

## • VIEWPOINT •

### Jamestown to enter into an agreement to use North Kingstown's animal shelter

By Barbara Szepatowski

After years of discussion and debate about whether to build an animal shelter on Jamestown, a temporary solution has been found. After a very positive meeting between the towns of Jamestown and North Kingstown, it was agreed that Jamestown would immediately present North Kingstown with a proposal for housing Jamestown's pets. This arrangement should be finalized within the next week or two.

Jamestown has always had an agreement with North Kingstown to house dogs picked up as a result of Jamestown leash law violations, at the North Kingstown Animal Shelter on Hamilton-Allenton Road. The owner pays North Kingstown for boarding fees and Jamestown for the leash law violation fine.

Sadly the real problem on our island has always been the number of homeless domesticated cats and pocket pets. Whether it was due to death, divorce, a move, or new allergies, from August 1999 on, Paws and Claws slowly became the place to advertise or bring Jamestown pets that needed a new home. Over 500 animals including cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, ferrets, rabbits, gerbils and a handful of dogs successfully found new loving families. After the building our store was located in was sold, the new owner decided he did not want animals in his building. This caused a serious dilemma, since the Town of Jamestown had not had to bear the cost of caring for these animals for more than eight years.

Since 2004, the staff of Paws and Claws and more than 50 potential volunteers have had serious talks with the town and our residents about whether Jamestown really needs its own animal shelter. Back and forth, back and forth the discussions went. The 2006 announced "potential sale" of our favorite site, the garage behind the town offices at 44 Southwest Ave., ended the most plausible and quick fix solution. The lovely old water treatment plant would have also made a wonderful home for Jamestown's Animal Shelter, the Osprey Program and the Coyote

Study. Federal Homeland Security regulations and the town's potential future needs nixed that site.

In 2005, 60 Jamestown animal lovers spent 24 hours a day, for four days, renovating the North Kingstown Animal Shelter. We then helped to set-up the "Friends of the North Kingstown Animal Shelter" as a non-profit corporation. It is fitting that our animals will now get to use this wonderful shelter.

Paws and Claws will be working with the municipal staff of the two towns, the "Jamestown Teen Center," and the "Friends of the North Kingstown Animal Shelter" to set up volunteer programs for Jamestown residents. Senior high school kids are also welcome to complete their internship programs at the shelter. We are also always looking for anyone who needs to complete community service hours to help with construction or renovation projects at the North Kingstown Animal Shelter.

Usually financial reasons are why towns do not want to add services. In our case, the biggest hurdle is not raising the capital, but trying to locate the building and a dog park in an area where no one will complain. In the meantime, this sharing of community services with the Town of North Kingstown will provide Jamestown with a structured animal shelter environment, as well as allow us to continue to explore our island's needs.

In the end, hopefully Jamestown will have its own animal shelter. During the fall of 2008, we will reconvene the animal shelter meetings, finalize the Jamestown Animal Shelter's Board of Directors, and once again investigate potential sites.

I applaud Town Administrator Bruce Keiser and Chief of Police Thomas Tighe for making this solution happen. I also thank my fellow Councilman William Kelly for constantly reminding us to dot all of our "I's," and cross all of our "T's." Please call Paws and Claws at 423-9677 to volunteer at the North Kingstown Animal Shelter.

*Editors note: The writer serves on the Jamestown Town Council.*

## Letters

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Lt. Donovan explained that even though my call could have been handled more professionally, there was nothing disciplinary he could do. I never intended for the officer to be punished, or fired or anything like that. I don't even want an apology. What I want is change—change in attitude. Maybe I am asking for too much. I have heard from the department that the officer who took my call is leaving the department to go to the Pawtucket Police Department and, "not to worry." That is not what I wanted to hear.

I am a man who will stand up for what he believes in. I believe that the police can have compassion, be nice to people and still do their job.

I think that the public perception of our police department is too negative; and this is a shame. Attitude and perception are everything when it comes to people's lives and our wonderful community. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events, and outcomes. It is a catalyst that creates extraordinary results.

This will be the last letter I write about my tragedy as it is all just too negative. I only want my memories of Makogirl to be happy ones.

I wish the Jamestown Police Department no ill will and have no animosity toward any of the officers. I do feel sorry for Derek Carlino and a few other officers who seem mad at the world. I wish I could change the way they see things, but only they are in control of their attitudes and actions. They don't see our island the way that we see it. I understand that for them, this is just the place that they work. It shouldn't be that way.

Again, I thank the wonderful people of Jamestown for their overwhelming support, and I will always try to be there for you.

