

# Island Opinion

## • EDITORIAL •

### Lessons learned, from windmills to transportation

My wife and I are in Germany to visit our teenage daughter, who is participating in a student exchange. The young German woman with whom she is living came to our home in Jamestown last year. So, we came over to meet the rest of her family and to explore.

We have found that Germany is light years ahead of us in transportation and alternative energy production.

First of all, the German rail system is outstanding. There's an old saying that you can set your watch by the trains in Germany. That is not quite true – we've seen a few trains that were several minutes late (much to our benefit!). What does hold true, however, is that one can travel most anywhere in Germany via commuter rail. No car is necessary. Missed the train? Another one will be along shortly.

Such a train system would be an obvious boon to our well-populated New England. A reliable commuter train system would reduce our nation's overall energy consumption. It would also decrease the vast amounts of unhealthy pollution created by automobiles.

It is ironic that in the early 1900s, General Motors helped dismantle the commuter train system that was already in place in many areas of our country in order to sell more diesel buses. Today, we're bailing out GM and our streets are gridlocked by vehicles that belch fumes into the atmosphere. Meanwhile, a commuter rail system is virtually non-existent.

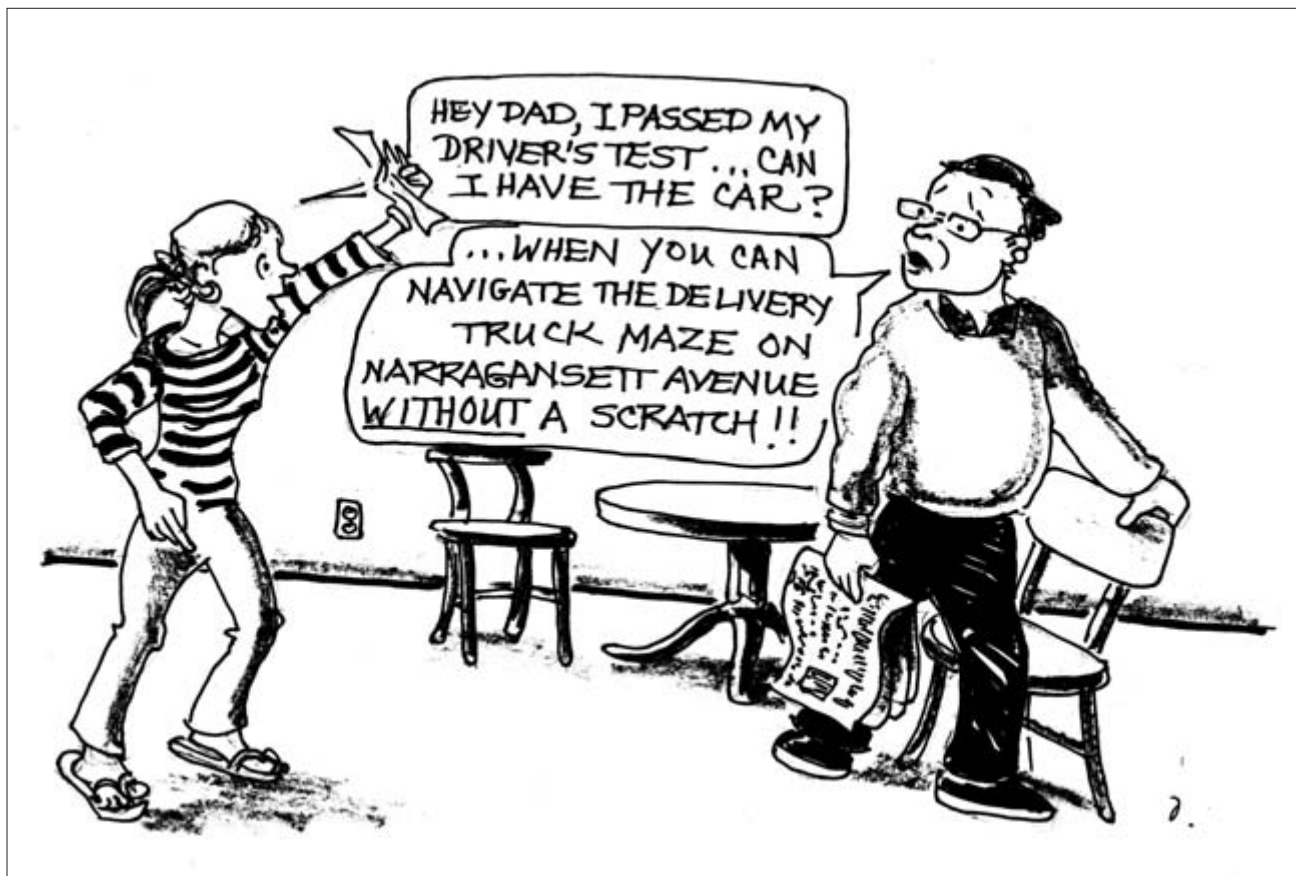
Another transportation observation: bicycles are everywhere in Germany and are encouraged. Many streets have bicycle lanes that are well marked. You can also take your bicycle along on the train. There are plenty of bike racks to store your two-wheeler once you reach your destination.

The Germans are also leading the way in producing energy without using fossil fuels. There are windmills – massive, two-blade and three-blade turbines, like the one we should build in Jamestown – across the countryside. When you look closely, you also see that the rooftops of many homes have solar panels that are used to heat their water.

The Germans also black out a room or building that is not in use. Flip one switch and all the electricity is off. That way those little electronic devices (like the television, video player and computer) are not sucking up expensive electricity when you are not there.

