



# JAMESTOWN PRESS

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Almost 200 Providence College freshmen visited Jamestown last Saturday for a day of community service. Here, volunteers paint the fence at the community playground.

Photo courtesy of Carol Crafts

## Jamestown residents to launch volunteer service corps

By Phil Zahodiakin

A group of Jamestown residents will unveil a volunteer service corps during the upcoming biennial volunteer night sponsored by the Friends of the Jamestown Library. But a group of Providence College students has already provided a glimpse of the benefits that a cadre of volunteers could regularly provide to the island.

The 188 students and their advisors descended on Jamestown last Saturday. Guided by 10 local residents, they broke into teams that tackled a variety of projects throughout town. One of the teams pulled weeds along the library playground fence, whose graffiti-splattered panels were then painted in alternating green, blue and yellow pastels.

Half the team assigned to Hull Cove scoured debris from the beach, while the other half dragged brush and brambles out of a freshly laid path that will serve as the footprint for a boardwalk that the Conservation Commission will build. Other teams tackled gardening and massive clean-up jobs at Potter Cove, the town's animal holding pens and the police station.

The new volunteer service corps is the inspiration of Town Council member Barbara Szepatowski, who has decided to pursue a variety of endeavors rather than seek re-election to the council. It was her chance encounter with Sharon Hay, a Jamestown resident and Providence College dean of student programming, that led to the day of

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## Council approves rate increase for water and sewer

By Phil Zahodiakin

During a special Sept. 8 meeting on town, water and sewer matters, the Town Council approved an increase in water and sewer rates, while deferring the controversial issue of distributing future increases among all island residents.

For now, connected residents using an average amount of water will see a 10 to 11 percent increase in their water and sewer bills – with ongoing debt service being the primary justification for both hikes.

Connected water users who draw large amounts of water will

likely see their water and sewer bills jump 15 percent.

Council President Julio DiGiando observed that the water rate increase "may seem like a lot, but we were plagued by chronic leaks, and now we have a better system that we have to pay for. This is nothing new."

The improvements were confirmed by Stephen Goslee, director of the Public Works Department, who added that leaks have decreased from "one a day to one a year."

Nevertheless, the council in-

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## Proposed zoning ordinance will create non-conforming lots

By Tyler Will

After a heated discussion during its Sept. 2 meeting, the Jamestown Planning Commission voted to keep lot width restrictions in the zoning ordinance proposal – changing the status of 19 existing lots to non-conforming, unless changes are made to the ordinance in the future.

The proposal calls for maximum lot widths of 96 feet in the downtown district and 120 feet in the CL district. Between the two zones, 19 lots – including Jamestown Town Hall – exceed those maximums.

The intensity of the discussion rose to such a level that some commission members questioned

the principal role of the Planning Commission, and what legal abilities it has.

The width restriction measure would make it difficult for property owners to buy an adjacent lot and build one building on the two lots. While a land owner could get a variance from the commission, Commissioner Michael Smith acknowledged that the commission has not always been open to giving them.

"I have been to the Planning Commission for variances, I have sat on the Planning Commission and granted variances, and I have seen how people were brow beaten

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## Island school officials prepare for impact of swine flu

By Dara Chadwick

As the nation braces for a potential outbreak of the H1N1 virus – commonly known as "swine flu" – Jamestown schools have taken a calm approach that relies on a simple concept: Common sense.

"If you have a fever, stay home," said Renie Sullivan, certified school nurse teacher for both the Lawn Avenue and Melrose schools. "And stay home until you're fever free for 24 hours without Tylenol or Motrin."

The "home until fever free for 24 hours" guideline comes directly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But Sullivan hopes it will help ease the burden for working parents who might have otherwise had to worry about finding several days' worth of child care.

Parents, she said, will play an important role in helping to prevent the spread of H1N1, should it appear in Jamestown's schools. A letter went out to parents of all Jamestown students this week, according to Jamestown Schools Superintendent Marcia Lukon, who added that she will participate in a weekly conference call for superintendents throughout the state. The department's Web site will also be updated regularly and should an emergency occur, the schools will use the automated ConnectEd system to quickly get information to parents.

"If a child is going to be out sick, parents should call me at the school because we are tracking daily absences," Sullivan said.

It isn't necessary, however, to confirm that a child does, in fact,

have the H1N1 virus.

Anyone who comes in to see the nurse with symptoms of 'influenza-like illness' – fever, sore throat, etc. – will be sent home until they are fever free for 24 hours, she said.

Dr. Joseph England of Jamestown Family Practice said that no H1N1 testing will be done, other than for people who develop complications and have to be hospitalized. Otherwise, he said, "fluids, rest and stay at home" is the best course of action for those who develop flu-like symptoms.

England added that the H1N1 virus itself is "not necessarily any more pathogenic or virulent than the seasonal flu." In fact, he said, the mortality rate from swine flu is currently actually less than that of seasonal flu. It is making head-

lines, however, because "a lot of deaths have been children. Young people are dying and you usually don't see that," he said.

Approximately 30,000 people die each year from the seasonal flu virus, he said.

Sullivan said she expects the state to begin offering an H1N1 vaccine sometime in October.

"Schools are going to have clinics set up," England said, adding that the vaccine will not be mandatory. "It will be offered to all children, but it's still going to be the parent's call."

As for risks associated with the new H1N1 vaccine, England said the risk level is likely about the same as that of any other flu vaccine.

"These types of vaccines have been made every year for decades

now," he said.

Currently, vaccinations are recommended for pregnant women, those with certain illnesses, such as diabetes and asthma, people caring for babies under 6 months old, and children and young adults ages 6 months to 24 years, according to the U.S. Dept. of Health.

Preventing the spread of the flu virus involves many of the basic illness-prevention techniques we all learned back in kindergarten, Sullivan said. "Wash your hands, and cough into the crook of your elbow," she said. "Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze."

Schools have been equipped with an alcohol gel hand sanitizing system, and students and staff

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