Islanders still cleaning up after Patriots Day storm

BY DAVID TYLER

Nearly three weeks after the Patriots Day nor'easter devastated the coast, the clean-up continues.

On Peaks Island, crews from Central Maine Power were still at work on May 3, according to John Carroll, spokesman for Central Maine Power, and also a Peaks Island resident.

A huge chipping machine that can handle logs 16 inches in diameter was sent to Peaks Island at the end of the week to help grind up hundreds of downed trees, according to AJ Alves, Portland's Public Works Island Services supervisor.

It's all part of continued clean-up after one of the most damaging storms in Casco Bay in the last 35 years. Homes were damaged, cars destroyed, and thousands of trees knocked down off Cliff, Chebeague, Long, Great and Little Diamond and Peaks Islands.

In terms of total damage, "this is the worst I've seen in my whole life," said Tom Calder of Chebeague Island. Calder is a Cumberland County deputy sheriff in charge of the protection on Chebeague.

"There were trees down everywhere," said Mark Greer, a resident of Long Island. "I've never seen anything like it."

One resident who lives on Chebeague's east side clocked winds at 70 mph and 78 mph, said Greer.

On Long Island, a gust of 81 mph was measured at a home on Harbor Drive, according to Greer.

Several factors combined to devastate the island during the spring tides, the highest tides of the year, which peaked on April 17. Over a foot of snow fell April 12 and the Patriotsplease see STORM, page 8

On the road to Augusta

Mike Richards, co-chair of the Island Independence Committee, speaks before the Legislature's State and Local Government Committee in support of LD 2793.

Scession decision is now up to state lawmakers

BY DAVID TYLER

After over eight hours of passionate testimony on April 30 both for and against LD 7603, the Peaks Island secession bill, one member of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government wished there was another opinion.

I would just love to see both sides be able to come to a different conclusion—to find some middle ground," said Rep. Andrea M. Bolduc (R-Sanford).

It was not a day for the middle-ground.

Over 120 people came on Monday to the Cross Office Building in Augusta to testify both for and against the bill that would set in motion the final process for secession. The bill sets up terms of negotiations with the City of Portland and calls for a final vote on the island after an agreement is determined.

The secession process began in 2006. In June 2006, islanders voted in favor of secession. Votes totals to 290, Negotiations between the city and the group representing those in favor of secession, the Island Independence Committee, reached no resolution.

So many people came Monday that the overflow spilled into two more hearing rooms. In the afternoon, testimony was limited by the committees' chairmen, Sen. Elizabeth M. Schneider (D-Penobscot), who kept urging people to exercise those in favor of secession argued that Portland's city government is inaccessible, does not address fundamental island needs and has eroded the island. Schneider said allowing islanders to decide how to spend their tax dollars on what is most important to islanders, not on projects decided by the city. Proponents also said that the only way for Peaks to survive as a year-round community is for islanders to control their own destiny. And there are plenty of talented Island residents who could help the island govern itself.

Opponents said the secession movement is just a tax revolt. They also talked about concerns about whether an island government could provide the same level of police, fire and safety services on the island. Opponents also wanted their children to remain in the larger Portland school system, which they felt would provide island kids with more opportunities and a better education.

They also said that Peaks is not like other Maine islands that are independent and that they enjoyed being part of a large, diverse city.

After the hearings, legislators talked about their reactions to the day's testimony.

Bolduc said that before the hearing "I was inclined not to support secession. But now I'm less confident about my decision. I'm still waiting to look through everything."

For Rep. James M. Schatz (D-Brooklin), the hearing pushed him in the other direction. "Frankly, even though I am an advocate of small municipal government, I'd prefer to dispose of the bill," Schatz said.

But the hearing could have a better chance with a split vote in favor. In this case, the votes of the three senators on the committee are crucial. Because the Senate has 10 Democrats and 17 Republicans, the issue of party loyalty looms larger than in either the House or the Senate.

Opponents of the bill included the governors, the feds, and the courts. The bill would have to pass a first and second reading in each chamber, before being enacted by each branch.

If the committee unanimously votes against the bill, it is essentially dead. "I have never seen an unanimous 'nought not to pass' go through," said Schneider.

What's next for the secession bill?

BY DAVID TYLER

Now that the public hearing was held in LD 7603, the Peaks Island secession bill, what happens now?

On Monday May 14, the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government will hold a work session on the bill.

That session is open to the public, but will not be open to public input, according to Sen. Elizabeth M. Schneider (D-Penobscot), the committee's co-chair.

The committee's other co-chair, State Rep. Christopher Barrett (D-Gotham) recused himself from debate over the bill because he has applied for a job for someone with interest in the bill.

Committee members will talk about the bill, consult with the group's analyst, and, if needed, ask for factual information from experts in attendance.

With a bill this complicated, there could be another work session. It's also possible that a motion could be made at the work session on how to dispose of the bill, Schneider said.

There might be a decision to carry over the bill to another session. There are many different possibilities, she said.

If the 12-member (minus Barrett's) committee unanimously votes either in favor or against the bill, the next step is fairly simple. A unanimous vote to pass means the bill would get sent to the Senate, then the House of Representatives.

The bill would have to pass a first and second reading in each branch, before being enacted by each branch.

If the committee unanimously votes against the bill, it is essentially dead. "I have never seen an unanimous 'nought not to pass' go through," said Schneider.

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In Brief

Councilors question pier process

Two Portland City Councilors are questioning the process by which the City Council's Community Development Committee (CDC) is reviewing proposals to develop part of the Maine State Pier.

The city is reviewing plans to develop a seven-acre parcel of land, which includes part of the Maine State Pier, that used to house the Bath Iron Works ship repair facility. The city council rezoned the city-owned property for non-marine use because it said it could not afford the millions of dollars necessary to repair the pier. Two developers have submitted plans for mixed-use development of the pier.

