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Kevin Attra

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Straw poll rekindles independence movement

BY KEVIN ATTRA

Although it was initially unclear who was behind the ballot conducted to discuss a potential separation from the city of Portland, more than 200 Peaks Island residents opted to vote, with 67 percent in favor. By comparison, the 2007 election sponsored by the city resulted in 58 percent of roughly 600 voters in favor.

The poll was organized by a handful of volunteers on Peaks Island, including a write-in candidate on the Peaks Island Council, Sid Gerard. It was also supported by Eric Eaton, also on the council.

Eaton sent out a public notice on the internet the previous Sunday which stated that the PIC was sponsoring the vote. He later rescinded that statement in an email on Dec. 8, saying, “That was an error on my part. The PIC never met to discuss the straw poll, or to organize it.”

The poll was conducted in the lobby of the MacVane Center on Saturday, Dec. 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., but people could also cast their votes online. Participants only had to be Peaks Island residents to qualify.

“Online did not work well,” said Jane Gerard, another organizer of the poll. “Identities were hard to make based on some of the email addresses used, so we did not count them. There was an awful lot of garbage. Some stated opinions but did not vote yes or no.”

She also added that one person voted online and also at the poll, and one voted online three times. Opponents of secession were apparently the most vociferous, according to Mrs. Gerard.

The final vote was 122-89 in favor of secession, with 96-48 at the polling station in favor, and 26-32 online votes opposing.

“Our plans are to resubmit a bill to secede from Portland using the old bill with some minor changes,” said Sid Gerard. “We know we'll have to do a financial analysis, but we don't see huge changes.”

He said that out of the estimated $5.5 million currently paid to the city in property taxes, $2.5 million is actually spent on the island itself, so he figures there's $3 million left to run the town.

State Representative Wendell Weener (D-Portland) was already lined up to sponsor the bill before the poll was conducted.

“His called us,” said Gerard, “we didn't call him.”

Representative Peter Stuckey (D-Portland) has also stated that he will support the bill, according to Gerard.

This latest secession effort was inspired last year when members of the previous PIC resigned en masse in August, after the election in November, a group met in early December and organized the straw vote.

“We were worried about getting the word out,” said Gerard, “but then the media descended on us.”

Ex-PIC members Suellen Roberts and Judy Phippuck, and four other islanders joined forces with the Gerards to organize the poll and help bring the bill to Augusta. The owners of House Island have

Public safety meeting dispel rumors

PPD members discuss communication and procedure on Peaks Island

BY KEVIN ATTRA

In the wake of rumors and innuendo concerning the police investigation of a house fire and home invasion in November that ended with the arrest of a former island resident, the Peaks Island Council held a community meeting in the ten on Peaks Island with representatives of the Portland Police Department Friday, Dec. 10.

Speaking for the Department were Senior Lead Officer Rob Lauterbach, Community Services Division Sergeant Chuck Libby and Commander Voss Mallick of the Uniform Operations Group.

Among 60 people attended the meeting including additional members of the police force.

The officers were asked to describe the standard procedures used in police work on the island, with specific questions about their response to the November break in.

The audience focused mainly on the police handling of that incident as well as a series of crimes over the summer, and many people also complained about communication problems with the department and inaccurate or missing police records.

There's been a lot of concern lately about what we on the island consider to be a crime spree,” said Councilor Eric Eaton, who moderated the discussion. “By mainland terms, it may not be a crime spree, but it feels like things have changed here.”

However, Cedrick Mallick said in response, “It would be categorized as that on the mainland, too, if we had a suspect that was involved in five or six felony crimes, especially crimes of violence like aggravated assault.”

Eaton asked specific questions that concerned the reduced police force on the island, mainly as it relates to delays in getting backup in dangerous situations.

Cedreck Mallick and Officer Lauterbach claimed that most calls for backup on the island are identical to those in Portland. In fact, the Peaks unit was given a Taser when the workforce was reduced, in part to address officer safety.

When asked if waiting for backup caused delays, Cedrick Mallick said that statement in an email on Dec. 8, saying, “That was an error on my part. The PIC never met to discuss the straw poll, or to organize it.”

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Corrections

Last month's cover photo was misidentified as part of the annual Holiday Concert. It was in fact a picture from last year's Swedish Saint Lucia pageant (Ellaine Hanley as Lucia) but had gotten misfiled. They are unrelated events. We apologize for the confusion.

Cleaneup on PILP land to start January

by ANN WHITMAN, PILP BOARD MEMBER

Last year's windstorm on Feb. 25 blew down hundreds of trees on Peaks Island. Many were uprooted and blown onto trees still standing. Immediately after the storm the city formally declared Peaks a "disaster area" in order to access money from a FEMA program to clean up the debris, considered a serious fire hazard on the island.

Beginning in January damaged trees will be removed from lands either owned by the Peaks Island Land Preserve or where PILP holds the conservation easement. FEMA will pay 75 percent of the cost, the state will pay 15 percent and the city will pay the remaining 10 percent.

Last June, Deputy Fire Chief Terry Webb, the city's liaison with FEMA, and professional foresters Rene Noel who will oversee the cleanup, held an informational meeting on Peaks Island.

They explained that the tree removal will be a commercial logging operation using heavy equipment - skidders, chainsaws, chippers and cranes - estimated to cost around $200,000. In hard-to-access areas logging roads may have to be built in order to reach the trees.

Trees damaged from the storm are a fire hazard, especially leaning trees, which are not in contact with the ground and therefore do not decay quickly. Instead, they dry out and become "ladders" for fire to reach up into the crowns of healthy trees.

The professional loggers will remove all dead, blown down and standing trees considered to be a hazard. Most of the material will be chipped or sold for biomass fuel.

From the HomeStart board of directors

by JANE BANQUER

The HomeStart board elected new officers at the annual meeting in December. Jane Banquer stepped down after two years as president, to be replaced by Ellen Mahoney. Don Webster was recognized in October for his longtime service as treasurer, and is leaving the board.

New officers are: Ellen Mahoney, president; Ginny Rynoing, vice president; Chris Pizer, treasurer and Suzy Kane continuing as secretary.

Earlier in the fall, the City Council approved the conditional rezone based on a draft version of the HomeStart proposal for the property at 18 Luther Street. The minimal changes in the final document were expected to be ratified as scrivener's errors at the Council meeting Jan. 3.

The existing house at 18 Luther Street has undergone some routine maintenance to be ready for new tenants this month.

