Island Times, May 2011

Kevin Attra

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Early Spring Edition. Peaks resident Vinnie Demos took this great picture near Woodlanding Cove on Peaks Island in the wake of a big storm on April 17. She is a member of the Peaks Environmental Action Team, which is sponsoring an island tree picture contest for PeaksFest. Send a photo, drawing or painting of your favorite island tree to 25 Crescent Avenue, Peaks Island, ME 04131. Multiple entries will be accepted, any size. The winning image will be published here on the front page of the Island Times. All entries will be displayed in a show at the MacVane Community Center during PeaksFest.

A spate of thefts and vandalism on Peaks
April rampage includes a Cafe burglary and seven stolen or wrecked vehicles

BY KEVIN ATTRA

The safe and trusting atmosphere of island life may evaporate on Peaks Island in the wake of a series of wilding episodes by persons yet unknown.

Between Monday night, April 4 and the following Tuesday morning, six vehicles ranging from automobiles to golf carts were either vandalized or stolen and damaged. Around 4:00 a.m. that Tuesday the Peaks Cafe was burglarized as well. The Portland Police Department issued a statement on its Facebook page, concluding, "These incidents are most likely related and are under investigation."

"They even took the $2 we always leave in the tip jar at the end of the shift," said Cafe regular Ellen Huson. "We also had to throw out all the pastries because we didn't know if they touched it or done anything to it. So everything's a day old today."

This is the latest of several crime sprees on the island targeting unlocked vehicles with keys left in the ignition. Last summer the Anchorage Shop Downfront was burglarized along with a series of vehicle break ins and golf cart theft.

Last July the Peaks Island police force was cut in half, which was protested by the Peaks Island Council and the community on the grounds that it would compromise public safety.

One person predicted that the reduction in police force would only encourage crime, and in light of incidents in April, that prediction may be coming true.

On Friday, April 29 around 4:30 a.m., a seventh vehicle was stolen, taken for a joy ride and then driven into the woods off Brackett Avenue where all the windows were then smashed out. That investigation has just begun.

According to Sg't. Dean Goodale of the Property Crimes Division, enough evidence in one case has been developed to be brought before the District Attorney, who will determine if it is sufficient to prosecute.

He added that the investigation is continuing and that there may be more suspects.

PIC focuses on reducing commuter costs

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Love of Peaks

Island Council meeting Tuesday April 26 the Peaks Island Council elected to switch focus from providing token discounts for all islanders to giving meaningful discounts to the busiest users of the transit system's daily commuters.

Chair Rusty Foster recommended that the PIC allocate approximately $25,000 of the city's discretionary transportation fund to supplement monthly and annual permits rather than provide $25 vouchers as had been done in the past. The money comes from a discretionary account controlled by the City Manager and restricted to use for parking and transportation needs of the islanders. It was originally $30,000 but is now at $30,000. The PIC plans to ask for $40,000 this year. The request must be submitted by March 31.

"Essentially [annual passes] are not a good deal," said Foster. "If you buy them with a credit card, the interest costs will eat up any savings you would get. [Casco Bay Lines] makes you pay in cash so they can." The recommendation was to provide a discount of $250 for annual pass holders and $20 off per month for monthly pass holders.

Foster said there are currently 20 annual pass holders for Peaks Island, though not all of them live on the island.

This was a bone of contention for Casco Bay Heather Thompson who argued that any benefits should be for island residents.

"We should be paying attention to our community because we pay such a high price to live here," she said. At one point in the meeting she was actually going to filibuster the motion, but ultimately it was approved unanimously.

Since the total amount is limited to $25,000, the discounts are expected to be given on a first come first serve basis, with priority given to existing annual pass holders.

Another $2,506 was allocated to cover transportation costs for children attending summer camps to help mainland kids coming to the island camps as well as island children going away to camp.

Foster estimated that $2,500 would provide two week's worth of commuter books to about 50 kids. If approved by the City Council the allocation will be administered through the PIC.

In other news, the council approved another $10,900 to the Peaks Island Children's Workshop for scholarships for five children whose families rely on it to afford day care services.

In appealing to the council for the grant, interim Director Lori Fred Moses said the actual cost was $9,258 for 30 weeks of service (the number of weeks the PICW is open) but added, "This does not include adding any new children and does not include any school age children, for which we know there is a significant need."

Last year, the PIC awarded the PICW $5,000 towards scholarships after the Workshop lost city and state funding that had previously counted on. "That $5,000 went a long way," said Fred Moses. "Without it, these five children would not have been able to be in the program."

Tom Boblan, representing the
An accidental fire undoes years of work

BY KEVIN ATTAR

Fire broke in a home at 105 New Island Avenue on Peaks Island a little after midnight on April 15, causing extensive damage to the upper stories of the building but leaving the basement virtually intact.

According to Portland Fire Department Lieutenant Dan Small, who investigated the fire, it started in one of the floor joists under the first floor in the vicinity of a pipe that led to the upper floors, and apparently had been smoldering for as much as six hours.

Once it ignited, the fire traveled quickly through the wall cavities surrounding the pipe. It consumed a beam and panel of the floor that led to the upper floors, and apparently had been smoldering for as much as six hours.

According to Schiller, who lives across the street, "The fire was 13 floors up. It was 1:54 on my boat time clock, close to that. A couple of minutes later the sirens went off, and it was 201 on the clock and the truck was here."

"I don’t know how many [firefighters] were there with the first batch, but apparently Lisa Lynch and Ellen [Huston] were there shunting people. At one point I counted 12, then a second truck came."

Lt. Small said the fire was caused accidentally, most likely by a plumber’s torch. "We eliminated all the accidental sources except the plumber’s welding equipment," he said.

According to Schiller, a plumbing contractor had been working in the home the day before, apparently in the process of moving a furnace in the basement.

"Insurance investigators for both the homeowner and the plumbing contractor are currently conducting independent studies of the fire."

Most of the damage occurred to the rear corner of the house, shown by the black stains along the porch roof trim.

staff photo

It used to be that calling the police or fire station directly was the only way you could get help, and you had to memorize the number or have it posted everywhere. Some places gouged and used numbers like 347-FLARE, but nothing was consistent until 1968 when AT&T, which had a monopoly on phone service at the time, came up with 911.

It had been the informal procedure for passengers on the boats to call the police on the ferry, but that was changed. With the advent of new wireless technology and global positioning systems calling the station now will only slow things down.

On Peaks for instance, calling the police station only causes a delay as the officer or firefighter has to then call dispatch to get the Marine Division activated. If 911 is called, dispatch will activate the right people immediately.

Portland Fire Chief Fred LaMontagne said "The state of Maine and the phone companies have invested a lot of energy to do point locations when calling 911."

Last year during a run down the bay, a passenger aboard one of the ferries became uncontrollably violent. As the boat was just off Little Diamond, the captain headed for Peaks Island and called the island police station directly in order to have an officer on the boat to take the passenger off.