At the April 25 CDC meeting, District 1 Councilor Kevin Donoghue, who is on the committee, made a motion the committee only review proposals that came in by Feb. 22, the deadline for the project. His motion was defeated 2 to 1, with councilors Jim Cloutier and Jill Duson voting against.

Ocean Properties Ltd. plans to spend $59 million on its proposal, building a complex that includes ferry service to other Maine communities, an office building, a parking garage, restaurants, and an art gallery and a new public fishing area. The Olympia Companies' proposal includes a village at the end of the pier and a two-acre park. It also includes a hotel.

While Olympia has not changed its original plan, Ocean Properties has made some changes since Feb. 22, including adding green space.

But both Donoghue and District 2 Councilor David A. Marshall are also concerned that there are no written guidelines for the review process for these two proposals. "It's the biggest game we have and it seems like we're just making it up as we go along," Donoghue said.

"What is disappointing to me is that we don't have a defined process for the RFP," Marshall said. "It has never been written down." Marshall understands that the process is called a conceptual RFP, which depends on institutional knowledge of city officials. But as a newly-elected councilor, he does not have that knowledge. "If we had a clear, written procedure, we'd be in a better place right now.

At the April 25 CDC meeting, Marshall also asked questions about the process. "This is our only publicly-owned pier. We only have one shot at this," he said.

Marshall also believes there has not been enough input into the entire plan for the Maine State Pier, making it a mixed-use retail pier. "We haven't had much public feedback about whether this is something the public wants to happen," he said.

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Construction began recently of a 720-space parking garage at the corner of Middle and Hancock streets in Portland. There are to be 150 spaces reserved for islanders.

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Groundbreaking for parking garage

Construction began on April 28 on the 720-space parking garage to be located at the corner of Middle and Hancock streets.

The building is part of the city's efforts to develop the eastern waterfront. Of the 720 spaces, 150 are to be reserved for island residents, according to Stacy Theberge, spokesperson for Riverwalk LLC and Intercontinental Real Estate Corporation, the company building the garage. She did not have details about the rates for these islander spaces, or how long they will be available exclusively for islanders.

The 185,000-square-foot Ocean Gateway Garage will be six stories high and is projected to cost $20 million. The garage was picked as the general manager for the project. The garage is expected to open in the late spring of 2008.

The garage is the beginning of the development of a 2.9-acre parcel that will include 125 luxury condominiums, called The Watermark, according to a press release.

This condo complex will also include 38,000 square feet of retail shops and a 3,000-square-foot, five-story office building. More information may be found at the website www.thewatermarkportland.com.

"This groundbreaking is an exciting first step in a project that will provide an estimated 700 construction jobs and reenergize an underused part of our city," said Joseph E. Gray, Portland city manager. "The garage will not only provide parking for Portland and island residents, but will also accommodate thousands of additional visitors who will visit Portland with the opening of the new Ocean Gateway passenger terminal next spring".

Riverwalk, LLC is led by Dave Severson and Fred Forsley, owner of Shipyard Brewing Company.

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Chebeague internet work continues

The island company, chebeague.net, that was formed last year to bring high-speed internet to Chebeague Island, is making progress.

So far, a total of 46 homes have been hooked up, said Beverly Johnson, the company's chief executive officer.

Right now, the company is working on getting homes on the island's west end hooked up. They are working on a plan to bring broadband to the shorefront ideas of the Chebeague Recreation Center. The reach of that signal will impact future plans for the west end.

The company was incorporated in July 2006 when 12 islanders got together to put up the capital needed to start the company. The island effort occurred because attempts to interest Time Warner and Verizon in establishing high-speed internet on the island failed. The Chebeague system is wireless.

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The Olympia Companies to host

DASH TO THE DOCK

INFORMATIONAL HAPPY HOUR AT THE HILTON GARDEN INN ON FRIDAY, MAY 18TH, FROM 4:00 PM TO 5:30 PM

In addition to refreshments and light fare, Olympia will have several members of the Casco Bay Park design team on hand to discuss the project. If you haven't had a chance to attend one of their neighborhood forums (One happening at Peaks Island Community Center this Tuesday, May 8th at 7:30 PM), this is a great opportunity for Islanders to ask questions about how the pier redevelopment will effect their daily lives.

Also on hand will be Tom Gorill of Gorill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, Inc. Tom was hired by Olympia to design a parking solution that works best for island residents and the City at large.

If you can't attend and would like information you can call
Jed Rathband at 332-1513, or email him at jed@stonesthrowconsulting.com.
You can also see more about the project by visiting their website, www.cascobaypark.com.
Discovering wood frogs on Peaks Island

BY LINNEA RICHARD

I am happy to report that Peaks Island does have a population of wood frogs (Rana sylvatica)! Deb and Steve Nielsen, located way up in the forested part of the island have a nice population in their vernal pool. I guess it makes sense that the wood frogs live on Woods Road! Vernal pools often occur in clusters, so I wouldn’t be surprised to hear of other populations around Breed Road, Echo Pond, and that area (call me!).

Deb stopped me at the boat one morning, after the storm, to ask if those croaky duck-like sounds that were keeping her awake at night could be wood frogs. As soon as she initiated the call I knew it was true! That afternoon I visited her site, and sure enough confirmed a squawky group of calling wood frogs.

You may recall from past articles that wood frogs migrate to vernal pools on Big Night, often along with the yellow-spotted salamanders. I believe Big Night on Peaks was April 17 this year, the night after the Patriots’ Day storm. I can’t say for sure, since I had run away from home to enjoy a warm bed and shower at the Eastland, and seeking Big Night was the last thing on my agenda, but the conditions were right and even in the daytime the yellow-spotted salamanders were easily found.

