Grassroots activity swells in the wake of price hikes and budget cuts

A call for action as the city plans to cut the 50K fund in half and a citizens petition on Peaks Island to the PUC against CBITD rate hikes.

**BY KEVIN ATTRA**

On April 26, Peaks Island Council member Mike Langella sent out a mass emailing calling on residents to urge the City Council to reject the proposed cut in what is known as the 50K fund to $25,000, half of what it has been in the past. The 50K fund is an amount that has been given at the discretion of the city manager to the PIC for the past two years to be used for parking and transportation needs of the island. Many island councilors have said that the usual amount of $50,000 is already insufficient to address any significant problem; it has just been enough to repair gaps in the provision of student bus passes, and to fund an $85 annual voucher for island residents towards the purchase of ferry tickets. This year that amount was reduced to $20 for residents of Peaks Island.

"The voucher program and student passes will be in jeopardy if this recommended cut is accepted by the Portland City Council," said Langella in an email.

He also noted that other budget cuts recommended by the city manager would reduce police coverage on the island, and wrote that two police officers should be on duty during all three shifts in order to provide adequate coverage in the event of an emergency.

Last year a medical emergency occurred when only one officer was on duty, and resulted in two untrained civilians who happened to be at the scene assisting in the rescue. One ended up driving the ambulance to the emergency room so that the officer could administer first aid. The incident caused a small uproar on the island, and led to the PIC drafting several resolutions to the city requesting increased coverage.

"Since last fall there have been at least fifty instances when only one Portland police officer has been on duty on Peaks Island," wrote Langella.

A representative from the City Manager’s Office said this has far exceeded the city’s expectations. Residents and city staff alike have been asked to make sacrifices to ensure a reasonable budget.

The City Manager has asked all eight of the city’s contract unions to agree to a wage freeze, and the majority have apparently done so. We’re still in negotiations with Public Safety,” said the spokesperson.

The manager’s office said its goal is to maintain the existing police services and current taxpayers without increasing the tax burden for the city’s residents.

Another move that got started two months ago when Casco Bay Lines raised ticket prices to meet the requirements of its new budget for 2009 – 2010. Howard Pedlikin, the manager at the Casco Bay Lines office, said he initiated a drive to collect signatures on a petition opposing the fare increase.

After getting more than 300 people to sign, he presented it to the CBITD board of directors at the Executive Committee March 26, but it did not sway the majority of the board, and the rate hike was approved.

Immediately afterward, Pedlikin circulated a second petition recommending that the Maine Public Utilities Commission investigate the rate increase on the grounds that it was neither fair nor justifiable, and also charged that CBITD may not be operating efficiently nor utilizing sound management practices.

"Fares have gone up in the last five years 42 percent," Pedlikin said, "while the cost-of-living index has only gone up by 21 percent" (see chart at left). He alleged that the CBITD’s owner of charter or strategic plans, and the fare increases follow the cost-of-living index, and said this latest rate hike is "not that politic.

The petition also listed examples of past discrepancies in CBITD financial records, and made other claims alleging poor business practices, miscommunication and lack of transparency with the public.

The second petition received 286 signatures. Pedlikin and a group of concerned citizens informed the CBITD board of their intent to file with the PUC at a committee meeting on April 23, and the board reportedly made no comment.

"The petition was sent to Augusta that day, and the PUC acknowledged its receipt April 27. The committee meeting will decide if and how any action will take place by May 8, according to Pedlikin, who said it would be anything from rejecting the case outright to conducting a full investigation.

"We’re anxiously awaiting the 8th of May," he said.

**Dr. Jim Morse visits the island schools**

**BY KEVIN ATTRA**

New district Superintendent James Morse visited the Cliff Island and Peaks Island schools Friday, April 10, to meet staff and parents in the communities. "I think everybody was predicting that Portland would hire somebody from away," he said. "It is so much fun to come home. I’ve never felt so welcomed in my life. It’s kind of overwhelming.

For the last 13 years Dr. Morse has been superintendent of the Messalonskee School District, encompassing Oakland, Belgrade, Sidney and Rome. "That qualifies as a very long time for a superintendent," he said. It is the second largest school system in Maine with 2,500 students (Portland has 6,800), according to Morse.

"Oh, I have all kinds of plans," he said about his new position, "but they’re not going to be my plans; they’re going to be our plans." Jesse Holden, a teacher at the Peaks Island school, said she was excited about the visioning that Dr. Morse will do. He plans to hold conferences with members of the school committee, staff and teachers to brainstorm ideas and establish consensus on what the district needs, "which is a great idea," she said. "It’s a great city for doing modeling."

Dr. Morse said one of his best strengths is the ability to establish a vision and create a strategic plan from that vision. He said, he’s very concerned about Messalonskee in literary efforts, technology efforts, and in keeping pace with students interests and their desire to learn, "because often in public schools ... we get what we call the level of mediocrity [sic], and we don’t accelerate them enough.

"I’ve been able to get teachers to understand that we can teach multiple levels of abilities by providing good quality staff development, and having kids accelerate in the programming.

Although referred to as visioning, Morse’s goals appeared to be more pragmatic than imagining what-if, please see MORSE, page 3.
On the cover:

Wan Fu

In Chinese, the name Wan Fu means "more than 10,000 good fortunes," which aptly describes the life of this ship. In her 30 years she has withstood some very nasty weather, and circumnavigated the world at least once. "Knock on wood, she's never made a wrong move," said owner Dom Zapponi, who bought her four years ago from retired Australian Navy Commander Charles Falkiner.

The Wan Fu is a 37-ton, steel Chinese junk designed by naval architect Tom Colvin, and built by Falkiner and his wife in Melbourne, Australia at a shipyard they apparently created just for that purpose. They gave it to the workmen once the ship was built in 1978. She is 54 feet long on deck with a 14-foot beam, carries 600 gallons of water and 600 gallons of fuel in four tanks, and can sleep 12 people comfortably.

In preparation for a trip to Barbados about ten years ago the Falkiners had her completely refitted with new inlaid teak deckling, new rigging, new sails, a new Isuzu 150 HP diesel motor, and of course a new drive shaft, gearbox, and electric generator as well. "The whole thing is new," said Dom. "I've never owned a Chinese junk. It's comfortable. I can do my phone calls from the bow, and boat builder, Gilbert Klingel, once wrote that during a storm in the South Pacific his ship came along side a Chinese junk. "Now, they're in the South China sea on this Navy ship," said Dom. "They look over the side and there's a Chinese family in the same storm having dinner on a hibachi on the deck."

The Wan Fu weathered its third major storm when Dom first brought her back from Norfolk in late November, 2004. Weather reports from two different sources predicted that he would have three juicy days, but the fourth day would be horrendous.

Trouble started quickly when fuel filters clogged up with algae. "This is not good," he said. "We don't have a lot of wind. We pretty much need the engine to get this trip going."

As seas began to build, he and another crewman took turns every 90 minutes crawling into the tiny engine compartment in the bottom of the boat, cluttered with machinery, pipes and electric lines, to change the filters. They ran out of fresh ones and had to rinse the spent filters in a bucket with clean fuel so they could reuse them. "You actually can use the engine to clean the fuel," he said, describing it as akin to back flushing a pool filter. "We had it down to a science."

They managed to hold Thanksgiving dinner on board before the weather deteriorated badly. "Here it comes," he thought, "Day three."

During the day they ran into six or seven line squalls, and the main sail eroded completely and had to be shortened. That night 40-knot winds and 20-foot seas hammered them, and then just two hours out from a safe harbor the fuel line jammed again, killing the engine for good. The ship was being tossed so violently they couldn't get into the engine room to change filters without being hurt. "I mean, we are rolling," he said. The bow plunged so deep into the water that waves broke 30 feet across the deck. "They say if you put the helm asternships in a Chinese junk she'll sit in the water like a duck," he said, and that's what he did. We came down and we had a drink sitting here just like we are right now, and it's 40 knots of wind, 16 to 20 foot seas, a roll blown gale. I said, 'Well, I guess she does what she's supposed to do.' In all, that's how she's always fared."

"I like coming on the boat," he said. "It's comfortable. I can do my phone calls and paperwork and all I do - or what I dislike myself of doing."

"You can make believe this is your office, you know. You don't get anything done, but you think you do."

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Interest in community garden growing slowly

BY KEVIN ARTTRA

Justin Palmer hosted a gathering at Peak’s Cafe on Monday evening, April 13, so folks could demonstrate their support for a community garden on Peaks Island. About 10 people showed up to mix and mingle, munch on snacks, gossip, and check out the handsome Palmer had assembled and diagrams of the garden he had taped to a refrigerator.