It had been the informal procedure for years, but unfortunately what should have been a five minute delay became a 20 minute ordeal for passengers and crew because the officer was on the other side of the island at the time and had to be tracked down. Meanwhile, the violent passenger continued his rampage around the boat.

"To get the best response, get in the habit of dialing 911," said Chief LaMontagne. "Assist us in helping you. Dialing 911 takes another step out of the process."

Most of the damage occurred to the rear corner of the house, shown by the black stains along the porch roof trim.

staff photo
At Casco Bay Lines
Electronic ticketing expected this month

BY KEVIN ATTRA

Sometimes this month the Bay Lines plans to install an electronic ticketing kiosk, similar to an ATM. In fact, it will provide the location near the Credit Union’s ATM in the terminal until the bugs, if any, get worked out. Eventually, it will be located near the reading material to avoid congestion at the ticket window. The kiosk will only provide single adult tickets at this point. “We wanted to start with the basic,” said Automation Manager Roki Horr, who is managing the project.

In addition Horr said, “We’re going to bar code all tickets. The bar code scanning will allow, potentially, for online ticket purchasing.”

With the new system, as passengers board the ferries their tickets will be scanned by the crew members using handheld electronic scanners. With one swipe the Bay Lines will have more data available than ever before. “I mean, data is priceless. We’re asked for it every day, from somebody. So having that more readily available through this bar code tracking makes sense.”

The system can correlate dates of purchase, dates of use and destination for each ticket, as well as ridership from Portland.

Both projects - bar coding tickets and providing electronic purchasing - have been in the works for a number of years. In 2004, Microsoft stopped supporting the Bay Lines DOS-based computer ticketing system, and so it was entirely replaced with a more modern Windows platform.

But through that change, the company decided to keep using the same ticketing software, developed by Gateway out of Boyertown, Pennsylvania, which Gateway upgraded to work in the new operating system.

“The advantage - and the reason the District made the decision to stick with it - is that it’s modular,” said Roki. “You can add or take away or build on the foundation, so your basic ticketing system can be expanded to meet all sorts of needs. Much of this is the foundation for what we do next.”

If self-ticketing takes off, Roki said the hope is to eventually expand the ticketing options on the kiosk and move towards more automation, including reusable passes. “I want to be able to park my car, rush in the terminal, hit ‘adult to Long Island’ - which is where I go - and go aboard the ferry, and self-scan.

“I’m an islander. I grew up on Long Island. It has never made sense to me that I buy a paper ticket at that ticket window, I go 50 feet away and somebody takes it, tears it in half and puts it in a box, and there it sits until another employee comes out and empties the box, then shreds that, and then that shredded material has to go somewhere. It’s never made sense.”

A team from Gateway is expected to arrive May 9 in order to help bring the system online.

“So far we’re on point,” said Roki. “The programming’s done. We’re ready to plug and play on our end.”

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The National Children’s Study, a research initiative at Maine Medical Center, has interviewers in your neighborhood. This study is the largest of its kind in the nation and your participation is essential for it to succeed. You won’t be asked to change anything in your life and everything we learn will be kept confidential.

By opening your door, you’ll help every child in Maine, including the ones right down the street. To learn more about the National Children’s Study in Cumberland County, please call (207) 662-1488.

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The Casco Bay Island Transit District board of directors’ goals were to move toward mobile Internet access for several reasons: To enhance the learning experience of the island students, some of whom spend several hours each day commuting to and from the mainland for school, in hopes they would be able to work on homework assignments and other school-related assignments; to provide a web office as well as recreational access for regular commuters; to help guide tourists to local businesses as well as provide a means for them to search for local attractions; and to provide the capability to electronically transmit data (such as passenger count, engine status, etc.) between the ferries and the terminal.

The service currently is being offered for free to the users, thanks to supporting sponsors. Great Diamond Island resident and Casco Bay Lines board member Matt Hofffman, who utilizes the service, says “I am really surprised and gratified to see the number of adults and children logging into the Wi-Fi network each morning. It seems to really help islanders get a little work (or play) done while they have some down time on the ferry. It has been a great addition to the services offered by Casco Bay Lines.”

“I am very pleased that the Casco Bay Lines moved forward on this Wi-Fi initiative,” remarked Peaks Island resident Steve Schuett. “Now every rider has another option for how they use their commuting time. For example, we see some students doing their homework on their laptops, and commuters can now use the Internet, perhaps freeing up some time at home.” He added, “The Bay Lines has moved into the digital age.”

CBITD operates the ferry service in Casco Bay 365 days per year and must ensure that residents have safe, dependable and reliable transportation for themselves and for their goods on a scheduled daily basis. It is the “lifeline” for the residents of the islands, carrying over 977,000 passengers, 5,300 tons of freight, and 25,000 vehicles annually. CBITD also carries the U.S. mail and transports school children to and from Portland. Incidental tour, cruise and charter service is offered as well.

Wi-Fi service now onboard

BY CATHLIN M. GILDART

In April, Casco Bay Lines launched mobile Internet service out of ferries Magaguadavic, Aragoiseco, and Machigonne I, as well as in its terminal waiting area.

This comes after several months of exploring technologies required to provide a steady connection on a moving ferry. The technology being used provides an Internet connection by creating an instant broadband Wi-Fi hotspot using a wireless router (similar to those commonly found in homes) that is connected to the Internet via an air-card supplied by one of the wireless telecommitters.

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The Division’s website offers a detailed street map and contact information for nine other parking areas in the vicinity. Prices and restrictions vary considerably, primarily due to convenience.

Marginal Way and Exit 7 of I-295. It’s free for 2 hours. We have used it many times, rewarded for the less-than-a-mile hike to and from the ferry terminal.

There are also 55 free parking spaces within easy walking distance from the ferry terminal on Thames Street - the eastern extension of Commercial Street. Many islanders and visitors use the Thames Street parking, but they must be diligent about what they do. Overnight parking is not allowed from 11:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. on Monday or Tuesday nights because of street sweeping. Red and white signs mark the schedule.

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**cPort CREDIT UNION**

355 Main St
Saco, ME 03862

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For the love of Peaks!
Profiles by Fran Houston

Mickey Friedman

I was born on June 16, 1928 in Hartford, Connecticut, the middle girl of three girls. I grew up in Connecticut but went to camp in Maine and always wanted to live in Maine. Finally made it. On our 24th anniversary, we came up here to live full time. We spent about 10 summers living part time up here, and then we came full time in 1973.

How did you hear about Peaks?

My daughter Betty's former husband, He had been talking to some people and they were saying if there was one place they wanted to live it was Peaks Island or the Caribbean, and Harry said there were inexpensive houses out here and we should come out and take a look. At first I wasn't really interested because I had been juggling two houses and five children, and once we moved to Maine we were in one house.

On the other hand I always loved the ocean, and the idea of living on the ocean was appealing. And, Harry said if we could share the house they would do all the work, so I couldn't turn that down.