Wood frogs migrate for the sole purpose of breeding, and may accomplish mating, egg-laying, and out-migration in less than a week. They’ll call all night and even into the day during that week, but then aren’t heard again until the following spring.

After laying a few hundred eggs, the adult frog heads back out to the nearby upland habitat, where it lives until it burrows under the leaf litter for the winter. The eggs occur in masses, making them difficult to see after just a couple of days. That site is the first meal of the hatched tadpoles—handy to have a meal before starting out into the vernal pool world, eh? As the tadpoles mature over the next few weeks, they’ll consume thousands of mosquito and other insect larvae. Eventually, survivors de- velop into adults and migrate out, but generally are found within a quarter-mile of their original pool.

Here’s the very cool thing about wood frogs. In order to survive our winters, they employ two methods of survival: they take control of the freezing process in order to adjust their metabolism, and they accumulate 100 times their normal blood concentration of glucose, which acts as an antifreeze.

With the two strategies in place, the frogs spend the winter in a cryogenic state until the spring thaws the ground and the frogs. You could describe them as “frogsicles.” Sounds gross, but this adaptation allows them to be first into the vernal pools, arriving before the predators and time to select the best breeding locations. Isn’t nature fascinating? Scientists are examining how wood frogs process such high glucose levels—there may be medical applications for humans suffering with diabetes.

By early May, the wood frogs have taken their turn in the pool, and leave it to the spring peepers, toads, and other species. By midsummer, some pools are completely dry with no sign of the spring’s vernal pool party. It’s nice to know that Peaks hosts this little frog and the productive pools they inhabit. And, it’s nice to know that we have an expert wood frog-caller on the island: Deb Nielsen.
Ten reasons against secession

After visiting Augusta for the April 30 publ ic hearing on Peaks Island, Peaks Island speakers and against secession plus countless written testimonials on both sides, dozens of search to Portland talking about the pros and cons of such a drastic step. Here are ten reasons for opposing secession that we developed with many other islanders.

1. Highest quality public services from ex- perienced and dedicated public employees.

2. Help when we need it in emergencies such as the Patriots’ Day storm.

3. Our Island School and Library are fantastic.

4. Our kids get to go to great mainland schools.

5. Safety with professional police and fire fighters.

6. Island living with easy City access.

7. With 200-plus years of Portland history, we don’t want to gamble with the future.

8. Island voters unite and don’t want to isolate themselves selfishly.

9. To sustain our quality of life.

10. Other Islands and Chris Hotopy, Peaks Island

Myths about secession

Myths are fictitious, according to the dictionary. It is important for all town residents to use them to spread untruthful information. Some examples that Peaks’ citizens have been sold on:

- “We don’t govern ourselves. Of course we can, look at our phenomenal resource rich town.”
- “We are not smart enough to govern our selves.”
- “We can’t be allowed to keep the school agent.”

Our town voters always place education first.

- “Never fear, we go up to 700 percent. So preoccupied—town voters will not allow it.”
- “The library will be closed or become dysfunctional! Never in a thousand years would we allow this, we are smart and reasonable—library availability is very high a citizen “fixed list.”
- “Too able to file for the right education or education specialists! Who wouldn’t want to teach on Peaks with a superb education of a superb school?”

Some old ideas, many worn-out. We have the best minds at work on this, and the people will be given the opportunity to have a say in the future direction with Portland.

These myths are only part of the fear and scaring tactic that embolden the minds of those opposed to independence. Change can be great, and we can make it so. We asked questions.

-Harold Pelletier, Peaks Island

Peaks will heal

If it is an unfruitful thing to do...to go to Augusta on April 30 and speak before a legislative committee in opposition to a proposed bill and not supported by as many Peaks Island friends and neighbors.

For months now, we have been pretty careful not to speak out. We have known we were with others who shared our opinions. It is always easier to be quiet, not speak out, stay home, and just observe the action. We all value our friendships and the fun and closeness that living in a small community, and we want to protect and preserve our island life.

You may have many reasons for what we believe is right for Peaks, and over 100 Peaks Islanders headed north to Augusta. It is important to realize that visions that secession opponents believe just as strongly that separating from Portland will not work. Thousand-peoples, and the Island Independence Committee supporters believe that such separation is the only way to preserve it. It is amazing that we Peaks Islanders can share the same reality, the same events, the same needs, both met and unmet. Unite and we may get our way.

We are hoping that we will come through this experience, whatever the outcome, with our community intact. There may be some bruising in places, but we are not going to break. We have worked to do right, now right on issues of affordable housing to environment, on Peaks, looking for the island that we love each other, the celebration of Peaks’ history in many sumptuous times, and friends to greet and cherish from one end of the Island to the other. Let’s get on with it.

Key Taylor, Peaks Island

Secession proponents respond

In the April issue of the Island Times, the article “Peaks Secession” met to L.D. 1703” appeared. I would like to respond to each of these issues:

1. Are we like other islands? We are a true island and remote from the mainland by about 12 miles, yet we are governed by remote control as we have little or no true voting control over our self-reliant island.

2. Do we rely on facts, most all of which we received from the City of Portland over a sometimes tedious, nearly two-year time frame?

3. Civil rights in process.

4. Yes, the budget is totally not under our control and will remain in process. We closed the City’s budget to negotiate the debt and assets, tuition, and other issues as parts of the process of secession including the real assets. We had to start. We are an island of our own.

5. Our school is not free.

6. We do not want to be a part of the Department of Education. Our children will not be worse off. We would be on our own to control the curriculum and budget.

7. There is no question we will continue to seek private facilities, services and work in Portland. We do not support the Portland Windham Maho. And, at the island level, we are supporting the votes, an independent town are willing to try and develop regionalization of services to assist Portland in contributing to the costs of these services.

