Island Times, Jan-Feb 2010

Kevin Attra

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INCIDE
In the News

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FREE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010
A community newspaper covering the islands of Casco Bay

Winter Edition
The first snow of winter started at 4 pm on Friday, Dec. 5 and fell to a total accumulation of 6.1 inches by sunrise Saturday, Dec. 6, near the record 7.9 inches set in 1964. The first Parking ban was implemented on Wednesday, Dec. 9 during the second snowfall. Expecting it to be severe, schools were closed, but it turned into 0.52 inches of rain later. Winds gusted to 45 mph.

Henry “Hank” Berg to head Casco Bay Lines

BY KEVIN ATTARA

After wading through 136 applications from across the country and interviewing 12 candidates, the board of directors of the Casco Bay Island Transit District selected Henry Berg as the new General Manager for the Casco Bay Lines.

The announcement was made Tuesday, Dec. 29 at a special board meeting held at the ferry terminal. “The applicants were all highly qualified. Some were outstanding,” said Matt Hoffman, chair of the search committee in charge of selecting the general manager. Since 2001, Mr. Berg has been with TDot, a contact center for customer sales and support in Waldoboro, having served as its president and chief operations officer. TDot’s client list includes Chad, Sununite and McGowan Hill children’s publishing among others.

He’s been responsible for establishing operational and financial goals, and developing systems to ensure high-level performance in sales, marketing, human relations, finance, technology and operations.

Prior to that, he was a design engineer with Sanders, a Lockheed Martin company, where he became director of the telecommunications product line in 1999.

Mr. Berg has more than 21 years’ experience in operations management and product development in a variety of high-tech industries.

“The board was clearly looking for someone to bring business experience to the company,” said Mr. Hoffman. “There’s a lot of marine experience already here with the staff we have. Bringing in someone with a strong business sense will be very helpful.”

Mr. Berg earned a Bachelor of Science of Electrical Engineering degree from the University of New Hampshire, a Master of Science degree in computer science from Northeastern University in Boston and an executive MBA from Boston University in 1995.

He lives in Damariscotta with his wife, Stephanie. They have two grown sons, Michael and Jamie.

A new era begins for the PIC

BY KEVIN ATTARA

New members of the Peaks Island Council were inaugurated at a ceremony at the MacVane Center Tuesday, Dec. 8. Even though the ceremony included catered hors d’oeuvres by Lisa Lynch, the affair was lightly attended.

City Councilors Dory Lavois, Kevin Donoghue and John Annon were present, as was Mayor Nicholas Mavodones Jr., Senior Lead Officer Rob Lauterbach and Neighborhood Administrator Mike Murray, who administered the oath of office.

Eliminating city personnel only 14 people came to the event, few enough that PIC Chair Mike Richards was able to say something about each one in a 20 minute speech.

“I mean, I could go right around the room,” he said, “because, really, just about everybody in this room has participated and held on with the Peaks Island Council.”

He thanked outgoing councilors Betsy Stout and Bob Hurley as well as former councilor Mike Langella, who didn’t attend because he and his wife were in Florida for the winter. “These were our first council,” said Richards, “and work that they did just in the first year to get it up and going was a monumental effort.”

Island Councilor Tom Bohan will serve an additional one-year term in order to fill one of the positions vacated by Bob Hurley.

Returning councillor Tom Bohan is sworn in with new members Marjorie Phye and Suellen Roberts (left) by Neighborhood/Island Administrator Mike Murray at the MacVane Center Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Phyllis.anso.see COUNCIL, page 3

Photo by Kevin Attara

Page 13
On the cover:

E Cosi

BY KEVIN ATTRA

John Golembiewski, who occasionally worked as a crew member for Rick Callow, bought the E Cosi from him in January 2008. She is a 32-foot Novi, a particular style of fishing boat with a characteristically high bow and wide beam, which John says he loves.

He said he calls her Ethyl, like BB King calls his Gibson Lucille. "This is my keeper boat," he said. "This is the one I'm going to keep forever."

When he bought her she was beached. He made some minor repairs and then used her over the summer for picnics, bachelor parties and day trips. "It was kind of a booze-cruise boat, to hang out, be on the water with friends," he said.

"I bought it with the idea of retiring it from fishing and restoring it as a pleasure boat." John owns five other vessels, all wooden boats, all built or restored by himself.

"I'm a certified wood snob," he said. Besides other power boats and rowing punts, he also owns a 21-foot sloop. He wants to create an apprenticeship program to show kids how to build wooden boats.

He has been working on the E Cosi where she is beached down front, under a plastic tent he erected in the fall 2008. She is planked with cedar, a very soft wood, so an ice shield made of 5/8-inch thick oak ribbing extends about 2 feet below the water line to protect the hull from damage.

The ice shield is a particular design feature on lobster boats because as the traps are being hauled up, the lines rub against the hull. If they were to come in contact with the soft cedar they would quickly gouge out the side. He currently expects to have the E Cosi finished and in the water by spring.

"I'm really excited to unleash this to the world to show, to use as a show boat." He plans to build a line of pleasure boats based on her design.

ABOVE: John enters the plastic dome he built last year to enclose the E Cosi while he works on her. RIGHT: Inside the dome, the superstructure has been demolished. He plans to rebuild and launch her this spring.
Wind not a factor in Aucocisco III collision

BY KEVIN ATTRA

Casco Bay Lines' interim General Manager Nicholas Mavodones Jr. said that when the captain on board the Aucocisco III moved from the center console to the starboard controls as he approached the Forestd City landing on Peaks Island, a switch activating the remote throttles did not engage.

"The captain reported later that he got no response as he reversed the engines, so he quickly reactivated the switch, but the throttles did not catch on time," he said. "He also said that as the ship neared the dock it is necessary that the captain move from the center of the wheelhouse to the side in order to see better, and there are remote controls on both sides of the console for that purpose. Normally, it is a matter of stepping over a few feet to the console, pressing the switch that activates it and docking up.

In this case the switch did not engage, which Mr. Mavodones said was probably because it hadn't been held down long enough. The switch actually signals a computer system to shift control of the boat to the console and has to be held down long enough for the computer to register the message, usually indicated by a red light on the console. The switch itself was not faulty.

Casco Bay Lines notified the Maine Department of Transportation, which maintains the landing, and, though not required under the conditions of the accident, also notified the Coast Guard and the Bay Lines' insurance carriers. The damaged fender was repaired by the Lionel Plant company the following week through a contract with the Maine DOT.

Mr. Mavodones said that the accident was an unusual incident in the captain's 20-year career with the Bay Lines, over 10 as a captain. "He is meticulous," he said, and added, "I think he feels bad about it. Even if there was no damage, it would probably eat at him. He's very conscientious."

COUNCIL from page 1

fill the other one-year vacancy. New members Marjorie Phyfe and Betty Heller were elected to the council in November for three-year terms, but only Ms. Roberts, Mr. Bohan and Ms. Phyfe were sworn in.

Ms. Heller did not attend the ceremony. She had withdrawn from the race in October, but won the election anyway, having already been qualified by the City Clerk's office and placed on the ballot. She was expected to resign in order for write-in candidate Judy Pawlock, who received fewer votes in the election, to serve in her place.

"Judy Pawlock would have won if her candidacy had been known to voters," said Mr. Richards in a workshop on Dec. 15.

Councilor Lynne Richard concurred, saying "I submit that we invite Judy to take her rightful seat, but that we don't let the City's speed slow us down."

Ms. Pawlock was later appointed by the PIC as an interim councilor with full voting powers at the regular session of the council Dec. 23. She will hold that position until next year's elections. The City Council would not authorize a special election for this purpose.

The appointment was also based, in part, on wording in the PIC's ordinance which allegedly grants powers to act in its own behalf when necessary. As an added measure, the PIC resolved to seek an amendment to that ordinance which would specifically allow it to declare a vacancy and appoint a councilor during a period between elections and under similar circumstances.

With Ms. Pawlock on board, the council is now composed of four women and three men.

At the regular meeting Mike Richards was re-elected to Chair, Lynne Richard to Vice Chair and Tom Bohan, Treasurer. Kathy Schneider's compensated position as Secretary was suspended with an hourly rate for any council work done outside of meetings. Previously she'd been paid a flat fee only for the meetings she attended.

POLICE LOG December 2009

Provided by Lisa Perretta Planning & Research Coordinator, PPD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Island Av</td>
<td>Check Well Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Island Av</td>
<td>Intoxicated Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Peaks Island</td>
<td>Bart Check</td>
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<td>22:59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Central Av</td>
<td>Weapons Violation, poss.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Upper A St</td>
<td>911 Hang Up Calls</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Seashore Av</td>
<td>Persons Breathing</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Central Av</td>
<td>Theft</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Church Av</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Suspicious Activity</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Pleasant Av</td>
<td>Check Well Being</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Sargent Rd</td>
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<td>16:28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Upper A St</td>
<td>Suspicous Activity</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Lower A St</td>
<td>Follow Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Herman Av</td>
<td>Follow Up</td>
</tr>
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<td>Church Av</td>
<td>Special Att Check</td>
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<tr>
<td>19:36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Island Av</td>
<td>Missing Persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Little Eric went to a robotics camp at the University of Southern-Maine later in the summer where he learned about the competition. The annual event drew 50 teams from around the state vying for the first prize, a chance to compete at the First Lego League World Festival at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta next April.