So we came and looked, and the second time we looked we saw this house, which was funky but because of the way it's laid out it was perfect for two families to share. We shared one bathroom for three years with their two kids and we're still getting along, so something must have been right. I love being out here, and I'd love to be out here all year round but it's not practical. I'm just here in the summer and occasional weekends in the winter. But I live in an apartment, just a rental apartment in Portland. I'm involved in a lot of stuff in Portland, so it doesn't make sense for me to live here. And that hull from the boat goes steaper every day, I swear, they keep jacking it up. Every time I go into Portland it seems like it goes steeper.

What was there anything that first boat ride that you took over?

The first and the last – I never get on the boat but that I feel like I'm going to a party. To me, there is something very symbolic when the boat pulls away and you're disconnected from the land. It just feels to me there is a freedom, a liberation of some sort that happens and that never gets older or hackneyed, it just – I love it. The first few years we were always bringing things over. It seemed like we were all just camels, constantly bringing stuff over. But that feeling of festivity, like I was going to a party, has been maintained. It's been 22 years.

What kind of work have you done?

I started having children in 1950, and I had five children in six and a half years, because my last one was two – I have twins that are now 50 years old. So for the first 25 years or so I did a lot of volunteer work. I ran in an inner city school, I worked on PTA – I worked in the school library with our synagogue's social action committee, and was appointed to our town's first conservation commission. Before I had children, I taught at a school for the deaf. Then when we moved to Maine, I decided to go back to college.

T majored in social work, gerontology. I did you have a Pepper Island story to tell of memories from childhood or that illustrates why you love living here? Please email or call Fran Houston. She has already heard some great stories and she wants to hear yours. fran_houston@barnes.com, or call 765-2226.

Peaks Island ExperienceS
The Kiosk with Eight Windows

By Jerry Garman

An island is a very active place with an overwhelming need to keep islanders informed about a multitude of events and meetings.

The octagonal kiosk, located at the top of Welch Street on Peaks Island, was designed and built with the dedicated purpose of providing informational space for "nonprofit" organizations; the essential core of our island community. In 1998 there were 15 organizations, today there are over 30.

One of the last phases of kiosk construction required the design and fabrication of eight doors. I was fortunate to enlist the skills of Don Webster (the Very Reverend Donald Andrew Webster). This turned out to be a most pleasurable and painful experience.

Pleasurable, because I had enjoyed working with Don on many projects. Painful, because his basement workshop was only 5 1/2 feet tall and Don was almost 6 feet tall and I was 5 feet 7 inches. With braced heads we painfully finished the windows in time for the dedication.

This kiosk has been serving the island for 12 years. Don had been serving the island for 22 years until his untimely death on April 11.

Philosopher Nassim Tale states that, for two families to share. We shared one bathroom for three years with their two kids and we're still getting along, so something must have been right. I love being out here, and I'd love to be out here all year round but it's not practical. I'm just here in the summer and occasional weekends in the winter. But I live in an apartment, just a rental apartment in Portland. I'm involved in a lot of stuff in Portland, so it doesn't make sense for me to live here. And that hull from the boat goes steaper every day, I swear, they keep jacking it up. Every time I go into Portland it seems like it goes steeper.

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This extraordinary picture was taken by graphic designer Mark Shain of Virtual Design, Ink, during the Easter Sunrise Service on the back shore of Peaks Island, April 24. It can be viewed in full color glory on his Facebook page.

Letters

Dear Friends,

I am a week or two behind reading the letters to the editor of the Island Times and the Letters from Casco Bay. I think people do not realize that the taxes being levied on property on the island have wreaked havoc with some islanders. Whether you are a homeowner, Peaks Alliance member or neutral, we need to sit down and talk about assessments and property taxes. Do we have the information to suggest some changes to the City of Portland? I would like to see an article on valuations and taxes to see if there are differences in housing costs. I am not a great writer but I am willing to do the research and share my findings in the June Island Times.

There are some islanders, including the Pedlkins, who bought properties a year or so before the valuation and know their taxes are fair. Some islanders believe that the state should adopt the Circuit Breakers tax refund and increase that tax refund. The suggested cost to the state would be about $1 million. However, someone has to pay for that. You cannot count on refunds without finding a new revenue source or asking others to pay more. Would this refund really be fair?

Others have long suggested that a local option sales tax be imposed to recover $100 million. The problem is Mainers already pay high taxes and would be paying that sales tax too. Those who are summer citizens already pay their property taxes and would also be paying the local option sales tax.

They have no say or vote to make any tax changes in Portland or Maine. Some of the citizens have suggested that Portland adopts a Circuit Breakers tax refund. However, in order to get the money for the refund you must either tax increases or creative ways to secure $1 million to cover the costs. There are other problems as well.

As you know people get a little testy when certain topics or ideas are discussed. I get a little testy every day because I see friends and neighbors doing everything possible to pay their property taxes only to come up short. Is this really what we want for this island? I do not know the answer but I am willing to begin researching valuations and the taxes levied on properties. Most of the research can be done online and I will compare taxes without divulging the names of the owners of the properties.

Stay tuned. I will be reporting on all of this next month. Perhaps I will get answers to the questions I have about property taxes.

Cynthia Pedlikin

from Congresswoman Chellie Pingree

Greetings,

With the winter chill leaving us and the spring upon us I wanted to remind everyone about maintaining a current registration and insurance on our Island golf carts. I've personally spoken with a couple of islanders regarding the issue and am confident it won't be an ongoing problem. You have to remember that the operator of the golf cart would be liable if there was an accident that had property damage and or injuries.

On a lighter note, Officer Dan Rose just completed his wrestling program. Officer Rose stated that it was a major success. In total, there were 12 kids in the program competing in competitions all over the state, with six of them finishing off the program by competing in the New England Wrestling Classic, held at the Cumberland County Civic Center. So congratulations to Officer Rose and the kids that made it possible.

Officer Rose stated that he hopes to be able to put the program together next year as well. We'll make sure word gets out as soon as possible so everyone knows about it.

P.S. Please be aware of where your dogs are. We've had too many calls regarding loose dogs lately.

Supporting military victims of sexual assault

I recently had the honor of meeting a group of women who told me about their time serving our country in uniform. As patriots, their stories were of bravery, strength, and sacrifice. But as victims of sexual assault, their stories were of perversion, pain, and injustice.

They are not alone. Today a female member of the military is more likely to be raped than to be killed by enemy fire. She is twice as likely to become a victim of sexual assault as a service member than as a civilian.

Thousands of women—and men—in the military report cases of sexual assault each year, but the Pentagon estimates only one in 10 ever report their assault. Those who do are routinely ostracized by other unit members and ignored by superiors. And when they try to get counseling to deal with the effects of their assault, they have to cut through reams of red tape to claim benefits.