I'll have more observations and commentary on my blog, Island Time, at [www.JamestownPress.com](http://www.JamestownPress.com).

— Jeff McDonough



### Garden tour a great success

Our "Island Treasures" garden tour held on Saturday, June 27, was a great success and we appreciate the local support. We want to thank Baker's Pharmacy and the Secret Garden for selling tickets and The Jamestown Press for supplying maps.

We were fortunate to have a bright sunny day to visit the 11 gardens on the tour. We thank the participating garden owners for opening their lovely properties to all our visitors. Many came from out of state.

Everyone was impressed by the beauty of the island and especially the beauty and diversity of the gardens. The profits from approximately 250 visitors will be

used for civic beautification projects here on the island. Thanks for helping us celebrate our 60th year.

Jillian Meyer, president  
Quononoquott  
Garden Club

### State bargaining law needs teeth

The state's collective bargaining laws need teeth. Communities deserve statutory language that strengthens and protects managerial rights. Appallingly, last week's passage by the R.I. Senate of a bill that would lock in place expired teacher contracts gives all the teeth to the unions.

In no other state does a bargaining impasse trigger the unlimited extension of an expired teacher contract. Rhode Island would be the first.

In most states, when an impasse is reached, a school committee can implement unilaterally any terms or conditions reasonably embraced by proposals made at the bargaining table. In a handful of states, school committees can unilaterally implement these terms once other avenues, such as mediation or arbitration, have been exhausted.

If passed by the House, this legislation will undercut the effort by the East Provi-

dence School Committee to save its school system.

A recent *Providence Journal* editorial ("Stop Special Interest Law," June 21) posed the question of whether taxpayers are "truly so poorly represented at the state house." Let's hope that the House has the courage and foresight to respond to this seemingly rhetorical question by rejecting the proposed legislation.

Taxpayers can hold only one side of the bargaining table accountable—the elected school committee. When statutory language does not protect and preserve managerial rights, the public loses control of public education.

Cathy Kaiser, Chair  
Jamestown School  
Committee

## • LETTERS •

#### 100 years ago

##### From the Newport Daily News, July 1, 1909

The new contract for carrying the mail went into effect this morning. Since the first steam ferry to the island 36 years ago, the Jamestown and Newport Ferry Company has carried the mail to and from the island until today. The mail now goes by the Narragansett Transportation Company for the new contract.

##### From the Newport Journal, July 3, 1909

The water works has a force of men at work extending the water main up Clinton Avenue to connect with the main on High street.

The government contracts for the ferry services for Fort Greble has been awarded to the Narragansett Transportation Company, for both the east and west bays.

#### 75 years ago

##### From the Newport Daily News, July 2, 1934

The graduate dance, held in the grange hall Saturday evening under the auspices of Conanicut Grange, was largely attended, many of the graduates and their friends being present, and a number of young people from Newport. Music was furnished by Gage's orchestra of Newport. ... Dancing was enjoyed from 8 to 11:15, and punch was served during the intermission.

There was a capacity crowd at the Casino Saturday evening. Many members of the cottage colony, their guests and friends, and hotel guests filled the ball room and veranda. The "Newporters" orchestra played for dancing.

#### 50 years ago

##### From the Newport Daily News, July 2, 1959

The recently announced reduction in the Newport-



## This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

### Week of July 2

*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.*

Jamestown ferry fares went into effect yesterday. Passenger fares on the ferry went from 25 cents to ten cents. A passenger may get on at Newport or at Jamestown, sail back without getting off for ten cents. A one-way fare for an automobile is now \$1.25 with car passengers free. This compares with the former \$1.25 per car pays 25 cents per passenger.

#### From the Newport Daily News, July 6, 1959

The Jamestown Water Co. (a private company) ... petitioned the State Public Utilities Administration for higher rates which would increase its overall revenues by approximately 42 per cent.

#### 25 years ago

#### From the Newport Daily News, July 3, 1984

The Town Council Monday awarded a contract to Forte Bros. Inc. of Cumberland to handle excavation and site preparation for the new trash transfer facility.

#### From the Newport Daily News, July 6, 1984

The School Committee Thursday created a new administrative position - director of pupil services - giving the department two full-time administrators.

#### 15 years ago

##### From the Jamestown Press, June 30, 1994

The police department recently selected 21-year-old Angela Benedetti to become the newest member of the force and its first woman police officer.

The island's fifth annual Independence Day parade on Monday, July 4, will start at 11 a.m. on East Shore Road. What began simply with 40 patriotic north-end neighbors, has become a parade with more than 200 people.

Fireworks on Monday, July 2, will start at about 9 p.m. at Ft. Adams State Park in Newport.

#### 10 years ago

##### From the Jamestown Press, July 1, 1999

Despite a ban on all weekend garden watering, Town Administrator Maryanne Crawford told the Town Council Monday that municipal water customers had consumed 400,000 gallons of water over the past weekend.

The Board of Water and sewer Commissioners has approved an application from the state Department of Environmental Management for a town water hookup at its new marine fishery facility at Ft. Wetherill.

(photo captions) There was plenty of activity at East Ferry on Sunday for the annual Waterfront Festival hosted by the Jamestown Chamber of Commerce. The Jamestown Community Band was on hand for a lively performance. Meanwhile, island youngsters dug eagerly in the sand for a treasure hunt at the town beach, in which the top prize was a kid-sized kayak. The day ended with chef Tim Baker's famous chicken barbecue.