Recent Long Island revaluation results in few property tax increases for homeowners

Interview by Mary Lois Wendell

The following interview was conducted online with Long Island’s Mark Green, who, as a selectman’s assistant, oversaw Long Island’s first property revaluation since the town seceded from Portland in 1993.

1. So Long Island recently went through a revaluation process. What was the outcome?

The outcome actually surprised us. While there certainly are some folks who may not like their new valuations, for the most part, the actual taxes to be paid on properties with dwellings on them did not change much at all from amounts being paid now. The valuations on all properties soared as they have on all coastal properties. The estimated “mill rate” is projected to drop next fall when the new valuations take place from the present $21.56 to approximately $5.50 keeping tax bills, with a few exceptions, fairly stable. It would be hard to imagine anyone complaining that they are being driven off the island because of taxes on their homes, cottages, or camps.

The stability of residential tax bills in spite of revaluation, was please see REVALUATION, page 6.

NOW THAT’S A GAEL!

Mike Langan, Chairman of the new Peaks Island Council, expresses thanks to Dave and Jane Adams for the gift he holds in the above picture: “This will go down as the biggest gavel in history,” Langanella said.

The new Peaks Island Council serves as a voice for islanders


Photo by Chris Hoppin

Groundhog Day cruise a hit

By Chris Hoppin

More than 125 Islanders and mainlanders enjoyed a midwinter Groundhog Day cruise with the Bay Mist Ferry on Casco Bay February 2. The cruise, a special event planned by the Casco Bay Island Transit District’s marketing committee to have some winter fun while highlighting the Casco Bay Line’s charter and party potential year-round, included visits to all of the islands served by the Ferry Line. The Bay Mist left Portland at 6 pm and made stops at Peaks, Great Diamond, Long, Chebeague and Cliff Islands before returning to the mainland by the same route. A scrumptious dinner by Peaks Island’s Dockyard Pub, great dance music by DJ Patrick Daniels and special entertainment by Islanders added to the festive event.

Photo by Chris Hoppin

Increase in vandalism threatens Battery Steele, heightens fire danger to nearby island properties

By Cynthia Mollers

Battery Steele has long been a popular hangout for islanders and visitors, but it was built by the US Army during World War II, along with Battery Craven, a control bunker, and several observation towers as part of the Portland Harbor Defenses. Its two large guns, measuring 16 inches, caused windows throughout the island to shatter when the guns were tested.

Battery Steele is also a frequent hot spot for underage drinking, minor vandalism and illegal dumping of household debris and yard waste.

According to Gary Fox, a Peaks Island Land Preserve (PILP) board member and a long-time volunteer land steward for the Battery, “Much of this activity has been more of a nuisance factor than an outright danger to the Battery or please see BATTERY, page 11.

Peaks Island Council to decide on use of $50,000 for transportation/parking

By Tom Bohan

The City of Portland allocated $50,000 to the Peaks Island Council for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, directing that it be spent on projects related to transportation and mainland parking for year-round islanders who are residents of the city. The City Manager has indicated that he intends to request a similar amount for the next fiscal year, and it is expected that it will not have the same restriction.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the City Council has found the funding to be something of a problem, led by the fiscal year was over, the council was up and running, and that it will not be possible to carry over any unspent funds to next year. The amount itself adds to the difficulties. It is a large sum, one requiring a great deal of thought in its disbursement, yet not nearly large enough to solve by itself any of the problems in the parking-transportation category. Interpreting “transportation” broadly, it has been suggested that it be used at least to start the process of improving the means by which islanders are transported onto the ferry boat. The present setup can be treacherous at low tide.

Another suggestion made by residents is that it be used to delay the painfully high cost of home heating on the Island. However, given the stated restrictions, it would seem that, at most, this could be done only through subsidizing fuel transport to the Island. Unfortunately, it is difficult to see how this would have much effect on the cost of heating oil, given that the ferry charge amounts to only pennies on the gallon transported by the large tanker trucks.

It would make more of a difference for those using wood for heat.

At any event, the talks go on and the public should feel free to approach any member of the Council with suggestions. Furthermore, written proposals are solicited and should be mailed to the Council at 303, Box 14, Peaks Island, Maine 04108. All letters to the Council will be answered in writing.

Tom Bohan is a member of the Peaks Island Council.

Inside

FREE

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2008
A community newspaper covering the islands of Casco Bay

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The Russians were here!