Sam Salmonstall, “I’m a member of PEAT and PEAT has supported the idea of a community garden,” he said he came to see how the meteorological tower might be located in relation to the garden so that everyone is happy.

Island Councilor Lynne Richard

The Peaks Island Community Garden logo on a sign board outside the Cafe April 13.

“Part of the goal is to get some consistency into the system,” he said, “because my observations — very brief as they are — there’s a tremendous lack of consistency in this system school to school, and in the larger schools, between grades. That’s been a source of frustration for me.”

“I think the Expeditionary Learning schools is what we want to be encouraging,” he said. “I think that the schools, their sister schools need to learn what’s happening.”

Expeditionary Learning is an educational method that combines classroom learning with hands-on experience, and is exemplified by the programs at King Middle School.

“What’s making King hugely successful as an inner-city school is the teacher-to-student connection,” said Morse. “It’s really all about Expeditionary Learning, it’s about relationships. The same thing that makes you effective as parents, makes them effective as teachers.”

He said it’s important to make the curriculum relevant. “What you have to do is capture the kids where they’re ready to learn. My background is art, so for me it would have been learning for images. What do we want the children to achieve?”

That may also be based on his experience as a high school student, when he dropped out because the curriculum became irrelevant. “I walked into an English class and they wanted to talk about Shakespeare. I was not ready to listen, quite honestly, at that point. I was really interested in music. I was more inclined to be on a survival mode at that point. I just got up and left.”

Dr. Morse said that as a teacher he found that children are more than willing to push themselves if given half a chance.

Peaks Island Elementary School Principal Gwen Smith was excited about the new superintendent. “I’m happy to meet someone who wants to come in for the next decade, having a vision in carrying on,” she said.

She didn’t think her school had any special issues that Dr. Morse should address. “No, it’s a gem,” she said. “I’m just so happy with what’s happened here in the past few years. We’ve worked on aligning our social services and science curriculum to the Millennium Assessment and Learning Results. So we are moving full steam ahead.”

Recently, programs like “No Child Left Behind” have come under fire for politicizing the educational process by tying school funds to student test scores. This has led some teachers to make up test results in order to keep their jobs, and in many cases real learning has actually declined. The latest of these programs focuses on improving test scores in science and social studies.

Dr. Morse said he tells his primary educators, “Don’t worry about science, and don’t worry about social studies. Our job is about teaching literacy. Our job right now is mathematics. Those two skill sets will take care of the science and social studies.”

“No Child Left Behind, in my mind, is not a measure of student growth,” he said. “It’s a measure of political correctness that Washington has passed. I see [those programs] as being tricks but not the end result.”

Dr. Morse said he plans to visit the schools on a daily basis. “Number one priority: That’s how I get my battery charged. Otherwise I would go nuts.”

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all come from completely different places: some from Argentina, Brazil, Germany and Thailand noticed the same manners of French speaking and schooling as I had. We "more experienced" students saw ourselves in the new ones; they were six months earlier, so we gave them the advice we never had.

That weekend I only slept three hours. The rest of the time we talked, played guitar, sang and even had a snowball fight at 2:00 in the morning. It's a shame we can't do weekends like that more often, but when we do we have a lot to talk about.

I've often taken the train to Clermont, about an hour away, for AFS reunions. Usually, I'm seated across from a stranger, which is fine with me. I write in my journal and look out the window. I'm sure I surprise them when I write in English, but I bet they're even more surprised when I open my mouth and speak French. My friends laugh at my accent too.

I've learned a huge amount about language since I've been here - not just the French language - but the way words work, the way phrases are formed. There are a lot of phrases in English that, when you think about it, make absolutely no sense, and yet we say them and know what they mean.

Why do we say "in a car," but "on a bus)? What does the phrase "You'd better" really mean even when you think about it literally?

Every time I learn a French word, I look back to the memory of when I first heard it, and that has made me remember learning words in English that I never thought about before. I've started remembering where I learned words like "chubbe," "echo," "sidewalk," "belly-flap," "sealing wax."

But in French, where I have trouble is with object names that I don't have any memory of learning in English, "words like "cup," "table," "floor," or "sweater." What I don't even think about in English, I have to reexperience in French, everything that, for so long, I knew by heart.

It's now officially spring, and the weather's been really nice. I've started wearing skirts and sandals and leaving my winter coat at the door.

The school is a much more enjoyable place too. All the classrooms form a square around an empty courtyard in the middle, so once you leave class, you're outside. We have breaks every hour, and everyone finds their friends in the court to chat with. There are nice breaks to have because school normally ends at around 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock at night.

A French custom I've grown to really like is going to the local cafes. Every Friday evening after school my friends and I will walk to one nearby and just hang out. We always see people we know.

Everyone knows everyone in Moulins.

The waiter knows me, and says that every time I'm there I bring something to eat. It's really friendly. I love to just relax after a hard week with a hot chocolate, and be with friends.

I began rehearsal with my singing teacher at the end of April for a jazz band concert in June. I've had a really bad sore throat for a while and haven't been able to sing at all. He wanted me to pick three songs from a huge list he gave me, but I didn't know very many of them so I started with My Funny Valentine, which I know very well, just to show him how I sing.

As I began, I felt a huge wave of relief. I hadn't sung for so long that performing in that little room with only a piano and my teacher reminded me of what I'd been missing. I felt like a runner who just got off her crutches.

Although I'm not sure I'll sing that song in the show, it was definitely very refreshing to get back in the swing (so pun intended) of what I love to do.

I celebrated my 17th birthday a few weeks ago. My host family was sweet and got me a book of quotes about what it means to be a sister. Since it was April Fool's Day, my host mom also told me that my mother, who is coming to stay for a week, had called to say she'd be delayed for three days. I completely fell for it.

I've been documenting a lot of this trip because I don't want to miss anything. I feel like if I go a week without taking a picture, I've completely wasted the week. I document the important things, like going to jazz and nailing that hard rugby song, going to my host brother's rugby games to watch him win, touching my host sister a song on the piano.

But will I regret not documenting the little, not-so-important things like drinking cappuccino in the cafe across the street from school? watching the news with my host family every night after dinner? the bad cafeteria food? the train rides to and from the neighboring towns? laughing at the English teacher's terrible accent with my friends during break? the man behind the counter at the newspaper stand who finishes every sentence I make the same flavor of gum? I try to take pictures of everything, because I don't want to forget a single minute of my time here.

I'm having a great time, and I'm sad that it's getting to be the end of my trip. I'll let you know more about it soon!
familiar with the ferry schedule to the islands served by the Casco Bay Island Transportation District, some might be surprised to learn that many of its employees almost work around the clock, including both part-time and full-time staff. And, the district operates 365 days per year.

Captains, mates and deckhands are perhaps the most visible Casco Bay Lines employees, as they operate the district's ferries each day. Captains work 46-hour weeks while mates and deckhands are on a 40-hour per week schedule. Seniority affects those schedules, which follow the changing seasons. Some weeklifers start as early as 4:45 a.m. and others run through 12:45 late at night. Senior employees are eligible for overtime pay on holidays and when other employees are away due to illness or vacation.

The U.S. Coast Guard regulates the number of crew members who must work on the ferries, based on the number of passengers, to assure safe operations on Casco Bay. For up to 149 passengers, there must be one captain and two deckhands. The exception is the Machigonne II, which also requires a mate, also known as a lead deckhand. An additional deckhand is required for every additional 100 passengers, up to the maximum allowable for each boat. Most CBITD ferries can carry up to 399 passengers.

During recent budget discussions, the board of CBITD explored the possibility of reducing the size of the car ferry's crew by one deckhand to lower costs, but Operations Manager Nick Mavrides, after discussing it with the Coast Guard and crews, concluded that it would not be safe. He felt there would not be sufficient crew to meet critical staffing needs for man overboard and other emergency situations, and everyone on the board agreed. The Machigonne's design layout is such that the mate is needed to serve as the captain's eyes in communicating the location of a person overboard while the captain maneuvers the ferry.

Shore side, CBITD employees work at the terminal in ticket sales, freight handling, maintenance and administration. Operations agents staff the ticket office and freight shed to handle ticket sales, freight handling, telephone calls, dispatch of marine-side crew, and a variety of administrative tasks. They work from 4:45 a.m. until 11:30 p.m. each weekday, and even later on weekends.