Dave Adams, co-chairs Finance Committee, Island Independence Committee

Peaks Island is not a Portland neighborhood

I would like to reiterate that many have been shown to be ridiculous spoken or written by apparently intelligent people in both writing or speech or writing. I reflected on this a few months ago at the meeting mediation between the Island Independent Communities and the Portland City Council, in the aftermath of my confusion by Governor Edward Louis’s comment “I love the islanders of Peaks Island. I will describe the neighborhood of Peaks Island recently.” Since “the neighborhood of Peaks Island” would seem to refer to the water and islands surrounding Peaks, I wondered why he was telling us this. Then I realized that it was just a political through-language play in league with British Unionism referring to the Irish city of Perry by the name Londoners or the cities (accompanied by homophobia) in French in 1933 that was losing its long-time colony, Algeria. This realization was born out at this year’s hearing in August before the State and Local Government Committee, where those testifying against Peaks having the opportunity to vote on secession in favor of Peaks representing the “Island of Portland” phrase so often it was humorous.

A number of Portland areas are undisputably City neighborhoods, including South Portland, East End, West End, Bayview, etc. Residents of those neighborhoods, when asked where they live, will answer, “South Portland, or East Portland, or West Portland, Maine.” If asked while in Portland, “What part of Portland do you represent with your neighborhood name?” in contrast, Peaks residents, whether they are in downtown, north, Maine, downtown Portland, or downtown Tokyo, would respond “Peaks Island.” If the question is answered, the Peaks Islands represent Peaks as “a few miles off the main coast, not Portland,” or words to that effect. The neighborhood of Peaks Island includes Peaks or any of the Casco Bay Islands. I suggest that Commissioner Sue slowly try to find the “neighborhood of Peaks Island” on any of the Portland maps in City Hall.

The fact that one can drive from downtown Portland to any of its true neighborhood, but not Peaks Island, is in a more formal distinction; underlying it is the geographic reality making the Peaks Island community to be quite different from the rest of the Portland population.

If you are a person personally acquainted with one another to a degree that far surpasses neighborly knowledge among any 20 or more people, then you might venture to one another, whether during a daily commute on the ferry, through shopping, neighborhood association, the act of picking up mail at the Peaks Island Post Office, islanders come to know each other and see each other regularly. They play on the island or on the mainland. If you were concerned with pursuing the issues of Peaks Island, the islanders would say well as the Casco Bay islands. I suggest Councilor Susan to understand the needs of the community.

In spite of the above, it is likely that for many years the Portland City Council did so for good faith consider Peaks as to just another of those Casco Bay Islands. We have not been on the Portland Council to pursue Peaks Island issues. Instead, if asked, “What is Peaks Island?” the only answer would be “Peaks Island” or “Peaks Islander.” We pursue Peaks Island without the other Casco Bay Islands. We pursue Peaks Island without the other Casco Bay Islands. We pursue Peaks Island without the other Casco Bay Islands. We pursue Peaks Island without the other Casco Bay Islands. We pursue Peaks Island without the other Casco Bay Islands.

The name Peaks Island is how islanders see our island.

-Mary Lou Wendell

Member of the New England Press Association.

The Island Times is a community newspaper serving the islands in Casco Bay. We welcome birth, engagement and wedding announcements, obituaries, notices of community events, and letters to the editor. Please keep letters to 300 words or less. We reserve the right to edit letters.

The Island Times is available for $1.00 per month. For those unable to read the Island Times, we will mail a free subscription.

Post office Box 141, Windham, ME 04062

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The Island Times is published weekly on Thursday. Deadline is 3 p.m. on Tuesday. For advertising information, call 272-2908.

Printed by Southern Maine Newspaper Printing Co., Westbrook.
BY GEORGE ROSE

An April to remember. A rain dance gone bad. A marathon storm on Patriots’ Day and as usual, unusual stories to be told. There is the hen on Sterling that, polling against the will of the gale force wind, laid the same egg three times. And an ancient maple, split at the base, exposing a coffee cup containing an old deed showing that the property on which the tree stood was left to the family curand as its descendants. A real windfall so to speak.

The matter is in court and the hunt is on for the true owner. Among the items that came to light on the backburner was a parking ticket from Revere Beach—stuck at 10 minutes to expiration and loaded with fifty-two quarters and six slugs. There were the usual battered lobster traps and branches and logs and stones, large and small. But at the foot of Welch Street was a twisted pile of shopping carts blown from the grasp of those who survived the climb to Island Avenue.

***

An event of some importance sent many islanders to Augustus for an entire day. This left the care of the island to a couple of police officers, school children, a smattering of adults and most of the island dogs who were put on work keeping order. Four border collies kept the kids corralled in the schoolyard and in the streets. Several German shepherd dogs patrolled the roads and served as guides for those visiting the island for the first time. Pugs and Scotties and holy Terriers and Dachshunds and other small breeds served as alarm as needed. This image helped on the part of island dogs demonstrated that if they were unrestrained and bred to have opposable thumbs, they could do considerably more than howl and beg for treats.

***

Now a page from an island walker’s chronicle. Forget walking as an aerobic workout on Peaks. The folks here suffer from chronic work syndrome. Encounters lead to more stories than are made by a milk truck. Casual meeting with one person consumes at least five minutes. Add five more if a dog is involved. If there are family groups, introductions and job descriptions, a loss of fifteen minutes is possible. Vehicle to vehicle combinations and common discussion sites. If pictures of family appear, bringing a sandwich. And if a walker is unfortunate enough to happen on a phone on the rocks, a return home by sundown is a real possibility. But there are ways to get in a non-stop session. Many doctors provide a sign that reads “Evidence in Progress—Do Not Enter”. More severe, is the one I saw on Island Avenue. “This rumour has absolutely nothing to says.” The message here is that being hospitable can lead one to the hospital.