Skazka! Peaks Island looked like a Russian fairy tale the morning of December 14 when an early morning phone call to the Peaks Island Council announced "The Russians are coming!" It was a perfect day for a young delegation from Russia to set foot on this island with its half hour of frosty snow sparkling in the frigid sunshine under a cloudless blue sky. As the Russians were walking around the island, the visit was very brief. Peaks Island Councilors Tom Bohan, Kathryn Moxciil and Beth Tiffany, on the Council's first foray into citizen diplomacy, made the group feel right at home.

The four-person Education Delegation from North West Russia's Solovetsky Islands (also known as Solovki) and the city of Arkhangelsk was hosted during its weeklong visit to Maine by the Archangel Committee of Greater Portland and was funded by the Library of Congress's Open Content Program. The official Sister City relationship between Portland and Arkhangelsk dates back to 1998 and has done much to develop strong ties through visits such as this one.

The delegation included Solovetsky Vicer Mayor Natalia Yakubonova, the Solovetsky Museum director of education Tari Doritske, the director of an outdoor wooden architectural museum near Arkhangelsk Alexander Shayev and a business, media professional Elena Kaznetsov. The Solovetsky archipelago of 106 islands in the White Sea not far from the Arctic circle, with a year round population of 900 people, is a part of Russia that is trying to develop business and tourism after many years of being isolated. The Islands have a particularly notorious history being the site of the first gulag in Stalin's labor camp system. It is also boasts the gloriously restored 15th century Solovetsky Monastery and a unique northern ecosystem.

In addition to education, the group naturally was interested in life on Peaks. Our three Councilors did their best to answer the Russians' questions, and the Solovetsky visitors drew parallels with their own island existence. After getting acquainted over coffee, the Russians were taken on a car tour of the island, plus a walk through Bay State Steele. Despite the brevity of the visit, a good impression was made.

Follow-up contact with the Archangel Committee of Portland underscores our willingness to provide Peaks Island hospitality in the future when we hear that "The Russians are coming!"

An evening of song

On Fri., Jan. 18th, PITA member Doug Smith staged "an evening of whimsical entertainment" at the Brackett Church to benefit Peaks Island Tax Assistance. With "Madame Faith York" at the piano and the Fabulous Hanley Girls, Camille and Ellen, as his musical guest, Smith tried and succeeded! in driving away the winter blues with laughter, as he sang 16 humorous songs by Flanaders & Swann, Gilbert & Sullivan, John Prine, and others. Camille Hanley, 11, amazed the audience of about 50 with her powerful stage presence and singing of the song "Nothing" from 'A Chorus Line' and her sister, Ellen, 15, had them holding their sides with a hysterical monologue, delivered like a professional actress. Free coffee and desserts followed the show, and a good time was had by all, with PITA raising $240 toward helping islanders with their property tax burden. A number of those attending urged Smith repeat the performance, perhaps next summer, and PITA and Smith are considering just that!

The Fifth Maine

The Fifth Maine Regiment Museum recently received grants from the Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust and the Edward H. Davis Bicentennial Fund to support its Collections to Classrooms project. The goal of this project is to create "hands-on" activities and lesson plans that draw on the museum's photographs, documents and objects to teach students at the Peaks Island School about our community's history. It is designed to enhance and enrich the school's social studies curriculum. A previous grant from the Peaks Island Fund allowed the museum's educator, Patricia Estkoon, and curator, Kim Machacek, to develop and deliver activities for the fourth and fifth grade students. The new grants ensure that the project will continue for another year, in 2008 with additional activities for the students.

Deer management

The deer management program on Peaks, Cliff and great Diamond Islands has come to an end for this season, according to Mike Murray, Island Bason/administrator for Portland. Phil Bozenhard, retired state biologist and one of the hunters, reported the final count of 13 deer taken on Cliff Island, one deer taken on Great Diamond Island and eight deer taken on Peaks Island. In his report, there initially appeared to be quite a few deer on the islands, however as they were removed the deer activity became really scattered, much more than in past years. He said there are probably 6-10 deer on Cliff and 15-20 on Peaks. He added that the islands should be in good shape going into the spring barring any substantial movement from island to island.

The deer management project is an annual activity run by Portland in order to keep the number of deer on Peaks Island, the Diamonds and Cliff Island. The program is run by the Portland Department of Parks and Recreation and is supported by the Peaks Island Fund.

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89 Island Avenue Peaks Island Maine 04108 Phone: (207) 766-2508 Fax: (207) 766-2507

Email: lplante@maine.rr.com
Is car sharing for you?

