficial to everyone. "These tight economic times"

should not punish the children if we, as a community, can at all avoid it.

The repercussions of the state of our nation's economy will slap our children hard enough in the years ahead when they struggle to afford college and find jobs, let alone live in Jamestown if they choose to.

I believe that everyone who is part of the school feels the ultimate value of having a model program for special needs children. Our children are bigger people for this experience, whatever their needs are. Using the word "magnet" in a negative sense to describe the Jamestown school's successful program as attracting families with special needs children doesn't rate. These parents are tax-

payers, and, as everyone knows who actually spends a little time in the school, they are generous volunteers and fundraisers. And certainly Jamestown has other draws to newcomers, such as tranquility, beauty, and safety.

Most of all, I believe we should be proud that we invest so much in our children's education. Instead of looking at how other communities minimize and economize education, other communities should look at us and be inspired.

Our children have a heavy world to inherit. Their childhoods blossom out of post 9/11, a war costing trillions of dollars, China and India emerging as leaders in world economy, advances in technologies that none of us could ever have imagined as kids in the 60's, 70's and even 80's. With all the affluence

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• LETTERS •



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

Week of May 22

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, May 20, 1908

The wild deer at the north end of the island have committed such depredations on the Sherman farm, occupied by Manuel Rosa, that he has applied to the secretary of state for the necessary permission to shoot them if caught destroying his crops. The herd consists of five deer, three of whom probably swam from the mainland more than a year ago.

From the Newport Daily News, May 22, 1908

Blackfish are running more plentifully and a few are being shipped to Newport.

From the Newport Daily News, May 23, 1908

The fire engine of the local department was given a test by the insurance underwriters yesterday afternoon. The steamer was put on draft on Knowles wharf, taking the water from the bay. The test lasted only a short time and the engine was not driven to attain either a high pressure of steam or water. Taking water as it did from the bay with safety valve set at 80 pounds, the steamer was able to maintain a water pressure of up-

wards of 110 pounds with an inch and a half nozzle.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, May 20, 1933

The faculty and students of the Thomas H. Clarke school Friday celebrated their annual educational trip going by the Short Line buses to Plymouth, where arrangements had been made for their entertainment. In addition to these, the members of the Americanization class were also present, a total of 136 taking the trip. ... Among other places visited was Pilgrim hall, many enjoying looking through old documents and records, also the Brewster gardens and Plymouth Rock and the monument.

From the Newport Daily News, May 25, 1933

The Tollefson & Dewick fish market opened today for the season.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, May 23, 1958

John Nicholson (sic) Brown of Providence and Newport and Archibald van Buren of Middletown have been named co-chairmen of a newly-created state-wide advisory board of the Narragansett Bay Home Owners Assn. which is seeking to prevent construction of the proposed \$55,000,000 refinery in Jamestown.

Naval Station made its first Sunset League win a resounding one by walloping Jamestown 21-6 last night at Cardine's Field.

From the Newport Daily News, May 24, 1958

The state formally took over control and operation of the Jamestown ferry service yesterday shortly after Gov. Dennis J. Roberts had signed the bill abolishing the Jamestown Ferry Authority.

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