

Letters

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While we waited for the inevitable phone call, we took him Jamestown Animal Clinic for shots and found out that he was already neutered, but no one at the clinic recognized him. As the days went by, and no owner surfaced, we became more and more attached to him, naming him Jacksonian Democracy, Jackson for short. He evolved from a slightly skittish, skinny adolescent to a slim, athletic adult with a beautiful dense black coat and luminous golden-green eyes.

Jackson was a quick study; he came to the window of whatever room we were in and asked to be let in, even if it meant climbing up the tree to the bedroom. When I had surgery this summer and was relegated to the couch for six weeks, he would lie on my chest and purr, or stretch out on the back of the couch where he could look out the window and keep an eye on me at the same time. He loved to be petted, and never liked to eat dinner without having us rub his head first. I have always been a dog person, but Jackson made a believer out of me.

He continued to spend a lot of time outdoors, but last week, he was gone longer than usual, and when he made it home, he had been shot in the face with a shotgun. The doctors at the clinic here sent us to the Newport Animal Hospital, but there was no way to

save him. So that's the end of my story about the beautiful black cat who adopted us, but I'll always wonder what happened and why, and I'll always be grateful that he came and stayed, even for just a little while.

**Sarah Wheaton
Jamestown**

Project a success thanks to community

You may have taken a second look as you drove by St. Matthew's Church last Saturday evening with the fire pits burning and cardboard "tents" scattered about the lawn.

It was St. Matthews' youth group's "One Night Without a Home" project-the first event, in a year-long initiative to help the hungry and homeless in Rhode Island.

Armed with nothing but the clothes on their backs to offer protection from the elements, the youth (grades 7-11) were entirely dependent upon the charity of others for food, blankets and shelter.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, the group not only survived their "one night of homelessness," but they were able to raise more than \$700 for Lucy's Hearth and \$300 worth of canned goods for the Johnny Cake Center.

Many thanks to the parishioners of St. Matthews, friends and

neighbors who stopped by, Adrienne Downing for supplying the cardboard, local merchants who supplied food and moral support (especially the Village Hearth Bakery) and to the Cook and Schnack families for rising early to make the kids a wonderful pancake breakfast.

While spending the night outside in a lovely, generous village doesn't replicate the hardship of true homelessness, the participants still learned a significant lesson about hardship and the value of community support. Thank you, Jamestown, for showing these kids how to lend a helping hand.

**Fred Glomb, Christy Ferguson, Amy Smith, and Shawn Mayers
Youth group leaders**

Campaign signs are not welcome

It used to be that the local political parties had an understanding that campaign signs were not good for the town - visual pollution, ect..

Apparently, times have changed. The then conventional wisdom was that those candidates who planted the signs lost the election.

I hope times haven't changed that much.

**Jerry McIntyre
Jamestown**



Tim Mayers, 15, found a mattress by the roadside to keep him off of the cold ground during the St. Matthew's Church homelessness awareness night.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

Tent City

Continued from page 1

their cell phones, iPods or toilets," Smith said. "They were only allowed to go inside if they had to go to the bathroom."

Parishioners and passers-by dropped off pizza, chicken and other food items, but the teens were forced to improvise to eat some of the food. "One of the parishioners dropped off a whole roasted chicken," Smith said. "But, we did not have any plates or utensils so they had to figure out how to tear it apart and eat it with just their hands."

Smith said in retrospect she should not have asked so many people to bring food for the kids to eat, but it was a good way to get the community involved.

"As the night went on, they actually had a decent amount to eat. Even the owners of the Village Hearth brought over bread for them, but this particular night was more about homelessness than hunger."

To make the situation more authentic, a few of the youths made cardboard signs and walked Narragansett Avenue asking for donations. "A few people gave us donations, and one person even asked if we were going to buy beer with the money," participant Greg Glomb said.

Although the teens agreed that they only got a small first-hand taste of homelessness, it was enough to change their attitudes about the homeless.

"I honestly did not think about the homeless a lot before we did this, but now it's different. I can't imagine doing it night after night," Glomb said.

The hardest part, Glomb said, was waking up in the middle of the night and being cold. "I did not expect it to be as cold as it was," he said. "I would definitely do it again though if it would help someone who is homeless."

Waking up to the cold was when the reality of the situation began to sink in for most of the teens, Smith said. "It started out as an adventure for some of them. We used every single blanket people brought us, but when they had to wake up and get near the fire to get warm or go inside to use the bathroom, they really started to think it was not so much fun anymore."

Allison Smith, a North Kingstown High School junior, had spent time in Washington, D.C. during a leadership conference doing some work with the homeless, but she said participating in this event so close to home had extra meaning for her.

"We always hear how lucky we are to be able to grow up in Jamestown," she said, "and homelessness is not something we see here, but this really drove home to me how fortunate I am, that I can go home and feel safe and loved every day."

The event did more than just soften a few teens' hearts towards the problems of the homeless; it also raised money the group will donate to Lucy's Hearth in Middletown and the Jonnycake Center. "We collected about \$350 to \$400 in canned goods for the Jonnycake center and \$350 in donations to go to Lucy's Hearth, which the church matched," Smith said. "We had so much more interest from the community than we could have hoped for. I would say it was a big success."

Broadway performer to debut one-man show on island

The Jamestown Community Theatre will present Jon Peterson, Broadway and off-Broadway actor, singer and dancer in a one-man premiere cabaret called, "Song Man, Dance Man."

The musical numbers will feature songs and dances originally performed by George M. Cohan, Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Sammy Davis Jr., Charles Aznavour, and Anthony Newley. Peterson wrote the script for the show and this will be his official opening venue.

Peterson has performed in many shows; most recently, this summer, he was in one of the Goodspeed musicals in East Haddam, Conn. as the lead of the originally British and subsequently 1965 Broadway

hit, "Half a Sixpence."

A native of London, Peterson became a veteran of numerous West End musicals. Credits include: "The Sound Of Music," "Dames At Sea," "Cats," "A Chorus Line," "Blitz!" and "She Loves Me."

There will be two performances at the Jamestown Recreation Center on Saturday, Nov. 15, at 7:30 p.m. and on Sunday, Nov. 16, at 4 p.m.

Tickets will go on sale Friday, Oct. 17, at Baker's Pharmacy in Jamestown, Pleasant Surprise in Newport and other locations to be announced

Ticket prices will be \$7 for seniors and children, and \$12 for adults.

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