HomeStart is working to finalize a relationship that will convey the two new houses proposed for the site to Community Housing of Maine, which will own and manage them as rental properties. This will fulfill HomeStart's goal to continuously seek affordable housing solutions for islanders while not directly managing rentals.

An application is also being readied for a Maine State Housing Authority grant of $350,000 from the 2010 Affordable Housing Initiative for Maine Island Program. Applications are available for current and future Start housing opportunities at the library or www.399presumpscot.org. Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Far Garman Senior Center. The public is invited to participate.
asked to be included as well. The previous bill had been the work of the Island Independence Committee, which had formed specifically for that purpose. After the bill was killed in the state legislature and the PIC, formed instead, the PIC disbanded. "A lot of former PIC people don't agree with what we're doing," said Gerard.

One exception is Russ Edwards who was very active in the previous effort. "We're redrafting the old bill," he said "Only a couple of things will be different, like dates." Edwards has felt that "he'd like to see the 911 call log stored for a medical emergency and not appear on the police log. Serves me right. I missed something as an example of inaccurate or incomplete records.

As a result, the initial 911 call was logged in a medical emergency and did not appear on the police log. Logically, the people are under the impression that it was very active in the previous effort. She added: "Russ Edwards said he asked to speak with a sergeant, lieutenant, go to a supervisor. "We'll find out why that officer isn't calling you back. That's just patently unacceptable.

Other police resources include Jenelle Bechard, the community policing coordinator for the island and Eastbayes. They were introduced at the meeting. Her office is at 44 Bay Street, Portland, phone: 671-3516.

An online crime mapping service at policenorlemaine.com is also available that shows there are communities where there have been committed each month in each of the seven city sectors having senior lead officers.

According to Candie Mallock, the MapVista software program, designed by Geographic Technologies Group, just came online in December and is not yet fully functional. For example, the East End area has been entirely mapped. So far, data for the island, sector 7, has not been posted. "It's not going to map every crime," he said. "It's handled it was last Friday." We find press release and announced the roll out of it, and we probably should have played it a little bit more before we did that.

The newest business on Long Island

BY JUDITH MCALLISTER

Capt. Perry’s Café, a new eating establishment on Long Island, has location, location and a beautiful view. It also has a very engaging proprietor and an interesting, delicious, flexible menu. I sat with Tony Donovan when he wasn’t pumping up to cook or serve, on a recent Saturday to ask about the newest business on Long Island.

Your career is caretaker and real estate. What attracted you to the restaurant business?

Since the 1970s I have thrown beach parties on the island for our good friends from other islands. Sometimes a J. Alves from Peaks helped assemble the food and characters. Some readers may recall the famous "Beer, Beet and Belch Bash". And my wife’s family used to operate the largest clamshells business in Casco Bay.

They hosted the Portland Centennial Celebration of 1876 for over 1,500 guests. So, feeding and entertaining people on the island was familiar territory. I knew we needed a base and a commercial kitchen to continue this and that was the real purpose for this café. Owning this land, as the busiest user in the center of the island commercial district, is a bonus.

How did you come up with this design? It has the flavor of old and new.

There is a story about the original owner of this property, Capt. Perry, but I’ll save that for another interview. The Perry family was part of the island business community from the 1870s. I wanted to save the original building, but it wouldn’t work, so I combined some of the old flavor with soil to soil windows. I can stand in one spot and I actually have inside windows that let me look right through the building to Peaks Island. The look of the café evolved as it was being built. By the way, I built this myself but had a lot of help from my friends.

Have you changed the menu since? Well actually there isn’t a menu yet — it’s all in my head. We have some basics and then we do a weekly special. We are trying out a variety of offerings. Our breakfasts are centered on these mainstays.

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[Contact information]

They have a few things we want to try. One of the things I look forward to each weekend morning is when I meet the 6:30 a.m. ferry to trade coffee and fresh muffins with the crew, for copies of the New York, Boston and Portland papers.

We’re all in this together, and this is a lot of fun. The islands tend to attract good people in good moods, so when you come into the café, expect a few laughs and a few stories. We are open year-round, rain or shine or sleet or the inevitable Nor’easter.

As Capt. Perry’s Cafe develops, Tony Malock will add other updates to this list of offerings. He showcased two local artists during the Christmas season. Musicians could be added to the mix as business grows. As you’re planning an event that you could hold at the café, email him at support@mapvista.net.
Lines from Casco Bay

BY CHRIS HOPPIN

Many people start off a New Year with resolutions to get more involved in new projects and this column offers some possibilities for readers to consider. Part-time and year-round islanders make dozens of organizations work successfully to serve all islanders throughout the year.

The Island Times regularly reports on their activities and each year the Island Phone Directory lists virtually all of them with contact information. Each of the Casco Bay islands also includes websites, blogs, Facebook pages and email lists operated by islanders to share information about their programs and to solicit participation in their events.

Just before the holidays, I asked people on my email list to describe their organizations, its needs and contact information. Here’s a sample of their replies, presented in no particular order. I look forward to providing more information about other organizations as I hear from them in the future.

The Peaks Island Music Association sponsors concerts throughout the year at Brackett Memorial Church and the Fifth Maine. Director Faith York says PIMA regularly seeks help setting up and taking down for concerts in the summer time. She adds they have four date a year - all Wednesday nights and occasionally other events such as the performances by the Maryland State Boychoir that need a few hands. She is at 766-5706 or PFM@di-aol.com.

The Peaks Island Prayer Shawl Ministry uses their knitting by Rebecca Stephens. The group will teach crocheting and knitting and also welcome experienced hands. They meet Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. and has produced more than 400 shawls. Contact Emily Sherwood at 766-5345 for more information.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) receives training in responding to emergencies and backs up the Portland Fire Department when danger strikes. The team will sponsor additional CPR training this winter on Peaks Island. It is also using a grant from the Peaks Island Fund to acquire portable electric power generators to supplement units at the Faye Garman House and Dogo Macsafe Community Center. Contact Al Blue at 766-0097 or 781-962-2862.

The Fifth Maine Regiment Museum is a nationally-recognized historic site that is not only a Civil War memorial but also works to preserve the history of Peaks Island, and serves as a gathering place for the community. There are many opportunities for new volunteers to help during community meals, Wednesday evening programs and the Art on the Porch event, and by performing minor repairs and maintenance, cating for its collection of historic artifacts and, most importantly, greeting the thousands of visitors who come each year to learn about the Civil War and Peaks Island.

Director/Curator Kim Macsafe says, “No experience necessary! We provide training.” Contact her at fifthmaine@juno.com or 207-332-4490 for more information.

