

# JAMESTOWN PRESS

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## Reporter takes ride of a lifetime aboard 'Fat Albert'

By Adrienne Downing

Rhode Islanders, particularly Jamestown and North Kingstown residents, typically spend most of the final week of June each year with their eyes to the sky. The arrival of aircraft at Quonset Point for the Rhode Island Air Show is as much a sign of the official start of summer as the last day of school and full beaches.

I look forward to this week every year. To say I am an aviation enthusiast is an understatement. If it flies, I am fascinated by it. So you can imagine how excited I was to receive an invitation to take a ride on the Blue Angels C-130 Hercules, Fat Albert, this year.

Fat Albert is a cousin to the Air Force C-130Js that light up the night sky and bring the sound of freedom to Narragansett Bay every day.

Being a military wife and having been stationed in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, I have flown on C-130s before, but that certainly did not prepare me for my ride on Fat Albert.

The plane is crewed by a team of eight U.S. Marines. That alone should have clued me in that this would not be an ordinary trip in the sky.

I arrived at media day last Friday eagerly awaiting my flight. We were able to watch some of



The Blue Angels C-130 Hercules Fat Albert shows off its wings for the crowd at Saturday's Rhode Island Air Show.

Photo by Caitlin Downing

the planes arrive and stage for the air show, and also see a few performers practice their routines.

The weather did get a bit rainy at times, but the skies stayed clear

enough for Fat Albert and the Blue Angels jets to practice. By 2:30 p.m., I had been told that I would not be riding Fat Albert that day, but would actually fly the next

day during the air show.

That was when the real fun started.

**"Eat a light lunch..."**

I am not really afraid of much.

I love roller coasters, and I did not have any reason to think I should be fearful of flying in a cargo plane.

However, while I was sitting in the operations center, two aviation photographers from Texas struck up a conversation with me about the pending flight.

The conversation went something like this: "I heard that you are going to ride on Fat Albert tomorrow. Make sure you don't eat before you go and take the air sick bag when they offer it to you."

They proceeded to tell me that they had done a Fat Albert flight at another air show, and although they fly all the time, it made them sick.

I meditated on that conversation all night and began to get a little nervous. Maybe this was not going to be the walk in the park I thought it would be.

So there I was, a light lunch, 24 hours and a few butterflies later, standing on the runway in front of Fat Albert, trying to decide if I would actually go through with this adventure when Gunnery Sergeant Ben Chapman came up and introduced himself.

Chapman, the flight engineer and resident comedian, told me we were not going to take off for more than an hour, so we were

See "Air Show" on page 11

## Town to install curbing on Watson Avenue to protect students

Parking is an ongoing problem for area businesses

By Tyler Will

By the start of the 2009-2010 academic year, Jamestown will likely have curbing on Watson Avenue to help protect children walking to the Jamestown schools. Both schools are located off of Watson Avenue, a street on which some say parents and residents drive too fast.

"That is just an ongoing problem in this town," said Mike Tiexiera, an employee of Island Rubbish Service, a business located near the school. People drive too fast, especially when they are late for school, he said.

No student he knows of has been hit, but it has been close several times, Tiexiera said.

At a Planning Commission meeting about two weeks ago, Tiexiera said employ-

ees should be allowed to park on the north side of the street, the side most of the walking students use to get to their schools.

When parked on the north side, the parked cars shield students from motorists. Current town ordinances require employees to park on the other side of the street, where most students do not walk. "We have always done what the town has asked us," Tiexiera said.

Tiexiera said the problem is that driv-

ers, some of whom are parents dropping their children off, drive too fast and swerve around in the lanes of the road, which is narrow when cars are parked on one side.

"It just became more pronounced when cars swerved toward the kids," Tiexiera said. "And we're looking here saying, 'This is not safe.'"

The speed limit is 25 miles per hour, but

See "Curbing" on page 14

## High tick counts raise tick-borne illness concerns

By Eileen M. Daly

The number of ticks in Rhode Island has increased 54 percent since this time last year, according to Thomas Mather, professor of entomology and director of the University of Rhode Island's Center for Vector Borne Disease.

Recent weather conditions have created an ideal environment for ticks, Mather said. In studies conducted at the center, Mather found that ticks could not sustain themselves for more than 10 hours when humidity levels were below 85 percent. If humidity levels reach 85 percent or greater, however, within an eight-hour period, the ticks were much more likely to

survive, he said.

"Ticks don't care much about temperature, what they really care about is humidity," Mather said. These last few weeks of dreary, high-humidity days have created what Mather refers to as a kind of "perfect storm" of conditions for an increase in tick-borne illnesses. Since the next dry sunny days will likely drive people outdoors, this will create ideal conditions for the spread of tick-borne illnesses including Lyme disease, babesiosis and anaplasmosis, Mather said.

Information on the Tick Encounter Resource Center's website states: "According to Mather's tick abundance database, the most

extensive database of its kind in the world, when Rhode Island has experienced a 50 percent increase in tick abundance, there has been a corresponding 35 percent increase in reported cases of Lyme disease."

Dr. Joseph England, a physician with Jamestown Family Practice, said he has not seen an increase in Lyme disease cases as of yet, but he also expects that to change when the weather gets better.

"We haven't seen an increase yet," he said, "but that is directly related to people not being outside much right now."

See "Ticks" on page 9

### Fourth of July deadlines at the Jamestown Press

The Jamestown Press office will be closed on Friday, July 3, in observance of the Fourth of July. The Press will have an early deadline for display advertising due to the holiday.

Here are the deadlines for the Thursday, July 9, issue of the Jamestown Press:

**Display Advertising:** 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 2.  
**Classified Advertising:** Noon on Monday, July 6.  
**News items:** 3 p.m. on Monday, July 6.

The staff of the Jamestown Press wishes our readers and advertisers a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July! Don't forget the fireworks at Mackerel Cove on Sunday, July 5.