The Robot Club competed in the Smart Move category, which required robots to travel a simulated roadway course and perform specific tasks - knock things over or pick things up and so forth. Another category was for design, and there were several age groups in each category, making it a full day event.

In its very first competition the Peaks Island team took fifth place. "It was really fun," said Melissa. "We're very proud of them."

The first ever Peaks Island Robot Club competed in the Smart Move Challenge, the championship of the First Lego League, held in the Augusta Civic Center on Saturday, Dec. 12.

The First Lego League is an international, nonprofit organization founded in 1989 to encourage study in science and technology. It will provide $11 million in scholarships in 2010.

The Robot Club was planned in the summer and started practicing for the competition in September. "Three out of four kids on the team had never seen a robot before," said Melissa Conrad.

Her husband, Eric, created the team and coached them. She said he brought a robot for himself last winter but their son Eric Jr. "basically took it away from him."


photo by Melissa Conrad.
Lines from Casco Bay Lines

BY CHRIS HOPPIN

The new year brings with it a new slate of elected and appointed board members, officers and committee members for the Casco Bay Island Transit District that operates Casco Bay Lines.

Newly-elected President Patrick Flynn, 1st Vice President Frank Peretti, 2nd Vice President Chris Hoppin and Clerk Dan Doane are from Peaks Island. Treasurer Bill Overlock is from Long Island and Assistant Clerk Matt Hoffner is from Great Diamond Island.

Other board members are Scott Johnston of Little Diamond, Dave Crowley of Cliff and newly-elected members Al Alves of Peaks and Enro Bonebackler of Chebeague. Mr. Alves and Mr. Hoppin are at-large directors.

Kevin Doughtie, City Councilor for Portland’s First District, and Susan Moreau of the State of Maine’s Department of Transportation are appointed to the board by the City and the MDOT respectively.

Contact information for each board member is available on the District’s website, www.cascobaylines.com. The site also offers a calendar that lists all board and committee meetings, which are open to the public.

The new board also offers new opportunities in many areas. The District’s board committees include community representatives who volunteer their time as well. Readers who wish to join any committee are urged to contact members of the board.

Committees address a range of issues, as their titles indicate, and make recommendations to the board which incorporates them in decisions on District policies.

The Finance Committee (Chair Bill Overlock) reviews financial information. The Operations Committee (Chair Dan Doane) addresses how the District operates its ferries and terminal, while the Rate Structure Committee (Chair Frank Peretti) determines prices for passenger tickets, freight and vehicles.

The functions of the other committees may not be so obvious. For example, the Sales and Marketing Committee (Chair Scott Johnston) promotes new business and looks for more revenue wherever it can.

Their efforts to promote charters and tours help to offset ticket prices and other revenue sources needed to operate the ferries.

The Personnel Committee addresses human resources issues. An ad hoc Search Committee chaired by Matt Hoffner recently worked many hours to identify candidates for a new general manager for consideration by the board.

The Government Relations Committee (Chair Chris Hoppin) will work this year to seek new and better connections with government agencies at the municipal, state and federal levels.

The District receives $800,000 from government grants towards its $5 million annual operating expenses, but needs more to keep from raising ticket prices to offset rising costs.

One subject for the new year that will be revisited is the proposal, made more than a year ago, to explore an Inter-Modal Transit Facility for the District. Although a new facility has been discussed by a few islanders and a so-called “Committee of the Whole” comprised of all board members, it needs much more attention.

The facility could include a new transit terminal for the ferries with the added benefit of simplified freight handling and parking for residents and visitors. It could also connect to bus systems, taxis, shared rental cars and other future mass transit operations such as light rail and trolley buses.

Our transit district is one of the few in the entire country that does not receive income from parking. Many of us have visited other cities where we pay daily rates for parking before boarding mass transit like ferries, buses, trains, and airplanes. All of those transit districts use those parking fees and income from businesses and agencies that rent space in their terminals to offset the costs to operate their transit systems.

The new year offers the opportunity to reflect on the past with appreciation for all who have worked to serve islanders. We especially appreciate the hard work and dedication of the District’s employees who operate our ferry lines so well.

As we begin 2010 and look at new opportunities, Casco Bay Lines is ready to explore all of them while continuing to provide safe and reliable ferry service.

HomeStart applies for zoning variance

FROM THE HOMESTART BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Working with Bill Walsh, Walsh Engineering Associates, HomeStart submitted a conditional use application on December 13 seeking approval to build two additional affordable homes at 18 Luther Street.

The Planning Board will hold its first workshop on the proposal on Tuesday, Jan. 12 at 3 p.m. in room 209 of the City Hall.

In addition to Bill Walsh, HomeStart is working with Bill Floyd, Executive Director of Genesis Community Loan Fund, to guide various aspects of the process, including financial planning, navigating government programs and community dialog.

The construction team consists of Kaplan Thompson Architects, experienced designer of LEED-certified homes (the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building rating system, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), Keiser Homes, manufacturer of custom modular buildings here in Maine; and MosoSource, an affordable modular building installer owned and run by Shawn and Lisa Dunlap out of Oxford, Maine.

MosoSource has been in business for 10 years with over 3,000 installations, including housing for Vinehaven, Edgartown, Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard, and has worked with Keiser

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With historically low interest rates, now is a good time to refinance your home and undertake much needed energy efficiency improvements. We perform certified energy audits and can provide all of Casco Bay Lines' green home weatherization needs including installing new windows and doors, air sealing and insulating.

You will experience both energy savings and increased comfort in your home.

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207-766-5919 www.tjwhome.com

Guardsmen take a ride on the Machiguonne II

U.S. Coast Guard Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class Timothy Stanton peers out from the upper deck of the Machiguonne II as it made its way to Peaks Island from Portland on Thursday, Dec. 17. He was part of a three-man team who randomly boarded the 9:30 a.m. boat to preserve and create an over-Coast Guard presence as part of its Maritime Domain Awareness program, said Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Todd Walters.

The MDA program is administered by the Coast Guard under the Department of Homeland Security, and is defined as “the effective understanding of anything associated with the global maritime environment that could impact the security, safety, economy or environment of the United States.”

Besides protecting domestic waterways from acts of terror, the Coast Guard also enforces laws against drug smuggling, illegal immigration, organized crime, exploitation of fisheries and other marine resources, hazardous boating and environmental degradation.
Brittainy Brannen visits Peaks Island-usually every storm and the importance of properly removing snow from the streets, it is important for the streets to be cleared of all vehicles.

The Portland Police Department encourages voluntary compliance with these ordinances so that vehicles do not have to be towed and summonses issued. If there are questions or concerns regarding these items, or any other items, please stop by the station house or contact me at RobertL@portlandmaine.gov or 207-233-0995.

By Robert Lauterbach
Peaks Island Senior Lead Officer, PPD

Greetings to all. Just a friendly note from your Peaks Island Senior Lead Officer with a couple of important reminders for this winter season.

First, it is important that we all abide by the 72-hour parking limit in the Welch Street lot. Although you may be tempted to leave your vehicle in the lot due to the snow accumulations, this severely limits the number of parking spots available for ferry passengers.

Secondly, I also wanted to remind you about the city-wide street parking bans that are activated during snow storms and the importance of complying with these bans. In order for the Department of Public Works to properly remove the snow from the streets, it is important for the streets to be cleared of all vehicles.

The Portland Police Department encourages voluntary compliance with these ordinances so that vehicles do not have to be towed and summonses issued. If there are questions or concerns regarding these items, or any other items, please stop by the station house or contact me at RobertL@portlandmaine.gov or 207-233-0995.

Public Notice

To Peaks Island residents and property owners: A zoning amendment application was submitted to the City of Portland Planning Division by HomeStart Affordable Housing. The applicant is seeking a conditional zone to allow the development of 2 new single-family affordable housing units at 18 Luther Street, Peaks Island. In accordance with the Portland Land Use Ordinance, notices of receipt of a minor site plan application must be sent to neighbors. This application will be reviewed administratively by City Staff. This is the only notice that you will receive unless it is determined that the application needs to be reviewed by the Planning Board. A notice of any upcoming meetings will then be sent to you. Plans are available in the Portland Planning Division, 4th Floor, City Hall. If you have any questions, please call Shakesha Wijeratne, Planner at 207-891-9083. Jennifer Dorr, Office Manager Planning and Urban Development City of Portland 389 Congress St., 4th Floor Portland ME 04101 (207)874-8719

By Kevin Attra

Cascos Bay Lines board President Patrick Flynn (center) presents a gift to retiring Administrative Assistant Susan Williams while Marketing Director Caitlin Gildard (foreground) records the event.

Interim General Manager Nicholas Mavodones Jr. described her as someone who "really looked out for the whole operation in a host of ways," and said that her diligent attention and accurate recordkeeping helped her weather a controversy that arose in a previous board election.