***

Snapshots from around Peaks. The bowling alley, now a residence at the south end of Island Avenue, is having a face-lift. The original board-beamed siding was exposed for a brief time before being restored, allowing a glimpse of the past.

Nourished poodles sections of sidewalks on Island and Welch streets are now passable. Missing are initials or cat and dog paw prints or date scratched into the wet cement. How sad. Seen here and there are heads under hoods and legs propped up from the undersides of car and trucks suffering

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So, what will you be doing June 22, 23 & 24?!?

...Sipping a cocktail with your neighbors at the annual Schoonerfest kick-off party? Winning one of the Peaks Island 2007 competition? Piling up on pancakes, cookies, hot dogs, hamburgers, strawberry shortcake, chili, and home-baked pie? Dressing up in a water fight? Lining up wide enough to make an amazing children’s story? Wiping whipped cream out of your eyes after the pie eating contest? Tailgating with some cool crafts and collages? Punting your face? “Taking home the blue ribbon for your best pie recipe?”


...And so much more...

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Celebrating the Community of Peaks Island

www.peaksfest.com
Chebeague Chronicles

BY D.J. COBLETH

Saturday April 14: The weather leads the news, which is nothing new to Mainers. Radio and TV are all about the coming nor'easter; heavy rains, major flooding and winds exceeding 70 mph are predicted. It is the topic of the day at the store, the library and the wharf.

Sunday April 15: The prediction turns into a warning. Our responses are automatic and practiced. We all round up candles, batteries, kerosene lamps, and auxiliary heaters. We draw water; bring in dry wood and prepare for a power outage. But what we do not prepare for is a power shutdown that will last the better part of a week.

Monday April 16: The winds and rains begin around midnight and they build in the early morning hours until they combine to make a blow that will test the record books. Downed wires, dangling transformers and fallen trees litter the landscape. The North Road, South Road and smaller roads that crisscross Chebeague are mostly impassable and then the power goes out as we wake.

Shortly thereafter Bob Bowman, our Island librarian, receives several calls asking her to open the library so that it may serve as a shelter. And so begins a Chebeague Island shelter/soup kitchen. Cynnie Steckeloff, who needs power for her respirator, and her daughter-in-law, Mary Holt moves in. And by noon, the shelter has a rotating, daily, two residents and a cook. Rescue member Tina Range serves up lentil soup lunch to EMS, the safety crew and guests.

Meanwhile over on the North Road people from the fire department, rescue squad and public works are scrambling to organize at the Public Safety Building in order to map out a strategy for troubleshooting and setting up a shelter/soup kitchen for their workers and any other islander who needs warmth, food or a shower. The rain continues and winds exceeding 80 mph are recorded at the West End.

Tuesday April 17: Power is still out and the wind continues to blow. The sandwich board in front of the Community Center advertises. Hot Food. Hot Stew and Cynnie Too! It is determined at this point that lunches and dinners will be served until the power is restored. Casseroles, homemade bread, salad, cookies, more cookies and cakes are donated.

At the Public Safety Building Monday's plans are put into action. Diane Calder helps the EMS construct a list of islanders living alone who might need assistance. They break up into teams and visit those folks on the list. Some need help with setting up auxiliary heating; others have flooding cellars and others simply need to be called.

Deputy Fire Chief Tom Calder organizes the Fire Department into crews to assess the storm damage and tamp off danger spots where there may be hot wires. They also attend to the generator that is keeping our phone service alive.

Cumberland is in constant contact with us, offering our assistance and providing us with an open account at Hannaford so that we may continue to feed the cleanup crew.

Wednesday April 17: Power is still down but the wind has subsided. Central Maine Power (CMP) gets word to the Fire Department that there is no juice in any of the stores on Chebeague and that anything clean up they and Public Works can do will help them get their jobs done more quickly. CMP and Lucas Tree are slated to arrive tomorrow. And so the work begins in earnest. At noon volunteers arrive to prepare a full course chicken dinner for the workers and anyone else who needs a good hot meal.

Thursday April 18: CMP and Lucas Tree arrive and as they swing by the café field, kids playing a vacation week pickup game drop their bats and gloves and run out to the roadside to cheer them on. The Fire Department and Public Works crews continue clearing the roads. Generators mounted on fire trucks travel to homes that need a squirt of power to save freezers full of food or need power to pump out their cellars.

Rumors persist that electricity will be restored before the end of the day. But by evening we are still in the dark. No lights, no heat yet. And then, gradually, neighborhood by neighborhood, the island comes alive.

At the Community Center, islanders gather for dinner and a slide show of storm pictures. It is the end of a very long week. Even though the storm has passed, evidence of its happening will be with us islanders for years to come. Many beach banks have been dramatically eroded and reshaped, some wooded areas leveled, roofs stripped of the shingles and vehicles demolished by the fall out of high winds and drenching rains. Yet evidence of another sort will also remind us of the storm and what island folks do together when faced with a challenge.

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SCHNEIDER, from page 2---

in the House of Representatives.

Speaking theoretically, Schneider said, "If Sen. [Paula] R. Kemeny and I vote ought to pass, then it's got a chance." This assumes that the bill's sponsor, Savage, can carry off Republicans in the Senate.

"In the Senate, you have a lot of jockeying around if it is a divided report—you've got to make your case," she said. "In the Senate, very little is predictable because the Democrats have such a close majority," she said.

The Democrats have a much larger majority in the House of Representatives, but Speaker of the House Glenn Cummings (D-Portland) testified against the bill on April 26. However, party affiliation is no guarantee of a result. "People vote their conscience and what they think is best for the community they serve," Schneider said.
Cliff Island News

BY LUD CARR

Our cell phone jingled in my pocket, when I was on the mainland and after fishing it out and prying it open I was pleased to hear the voice of Cheryl Crowley calling from Cliff Island. She informed me that our property (on the water in Fishermens Cove) had been re-landscaped by the District's Dept. (northwest), and that if we could stay on the mainland we would probably be safer and more comfortable.