Let’s face it, keeping a car on the mainland has always been something of a hardship for islanders, what with the expense of parking garages and the hassles of street parking. Now, with skyrocketing fuel costs and global warming at hand, it seems that the notion of a car in every garage is obsolete, a luxury we can’t afford anymore.

A number of people on Peaks Island have solved this riddle by sharing cars. Actually, they’ve been doing it for years, informally as a matter of course, the way you might lend your lawn mower to a neighbor. They came together more or less through friendship and need. But with only one car to the group they don’t take up much parking, and they contribute less to greenhouse gas emissions than they would if they each had a car.

There are basically three ways you can get into a car-sharing program: 1) Join an organization that owns a car you can use (usually for a fee), 2) use an on-line networking service that connects local people with similar needs, or 3) make arrangements with friends and neighbors to use their car from time to time.

Europeans got the idea of leaving cars around town for folks to use back in the 1990’s, and is now basically another form of public transportation there. In the US, systematic car-sharing got started more recently, first in Seattle, by a company called Flexcar, and then in 2000, when Zipcar was launched in Boston. It soon became the dominate car-share provider, and late last year both companies merged. They now operate under the Zipcar name.

Zipcar only operates in limited urban areas. Members pay $35 annually to join, and are given a “zipcard” that allows access to the car during the time it has been reserved. A gas card is also provided for purchasing gas, wiper fluid, etc., when needed. It’s been said that if you use the car for more than a few hours it can cost more than an average rental car, and that the minimal liability insurance Zipcar provides with the car may not cover the cost of damages in an accident.

Brian Kusler is the owner/operator of Open Car Network out of San Francisco, which provides cellular and security technology similar to Zipcar’s for individuals wanting to start a car-sharing service anywhere in the country. He has been involved in car-sharing since 2003, and has seen a sharp increase in public demand in the last 2 years. Several property developers in the Portland area (he couldn’t tell me who) are interested in his product because they want to include a car-sharing program in their building designs in order to satisfy zoning requirements for parking.

Kusler says this is a popular trend across the country. A condominium developer in Florida has established a fleet of Cadillacs for its retiree population, and a small apartment building in San Francisco has one Cooper Mini that all the tenants share. They are young professionals, and apparently view the car-sharing lifestyle (and the Cooper) as “very sexy.”

The biggest hurdle for anyone trying to start a car-share like this is getting insurance. “Ask people if they’ve looked into insurance,” Kusler says, “and if they haven’t, I tell them to come back in 3 months. Getting the car and hooking the computer up takes maybe a week. But getting the insurance is where it gets scary.”

Craig’s List, Local.com and eRideShare are three on-line networking services that list people with cars or in need of rides. Local.com and eRideShare generally have car pool listings, ostensibly for getting to and from work.

Feb 2. Groundhog Day cruise attracts many

Although Punxsutawney Phil predicted another six weeks of winter early Saturday, Feb. 2, more than 100 islanders celebrated the event on a cruise offered by Casco Bay Lines. Photos starting above and clockwise: Guests enjoy the buffet during the Groundhog Day cruise, Cliff Island’s Diane Little reigns as honorary Queen of Groundhog Day on the Bay Mist cruise; Chen Ye Taylor and the Cockeyed Gull provided a delectable dinner on the Groundhog Day cruise; More guests enjoying the buffet.
An Exit Strategy from the Procrastination Superhighway

**By Kevin Donoghue**

Portland adopted its Transportation Plan, *A Time for Change*, as a backdrop of growing concern for suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, air pollution, global warming, and even fuel costs back in 1998. The plan had understood itself as a necessary corrective "to something fundamentally wrong in how we as a government and as citizens, make decisions about building and using transportation systems."

*A Time for Change* imagined our city through lenses of a utopian and a dystopian transportation future, the former a place where children could walk to school and parents could shower after biking to work and the latter a place where families have fled to the suburbs and the city became but a parking garage.

The planning horizon for each had been fifteen years and clearly one has been chosen for 2008.

Notwithstanding the sizable benefits from the leadership of Trainriders Northeast and Portland Trails, the interim has seen decisions to shutter neighborhood schools and open several more parking garages.

METRO has converted its fleet to natural gas, but after, too, have built a new highway in the West End, in a paraphrase of Jane Jacobs: "This is not the rebuilding of Portland. This is the sacking of Portland.

