



A busy weekend

There was something for everyone at the 78th annual Summer Fair hosted by St. Matthew's church on Saturday. Above, folks shopped for a good read at the fair's used book table. Meanwhile, the Conanicut Island Art Association's annual Craft Show was underway at the Recreation Center. Those artists who set up shop outside the rec hall, below, had a great view of Narragansett Bay.

Photos by Jeff McDonough



School committee approves new director of student services

By Eileen M. Daly

The Jamestown School Committee held a short meeting last Wednesday evening during which it approved the appointment of Gwenn Spence as director of student services. Spence will replace Dr. Robert Fricklas, who retired at the end of the last school year.

Spence comes to Jamestown from the Exeter-West Greenwich system, where she served as assistant director of student services for the past two years. Prior to that, she was the director of special education in Westonka, Minn. for six years. Spence and her husband relocated to Rhode Island two years ago when her husband, a golf professional, accepted a position at Carnegie Abbey Club in Portsmouth.

Spence said that she'd like to take some time to get to know the system before integrating what she brings to the table. "This system is not broken," Spence said. She emphasized a spirit of collaboration and a sense of community. "We're all about the kids," she said. "Not just special education, but general education as well. I am a wholehearted believer in inclusion."

Spence went on to say that in a perfect world, early intervention would prevent the need for special education, but until that occurs, her goal is still to get to children early and to provide consistency and safety for ev-

ery child. "Of course we care for the whole child, but we must be specific to what the impact is at school. That is what we are charged with," Spence said. Her energy and optimism were palpable as she stated her desire that every child has equal access to curriculum. "We owe all of these children," she said.

Spence will conclude her service with Exeter-West Greenwich on July 21, and will assume her role here in Jamestown the following day.

Other business

In other business: The committee approved Christine Antidormi as speech and language pathologist and recalled Jamie Ordway as Grade 2 teacher for 2009-10.

The committee also approved the special education staffing policy by unanimous vote.

There were no meetings held for the school improvement teams, the Special Education Local Advisory Committee (SELAC), the facilities committee or the Southern Rhode Island Collaborative Committee (SORICO).

In legislative business, Chairwoman Cathy Kaiser reported that the state House of Representatives will reconvene on July 28 to take up unfinished business, including the bill that would automatically extend teacher contracts in the event of a bargaining impasse. The *Newport Daily*

News ran an editorial warning against passage of the bill, accompanied by a letter written by Kaiser, warning against passage of amendments to the bill that provide for mandatory binding arbitration, Kaiser said.

Regarding policy, Supt. Marcia Lukon polled the committee about the desirability of having a policy on charging out-of-district students tuition to attend Jamestown Schools. The committee agreed that such a policy should be carefully researched and possible ramifications should be considered.

High school review

Principal Kathy Almanzor, who is also chairman of the High School Review Committee, asked the school committee to provide a deadline for the review report. Chairwoman Kaiser explained that while the research and observations can be compiled by October or November, the group cannot fully weigh the information and make recommendations until it has tuition figures from both the Narragansett and North Kingstown communities. The North Kingstown tuition figure will be contingent on fall negotiations.

The next meeting of the Jamestown School Committee will be on Aug. 19. All meetings start at 7 p.m. in the Lawn School library.

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