The storm had been particularly vicious on the south-facing side of the island. The anemometer on the Crowley house had clocked winds over 80 mph. Electricity and phone service was unavailable almost everywhere on Cliff.

Without electricity we would not be able to pump water or heat our house. Portable generators were being shuttled from house to house to alleviate the most urgent needs of those who remained on the island. We remained in Portland as to not to add to number of people in need of support.

Nevertheless, on Tuesday we learned that power had been restored so we headed back home. Mac McCone, Charlie Green and Gordon Griffin, who were sitting outside MIK's store near the wharf, greeted us with enthusiastic remarks about the devastation which we would see at our place, and we headed off with our pushcart full of groceries wondering what our own impression would be.

At our property, we were greeted by a scene of natural destruction. Large spruce trees emulated a bunch of dizzy drunk after too long a night on the town. They leaned on one another if they weren't already prone. The soles of their feet were visible from above eye level all the way to the holes which formerly had been their standing places. No black coffee would solve this lastgown, but the mess could not be left alone.

At least 10 major trees fell on our less than one-acre lot, and the hillside just beyond our lot is littered with large rolling turkeys.

David Crowley made sure that the "launters" got safely to the ground, and we enjoyed seeing the roof pats snap back into the shallow holes left by the stubs of these giant plants. The safety of children, who range freely through our woods from the adjoining school property, was greatly enhanced by this work.

Chainsaws could be heard everywhere. Ever since we returned, we have been topping limbs with our ax and dragging the boughs to the roadside where city workers will reduce them to chips. Eager lumbermen gladly haul away the few hardwoods that came down and I am considering the development of some tiny poles or a funky fence with what is left. Other uses may prevail.

The next morning curvature caused me to break my rule of avoiding dangerous places on my morning jog. (I dress in red and I am attached to the chest by a rope.) I jogged to the entrance of the Fire Road on the northeast end of the island.

This road runs through the mostly unmanaged forest which houses a small number of shore built summer homes. It usually takes less than five minutes to traverse this road, but on this occasion, running was not an option. Passage along the road required climbing over and under fallen trees and after a few minutes I jogged the fire road heading uphill into the deer herd reduction season.

Too far into the woods to go back, I kept meandering until, after more than a half hour, I found myself on the open road on the northwest shore of our long thin island.

I counted more than 60 very large downed trees, most of which were blocking the Fire Road. My jog down the road led me to the post office near the wharf where I mentioned my experience, and confided to Anna kter, our postmaster, to feeling a bit foolish while crossing under the falling behemoths.

She shared that she had gone out with her husband, Bruce, to survey the damages near their house, and had gone through the same experience. Fortunately curiosity didn't kill the cats, and satisfaction still brought them back.

A day or two later I checked the Fire Road, and it appeared that a miracle had taken place. The road was clear of trees, and neat piles of logs had been stacked beside the picturesque CLIFF, page 9.

Mother's Appreciation Month

Mother's Day Brunch

Welcome! Just mention this ad and residents of Peaks Island will receive 10% off their purchase for the month of May.

Welcome Spring! Just mention this ad and residents of Peaks Island will receive 10% off their purchase for the month of May.

May Special

$199 special includes:
- Overnight stay in room of your choice
- Dinner for two ($75 value)
- Bouquet of flowers
- Card for mom

The Inn on Peaks Island 33 Island Avenue Peaks Island, Maine 207-766-5100 www.innonpeaks.com

Take home the freshest seafood, soups, light entrees, and of course excellent wine, cheese and gourmet treats. Everything you need for a quick light meal, or an elegant feast.

GET A JUMP START ON SPRING CLEANING!

With the weather improving let me know what you need to do to air out that closed-up cottage or finish that home improvement project before summer guests start arriving.

Call 766-5100 for details and reservations.
Patriots day Northeaster

From top left, clockwise: There are more than 10 trees blown down on Lee Carter's small lot on Cliff Island. Photo by Alice Carter; Chebeague Island's Stone Wharf is awash at high tide during the storm. Photo by Beverly Johnson; Ocean spray and debris streak the front window of Mark Greene's Long Island home, which faces Chebeague's Deer Point. Photo by Mark Greene; Waves smash against Seashore Avenue on Peaks Island's back shore during the storm. Photo by Rhonda Berg.

Day storm brought several inches of rain. And the northeaster staked out south of Maine, making the storm longer, with the strongest winds blowing from the east nearly all day on April 16. And the storm blew hard for several days.

Central Maine Power (CMP) crews were in their first response phase, which is protecting public safety, for 36 hours, according to Carroll.

Power was restored for most of Peaks Island at 10 p.m. on April 17, according to Carroll. A CMP spokesperson said power was restored to most of Long and Cliff islands on April 19 (although on Cliff Island resident said there was power on that island April 17). Chebeague did not get electricity back until the evening of April 19 and during the day on April 20. And there were residents on all the islands that still did not have power by the end of the week because side roads had so much tree damage.

The islands have power fed from two separate locations, Wyman Station on Cousins Island and also from South Portland, Carroll said. CMP has the capacity to close or open circuits in that loop “so you can feed the whole thing from one end or the other,” he said. Long Island, for example, can be made part of the Peaks Island circuit.

The saturated ground made shallow-rooted spruce and pine trees especially vulnerable to the sustained winds. On Deer Point and along Seashore Road on Chebeague Island, there were places where every single tree was flattened.

“[T]o see just what happened there—tangled down, broken and fallen,” said Greene, about the fallen trees.

Beverly Johnson lives on Seashore Road, where some of the worst tree damage on Chebeague occurred. She said 100 or more trees were knocked down there. “It didn’t happen all at once,” she said. “It just kept wearing away,” and the saturated ground caused more trees to fall and “open up space.” People said it looked like a tornado—but it was just the constant wind back and forth,” she said.