She said she had enjoyed working at the Bay Lines, but was ready to spend more time with her family.

Stylist makes island calls

Brittainy Brannen cuts Judith McAllister’s hair at the Fay Garman House.

By Judith McAllister

Brittainy Brannen has been coming to Peaks Island for almost two years now, to cut and style islanders’ hair.

She is a licensed cosmetologist who received her training at the Spa Tech Institute in Portland. She also works full-time at the Addia Salon in Westbrook.

Her visits to the island—usually every three weeks—are hosted by the Fay Garman House where she cuts hair in the center’s community room from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Check the bulletin board for regularly scheduled dates.

Brittainy styles hair for women, men and children. Walk-ins are welcome, but to avoid waiting call 807-7783 to make an appointment.

CBITD Admin. Assistant Susan Williams retires

By Jennifer Dorr

Casco Bay Lines board President Patrick Flynn (center) presents a gift to retiring Administrative Assistant Susan Williams while Marketing Director Caitlin Gildard (foreground) records the event.

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Island Views

Community Letters

To the Editor

The column, Lines from Casco Bay Lines, in the December issue contained a number of issues that should be addressed for the sake of accuracy and an honestly informed public.

The Maine Public Utilities Commission does allow the use of the "reserve vessels" for cruises, tours and charters, but barring substantive proof that they are benefiting us - let alone costing us in extra boats, crew, fuel, overhead, marketing and advertising - the presumption is that we are being asked to subsidize the tourists. At the prices we pay, that is totally unacceptable.

The majority of people coming to the lobster bakes arrive and depart on regularly scheduled boats. The cruises which take place on regularly scheduled trips (we call them the "watch the locals" cruises) do make money, since tourists are charged more than islanders. However, although they have been asked to break out the costs for over two years, management has never supplied the costs and revenue for any of these trips separately. If they are truly making money, why the aversion to showing us financial proof?

The revenue of $700,000 stated in the December article is misleading. This is a gross revenue figure, not net. Insurance, maintenance and repair costs for the boats and "reserve vessels" were not deducted, and while the basic salary of the marketing director was subtracted, her FICA, benefits, pension, office space, and supplies were not.

On cruises on which banquets, refreshments and entertainment are an integral part, catering, supplies, and all entertainment costs as well as the costs for captain, crew and fuel should also be deducted before reporting the revenue. So, although these two boats are used the majority of the time for tourist excursions according to the operations manager, the costs described above are buried as overhead for regular passenger service.

The statement, "We are always looking for new ways to generate more revenue so we don't have to raise tickets, freight or vehicle prices or reduce service," is, to say the least, infuriating. Apparently, reducing shore side overhead, cutting costs, and stopping redundancies are never considered part of the equation.

In closing, we'd like to leave you with some things to think about. How many additional summer employees must be hired to cover these cruises? How much extra fuel is used? How much did the Bay Miss initially cost? How often during the nine months when they are not being used for charters, are two extra boats needed?

When there are a number of other companies offering tours, what portion of the market do we capture? Does that portion justify the advertising costs? How many islanders are taking the cated, mid-winter inter-island cruises?

Did it make money last year?

Sincerely, Sid and Jane Gerard

Peaks Island Tax Assistance

When a group of Islanders got together to form Peaks Island Tax Assistance in May of 2005 in response to the large increase in property taxes we thought our revenue would be short-lived. We put out our first articles noting, "Our mission is to assist island residents to remain in their homes despite extraordinary tax increases."

As of December 2010 we have raised over $43,000 and paid almost $41,800 to the City of Portland and escrow holders for partial payment of property taxes. We are happy to report that not one family or resident who asked for assistance left the island or received a lien on their property. In fact, some of the recipients no longer need our assistance.

We are grateful for every donation, all your support and your words of encouragement.

As people have left the program, others have found that the downturn in the economy has left them unable to pay all of their taxes. In order to help families, our fund needs to be rebuit.

As members of PITA we are in the unenviable position of requesting your help. Funds are needed to offer assistance on property tax payments to those in need in March and September. The partial payments that we offer make the difference between paying taxes and remaining on the Island of having to sell family property and move off Island.

Each of us wants to be able to keep friends and neighbors here with us on our wonderful island. If you feel you are able to contribute to PITA, please send your donation to: PITA, P.O Box 126, Peaks Island, Maine 04108.

We are grateful for every donation, all your support and your words of encouragement.

Jane Adams, Ralph Ashmore, Diane Clark, Joyce Doane, Christina Foster, Jane Gerard, Georgia Gillette, Sandra Haff, Judith Mallison, Cynthia Peddlkin, Howard Peddlkin, Teresa Schull and Doug Smith

Dear Peaks Islanders,

Peaks Environmental Action Team is looking for a little cold, hard cash. PEAT members have worked now for a full 12 months to find a way to get a wind turbine tower up on Peaks Island in order to see if the wind resource might support a small wind turbine project here.

We have secured Peaks Island Council permission of our effort. We have provided comment to the Portland Planning Board and City Council as the City adopted the ordinance that makes a test tower possible under the zoning law. We have gone before the Zoning Board of Appeals and secured a conditional use permit. A building permit for the tower is also in place, and we have found a $1 lease and "tower removal agreement" have been set up with the City.

When our original partners at Unity College were not funded, we had to apply for a tower from the University of Maine. We were one of only five communities chosen state-wide in a competitive process to be offered one. In short, we are ALMOST ready to go.

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BY REBECCA JOHANNA STEPHANS

Many yoga students arrive for their first yoga class because they are in pain. Frequently they have been referred to yoga by a doctor, therapist, or family member. Often they begin with some reluctance or resistance. The less inclined they are to get on a yoga mat at first, the more surprised they arc by what they discover there.

There is no question that pain is a motivating energy. We desperately want to be rid of it so that we can carry on; however, that pain is trying to tell us something. The founder of Kripalu Yoga calls pain, "life's messenger". If we simply relieve the pain without investigating the source, it will come calling again. And again. A mindful yoga practice will accomplish both the pain relief and the exploration into the source.

If students find a teacher and a class that are a good fit, they usually continue with yoga practice long after they understand and relieve the pain that inspired them to begin. The quality of peace and well-being they experience becomes compelling and they discover the joy of a practice that nourishes and sustains them. The unfortunate reality, however, is that while pain is rather sharp and intense, contentment tends to be quietly inviting. Once the pain is gone, it is very easy to slip back into old habits.

This is the time of year when many folks become inspired to make resolutions that involve some type of shift toward a healthier, happier existence. Most of them will "fail" within a few days or weeks, and then wait a whole year to try again. There is such sweet and powerful promise in new beginnings, and a rather mundane monotony in maintaining those good habits over time. The keys to sustaining a healthy habit are to remember that every single breath offers a chance to begin anew, to learn to love the mundane, to believe that you deserve to thrive, and to ask for help.

For many years now, I have been contemplating the Greek myth of Sisyphus. Having defied the gods on several occasions, Sisyphus was condemned to an eternity of pushing a huge boulder up a mountainside only to have it roll back down as soon as he let go. When we get stuck in a negative perspective, staying healthy can feel a lot like that. Even if you are well, walked the dog, brushed your teeth and practiced yoga yesterday, you still have to do it all over again today.

But what if something else is possible? What if Sisyphus not only made peace with his fate, but learned to enjoy his strength, his perseverance, and the empowerment that comes with sustaining a daily discipline. Just like the boulder rolling back down the mountain every day, our systems naturally move towards disorder and chaos and we are forever working to restore balance and order.

We have a choice to either put a shoulder to the task with resignation and despair, or to learn how to show up with "beginner's mind", approaching each new day with enthusiasm, curiosity, and purpose. Unless we bring joy and intention to our discipline practices, even our most delightful endeavors will either fall away or become just one more routine obligation. For an entertaining perspective on the power of beginner's mind, I highly recommend the movie, "Groundhog Day" starring Bill Murray.

In this time of new beginnings and resolutions, I encourage you to set an intention of moving toward something inviting rather than getting rid of something you don't like. The good news is that once you establish a healthy habit, continuing will become quite compelling until there is some sort of interrupt.

If you are paying attention, you will notice that you need to reapply yourself before you lose much ground.

To support you in this endeavor, I offer a series of warrior poses which produce heat to warm and purify your body, strengthen your core and open your heart. Warrior poses are empowering postures that invite us to invoke our heroism, our dedication, our persistence in the face of obstacles, and to do all of it with compassion.

Most of these postures have been described in other columns, so this month, I will simply apply the power of the photos. You may choose one or more of these postures to practice, or string them together in any posture flow. May you discover abundant joy, courage, and peace of mind, one breath at a time.

Intention: Begin your practice with a moment of stillness in which you affirm your intention to practice with compassion and mindfulness.
For the love of Peaks!

Gayl Vail

As Told to Fran Houston

I used to go bowling in the bowling alley. I remember that well. And it was forbidden because summer kids who lived on the club-end of the island were kind of told to stay on that end. There was a real division between winter and summer and I'm not sure why. I never understood it.