Along with 12 other service members, including two men, the women I spoke with are filing a class-action lawsuit against a military system that did not do enough to prevent their assaults; to support them in reporting their rapes or to bring them justice. After being repeatedly assaulted, these women watched their rapists get promoted in rank, their complaints spawned retaliation. Superior officers told them to be good soldiers and "push through the pain." As they continued to serve with outstanding resolve and bravery, others made it a mission to make them feel like cowards and traitors.

Is it surprising that so few service members ever report being assaulted?

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This letter is from Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, a Democrat from Maine. She represents the 2nd congressional district, which includes Cumberland County.

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The Casco Bay Island Times is a community newspaper covering the islands in Casco Bay. We welcome birth, engagement and wedding announcements; obituaries; notices of community events; and letters to the editor. Please try to keep letters to 300 words or less. We reserve the right to edit all material. The newspaper is available by mail for $25 a year. Address checks to Island Times, Casco Bay Island Times, PO Box 129, Windham, ME 04062. To reach Kevin Attra, call (207) 650-3161 or e-mail kattro@islandtimes.org. For ads rates visit our website at www.islandtimes.org.

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YOGA FOR LIFE
A yogic perspective on health and simple living
BY REBECCA JOHANNA STEPHANS

Rebecca Johanna Stephens teaches privately and at Prana Island Land in Portland. You may direct your comments, inquiries, or column ideas to 766-3017 or rjsyoga@gwi.net.

For one week in April, a Tibetan Monk and a Mandala Master set up shop in the tangerine lobby on the second floor of Maine College of Art and created a sand mandala for peace. A mandala, Sanskrit for circle, is an intricate image used to facilitate meditation, illustrate a specific teaching, and generate a particular energy in the artist and observers. If you are fortunate enough to have known about it and stopped by, I imagine you still have colorful images dancing behind your eyes and a deep pool of peace in your heart.

I have only a superficial knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism, so I recommend you do some research if this column captures your curiosity. However, Buddhism and Yoga share foundational teachings, one of which is the four roots of suffering: attachment, aversion, ego or ignorance and fear of death. In recognition of this connection, I was invited to participate of one of the evening talks on compassion.

Sand mandala creation begins with an overhead design on a birdbath. In this case, it was a beautiful octagonal table that was smaller and a bit shorter than the one the artists are used to. The scale of the grid was quite fine and precise, and the artists assumed a bent back position that required frequent stretch breaks. This particular design illuminated peace and compassion, and the artists prayed and meditated throughout the creation.

The process of applying sand to grid to create the design is a wonder to beholders. Each individual sand grain is scooped into a funnel shaped metal tube. Near the smallest end a series of ridges reminiscent of a rasp. The artist holds the tube by the mandala and runs a solid metal bar across the ridges. The vibrations create a droning sound and the meridian pattern of sand. Almost like magic, a bright design appears on the background sand.

Let you imagine only geometric shapes that may seem rather simple to create, please expand your vision. With mere sand, the artists create waving ribbons, animal masks, delicate flowers, trees and flowers that a botanist could identify. Despite the intensity of their concentration and prayers, the artists gracefully pause to greet observers, answer questions and photograph foreigners. The two men opened the ritual with prayers and ceremony Monday afternoon, and then worked 10 hours or more Tuesday through Friday until the mandala was complete. When I stopped by on Saturday to sit for a bit with the finished mandala, they were returning from a speaking engagement at Colby College and had time to talk. Geshe Gendun Gyasto, the Tibetan monk, divides his time between Boston and India. Srom Dargyal, mandala master, lives in Chicago. I am always pleased when folks don't fit into the stereotype we may attempt to assign them. The first time I arrived at MECA to watch the mandala creation in process, the monk, bedecked in orange and gold robes, was busy working on his laptop computer. Turns out he was putting together a slide show of events from earlier in the week so we could get caught up. At the mandala master was working (in Nike sweatpants!), his cell phone broke the meditation with a lively ring tone. They are ordinary men who engage in an extraordinary practice.

The Dalai Lama, spiritual master of Tibetan Buddhism, offers this bit of wisdom about practice and life: “The point is that in your life, unless you make specific time for something that you feel committed to, you will always have other obligations and you will always be too busy.”

After a full week of diligent work, prayers, and meditation, the final ceremony was befitting of the awe that the mandala inspires. The two artists took sponge-type paintbrushes that they also used on occasion to clean up the edges of the mandala, and pushed all the sand into the center of the circle. The sand was collected into a vase, and all who were present for the ritual walked to the Maine state pier and offered the sand into the harbor. Each grain of sand carries the prayers for peace and compassion into the bay, the ocean, the winds, and all the land the wind and waters touch.

The dismantling and redistribution of the sand mandala is the most powerful, tangible teaching of nonattachment and egolessness that I have ever witnessed. In our culture this phenomenon often occurs in behind-the-scenes volunteers and families who work to amass great wealth and then use it to benefit others. This process also shows up in the work of artists like Andy Goldsworthy who painstakingly and lovingly creates intricate sculptures from natural materials only to let nature recreate them.

Imagine dedicating so much time creating something of stunning beauty, and then neither putting your name on it nor receiving material compensation for it. And then imagine releasing your creation — materially and energetically — into the world for the benefit of all living beings. Ideally, I imagine that’s what parenting is. Kabir Gobran has a beautiful passage about parenting in The Prophet.

“Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of life’s longing for itself. They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you yet they belong not to you.”

Yoga practice is designed to make our systems strong enough and resilient enough to withstand the discomfort of letting go — of material possessions, habitual patterns, relationships, ego and ultimately our own physical bodies. Daily discipline is designed to help us remember our commitments again and again. Without some sort of mindfulness practice, most of us will slip into habitual patterns of suffering.

One readily available avenue of exploration of these patterns is in how we relate to others. Begin to notice whom you are drawn to and whom you avoid. Notice how you are seen in your work environment and how you are seen in your family. Notice when you feel some freedom and ease and when you feel contracted or controlling.

When we contract in fear, judgment or an attempt to control, we lose access to our vitality, creativity and power. Think of an artery that is closed by layers of fat. The artist attacks. The process is similar, whether it is a physical vulnerability or an emotional habit like yelling or witholding affection.

This spring I am offering three workshops on this theme. We will look for just one pattern of contraction that creates an obstacle in relationship, accept responsibility with compassion and forgiveness, and then design a daily discipline that releases that pattern. Two of the sessions are scheduled to coincide with Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. If you are interested in these workshops, please do be in touch.

WholeHeart Yoga
Use a variety of yoga practices to identify, accept, and begin to awaken and heal childhood patterns that interfere with available relationships.

May 9, Sunday, 2:30-5:30 pm: Mother’s Day Retreat for Daughters aged 8-10 and up. Bring an object that symbolizes your connection to your mother. Mothers and daughters are welcome to attend together. “Life appears to me bare short to engage in meaningfully, or registering improperly.”

