

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Toll hike on bridge a necessary expense

We all knew it was just a matter of time. The toll costs to cross the Newport Pell Bridge have not changed since the span across the East Passage of Narragansett Bay opened in 1969.

No one likes price hikes, but you have to admit that it's finally time to raise the fare that motorists pay to cross the big blue-green bridge.

The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority is reviewing a proposal to increase the cash toll from \$2 to \$4 per crossing. EZPass holders who do not live in Rhode Island will see their tolls go from \$1.75 to \$4 per crossing. Commercial vehicles will have to pay \$1 more per axle to cross the bridge under the plan.

In comparison, it costs \$5 for a Rhode Islander to cross the Tappan Zee Bridge on the Hudson River.

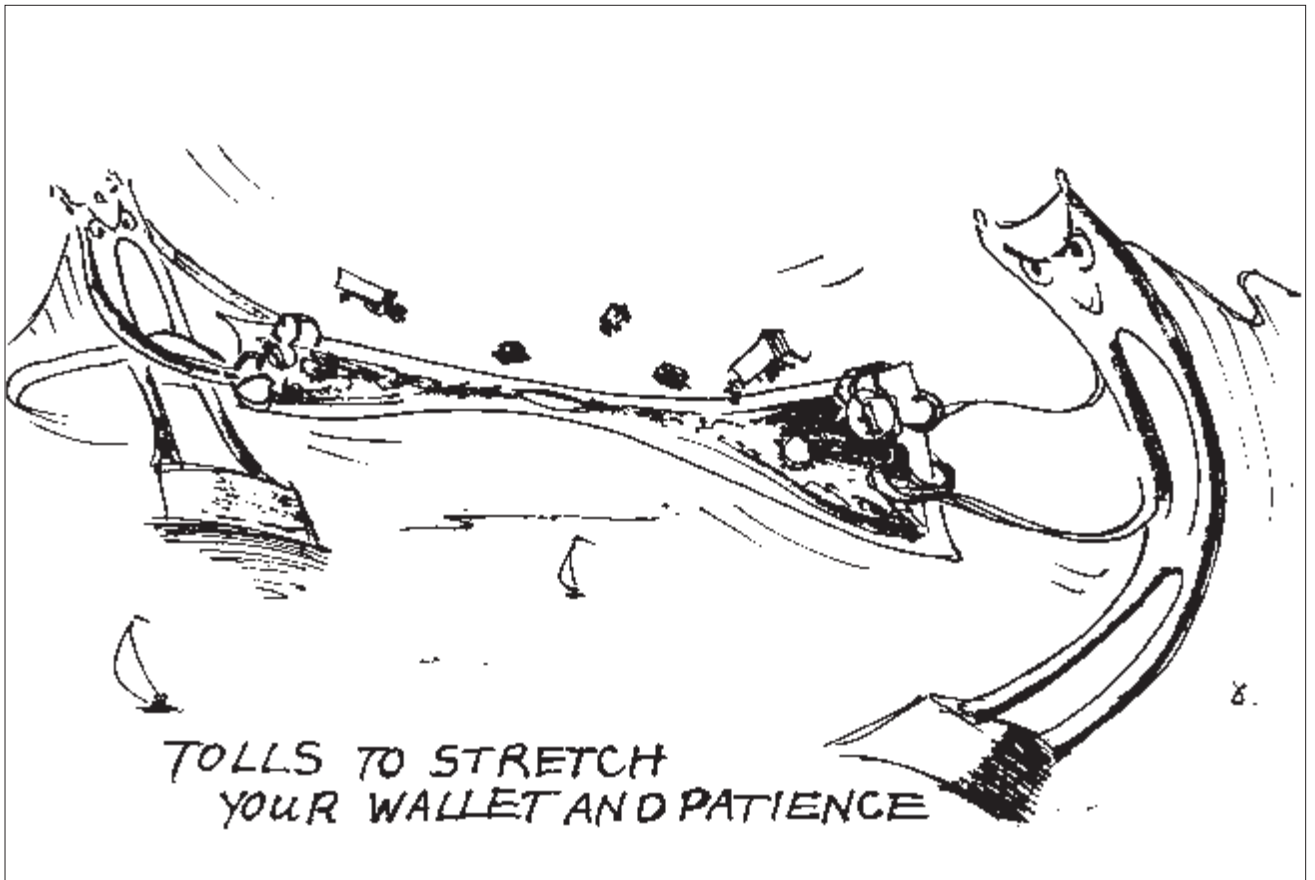
Regular Newport Pell Bridge users — that includes Jamestown residents who have the new-fangled EZPass transponders — will pay the same toll of 83 cents per crossing, according to the proposal before the RITBA board. It is also important to note that the commuter rates will also remain at 83 cents.

These toll hikes are needed, RITBA officials say, so that the authority can continue to pay the rising maintenance expenses on the aging structure. The bridge is getting older and is going to require some serious work to keep it safe in the years ahead. And, like just about everything else these days, things cost a whole lot more than they used to.

We're in favor of the proposed toll increases and recognize that one day, the regular bridge user will have to pay more than the current 83 cents. However, we'd like the bridge authority to return a toll on the Mt. Hope Bridge. We think it is only fair that those motorists who use that bridge share in its ongoing maintenance costs.

RITBA will hold a public hearing on the proposed toll increases in Jamestown at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21, in the Town Council chambers at Town Hall. Islanders are urged to attend and speak their minds.