When we were 11, 12, and 13 and allowed to go out for a little bit after dinner, we could walk as far as Whitten's store - which was right on the corner by the school where the condoms are, that same big building (I think they lived upstairs and the store was downstairs) - but we weren't to go any further.

We weren't to go down front. Down front was off limits. Of course, we did! That was the first thing we'd do, go in to Whitten's and buy a pickle, and then keep going.

Do you remember any of the summer stores on the island besides Whitten's?

Of course, Webber's Store because we were on that end of the island. That's where we bought our real penny candy for a penny and brought our returnables for 2 cents. The one where the workshop is now - I can't remember the names of them now - I remember that one; and where the kids have House is, there was something there. And, what was the one where the Post Office is?

I can't remember any of their names. But I mean I can just envision all of them. It was amazing, so many places. Now, as an adult, I wonder, how did they all survive? There's one.

When I was younger, the barbed wire was still on the backshore. There were gates and you weren't supposed to go the whole length of the backshore. That was government property. So it was always scary to walk in there, like there were guards still on duty. There was no one there, but it was posted. It was scary as a kid.

The times, the peacefulness. I'm finding it harder and harder to go to the places I used to go, because there are new houses there. There aren't the paths through the woods. It's still wonderful but I have to change my direction. I'm getting used to it, but in the beginning it was really hard. I was offended that people had the readiness to build new homes on my paths, or in places I played as a kid, or picked blueberries!

Oh, that was another thing, picking blueberries. I went with this lady who lived down the street, Barbara Shay, another Irish woman. She would go early in the morning before it got hot. We'd go with her, and we wound our way up over the hill through the woods and we'd wind up at the convent. The nuns were still there. She was very Catholic, and I was Protestant.

To stand in the woods when it [the storm] burnt down, I went...wow, I remember. It was a rainy night. I thought the island was going that night, it was so incredibly dark and windy and rainy. And icy. It was amazing. It was the biggest fire I ever personally saw. I'm thinking, it's going to take off, there's no way they can control it. And then to see it later, just rubble. Think of the stained glass windows and just the history of it. It was gone. Gone.

There's something else. And that's life. Things change. I remember one story. You just rode the boats. As a kid, there was a landing down at the club, and that's where we'd get on and off, basically. It was a quarter for me. You just ride the boats. You don't think about it. That's what you do for transportation.

But personally, once I was pregnant with my youngest, they had a boat strike, and they only ran certain boats each day, maybe four boats a day. Legally they had to do it for mail and school kids and whatever. So I would have to make a doctor's appointment and spend half the day in town because there were no boats between certain times.

And then, Jamie was born in January and the boat strike was still going on. It was a time in January when it had been bitterly cold for days and days and we had snow on the ground, the big ice chunks out in the harbor and so forth. The fun part was I got to go on the fire boat to the hospital during a storm.

But coming home, there was this huge [delay], hours and hours between boats. And trying to explain that to the doctors in the hospital - they try to work with you, but they don't really care about boat schedules. They do things at their pace and they're busy. My husband talked to somebody who talked to somebody.

It ended up that Meldo Whitten, who used to own the store and also lobstered on the side (and was probably 150 at the time, I don't know) he would come and pick me up in his lobster boat, so I didn't have to worry about boats. And it was a bright sunny day, the sky was bright blue, it was like 40 below zero and ice in the harbor.

I got in the boat on the Portland side and it must have been 100 degrees in there, he was so worried about a new born. It was beautiful, a nice calm ride, avoiding all the ice chunks in the harbor.

So that's how Jamie came home from the hospital, on Meldo's old lobster boat. It was fun. That was fun.

FINISH Whitten worked for Peaks Island Fuel for awhile. Meldo was his dad.)

THANK YOU Peaks Island

We want to thank all who attended the benefit concert for the Island Times, and the Dans en December ensemble: Julie Goell, Annie O'Brien, Stephanie Elliott, Ronda Dale and Nancy 3. Hoffman, with wonderful support by Pat Council.

We'd also like to thank the staff of the Inn for providing great service and asking their own brand of support to the mix.

Finally, we are especially grateful to the following people (in alphabetical order) for their generous donations to the newspaper.

Peg Astarita
Rhonda Berg
Rick Caron
Cynthia Cole
Thea Demetre & Howard Kessler
Nicole d'Entremont
Linda de la Bruere & Keith Hults
Linda Dillingham
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Colleen Sullivan
Kay Taylor
Heather Thompson & Harvey Johnson
Rob & Jill Tiffany
Grace Valenzuela & Val Hart
Faith York

Donations totalled $757. Thank You!
A benchmark was originally a concrete mark created by surveyors to assure accurate repositioning for future measurements. They are currently used at the corners of points for surveying, geolocating, evaluating business processes and even to track the progress of war.

On Peaks Island benches mark some of our most delightful and memorable island experiences. To share in this experience you can make a journey, starting on one of the benches around the Kiosk where you can rest, read our bulletin boards, finish your ice cream cone or decide which way to go.

If you go south to the Lion's Club located in Greenwood Gardens, you could sit at one of the brick colored benches like many have done before you and experience a Maine lobster bake. Revenues from these bakes are generously shared with many island organizations.

Or simply sit on the lone bench dedicated to Judge and Libby Ingram, observing maritime traffic and the magnificent Portland skyline. The judge was involved in coordinating the island's voluntary taxi service.

Continuing along Island Avenue you will pass a bench dedicated to Loretta Voyer, who created the fund in her name to aid cancer victims. Nearby is a bench overlooking Hadlock Cove, simply marked "Mom's seat" donated by her sons, Mark and Greg.

You'll certainly want to share a bench at the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum, listen to a docent detailing the 150-year history of the building. If your timing is right you might witness a Civil War re-enactment by volunteers in full military garb.

Proceeding on Seashore Avenue you finally enter a 1/3 mile corridor on the island's back shore where benches offer nine different, spectacular ocean views. From these benches, dedicated to loved ones from Mahony, Phillips, Charles, Margaret and Thomas Franco, are views of Whitehead and the Portland Headlight.

Benches dedicated to Henry Burnham, Mardy and Red Morrison and John and Esther Callow look eastward toward a sunny day and were the site of the 1987 celebration "The Harmonic Convergence" (new age of peace and love). Mary Davis (post president and active member of American Legion Post 142 Auxiliary) bench was given by her friends in the Auxiliary.

All benches will provide magnificent sunrises and romantic views of the moon and stars. I propose to my wife on the bench overlooking Whalebake, dedicated to Francis and Adell O'Leary whom I am sure would have approved. Whalebake is also the scene of our Easter Morning Sunrise service. Louise Montgomery often observed her husband Claude playing paint near her bench and Mathew Baldi, who loved the island, was often seen kayaking past this site.

At the Whitehead walkway near Reed Park, a 7,000-square-foot area given to the city by W.S. Trefethen in memory of his brother, Emily Reed. Twin benches dedicated to Jane and Mary Nutt and Pauline and Adrian Williss will welcome you, suggesting that you simply "sit, relax, and enjoy your time on Peaks and ponder the large cannon ball displayed there.

Moving East on Trefethen Avenue you will find the Trefethen Evergreen Improvement Association club house which was originally the Dayborne Casino built in 1912. This organization, founded in the same year has utilized the old Casino since 1921. Notice both the tennis benches (scene of many wins and losses) and a basketball bench which seats athletes both waiting and resting.

Old Casco Bay Line benches provide seats for watching boating activity at the TEIA marina. At the waterfront next to a large flagpole are twin benches which are filled every summer evening with couples enjoying colorful sunsets. Next door is a single bench where John and Mary Allen never missed this nightly show.

Turning south you will pass three churches whose pews offer Unlimited space to sit and reflect on those important aspects of life: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Next to the white church on the hill is a bench given in memory of Madianne Green "from all creatures great and small" (she loved nature).

Stop at the bench next to our Elementary School built in 1832 (Portland's oldest school) and listen to the laughter of children. Or perhaps try the bench next to the Cockeyed Grill restaurant dedicated to Pauline and Adrian Williss "A Love Story", and maybe try the bench next to the Gull restaurant dedicated to Pauline and Adrian Williss "A Love Story".

The Littlest Lighthouse is still delight and the laughter of children. Or perhaps try the bench next to the Cockeyed Grill restaurant dedicated to Pauline and Adrian Williss "A Love Story", and maybe try the bench next to the Gull restaurant dedicated to Pauline and Adrian Williss "A Love Story".

Island author Ruth Sargent's bench, in front of the library, invites you to sit, read, and rest your mind.

Brad's bicycle bench constructed of old skin and snowboards offers a resting spot while you rent/return or just receive instructions and directions for your ride. A short dogleg will bring you to a bench near the Fry Carman House, our senior housing project, permitting you to visit an old friend.

Shortly you will return from a five mile walk to your starting point where you can sunburn down the full for a snack stop to be shared on Linda's colorful picnic bench. You will pass benches dedicated to Virginia Adamson (Berry) and her daughter Jane Anne (Berry), Virginia's Island and Henry helped form the Casco Bay Island Transit District and served as its first president.

