

# Island Opinion

## • EDITORIAL •

### Have you made your New Year's resolutions?

It is on the eve of the new year that we traditionally pledge our resolutions. This is a time of retrospection; we resolve to do better and bid farewell to the old ways.

We always have the best intentions. We may decide that we need to lose weight or possibly quit smoking. In fact, shedding pounds and giving up tobacco are probably the two resolutions most often made — and broken.

We humans certainly have our foibles. We have been celebrating the new year for some 4,000 years now, historians say, and it seems that we've been constantly pledging some sort of self-improvement. The practice began with the ancient Babylonians. Their custom was to return something that had been borrowed during the year. They must have borrowed a lot of things.

At about the same time, the Chinese started their new year's observances, complete with colorful and noisy fireworks. (Remember, the Chinese invented gunpowder!) The ancient Chinese were commonly fond of pledging to clean up their homes as their resolution for the new year. Makes one wonder what the homes looked like during the rest of the year.

The ancient Romans liked to forgive their enemies at the new year, which is easy to do when one is building an empire and have pounded the opposition into submission.

What is your resolution for the new year? We have a suggestion, a simple resolution that should be easy for everyone to keep.

Here it is: shop and buy locally in 2009. Keep your hard-earned dollars in the community where they will do the most good for you and everyone else.

When you buy local, you are helping to maintain a strong, sustainable local economy. The local merchants employ your neighbors and friends, pay local taxes and make contributions to local organizations.

Here at the Jamestown Press, we hope that you buy from our advertisers who make this weekly newspaper possible. We appreciate when you let our advertisers know that you see their advertisements in the Jamestown Press!

May you and your loved ones have a safe, happy and prosperous new year!

— Jeff McDonough



### Elves at work

We would like to thank whoever put our trash out for us Wednesday morning, Christmas Eve. We missed getting the trash can out early but some kind person took our trash out for us in time for it to be picked up. What a nice, early Christmas present! The holiday season is not only for giving, but for helping and caring!

The Lowell Family  
Howland Avenue

### Thanks for love and support

We would like to thank everyone for all the lovely cards and expressions of love and support we have received at the unexpected

## • LETTERS •

and unbearable passing of our beautiful daughter, Payton.

We thank you all who honored her by attending her wake and funeral. Payton fought an incredible battle against her leukemia over the past two years. She taught us so much about courage, strength, forgiveness and what is truly important in life.

Payton is an incredible inspiration and touched so many lives, even those who did not know her personally. She was a wonderful child and we are honored to have been her parents and sister. We thank our family and friends for all

their kindness and prayers in Payton's determination to beat her AML. She is greatly missed and will continue to be our superhero.

Frank, Elizabeth and  
Frankie Watson

### Union contract re-negotiations

I believe our best teachers are underpaid and that our very high per pupil costs come from other than teacher salaries. This must be remembered when we try to address a very serious problem.

It is no secret that our cities and towns are strug-

gling to pay for services and also stay within the tax levy increase limits. As revenues from the state are lower than last year, towns need to replace that lost revenue. One easy answer is to increase property taxes on a population that is already paying among the highest in the country. This will not sit well.

Another choice is to look for cost savings, and unions, especially teachers' unions, will surely be asked to re-negotiate contracts. This of course, will be met with resistance. But I hope everyone will keep the following in mind in these tough times.

When private sector unions make concessions

See "Letters" on page 11

### 100 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, December 28, 1908

Rev. and Mrs. C. D. Burrows left yesterday for Florida, where they will be for five weeks' vacation. The pulpit of St. Matthew's Church will be filled by a lay reader during Mr. Burrows' absence.

A large fleet of tugs and barges is anchored in the east harbor and it is only during the past few days that vessels have made a harbor here to any extent. During the present winter there have been several tows anchored at a time within a short distance of the ferry.

#### From the Newport Daily News, December 31, 1908

About 20 tons of slate roofing has arrived in Newport for the new buildings at Fort Wetherill and is being carted across the ferry to the post.

### 75 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, December 27, 1933

A Christmas program, given by the children of members, marked at the annual Yule party of the Holy Ghost Society.

Twelve little girls and boys were guests at Maplewood over the Christmas holidays. They came from Providence and Newport through the efforts of the Providence Salvation Army and the Newport Welfare Commission.

#### From the Newport Daily News, December 28, 1933

Fifteen hundred members of the Jamestown summer colony will be the recipients of New Year's cards of greeting sent by the Jamestown Board of Trade. ... "On behalf of the townspeople of Jamestown, we wish to express out pleasure at your summer visits to our island and hope that we shall see you again."

Conanicut Grange will usher in 1934 with a dance in



## This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

### Week of December 31

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.

the Grange hall on New Year's Eve from 12, midnight, until 4 a.m. Gage's orchestra from Newport will furnish music and there will be a launch to Newport after the dance.

Walcott avenue, from High street to Union street, has been closed to traffic by Chief of Police Chester Greene, to insure safe coasting. Clarke's Pond off Southwest avenue is declared safe for skating.

Despite the heavy storm, the snow plough worked all night and all town roads were open for traffic this morning.

### 50 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, December 31, 1958

Newswise, Conanicut Island had a busy year in 1958, but in the pattern of its immediate predecessor, the proposed \$55,000,000 refinery continued to be the big story. ... This was a year in which transportation made the news. The Jamestown Ferry Authority was abolished by a bill passed by the General Assembly in May and a commission with

power only to set ferry rates was established. ... The Hammonton and Wildwood were sold by the state for scrap for \$16,000 and later the Hammonton was purchased for \$7,200 by the Newport Oil Company for conversion into a barge. ... In contrast to the Jamestown and Newport ferries, tangible gains were noted on the Jamestown Bridge throughout the year. Revenue increased by \$12,990.40 or 11 percent over the previous year. A total of 29,391 more vehicles crossed the bridge in 1958, a 6 percent increase. ... Toll rates for passenger autos (on the bridge) were reduced from 75 cents one way to 65 cents. ... On the political front, the Democrats score their second successive victory over the Republicans. .... In the field of government, perhaps the most far reaching development was the property tax revaluation on the island. ... A new ordinance adopted this year by the Town Council established a permanent police department. ... The Naval Radio Facility on Beavertail Road was closed early in the year. ... This year, the Jamestown school enrollment of 406 reached an all time high and the school budget of \$1,669,838 adopted was an increase of \$10,000 over that of last year. ... The Jamestown fire department ... completed the first museum of fire fighting equipment to be established in Rhode Island. ... The Sam Carr house on North Road, the oldest house on the island, was leveled. Purchased from Miss Elizabeth Howry by Commerce Oil, it was used to house the offices of the oil corporation and was unoccupied at the time of the fire.

See "History" on next page