While implementing our transportation plan has stayed the course on the procrastination superhighway, citizen activists are signaling for a exit strategy ahead. When traffic engineers recommended doubling the automobile traffic capacity of Franklin Avenue in the essentially discredited Peninsula Traffic Plan, neighborhood leaders exclaimed the public process and redirected it consistent with *A Time for Change.*

While the city has indeed corrected course and is moving forward with its new Peninsula Transit Plan, a new highway project is coming over the horizon. Maine DOT is resuming its plans to widen I-295 through the peninsula and is aggressively seeking federal earmarks through our delegation in Congress, included among whom is former Mayor and the father of *A Time for Change*, Congressman Tom Allen.

MaineDOT will invoke alternatives to widening as obviated by the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, but is unlikely to recommend against widening and even less likely to identify funding for alternatives. The most meaningful alternative, commuter rail, remains but a mere twinkle in the eye of the governor.

Meanwhile, the only thing between the sand and gravel folks and a lucrative fait accompli is the public.

Feb. 12 at 7 p.m., there will be a crucial public hearing at the Clarion Hotel on 1230 Congress Street on whether we should seek federal earmarks for highway widening or for greater public transportation. The hearing will be hosted by the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Study group (PACTS), a federal transportation planning committee which I serve as the one and only local elected official.

Feb. 21 at 7 p.m., there will be a public forum at the new Ocean Gateway on the Eastern Waterfront on our priorities for work on the Peninsula Transit Plan. I am chairing the planning committee whose outcomes are expected to include, among others, recommendations for the new bus routes for METRO.

*A Time for Change* had been with us back in 1993. Now the time for action has been established: 2008.

Please tell me your thoughts on transportation planning in Portland: kdonoghue@portlandmaine.gov.

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**City Councilor Kevin Donoghue addresses transportation issues**

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**Lines from the Casco Bay Lines**

**By Chris Hoppin**

Casco Bay Lines, directed by the Casco Bay Islands Transit District, includes an elected board and several committees that work to serve customers. The board, led by Jim Philips of Chebeague, provides policy direction to the staff, which is led by general manager Dan Deering. The company regularly makes suggestions to the board.

All of the groups meet at least once each quarter in the annual conference presentations virtually all of their meetings are open to the public. Meetings usually begin at 7:30 AM and conclude by 9:00 AM. Their dates are posted in the terminal building and on line at www.cascobaylines.com.

Philips chairs the Personnel Committee, which also includes Dan Doane of Peaks and Rick Franz from Great Diamond and Donna Rockett of Long Island. They regularly review the general manager and other duties as assigned. Casco Bay Lines has approximately 40 regular employees and adds another 60 seasonal and part-time employees during the peak season.

The Operations Committee, chaired by Donna Rockett, monitors ferry schedules, equipment and other operational matters. For example, the January meeting included a request for WiFi service in the terminal. Board members are Franu, Philips, Patrick Lynn and Chris Hoppin from Peaks, and Susan Johnson from Little Diamond. Member citizens are Chuck Ralids of Peaks and Jean Diey of Peaks, formerly of Chebeague, Susan Goboz of Great Diamond, and Mac McKenzie of Cliff.

The Finance Committee, led by board treasurer Emily Jacob from Long Island, Bill Overlook, includes Doane, Hoppin and Frank Peretti as board members as well as Philips. Board members are McKone, Leo Carter of Cliff and Steve Macnasac of Peaks. They help develop the long-term capital expense budget as well as the annual operating budget and review monthly financial reports.

The Government Relations Committee, chaired by Scott Johnson, monitors relationships with government agencies developed by the general manager and other staff members. They also attend to city council presentations. In its other board members are Rockett, Doane, Hoppin, and Phillips. Other members are Carliss, Diey, Rockett, and Jalone O'Brien and Gene Taylor from Peaks.

Bill Overlock chairs the Pension Committee, which monitors the performance of pension plans for the Bay Lines' eligible employees. Other board members are Danna, Franz, Peretti, Phillips and as well Will Wanner, the employee representative.

The Rate Structure Committee, chaired by Chris Hoppin, also includes Doane, Franz, Peretti, Phillips and Rockett as well as Castell, McKone, Taylor, and Ralph Sweet from Long Island. This committee reviews and recommends ticket and freight prices to the board to generate sufficient revenue to enable Casco Bay Lines to operate in a "break even" mode.