Friends of the TEA (Trefethen Evergreen Improvement Association) collect funds to enable all Peaks Island children to attend tennis, sailing and day camp programs this summer. They also sponsor art lessons in different media each week. The TEA will use a Peaks Island fund grant to offer counseling programs for "twinsters" this summer. Contact Stephanie Castle at 766-2254 or scastle@aol.com.

The Peaks Island Fund is an endowment organization that raises funds to assist other 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organizations. A panel of volunteer residents evaluate requests for funding to determine how money will be distributed. Details are on the website at peaksislandfund.org or by calling Bill Zimmerman at 766-7061.

Saturday Night Movies, a program of the Friends of the Peaks Island Library, can always use more projectionists for both the 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. showings. If you would like to show movies or for more information about what’s involved, contact movie coordinator Paul Conley at 766-2070 or precy@comcast.net.

The Peaks Island Baptist Church

Sunday 10:00 AM Bible Study
11:00 AM Worship Service
Prayer Meetings Wed. 6 PM

THE TALE OF A PRODIGAL CRIME

BY JEFF AND LIBRA CUSACK

We loved our silly golf cart. When our family or friends came over, they loved our golf cart. It became a symbol of our happy island life. Riding with the wind in your hair. What better? People rode around in their "fun cars" and that’s great, but nothing beats tooling around in a golf cart.

Over the five years that we’ve lived on Peaks Island, the golf cart was taken (stolen) for joyrides more than half a dozen times, but it was always found somewhere on the island the next day and it looked unharmed—a blessing, but somewhat expected due to the fact that all keys to their make of golf cart are the same.

But this time, on a morning this past September, the cart had been taken and found in the bay off of the boat launch at Centennial Beach.

We immediately put up a sign down from: "$200 for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator.”

A young man came forward and gave us the names of two young men from Portland that he had witnessed on our cart. When we brought this information to an officer on Peaks Island (and we even looked these guys up on Facebook and printed out their information), he said there was nothing he could do.

We would not take no for an answer. We contacted the chief of police in Portland and the case was given to a detective in town.

It had just been about three months since the golf cart tragedy. After many interviews with the perps, and a lot of patience and tenacity on the part of the detective, the offender who had actually driven the golf cart into the water was given up and he decided to pay restitution rather than go to trial for a felony.

We had the check in hand on Dec. 6 and can’t wait to replace our silly golf cart with a new one and once again feel the wind on our hair.

Peaks Island Baptist Church

I was born in 1921, in the Roaring Twenties, so there's a long span of years, and during that time I think I've seen just about anything and everything that life can throw at you, you know, whether it be peace or wartime.

As far as my part of it was concerned, after high school I got caught up in World War II, found myself in a new phase of psychological warfare, carrying on in conjunction with the British. I was born in 1921, in the Roaring Twenties, so there's a long span of years, and during that time I think I've seen just about anything and everything that life can throw at you, you know, whether it be peace or wartime.

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Letters

To Islanders,

Negotiations between the CBTD board of directors and the District employees that commenced in January of ‘09 continue to cripple the morale of Casco Bay Lines employees and captain, I feel like the action could have eradicated a once-healthy relationship between management and employees. I believe that the board is represented by individual agendas and disregards the true feelings of the Island community.

To start, I would like to present you with the proposal your board has presented to us: 6 percent for 2009, 8 percent for 2010, and 1 percent 2011. This means a 13-cent per hour wage increase for deckhands next year. To add insult to injury, they also want to cut our pension in half. This comes during the best financial years Casco Bay Lines has ever had. One would think with an offer this small, financial suffering would be company-wide. Sadly it isn’t.

In a board vote that passed earlier this month our general manager received a $5,000 bonus in what can be described as a week of normal operations. Personally, I describe it as wide-sparrowed: the employees are still without a contract after two years.

To counter these problems, I have proposed a plan where the company pays and for our cost of living increase. So far our efforts have been the same results as before. I will now propose all our deckhands, bar tenders and helmsman to look into a pension that will both save the economy and provide a retirement.

Dear Islanders,

My brother Graham and I grew up on Peaks Island. Our parents and grandparents have lived on Peaks for almost two years. What the employees came to the negotiating table with last spring was a modest cost-of-living increase. The board offered a one percent increase, or seven cents, to put together a $21,030,000 budget for the hourly wage of deckhands next year. The board’s reason: The District is in debt, and the Great Recession is taking its toll on revenue. Your checks, I completely disagree in the face of reality.

Fuel savings from last year due to modestly reducing engine RPMs helped cut our moneys for the District to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars (an idea practiced and executed by

From the CBTD board President

Dear fellow Casco Bay Islanders,

Once again we understand that you may have recently received mailings from our unionized workers at CBTD. We want to explain their perspective on the current status of negotiations regarding their contract. We regret that the union employees have not been kept on the normal procedures previously followed by Maine law for settling the contract and have instead decided to go public.

Since they have, and since some of their information has been over-simplified or mistracted, we are offering a more comprehensive perspective on many of the points raised by the workers.

We operate a safe and efficient transportation system and our employees work closely with the operation. Obviously the challenge your elected board has is to maintain current service levels without a rate increase while offering competitive wages and benefits to our employees. We are confident that the board has spent a great deal of time and has given thoughtful consideration to both service levels and the needs of our employees.

You should not be concerned that the mediation will be interrupted during this labor dispute. Employees are not permitted by Maine law to receive strike or strike. We are confident our employees will obey the law and will continue to provide the best service possible.

CBTD’s board of directors will continue to follow the process prescribed by law and mediate the dispute. Employees are not permitted by Maine law to receive strike or strike. We are confident our employees will obey the law and will continue to provide the best service possible.

Because an agreement could not be reached, both parties agreed to go to mediation. At mediation an agreement also could not be reached, but the board and CBTD are committed to work together for a mutually beneficial agreement.

Recently the union rejected a settlement offer from the mediator. Consequently, the parties participated in a second and final day of arbitration on Dec. 17. The arbitrator’s ruling is expected to be in the next 10 days.

1) Difficult times cause difficult bargaining. As you know, it is taking a very long time to emerge from one of the worst economic our country has ever experienced. During the past year, Maine workers in private and public and federal and university employees have all experienced the effects of budget cuts and layoffs. There have been numerous examples of workforce reductions, “furlough days,” reductions in hours and overtime, elimination of benefits and certainly wage freezes. At CBTD there is competitive pay, as close to job security as possible and ample overtime opportunities. From 2000 to 2008, the consumer price index increased 26 percent. However, this year wages as awarded to our employees has increased 2.5 percent, or 47 percent, depending on the position. At the end of this last year CBTD had a record balance of $240,000.