In the early morning hours before 6 a.m., one operations agent has to work at the ticket office and receive freight until additional staff arrives. In the evening, one operations agent provides support service to crews in maintaining ship-to-ship communications and performing administrative tasks until the last boat departs. The scheduled hours of the six full-time operations agents and one part-time ticket/freight agent must be carefully arranged to meet the variety of needs over the seven-day workweek. In the summer, seasonal workers must be hired and trained to help meet the district's significantly higher volume of ticket, freight and vehicle business.

There are three maintenance workers who rotate duties in order to refuel the ferries, which must be done during the night several times per week. They handle routine mechanical work for the boats, as well as the mechanical and maintenance work for the terminal. Refueling at night is both a safety issue and one of convenience for passengers and freight – the refueling trucks would interfere with operations and travel if they refueled the ferries during the day.

Administrative employees work a typical 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule, although most work longer to cover personnel absences or heavy workloads. They are cross-trained to handle a variety of administrative tasks. The general manager and operations manager are on call 24/7 to respond to any unforeseen emergency throughout the year.

Hopefully, this look behind the scenes will give readers more insight into the daily work of the CBITD, and their efforts to provide safe and efficient ferry service for Casco Bay Islanders.

The driver of a blue pick-up truck apparently lost control of his vehicle at a turn near the Peaks Island elementary school on Pleasant Avenue. The driver was allegedly driving at the time, was charged with leaving the scene of an accident. Police will not release the name pending a court appearance.

photo by Tom Robas

It's May!

Come into Brown Trading and begin the summer Right!

Fresh Seafood
Local Organic Produce
Excellent Wine Selection!

Come in and see what's On Sale!

Cheeses Wine Fish
Bring them home for a wonderful meal
Community Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Every year around Memorial Day, Peaks Islanders find their annoyance growing as the passing weeks of our short summer bring more and more cars to our small island. On the Monday of the 2008 Memorial Day holiday, cars getting on the ferry were lined-up all day stretching back past the Old Port. Many vehicle owners were very frustrated waiting in that line. They would readily leave their cars on the mainland but for two things: 1) no transportation on the island to get their luggage, etc. to their cottages, and 2) the expense of leaving their cars in Portland – an expensive ferry ticket costs a good deal less.

I would like to propose a solution. The PIC is working hard on starting a taxi service for Peaks Island. That would solve the transporting of luggage for summer folks. For the City of Portland would permit it, what if islanders could park at the old Scotia Prince parking lot on Commercial Street; let's say for $50 per week. They could purchase a brightly colored and dated card perhaps through a city of Portland computer and receive it through the mail or pick it up at City Hall. They could drop their items off at CBL to be shipped to the island, then park and board the ferry. Even better would be the option of having the Old Port trolley swing down that way and deliver people to the boat terminal.

Vehicles have their place and are necessary for many, but I feel the quality of island life as well as the essence of the island experience for visitors would be heightened with the reduction of cars on the island.

Rhonda Berg

Howard Pedlikin went armed with over 380 signatures on petitions asking them to rescind the proposed rate hikes. Frank Peretti presented an alternative proposal which would have kept rates the same.

The board was obviously unmoveable by anything they heard, did not address any of the alternatives and proceeded with the vote. The representatives from Peaks (Doane, Flynn, Peretti), Cliff Island (Crowley) and City Councilor (Domingue) voted against the budget. Only the representatives from Peaks and Cliff voted against the proposed rate hikes.

Last year, Bill Overlock (Long Island representative) had proposed investing in a “hedge” during the fuel crisis, which he explained was as a form of insurance against rising fuel prices that would only have cost the district $24,000. Although instructed by the board to invest in the hedge, Catherine Debo opted to negotiate a fixed price contract with the fuel supplier which locked in the fuel price at $3.61 per gallon for one year.

Since the lock took effect, that decision has cost us $142,394, and if we use the same quantity of fuel this summer as last, will ultimately cost a total of $329,912. What it boils down to is that she defied the board and made a very poor business decision that we’re paying for. (She already locked in a new price for next September once again that is above the current price.)

Flush with victory, the management is already exploring many options. According to an article in the Portland Daily Sun, some of the ideas generated in this “fun process” are elimination of the longstanding seasonally based ticket pricing in favor of relying on discretionary trips at all times of year to fund the balance of costs, “charging for island-to-shore rides”, and “onboard credit card processing.” Several fallacies exist in these thoughts. Do you consider a trip to the doctor or dentist discretionary? Aren’t those tickets you purchase round trip? It already costs us over $40,000 to process the credit cards that people now use. Extrapolate how much more daily usage will add to this.

I’m sure you are totally depressed by now, but there are two additional items you need to know.

First, CBITD IS NOT $600,000 IN DEBT. Like most businesses, it has a line of credit. If, because of our fiscal year (April to April), we go over the budget with a lean winter, boats in dry dock, etc., we use that credit and then repay the loan in the fall. IT IS PAID OFF EVERY YEAR AND DOES NOT ACCUMULATE.

Your grandchildren will not be saddled with this debt.

Second, the management is required by the Public Utility Commission to post notices five days prior to a meeting. This is not discretionary and is presently being questioned by the management as unnecessary and not being strictly adhered to. The management is also circumventing this by-law by referring to meetings as continuations of previous ones. We hope this addresses some of your concerns and questions. Our aim is to simply give you information that is essential and not necessarily available in any other forum.

Jane and Sid Gerard

ISLAND TIMES

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YOGA FOR LIFE

A yogic perspective on health and simple living

BY REBECCA JOHANNA STEPHANS

Rebecca Johann Stephans teaches weekly yoga classes and private yoga lessons on Peaks Island. You may direct your comments, inquiries, or column ideas to 766-3017 or ryoga@vs.net.

Spring is unfolding in its uniquely slow and erratic Maine sort of way. In fact, we are already almost halfway through the season! Many folks I know have begun raking, clipping, pruning and clearing out garden spaces. While some of us are still entertaining the notion of perhaps beginning to maybe think about airing out the homestead, others are diving right into their traditional spring cleaning. Even the Douglas MacVane Community Center windows have been washed (big thanks to the city crew from the early morning weight lifting class).

Have you noticed that whatever cycle you are in tends to perpetuate unless there is an intentional or accidental interrupt? A cycle of fitness will become your natural routine unless there is some interruption such as travel, visitors, illness or injury. And once potato mode naturally begets more potato behavior until you take the initiative to get moving.

Unless you are a winter athlete, you may have engaged in more sedentary activities for the past few months. In a northern climate, a winter diet often tends towards heavier, warming foods such as root vegetables, meats, thick stews, casseroles, and soups. And for many of us, the shorter days and cold temperatures bring a general malaise. If you are stuck in lethargic winter doldrums even as your neighbors merrily engage in the rites of spring, now is the time to access your warrior spirit and create an intentional shift in your physical fitness, diet, and attitude.

Yoga offers three types of practices that can help you generate an uplifting of your spirits. Please start with the one that resonates with you the strongest, and then add the other two as your vitality returns. The first is a discipline practice of cleansing your body by eating lightly for a week or two, or even doing a brief spring fast. Food choice is a very charged topic and uniquely specific to each individual. If you have any concerns or are taking medication, please consult with your physician.

Generally, cleansing your organ systems with diet involves supplementing to the bare bones essentials until you feel better. Foods to avoid at this time include all refined sugars and flours, all packaged foods such as crackers, chips, and energy bars, prepared foods such as deli salads, alcoholic beverages, fruit drinks and sodas, processed meats and sausages, red meats and cheeses, and caffeine. Upon reading that list, some folks ask: what’s left?

Fill yourself up on spring greens, fresh vegetables and fruits, whole grains such as rice and oats, nuts and seeds, olives, eggs, plain yoghurt, fish, and chicken. In a typical grocery store, staying on the periphery will help you avoid the heavier, processed foods. Another practice that may help a strong desire for well being and movement is prun ing and clearing out garden spirit and create an intention for cleansing.

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

Hara Breath:

Hara is a Sanskrit term which refers to the energy of vigorous transformation. Stand with feet comfortably wide, toes turned out, and knees bent. Make loose fists, fingernails facing up, and pull your elbows back until your fists rest beside the base of your rib cage. Take a strong breath in, and as you exhale through an open mouth, push one arm forward and across your torso while turning your face so that your fingers face your back. Inhale as you pull your arm back, and exhale as you push your other arm forward. Begin slowly, alternating arms, and then speed up. Continue until you either begin to smile, or wear yourself out.

