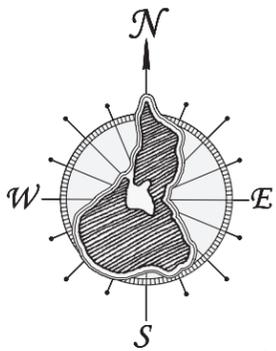
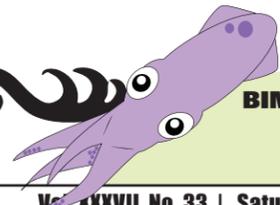


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Vol. XXXVII No. 33 | Saturday, August 18, 2007

Illegal dorm to go to court

Council learns state law already provides authority to limit liquor service areas

By Pippa Jack

A downtown home that was cited two summers ago for being illegally used as a rooming house is once again overcrowded with summer workers, say town officials.

The Town Council heard at a Wednesday, August 15, meeting that a recent inspection, triggered by numerous complaints from neighbors and from the staff of the nearby Early Learning Center, found three people in one bedroom and four in another at the Old Harbor Meadow home. Both rooms are too small for that many people, according to health and safety laws, said Minimum Housing Inspector Don Thimble. He guessed that two other bedrooms, locked at the time of the inspection, are also overcrowded.

Building Official Marc Tillson, in a memo to the council, recommended legal action.

The council voted to authorize the town solicitor to begin legal proceedings against the owner of the house, Maria Leone, in state Superior Court. Members of the Leone family own the Aldo's bakery and restaurant complex and other businesses in town.

In the summer of 2005, complaints led to the house's first inspection, which found 23 people living in the house, and extra walls thrown up to create more bedrooms. The town issued a notice of violation, and Leone initially appealed, but then withdrew the appeal that fall.

Now, said Thimble, the makeshift walls

See Town Council, Page 32



BUOY SWAP—Crewmembers from the Coast Guard vessel *Juniper* pull the BIS — "Block Island Sound" — buoy from the ocean 5 miles southwest of the island on Tuesday, Aug. 14. On deck to the right was its refurbished replacement, which went into the water soon afterwards.

PHOTO BY PETER VOSKAMP

Replacing the road signs of the sea

By Peter Voskamp

As the recent bridge collapse in Minnesota made all too clear, the public relies heavily on government-maintained infrastructure for its transportation needs. It might even be said that such infrastructure is taken for granted — until it is either not there or fails — sometimes leading to disaster.

This is true not only of the nation's highways, but also for its driving lanes at sea, where commercial, civilian and government vessels depend on navigational aides to direct them safely from point "A" to point "B." People traveling to and from Block Island are accustomed to seeing navigational buoys — some red, some green, some with bells, some with horns — bobbing in the ocean at differ-

ent corners around the island. They seem as fixed as a natural feature.

But buoys, chained as they are to the sea floor, are subject to all the extremes that nature can throw at them — not to mention the occasional collision with a boat. They have to be maintained, or the sea they aim to tame would ultimately claim them.

That maintenance is the job of the U.S. Coast Guard, which is charged with replacing buoys every six years and conducting check-ups every three.

This week the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Juniper* arrived off the shores of Block Island to replace one buoy and to take a look at another two.

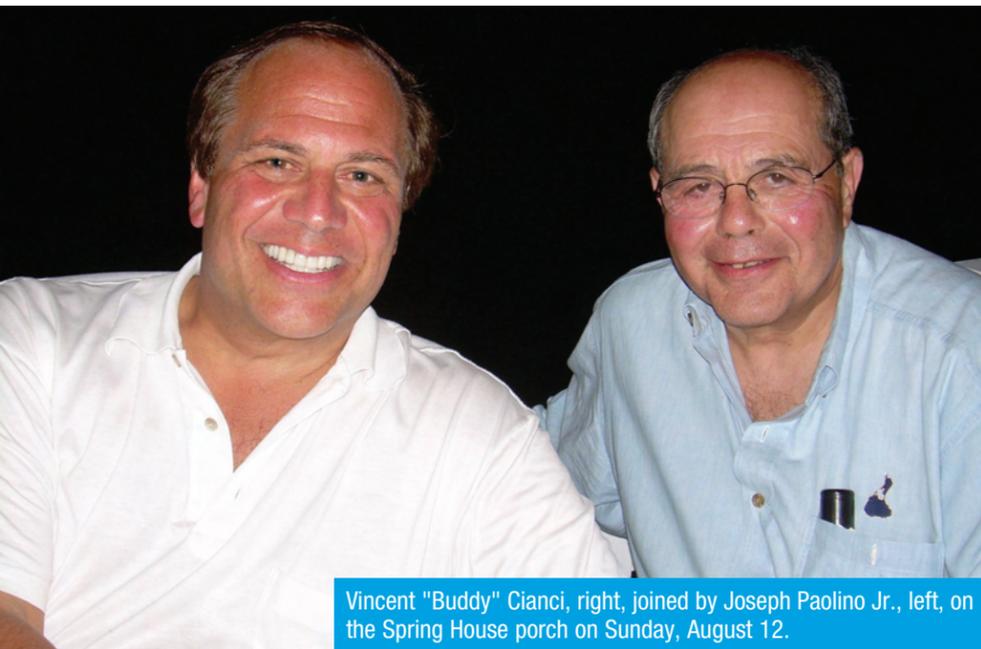
The 225-foot *Juniper*, based in Newport, carries a complement of



Commander Rick Wester of the Coast Guard vessel *Juniper*.

eight officers and 37 enlisted crew. Commissioned in early 1996, the vessel had a trial by fire as part of the recovery team after TWA Flight 800 exploded south of Long Island in July 1996. The

See Buoy, Page 7



Vincent "Buddy" Cianci, right, joined by Joseph Paolino Jr., left, on the Spring House porch on Sunday, August 12.