Emergency, public service and utility workers put in tremendous overtime hours after the storm, Abves said after his crew stopped work at 8 a.m. on April 16 and another crew came back on at 2 a.m. April 17. Crews on Peaks cleared roads and muck basins. On the Back Shore “we had to clear the road after every high tide,” for three days, Abves said. On some parts of Seashore Avenue there was 12 inches of rocks on the road, he said. There were hundreds of trees blocking roads on Peaks, Abves said.

On Chebeague Island, firefighters logged a total of 900 hours and emergency workers logged 300 hours, said Calder. There were dozen firefighters working round-the-clock. By Tuesday morning, they had all major roads on the island clear. CMP let the fire department know it was safe to work around wires, so they also cleared wires that were tangled up in trees. “They had very little tree work to do,” Calder said about the CMP crews. “We had it ready for those guys. Calder said Town of Cumberland officials on the mainland were also extremely helpful during the storm.

Firefighters and emergency workers also drove around the island with three generators, hooking them up to homes where the elderly lived and heating them for two hours at a time. That also helped homeowners with electric sump pumps to empty out flooded basements.

Emergency workers were stationed at both the Fire Station and the Community Center, which have generators and were open as shelters.

On Monday, Librarian Deb Bowman decided to open the Community Center as a shelter. Cynthia Shukett, 80, who has terminal lung cancer, came and stayed at the center so her oxygen machine could keep running. Shukett was joined by her daughter in law Mary Holt, who was visiting the island for vacation.

“Cynthia really drove the whole thing,” Bowman said, about making the center a shelter. “We were just going to serve lunch and dinner until the power came back on,” Bowman said. Each night, between 20 and 25 people had dinner at the hall. Since people’s freezers were drawing, all kinds of food came in. “The menu just kind of evolved.”

Next door, Ed and Julie Doughy, who own Doughy’s Island Market, kept the store open throughout the week. So those at the hall could run over and buy more supplies as needed.

On Thursday night, Beverly Johnson brought her computer to the center and held a slide show of storm photos. “It was the most miraculous week I ever spent out here, just how we all worked together,” said Bowman.
I last week and went on his back deck on weekends had a small telescope stick away undoubtedly, from consulted, and not so some slopily hit-and-miss landers stepping out into been nice in the majority’s opinion had been regarding Island opinion on a matter affecting City in lieu of this year. What we did bring down, and it was an immense, delicate through the field of view as the Earth turn. It had a few screws loose (and others missing), but we managed to patch it up with a stick and the always-helpful duct tape. We took it out on the deck and aimed it at Venus, then a small warning gib, so bright (we had no filters) it caused several secondary rings in the field of vision. Venus was kind enough to stay up, and I showed them how to find Saturn using the eastern point of the equilateral triangle formed by the ring of rings, the red disc of the gas planet, and the ring of Uranus’s upper left shoulder. Sirius, the bright star in Canis Major at Orion’s knee, could not be seen in the binoculars, but the bright star right above them sat there in Canis Minor. I pointed the telescope straight up at Sirius, and I’ll be darned if I didn’t see them.

Illustration by Jamie Hoag

Star Gazing

BY MIKE RICHARDS

I visited my brother John in South Carolina last week and went on his back deck after signing with his seven-year-old daughter Hanna, a beautiful, precocious child with glasses, a cute lips, and exciting pronunciation.

It was warm and still, and I couldn’t help noticing Venus blushing in the west, and a waning gibbous moon shining in the east, so I pointed them out to Hanna. John suddenly remembered that he had brought away (that week), had a small telescope stuck away upstairs in his closet. He brought it down, and it was an intense experience. We then, thanks to the City, ignorant people can and do drive their vehicles on the island at 40 or 50 mph, showed only by angry adult islanders stepping out into the road. Undoubtedly, some on the island wanted and welcomed the new roads. Wouldn’t it have been nice if the majority’s opinion had been consulted, and not by some sloppy hit-and-miss survey? During my 27 years serving on City Island and probably during the entire relationship between Peaks with the City, the only time the island had a-garding island opinion on a matter affecting the Island was the secession vote administered by City Island. Probably the worst consequence of the “Peaks is a neighbor?”) means was the failure of any group in the commuter county calling itself the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association (FINA). From the start, in its dealings with the City, FINA was just one more lobbying group with its own ideas of what it wanted for the island, but another group of interested citizens, but it took a name that opened doors through which neither could not easily pass. It raised the City’s dealings with the island to accept the FINA statement that it represented all of the islanders.

Whether true or not, it is the perception of many islanders that FINA has been at the heart of nearly every important City action on the Island during the past 20 years, either through having requested the action, or through sequencing in on it with organizations that their fact’s opinion been consulted, and not by some sloppy hit-and-miss survey.

As the House of the Lord moves toward the final days of the current term, the major consideration in the mind’s eye of the island people is the confluence of events.

The irony is that, had the City been held hostage by formal electronic ballot, a majority council truly elected by all islanders, the present secession movement might well never have surfaced. The island did, instead, during the last 20 years, to deal with the self-selected FINA group, was a testament to the secession consequences of the City Island election, but which never constituted more than a tiny fraction of the island population.

The City now presents, while confronted with the secession process, to create a truly democratic action, to the fullest extent possible, where otherwise, by any means necessary, to create the kind of consensus that would, at best, provide islanders with a temporary means of avoiding the city with a majority voice, and that, in any event, would not ensure that islanders would determine what happens in their community.

Thomas L. Baker, Peaks Island

Division can only be healed by final vote

Secession opponents on Peaks and in Portland have begun to report that secession is “dividing” Peaks Islanders and creating wounds they hope to heal after they defeat the secession bill now pending before the Legislature.