Finaly, you will choose a bench in any of the three sheltered buildings where you can contemplate the many island benchmarks you have experienced as you wait for the ferry boat. Part of island magic lies with our desire to protect and perpetuate these memories. Perhaps Peaks Island will serve as a benchmark for your memories of Maine.

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**Thanks For Thinking**

*BY CHRIS NEWCOMB © 2009*

I'd like you to think about something. Ever seen the bumper sticker: "Intolerance will not be tolerated"? You have to think about that for a moment to truly appreciate its wit. It's kind of like the parent who yells at the top of his or her voice "You kids stop yelling!"

Intolerance will not be tolerated.

I suppose we all have things we won't or can't tolerate. For me, it's not intolerance, it's tolerance that I can't tolerate.

Let me explain. I don't know exactly where or how it began, but in the past few years it's become acceptable when referring to same sex couples, or the queer community in general, to say things like: "I don't believe in same sex marriage, but I believe we should be tolerant." Even president Obama and vice president Biden have stated this opinion on several occasions.

Tolerance? I gotta tell you, I cannot tolerate their tolerance. What kind of message is that anyway? "We don't like what you're doing. We don't believe it's normal, but we'll tolerate your abnormal behavior because we're just that good." Well, isn't that just big of them?

I will not tolerate their tolerance! Accept me as a full and equal citizen of the United States, or be honest in your free and equal citizen of the United States, or be honest in your free and equal citizen of the United States, or be honest in your free and equal citizen of the United States, or be honest in your free and equal citizen of the United States, or be honest in the way you live with.

Tolerance? Grays and lesbians have tolerated the prejudice, fears and hateful actions of societies for far too long. We've tolerated stereotypes in TV and movies. We've tolerated horrific jokes and discrimination in almost every area of our lives. We've tolerated heterosexual couples enjoying special rights. Tolerance?

Enough is enough. To those who say they tolerate our lifestyle, we will no longer tolerate your tolerance. Accept me as a free and equal citizen of the United States, or be honest in your discrimination. But do not hide behind the current wave of tolerance.

Your tolerance will not be tolerated. I'm Chris Newcomb. Thanks for thinking.
Oklahoma was the first musical written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, a collaboration born of necessity when Rodgers' usual partner, Lorenz Hart, refused to do it and skipped off to Mexico instead. It is based on a 1931 play Green Grow the Lilacs, which flopped at the box office but was picked up by the Theater Guild's Theresa Helburn who thought it might make a good musical.

One innovation of the 1943 production was that instead of the usual practice of choosing actors who could sing, Rodgers and Hammerstein found singers who could act, and that apparently what Peaks Island School music instructor Sukie Rice found with her line up of third graders at the school's winter concert, Thursday Dec. 17, who performed — literally — a medley of Oklahoma tunes as fun to watch as they were to hear.

The concert had been rescheduled from the previous week when a snowstorm cancelled classes, and was performed in two sets to around 100 people in the school gymnasium. Ms. Rice featured each of the six grades in the first set, with a range of numbers from seasonal carols to spirituals to international folk songs.

Choral director Jan Thomas played accompaniment on piano, and in the second set, showcased her II-member school chorus in a performance of five songs, including another Rogers & Hammerstein melody, Do-re-mi, from the Sound of Music.

The concert featured children not only singing and dancing but also playing xylophones and hand drums.

The only possible complaint was that it was a little too long.

Paul Nelson IV, 5, who sat patiently with his father, Paul Nelson III, on the floor near the exit, wondered several times when it would end. When Ms. Thomas finally said they would be singing their last number, he perked up. "And then we go home?"

As he climbed into the Santa suit his ex-wife gave him 10 years ago, Norman Provost chuckled a deep "ho, ho, ho," sounding very much like the real thing. "After 29 years I've got it down," he said.

He was getting ready for the monthly senior potluck lunch at the Fay Garman House Monday, Dec. 14, organized by the Peaks Island Senior Fellowship Association. "It's the one day a year I let Norm tell me what to do," said Sandra Pederson, manager of the senior center who was invited specially for the event.

The Christmas feast - a 20 pound turkey was donated by the Lions Club - included a visit from Santa and students at the Peaks Island Children's Workshop who came caroling with half a dozen songs that ranged from the traditional (Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer) to the secular (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star).

A song about life as a snowman ended when the sun came out: "Once I was a snowman big and round/Now I am a puddle on the ground."

Afterwards, the children and the seniors exchanged gifts, a tradition that has been carried on in one form or another since 1972. Said new resident Francis Frost, "I call this a first-rate holiday dinner."
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Santa helps light the tree on Peaks Island

BY KEVIN ATTRA

As the fire engine No. 12 brought Santa to lower Welch Street to hand out gifts (right), occasional flakes started falling in what turned out to be the first snow of the season.

Children scampered around the tree, chased each other, sang carols or slept in their parent's arms during the tree lighting ceremony down front on Saturday evening, Dec. 5.

Chris Hoppin passed out song sheets with the words to five or six of the most popular, standard Christmas carols, and Mike Richards backed the crowd of over 60 adults and children with his guitar while his wife, Pam, sang accompaniment dressed as an elf.

Snow started falling for real just as the revelers sang White Christmas, and Chuck Radis asked to be quoted saying, 'Bah humbug!'

Afterwards everyone piled into the Peaks Cafe for hot chocolate (below), where donations were collected for the food pantry.

We're making Peaks Islanders' financial life easier.

Thompson Johnson Woodworks
Serving the Island Communities of Casco Bay
Star Gazing

January 2010 Sky

BY MIKE RICHARDS

January is named for Janus, (aka Janus), Roman god of the doorway (i.e., the New Year). Earth, in its elliptical orbit around the sun, reaches perihelion (closest to the sun) early this month and thus receives about 7 percent more solar energy when Earth’s at aphelion (furthest from the sun). The Earth’s tilt now points the north pole 23.5° away from the sun, giving the Northern Hemisphere less heat (and light). Meanwhile, the earth orbits the sun at an average of 18.5 miles per second, though at perihelion we reach maximum speed, shifting earth’s position to the sun so much each day, the latest sunrise of the year for us is in January (7:14 AM).

PLANETS

Small and fast, Mercury passes between earth and sun early this month and then pops up above the eastern horizon just after sunrise the last half of the month. Big and slow, Jupiter still dominates the southwestern sky at sunset, with distant Neptune just to its left and Uranus in Pisces, low in the southwest. Venus is out of sight, so this month belongs to Mars, as the red planet reaches opposition at the mouth of Leo, the Lion, and swings its closest to earth (61.7 million miles) this time around. Mars is retrograde now as earth passes it on our inside orbit. Yellow Saturn rises just before midnight and is high in the sky at sunrise.

STARS and CONSTELLATIONS

In the west, Cygnus, the Swan, disappears into the sunset, though to its left Lyra’s blue-white star Vega still catches the eye. The Great Square of Pegasus is lost in the light pollution from town, but above it the Andromeda galaxy is still visible in binoculars (use the deep V in Cassiopeia to point the way). Perseus, the King, is overhead followed closely by Auriga, the Charioteer, which is easy to find because yellow sun-like Capella is so bright. The Gemini twins lie prone on the eastern horizon, their heads capped by stars Castor (above) and Pollux (below).

The Pleiades star cluster hovers almost overhead, and the “Seven Sisters” still look great in field glasses. Below them the V-shaped Hyades asterism frames the head of Taurus, the Bull, with reddish Aldebaran, his angry eye, staring down at familiar Orion, the Hunter, below. Red supergiant star Betelgeuse (beetle-juice) is his upper left shoulder and white giant Rigel (ryeg) his right foot. The 2-star belt holds lies sword which is graced by the gigantic gossamer curtains in the Great Nebula, a stellar nursery. Closest to the horizon is Sirius, the brightest star in the sky (because it’s only 8.6 light years away), the bright eye of the Big Dog, Canis Major, with Procyon the bright star in Canis Minor due east.

ALMANAC

Jan. 1- Moon’s at perigee today but will be even closer (by 1300 miles) at month’s end.

Jan. 3- Quadrantid meteor shower peaks tonight, but the waning gibbous moon will wash the sky with light and make viewing difficult. Today Earth’s at perihelion, its closest approach to the sun this year (3 million miles closer than in July). Tonight Mars follows the moon closely, about 3 fingers at arm’s length.

Jan. 7 - Last quarter moon rose just before midnight and is highest at sunrise. On this date in 1610, Galileo discovered the four large moons of Jupiter. Over the next few weeks he noted the change in their positions and confirmed that they orbit Jupiter, suggesting that Copernicus was right: the earth orbits the sun – hereby in those geocentric days, and enough for the Pope to put Galileo under house arrest for the rest of his life.

Jan. 11- Scorpius’s heart, the red super-giant star Antares, is occulted by the crescent moon at about 6:15 AM.

Jan. 15- New moon rises and sets just after the sun for us, but from Africa to Asia, it will produce an annular eclipse of the sun, leaving a bright ring around the moon, because it’s so close to apogee.

Jan. 17- Moon’s at apogee, almost 31,000 miles further away than it will be in two weeks. At sunset today, the small, thin crescent moon points left to Jupiter.