2) Generous benefits - last year CBTD contributed 82 percent of the total cost of medical insurance for the employees (at $2,000). This has not been discussed.

The cost of medical insurance is a national issue and when compared to workers in the public and private sector, this approach seems fair and consistent. In addition to health care, CBTD pays 100 percent of the cost of dental and life insurance. CBTD also provides uniforms and safety shoes as well as simple benefits.

3) Our economy is a community newspaper covering the islands in Casco Bay. We welcome birth, engagement and wedding announcements; obituaries; notice of community events; and letters to the editor. Please try to keep letters to 300 words or less. We reserve the right to edit all material. The newspaper is available by mail for $23 a year. Address checks to Island Times. Our mailing address is 120 Main Street, Peaks Island, Maine 04108. To reach Kevin Attra, call (207) 650-3016 or e-mail Kevin@islandtimes.org. For ad rates visit our website at www.islandtimes.org.

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2010 Year in Review

It’s amazing to think, but here we are at the end of another year—and what a year it has been, both in Washington and in Maine. We’ve passed historic legislation, seen a seven year war begin to wind down, and have had some critical victories for Maine jobs. However, too many Maine families continue to struggle in the down economy, and getting more folks back to work will be my top priority in 2011.

Historic legislation

I’m proud that we were able to pass several pieces of historic, legislation that will help working families, protect the economy and put service ahead of discrimination.

After months of debate, I voted in favor of health care reforms that will end the worst practices of insurance companies like dropping coverage when you get sick.

I’m also proud that we have passed the biggest reforms of Wall Street since the Great Depression. This legislation is critical in ending irresponsible practices that put our country at risk and finally gives consumers an advocate to keep Wall Street accountable.

And just this month, we finally brought an end to a 17-year policy of discrimination by repealing Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell. After hours of debate, numerous studies, and disturbing stories of how this policy has weakened our defense, Congress finally reached a point where it could no longer avoid the issue. The vote will restore the military’s key values of honesty and loyalty by welcoming thousands of service members who would have been denied for reasons that had nothing to do with their capabilities or patriotism.

Protecting and creating Maine jobs

In 2010, we were able to make some critical investments in Maine that will protect jobs in the near term and create opportunities for more in the long term.

Work has already begun on extending the Downeast rail line to Brunswick, which will put development along the line. The state’s broadband structure is being brought up to date so Mainers can compete in the technology-driven economy. And in August, I accompanied the Obama Administration’s top economic development official on a tour of Southern Maine.

Work continued to help the Midcoast deal with the closure of Brunswick Naval Air Station. Several developments...
YOGA FOR LIFE
A yogic perspective on health and simple living
BY REBECCA JOHANNA STEPHANS

Rebecca Johann Stephans is on sabbatical until the spring equinox. She is unplugging from phone and email until then. Keep breathing!

If I were in charge of the educational system, every child would study yoga and martial arts beginning in first grade. Discipline practices would give them solid, effective resources with which to address the ordinary challenges of growing up. These studies would also imprint them with a foundation of healthy patterns from a very early age, rather than trying to start from scratch later in life.

One New Year's Eve many years ago, rather than making resolutions I decided to hold a question: "Why do I so often reject the practices that nurture me, and choose behaviors that sabotage my well being?" I held that question for a number of years before a potential answer surfaced.

Yoga is a Sanskrit word that literally translates as "to yoke together", often interpreted as union or harmony. We seek to align our physical and energy systems in a way that brings balance, vitality and peace. Without an organizing influence, systems tend toward disarray. With the practice of yoga, we return again and again to steadiness and ease.

Many of us are either hard-wired at birth or trained from a very early age to recognize internal chaos as the norm. When they finally experience true balance and peace, some folks respond with joy and relief. Others, however, are beset with anxiety and terror. Those of us who originally felt stillness and harmony have a long healing road ahead.

I believe we generally seek congruence between our internal world and our external circumstances. If our inner world is in chaos, we tend to keep sabotaging the external to maintain some form of vanity. Addictive behavior is just one of many ways these disruptions manifest. I have so often seen myself and others confound the ones who love us with behaviors that go against our best instincts and intentions.

One of my most memorable experiences from an organic farming apprenticeship was pulling witch grass from garden plots. When extracting witch grass, known for its roots that grow strong and deep with a complex web of offshoots, if you leave the tiniest piece of root a whole new system will regenerate. Changing your energetic hardwiring is much like eradicating witch grass roots from a garden; it requires a long term commitment to vigilance and an acceptance of inevitable set-backs.

The first step in any program of adjusting behavior is awareness. We must find the courage to see our patterns clearly. The next step is compassionate acceptance. Self-hatred only keeps us mired in the damaging behavior. If you have hurt yourself and the ones you love, embracing yourself with loving kindness feels uncomfortable at first, but ultimately it keeps you safe from further harm and motivates genuine change.

From a yogic perspective, being wired for addiction or any other disruptive behavior is not a curse, but a motivation to heal. In his Don Juan books, Carlos Castaneda uses the term "petty tyrant" to describe a tormentor – someone or something with power over us and the capacity to irritate us to distraction. Rather than try to rid ourselves of the petty tyrant, Castaneda suggests that we need the tormentor to keep us from becoming complacent.

Learning to embrace your tormentor is an advanced practice indeed, and one that I highly recommend. Over the years I have finally come to accept that my own journey with addiction and depression has inspired me to seek teachers and practices that have enhanced my joy exponentially. I understand that I will continue to address these patterns for the rest of my life and that is okay with me. They are the thorns in my side, the petty tyrants that keep me awake and growing.

Below I offer a poem that addresses the agony and revelations of this path that I walk.

**August, 2008: Undertow**

Someone who is not me

hates him

labels him

Someone who is not me

reads the warning sign:

no swimming on this beach

retreats to safety.

Someone who is not me

takes a bite

poisonous fruit

gags and spits it out

remembers next time

disturbed.

Someone who is not me

feels the tremors

his psyche aching, vibrating

disturbed.

responds with aversion

keeps a respectful distance.

Someone who is not me

decides to run a marathon

trains

This someone

who is me

understands the warning

to be invisible

ignores the sign

gobbles the fruit

welcomes his kiss

encounters the wall every day

involuntarily

like Sisyphus and his boulder cursed

every time.

