

Sweep out the old

For some, the new year is a time to make pronouncements about the way they want the future to be. Newspapers and the Internet are full of sites making predictions about everything that is 2009—from the new presidential administration to the stock market to celebrities and their pregnancies. Personally, I'm not interested in predicting the future. What I'm busy working on now is eliminating the past.

For me the new year signals a clean slate on which to write a new chapter, but in order to get the slate clean, I have to get my house clean. This requires some work.

One of the mottoes I live by is "you can't start a new week with last week's dirt," which means that on Sunday evenings everything that was started during the week has to be wrapped up and put away before the new work week can begin on Monday.

Expounding on that sentiment, I also feel that I can't start a new year with last year's clutter still wafting around.

I've been cleaning.

I've gone through all my drawers looking for clothes I have not worn in recent months. I found items I haven't worn in more than a year and some still have the tags on them. I tried some of them on only to wonder what the heck I was thinking when I bought them. It makes me think I must have an alternate personality who takes over when I go shopping. These all went into a bag to be donated to charity.

Every year at this time I go through my underwear drawer. I pick up each item and give it the stretch test—anything that has lost its elastic snap is tossed in the trash. I go through my husband's underwear, too, but he doesn't know this.

The spice drawer or cabinet is a good target for January cleaning. I open each jar and give it the sniff test. I close my eyes and stick my nose in the jar. If I can tell which herb or spice it is, I keep it. If it smells like dust, it's gone.

The freezer in my house is like a black hole. It's just a place where leftovers go never to be seen again. At this time of year I take a good look in the freezer to see what's been overlooked. Brown bricks. Orange bricks. Green bricks. I have no specific test for freezer items; I just get out a big trash bag and put everything unrecognizable in there. If I haven't used it by now, I certainly won't miss it when it's gone.

Take a look at what's on the refrigerator door. Condiments have a tendency to overstay their welcome. According to information available on the Internet, mayonnaise lasts two months after open-



Flotsam and Jetsam

By Donna Drago

ing, salsa and pasta sauce lose freshness after just five days. It's a good idea to have this information handy so you'll know when to toss out items that have passed their prime.

Look behind all the appliances and electronics in your home. If yours are anything like mine, there is a furry coating of dust on the back of everything as well as on every wire. I unplug each one and run a damp cloth down the length of each wire and across the back. If you don't do this for a year or two, it'll get pretty hairy back there—better get on it! Make sure any item with an exhaust fan has enough clearance and that the grate covering the fan is clear. These can pose fire hazards if not checked out periodically. If your electronic components are stacked up, you can separate them and dust in between and under the bottom one. You'll probably even find a lost DVD or two under there.

Another good January project is to clean or replace the cleaning tools. I like to take a look at the reusable filter in my vacuum cleaner, which pops out so I can give it a good rinse and dry it before putting it back in the unit. Turn the vacuum over and look at the brush. I like to pick out all the hairs and clumps of dust before returning it to service. Every few years I replace my broom and feather duster—especially if the broom has a distinct flip to it or the duster is down to its last couple of feathers. I wash my dust pan, too. Some mop heads can be removed and thrown in the washing machine. Others need to be replaced. A benefit to this is that having new or improved tools makes me want to clean even more.

I'm starting my new year with a clean slate and a clean house. Now, it's time to mess it all up again.

Jamestown fire truck temporarily out of service

By Adrienne Downing

The Jamestown Fire Department will be using temporary backup coverage from Newport and North Kingstown while Ladder Truck 1 is temporarily out of service for repairs.

The ladder truck was damaged during a training accident on Dec. 18, and fire department officials have been working with a fire truck manufacturer and the insurance company to get the repair done in the most efficient manner possible.

"We are just waiting for Greenwood Fire Apparatus and the insurance company to get together, so if there are any questions about what repairs or parts are covered, they can talk directly to each other and I don't have to get in the middle of it," Fire Chief Jim Bryer said. Greenwood first had to determine if the damage was in the scope of what the company could repair, the fire chief said.

The accident occurred during a routine Thursday night training exercise in East Passage Estates.

According to Bryer, part of the training included extending the

the crew put the ladder down, it did not close all the way, Bryer said. "It was a complete accident. When they tried to store the ladder, one side of the cab was up just enough that it twisted the cab."

The truck sustained a damaged windshield and the cab was cracked. "The ladder still works and the truck is drivable, but it does not have a windshield, so we can't have someone drive it around," the fire chief said.

Although the incident was a first for the JFD, it was not the first time the department's insurance company has seen a similar occurrence.

"Greenwood has a replacement truck we can use, so we are just waiting for the insurance company to tell us if they will cover it," Bryer said. In the meantime, the fire chief has notified the North Kingstown, Newport and Newport Navy fire departments that Jamestown is without a ladder truck and may need backup.



A training accident left a crack in the cab and a damaged windshield on Ladder Truck 1.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten

ladder over a pond. "During the exercise, one of the firefighters thought they detected an oil leak from the truck and opened the cab to look at the engine," Bryer said. "Because the truck was sitting on uneven ground, the cab apparently did not seat properly when it was closed back up. But, it was dark and it was not an obvious difference that someone would have noticed."

When the exercise ended and

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JAMESTOWN TOWN COUNCIL

NOTICE

The Jamestown Town Council will hold the following work sessions in January.

Monday, January 12, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Fort Wetherill
The Council will discuss the future use of the highway building.

Monday, January 22, 2009
6:30 p.m.
Fort Getty
The Council will discuss the future plans for Fort Getty.

The meetings will be held at the Jamestown Town Hall, 93 Narragansett Avenue. The Town Council invites the public to attend and comment at these open work sessions.

Please call the Town Clerk at 423-9800 if you have any questions about these meetings.

This meeting location is accessible to the physically challenged. Hearing or speech impaired individuals requiring the services of an interpreter should call the Town Clerk at 401-423-7200 or facsimile at 401-423-7230 not less than 3 business days prior to the meeting.

TOWN MEETINGS

Thursday, Jan. 8

7 p.m., Lawn Avenue School library, the School Committee meets.

Tuesday, Jan. 13

7 p.m., Town Hall, the Conservation Commission meets.

Wednesday, Jan. 14

7 p.m., Town Hall, the Harbor Management Commission meets.