One other committee, formed last year to seek additional revenue, is the Marketing Committee chaired by Scott Johnson, it includes Doane, Franz, and Hoppin plus Jim Lassier from Peaks, Jennifer Fox and Karen Tucker from Peaks, Emily Jacob from Long Island, and staff members Cary Baker and Bob Anderson.

The Marketing Committee works on marketing opportunities to build revenues related to charters, cruises, advertising and other sales. They suggested on-line sales of souvenirs in the terminal and on the website at www.cascobaylines.com as well as other revenue-generating projects.

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**Police log**

- **Dec. 2: 9:18 AM, Island Avenue, Follow-up**
- **Dec. 6: 8:44 PM, No Address Listed (NAL), Terry Ave., Arrest**
- **Dec. 5: 4:52 PM, Welch Street, Parking Complaint**
- **Dec. 2: 7:19 PM, Brackett Ave., 911 Hang-up Call**
- **Dec. 20: 4:20 PM, NAL, Cruiser Accident**
- **Dec. 21: 7:48 PM, NAL, Parking Complaint**
- **Dec. 22: 10:48 AM, Eighth Street, Alarm/Burglary**, **8:23 PM, Island Ave., Lock-out**
- **Dec. 23: 11 AM, NAL, Animal Complaint**
- **Dec. 26: 8:01 AM, Whitehead Street, Check Forging**
- **Dec. 30: 12:57 AM, Centennial, Suspicious Activity**
- **2:29 PM, Island Ave., Motor Vehicle**
- **3:12 PM, NAL, Suspect Activity**
- **Jan. 7: 8:29 AM, Island Ave., Assist Citizen**
- **Jan. 8: 1:06 PM, Upper A Street, Warrant Check**, **10:45 AM, Island Ave., Warrant Check**, **7:57 PM, Ocean View Terr., Burglary**
- **Jan. 10: 8:04 AM, Sterling Ave., 911 Hang-up Calls**

**ISLAND TIMES**

*February/March 2008*

**Publishers:** Mary Lou Wendell

Member of the New England Press Association.
This island life

BY GEORGE ROSE

The cold, the dark, the long of a Peaks Island winter leaves not much to do but wait it out with a minimum of effort. When asked what is new, there is little to say other than BlooBricks, paperless, a louder horn on the Acrois II, and an unexplainable increase in the number of writers, music makers and storytellers.

It wasn’t for the power of talk. Peaks would be just another rock pile standing in the path of a restless ocean on the way to Portland. But talk carries certain risks. It is different than conversation. Talk is about weightier matters. The talk on the streets is...

There is talk that... Folks are talking about... I can’t talk about that now... It’s all about truth. But the truth about truth is that most of the time it isn’t all that interesting. A true story might get you a few nods of the head or some tongue clucks or a show of disbelief. But dress it out with a minimum of effort.

A Shaman

W姥 with a background in ancient practices, he is known for healing ailments found only in fourth world communities. On Fiji he is known as a Quag, which is the Fijian word for great and noble healer. He uses not only ginger for medicinal and a homeopathic dose of a few shakes is usually enough to effect a lasting cure. A sign-up sheet is being circulated.

What is more romantic than a Horoscopic Valentine? Did I hear someone say a meat loaf dinner with all the trimmings? Being an Astrological fiend, I am qualified to offer the following readings for our island friends suffering birthdays this February and March.

Aquarius: Water, the life source, will flow in your life’s stream. It will nourish and give you in equal measure. Be thankful for hot showers and ignore all reports of contamination in your well. Sing and dance in the rain to free your spirit. Romance and wealth will arrive at tortoise speed. You are patient.

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2. Please provide details of the revaluation process, including the town's budget figures and how that changed since November.

Actually, the revaluation process is totally unrelated to the budget process. That is a separate annual project carried out by the Finance Committee in January. The Finance Committee submitted a detailed budget report to the council for its consideration. The report included an analysis of the town's financial condition, including estimates of future revenues and expenditures. The council approved the budget on a 9-0 vote, with one abstention. The budget included funds for essential services, such as schools, public safety, and infrastructure maintenance, as well as reserves for unexpected expenses.

The Town of Long Island had never undertaken a revaluation since incorporation in 1983. The last revaluation was done in 1993 by a company called Trumble and Associates. The new revaluation was needed because the tax base had changed significantly since the last revaluation, and property values had dropped in the initial years of indepedence and property taxes were no longer in line with the current market value. In mid-January the PIC became aware that some land had dropped in value significantly and sought to address this issue. The PIC is also considering whether to delay the revaluation process until the town has a better understanding of the economic conditions.