It is not boldness

or the adventurer spirit

that lures me into danger

starts me against the wall

impels me to leap

again and again

into the abyss.

It is an irresistible pull

the undertow

seductive fantasy love

the illusion.

this time will be

different

the dark, deadly promise of addiction.

For days or months,

I resist.

I pray.

I seek the light.

Breath by breath

hour by hour

building core strength

around a gaping wound.

Finding my balance

feeling alive

looking good

dancing with joy.

Until one day

just the right (or wrong) combination

fatigue

despair.

I slip.

Succumbing to envy and desire

I forget to breathe

tire of the practice.

Maintaining center is so hard

too hard.

The song beckons

fruit tastes so sweet

euphoric recall.

kisses so tender

it's a Judas kiss.

I believe myself when I say:

Just this once!

I'll get back on track - tomorrow.

Giggle at the warning signs

I scoff at the cautios ones.

Ecstatic now

High on delusion

I give up the fight

Flying myself in

Go for the wild ride.

Perhaps the ocean will

swallow me whole

or beat me, pierce me

bush me again and again

onto the jagged rocks

until I sink bloody and broken.

But if I am spared

If I'm flung back

gaping and exhausted

onto the sand

will I feel a sweet relief?

The blessing of another chance?

Or the deep

raging loneliness

of regret.

Rebecca Johann Stephans, Kripalu Certified Yoga Teacher since 1994, has 23 years experience in the healing arts.
**Something Different** - by Anna Tierney

For each set of three words below, the same three-letter word can be inserted inside each string of letters (but not affixed at the beginning or end) to create a longer word. For example, the word AND can be inserted into MATE, ORGY, and SLOT to form MANDATE, ORGANDY, and SANDLOT. Write the three newly formed words in the spaces provided.

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**Ferry Convenient**

Island-baked pizza, great food to travel, and only steps away from the terminal.

94 Commercial Street, Portland  207 874.2539

*Serving extraordinary pub fare & pizza from 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.*
PLANETS

In the morning, tiny Mercury rises just before the sun and is in good position for viewing, just above the ocean, the first half of January. Bright-white Venus is up very high at sunrise all month, and you can almost see its half-moon shape without binoculars. Golden Saturn, having risen around midnight, is high in the southern sky at dawn. In the evening, ruddy Mars sets right after sunset, too low to see. Mighty-white Jupiter still dominates the southwestern sky at sunset, with blue Uranus lined up just 1/4 above it. Green Neptune is now setting just as the sky gets dark.

STARS & 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 now 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 binoculars. Below them the V-shaped Hyades frames the head of Taurus, the Bull, with reddish Aldebaran staring down Orion, the Hunter. Close to the horizon is Sirius, the bright eye of the Big Dog, Canis Major, with Procyon the bright star in Canis Minor due east of it.

ALMANAC

Jan. 1- Sunrise is at 7:15 a.m., sunset is at 4:14 p.m., which makes for short days and long nights. Those few who are up before dawn today can look east and see the waning crescent moon slicing between Venus and Mercury.
Jan. 2- An even thinner crescent moon points above and left to Mercury.
Jan. 3- Tonight a telescope will show Uranus almost directly in line behind Jupiter. Earth reaches perihelion (closest to the sun) at 2 p.m. today. The Quadrantid meteor shower peaks at 8 p.m. tonight, with the radar blip the northeast sky. The moon’s down so it’s not a factor in watching them, but the temp is down, too, so cold it will be. Fortunately, binoculars are unnecessary.
Jan. 4- New moon at 4:03 a.m. will produce a solar eclipse for those on the other side of Earth.
Jan. 9- Tonight the waxing crescent moon points left to Jupiter.
Jan. 10- The moon at apogee so it will look small.
Jan. 12- First-quarter moon is high at sunset and signals great moonscapes-viewing for the next week. best right along the shadow line.
Jan. 19- A big, full “Wolf” moon sets over town at 6:47 a.m. and rises again out of the ocean at 4:40 p.m.
Jan. 22- The moon at perigee and just past full, so tides are astronomically high, with 12.8 feet separating high and low.
Jan. 26- Last-quarter moon is high at sunrise.
Jan. 30- This morning around 6 a.m., the waning crescent moon points up to Venus.
Jan. 31- Sunrise is now at 6:59 a.m. and sunset is at 4:49 p.m., so we’ve gained almost an hour of sunlight this month along.

STAR GAZING

by Mike Richards

Illustration by Jamie Hogan
Like most people who have photo collections, the Fifth Maine has a number of mystery photos — little, if any, identification or description. Here are a few. Perhaps someone can shed light on them.

**Peaks Island Racer**

*ABOVE:* The image of the Peaks Island Racer arrived via email from a man from out of state who was settling a relative’s estate. He had never been to Peaks but had heard stories about the island from his relative. The racer or sled has an unusual design. It has a steering wheel mounted on a triangular shaped box that is probably crafted of wood and what appears to be a sort of brake controlled by a handle at the rear right hand side.

**A Possible Hotel?**

*BOTTOM:* The granddaughter of Alfred Benjamin, Sr. sent the photo of him taken about 1900 by H.N. Brackett, Peaks Island, ME. Attached to his jacket lapel is what may be a ribbon of some sort. He is holding what could be a pocket watch in his right hand. Was he attending a company outing or military reunion on the island? Where on the island was the photo taken?

Mysteries like these make the case for always identifying photos. The recommended method is write on the back with a No. 2 pencil any identifying information. Never use ink — it can bleed through or damage the paper on which the photo is printed. Identifying photos now may not seem important but your children and grandchildren will be happy that you did.

**HELP PRESERVE WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT PEAKS.**

Peaks Island is a truly special place, with its rocky shores, its woodlands and its saltflats. Your membership (only $15 individual/$25 family) and your donation are crucial in helping us maintain open space.

Join today. Help preserve what we love about Peaks.
LETTERS from page 6

the captains, yet they never received any recognition for it.) Increased ridership this summer due to great weather meant that the District enjoyed record-setting profits. We have had way too many reports telling us what was spent. Why? The board have brought in professionals over $112,000 in cost savings, putting the Islander to file a freedom of information request, and pretty much "buried" them. They were not willing to follow the conclusions that they spent a lot of your money on to get! The answers I believe in many ways will explain how we have reached our present contractual situation. Back in 2003, I joined the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves. Since those days of boot camp, I have made it all the way up to the pinnacle of the enlisted ranks, I'm a master chief. Last year 25% of all enlisted fighting the employees, and pretty much treated fairly. Loyal employees try to put my daughter on the team to go home. I'm telling you this so that hopefully you can realize that Uncle Sam has spent a lot of money to ask for that unemployment, and therefore now places a lot of responsibility as well as trust in me. I am checked on at an expert in my field, I am an important person who is paid to be a professional mentor to the junior officers, and the senior officers seek my advice as we work together.