Jan. 23- First quarter moon is highest in the sky at sunset, in the next few days are best for telescope-viewing of the moonscape.

Jan. 29- Mars is at opposition (to the sun) and is now best for viewing. Look for the polar cap(s) and the green and red surface details. For an up-close look at the red planet, go to “Mars Rovers” on the internet.

Jan. 30- A huge full “Wolf” moon (it’s at perigee again) sets over the city at 7:03 AM, with Mars above and to the right, perfect for those few on the 6:15 AM boat to town this Saturday morning. The moon, it rises again over the bay at 5:44 PM, giving those on the 5:35 PM boat to Peaks an eyeful. Because the moon is now passing through earth’s magnetic tail (caused by the Earth’s own magnetic field), the surface of the moon is electrically charged and would cause a small shock if you stepped on it - one of the many things to consider in man’s return to the moon.

Jan. 31- Highest ride this month (11.6”) is at 11:29 AM, lowest (-2”) at 5:49 PM, creating a tidal shift of 13.6. The moon’s gravitational pull also affects earth’s land masses, helping the tectonic plates to shift. The sunrise is now just before 7:00 AM and sets just before 5:00 PM, so it’s up and warming the Northern Hemisphere for only 10 hours out of 24, but that will increase rapidly over the next few months.

Illustration by Jamie Hogan

February

is for Lovers

Now taking reservations for a romantic four-course gourmet dinner on Valentine’s Day. Dance the night away to live music in the Bayview Room. $55 per couple.

Gourmet Brunch:
Starts at 11:00am
Last Sunday of the Month
January 31 & February 28
Live music by East Wave Radio
$13.95 per person

Call today to make your reservation
(207) 766-5100

The Inn on Peaks Island 38 Beach Ave - East Boothbay 207.766.5100 www.innownpeaks.com
Peaks people have long shown a keen interest in all types of music. Witness the Peaks Island Cornet Band, established in 1881. The group's longevity constitute reads, in part, "We the undersigned agree to associate ourselves together for the mutual improvement and benefit in music."

Membership was limited to 13 men, with James B. Jones as Leader, H.H. Trefethen as Secretary and Epps Brackett as Treasurer. The other members were Albion Brackett, Henry Skillings, John Holbrook, George Trefethen, Charles Trefethen, Andrew Fisher, Allen Fisher, Wesley Sterling, Frank Sterling and W. S. Jones. Each contributed toward the purchase of instruments, such as drums, cymbals and wind instruments, for members who did not already own one. A Mr. Cole [no first name listed] was hired to come from Portland two nights per week to assist the band members in learning new music and new instruments. The April 19, 1882 entry in the band's record book states "Instructor Mr. Cole presented himself in a condition of perfect [sic] sobriety and introduced for our consideration a lovely little thing entitled Andante and Polka. After destroying the peace of mind of all in the vicinity and horrifying the veteran Cole till he was baldheaded, we approved a practice meeting for the following Saturday evening."

The band presented its first public entertainment at Brackett Memorial Church on June 22, 1882 to a full house that included a Miss Latham and a Miss Skilling. On July 4th of that year, the band marched from down front to the East End (Trefethen-Evergreen), stopping to play outside of various cottages and hotels where they were given cigars in appreciation of their efforts. At the Oceanic House on Pleasant Avenue they were invited inside "to wet their whistle."

Throughout the year and into the spring of 1883 the band continued their twice-weekly practices at the Island Hall, even though that winter "the harbor was so full of ice and the burning of the steamer kept Mr. Cole away for a month." Two more entertainments were presented that spring. The last entry in the band's record book - May 28, 1883 - notes the resignation of two band members and a general loss of interest. Unfortunately, no additional records have surfaced that might tell us how much longer the band stayed together or what caused its demise.

The Island Hall, which sat where the fire trucks and ambulance are now housed, was torn down in the 1960s.

Andrew Fisher, courtesy of the Fifth Maine
The state of the union

BY KEVIN ATTRA

It has been more than two years since a bill authorizing the incorporation of Peaks Island, House Island, Camp Island and Pumpkin Knob into the town of Peaks Island died in the State Legislature after an advisory committee rejected it, 7-5.

The State & Local Government Committee, however, made its rejection contingent on whether the City of Portland could show sufficient proof it was addressing concerns about the island's schools, governance and transportation, which were viewed as the most pressing issues.

As a result, the City amended its municipal code to create the Peaks Island Council, an elected body of island residents who would channel the needs of the Peaks Island community and clearly voice them to the City Council.

Described as neither fish nor fowl, the PIC has the legitimacy of an elected body but none of the legislative power. Instead, it is a filtered voice representing the Peaks Island community speaking to the City Council.

The challenge within the community, and within the council itself too, has been how to find a voice the city will listen to.

Outwardly, the struggle on Peaks Island to secede from Portland would probably go on, if the same thing happened anywhere else. Public opinion would still be divided, the focus would occasionally shift, energy would flag, and the answer and power struggles would emerge.

Permuting it all would be a gnawing uncertainty about the future. The existential question, though, would still be "why?", and it would have to be answered once and for all for a new community to be built. Everyone involved has to believe the answer.

"It requires a lot of commitment and public involvement to make a town work," said Coleman Clarke, an early opponent of Long Island's secession from Portland in 1992 and currently its fire chief.

"I'm glad, now. It took a couple of years to figure it out, but it was worth it."

The urge to secede from Portland has occurred to Peaks Islanders for at least 126 years, according to Fifth Maine Museum curator Kim MacIsaac, who wrote an analysis of the island's secession movements in 1995.

She found that the movements began after 1860, when the character of the island changed from that of a small, close-knit farming and fishing village with a fairly stable population to a major tourist attraction.

The demand for housing skyrocketed and strained basic services from the city, which allegedly was more than Portland could keep up with.

In 1883, the situation led to the first organized movement to secede on record. "After much discussion it was concluded that islanders could not afford the cost of self government," wrote Ms. MacIsaac.

As population pressure increased, secession movements flared up again and again. In 1922, it arose because there was no electricity, the roads were in disrepair and the aquifer was drying up. Within two years, municipal water and electricity was installed.

In 1948 a series of forest fires led to a secession drive over lack of firemen. In response, Engine No. 12 was upgraded by the city. In 1951 baby boomers were overcrowding the schools. The next year Portland added two classrooms and the gym to the Peaks Island School.

These issues are very similar to the ones islanders complained about in 2006, and it seems Portland has always tried to resolve them as fully as possible.

But in the last 30 years, the residents of Peaks Island seem to have been getting poked at every so often by the runaway housing market. Like some desperado in a cheap Western movie itching for a fight, it keeps pushing up rents and driving people away.

"It's not clear if it's the city that's doing the actual poking, or the state."

In fact, Portland has made headway resolving some concerns of the community, as they were spelled out in a Peaks Island neighborhood plan published in March 2010. A lot of it was done on the City Council's own initiative.

Last year Portland facilitated the U-Car vehicle sharing service in the vicinity of the ferry terminal, and permitted a livery service (loosely referred to as the taxi) to operate on the island.

In the past five years Portland has addressed other issues as well. The Peaks Island Community Emergency Response Team was established by the Portland Fire Department, among the first CERT teams to be organized in Maine and the only one on an island.

The Fay Garman House was built to provide senior housing on land subsidized by the city, and HomeStart, established in 2005 by island volunteers to address affordable housing issues, has been nurtured by the city ever since.

All of these solutions specifically mentioned in the neighborhood plan to resolve issues on the island. In some cases they just happened to coincide with the city's own agenda, but in the 126-year history of secession on the island Portland has had a pretty good response record.

Since 1955, however, there have been four secession movements - in 1979, 1986, 1992 and 2006 - which were sparked by revaluations that jumped property taxes up significantly. These reactions to secession may turn out to be episodes in a different, more traditional battle, one over who gets to live on the island.

Peaks Island has gone from a fishing and farming village to an amusement park to a welfare island to a gentrified artist colony. All along, a number of families who have lived on the island for generations have quietly gone about their business, mostly working with their hands and at sea.

But with the fishing industry in trouble (lobstering is actually in crisis) the absurdly expensive real estate market has forced some of these families to leave. Bereft of their culture, the island may inextricably morph into an exclusive summer getaway for the ridiculously rich.

"I'm a third generation fireman," said Long Island's Chief Clarke. "We have a long tradition. There's not a lot that can say that about their community."

"There's fewer and fewer people with tradition, with history."

An important reason he cites for the success of Long Island's independence is the depth of history people have with each other. He said there are a number of families who have known each other for generations, either as kin or friends.

These relationships extend throughout the islands in Casco Bay.

"Stuff is passed down through generations. There are unwritten rules of how islands work. Everyone knows. If you're trying to keep a secret, you're in the wrong place. That's what makes it unique about living on an island."

Now, he said, the islands themselves are changing, "Look at the Diamonds. There's no history. They all come from somewhere else."

A lawyer on Peaks Island sees it differently. "We have a very diverse community, compared to other communities in Maine. Out here we've all over the map."

The character of the island will clearly change if families are unable to survive, and one of the biggest worries on the island has been about school closure. It concerns everyone on both sides of the secession issue.

