



# JAMESTOWN PRESS

www.JamestownPress.com

PRST STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 5

Rural Customer  
Jamestown, RI 02835

Volume 22, Issue 22

A weekly newspaper serving Conanicut Island

Thursday, September 24, 2009

## Study grant concerns Town Council

By Phil Zahodiakin

A state grant for an inventory of historic properties on Shoreby Hill sparked debate during the Sept. 21 meeting of the Town Council. The Jamestown Planning Commission last summer recommended historic district status for Shoreby Hill, where reaction from residents has been divided. The debate led a council member to raise a red flag over a recent \$10,000 grant from the state Historic Preservation Commission.

The grant is intended to fund a study to determine the number of Shoreby Hill houses that qualify as historic. The tally would then be used as part of further council discussions on the merits of nominating Shoreby Hill for historic status. However, council member Bob Sutton said that the wording of the grant seemed to imply that the money has been awarded in support of a nomination, as well as a survey.

"The record should be clear that we have not agreed to nominate Shoreby Hill" for historic status, he said.

Sutton also noted that he has received "many phone calls" from Shoreby Hill residents opposed to historic status for their neighborhood, although Council President Julio DiGiando said he has not received "any calls" about the issue. DiGiando agreed that a nomination

See "Council" on page 10



Knitters gather each Sunday afternoon at the Jamestown library. In front, from left, are Leah Kapoor, Peg Avery and Carolyn Leys. In back, from left, are Susan Burke, Debbie Murphy and Julia Montminy.

Photo by Caitlin Downing

## Group knits friendship with creativity

By Stacy Jones

Most days, the children's room at the Jamestown Philomenian Library is filled with a high-energy vibe of storytelling and constant motion. But on Sunday afternoons, the atmosphere changes to what can only be described as a collective group exhale as an air of serenity occupies the space. This is where a local knitting group meets to create, discuss, learn and relax.

The knitting group is a free-flowing assembly of women from various backgrounds, ages and professions, all of whom happen to love to knit. Members, a loosely used term, come and

go. Some attend faithfully, while others visit to get advice on a project or simply stop by when they are in town. But the one constant that binds this group together is the power of knitting to offer something not often found in a world of congested commutes, text messages and multitasking: Calm.

"It's like a yoga-type thing," said Debbie Murphy, a retired Jamestown elementary school teacher who's been involved in the group for three years. "It's stress-free, something you can

See "Knitting" on page 16

## Residents discuss historic district

By Tyler Will

Approximately 15 people – mostly residents of Lower Shoreby Hill – attended a meeting at the Jamestown library on Sept. 20 to clarify information about the possible creation of a historic zoning district in the Lower Shoreby Hill neighborhood, a move that could happen in about a year, according to Betty Hubbard.

Many in attendance shared enthusiastic sentiments about creating a historic district in Lower Shoreby Hill, which supporters say would help preserve the character of the neighborhood.

"It is not snobbism, it is not elitism, it is we love the island of Jamestown," said Mary Pat Ryan. "I wish there was a way we could get that spirit out there, that is why we are doing this."

Other residents admitted that the community has little power to enforce rules to which the trustees have agreed. Some residents have been intruding upon bylaws with actions like building fences in front yards, when only rear-yard fences are allowed. Other violations include building houses in sizes that are out of character with the area, residents said.

"They are unable to enforce community bylaws due to cost of litigation," said Shelley Widoff, a Lower Shoreby Hill resident. "They are deferring that authority to the town."

Some residents cited concerns

See "Shoreby" on page 11

## Islander confirmed as U.S. attorney for Rhode Island



Peter Neronha

By Phil Zahodiakin

The U.S. Senate last week confirmed a fourth-generation Jamestown, Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter Neronha, as the next U.S. attorney for the state of Rhode Island.

Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse and Jack Reed had recommended Neronha to President Obama, who nominated him on Aug. 1. Shortly after his Sept. 16 approval by the Senate, Neronha took the oath of office – marking the latest milestone in what has been a distinguished career.

Neronha was not specifically drawn to the legal profession in his youth. Rather, he says, "It was clear during my [North Kingstown] high

school years that my skills weren't leading me toward a career in math or science, so it seemed that it would have to be something in the humanities, and the law was an interesting possibility. When I went to [Boston College], I paid more attention to the idea because they had a law school there, and I felt I had the analytical abilities a lawyer needs, and the thought of going into court and trying cases appealed to me."

Neronha is married and has two children: Zachary, 12, and Joshua, 9. During his youth, he said, he wasn't "pressured" to excel in school, but neither was he left to his own devices.

"My parents placed a major emphasis on hard work and integrity,"

he said. "My mother [Veronika] emigrated to the U.S. after World War II, and I have this memory of my mother and I reading together when I was a young child, so my mother, to some extent, was learning the English language as I was learning it."

Neronha's father, Monte, went to Rogers High School, then to Korea. He returned after the war and started working on the Jamestown ferry.

"What my father really instilled in me was his work ethic, and he set a very good example for integrity," Neronha said. "I really admire my father for that."

"A week I will never forget"

When he started Boston College Law School, public service was in the back of Neronha's mind. He knew he wanted to try cases, but his intention wasn't necessarily to become a prosecutor – with plenty of student loans to pay off after his 1989 graduation, he knew he'd need to get a job quickly. He was hired by the Boston firm of Goodwin Proctor, LLP, and worked there for seven years.

"We represented large corporate clients, mainly in their defense," he said. "There were 400 attorneys there when I started – they have 800 now – so it was the first- or second-largest firm in Boston. It

See "Neronha" on page 18