Back to communications at CBITD. The workforce has increased and the board with over $12,000,000 in cost savings ideas last year. I believe it was just before Ms. Debo went on her $46,000 "please go away and be quiet" six-month terminal leave. It looks like it will be 2011 before we get anything on our ideas that sound like good communications!

We have to keep on with the employees for the ticket price tag for the future! We have to keep on the contracts, and counting. I reference this note because of the labor issues but because of the communication angle to it. Employees are being told by the right to ask for that information, did ask and received no answers to their queries. They were simply trying to compare what was budgeted each year with what was spent. (It's the Islander's money afterall)

Weeks later, it finally took a couple of Islanders to file a freedom of information act request for this information. Who got this information at that. Again, does this sound like proper communications?

Well, this letter is getting longer than I intended, so I will wrap it up with a last comment/issue. Islanders and employees shouldn't get run around when asking questions of their elected officials, the board, and of the management. Proper and effective communication is vital to the health, growth and future of any company, its employees and customers. We have to help the CBITD with many more of these issues, and we don't need any more. We need to find a way to get management and board directors to follow the conclusions that have been made public. The real question is, How?

Thank you for your time.

Senator Captain John J. Fass

CBITD from page 9

makes a contribution over and above wages to each employee's pension account of 15 percent of wages plus another 7.65 percent for social security (the annual contributions are $250,000). This is a very significant and valuable benefit. When viewed in total, these ancillary benefits are more than fair and competitive.

3) CBITD does not have a surplus of cash. As of March 31, 2008, CBITD had accumulated losses of $797,173, putting CBITD ability to borrow at significant risk. As of March 31, 2009 these losses had been reduced to $723,528, which is certainly an improvement, but there is still a long way to go to emerge from years of operating at a deficit, which has resulted in the CBITD borrowing as much as $925,000. This debt has been necessary for a majority of each year and has been as high as 20 percent of the operating budget. This is not sustainable.

4) Wage increases lead to Fare Increases - Labor expense represents 31 percent of CBITD's total expense. Vessel operations (capital, maintenance and fuel) represent 22 percent of the total expense. Until we can significantly reduce the cost of short-term debt we do not see how one can increase labor without a reduction in service, or an increase in fares.

We continue to feel that given the current economic conditions and sensitivities on fares, the board doesn't want to consider unless it's an emergency. The board has reached pretty much the same understanding proper and effective forms of communication. Employees, please feel free to contact your Island representative. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your patience in this matter.

Patrick Flynn
President, CBITD board of directors

Position Available

2011 ACE Summer Program Director

Cliff Island Corporation for Athletics, Conservation, and Education ("ACE") is seeking a Summer Program Director for our sixteenth Program season. A non-profit organization founded in 1977, ACE has obtained and stewarded open space properties on Cliff Island for the benefit of Island community members and their guests for active and passive recreation. We provide support to the Cliff Island Public School in both its academic and athletic programs. We have also provided various programs of educational and entertainment content for our entire community which expand upon and enrich the experience of living on an off-shore island.

Please provide by email a resume with cover letter to: rbarker@maine.net, or by mail mail to: Roger Berle -- 11 Oasis Landing, Falmouth, Maine 04105-1649. Phone questions to Roger Berle at 207-369-4211.

The Position: Since the early 1990s, ACE has engaged a young person to organize and run a varied Summer Program on Cliff Island. The Summer Program includes free, voluntary activities for islanders and guests of ages from 8 to 80. There have been arts and crafts with instruction, nature and history walks, trips to other islands around Casco Bay, community service projects, social and eating occasions, team-building, outreach to and hosting of off-island educational institutions, accessing events and resources in Portland, evening gatherings and camp-outs, and many other activities. The goal is to challenge the Islanders to think outside the box — without over-programming. We continue to seek to balance our offerings with lots of time to just enjoy Cliff on one's own.

The candidate must live on Cliff Island from roughly June 25 through Aug. 25. S/he must have good people skills, demonstrate group organization skills and have a positive, energetic and enthusiastic and strong with follow-through be able to articulate definitions' experiences as well as generate fresh ideas; and, be self-motivated as well as able to take direction. Housing available.

including an airplane manufacturer and a composite materials technology center—have lined up to use the base, which is very exciting news.

We've also won some critical fights to keep Maine's economy from losing ground. After the entire state delegation testified on behalf of our paper manufacturers, we took steps to level the playing field for China, which has been unfairly flooding the paper market. In York County, we've secured funds to help rebuild Memorial Bridge, a critical link for businesses in Kittery and Portsmouth. And for working waterfronts, I've fought for responsible regulations that don't handicap our coastal communities or unfairly burden our fishermen.

Inspiring acts of Mainers

As your Representative in Congress, it was with great pride that I watched Mainers step up to respond in times of tragedy. After an earthquake rocked the island of Haiti, thousands of Mainers donated to relief efforts and came to help, including a salvage crew from Gortum who heaved stormers and other hurdles to deliver a ship of supplies.

Though our state isn't able to help them through bureaucratic red tape on their journey.

Just like every year, thousands of brave men and women answered the call to serve our country in 2010. Though the year was difficult, the end of combat operations in Iraq, their service continues there and in Afghanistan. Our thoughts and prayers this season are with the families of those who gave their lives for their country this year.

May you all peace and happiness in the coming year.
**Art Roamings**

**BY JAMIE HOGAN**

**Earth, Wind and Fire**

"Peaks Island is the belly button of the universe," said Peg Astarita recently, one of her many signature phrases. Peaks is a community with unpredictable connections, no doubt, and a creative one, at that. The Art Walks have established over a dozen studios open to the public, allowing visitors to see where art is made.

But only one welcomes people to create their own work. Peg Astarita’s website (www.pegspolset.com) says "open for fun" and that sums up her studio space open to the public, allowing everyone else’s pencils are having the approach.

"I try to be flexible for whatever people’s needs are," said Peg. She’s hosted mosaic parties, ornament making, held outdoor barrel firings, and a creative one, that. The Arc creates their own work. Peg Astarita’s group with wet globs of clay. While people’s needs are," said Peg. She’s imobcing.