Reasonable people can disagree on whether Peaks should secede and govern itself, but this matter of “division” is obviously a political cancer—political cancerous tumors growing in the Island and the city with a majority voice, and they will not even if they could.

But if secession opponents in defeat Peakes Islanders of their constitution’s right to vote on secession, they will have nudged islanders in the battle that would never will heat—least of all by the subsequent salutary ministrations of the City of Portland and its insular advisors.

The only democratic way to conclude this political process, and put the hearts and minds of both Island and Portland, is to let them make an intelligent choice on whether to govern themselves.

Mike L. Klaber, Island Independence Committee
Artists create portraits of Americans who fight for their rights

B Y D AVI D T YL E R
In 2002, Maine artist Robert Shetterly was struggling. During the war in Iraq, which had already started, Shetterly, who took part in the Anti-Vietnam War movement as a young man, was angry about where the country was headed.

"I couldn't figure out how to get into the art world if I didn't have a sense of how I felt about what was going on in the country, and how I could respond," Shetterly said. "I started painting some portraits, the whole thing happened right there — it was an epiphany." He had a vision of a series of portraits of important people who had made, and are making, a difference in the world.

He painted the first 10 portraits in a "white heat" in one month. The first portraits were displayed in sandwiches shops and pizza places in Portland and Bar Harbor, near his home in Brooksville. They need to be where people go, he said. "We all walk in museums — I thought it would be more appropriate for them to be where everyone is.

By now, Shetterly has painted over 100 portraits, and the project is called "American Sentinels," with the idea to address the issues that divide us, to paint a portrait of the whole country.

"I just want to see that the piece is well — if there are other concerns besides taxes — people, that's the real motivation, that it's a way to get people to think about issues from the center and from the outside. Other the other hand, some of the other issues I want to think about a little more differently, or not being a little more forthcoming in their relationship and I think for a while kept not touching on some of the Peaks Island issues," said Shuetterly.

Shutterly agreed. "It was one little concerned that the whole of the city has been controversial over the years — as I would like them to," said Boland. "But you know that there are a lot of issues, and everyone is struggling about how best to handle them.

Portland officials have actively opposed Peaks Island projects and their negative impacts on the city, including the Peabody Development, that have ultimately led these and the Portland real estate community, including the City Council, to work on a comprehensive solution to the problems between Peaks and the city.

"I am not convinced that the actions taken are enough to address the problems," said Schneider.

"I am still undecided. I am not convinced, one way or the other yet," Schneider said.

Shutterly also said that all of the Maine islands are unique because it is not the same thing, and when there are some people who might not know what they have until it's gone. "I just got very concerned about the issues, and I think the things that Shutterly did had some small consequences of some of the actions that we take," said Boland. "It has to be thought through very carefully."

The Peaks situation is different than Chebeague Island, said Schneider. "It is a situation of people doing succession bill last fall. Chebeague also came to the Legislature with a series of bills that could have gone further."

But for Peaks, it is difficult, when there is such a small community. "I think it is very difficult to say this is the answer — that the silver bullet that will solve everything is this," Schneider said.

On Peaks, the City of Portland's property resolution was the spark. "I am not sure that people don't want to govern themselves," Schneider said about Peaks. "I just think the face was left by the resolution — it's hard for us to make that right and to weight that very heavily in my thought processes."

Tina Paul. L. Bonnet (R-Sagadahoc) said she has not made up her mind on the bill yet.

The Peaks Island Land Preserve is holding its PIP spaghetti supper at Peaks Island Memorial Church on Thursdays, May 10, and June 14, and July 26. There will be two seating, one at 5:30 p.m. and one at 7:30 p.m. The cost is $4 for adults and $2 for children. There will be a choice of vegetarian or meat sauce, with a beverage. The money will go toward Peaks Island Land Preserve's memorials of desserts.

Community Notes

Renaissance Voice performs
Renaissance Voices, directed by Harold Stover, presents its spring concert, "Thoughts of Love," Saturday, May 5, at 8 p.m., at Inmaculate Baptist Church on High Street across from the East End Hotel in Portland.

The concert will be repeated at the Fifth Manor Hotel on Saturday, May 12, and June 10, at 6:15 p.m. Tickets for each concert are $8 at the door.

PILP spaghetti supper
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Meeting for nonprofits
There will be a meeting on Sat., May 19, from 9-11 a.m., at the Peaks Island Community Center to help nonprofit groups.

Last November, the Peaks Island Fund sponsored a needs assessment meeting for Peaks Island non-profit organizations. Foremost among the organizational priorities identified was the need for a meeting place to be held, in response, island resident Jane Bannister, a professional grant writer, will host this collaborative meeting to identify and prioritize common needs for island nonprofits with a goal of leveraging larger resources. Following the meeting, a needs assessment respondents will be asked to complete a proposal narrative, following the process and development of a written budget for submission. RSVP or address questions to Sarah Carrigan, Island Nonprofit Collaborative, 761-3301, sarah@alanadiocese.org, or Jane Bannister, 769-2426, banji@verizon.net.

Artists island kids to create mural
Toison, sculptor and filmmaker, and Allen Hammaan's Island Kids Art Project, will be held at May 27 with a sample of one of her Memory Murals and a china bar to begin the project process for this summer's project on Peaks Island.

She will work with children at the Peaks Island Community Center in May. This summer, children attending the Peaks Island Children's Workshop will have the opportunity to participate in a creative art project, such as painting, drawing or sculpture, as well as painting and creating a mural. Children will use the materials and tools to create the art piece, which will be displayed in the Peaks Island Community Center.

Online island forum
Peaks Island resident Richard Shaw has created an online discussion forum for Peaks Island residents. The forum is intended to provide a means to discuss a wide range of topics and related issues, is long-term facility for community building and communications.