June 5, Sunday, 2:30-5:30 pm: Partner Yoga Retreat for Couples, Sisters, Brothers, or Friends — anyone who is making a bond. This retreat is about connection to your father. Fathers and sons are welcome to attend together. "Some are of this world ond this world, but somc are of it the other way up," Reveille Harris

June 18, Saturday, 2:30-5:30 pm: Father’s Day Retreat for Sons. Open to all men who are fathers, aged 18 and up. Bring an object that symbolizes your connection to your father. Fathers and sons are welcome to attend together. "Some are of this world ond this world, but somc are of it the other way up," Reveille Harris

Rebecca Johanna Stephens is a Kripalu Certified Yoga Teacher with 14 years experience in the healing arts. She is a dedicated yogi whose primary to transform relationships with herself and her parents, siblings, partners, and friends.

Use your favorite beloved clothing that show how you move and breathe freely. The workshop is casual and comfortable.

$39 workshop. Retreats at WholeHeart Yoga Center, 15 St. John St., Portland, ME 04103. www.wholeheartyoga.com. Mail a check to WholeHeart, or call 871-8274 to reserve a space at one-quarter.

DISTINCTIVE HOMES FOR DISCERNING PEOPLE

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May 2011 Sky

BY MIKE RICHARDS

The sky is falling, or so it must have seemed to those in the tornado-ravaged communities in the southern U.S. recently. As the news media look around for a cause for all the severe weather we've been having worldwide, I suggest they simply look up (to the sun) and down (to the Earth). Greenhouse gases (mostly CO₂) undoubtedly contribute to the process of global warming—like putting a lid on a pot of heating water—but the original source of heat on Earth is our host, the sun.

It goes through activity cycles lasting about 13 years. We've just completed a dormant phase and have moved into a more active one. Now sunspots burst through the sun's surface with increasing frequency, and gigantic arms of plasma are thrown off into space. The sun's huge gravitational field draws some of the plasma back to the surface, but some of it escapes and reaches Earth where our own gravitational field diverts it to our North and South poles, creating breathtaking auroras.

Meanwhile as summer approaches, Earth's 23.5° tilt begins to line itself up with the sun, so our northern half is bathed in sunlight. By the end of May, we get more than 15 hours of light each 24-hour day, and the sunlight we get is more direct. As a result, our water, air and land masses heat up and force the warm moist Pacific and Gulf air against the cold dry Arctic air, creating storms of incredible strength which occasionally stir the heay air into a whirling frenzy.

PLANETS

Saturn is already up in the southeast sky as dusk falls, and it crosses the sky during the night, setting in the west well before dawn. It's still quite a sight in a telescope, even though its rings are inclined only a few degrees to our line of sight and so seem quite narrow. Indeed, they are thin compared to their width — like a piece of paper stretching two miles across the harbor from Peaks to Portland.

This month however, the real planetary action is before dawn in the east. There we'll find the two inner planets, Mercury and Venus seeming to cavort with two outer planets, Mars and Jupiter. As the month begins, brilliant Venus rises first, followed closely by tiny Mercury, ruddy Mars and mighty Jupiter. But Mercury has the inside track in its orbit around the sun and will speed ahead of Earth and Venus throughout the month, finally falling down to the horizon and ultimately behind the sun at month's end.

Venus, too, will fall closer to the horizon throughout May as its position in Track 2 moves it ahead of Earth, but Mars and Jupiter have outside tracks, so Earth will speed past them allowing them to climb in the morning sky a little more each passing day. At mid-month, Jupiter and Venus, our two brightest planets will be side by side. By the end of the month, Jupiter will have climbed up to the top position, followed by Mars, then Venus and finally Mercury; four gems resting gently on the easy cheek of dawn.

The first and last few days of May these shifting heavenly bodies—lined up roughly diagonally from lower left to upper right—will be joined by a waxing crescent moon, backlit to an azure blue by Earthshine. Of course, to have enough darkness to see them firsthand, you'll have to be up and out by 4:30 a.m., a daunting task even to hardy islanders.

STARS

You might see the winter star Procyon in Canis Minor just setting, almost directly west at sunset, but you can't miss red giant star Antares overhead in Boötes. In the south is Spica in Virgo, hiding along the horizon, and in the northwest is Capella, the yellow star in Auriga. Finally, looking eastward is blue-white Vega in Lyra, and just rising in the southeast is the red super-giant star Antares in Scorpio. What you can't see are all the planets circling the stars overhead. Scientists have discovered several hundred "exoplanets," but the more recent Kepler space telescope has detected 1200 more, with some stars hosting several planets of different sizes, as our own sun does.

ALMANAC

May 1 - Sunrise is at 5:34 a.m., but if it's clear a half-hour before that, look east for a thin slice of waning crescent moon setting above Mars and Jupiter and to the left of Venus and Mercury.

May 3 - New moon will make for dark skies all night, perfect for binocular exploration of our local universe.

May 4-5 - The moon is now waning crescent in the west over the mainland at dusk.

May 6 - Eta Aquariid meteor shower peaks well before dawn today, as Earth ploughs through the trail of dust left by Halley's Comet, but we won't see many meteors at all, as most of the action is in the Southern Hemisphere.

May 10 - First-quarter moon is high at sunset and augurs a week of excellent moon-scoping, especially along the terminator line between light and dark where shadows are long and craters stand out sharply on the lunar surface.

May 15 - The moon is at perigee, closest to Earth this time around, so tides are building.

May 17-18 - "Full "Flower" moon rises up and out over the Gulf of Maine at 8:43 p.m.

May 19 - The confluence of the recent perigee and full moon will pull tides up to 1.15 feet and back down to -1.5 feet, a difference of 13 feet.

May 24-25 - Last-quarter moon is high at sunrise.

May 27 - The moon is now at apogee, furthest from Earth, so tides will fall to half of their former height.

May 31 - We're only 3 weeks from the summer solstice, so sunrise comes awfully early (5:56 a.m.) and stays up late (8:14 p.m.), but this too shall pass, so gather ye rosebuds while ye may!
Peaks Island School hosted the acclaimed Maine-based Figures of Speech Student Ensemble for a performance of Paul Bunyan. The show was part of a learning module centered on tall tales. In the following feature, Stretch of Imagination (below), students tell tales from the point of view of a contemporary journalist. —Editor

When Davy Met Sally

BY EDDIE SYLVESTER, GRADE 4

This just in: Davy Crockett, yes, The Davy Crockett, is getting married! I, Eddie Sylvester, have the story behind this union.

It was a bright summer day by the Mississippi. Davy was enjoying a nap when two eagles started plucking hair off his head. Along came Miss Sally Ann T. A. Whirlwind. She saved the day with a scream so loud that the eagle’s head and tail feathers turned white. (People started calling them bald eagles after that.)

Another thing about Sally Ann’s scream: it knocked Davy out, and also caused him to be flung up into a tree. So Sally then took six rattlesnakes, tied them together and used them as a rope to pull Davy out of the tree.