Warrior #1

Stand with feet wider than hip width, one foot in front of the other, knees bent. If you seek a more challenging pose, step the rear foot farther back. Keep the back knee above your ankle, and especially do not let it extend in front of your ankle. The back leg is engaged by pulling the hip forward as you extend the heel back. Lift your arms up overhead. To add a heart opening stretch, interlace your fingers (except the index fingers), lower your hips a bit, and stretch in to the rear.

Pause. Lie down with your legs up the wall and rest. Close your eyes, breath slowly and feel the effects of your movements. Give thanks for your practice and ask that it enhance your well-being.

Warrior #2

Stand with feet very wide, turn one foot out 90 degrees and bend that knee. Turn the other foot in about 45 degrees. From your hips, strongly externally rotate both thighs to strengthen your legs and keep your hips open. Stretch your arms out wide, keeping your shoulders relaxed, and turn your head to gaze along the arm to the bent knee. Optional variation: turn your palms up to face the sky. Hold the posture for five slow breaths or until you fatigue. Switch legs and repeat.

Warrior #3

Stand (or Inverted Half Downward Dog)

Start in table position facing away from the wall with your toes right at the base of the wall. Lift your knees into a high downward facing dog pose. Step one foot up onto the wall at about the level of your hips. Step the other foot up. Straighten out your legs while lifting strongly through your belly and hips. Gaze back towards the wall. Keep your breath slow and full.

Optional variation: lift one leg at a time and stretch towards the ceiling. Hold for as long as your strength allows and then step down. Sit for a moment to integrate.

Rebecca Johann Stephans, Kripalu Certified Yoga Teacher since 1994, has 21 years experience in the healing arts.
For the love of Peaks!

Dan Murphy

As Told to Fran Houston

We and the Litchfields were neighbors and close friends. They moved away but we remained in touch, and they were constantly extolling the beauty and attraction of Peaks Island. I really didn’t want to hear of it because I thought Dracut, Mass. was far enough north for me. The Cape was more to my liking.

One trip to the Cape in the summer soon put an end to that: traffic was brutal. That was it for the Cape.

For three years, I was able to find excuses not to visit them on the island, but one November evening, at a Scholarship meeting, I was asked why I responded that we were not the kind to just drop in on folks. Actually, I found it hard to accept that anyone in their right mind would live where you could only get there by boat. My family was then and there sold on Peaks Island. We got on the boat and left the pier. Also, equally hard was leaving Sunday afternoon to face the drive back to reality. It was always a joy to arrive on Friday evening and have my children on the pier waiting for me to arrive. Paul Whitney told me to enjoy the cottage for her. How dear is that to a son?

For those of us who now can travel to Boston or Lowell in a couple of hours, getting there and back is a snap. In 1961, the Maine turnpike ended in Merrimac, Haverhill, etc. Wednesday nights were Peaks Island nights for me. I would call Frank Houston and have my car ready for me by Saturday night and have my children on the pier waiting for me to arrive. Paul Whitney told me to enjoy the cottage for her. How dear is that to a son?

For all who remember the Memorial Day and July 4th experiences, anticipation of how long the line would be backed up on Commercial Street, and how many ferries we’d watch depart before we finally would get across. Remember, trains still ran up and down the street. In those days, if you couldn’t get across on Friday night, (the car ferry cost $2.75), you could wait until the next day.

Have you lived on Peaks for a long time? Do you have a Peaks Island story to tell of memories from childhood or that illustrates how you have lived here? Please email or call Fran Houston. She has already heard some great stories and she wants to hear more. Fran Houston can be reached at 766-2286.

1961, the Maine turnpike ended in Merrimac, Haverhill, etc. It was a long and arduous trip, at least three hours, yet I looked forward to it. I was an electrician as well as a teacher at the time and would tell the contractor that I had to leave at 2:30 p.m. every Friday. Not one contractor objected. I think the foremen were bussed out of anything could be that important to anyone.

For all who remember the Memorial Day and July 4th experiences, anticipation of how long the line would be backed up on Commercial Street, and how many ferries we’d watch depart before we finally would get across. Remember, trains still ran up and down the street. In those days, if you couldn’t get across on Friday night, (the car ferry cost $2.75), you could wait until the next day.
Years ago I was exposed to a "Futurist" at a marketing convention. He started his talk by surveying the birth dates of all the members of the audience, and then based on their age group, he proceeded to tell them what they probably believed and how they would react to certain situations and changes. I believe that same concept applies to islanders. By answering the following questions, your island perspective becomes more obvious.

Which boat first transported you to Peaks? Nancy Helen, Emeria, Rebel, Island Adventure, Island Romance or Machigonne II?

Did your boat depart from Longfellow wharf, Custom House wharf or the State Pier?

Did you take the boat from Evergreen, Trefethen or Forest City landing?

When you hauled all the trash out of your home, did you say you were going to the garbage pit, the dump or the transfer station?

Was your sanitary system a cesspool or a septic system? Was it pumped into the sea or processed at the island sewage plant?

Do you remember the fire call signal for your local call box?

Did you ever have a two digit telephone number?

Was your mail delivered by Jon or Mike?

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ACROSS
1. Hungry
6. Mold
10. King, for example
14. Proscenium
15. Where the Stans are
16. Article in Vienna
17. Volume and tone, for example
18. Absent-mindedly answering the door wearing only a nightgown?
20. A degenerate disease?
22. Blackbirds
26. Method of locomotion
28. What the Pied Piper did
29. Where are
31. I had too much fun
34. Preserve
36. Motherless calves
38. Words
40. Apes mellerita
42. Candles can be
43. Found on a diamond
45. One begins, "O wild West..."
47. Magazine
48. From Los Angeles to New York
49. Credit card term
51. Function
53. Andy's muse
54. Falla's alternative
57. Coming back to life as a hillbilly?
61. Attempt an explanation while drunk?
63. Swedish model
64. Unspeakable actor
65. Gets by
66. Body of water
67. Where the Stans were
68. Long-running musical
69. Gulf, WWII battle

DOWN
1. Ruin
2. Like a gull
3. Emergency vehicle for steamroller victims?
4. Former "Purple People Eater," now in Football Hall of Fame
5. Vintage car
6. "War"
7. Feminist addict
8. Beacon
9. Raptorial
10. Sponsorship
11. Man is the only animal that does this
12. Massachusetts cape
13. Clear
19. Man's name
21. Junior's rite of passage, briefly
24. Man who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms?
25. The person upon whom one coughs?
27. Tense
29. Impotent?
30. Colognette greeting
32. Howard or Martin
33. Presidential initials
35. Keanu in The Matrix
36. Horse command
39. Cow Palace and Polo Grounds
41. Follows Harvard and Yale
44. Lure
46. Necessity for fans
50. Shoot again
52. Antidepressant drug, now off the market
53. Fisherman of sorts
55. Expiate
56. Forbidden by the Decalogue
57. Revolutions
58. Gulf in Mid-East
59. Sunday occupation
60. IOU
61. Easy bird to identify
62. Ma's daughter

SOLUTION TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE

OMAHA
ASSET
ELS
DINAR
CHEER
IOU
DANDO
TAX
RETURN
OLDEST
SIDE
ALTO
CUTER
NANA
BOAC
OPENING
DAY
LATKE
BRIDGE
NEVADA
DEO
TRICK
ERR
FRINGE
TIME
JOTA
ARAT
SITAR
NAR
MOCHA
FRA"E
SCDULTER
CAORTA
ONE
ROMAN
IDIOM
NEL
SAMS
ALEARY
May 2009 Sky

Star Gazing
BY MIKE RICHARDS

May is named for the Greek goddess Maia, the first-born, most beautiful and eldest of the seven Pleiades sisters, daughters of Atlas and Pleione. May is the fifth month of the Gregorian calendar, which most countries have used since Pope Gregory XIII decreed it in 1582, after talking with Christopher Clavius and Johannes Kepler, two German math and astronomy professors. They had to better compute the date of Easter (the first Sunday after the first Full Moon after vernal equinox), as the Julian calendar, to use since 45 BC, was a bit longer than the Earth’s orbital period around the Sun, and that caused problems with the Easter computation. Even now, we must occasionally make small corrections to match our calendars to the Earth’s orbit (e.g., Leap Year, which adds a day to February).

THE PLANETS

In this month, Venus shines brilliantly low in the east, over the ocean. It’s the second planet from the Sun (Earth is third), so when Venus is at inferior conjunction, between Earth and Sun, it’s fairly close to Earth – only about 26 million miles away. Venus’s cloud-tops are unusually reflective, making Venus the third brightest natural object we can see, after only the Sun and Moon. Venus is about the same size as Earth, so astronomers call her “Earth’s sister planet,” but she’s more like our evil twin.

