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Artistic Director Mary Wright (foreground) talks with the cast of "Willy Wonka" during rehearsal Monday evening. Enthusiastic reviews are expected when the Jamestown Community Theatre's autumn musical production opens this Friday evening at the Jamestown Recreation Center.

Photo by Jeff McDonough

'Willy Wonka' a sweet musical for JCT

By Stacy Jones

When Mary Wright and Patty Vandal founded the Jamestown Community Theatre in 1991, they had a small budget and a simple goal: Create an activity for kids to keep them off the streets.

The request came to Patty from the local Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force and the group's first production was "Peter Pan."

Today, the nonprofit's budget still doesn't rival that of Trinity Rep, but it has evolved to embrace not just the growth of children, but adults and the community as well. Its latest production, "Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory" opens this Friday with an all-island cast

and crew ranging in age from 7 to 81.

"There is talent everywhere," said Wright, JCT's artistic director. "It's very important for all people to have different outlets to express their strengths, or to find their strengths."

Wright, a longtime elementary and middle-school teacher, is originally from New York City. While living there, she took a stab at an acting career. She enrolled in acting classes, appeared in an off-Broadway play, and had a small role in the daytime drama "The

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Police called on election letter

Jamestown police are investigating an anonymous campaign flyer that was distributed last week just before the town's Nov. 3 election.

The unsigned one-page letter, mailed during the weekend prior to the election, claimed that two candidates running for Town Council – Bob Sutton and Mike Smith – backed a plan to tax residents with wells and septic systems for debt on the town sewer bonds.

The letter urged residents not to vote for Sutton and Smith, two veterans of island politics.

Sutton, who served as Jamestown's town administrator for 17 years, was running for re-election to the council. Smith had served on the Town Council a number of years ago and is currently a member of the Jamestown Planning Commission.

The two men were the only candidates defeated in their bids for council seats.

Sutton and Smith told the *Press* that they have filed complaints with the Jamestown police.

Island police are investigating whether the unsigned letter violated state election law. State statute requires that all political advertising, posters and circulars be signed by the individuals responsible.

"I have no interest in overturning the election," Sutton said Tuesday. "This type of campaign tactic has been going on for several elections and it's time to put a stop to it. This shouldn't be a part of the community election process."

Smith told the *Press* that he also did not want the election overturned. But, Smith said, last-minute campaign smears are in direct opposition to his belief that local elections are all about fair and open debate.

Officer Derek Carlino of the Jamestown Police Department is leading the investigation. He would only confirm that a complaint has been filed and said he wouldn't comment further because it is an open investigation.

When asked about the Attorney General's role, Officer Carlino said that if a charge is made, it would be a misdemeanor. He does not believe the state Attorney General will become involved in the case.

Any charges would be prosecuted by the town solicitor, Officer Carlino said.

Cliff Largess honored at Veterans Day ceremony

By Stacy Jones

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was a defining moment for many Americans – including former islander Clifton Largess.

"The attack on Pearl Harbor changed the course of everything: History, the future, attitudes," said Largess, a retired Navy captain who was involved in aviation combat in World War II and the Korean War.

The attack certainly put a spin on the life Largess had planned.

Life, he said, became very interesting after Pearl Harbor.

"People in my category, seniors in college, weren't paying any attention to the war in Europe," or to Japan's maneuver-

ings, he said. Largess was a student at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., at the time. "We felt isolated. We had these big oceans, the Atlantic, the Pacific, and we felt we would never get involved."

Dec. 7, 1941, altered that thinking.

The surprise attack united the country, all focused on one goal, said Largess, who moved to North Kingstown five years ago. "By the end of the week, all my classmates and friends were committed to going into the services."

He chose the Navy, where he

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Cliff Largess was honored Wednesday during the annual Veterans Day observance at East Ferry. Largess, who lived in Jamestown for many years before moving across the bridge to Wickford, saw action in World War II as a Navy pilot.

Photo by Jeff McDonough