'There's no bitterness. Life is life.'

Buddy Cianci, on vacation here, grants first post-prison interview to the Block Island Times

By Scott Greenan

Vincent "Buddy" Cianci, the charismatic and controversial former mayor of Providence, who recently returned to the Ocean State from the Federal Correctional Institution in Fort Dix, N.J., sums up his feelings in a few words as he relaxes with friends on the deck of the Spring House Hotel: "I'm happy to be home."

It was a warm Sunday evening, August 12, and Cianci was giving his first interview after five years in prison. Why here? "I have always loved Block

Island," he says with a smile. "You represent great assets here. Block Island is the unsung hero of the Rhode Island economy. We don't celebrate it as we should."

In a celebratory mood, Cianci was wary of giving away too much about what he plans to do next. Radio will be part of the picture, he says, and contracts have been signed. On a more personal note, prison taught him to be "more tolerant." (On Thursday, August 16, Cianci called Providence radio sta-

See Cianci, Page 34

Buoy

Continued from Page 1

Juniper also took part in the recovery of the Egypt Air 990 crash off Nantucket in October 1999, and was in New York the day after 9-11 to help with operations there.

As Commander Rick Wester explains, the responsibility of the nation's buoys used to belong to the Buoy and Lighthouse Service, which was absorbed into the Coast Guard in 1939.

As a nod to that service, the Coast Guard keeps the buoy tenders' hulls black, and maintains the practice of naming the ships after trees or bushes. There were two previous tenders named *Juniper*, one built in 1905 and another in 1939.

There are 16 such vessels in the Coast Guard fleet, some stationed in Guam, Hawaii and Alaska.

Wester also recently served onboard *Juniper's* sister ship, the *Walnut*, stationed in Iraq.

The buoy tender's jurisdiction runs from New York to Cape Cod, including waterways around Bridgeport and New Haven, Conn. The vessel is responsible for 214 buoys.

Buoy basics

Tuesday, *Juniper* was replacing the BIS — "Block Island Sound" — light buoy 5 miles off the southwest side of the island, with a refurbished one topped with a four-mile Carmanah LED light. The last time the old buoy had been inspected was in January 2006; it was built in 1962, and the opinion onboard was that it might be the end of the line for it given its age — meaning no more refurbishing.

The buoy is 26 feet tall from top to bottom and weighs 11,800 pounds (the largest light buoys are 35 feet tall). There was 180 feet of chain connected to it, though it sits in 50 feet of water.

Despite a buoy's weight — and the 12,500-pound block of concrete holding it to the bottom — these giant plugs of steel can shift position at sea. Wester says that sometimes they are dragged by barges. At other times, the chain may become knotted, shortening its length, causing the buoy to actually "hop" in large seas.

Wester says that many improvements have been made to the buoy lighting systems. Fifty-percent of the nation's red and green buoy lights have been converted to compact, solar-powered LED light systems, which are resilient in the elements and require far less maintenance than previous lamps (Wester said that a buoy sank in the Persian Gulf for 36 hours, and the light still worked upon its retrieval).

Currently the LEDs are being installed on three- and four-mile lights (meaning mariners would be able to see them from that distance). The six-mile white and yellow lights are still reliant on a lamp armed with a kind of sprocket holding six indi-

vidual bulbs; if one fails, the sprocket turns and the next bulb slides into place. In an angry ocean, they are not as fail-safe as the newer LEDs being installed.

Since leaving the umbrella of the Department of Transportation and becoming part of the Department for Homeland Security, the Coast Guard's role has changed.

While 40 percent of the *Juniper's* time will remain devoted to aids of navigation, the remaining 60 percent will be aimed more at law enforcement, such as fisheries checks.

The more reliable LEDs on the buoys will help this transition because they require fewer visits: buoys will now be visited every three years instead of two, as had been the protocol. Wester asks that all mariners report any and all damage they observe to navigational aids as soon as possible.

The process

The *Juniper* pulled up to the old BIS buoy, taking it on her starboard side. Crews on the working deck — made of those with green, blue and white helmets (denoting levels of experience in increasing order) lassoed the buoy and attached a crane hook to the top.

Once the crane hoisted the buoy aboard and the crew secured it to the deck with "gripes," those in green helmets went to work scraping the accumulated mussel growth from below the water line. The solar panels for the old lamp were missing, perhaps torn off by an outrigger on a large fishing boat. Other crewmembers — the "chain humpers" — helped usher the rest of the chain out of the ocean, measured it for wear, and eventually brought the mooring "rock" to the surface.

On this day the "rock" was brought on deck because the clasp connecting it to the chain was wrapped in metal fishing wire. The crew had to be sure that the clasp was still securely fastened. Once they determined it was, back in it went.

The new BIS buoy was connected in short order and sent over the side for its six-year tenure, lighting the way for those entering Block Island Sound.

The reporter would like to extend thanks to the crew and captain of the *Juniper*, as well as to Bosun's Mate Matt Oliveira, BM 2 Chad Gagnon and Seaman Apprentice Joe Hinds for the ride out from the Block Island Coast Guard Station.



The 4-mile Carmanah LED light atop of the refurbished BIS buoy.



The crew meet before the buoy retrieval operation to plan strategy. PHOTOS BY PETER VOSKAMP



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