At 880° year-round, Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system — even hotter than Mercury — because of the runaway greenhouse effect. Unlike Mars which is covered in sand-dunes, Venus’s surface is all rock; the sulfuric acid rain never reaches the ground before being vaporized by the heat. The atmospheric pressure is over 90 times Earth’s, like being 2,000 feet down under the ocean, enough to crush one of our modern submarines. Although the surface winds are a constant five knots, the density of the atmosphere would prevent you from walking around it (assuming a space-suit could be devised to withstand the heat and pressure).

Venus is unique in some nice ways: its orbit is the roundest in our solar system; it is the only planet with a female name (its symbol is the same as one doctors use for Earthly women); its temperature (though Hothish) is quite uniform all around the planet, as the atmosphere circulates evenly until it enters a double vortex at the south pole; and it rotates clockwise (all the other planets and sun rotate counter-clockwise). But, it’s tilit to the keel of all the planets. How nice. I’ll still take Louisiana in July, though it’s a close call (don’t tell Pams).

Venuscury is dipping down in the east, and can be seen only the first few days this month. Mars is to the lower left of Venus in the morning, Jupiter is up earlier each morning and coming into view. This month, Saturn, the rings are below the constellation Leo and is always worth finding in a telescope — I used my nephew’s little Tasco-brand scope in Georgia last week and we could see the rings just fine, even though they are edge on to us these days. Toward the end of May, Neptune is the blue dot next to Jupiter, which is easy to find next to the Last-quarter moon on the 17th.

THE STARS

May 1- First-quarter Moon is high at sunrise, Saturn is to its upper left. Sunrise is at 5:34 a.m. and sunset is at 7:42 p.m. If you can see the Pleiades star cluster in the west, you may notice an interloper, Mercury passing in front.

May 2- Venus is at its biggest and brightest this morning.

May 8- Full “Flower” Moon rises at 7:52 p.m. out over the islands. It might be a nice night for a moonlight walk along the backshore.

May 14- The Moon’s at apogee today, the furthest away it gets in its elliptical orbit.

May 17- Last-quarter Moon is high at sunrise; Jupiter is to its lower right. With a telescope, from 4 a.m. to 5 a.m., you can watch the shadows of two of Jupiter’s moons, Io and Callisto, pass across its cloud-tops.

May 18- Neap tide this month is just 6.4 feet between high and low, but that will double in a couple of weeks.

May 20- Waning crescent Moon is above Venus in the pre-dawn sky, but you’ll have to be up early to see it. Tomorrow morning it’s off to the left of Venus. This morning, Neptune appears so close Jupiter you could easily mistake it for one of Jupiter’s moons (it’s really 2.4 billion miles behind it).

May 24- New Moon means dark skies for hunting galaxies, star-clusters and nebulae, but the Moon is also on the same side of Earth as the Sun, and they’re combining their gravitational attraction and pulling our ocean tides higher.

May 26- The Moon’s at perigee, closest to Earth this month, bringing in spring tides over the next two days with a difference of 12.7 feet between the highest tides in the middle of the night and the lowest tides first thing in the morning (well, 7 a.m. today).

May 31- Sunrise is at 5:03 a.m. and sunset is at 8:14 p.m., giving us over 15 hours of sunlight. Summer solstice is only 3 weeks away.

The Calendar

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Peaks Island artists are popping up all over this spring. Suzanne Parrott’s fiber creations were recently featured in Show Us Your Wears 2009, a juried fashion show that took place on April 11 at Zero Station (www.zerostation.com) in Portland. Bristol Ivy at the Portland Fiber Gallery (www.portlandfibergallery.org) said, “It’s the second year of this event. There were about 100 pieces submitted, and the jury chose 50 pieces. It’s a chance to showcase some of the work that gets done while everyone is cooped up all winter.”

Suzanne’s background in painting is evident in her fiber work, full of rich subtleties of color and design. She wet-felted wool things for about five years now. “I’m ready to show them off.”

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How Green Thou Art
BY KEVIN ATTRA

The green we don’t have in winter except what we might get in a holiday decoration is finally coming back for real. Green is the color of nature, spring, renewed life, long hot days and mown lawns.

To be green ourselves is to practice ways that supposedly cause less harm to our planet than the ways of industry. It’s mainly practiced by people who feel the planet needs caretaking, usually portrayed as earthy artists in paint-splattered jeans. So how green is art? Well, if you paint in oils, your paint-splattered jeans are probably covered with heavy metals and soaked with carcinogens. Even if you don’t pour solvents down the drain, eventually they’re going to get used up and become hazardous waste. So, in some cases the image of the artist as green activist doesn’t make sense. The reality is that art is often an industrial process.

An artist trade organization called Trade Only Design Library (todl.com) tries to address this paradox through a green certification program that was implemented in 2007. To be certified, artists are thoroughly vetted about their methods and the materials they use, including sources of water, as well as waste handling and other practices.

Admittedly, the organization’s motive is largely mercenary: TODL is a buyer’s resource for architects and designers looking for artwork, and the rising demand for green home construction has led to the creation of the certification program as a way to tap into the green market.

Nevertheless, the criteria is comprehensive and scrupulously adhered to through review by field experts, making it a truly authentic resource for people who are looking for strictly green products in their home.

Long Island artist Maggie Carle, who for years has been quietly making paper from garden scraps and other old materials into new artwork, was recognized last year by TODL as a certified green artist and placed on its green resource list.

Carle works mainly in sculpture and collage using found objects and natural materials, including old jewelry, fabric, yarn, and tissue paper. Her collages are assembled as a variety of materials mounted flat to create a fixed visual perspective of each image. On the other hand, she’s created a series of mobiles she calls Sculptured Portals that use crafted openings designed to be viewed directly, and at the same time to incorporate the scenery beyond them into the image.

Her collages are assembled as a wide variety of materials mounted flat to create a fixed visual perspective of each image. On the other hand, she’s created a series of mobiles she calls Sculptured Portals that use crafted openings designed to be viewed directly, and at the same time to incorporate the scenery beyond them into the image.

She sells her pieces for what she deems “artistic value,” and she disposes of the materials she uses in her artwork, explaining where she got them and how she disposes of them.

Ironically, she’s only had one sale from [TODL] in six months.

Although a career artist, Carle achieves color naturally from the pigments already in the materials, or by what comes of overlaying recycled tissue paper.

Her collages are assembled as a variety of materials mounted flat to create a fixed visual perspective of each image. On the other hand, she’s created a series of mobiles she calls Sculptured Portals that use crafted openings designed to be viewed directly, and at the same time to incorporate the scenery beyond them into the image.

She says that as they twist and turn, they change our perceptions, slowly altering what we see, and occasionally even what we hear; some have bells. Others are designed to be hung inside a window, so that as the light changes, the scenery through the window is also changed.

A collection of roughly 40 of her sculptures and other pieces is currently on exhibit at the Dodwell Gallery on Long Island, in a show called “How Green Thou Art”. The show runs through Memorial Weekend, with a reception on Sunday, May 3 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the gallery.

In the past six years the gallery has featured over 100 Maine artists and exhibitors, mostly from the Casco Bay Islands. More information about the Dodwell Gallery can be found at: http://Library.long-island.lib.me.us.

“Honest thing as an artist is to market yourself,” she said, explaining why she sought certification from TODL in the first place. She learned about the program when a marketing firm approached her while doing research for an article about green construction and art.

To qualify for the certification program, she had to submit a list of about 100 materials she uses in her artwork, explaining where she got them and how she disposes of them.

“A lot of artists say, ‘I only use one sale from [TODL] in six months.’

Although a career artist, Carle actually studied theater where she learned techniques for making scenery and costumes. “I did a lot with children’s theater,” she said. “I learned how to make something from nothing.”

She’s known for the paper she makes from garden materials – dead flowers, stems, lawn clippings and even seaweed – that she likes to save up during the summer.

Carle’s work is often shown at the gallery, as well as in Long Island’s annual Art & Soul Exhibits and Wharf Festivals, and can be seen at her website: www.maggiecarle.com. Visitors are welcome to her home studio by appointment.

