

Nancy Logan rides her 23-speed hybrid bicycle every day, year-round, weather permitting. As of last Friday, the bike's odometer stood at 21,317 miles, many of them logged as Logan pedaled on daily errands from her home on Seaside Drive to the market, the library, the post office and other stops in Jamestown village.

One thing Logan has learned from all that two-wheel travel is the importance of safety, which is why each time she rolls her black beauty out of her garage, she wears a helmet on her head and carries a whisk broom to sweep away any broken glass she might find on the road. It's also why she has volunteered to join the newly formed Bike Path Design Committee, whose official charge is "...to facilitate the planning and construction of a designated bike path from the west side of the Jamestown Bridge to North Main Road and extending southerly into the village."

"There are really some dangerous areas for bicyclists on the island, and North Main Road is one of them," Logan said. "The shoulder gets down to almost zero for riding in some parts. It's really scary when two big trucks come by and you're on the part of the road with no shoulder."

Town Administrator Bruce Keiser, also an avid cyclist, takes the critique a step further, calling the island's central north-south by-way "death defying."

"North Road is one of the most scenic roadways for cycling on the island," Keiser said. "But too often the cars go beyond the speed limit and there is no shoulder whatsoever in places. The DOT put up those signs that say, 'Share the road,' with the picture of the car and the bicycle side by side. The problem is, there's not enough road to share."

So much for the problem; anyone who has biked the road knows it too well. The question is how to fix it, which is why, at the urging of the Town Council's Bob Sutton, the design committee has been put together to come up



**Island Lookout**

By Stephen Heffner

with answers. Sutton will chair the group, and will be joined by Keiser, Town Planner Lisa Bryer and Kate Smith, a member of the Conservation Commission.

In addition to Logan, there will be three other citizen members: David Burnell, Julie Kallfelz, and Susan Plowden. Because North Main is a state road, the bike path is a project for the state Department of Transportation, so DOT engineer Lambri Zerva will round out the committee. The group's first meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 1, at 3:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Keiser says the committee's objective will be to come up with a plan for a "separated" bike path - a two-way, paved route that would be adjacent to, but independent of, North Main Road. "The separated path offers the greatest margin of safety to everyone," Keiser said. "We think that there is enough public property along the west side of the road that a separated path is possible there."

Keiser concedes that there may be areas along the road where it might difficult to squeeze a separated path between the roadway and the adjacent stone walls and private property. But, he adds that the state has the option of building "several classes of bike paths," each with different width requirements.

Chris Powell, chairman of the town's Conservation Commission, was surprised last week to learn that the committee's aim would be to design a separated two-lane path.

"I always thought the easiest thing to do would be to just widen the shoulders of the road a little and give bikes the space they needed," Powell said. "Lisa

[Bryer] and I went out and measured, and we thought there was room just to add to the shoulders. I don't know what happened to that idea."

Powell believes that a separated path just isn't going to fit cleanly on one side of the road or the other. "You've got private property to contend with, stone walls, wetlands, trees, all kinds of problems." He adds, "Good luck on that idea," and predicts that there will be "a reality check" if such a plan were to come before the Conservation Commission for review.

Under any proposed plan, one of the most problematic stretches of the road will be the crossing at Marsh Meadows. On either side, the road shoulder disappears beneath steel guardrails, and the marsh waters lie immediately outside them. It is a choke point for drivers and one of the most dangerous pieces of the road for cyclists - especially in summer, when tall grasses intrude over the guardrails and force bikers into the road to avoid them.

Powell predicts that his commission would be happy with some form of cantilevered span, perhaps built of wood on pilings, close to but beyond the edge of the road. And, he warns planners to avoid proposals for filling the marsh to support the path. "You've got to be careful when you're dealing with a salt marsh, because the habitats are so sensitive. You can't go around willy-nilly, filling here and filling there."

As with most projects of this type on the island, there are likely to be questions about whether a bicycle path would have a negative impact on the scenic qualities of North Main Road. For her part, Nancy Logan isn't worried.

"Not at all," she says. "I've bicycled in France, Denmark, Holland, England, Scotland, Canada, and New Zealand. They all have bike paths and it doesn't affect the scenery. I don't think it will here either."



**Salt barn**

The first signs of the new highway garage at Taylor Point have started appearing. Here, workers start building the frame of the new salt barn.

Photo by Vic Richardson

**Yacht school hosts dinner lecture series this fall**

On five evenings this fall, the International Yacht Restoration School will host a different expert who will explore a topic of interest to many boating enthusiasts: the history and evolution of speed on the water.

IYRS's five-part Dinner-and-a-Lecture Series, which is coordinated with a special dinner menu at Newport's Café Zelda, begins on Tuesday, Oct. 7 and runs through early December.

The series looks at boats powered by both wind and high-horsepower engines. Local sailor, Chris Museler, opens the series on Oct. 7 with an overview on "The History of Speed." Museler's talk—which takes both a look back at past efforts and a look at the current cutting edge in waterborne speed—sets the stage for subsequent lectures on different types of boats.

On the powerboat side, the series explores the racing of vintage powerboats as well as a look at the designs of the Huckins Yacht Corporation, a producer of notable recreational powerboats and PT boats whose first designs date back to the late 1920s.

On the sailing side, the series looks at two different classes of

boats: the International 14, a development class that has a long history of taking advantage of the latest developments in technology and materials; and the 6-Meter, a popular meter-rule class, whose history dates to the early 1900s, that will host its 2009 world championships in Newport.

Coming up in the series is Keith Brown, who will lead a talk on "The Vintage Era of Powerboat Racing" on Tuesday, Oct. 21, and on Tuesday, Nov. 4, Steve Clark will speak about "The International 14: Evolution of the Oldest International Sailing Class."

Lecture-goers can start the evening with dinner at Café Zelda (528 Thames Street) and dine from a special lecture-night menu, then walk to IYRS (449 Thames Street), where lectures begin at Restoration Hall at 7:30 pm. Lectures are free for IYRS members, \$7 for nonmembers.

For reservations at Café Zelda, call 829-4002. For more information on the IYRS Dinner-and-a-Lecture series, visit [www.iyrs.org](http://www.iyrs.org) or call 848-5777.

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