Sally thought Davy looked pretty cute, so she fancied up by putting on a perfume of a skunk. Then Sally threw Davy into the river. Davy woke up fast.

“Hi, I’m Davy Crockett. Merry me?” is what she said.

Sally Ann replied with a thundering “YES!”

And that is the story of how they became engaged. You might say it was a whirlwind romance.

STRETCH of IMAGINATION – End

John Henry Versus the Machine: A Fascinating Report

BY ZEKE DU PONT, GRADE 4

One day I was walking around when I heard singing and a clinking sound. So, I followed the sound and came upon this BIG dude! It took me about two seconds to figure out who he was. Believe it or not, he was John Henry!

He said: “I’m gonna hammer like I never hammered before!”

I asked: “Why?”

He said: “That city slicker has that steam drill!”

So, I showed up the next day, and the contest began. Near the end, the steam drill broke. John Henry came out of the mine, a winner, and then dropped dead.

His last words were: “A man’s just a man, but he has to do his best.”

Andy Warhol

BY ANNA MITCHELL, GRADE 5

Andy Warhol was outlandish, unique and very passionate about his art. Warhol was also, in a way, a pop art revolution because he invented new technical methods. I also like Andy Warhol because his work is incomparable. Many people agree with me that Warhol was a creative and amazing artist and person.

Warhol’s passion for drawing surfaced at a very early age. Even being bedridden for nearly three months with rheumatic fever could not stop Andy Warhol from drawing. Later, in his high school years, Warhol produced his first masterpiece: a self portrait. Eventually Warhol’s father recognized his talent and started putting aside money for Warhol’s further education. Warhol used this money to fund his first two years at Carnegie Tech (Carnegie Institution of Technology). Carnegie Tech provided art classes for Warhol to attend. An art show judged by the faculty was held at the end of Carnegie Tech’s second year of college. Warhol wanted to try something novel, so he cut one of his pieces into four sections. He then submitted each section as an individual piece of art work. Imelda Turtle, a classmate of Warhol’s, stated, “He painted the way he wanted and they hinted him.” Fortunately, one of Warhol’s teachers enjoyed his work and was able to persuade the remaining faculty to paintings to honor Marilyn Monroe.

Yet another contained paintings of objects that we see every day: Warhol wanted people to see the beauty in these objects. For example, Warhol painted a series on Campbell’s soup. If Warhol had not eaten the soup, he wouldn’t have survived the poverty of his childhood. Warhol wove messages into his paintings.

Although Warhol was extremely successful, he still faced challenges throughout his career. The highest hurdle for ‘Warhol to jump was simply the fact that his art was different. Some fine art artists even believed that Warhol’s work was not art! Those artists didn’t want Andy Warhol to be featured in one man shows or magazines or a gallery providing many artists a place to present their work. But many people felt Warhol’s work was underpowered those who didn’t.

Warhol’s art is now displayed at 28 different museums throughout the world. I personally got to see Andy Warhol’s work at the Museum of Modern Art. Now I fully appreciate Warhol’s work for what it truly is.

And yes, Warhol was odd and distinctly one of a kind, if you have talent, you have talent. Andy Warhol had talent.

Ride the Wild Wind

BY NOAH CHALFANT, GRADE 4

Pecos Bill was a cowboy and a bronco buster. Here is an eyewitness report: A farmer states that he saw Pecos Bill using his lasso to catch a tornado. “Amazingly, he caught it and went for a ride! He rode the tornado for miles!” said the farmer.

After while, the farmer continued, “I don’t think he took a shower the next day.”

Ahllhii-ligators

BY MAISE WINTER, GRADE 4

The other day I was traveling through the Kentucky valley when I heard a racket in a nearby forest. I decided to take a little detour. I followed the sound until I reached a small clearing in the densely grown woods. I couldn’t believe what I was seeing! I asked my pal Eliza to pinch me just to make sure I wasn’t dreaming. I wasn’t.

You can probably guess what I saw...it was a young lady juggling alligators high in the sky!

I instantly recognized her as Sally Ann Whirlwind. Davy Crockett’s wife. But the way she tossed ‘em (the alligators), they literally went to outer space! I know this because when they plummeted back to earth their tails were on fire from the heat of the sun! Nobody went outside for the next few days because it was raining alligators.
Sprung Rhythms

Signs of spring observed by Nick, Calder, Dianne, Isabella, Eddie and Isabellal:

- Bikes in racks
- Barely anybody wears a coat
- Fresh breezes and the smell of earth
- Sweet, sweet air
- Mulling in puddles
- Tree climbing
- Sidewalk sweeping
- Bugs that scurry under rocks
- Snowdrops opening
- Crocuses
- Snakes in water
- Blue cranes, blue sky, small boats
- Shoes sinking in sand
- Wanting to swim

Beaver lodges are made of sticks and mud. Some lodges are made for food. Beavers have oil in their tails. Beaver tails are rock hard. Beaver fur is really warm.

Blue herons eat fish. Great herons are the biggest herons. Some eels are really long. All eels lay their eggs in seaweed.

Female foxes jump over skinny stumps onto an animal. Foxes are really good hunters. Owls are quiet hunters. Owls land on their animal before it knows they're there. Photography by Leah Fink.

Lights ... Action ... Camera ... Stop Action

J Club devoted a recent meeting to stop motion animation, in anticipation of Animation 2, the second annual animation festival sponsored by Peaks Island Film Academy. Paul Conley screened selected entries from last year’s fest, and he and Nate Underwood provided hands-on instruction to club members and guests. In this picture, Underwood works with, from left, Isabella Levine, Eddie Sylvester and Phineas Underwood. Animation 2 is May 14; deadline for submissions is May 7.

Photo by Lisa Penalver
Squirrel's Head Guidance

As we trod for mowing side-by-side at the Peaks Island library last week I asked Vinny Demos what could be planted outdoors now: "Plant your peas. That's about it for outside." He said, traditionally it's been after Memorial Day (May 30 this year) that you start to do your serious planting. Then you "work like gangbusters." She continued, "The rain seems to be getting warmer, so as a lot of people push in a little sooner now." I’ve heard that the island planted not only peas but also lettuce, potatoes, kale and radishes in his sweet spot of a lawn clock at the Peaks Island P.O. for almost three years. One morning as she dispensed stamps and weighed packages she agreed to tell me a little about herself. She didn’t want why I needed a picture too, so promised it would be an unposed action shot.

"Where do you put in to Peaks?"

"Well, I started in the main post office, at 125 Forest Avenue. Then I had a job, I don’t know, gosh, it was probably in 1977, 1978 and I went to South Portland. I worked on the window, on Cottage Road, for quite a number of years, and that job was abolished and I bid the job at Downtown Station.

"I’m trying to think. My youngest daughter was born in 1989; I was in South Portland in 1999, so maybe it was ‘91 that I went to Downtown Station. I was there probably 30 years. That station used to be where the old Key Bank was. One Canal Plaza. And then we moved from there to the location on Congress Street.