Glasswork from the Sculptured Portholes series by Maggie Carle. Photo courtesy Maggie Carle

From the FIFTH MAINE

A Cold Business on Peaks Island
BY KIM MACISAAC

Did you know that Peaks Island once sported a thriving ice cutting industry? Two ice houses were owned by a few island families and many a young man found employment cutting ice during the winter months. The Trefethen family maintained two ice houses adjacent to the ice pond near Spar Cove. This operation was later acquired by Lawrence Burke. A short distance away on Tolman Road Perley Knight built his ice house. This site is now home to the Tarry-a-White and Rivierdell cottages. At the other end of the island, Wilder Brackett harvested ice from Brackett Pond. Ice was also cut from smaller ponds that no longer exist. The large blocks of cut ice were stored in the ice houses and insulated with sawdust and hay.

In the days before gas and electricity refrigerators nearly every family owned an ice box to store perishable foods. Customers posted an ice card in their windows with the dollar amount of ice desired at the top of the card to alert the ice man how much ice to deliver. One of the many ice men on Peaks was Harvey Trefethen (above) who, no doubt, was kept busy delivering ice to the hotels, cottages and homes during the hectic season.

So much ice was harvested each winter that the business expanded to shipping ice to the southern states. A second, longer wharf was built adjacent to Trefethen Landing to accommodate the coastal schooners that transported huge quantities to southern ports. By the late 1930s the days of harvesting ice on island ponds was over but not forgotten. Photographs, ephemera like ice cards (far left), and other documents remain to document that bygone era.

PASSEOVER

Presented by Dr. Al Reichman
A Biblical presentation for the Jew, Gentile and Christian

Wednesday, May 27, 2009 at 7:00 PM
Peaks Island Baptist Church
235 Pleasant Ave.
Peaks Island, ME 04108
765-3639, www.ppbcinfo
Waterfront plans go on the public drawing board

BY KEVIN ATTARA

For the second time in almost 10 years, the City's Planning and Urban Development Department hosted a community design workshop to obtain public input on the redevelopment of the eastern waterfront after both Ocean Properties and Olympia pulled out of the project last year. More than 200 people from the Portland area, including residents of Chebeague, Long, Peaks and the Diamond islands, attended the event, held on Saturday, April 11, at the Ocean Gateway terminal on Thomas Street.

Bill Needelman, a senior planner with the department and lead staff member for the event, said it was the first time it's been done specifically for the Maine State Pier. "Hopefully when we look at the results there will be common themes and consensus points we can report back to the City Council."

He said the information will help the council with its decision making. "The specific questions we asked were: What uses? Where on the pier? What are the important points of public access? "It's not going to provide a specific design for a redeveloped pier," Needelman added, "but it will do a good job of identifying those things with which we agree."

Volunteers and staff of the City Manager and City Planning offices mingle with over 100 business people, artists, trade workers, and other interested citizens to brainstorm ideas for future development of Portland's eastern waterfront district.

"So much of the rest of the waterfront is developed, I just feel that one of the last places the public can go and see the ocean, and see the sunset, and see the sun rise." - event promoter Kris Clark

People worked in groups of 10 or less with at least one facilitator - either a member of the city staff, planning division or legal office, or a volunteer from the Portland Society of Architects - at each of the 11 tables to write down ideas, answer technical questions and make sure the group stayed on task throughout the 4-hour process.

CBITD General Manager Catherine Debo made the rounds urging participants not to create additional traffic problems in the vicinity of the ferry terminal. "We're trying to limit excess traffic down in this area," she said, "because they're going to get balled up." City staff also circulated among the groups to answer questions and see what ideas were developing.

Citizens were given a tight schedule so they could focus equal time on each of five areas that had been prepared for discussion by the department: Compass Park, the 1,000-foot berth and warehouse, the southern end of the pier, the northern end of the pier and the adjacent mainland property, called the uplands.

Portland resident Wendy Cherubini said, "I'm hoping that we'll come up with some kind of a community consensus [that can] guide development for the next 20 years."

However, landscape architect Tony Muench, said it's been a problem getting consensus on the waterfront due to zoning conflicts. "And when you own Portland, it's everywhere in the country," he said. "You go to any big city that has a waterfront, there are overlapping zones that don't make any sense."

Jack Humeniuk, with Ports America and a representative of the Longshoreman's Union, said many issues had to be resolved. "You have security needs. You have to have certain types of access to terminals from commercial vehicles. You have to have safety for pedestrians. You have to have parking."

Parking, in fact, was a big issue for many people who, like commercial real estate developer Tony Anderson, were troubled by the absence of traffic plans in the previous proposals by Olympia and Ocean Properties (he conceded that Ocean Properties at least put a parking lot in its hotel design). "It was totally unimaginable, quite frankly, to many of us."

Most of the groups seemed to prefer ideas that would make the waterfront more accessible to the community, enhance the view of the bay and promote a mixture of uses on the waterfront. "I think once you start building the hotels and offices you're both limiting your options," said Kris Clark, a promoter who has organized at least a few events at Olympia's past plans on the waterfront. "It's a big issue for this day and these people who cared enough to show up and present their opinion to the City Council."

The plans generated at the waterfront plan presentation and planning department personnel and presented to the City Council on April 19.
Current Financial Tides

MORTGAGE RATES

BY ALISON SCHNELLER & CINDY McDOUGALL

Did you know the prime rate is at a 50-year low of 3.25 percent, with mortgage rates hovering around 5 percent? If you’ve been thinking of buying a home, now may be the right time. If you already own a home, now may be the time to think of refinancing.

A lower rate may sound tempting, but there are several elements to think about before you decide that refinancing is the thing to do.

Other questions to ask yourself are: How will you pay the refinancing costs? If those costs can be rolled into the mortgage, how will that effect your monthly payments?

When refinancing your mortgage you incur costs which typically include appraisal fees, title search and insurance costs, as well as processing and recording fees. Your lender will provide you with a good faith estimate, which gives you a good idea of what to expect. In many cases, these costs can be financed into the new loan as well, but keep in mind that this will increase the amount of money you are borrowing and raise your monthly payments.

If you already have a low interest mortgage and would like an additional loan to make some home improvements, buy a car, pay tuition, etc., then you may be able to use the equity in your home to do the job, either through a home equity loan, or a home equity line of credit.

Home equity loans are a fixed amount, term loan while a home equity line of credit is a revolving credit account. In either case, most banks will lend up to 80 percent of the value of the home, minus the remaining balance on the first mortgage. For example, the maximum loan value of 80 percent on a house appraised at $300,000 is $240,000. But with a balance of $150,000 remaining on the first mortgage, let’s say, then the property would have an effective equity value of $90,000 ($240,000 - $150,000 = $90,000). The owner would be eligible to borrow up to that amount, subject to income and credit approval.

The home equity loan is a fixed rate term note with interest rates that are typically slightly higher than first mortgage rates (some lenders may absorb the closing costs and the cost of the appraisal). The monthly payment will remain the same throughout the term, so a 10 year home equity loan of $90,000 at 7 percent would cost $1,045 per month for the life of the loan.

On the other hand, a home equity line of credit (HELOC) is a revolving line of credit. The interest rate is variable, usually based on the prime rate with an added margin. During the “draw” period when you can borrow against the line of credit - typically the first 5 or 10 years of the loan - the required monthly payment is only the interest on the outstanding balance.

After the draw period the loan enters into a “repayment” period, which can be up to another 15 years as a principal and interest payment period. During the repayment period the credit line cannot be advanced.

If you borrowed against all of a $90,000 HELOC at a rate of 4 percent annually - which would be the current prime rate plus 1% margin - then your minimum monthly payment would be $300. If you used only $45,000 of the HELOC, then you’d only have to pay $150 each month. Keep in mind that by making the minimum payment you are merely paying the interest. Your principal balance will remain the same.

Some HELOCs let you convert the entire outstanding balance, or a portion of it, into a fixed rate term note. This added feature is especially useful when interest rates start going up. Your lender can let you know if your HELOC has that feature.

When choosing a financial institution to assist you, make sure you’re asking the right questions. Where do you want to be financially in 10 years? 15 years? 20 years? Get the right product for your needs and goals; choosing the wrong one can be costly. When you’re putting your home on the line, it’s important to work with a trusted professional.

Where do you want to be in 10 years? 15 years? 20 years?

Some questions to ask yourself are:

How long do you plan to stay in the house? Is your plan to sell it quickly or will you stay put for many years?

Let’s take a look at a $200,000 loan at 5 percent annual interest (5.097% annual percentage rate)*. With a 30-year term the monthly payment would be about $1,074. The same loan at a 15-year term (5.123% APR) would be $1,582. Though it has a higher monthly payment, the 15-year loan would save you $101,836 over the life of the note.