At the January 16 meeting, Tom Bohan opened discussions with Donoghue by asking, "When you come to town next week, is your job to represent the PIC and island residents?" Donoghue responded that his job is to represent the PIC and the town, not to represent the council. The council did not mention the contents of the letter to the council in that meeting. Donoghue also stated that the PIC members had not been consulted on the revaluation and that they were not aware of the decision to undertake it.

At a special meeting on Jan. 9, Rob Tiffany was appointed representative to the Island Advisory Committee, and Lynee Richards was elected to the City Manager's Neighborhood Advisory Committee. Both committees serve as community liaisons to police, fire, and EMS services and as the Council of the Islands. Mike Langella will represent Peaks Island in the Island Coalition which lobbies on behalf of the islands to the state legislature. All appointees were elected unanimously.

In other business, Mayor Boman has drafted eight PIC logos for consideration. The Communications Committee organized a “meet the councilors” event for the Winter Festival with which we will possibly take place at the Inscand event.

Minutes of The PIC meetings, as well as other news and information about the council, can be found at www.islandcoalitioninc.org. The next scheduled PIC meeting is on February 20th and March 10th:

- Workshops (7pm, Gym, every 2nd & 4th Wed) and February 20th and March 10th:
- Regular sessions (6:30pm, M., Elem., Gym).
- Feb. 25; Mar. 5 & 24.
Mayor apologizes to Peaks

BY KEVIN ATTRA

Spouting from the word "lose" repeated across its, Mayor Ed Suslovic met with the Peaks Island Council (PIC) Jan. 28 to facilitate communication and cooperation between the city and the island council. "You've been duly elected so there is a different level of representation than in other neighborhood associations," he said.

Calling it a "raised opportunity," the mayor apologized several times for not acknowledging a letter from the PIC to the City Council in December (see PIC Report, this issue). His regret over the incident was marked in contrast to Kevin Demougeon's dismissive undertones when it was discussed in a workshop meeting on Jan. 16. However, both men reiterated separately that the traffic concerns expressed in the letter were irrelevant to the current discussion at the time, and would have to be addressed later as details of the project develop.

Mayor Suslovic reaffirmed his desire to hold a joint meeting of the City Council and the PIC, which he first expressed when the PIC was formed in November. Council member Rob Tiffany hoped they could meet before the budget "gets too far ahead," as competition for dwindling city funds is becoming fierce. "This is not business as usual," he said.

Mayor Suslovic agreed that the city is facing severe budget cutbacks, especially in school funding, which has lost $2M this year in state aid. He said his experience with the board of education's budget-making process has made him skeptical of the figures it requests, and described last year's school budget as a "house of cards."

Much of the mayor's discussion with the council centered on funding at the city level, which has lost $1.8M in revenue due to the Sovereign's Prince settlement, school budget and snow removal overruns, he says. He expects further reductions this year due to a declining economy, noting that revenues from building permit applications and excise taxes on car sales are slumping. The community as well as the City Council will need to think creatively, he said, in order to "agree on what we cannot do this year."

The community will have to make some sacrifices, and cited the heavy item pickup program as an example. "People can take these items to the Riverside facility themselves," he said. When asked later how much this would save, he didn't know, but last year solid waste disposal costs went from $1.5M in 2006 to $3.8M, a 154% increase that is "by far the costliest jump in any department in the city."

The mayor also discussed the possibility of forming a new Charter Commission that would research ways to restructure the city government, and for year-round and seasonal residents. Traffic management on Welch Street is unsolved, and needs further attention. Islanders want public transportation, whether it be a taxi, shuttle, bus, or other idea.

We recognize that infrastructure needs have been deferred for some time, necessitating repairs on some roads. The sewer extension was delayed during the secession movement, and those affected would like to see it move ahead now. There is still much storm damage to remove from forested areas.

As an island, we have needs at our waterfront. Few fishermen remain on the island, and we need to assure access to allow them to continue to make a living. We could use more public docking in town.

There are many other issues -- E-911 compliance, teen programs, beautification of the downtown area, snow plowing, evaluation of the school, fuel assistance, and many more. Please contact a councilor to share your ideas for how we can improve Peaks Island.

Lynne Richard is a member of the Peaks Island Council.