**Pio Moretti**  
Jamestown

### Benefit will fund theatre troupe

The Jamestown Community Theatre extends many thanks to the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce for choosing us to be this year's recipient of their annual fund-raiser. Over the years we have had to discard costumes and set pieces due to a lack of storage space. Many of these pieces were truly works of art and it has saddened us to see them go. The funds we receive from the chamber will help defray the cost of a safe, climate-controlled space for our treasures.

Gettywood was a wonderful night. Thank you to all involved in this event and see you at the theater.

**Donna Gavin**  
President, JCT

### Thanks for all your help during tough time

I would like to thank each and every one of you individually for your cards, meals, flowers and help caring for Charlie day and night, and there were some long nights, phone calls and help to us during a difficult time in our lives.

There are so many people I would like to thank. I did not want to leave anyone out so I thought it would be nice to write a little letter to the editor to thank everyone. Charlie passed away on Sunday, Aug. 15, after a three week illness. He will be sadly missed by all of us, especially me. Charlie was a wonderful man and we will see him again someday. May you rest in peace, Charlie.

Thank you all and God bless you.

**Joanie Shaffer and family**  
Jamestown

### Many programs for island teens to enjoy

Teenagers are at great risk of becoming addicted to drugs and alcohol, but a local group is doing everything it can to keep them safe. The Jamestown Substance Abuse Prevention ask Force is a group of concerned community members who take political action to better our youth and sponsor prevention events in our community.

One of the main accomplishments of the task force is bringing Stephanie Nocon into the Lawn Avenue School. Ms. Nocon is the Student Assistance Counselor, who works one-on-one and with groups, and runs substance abuse prevention programs. These programs include Red Ribbon Week, an anti-smoking campaign run sponsored by the American Lung Association and Project Northland, an alcohol prevention curriculum. There is also Towards No Tobacco Use, a tobacco prevention curriculum. She helps the students of Jamestown navigate the hard years of middle school.

The task force was involved in the creation of the Teen Center. The Teen Center provides a safe, nurturing and fun environment for the teens of Jamestown. Boredom is a huge contributor to substance abuse, and with Melissa, and now Debbie, holding events, that is almost never an issue. Because of activities such as Skate Fest and Six Flags, teens have constructive things to do.

The task force has been able to

take political action, with the help of Representative Bruce Long. After Laura Hosley informed us of the dangers of energy drinks (Red Bull, Rockstar, etc.), several teens brought this issue to Rep. Long, who attends many of the task force meetings. Rep. Long said he would introduce a bill for us, banning these drinks on school property, and he did.

Jessica Bucklin and I had a once in a lifetime opportunity to testify at the State House about something very passionate to us. Because of this unique connection, we have been able to take these and other ideas to the next level. The task force has done great things in our town, and will continue to work hard to keep our youth and community safe.

For more information about the work of the task force, contact Laura Hosley at [lhosley@rieas.com](mailto:lhosley@rieas.com).

**Mariel Mastrostefano**  
Jamestown

### Council should stop encouraging cyclists

I am writing in the hope of articulating some of the reasons for the tensions that exist between motorists, of which I am one, and cyclists, referred to in the Jamestown Press.

"Share the Road" says a sign aimed at motorists. Sharing implies reciprocity. Under Rhode Island law, a cyclist has all the rights and privileges of a motorist, as long as he or she is not "impeding" traffic. Most of Jamestown's roads are designed for motorists without consideration for cyclists or their safety. Many cyclists, on main roads, "impede" motorists more or less, particularly on the northern and southern ends of the island.

In order to use a highway, motorists must pay substantial fuel taxes, for the building and maintenance of roads, a fee for the registration of their vehicles and share the joys of dealing with the DMV to obtain a license proving competence. Cyclists, on the hand, of any age, are able to use these same roads at no cost with no licensing requirements.

To add flavor, there is a sense of superiority that men and women share as they ride their bikes, improve their physiques and count their carbon credits, all the while knowing that under the law, they operate under the same rules as a semi.

With these thoughts in mind, I urge the Town Council to stop encouraging cyclists to come to Jamestown, in the name of safety and the restoration of some tranquility that residents have lost.

**Richard H. Hutchinson**  
Jamestown

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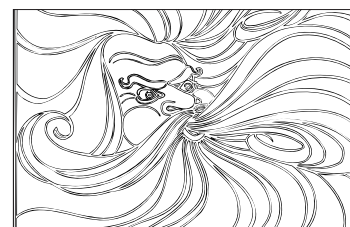


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