

Island Opinion

• EDITORIAL •

Reasons to give thanks in 2009

Tomorrow, we'll gather around the dinner table in the company of dear family and friends to partake in an annual feast. These homespun traditions are varied, but at some point, we may pause and remember those who observed the first Thanksgiving.

Historians believe that it was after the harvest of 1621 when a ragtag group of settlers gathered – just a few miles from our island of Conanicut – to celebrate their first harvest in a new land. These early colonists and the Wampanoag Indians joined together in a feast. In fact, it was the Wampanoags who were largely responsible for teaching the Pilgrims how to farm, and thus survive, in the new world.

The Pilgrims had survived a hard voyage across the Atlantic and their first winter. They were now preparing for their second season of cold. They gave thanks for the bounty that nature, coupled with their agrarian toil, had yielded. The land that they had worked had hopefully provided what they would need to eat during the long winter ahead. Little did they realize that the New England climate could be so unforgiving and brutal in the months to come.

Of course, there is much myth and legend surrounding those Pilgrims. But that moment of thanks has had an everlasting impact on our culture and society. Sixty-eight years ago, our Congress officially set aside Thanksgiving as a national holiday and thus we now break from work on the fourth Thursday in November to continue this tradition of feasting to give thanks.

Today, Thanksgiving serves as the opening kick-off to the holiday season, an electronic-fueled frenzy of consumerism and commercialism that dominates our world. Those early settlers could never have imagined the Thanksgiving that we celebrate. But then we would probably not recognize Thanksgiving – if there is one – some 200 years from now.

The principle of giving thanks remains the same in 2009 as it did in 1621. There is much for which we can give thanks and indeed, we should.

This Thanksgiving, remember to stop and count your blessings. The staff at the *Jamestown Press* wishes all of our readers and advertisers a safe and enjoyable holiday.

Happy Thanksgiving!

– Jeff McDonough

This week on the web at

JamestownPress.com

What do you really know about Thanksgiving?
Take the Thanksgiving Quiz.

Question: Will your family serve turkey on Thanksgiving?

Video: A trailer from Kettlebottom Productions about the Jamestown Classic.

R.I.P.

Dwight S. Smith
1949 - 2009

Thank you for your support

Once again, I find myself humbled by the extent of your confidence in and support of my run for Town Council. Thank you very much for your votes and your well wishes.

I promise to continue my service during the next three years with the same sense of integrity and character that has won your backing. While some of the members of the new council view my style of arbitration and fairness as a flaw or weakness, I will continue to conduct myself in a manner that will respect the rights of others to express opinions that differ from mine. I will persist in working for what is best

for the town and to help maintain our beautiful and pristine setting.

The Democratic Town Committee of Jamestown is to be commended, once again, for developing a slate of viable candidates and supporting them during the campaign and through Election Day. Many thanks for your endeavors.

Unfortunately, the field of candidates for this election was limited. It would be wonderful to see some of the younger members of our island community become more interested and involved in our electoral process. The participation of

a "new guard" would insure that Jamestown continues to flourish and grow in ways that help it to maintain its standing as an "island paradise."

Michael G. White
Town councilor
Jamestown

Put your family on the village tree

Did you know that each of the golden bell ornaments on the Jamestown Village Christmas Tree has a name on it?

Over the years, Jamestowners have purchased bells to help defray the cost

of the Jamestown tree lighting ceremony. For \$25, you and your family can be on the tree.

This is a great Christmas gift! If you would like one, please give Mark Baker a call at 423-9621.

Mark Baker
Jamestown

Wind turbine an important decision

Mr. Basso's letter about the Wind Energy Committee's presentation last week reveals his doubts about the wisdom of constructing a wind turbine on our island. As members of the committee that sponsored the presentation – and that

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• LETTERS •



This week in Island history

Compiled by Sue Maden

Week of November 25

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.

100 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 24, 1909

The no-school signal was rung this morning for the smaller children and the one-session signal this noon for those who went to school, so that the last day before Thanksgiving vacation was rather abbreviated. Neither the public nor the parochial schools will have sessions tomorrow or Friday.

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 29, 1909

Arrangements have been made to open the unused north school house as a waiting room for the school children who congregate in that vicinity daily to take the conveyance which brings them to the school in the village.

75 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 28, 1934

By the close vote of 110 to 100, the special financial town meeting held in Jamestown Nov. 24 authorized the sale of 109 parcels of land for failure to pay taxes. It was specified that the sale price be at least the taxes due, plus expenses and interest. The sum of \$6,000 was voted, 96 to 21, for unemployed relief in order to qualify for state and federal grants.

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 30, 1934

(At the school committee meeting) bills were ordered paid as listed. The tuition bill of Rogers High pupils for the first term was \$3,189.38. The committee commented on the better marks as shown by the Rogers first report cards of the year, and that fewer pupils showed lack of application than last year. ...The committee studied figures recently released by the State Education Service, showing per capita (pupil) cost per year. Based on the total average membership of all Jamestown pupils, both grades and high, Jamestown spent \$86.18 per pupil in the school year 1933-34, and stands eighth in a list of 39 towns and cities in the state. Jamestown dropped from fifth to eighth place.

50 years ago

From the Newport Daily News, Nov. 24, 1959

The possibility of assessing intangible taxes on residents having large investments in bonds, stocks and securities was considered at a meeting of the Jamestown town council last night.

Councilmen expressed concern at the increase in traffic accidents on the island and a proposal was discussed for an 8 p.m. curfew in the Ft. Getty area, which appears to offer a challenge to youths. The police department was directed to prosecute violators on this town property to the fullest extent of the law, and to intensify its patrol of the area.

Referring to the proposed Newport-Jamestown bridge, (the council president) pointed out that discussion on such a span has been going on for years but said Jamestown would have little to say about it, because planning would be at a state level. He said a Jamestown representative should sit on the Bridge Authority.

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