PIC member lists issues on Peaks

BY LYNN RICHARD

THE PIC has listed a number of issues of concern to islanders. This is only a beginning. It is our hope to solicit input from the public, and to continue to categorize and prioritize the list. So far, we know islanders are concerned about: Issues related to affordability, including zoning, tax relief, and reductions of costs to islanders for fuel, food, ferries, etc.

Environmental issues are mentioned frequently, including the protection and preservation of our shoreline, wetlands, and watersheds. Islanders want to investigate alternative energy sources, to improve recycling, to remediate contamination, and to educate visitors about how to protect our island.

Of course, parking is a huge concern - both on island and in town, and for year-round and seasonal residents. Traffic management on Welch Street is unsolved, and needs further attention. Islanders want public transportation, whether it be a taxi, shuttle, bus, or other idea.

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Winter delights on Peaks Island

Photos starting above clockwise: Jack Soley, his daughter, Luna, and friends take a dip in Casco Bay on New Year's Day; That was quick! A local snowman, photo by Rhonda Berg; Mike Adams and Shannon Smith get ready to skate, photo by Jeffrey Gill; Brackett Street Church in the snow, photo by Rhonda Berg.
IN BRIEF, from page 2

A couple of abutters took them to court. The abutters were referred to as "NIM-BAD," which stands for Not In My Backyard. All parties agreed to settle and the court action cost them over $200,000 in legal fees and building costs.$106,000. The local planning board required them to put all power lines underground exceeding the cost of those parts of the abutters these extra costs, CAHO has had to purchase the property and affordable homes in the development.

A new car-share networking service, called CARSHARING, is available to skiers; any years; his explanation of what to do and...
The Library provided a warm front row seat to the outside activity and the Hall of the month, Mercury will reappear each other, but with each passing child and it was wonderful to see many excitement or the moment. The cookies, sky high in the south and distinctive change of partners.

ets, so here are two trick questions: brightest stars and the closest planet to the Sun? and September 2009. Messenger will launch and finally reached Mercury last month. coming within 1.2 of Venus. Islanders on the back deck of the early boat to town can watch the planetary wafts and the change of partners.

In the evening, Mars still rules the sky, high in the south and distinctive-pink, just below the Gemini twins, but Saturn is hiding in the view in east, below Leo the Lion. Mars is fading rapidly as the Sun pulls away inside track around the sphere. Saturn’s sun is a bright thing because its rings are honed nearly to earth, but still visible in a telescope.

Mercury is the smallest planet in our solar system (now that a majority of astronomers have demoted Pluto to a dwarf planet, which is what I mean). It is close to the Sun, so it is always easier than ever to find. Mercury points it out for us from the end of February to the end of May, high in the southeastern sky before dawn. Of the two, Venus is the bright one, and Mercury is its dimmish companion, sitting just above.

Astronomers know little about Mercury except that it is so small that its gravitational pull is at the same time strong and weak. It also has a magnetic field and rotates slowly. Less than half its surface has been closely photographed. Decades ago, some of the photos showed tantalizing glimpses inside its polar craters — could that be ice on the closest planet to the Sun? August of 2004, Messenger was launched and finally reached Mercury last month, coming within 125 miles of its surface, snapping photos and beaming them back to Earth (see messenger.jhuapl.edu). After more close passes in October 2008 and September 2009, Messenger will settle into orbit around Mercury in March 2011 and greatly increase our knowledge of this elusive little speedster.

Illustration by Jamie Hogan

By contrast, mighty Jupiter is easy to find and photograph, even though it's 350 million miles at its closest, when it comes to superior conjunction, on the opposite side of Earth from the Sun. Jupiter is just rising in the east now as dawn lights sky and will be in the westerner position to see in a few months.

It is entirely serendipitous that our other 3 quartet member, Mars, is not visible for a while. It's 350 million miles away. As they are both on about the same plane, the Moon occasionally passes between the two. This passes behind the Earth, creating a solar eclipse as the Moon's shadow passes over the Earth. The Moon's shadow passes directly behind the Earth, creating a lunar eclipse as Earth's much larger shadow passes over the Sun.

In February, we both! On the sixth, the Moon's shadow passes towards Antarctica. Because Earth is so close to the Sun now, it will be an annular eclipse, leaving a ring of Sun visible around the entire Moon. A fortnight later, on the 20th, the Earth's shadow passes directly over the Earth. Because of Earth's rotation, the Moon appears to move through both the lunar eclipse and the annular eclipse, closing that its orbit is actually eastward, as the Moon passes through the Earth's shadow.