In 2001, she took her first pottery class at Portland Pottery with two other island friends. "I’ve been there ever since," she said. "I take classes to have access to 50 pounds of clay and a high fire kiln, and to see other people’s work. It’s a good deal. Seeing what other people do is very stimulating. You see it all there."

Two years later, Peg and Art finished a spacious room over the garage. She received a free pottery wheel from a friend in Portland, Oregon about the same time that a kiln came her way via another friend’s uncle. "It was divine intervention. I heard every word Divine was telling me," said Peg. She established her pottery studio, Peg’s Pots, etc. in 2003. She began participating in island craft fairs and finding buyers for her earthy bowls, mugs, and butter dishes. She delights in all natural shapes, creating functional ceramics with an embedded spirit, such as birds, whistles, drums, fish vases, goddess figures reaching to the sky.

About five years ago, Peg started teaching a group of home-schooled children in her studio, and hosting parties. She has on hand a variety of bisque-ware pieces, clay slip that has been formed in plaster molds and fired once. Visitors can paint these with glazes, and Peg fires them again after giving them a clear glaze. Recently she hosted a dozen 13-year-old girls for a birthday party. Eda French of Portland said, "I loved working at Peg’s pottery! It was so much fun! Peg was super nice and very helpful. It was nice that I could choose a piece of pottery and paint whatever I wanted. I also loved Peg’s doggie!" (Peg and Art’s English sheep hound, Sadie, makes regular and exuberant visits to the studio.)

Matt Barnes, who once ran a professional tile-making studio, said, "I don’t know an islander who smiles more. Peg is generous with her time, opinions, and honesty." Matt will be using Peg’s studio to complete a recent commission for ceramic dinnerware. Now that he’s pursuing an education degree, he needs access to pottery equipment on-island. He said, "A lot of people say they’re happy to help, but she really takes you up on it."

Peg’s studio is hidden down a bumpy dirt road, not on anyone’s regular orbit. Tall pines sway around the startling architecture, guarded by a pair of Indonesian sculptures that line the driveway leading to the garage. A collection of clay masks from many cultures hangs by the front door, signaling your arrival at a place where any sort of spirit might move you.

As the winter deepens out with cold and snow, consider seeking out this rare haven, in which art is not just an object or product, but an experience to be shared, shaped, and given the test of fire.
Cart Pride

BY LISA GOELL SINKI

I like to receive compliments now and then, so when an attractive woman in her late twenties stopped me in the Old Port, I felt extremely flattered. This happened about 10 years ago, shortly after my family that moved to Peaks Island. I was on my way from my car, which was parked in the Custom House garage, to the ferry. I was pushing a utility cart full of groceries, a little frantic to make the 5:35 boat.

The woman wore a streamlined black suit paired with tasteful black pumps and carried a pristine leather handbag. She looked too well dressed to be from here so I suspected she had probably just moved or was visiting on business.

"Excuse me," said the woman. "Where did you go?"

Vroom. A car sped by. I didn't hear the end of the woman's statement. Although I wasn't sure what she was going to ask, I still felt special. Out of all of the people walking by the Custom House, this put-together woman had stopped me. I stood just a little taller and smiled. Perhaps she'd noticed that I was wearing a brand new pair of brown leather Dansko clogs. Or maybe it was my beige LL Bean fleece jacket. Yes, I thought proudly, I do embody the Maine spirit. She probably wants to know where I shop for my clothes.

"Excuse me?" I said.

"Where did you go?"

I tried to anticipate what the woman was going to say. Would it be my jeans she liked or my lobster print socks? Maybe my boot-striped tote bag?

"...your cart," she said.

My cart? I deflated like a punctured balloon. Could this really be true? Was my utility cart my best feature?

Choosing your utility cart is entirely a matter of personal preference, much like selecting what motor car to drive. And while ultimately there is no right or wrong choice, cart selection is no different than anything else that matters weight in on. They feel with certainty that whatever vehicle they have selected is the best choice possible - and that everyone else's selections are, well, just wrong.

Cart users tend to gravitate toward the style they think fits best with the way they intend to use their vehicle. And while it would be a stretch to call a utility cart a fashion accessory, there is some amount of vanity involved. Whether people admit it or not, their choice of whether to use a cart - or which type of cart - depends somewhat on the way they see themselves and the way they want to be seen by others.

Some islanders attempt to look playful by choosing one of the blue plastic four-wheeled numbers that look like a cross between a kid's wagon and a plastic milk crate. Other people prefer the family look and pile their hardware purchases, housewares and groceries into their children's stroller for years after the child has ceased to ride. But overall, the most popular style, hands down, is the upright wire-groove cart.

Many prefer an upright cart because the cart owner doesn't have to bend over to use it, thus making it easier on their back. However for some, this cart's appeal comes from the fact that they can tip it onto two wheels and pull it from behind, which tends to be cooler than pushing it in front of you like Sisyphus having a large boulder uphill.

Another feature of the upright cart is that it comes in a variety of finishes. The selection includes chrome, black, royal blue and red. None of these are particularly attractive, but at least there are choices. Also, there is a variety of models to meet the user's needs. These range from smaller, lighter weight choices to larger, ultra-durable varieties.

The latter is what I have. My family is notorious for over-packing, so our cart boasts deep treads and a heavy axle to support five very full paper bags of groceries. Our cart's large wheels make it easier to drag it up and down the stairs between Flatbread and the ferry dock, while its deep treads painlessly navigate the rigors of mud season. I like to think of it as the 4-wheel drive, all-terrain vehicle of the utility cart world.

As my disappointment that the well-dressed woman was interested in my cart and not my clothes wore off, I tried to see my cart and me through her eyes. When I looked past my cart's big ugly wheels and lackluster matte black finish, I saw a durable vehicle that could get the job done. It had serpentine through throngs of summer tourists and made the trek up the Welch Street hill in the snow. It was reliable, and that's a good quality. Both for cart and for person.

I looked the woman square in the eye. "I got my cart at Maine Hardware, down on Saint John Street," I told her.

Then I placed both hands square on the handles, nodded, and smiled over the curb, across Commercial Street and toward the boat.

Lisa is a freelance writer who will be celebrating her 10th anniversary as a Peaks Island resident in February. Read her previous Island Times columns on her web site at www.lisaoilatobapen.com.

CASH Greater Portland's free tax preparation is a collaboration of local partners, including the IRS, working to help families and individuals make the most of their money. Due to recent federal tax law changes, households who want to itemize their tax returns cannot begin to do so until mid-February. For more information please see tax.gov or call 800-829-1040.