"We wouldn't have moved here without the school," said a small business owner on Peaks Island who opposed secession. "We would secede if they closed the school."

Part 2 continues next month on the state of island schools and education.

The 2010 Island Phone Directory is here!

Cover design by Jamie Hogan

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The changing of the guard at the Peaks Island Health Center

By Marge Powers

There is a new face at the Peaks Island Health Center. Mary Grimaldi, a certified clinical assistant with InterMed, will replace Kate Crothers (formerly Radis) and Jim Lausier as office manager, but is also qualified to replace Kate Crothers (formerly Mory Grimaldi and Jim Lausier at the health clinic.

"This is a great thing for the Health Center," said Jim Lausier, who will remain on staff with InterMed. "Our providers, Lois Tiedeken and Kitty Gilbert, and our patients will benefit from Mary's extensive experience and skill set."

A graduate of Westbrook College, Mary has been with InterMed for over 18 years with experience in internal medicine. She lives in Westbrook and has a married daughter and an 8-month-old grandson.

Jim has worked for InterMed at various sites throughout greater Portland since February 2006 and currently staffs InterMed's Urgent Care Clinic on weekends. He also works at their main campus on Marginal Way and operates his family-owned garden center on Peaks Island.

Kate made great contributions to the Health Center during her tenure. She is currently attending nursing school and will be assigned to a role as "Clinical Care Representative" at InterMed's main campus on Marginal Way and will gain experience in medical practice settings on the mainland, starting with pediatrics.

Both Kate and Jim will be available to cover staffing needs here on the Island as the need may arise. Mary has been getting oriented in her new position on the island and is delighted to be here. Her hours are Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

How big is your tax refund?

By Nicole Evans

If you’re "lucky" enough to get a 2009 income tax refund, what do you plan to do with it? Will you use it to pay bills, or build your savings account?

If you’re getting a refund and want to increase the size of your paycheck next year, consider reducing the amount of tax withheld. By doing so, you receive this additional income throughout the year, providing some extra income to pay bills, establish or grow your savings.

To make this change, review your federal Form W-4 with your employer, making adjustments to ensure that you are not having too much or too little federal income tax withheld from your paycheck.

The IRS has created a Withholding Calculator to help you with these calculations. To get started, go to www.irs.gov and search for Withholding Calculator. For more information, refer to IRS Publication 919. To contact the IRS, dial 1-800-829-1040.

Put more money back in your pocket

To save even more money, and potentially get thousands of dollars back that you didn’t know you qualified for, take advantage of free tax preparation services available beginning in mid-January. You may qualify for up to $5,657 from the federal Earned Income Tax Credit.

Free tax preparation sites are offered throughout Portland to help families and individuals save on income tax filing fees and apply for tax credits that they may not realize they qualify for.

Information is kept confidential and those handling your financial information are certified by the IRS. Any individual or household who makes $50,000 a year or less qualifies.

Free tax preparation sites can also connect you to free programs and services in the community that help you make the most of your money. CASH Greater Portland tax sites will be open Saturday, Jan. 23 until March 6, with additional AARP Tax-Aide locations open throughout the tax season.

How to participate:
1. Collect tax statements from ALL income received in 2009 (W-2, 1099, 1098, SSA and unemployment).
2. Gather Social Security cards for each person you will claim on your tax return.
3. Dial 2-1-1 (it’s free) to find a tax site.
4. Call the tax site to schedule an appointment other qualifications may apply (interpreters available upon request).

CASH Greater Portland is a community coalition that empowers families and individuals to achieve long-term financial stability. For more information, visit www.cashg.org.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bank of America, Gorham Savings Bank, KeyBank and United Way of Greater Portland.

Nicole Evans is a Project Director with CASH Greater Portland, a partnership of community leaders and industry experts managed by United Way that enables families and individuals in Cumberland County to achieve financial stability. She can be contacted at nevans@unitedwaygp.org.
Harvey Johnson explains energy audits and home heating efficiency

BY KEVIN ATTRA

Harvey Johnson, co-owner of Thompson-Johnson Woodworks with his wife, Heather Thompson, attended a two-week training course last year in order to expand his skills as a home builder and renovator. "If filled in missing information in my mind about insulating and home efficiency," he said.

In November he gave a presentation to a group of about 20 people at the Peaks Island Children's Workshop, explaining how he investigates a building's heating efficiency and described the most effective things islanders can do to stay warm in their homes and save money.

An energy audit is a thorough survey of a building for air leaks, insulation gaps, structural issues, moisture problems and other conditions that affect the heating efficiency of a home. He charges $350 for the service, but Peaks Island Tax Assistance can subsidize the cost for qualified homeowners through its Energy Assistance Program.

The audit provides a list of priorities to the homeowner—basically the order of repairs from the most critical items to the finishing touches. He tries to keep his reports simple. "It can still be a little bit overwhelming when you get a list of fifty things," he said.

The first priority on Peaks Island is usually the crawl space or basement.

"They concern me from a health standpoint," he said, because of the cancer risk from radon, a naturally-occurring radioactive gas, and the health effects of moisture. "Typical Peaks Island crawl spaces are pretty scary." He said air leaks are the most significant cause of heat loss in buildings. They typically account for one-quarter of an annual heating bill, which means if you use four tanks of fuel to heat your house each year, one of them was spent heating the outside air.

Harvey uses a calibrated exhaust fan that creates a vacuum of 5 Paclie, the same effect as if a 25 mile-per-hour wind was blowing outside, to measure the air flow through the house in order to determine the volume of air leaking out. For every 1,000 cfm (cubic feet per minute) of air flow he said there is 100 square inches of leaky area.

"Some people argue that you don't need a blower door to find air leaks," he said, mentioning how one fellow followed his dog around because he knew that if it liked fresh air, wherever the dog chose to lie down, there would be an air leak.

With a simple household fan, some cardboard and duct tape, he said, anyone can rig up a way to find leaks. The only drawback is that they won't know how much air is being lost, so they won't know when they've found them all and can stop looking.

People often think having a leaky house is a good thing because, to a certain degree, air leak is necessary for health and safety reasons, but based on studies he's read Harvey said the best plan is to make the house as airtight as possible and then engineer the ventilation to control the exchange rate.

In most homes indoor air eventually gets replaced with outside air (though not necessarily "fresh" air). He said an exchange rate of 1/3 air change per hour is enough to keep moisture, and air home contaminants at a minimum. Higher exchange rates start to take a toll on the heating bill. "Most homes out here have air changes of two or three times an hour," he said.

He estimated that running a high-efficiency bathroom exhaust fan continuously could provide all the ventilation an air-tight home would ever need and cost only $75 a year, in comparison with $2,000 spent on heat lost to uncontrolled air leaks.

While his exhaust fan is running, Harvey goes from room to room with a hand-held thermal imaging camera and photographs the leaks, which appear as dark fingers emanating from cracks in the walls or from gaps around the doors and windows. The camera also acts like an X-ray machine, revealing cold spots inside wall cavities caused by framing members or by gaps in the insulation.

He starts in the attic where most air leaks occur, usually around plumbing pipes and electrical lines. "If you haven't been in your attic, I would encourage you to check it out," he said. When electricians and plumbers do repair work there, he said they often move insulation aside to get at the problem and never put it back. "They're worse than rodents," he said. It's a simple thing to put the insulation back in place, and will make a big difference in living comfort.

He added that homes with a wet crawl space or basement usually have mold in the attic. In winter, a chimney effect is created by heated air rising through the house, drawing air in from below ground and outside the building. "It's as easy to get to the attic," he said.

"To save money you might suggest a number of things people can do that will make a big difference and cost little money," he said. "If you want to maintain the bar on the furnace or boiler. "It's extremely important," he said, "but there's not a great resource out there for that. Both companies are slow to respond." He said running a 10- to 15-year-old boiler will give you equivalent service of a brand new high-efficiency unit. "Don't replace it if you don't need to."

Putting plastic over windows is another energy saver that works very well, he said. Replacing windows is extremely expensive. "To do it right would cost around $700 a piece, installed," he said. "As a result, just for the cost versus benefit it's not worth it."

The highest-efficiency windows currently available have an R4 insulating value, but he said if you seal the cracks around an old single pane unit with rope seal and put a skylight film of plastic over the frame, the insulation value will increase to R3 if it has a storm window on the outside. Add another layer of plastic, as long as there is an air space in between the two, and it will be an R4.

If the window is rotten or doesn't operate well he said it's probably better to replace it, but installers must insulate in the framing gaps inherent with any replacement window or door or the new unit won't improve the heating efficiency much at all.

For instance, in old windows that use each counterweight there is a large air pocket on either side of the jamb that must be filled with insulation before the new unit is installed, and the joint between the old frame and the new frame needs to be sealed with seal, something most installers don't do.

Shutting off unused rooms in winter can save a significant amount of money, as can setting back thermostats for hours when you're not using heat. He recommends using programmable thermostats for that purpose.

He also said the age-old practice of wrapping the outside of the house at ground level with plastic and sticking hay bales against it is very effective, though it doesn't happen out here much.