If your goal is to stay in your house for seven or more years, the 15-year note may be a great choice. If you plan to sell the house in a few years, the 30-year loan may be your best option, or you may also want to check out adjustable rate options. They often start out with a lower rate than fixed mortgages.

*All rates quoted are examples only. Figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.

Are you leaving money on the table?

BY NICOLE EVANS

Renters and homeowners, June 1 is the deadline to complete the State of Maine Property Tax and Rent Rebate “Circuit Breaker” application. Complete an application if your 2007 property taxes were more than 4 percent of your 2007 household income; or your 2007 rent was more than 20 percent of your 2007 household income.

Maximum income limits for owners and renters is $80,000, based on adjusted gross income. Seniors do not need to meet these requirements if their total annual income was $16,800 or less. Applications are at Portland City Hall, or can be filed online at: http://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxrelief/homепage.html.

The City of Portland has two programs that may be of interest to islanders looking to purchase their first home, and to current homeowners looking for home rehab assistance.

“Homeport” is available to income eligible first-time homebuyers. The program is designed to provide financing to fill the gap between the amount the household can afford to borrow from the bank and the purchase price of the property.

The owner-occupied “Rehab Program” assists income-eligible residents to finance home improvements. Repairs are eligible if they address health and safety issues, abate lead paint hazards, provide energy conservation, or fall under the category of non-luxury building improvements.

Income guidelines for both programs, administered by the City of Portland, depend on the number of occupants in the home: a family of four must earn less than $57,900 in adjusted gross income; three persons, less than $52,100; a couple, under $46,300; and individuals, less than $40,350. For more information, call Mary Davis at 874-8698 or visit the website: http://www.portlandmaine.gov/planning/housingprog.asp.
Maine Opera Atelier

Do you (or your students) have auditions coming up? Preparing a concept or a part in a show? Craft your delivery, movement and acting skills with a live audience of peers.

Maine Opera Atelier is holding four Tuesday sessions with Julie Goell, Artistic Director on April 21, May 12, 19, and 26 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Maine Opera Atelier's Studio 604, 21 Crescent St (corner of Cumberland), Portland. Intercom #614.

Includes 1-hour of acting techniques, stage movement and vocal warm up followed by 2-hour labs on works-in-progress. Individual coaching by facilitator and veteran director, Julie Goell. $15 fee, $55 if paid in advance. Please confirm by phone (807-6666) or email juliegoell@gmail.com.

Accompanist provided, please bring music or your instrument.

We include a variety of vocal styles: Opera, Jazz, Funk Style Improv, Country, Musical Theater, whatever your bent. Solo instrumentalists are also welcome to participate.

Maine Opera Atelier is a training studio as well as a performing company, providing a variety of musical programs.

ACORN PRODUCTIONS' RICHARD II AT THE INN ON PEAKS ISLAND

The Acorn Shakespeare Ensemble, producers of the Naked Shakespeare series, will mount Shakespeare's Richard II for one night only at the Inn on Peaks Island, Friday, May 22 at 7:30 p.m. Featuring Paul Haley in the title role. $8 suggested donation. Seats can be reserved by calling 854-0065 or visiting www.acorn-productions.org. Made possible in part by a grant from the Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust. The Westbrook-based company, directed by Peaks Island resident Michael Levine, performs regularly at the Wine Bar on Wharf Street and at SPACE Gallery.

Peaks Island Author Book Signing Benefit

Anne Sibley O'Brien and Perry O'Brien will be at Arabica Coffeehouse in PORTLAND on Friday May 1, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., and the PEAKS ISLAND COMMUNITY CENTER Saturday, May 2, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to celebrate the publication of their new book, AFTER GANDHI: 100 YEARS OF NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE, acclaimed as a new tool for inspiring activists of all ages with the history, philosophy, and strategies of nonviolent resistance.

Friday's event, part of the First Friday Art Walk, is a fundraiser sponsored by Arabica, Curious City and Longfellows Books to benefit the A2U2 Social Action Committee, http://www.a2u2.org/social-action-programs-maine.aspx. On Saturday, the event hosted by the Peaks Island Branch Library will include tea & cookies, and Longfellows Books will provide copies of the book for sale. A portion of the proceeds will go toward purchasing a collection of books on nonviolence, peace and justice for the Peaks library.

Anne Sibley O'Brien is a Peaks Island resident and children's book author/illustrator as well as a lifelong activist. Her son, Perry, became a conscientious objector after serving as an Airborne medic in Afghanistan and is now a labor organizer in New York City. For details about the book please visit: http://www.aftergandhi.com/

Corrections

As some of you may have noticed, there were some strange stories in our last issue, but we're happy to report that there were only two actual mistakes.

Apparently, some people were fooled by the Mud Season News reports and the story on a new affordable housing group. To set the record straight, the stories were complete fabrications, as was the piece about a theme park on Diamond Cove. Happy April Fool's.

Unfortunately, the following mistakes were not April Fool's jokes, though we'd love to say they were.

Thanks to subscriber Bill Hoadley of Matinicus who caught the front page error in the story on the PEAT wind tests, where we erroneously stated that the footprint of a test tower is about 59,000 square feet, or roughly half an acre.

He correctly pointed out that an acre is 43,560 square feet, and that therefore something was terribly wrong somewhere. As it turns out, the required area is neither 59,000 square feet nor half an acre.

According to Mick Womersley of Unity College, who will be installing a 34 meter test tower on the island if it is approved, the area needed is only about 4,750 square feet, or roughly the size of three double-wide mobile homes.

And for those of you who thought your answers to last month's puzzle were wrong, you're wrong. See, you may have been right, but you thought you were wrong, which is just wrong cause it's all so confusing.

In other words, we printed the wrong answers, and here's the correct solution to last month's puzzle (right).
WOMEN IN HARMONY CHORAL CONCERT
Saturday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 17 at 3:00 p.m. Women's voices dedicated to the power of music for social justice and endorses the Maine Freedom To Marry Coalition, a broad-based coalition of organizations, businesses and people who want to end discrimination in marriage against same-sex couples.

Rennaissance Voices
Rennaissance Voices, the 21-voice a cappella ensemble directed by internationally-known artist and distinguished musicologist Harold Stover, will present its spring concert, Saturday, May 9, at 8 p.m., at Immanuel Baptist Church in Portland. The program will feature works by Monteverdi, Orlando di Lasso, Felix Mendelssohn, Maurice Ravel, and New Englander Amy Beach. The ensemble has been performing throughout Maine since 1994 and has sung live on Maine Public Radio. Admission is $15 at the door. Advance discount tickets are $12. For information, call 207-729-4958 or visit their website: www.renaissancevoices.org.

PeaksFest planning meetings
Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at The Pub, as follows: April 30, May 6, 21, June 4, 18, July 9 and 23. As noted, we are doing this virtually. Details can be found on our annual conf/edenced meeting schedule to make it as efficient as possible. We may also meet Monday night, June 13, just prior to the festival.

PeaksFest
June 19, 20 & 21
PeaksFest presents "Breakfast for Supper" at the Peaks Island Baptist Church from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The evening event at the Peaks Island Baptist Church from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tickets are $12 per person.

Jewelry Photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, photography, printmaking, assembly, fiber art, music and writing. The gallery mission is to foster and showcase fine art and contemporary crafts to and create an engaging, professional, friendly space that's educational and celebrates art. Solo and small group exhibitions change weekly. To apply for an exhibit, please contact. Larger theme shows are hosted in the other half of the gallery each year. Please call the gallery at 207-760-5600 for more information.

METALLIC'S
RICHARD BOYD POTTERY
The Fifth Maine provides a rare glimpse into the past and the early school in the 1860's as we work between the Community Library and the elementary school, in the past 6 years the gallery has featured over 100 Maine artists and exhibitors, mostly from the Casco Bay islands, and hosts the annual Long Island Art & Soul Exhibit as well as special shows during the What the Frogs festival. Every day, during library hours, http://Library.long-island.lib.me.us.

HOMESTART
Community Meeting Saturday, May 2 - 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. in the Doug MacVane Community Room. We look forward to your joining us. To apply for an affordable rental or ownership opportunity, please call Casco Bay Island Fellow, Mary Terry, 207-766-5600 for an application at 221-2507, or write to her at maryterry@gmail.com. Applications were developed with criteria used by the State of Maine and sister islander organizations. Process involves confidential review by an independent committee and placement on a waiting list. You will be notified when the first appropriate home becomes available.