Nicole Evans is 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 ncvans@unitedwaygp.org.

Put more money back into your pocket!

BY NICOLE EVANS

Did you know that if your household made $50,000 or less in 2010 you can have your federal and state income taxes prepared and filed for free? CASH Greater Portland, managed by United Way of Greater Portland, and AARP Tax-Aide, will begin these free events at the end of January.

Why free tax preparation?

- Claim federal and state tax credits that you may not be aware of. For example, every year in Cumberland County, $4 million is left unclaimed in federal Earned Income Tax Credits because those who qualify don't know they are eligible, or they file a federal 1040 EZ form which doesn't allow them to apply.
- Be confident that the individual preparing your taxes is up-to-date on the latest tax laws, and will complete your income taxes accurately.
- Save your hard-earned money for something other than using a paid preparer, a software program, or an online service.
- These sites also get you connected to other programs in the community that can help you make the most of your money, such as credit counseling, financial education and matched savings programs.

Every year in Cumberland County, $4 million is left unclaimed... because those who qualify don't know they are eligible.

How to participate:

1. Organize paperwork associated with the purchase of a first home, home energy efficiency improvements, and medical, child care, education, and work-related expenses.
2. Collect tax documents from all income received in 2010 (W-2, 1099, 1098, SSA and unemployment).
3. Gather Social Security cards for each person you will identify on your tax return.
4. Dial 211 to find a tax site near you.
5. Call the tax site to schedule an appointment.

For more information, visit www.cashgp.org or call 211.

CASH Greater Portland's free tax preparation is a collaboration of local partners, including the IRS, working to help families and individuals make the most of their money. Due to recent federal tax law changes, households who want to itemize their tax returns...
COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

Tuesday, Jan 4
**FIRST TUESDAYS BOOK DISCUSSION** - Hearts in the Right Place by Carolyn Jessop, moderated by Brenda Hoppen. At 7 p.m. at the MacVane Center. Call 766-5540 or email the library (macvanc@portland.lib.me.us) to reserve a book. Please include your library card number. Open to anyone interested.

Friday, Jan 7
**NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS in a TIME CAPSULE** (MacVane Center) Anytime between 10 a.m. & 4:15 p.m. - children can stop by after school. Make a time capsule to store your New Year’s Resolutions to be opened in July and December (according to the MacVanc Center). Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Saturday, Jan 8
**BRACKETT CHURCH THRIFT SHOP** (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) Stop by to shop, or drop off gently used clothing and household goods. For more info call the church office, 766-9018.

Monday, Jan 10
**MAKING PEAKS ISLAND’S LONGEST SCARF** (MacVane Center) Anytime between 10 a.m. & 4:15 p.m. - children are invited to come after school. Brainstorm ideas. BYO needles and yarn if you have them. Yarn supplies will be available. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Thursday, Jan 13
**BINGO FUN** (MacVane Center) 4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Bring a donation for the Food Pantry. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Tuesday, Jan 18
**LOST AND TASTED DINNER** for the Peaks Island Tax and Energy 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Peaks Island Baptist Church, celebrating the Chinese New Year with traditional and non-traditional foods. 16 adults/3-10 children. All proceeds will go to Energy or Tax Assistance. For more information call 766-6067 or email phil.dahgian@maine.rr.com.

Wednesday, Jan 19
**PEAKS ISLAND LECTURE SERIES** presents SCOTT NASH - BEER AND CHILDREN’S BOOKS @ The fun on Peaks Island, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Scott will show a selection of work from his repertoire of amazing books and other curious and random projects, as well as guide us through the world of all things Scott Nash. Bring the kids, or not! Babysitting is available at the Children’s Workshops - for information and reservations, please e-mail us at peakslandlectures@gmail.com. See you there!

Thursday, Jan 20
**LUNCH AT PEAKS CAFÉ** 11:00 a.m., meet at the Café. Join friends for good food, conversation and fun. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Monday, Jan 24
**INTERNATIONAL BELLY LAUGH DAY** (MacVane Center) Bring a joke or riddle to share anytime between 10:45 and 4:15 p.m. for lots of laughter and fun. School children are welcome to come after school. International laugh time is 1:24 p.m. on 1/24. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Wednesday, Jan 26
**LUNAR NEW YEAR CRAFT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM** at the Peaks Island Library led by Taylor Casack, starts at 1 p.m.

Thursday, Jan 27
**BRACKETT MEMORIAL CHURCH SUPPER** 5 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Join us for great food and good company. Free. All are welcome! For more info call 766-3013.

Friday, Jan 28
**"ARM CHAIR TRAVELLING - PERU and ECUADOR** 1:00 p.m. in the MacVane Center. Hear guest speaker Al Bleau speak of his recent trip to Peru and Ecuador. Through his slides and stories, we will learn about the Inca and Native historical sites in both of these countries. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Saturday, Jan 29
**MOFGA NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP** led by Peggy Smith, certified by the Center for Nonviolent Communication, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Mayo Street Arts, 10 Mayo Street in Portland (see listing previous page for details).

Tuesday, Feb 1
**FIRST TUESDAYS BOOK DISCUSSION** - The Movie and Storyboard by Somerset Maugham, Marcie Appel will moderate, 1 p.m. at the MacVane Center. Call 766-5540 or email the library (macvanc@portland.lib.me.us) to reserve a book. Please include your library card number. Open to anyone interested.

Friday, Feb 4
**Peaks Island Elementary School PTO SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER** at The INN from 5-8 p.m. for a family style spaghetti dinner and silent auction. Advance tickets $10 adults/$5 kids; at the door $12/6. Tickets available from Susan Hardley (766-2735) or Melissa Consal (766-9736). Admission includes spaghetti dinner, garlic bread, salad and dessert. Featuring Live Music by Phil Dugan. Donations may be sent to Peaks Island School PTO c/o Michelle Alves, 101 Central Avenue, Peaks Island, 04108 or dropped off at the school. Thank you!

Monday, Feb 7
**FIRST MONDAY FUN** for PRESCHOOLERS and their parents anytime between 11:00 a.m. and noon (MacVane Center) to make Valentine’s Day cards and gifts. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

Thursday, Feb 24
**BOARD GAMES and CARTOONS** (MacVane Center) Anytime between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to play old-fashioned board games and watch Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970).

**BRACKETT MEMORIAL CHURCH SUPPER** 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Join us for great food and good company. Free. All are welcome! For more info call 766-5013.

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