— Jeff McDonough



Regatta needs volunteers

As many of you are aware, the Conanicut Yacht Club and Jamestown Yacht Club are hosting the Club 420 2009 National Regatta from Monday, July 27, through Wednesday, July 29, at Ft. Getty.

Thank you to the large team of people that have been working on this event since December and the many more that have volunteered to help during the regatta. We are anticipating 180 boats, and all of the support that goes with this kind of an event.

We are in desperate need of more landside assistance. Particularly, we need people to direct traffic and provide directions to attendees. This does not involve a long time.

• LETTERS •

If you have three to four hours to help out, it would be very much appreciated. If you can do it, consider asking a couple of friends to join you. It should be fun. We are delighted to have the opportunity to host this national event in Jamestown, but we do need additional volunteers to provide the quality event we would all like to see.

We need volunteers for Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; Sunday, 4 to 8 p.m.; Monday through Wednesday, 7 to 10 a.m.; Monday and Tuesday, 3 to 6 p.m.; and Wednesday afternoon and evening, 3 to 8 p.m.

If you are available during any of those times,

please let us know by either leaving a message at the Conanicut Yacht Club (423-1424) or emailing club420@ConanicutYachtClub.org.

Thanks again for your consideration.

Nancy Lush
Regatta Co-Chair
Jamestown

Let Shoreby Hill residents decide

Our town wants to use taxpayer dollars to see if homes in Shoreby Hill might be historic enough to receive tax credits and other incentives. The Town Council voted to ask a state commission to spend \$18,350 to hire a consultant, whose

mission will be to catalogue houses in Shoreby as a first step for historic district designation.

Yet, according to the council, not all residents are sure an historic district is desirable for them. First, why not determine if a majority favors it? Then, if the people truly want to be transformed, let them pay for the consultant, as they will be the beneficiaries of the tax credits.

Since Rhode Island is technically bankrupt (acknowledge the true liabilities of the pension system), our council should have some compassion for all, including the taxpayers, and withdraw the \$18,350 application.

Nicholas Schaus
Jamestown

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 16, 1909

Fort Getty, Fox Hill, Jamestown, was garrisoned today and thus another of the chain of fortifications at the entrance to the bay becomes a part of the defenses. ... Fort Getty also is advantageously situated and in many respects superior to Fort Greble, yet it is but a detached post of the latter and its occupation today consisted of the arrival of a detachment of five men from Fort Greble to take charge. Quarters have just been completed there for 25 or 30 men, but the coast artillery corps has not enough men to man its fortifications and so just enough are sent to some of the places to care for the property.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 12, 1934

Jamestown experienced one of the busiest days in several years Wednesday. By an arrangement made with Captain George Manders, keeper of Beavertail light, the Jamestown fire department was notified shortly after 8 o'clock, and three blasts were sounded as soon as the fleet was sighted off Beavertail, apprising the people that the fleet was on its way towards Newport harbor. In a few moments airplanes were flying overhead in large numbers, towards the ocean to greet the fleet. The roads to Beavertail and the Dumplings were filled with automobiles, and the shore line found hundreds in their cars and on foot watching for the ships. The sight from Beavertail and the Dumplings was beautiful as the ships could be seen for miles in the distance.

From the Newport Daily News, July 17, 1934

The Y.W.C.A. Seaside Camp at Conanicut Park has completed its first week as a vacation camp for girls, under the auspices of Providence Y.W.C.A., with 58 campers last week and 99 on hand for this week

From the Newport Daily News, July 18, 1934



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

Week of July 16

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.

Joseph Martin, Jr., and Louis Wright have gone on a trip by motorcycle to Chicago, where they will visit the World's Fair.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 14, 1959

A proposal to convert Marsh Meadow in Jamestown into a town marina brought violent disapproval from persons interested in wild life conservation at the Jamestown Town Council meeting last night. A report from the Planning Board ... asserted that the marshland is of practically no use and its only potential would be as a harbor.

From the Newport Daily News, July 18, 1959

Receipts of the Jamestown Bridge during the four days of the Newport Jazz festival this year were \$407.15 more than the comparable 1958 festival days. ... On July 5 a new all time high of 5,130 crossings were recorded for a single day.

25 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, July 17, 1984

Water. Its scarcity, its abundance and its quality was the topic of discussion at the Town Council meeting Monday night. Meeting as Water and Sewer Commissioners, the

Council listened to complaints of flooded basements and of no tap water in Beavertail. They also discussed, but did not make a decision, on the much-talked about analysis of the town's water system.

From the Newport Daily News, July 19, 1984

Residents of Jamestown Shores told the Jamestown Design Study Committee Wednesday they are unhappy that more traffic will be funneled through their neighborhood under the Committee's recommended connector road plan. More than 150 people crammed into the Jamestown Recreation Center for the final public hearing on the concept for the road that will connect the island's two bridges.

15 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, July 14, 1994

Outside water use for residents hooked into municipal water lines has been restricted to odd and even days to conserve water in North Pond reservoir, the town's main water supply.

Jamestown's state senator has been reassured by Gov. Bruce Sundlun that the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority will begin negotiations over the size of a users fee it will pay the town in lieu of taxes it owns on the island.

10 years ago

From the Jamestown Press, July 15, 1999

Narragansett Avenue is about to get a new look, but this time, unlike earlier this summer in the filming of Jim Carrey's "Me, Myself, and Irene," the look will be permanent. After six years of waiting for federal "ice tea" (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) funds, the town was notified last winter that it qualifies for a half million dollars to enhance Narragansett Avenue. Last month, an award-winning design firm, Gates, Leighton & Assoc., was hired to develop a plan.