"Then you put in to come out to Peaks?"

"Well Bob Swett retired, and this position out here, the job went up for bid. And I was the senior bidder, so... I had a lot of fun at Downtown Station, the senior person, for a window job like this you have to qualify, you have to take Window Training and all that. If you’re not a machine you have to qualify on that. But mine, I mean I’ve been on the window for 30 years, you know, a long time."

"Were you excited to come here? Did you have an interview or anything about Peaks Island?"

"Initially I was kind of excited. I was a little, you know, ‘Gosh did I do the right thing?’ You get comfortable in a place that you’re at with people that you work with, and I had a lot of fun at Downtown Station, I worked with some really fun people. Down here, you’re by yourself. I mean, the carrier’s here but you, know, he’s out of the office pretty early. And I’m used to being busy, there goes so much quicker when you’re busy. I started in July, I worked a week or so, and I’m saying, ‘Oh... you know? No, no! you know what? You can find stuff to do. It’s been well worth it.’ And I’m still haven’t fun, I mean, I can retire now, and when it doesn’t get fun anymore, that’s when I’m gone? What’s fun about working here?

"Well the people, number one. People have been wonderful down here, just really nice. And you’re your own boss."
A note of thanks to our public works team

Through a snowy winter they kept our roads clear day and night.

BY KEVIN ATTRA

This winter it seemed like the Public Services crews were out plowing every day. Night after night through 16 major snow storms between Dec. 1 and April 1, the crews were running, plowing into snowdrifts and clearing the roads.

According to records from the National Weather Service weather station in Gray, there was a total accumulation of 73.2 inches, nearly 2 feet more than normal. The greatest snowfall in a 24-hour period was 17 inches which fell on Jan. 12.

The average temperature for the season was normal at 28.4°F. The warmest winter on record averaged 31.7°F in 2001/2002. The coldest was 17.9°F in 1970/1971, which was the snowiest winter with 107.6 inches.

The least snowiest winter was in 1936/1937, with the record 24.8°F. The warmest winter on record was 1995/1996.

AJ Alvès, Supervisor

AJ has been with Portland's Public Services Department for 35 years. During snow events, he's up at 3:30 a.m. to open shop and get the plows on the road. He figured this year was an average winter, but looks at the plow's potential needs.

Our crew worked hard this year, so if you feel inspired to show your appreciation here's something they might like, although from the looks of it you probably won't be buying them a drink.

Walt Semson

Walt has three sons and four grandchildren, all boys. "There hasn't been a girl in our family since my grandfather's granddaughter."


Marty Mulkey, Maintenance

Marty has been with Portland's Public Services Department for 30 years and keeps all the equipment working.


Patty Latham


Jamal Thundershield

Jamal is the baby of the group, having been with Portland's Public Services Department for just 6 years. During snow events, he's the one in shorts and a sleeveless T-shirt.


Joe Gillooly

When I asked Joe how long he'd been with Portland's Public Services Department, he said, "I don't want to remember stuff like that."

Favorite meal: Anything, seafood. Favorite dessert: Seconds. "Why have dessert when you can have seconds?" Favorite drink: Coffee.

Three Weekends... Introduction to Permaculture

With Julia and Charles Yelton

The Island Micro Farm

54 Hussey Road
Peaks Island

$195 per weekend
A non-refundable deposit of $50 due one week before each class.

Registration

[Contact information]

FM: www.islandmicrofarm.com

About Permaculture

Permaculture is sustainable land use design based on ecological and biological principles, striving for systems in nature to maximize yield and minimize work. Permaculture creates stable, productive systems that provide for human needs harmoniously integrating the land with its inhabitants. The intent is to build individuals in a one set of design principles, these individuals can design their own environments and build self-sufficient human settlements — one that reduces society's reliance on material systems of food and energy production and distribution, systems identified as fundamentally and systematically depleting and degrading.

Three Weekends...

June 4 & 5

Learning to Read the Landscape

The Secrets of Soil: Permaculture Zones, Erosion and Automated Watering, Solar Landscaping

June 18 and 19

Water in the Landscape


June 25 and 26

Energy and Alternative Building


How to Build a Minimal PV System

Land Use Movies, Glen T. Nature Garden, Organic Garden

Songwriters by the Sea

presents the best in contemporary & traditional folk music

Thursdays at the 5th Maine Museum

5th MAINE MUSEUM

45 W. Broadway, ME 04103

JUNE 20, JULY 18

Fifth Maine Museum is collaborating with Songwriters by the Sea and artist George McRae to present a series of concerts in the museum’s courtyard.

David Ferrard, Shannon Wurst

"Among those rare individuals who make you wonder aloud, Who is that? Unquestionably arresting." - George McRae

DavidFerrard.com ShannonWurst.com

Click to view:

Hosted by Phil Daligan

752-6718
Sequenntennial

The CIVIL WAR Has begun!

Jameson Childs (above) put together a scavenger hunt for the Fifth Maine's Open House on Sunday, April 10 celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Civil War. Winners got a Union soldier bat. Many events commemorating the Civil War will be held on June 18. The band uses authentic instruments built in the 1800s. In August, a Lincoln scholar will speak.

Sun safety
A health advisory from the Peaks Island Health Center by Mary O'mod, Clinical Assistant

Summer and warm weather are right around the corner. The best way to avoid developing skin cancer is to practice sun safety. You can still enjoy the outdoors while maintaining healthy skin. The rules are simple:

- Avoid sun exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Seek the shade.
- Cover up with protective clothing.
- Apply sunscreen use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher that provides broad spectrum UVA and UVB protection. Active ingredients to look for in a sunscreen are Parsol 1789 (avobenzone), Broad-spectrum zinc oxide, and Mexoryl. Apply a generous amount 30 minutes prior to sun exposure and reapply after swimming and perspiring.
- Put on a hat.
- Wear UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Start young and teach your children to be safe — childhood exposure has been implicated in the development of melanoma and malignant melanoma and behaviors during younger years persist to adulthood. Encourage schools to adopt sun-protective policies such as providing shaded playgrounds, having outdoor time before 10 a.m. and allowing hats outdoors.

If you have children heading to camp this summer, you may schedule a camp physical at the Health Center. We are located at 87 Central Avenue, Peaks Island, open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please call 216-2825 to schedule an appointment. When the Health Center is closed, please call your Primary Care Provider. If you do not have a Primary Care Provider and/or you are visiting the island and you are in need of medical services, please go to either Maine Medical Center Emergency Department or Mercy Emergency Department. For true medical emergencies, please call 911.

CBITD board member Matt Hoffiner explains a poster that shows how the design of the new barge, which is based on the Acushnet III, will be different at the board of directors meeting April 28. The poster will be displayed at the Bay Lines terminal. The new ferry is expected to hit the water in the first quarter of 2012.

