

Letters

Continued from page 6

er for our camping trips for many years. I am very pleased to report that, thanks to the support of many local businesses, we have now taken delivery of this trailer.

In particular, I would like to thank the Ali Dunn Packer Memorial Fund, Conanicut Marine, Integrated Management Solutions, Jamestown Animal Clinic, the Secret Garden, East Ferry Market, Jamestown Fire Department, Bill Del Nero Cleaners, Jamestown Hardware, Baker's Pharmacy, Jamestown Boat Yard, Joseph and Robin Yoffa, and the Rhode Island State Troopers Charitable Fund for their contributions.

I would also like to extend a special thanks to Paul Cardoza, grandfather of Cub Scout Conor Smith, whose initial and generous donation in memory of his father was the catalyst to begin our fundraising effort.

Our new trailer will be lettered, outfitted and stocked with supplies in time for our next campout this fall at the Conanicut Battery. We expect our trailer to last approximately 20 years, so it is very possible that many of you reading this will have children and grandchildren who will benefit from it.

Thank you again to all who helped in this important effort.

Bill Pratt
Cubmaster

Teens thank police union

The Jamestown Teen Center would like to publicly thank the Jamestown Police Union for its continued support.

The Police Union has been a huge supporter of the Teen Center in many ways. Its most recent contribution, sponsorship of the fourth annual Six Flags trip, is greatly appreciated. Forty-four teens and a handful of chaperones, including four police officers, had a fun-filled day at the park. This would not have been possible without its generous donation. Thank you again.

Debbie Tungett,
Teen Coordinator

Remember feat of 50 years ago

Recently we all celebrated the 232nd anniversary of America's independence. July 2-4, 1776 were

momentous days when 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were prepared to lose everything they owned, including their families and assuredly their lives.

Moving ahead to 1956, seventeen Jamestowners, led by Dr. William W. Miner, courageously took on the giant Commerce Oil Company, an out-of-state group who had planned to build a "state-of-the-art" oil refinery and series of storage tanks on the northern half of the island. The great majority of islanders wanted this refinery and were prepared to fight even though they thought this legal battle to be a shoe-in and an easy victory. Boy, were they wrong!

However, very few islanders understood the grit of the now famous men and women along with a fearless lawyer who worked tirelessly with no pay. Just as the revolutionary patriots changed the course of America in 1776, this determined group led by attorney Cornelius C. Moore of Newport changed the course of history in Jamestown.

The story of this heroic feat is recorded in the book "Dismissed with Prejudice, The epic battle against construction of an oil refinery in Jamestown, Rhode Island," published in June of 1994 by Mary Steams McGaughan and her husband Terrence F. McGaughan.

It is a book that every Jamestown should read especially all those like us who own a home on the site chosen by the Commerce Oil Company. Can present day Jamestowners imagine that this small band of patriots took on a giant oil refinery project that was supported by the majority of the citizens of Jamestown, the town council, town solicitor, the governor, and the legislative leaders? What possessed the small but mighty group to even attempt to overthrow the powers that "ran things in town"? To the majority of citizens this band of pariahs could not possibly fulfill their mission. But, as we all know, no one could believe that David would conquer Goliath either.

Commerce Oil Company, unsuccessful in trying to locate a large refinery in Portsmouth, attempted to locate their facility in Jamestown. They slowly began to option all the land they could with the help of the town leadership. This development was seen as saving Jamestown from its economic lethargy. Commerce felt that siting the refinery would be a slam-dunk and millions of dollars would be made by everyone who promoted this travesty of justice.

Does pride go before the fall? Well in this case it did! The evil that this refinery could have caused to our environment and the complicit arrangement of the town leaders with the Commerce leaders will forever be cast as the crudest faux pas by our town leaders before and since this horrible four-year battle. The amount of money spent by both Commerce and the town leadership was never recorded and even today no one knows the full extent of the financial burden of this long and arduous court battle.

Suffice to say this band of seventeen stalwarts and the pro bono lawyer eventually won the battle in federal court with Judge Edward W. Day delivering the verdict that was shocking to all concerned. The majority was saddened and the minority was gladdened.

The verdict, "Dismissed with Prejudice" on Jan. 1, 1959, was the shot heard around the bay. As we celebrate the various holidays to recognize famous events in our history, I am suggesting that we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the momentous verdict in January 2009, 50 years after the decision by this courageous federal judge and the victory of the hearty band of 17.

It is time for all Jamestowners, especially those homeowners living in the northern part of the island that would have been the site of Commerce's oil refinery, to start a fund-raising effort to, in some way, commemorate the famous seventeen who fought to keep Jamestown green as it is today. The area includes 700 acres including all land north of Carr Lane and south of Conanicut Park.

I sincerely recommend that the Jamestown Press lead the way in pointing out that this island event that changed the course of what could have been is worthy of a commemoration of some kind.

We all can be proud.

Anthony & Diana Trivisono
Wright Lane

Parents should lay down the law

What happened to the old days when police would bring a teenager home to his parents and let the family take the first crack at eliminating the risk of future bad behavior? I know in my house it worked

pretty well.

It sickens me to think about what the repercussions could be to the three teenagers who were fired as lifeguards at the beach. I know a lot of kids around town through our kids. I know that I know one of the three even though there have been no names leaked in the press. We've driven most of the 16 to 18-year-olds on this island places at one time or another, they have been in our house; my kids have been in their homes.

Let's face it, those kids could have been any one of our kids. Maybe if their supervisor or manager stopped by the beach more frequently they would not have been comfortable enough to do what they did.

My 16-year-old works in the same company with me and I certainly make a point to check on him periodically. Not because I am afraid that he may be drinking, but because he is only 16.

In the press it was emphasized

that the town was either lucky or so well managed that the newly hired replacement guards are surely exceptionally good kids. Well chances are that the three that were caught drinking were also good kids, or at least the person that hired them thought so.

I am all for reducing drinking, and mind you not just for kids. But my point here is let's stop going around making examples out of our own kids. The sacrifice of a great kid or any kid for that matter, even to save lots of other kids, is not acceptable.

We do not need a law to criminalize what happened at the beach. The police need to work with and give parents a chance to keep their kids on the right track before resorting to arrests and getting the courts involved. I am not saying we do not need the law. It just would probably not have helped us at the beach that day.

Jack Ferdinandi
Buoy Street



Feeney-Dolbashian to wed in October

Kimberly Ann Feeney of Jamestown and David Martin Dolbashian of Portsmouth announce their engagement.

The bride to be is the daughter of Millie Feeney of Jamestown and Tom Feeney of Middletown. She is a graduate of North Kingstown High and Johnson & Wales University and works for the Preservation Society of Newport County.

The groom to be is the son of Ann Dolbashian and the late Edward Dolbashian of Portsmouth. He is a graduate of Portsmouth High, Brown University, and Roger Williams Law School and is a practicing attorney with an office in Providence.

An Oct. 4 wedding is planned.

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