The constellation Orion is in the east, below Leo the Lion. In his evening tour, he reveals a huge nebula, with delicate curtains of glowing gas. At Orion's left is the Pleiades, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). Sirius is the Plea­ides, a brilliant Sirius (and its tiny companion star now visible in big scopes). 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functions at the Battery, such as the annual torchlight parade. According to PILP President Ed Daranyi, "we have talked about installing bollards to prevent the entry of vehicles to preserve the property and leaving it in even better condition than it was," said fox.

But the escalating vandalism and its more serious nature is now causing PILP to examine limiting vehicular access at certain areas by installing bollards and boulders. According to PILP President Ed Daranyi, "we have talked about installing bollards prior to this, but we were reluctant to take such a drastic step given the generally minor nature of the vandalism. But the board of directors voted to go forward with the installation in the Spring," said fox.

Daranyi said the PILP board is also exploring strategies to stop these individuals who continue to vandalize and dump materials on the property, which could include pressing charges against offenders. "It's an unfortunate situation," he said. "Because most people respect the property and use it in the way PILP intended when we were formed to acquire and manage the land - for hiking, picnics, bird watching, and other low-impact recreation. I love going there with my family and taking visitors. It's always a great adventure. Unfortunately, a few individuals just don't seem to care. The Battery is a wonderful resource for the island, rich in natural beauty and history. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. We're looking for more public awareness of the efforts to preserve this resource, as well as help in preventing vandalism."

Peg Astarita www.peepspotsonet.com

New Construction Renovation Property Management

PILP, which was founded in 1994 as a community effort to acquire Battery Steele from developers and preserve it, has sought to work with local police, fire officials and residents to protect the property while allowing unfettered public access. PILP also works with groups that wish to hold special functions at the Battery, such as the annual Torchlight Parade and installation, to make sure that no damage is done. "Sacred and Profane is a good example of a group using the property and leaving it in even better condition than it was," said fox.
Interview with Bob Dahl

Interviewer: Brian Houston

Bob Dahl first came to the island in 1851. He and his wife, Eliza, came to the island with their two sons, aged 3 and 4 years, and loved to spend his time with his grandchild. He is 83 years old and retired.

The following is part of a project called “For the Love of Peaks.” Fran Houston is interviewing people who have a connection to Peaks Island and are willing to write or be interviewed and photographed for an exhibit in June 2008.

It was the early 90s, like ’51 or ’52, and I learned recently that my father bought the house on Peaks Island from a guy in a bar in 1926. I was always interested in the history of the area, and my father thought it was like, forever. ’54 wagon. A classic, I’d like to have that today! I remember going through the wooden toll stations in Maine. It was all wood. It was kind of unique.

Then we got off at the wrong landing. We had all our stuff and we got off at Forest City Landing and like, nobody knew where to go, so we had to figure out, could we walk. So we asked someone where it was, it was, Tremont and he said it was down the road apiece. So we took a taxi and got to the house. We could see smoke coming off at Tremont Landing and just walked up the street, but we didn’t know.

There was a house, a very nice house, right across the street from Ralph Webbers store. The second one in Jay lived in it. Jay grew up on it. They live in it now. The bought it from the Webbers. They owned it and they lived there in the house, 50 and 60 years. They owned it the whole time. So we found it on the street. On the street, you see the land across from where the Webbers had a project going on. So it was great. The location. There. We had the clubhouse and we had the beach right there.

There was a lot that couldn’t stay on the island!

That was my father-in-law, Chafee’s father. He would not spend a night on the island. We’d never been to Peaks Island, never

On Thursday, February 21 - Family Spaghetti like to have that today! I do remember going through the wooden toll stations in Maine. It was all wood. It was kind of unique.

Then we got off at the wrong landing. We had all our stuff and we got off at Forest City Landing and like, nobody knew where to go, so we had to figure out, could we walk. So we asked someone where it was, it was, Tremont and he said it was down the road apiece. So we took a taxi and got to the house. We could see smoke coming off at Tremont Landing and just walked up the street, but we didn’t know.

There was a house, a very nice house, right across the street from Ralph Webbers store. The second one in Jay lived in it. Jay grew up on it. They live in it now. The bought it from the Webbers. They owned it and they lived there in the house, 50 and 60 years. They owned it the whole time. So we found it on the street. On the street, you see the land across from where the Webbers had a project going on. So it was great. The location. There. We had the clubhouse and we had the beach right there.

What was that? It wasn’t the same island!

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