PITA-EA's LOAF & LADLE DINNER
Our next dinner is Thursday, May 12. For information or to reserve, phone 207-766-5600. Peaks Island Tax Assistance will assist homeowners and renters with ener assistance during the summer months through our Audit and Weatherproofing Program. If this is an area where you need help, please fill out an application located on the bulletin board of the Peaks Island Library.
COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

71 Herman Ave., (Children's Workshop Building). Open to the entire community Monday thru Friday 7:30 am to 6 pm, first Saturday of every month 9am-11am. Please call 766-2854 for assistance or deliveries.

BRACKETT CHURCH

Weekly Activities:
- Worship, Sunday 10 a.m., includes childcare and Sunday School.
- Children's Choir: Most Tuesdays, 2:40-3:15 pm, call Manette Macaronis for details 897-0088.
- Lent Study Group, Thursdays 6 p.m.
- Wednesday Thrift Boutique 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the church fellowship hall.
- Capture Study Groups, Wednesdays 10 am and 7 p.m.
- Taizé Prayer Service - Thursday Evenings – 7 p.m. Join us for contemplative, low-key worship with candlelight, silence, prayers, gentle music, and communal reflection.
- Prayer Shawl Ministry Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. at the Church Office/Pastor's Office, 9 Church Street. Call Ann 766-2636 or Rebecca 766-0067 for more information.

Special Events:
- Open Mic and Dessert Night, Friday May 15, 7:30 p.m. Bring your stories, your music, your poetry and your appetites and enjoy a fun-filled evening. Contact Bill Hindsfer for more info 766-2036.
- Church Supper, Thursday, May 28, 5-7 p.m. at Brackett Fellowship Hall. All are invited to this free community supper. Please join us and enjoy good food and good company.
- Greedy Madrigal Singers, directed by Jan Thomas May 29, 7 p.m. at Brackett Memorial United Methodist Church, 9 Church Street, Peaks Island, Maine. Pastor: Rev. Dena Larson, 207-766-5013; www.brackettmnmc.org

HOST FAMILIES NEEDED

ASSE International Student Exchange is now accepting applications from host families for the 2009/2010 academic year. By hosting a foreign exchange student from Europe, Asia, North and South America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, you provide a rewarding opportunity to a special teenager. All students are well screened, insured, speak English and come with their own spending money.

Host families provide room and board and guidance for their new son or daughter while experiencing the joy of watching a child grow academically and culturally. Each exchange student expects to bear his or her share of the household responsibilities as well as be included in normal family activities. Couples, single parents and families without children are encouraged to apply.

For additional information about hosting an ASSE exchange student call Joyce McKenney at 207-766-4666 or 1-800-677-2773. Also, please visit our website at www.asse.org for additional opportunities through ASSE.

FRIENDS OF TEIA NEWS

Friends of TEIA is planning its ninth summer "camperships" program for the children of Peaks Island who want to attend the club's sailing, tennis and kids camp activities.

Children who are year long residents on the island may participate with a campership in any of their choice. Parents please think about these opportunities for your children this 09 summer. Registration forms are available at the Peaks Island School.

To volunteer or contribute financially please contact Stephanie Castle at sealights99@aol.com or Barb Hoppin at babiphy@main.com

WEIGHT TRAINING

Mondays and Thursdays from 5 pm to 6 pm in the Community Room. We use simple ankle and hand weights for strength training and to encourage strong bones. Call Rhonda (2483) for more information.

PEAKS CHECK-IN LINE

The telephone check-in line at 766-0067 is now in service, designed for those who live alone, for those who have recently had medical issues or surgery, and for those who are housebound for any reason. Every morning between 7 am and 10 am, participants call the answering machine to leave their name and let us know all is well.

If we do not hear from them by 10 am then we call to ensure they are okay. For those who cannot call us, we will be happy to call you. If you would like to join, or if you have questions about the program please call Howard and Cynthia Pedlikin at 766-0067. The cold windy weather is here and some of us do not get out everyday. We are a way to keep in touch and let us know you are okay.

PRESUMPSCOT WATER TAXI

DAILY RATES

Peaks Island $40
Little & Great Diamond $40
Long Is. & Diamond Cove $50
Cliff & Chebeague Is. $70

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Peaks Island Baptist Church

EXODUS 12:17

Sunday School: 10 AM Worship: 11 AM

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 7 PM

766-3637
The secret lobster count on Peaks Island

STORY & PHOTOS BY KEVIN ATTRA

"We're supposed to get here an hour before low tide," said Lynne Richard, standing in hip-waders at the shoreline one night last October to hunt for baby lobsters. "They just dash so you can't catch them if there's too much water," she said.

She and her husband, Steve, are volunteers for the Lobster Conservancy, a regional non-profit organization located in Friendship that keeps records of each new generation of lobsters through a program called the Juvenile Lobster Monitoring Project.

The conservancy has trained more than 100 volunteers from over 25 areas to scientifically collect population data on young lobsters, some only the length of a fingernail, living in inter-tidal nurseries along the Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts coastlines.

Between April and November, the sites are examined once a month during extreme low tide to take a count of the juveniles, and record other data as well, including weather conditions, air, water and soil temperatures and water salinity.

According to information on the conservancy's website, "the accessibility of these sites makes them extremely valuable as indicators of lobster fishery health - the baby lobsters counted today will be keepers when caught in lobstermen's traps six or seven years from now."

The information helps the lobster industry target maximum yields, and plan for each year's harvest, knowing what size population to expect.

Since it's impossible to count every lobster in existence, a representative slice of the environment is examined and then the numbers are extrapolated to represent the whole coast.

There was a full moon on this October night, which made the walk to the waterline a long and treacherous one. The usual path of slippery rocks near the water's edge was at that point a vast field of slime thanks to an extremely low tide one foot below normal.

"The hard part is you can't sample where there is a lot of water," said Lynne. "We're not allowed to say where they are because she said people may come there to fish lobster and thereby mess up the nursery and the count."

The Richards always come to the same beach and start the count in exactly the same spot, under one particular rock.

They lay out a 20 meter line, called a transect, and pull up every rock ("Well, the ones we can lift,"") into hold them in.

Lynne (left) and Steve Richard carefully peel back rocks and search for juvenile lobsters along a 20 meter transect line strung across the water line at low, low tide.

For every lobster they find, an array of data must be recorded, including length and sex, whether the shell is hard or soft, how many claws it has, which side the crusher claw is on, what parts are missing (they are often missing claws and legs), and any other distinguishing characteristics. It is a time consuming process - the Richards are rarely able to finish the entire transect before it gets too dark to see.

"Here's one!" Steve yelled.

"Oh, I see it. A little baby," said Lynne. "Here, you want this cup?"

They were looking for the juveniles, and although they've been doing this for seven years, it was the first time they'd thought to bring a small paper cup to hold them in.

"Oh, this is great," said Lynne, who used it to store the animals until they get charted, and also to scoop them out of hard-to-reach places. "Last time we lost four of the little baby ones. We couldn't catch them."

"After a quick inspection, Lynne took measurements while Steve wrote down the information on pre-designed tally sheets."

The total length is measured from the tip of the longest claw to the end of the tail. The size of the carapace (essentially the torso) is separately measured from the eye to the back of the shell. One end of the caliper is actually placed inside the eye socket, but Lynne doesn't think it hurts them.

A 14 mm carapace (about 1/2 inch) is considered tiny. "Generally we find that the total length is about three times the carapace length," she adds, "but on these little ones it isn't as predictable."

The Lobster Conservancy was founded by Diane Cowen, author of the Secret Life of Lobsters, who made the first lobster count in her hometown of Harpswell in 1995, and still continues today.

"She'll get as many as 27 lobsters in a quadrant," said Lynne, "so she needs a lot of cups." She said Diane will flip over every rock in a quadrant, collect all the lobsters and do a mass measurement, but the Richards don't get that kind of volume.

One of the baby lobsters Lynne and Steve enjoy finding sits on the record of its own existence, along with rocks of the trade.

They did find four on this night, apparently living like a family under one rock - a large male and female, and a couple of babies, one just 1 1/2 inches with a carapace under 10mm. "We'll go for a month without finding one of these, so to find so many like this it really lucky."

For more information about the lobster count visit the Lobster Conservancy at www.lobster.org.

Next Issue

Looking for my Parachute

Jo Israelson was a happily self-employed artist for 20 years, but when the housing market plunged, it took her business and all her clients with it.

She spent the first few weeks hiding under the covers, but then embarked on a whole new career: finding a job. This three-part series explores the process of finding work in a jobless market.

Starts in June.