He encourages people to call him if they want more detailed information, and he does follow-up testing for free. "I love seeing the effects of these improvements, how much of a difference they make."
Portland Recreation Walk Program - Monday and Thursday mornings at 8:15 (meet at community building). Indoor stretching will take place in inclement weather.


Ping Pong Tuesdays - Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:50 at Peaks Island School gym; $2 per night. No program on Dec. 29 or on snow days. No program during school vacations, holidays, school snow days. For more info, contact Denise Macarone, Recreation Coordinator, at 766-2790, or visit portlandmaine.gov. Additional activities and updates can be found on island bulletin board.

Patty's Old Books - Free delivery to Peaks Island residents. Contact by email at pattygsbooks@gmail.com or call 212-8307.

Recycling Electronics - To recycle your old cell phones or music players, drop them in the collection box by the bulletin board at the library. They will be reconditioned and distributed to those who need them.

Do Not Call Registry - You may place residential phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry to restrict telemarketing calls. To register, call toll-free (888) 832-2222 or visit www.donotcall.gov. If registering by phone, you must call from the number that you wish to add to the list. It's free and does not expire. Only residential land lines may be added. The FCC enforces the Do Not Call Registry. To file a complaint, email ftcinfo@fcc.gov, or phone (888) 225-5322. You can also use the online complaint form at http://www.consumer.gov/complaints.htm.

Furniture & Building Materials Exchange - If you are discarding reusable furniture, cabinetry or building materials, please don't place them in the trash. Bring them to the Peaks Island recycling area at the Annex, 100 School St., and contact Sharon at 766-2066 to register. For more info, email chance@mainet.edu or call (207) 766-2636, or visit www.mbrc.org.

Community Food Pantry

Peak Island Health Center - The Health Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more info, call 766-2873.

Peaks Island Library

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Monday, Jan. 4  
Portland Recreation First Monday Fun: Preschoolers/Adults from 11 am to 12 pm in the community room. Bring your little ones for winter fun with songs, dances and crafts. Drop in anytime, no pre-registration.

Portland Recreation Afternoon Movie: GUARDIAN OF OLD MEN, 1 pm to 3 pm in the community room. Long-running feud between small-town Mennonite neighbors Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau takes on new proportions when redheaded Ann-Margret moves onto the block and is pursued by both of them.

Tuesday, Jan. 5  
Peaks Island Library First Tuesday Book Discussion: at 7 pm at the library, 129 Island Avenue. On The Country Literary Picnic For the People by Mary Ann Shaffer, Christina Fostet moderating. There is a waiting list, so call (766-5540) or email peakslib@portland.lib.me.us to reserve a library copy and include your library card number. Please contact the library if you have a copy to return.

Wednesday, Jan. 6  
Thrift Shop, 2 pm to 5 pm at the Brackett Memorial Church vestry. For info call the church office 766-5013.

Thursday, Jan. 7  
After-school Crafts - ALL AGES: 2:30 pm at the community room, where parents and students can make placemats, box covers and pins using old greeting cards.

Saturday, Jan. 9  
Circumnavigating the Blogosphere Workshop with Peaks Island author Catherine Valets for authors, artists, small business owners and others on managing an internet presence using readily available tools, 9 am to 12 pm in the Community Room. For more information, visit: http://peak.islandjumps.com, or contact Patricia Erikson, coordinator, at erikenso@mainesavvy.net (phone 766-5591). Sponsored by the Friends of the Peaks Island Branch Library.

Sunday, Jan. 10  
First Annual Tidewater Family Farm Winter Fest, Falmouth. Begins at 10 am with animal paw print tracking, treasure hunts using GPS tracking units, snowshoeing basics and folklore, a snowman building contest, storytelling around a bonfire and hot drinks and refreshments. FREE and open to the public. In collaboration with the Cumberland County Extension Association and University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information visit: http://www.extension.umaine.edu/tideometer/default.htm or call 760-4213.

Thursday, Jan. 14  
Arm Chair Traveling To Riverton Trolley Park - 1 pm in the community room. Relay the “good old days” as we step back into time (1896-1920) to experience the beauty and history of Riverton Trolley Park.

Friday, Jan. 15  
Open Mic Night - 7:30 pm at the Brackett Memorial Church. Stories, music, poetry, maybe dessert to share, and enjoy a fun-filled evening. For more info contact Sam Saltsontall, 899-0922.

Sunday, Jan. 17  
The Campbell's, New England's First Family of gospel music perform at the Peaks Island Baptist Church at 11 am.

Tuesday, Jan. 19  
Chili Loaf and Laddie Dinner at the Peaks Island Baptist Church from 5-7 pm. Menu of different kinds of chili, cornbread, salad, desserts, beverages and maybe a surprise or two. $6.50/adults, $2.50 children. Proceeds to benefit PITTA EA.

Thursday, Jan. 21  
Peaks Island School “Visioning” session at 6:30 pm at the school, as an outgrowth of the community meeting that Dr. Morse had here on Peaks in August. It is an opportunity for the Peaks Island community as stakeholders in the school to have a voice in crafting its future. The whole community of Peaks Island is invited and encouraged to participate. Tour Sue Sue of the Portland Public Schools. Dr. Morse is expected to attend. Please RSVP the school in advance at 766-2528.

Friday, Jan. 22  
Open House Belly Laughs - 11am to 3pm at the Community Center. Share a favorite story, joke or riddle and enjoy a good belly laugh! Old TV shows will be played on the big screen. Drop in anytime.

Su., Jan. 23 & Su., Jan. 30  
Children In Harmony on tour of choral music, Sun, More & Sun, at Woodford Congregational Church, 202 Woodford Street, Portland, Saturday 1 pm to 3pm. Tickets $12 to advance available at Nonesuch Books in South Portland and Longfellow Books and Starbird Music in Portland) $15 at the door, $10 seniors and students with ID. Children under 12 FREE. For more information, visit www. sinemore.com.

Monday, Jan. 25  
Laugh-a-minute Bingo - 10:45 am to 11:45 am in the Community Center. Bring a joke to share as we play for laughs (and prizes too).

Thursday, Jan. 28  
Brackett Memorial Church Supper, 5 pm to 7 pm. Free and open to everyone. Join us on the last Thursday of the month and enjoy food, community, and good company. Call Wally Fischer, 785-0923.

Monday, Feb. 1  
Portland Recreation First Monday Fun: Preschoolers/Adults from 11 am to 12 pm in the community room. Make Valentine Cards and gifts. ”Drop-in” attendance, pre-registration not required. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Tuesday, Feb. 2  
Peaks Island Library First Tuesday Book Discussion: at 7 pm in the Community Room. The Peaks Island School fourth- and fifth-graders will join the discussion of Annie and Percy O'Brien's book, After Camille Hone Hundred Years of Non-Violent Resistance. Families may want to read the book and attend together. Longfellow Books offers a 20% discount if you mention the book discussion.

Wednesday, Feb. 3  
 Thief Shop, 2 pm to 5 pm at the Brackett Memorial Church vestry. For info call the church office 766-5013.

Tuesday, Feb. 9  
Hearts and Romance Children's Valentine Program - Mrs. Crowley Rockwell will offer “Hearts a Plenty” at the Peaks Island library with stories and crafts for 5-6 year-olds at 6:30 pm. Children are welcome to come in pajamas, and they can be home at a reasonable time for bed.

Thursday, Feb. 11  
The Mostly Annual Valentine Poetry Read at 7 pm in the Community Room. If you read poetry, write poetry, or like to listen to poetry, this event is for you. Musicians are also encouraged to participate. Bring your favorite poetry, prose, or songs to share or come as an appreciative audience. Rich and decadent desserts are always welcome. Begun in 1994, this Peaks Island event is lovingly sponsored by the library. For more information or to lend a hand, call Suzanne Patton (766-2346) or the library (766-5545). If you are looking for a poem to read, we can help you find that as well.

Friday, Feb. 12  
Open House Valentine's Day Celebration - 11 am to 2 pm at the Community Center. Drop in anytime.

Tuesday, Feb. 16  
Spaghetti Loaf and Laddie Dinner at the Peaks Island Baptist Church from 5:30 pm. $6.50/adults, $2.50 children. Proceeds to benefit PITTA EA.

Thursday, Feb. 18  
Portland Recreation Afternoon Movie: UP (rated PG) at 1 pm in the community room. Animated comedy adventure about a 78-year-old man who ties ballast to his house and flies away, with an 8-year-old runaway.

Friday, Feb. 19  
Open Mic Night - 7:30 pm at the Brackett Memorial Church. Stories, music, poetry, maybe dessert to share, and enjoy a fun-filled evening. For more info contact Sam Saltsontall, 899-0922.

Thursday, Feb. 25  
Brackett Memorial Church Supper, 5 pm to 7 pm. Free and open to everyone. Join us on the last Thursday of the month and enjoy food, community, and good company. Call Wally Fischer, 785-0923.

Peaks Island Taxi News  
Special Advertisement

We're digging in for the long off-season and need your help to keep the taxi going. Take a ride today! Here's a great deal for the off-season:

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