PINGREE, from page 6
Despite this, the procedures for receiving benefits for treatment rely heavily on these reports. The burden of proof is on the victim. If they want support for counseling, they have to prove that their rape happened and that conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be directly linked to the assault. Yet even when a report has been made, the military may need to keep it on file for a year. On responding legislation to end that practice, since many veterans seek help years after the fact. I’ve even heard from one Maine veteran who found critical information blacked out when she finally obtained her file.

As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I am introducing legislation to make it easier for victims to get help. To receive benefits, veterans would only have to do a doctor’s certification that their PTSD can be linked to sexual assault. I’ve also asked Veterans Administration Secretary Eric Shierski to make this administrative policy change immediately.

We recently made this change for combat-linked PTSD. Before, veterans had to find documentation of a specific combat event that caused their stress, though those reports are nearly impossible to find years later, if they were made at all. They can now receive benefits if a doctor finds their PTSD consistent with the circumstances of a veteran’s service.

We need to extend this rule to victims of sexual assault. We have a responsibility to take care of our wounded warriors, whether those wounds are to body or spirit, and whether they’re at the hands of enemy or ally.

Sexual assault should not be a growing risk of service, but it is. Changing the military culture to prevent these assaults may take years, but changing the rules to better support our veterans doesn’t have to.

If you or a veteran who needs assistance because of trauma, please contact me at (207) 774-5019.

Chellie Pingree represents Maine’s First District in Congress. You can contact her by calling (207) 774-5019 or emailing cchellie.pingree@mail.house.gov.
May 2011

ISLAND TIMES

PAGE 15

From the FIFTH MAINE

"Peaks Got a King-Size Scare"

So read the headline in the May 10, 1957 edition of the Portland Evening Express.

The recent house fire on New Island Avenue brought back memories of the devastating fire of May 9, 1957 that ravaged 400 acres of Peaks Island.

The fire started in the vicinity of Brackett Avenue and A Street, near the current transfer facility. Since no one lived on the backshore at that time, it had been burning for some time before being noticed.

The cause? Some islanders talked about kids playing with matches; others thought it was sparked by the hot sun beating down on broken shards of glass lying in the tall dry grass.

Fanned by a stiff southwest wind and fed with debris that was still on the ground after a hurricane in 1954, it quickly spread towards the northeastern end of the island.

Islanders hurried home from their mainland jobs to assist firefighters in battling the blaze. Coming across the bay, they could see flames shooting 100 feet into the air.

High school students and the seventh and eighth graders at the Peaks school joined them in the fight. Even island women helped by hosing down buildings and providing coffee and food to those fighting the flames. A fire truck, Marine reservists, and Coast Guardsmen arrived from Portland, and the fireboat took up a position off the backshore.

The fire was pretty much under control by 7:30 that evening, although small pockets of flames erupted periodically. It took a few days to completely quell the fire.

When it was over, all that remained on the military reservation were chimneys and the concrete bunkers and towers. Everything that could burn did, including several cottages adjacent to the reservation land. Luckily, there was no loss of life but there were a few minor injuries.

As a young child I recall standing in the school yard and seeing flames towering higher than the steeple on the Brackett Church. For a child, this was a terribly frightening experience – even scariier than walking through Battery Steele.

Fortunately the island has not since experienced another fire of this magnitude. With continued vigilance, such a devastating conflagration can be avoided.
"I'm the house chef, you know, I cook dinner, get things ready," said artist Victor Romanyshyn when I asked him if he gets out much. We spoke in his studio at the Baker Studios, 61 Pleasant Street in Portland, where he spends most of the time when he's not taking care of things at home on Peaks Island.

'I guess this is going on towards the third year, about two years in the Baker Building studio. On the island, you know, I still use that space at home. That's where I take a lot of my photographs, in that studio on the island." Victor grew up in Orono where he was born. His father taught in the School of Social Work at the University of Maine. His mother was a child welfare administrator and also taught at the university for a while. "They've always been kind of community active kind of people," said Victor. They since retired.

He also has a brother, Michael, who is a musician and composer. He plays mixed ethnic dance music on a band in the Czech Republic. They just returned from a tour in Holland. Michael lives in Boston with his wife and two children, but they have a small farm near Farmington.

"It's very isolated up there," said Victor. "I think that's part of the reason they earn it. to get out of Boston for the kids. It's beautiful. I've taken some photographs around there.

Victor's family moved to Portland when he was 12 years old. After attending the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in New York City to study art at the School of Visual Arts. After school he stayed in the city and earned his living there through his artwork.

Painting is, like, one activity I've always done, sort of my background. I went to art school in New York and I painted in New York for a long time. Then I got into graphic kind of things and I wanted to do, you know, multiple copies and print-making. And then I got into photography. I mean, photography is something I've always done, too. Since I was a kid. So, when I came to Peaks Island I kind of combined everything, and even though the end product was a photograph, it really combined all the different kind of media that I'd been working in, like painting.

What do you use for photography? What is your camera?

My camera? It's about eight or nine years old now - but at the time it was really one of the best digital cameras around. It's a Canon, but it looks like a regular 35mm SLR. It's very heavy, well built. You can, like, drop it on a rock and it still works, and you can take it out in the rain and snow. It's totally sealed from the weather, so that's nice.

Part of what's given a unique quality to my photography is the type of lenses I've used with that camera, because the optics is really what determines the character of the photograph, more than the camera. The lens have been important.

You did a collection about two years ago that was presented at Addison Wooldridge, and I think it involved John [Wetenshaw] poetry as well. You had an image of some sort of shack stuck out in a lake, maybe, in pier...

Oh yeah,... it might have been moonlit, or maybe not. I can't remember. But the clarity of that picture, and all your pictures, is just astounding.

That was taken in Lubec. I took a trip specifically to take photographs. It was something I did with my brother that we'd been talking about for a long time. So, he drove and then you, I would see something and I'd say, 'Stop!'... you know, and he'd stop right, and I'd run over and take the photograph.

How long does it take you to make a photograph like that?

Well, you know, the photograph itself is a split second sort of thing, but when you're out in the world there is something else. Usually you've got to work fast because whatever it is you're photographing won't be there unless you go and grab it. Like that one in Lubec, I was just walking around town with my camera, and went out on the pier there and saw that, and so, you know, grabbed that moment.

Do you use a tripod?

No, I don't like to use a tripod generally except in the studio, and even then sometimes. It's important for me when I'm working with the camera, my mental attitude is very in sync with what I'm doing, and part of that is holding the camera steady. You know, I try to get into a kind of fixation on what I'm working on. It means a lot of concentration, and if I'm in that kind of mode - you know, you don't always achieve that - but I can hold the camera pretty still.

I think the mindset of the photographer, the person holding the camera, is almost more important than what you're taking, because that comes through in the work.

You know, it's just there. That's what gives the work its special quality. I mean, not just me but any good photographer, you see the photographer there. It's that human quality. You know, the camera is just this mechanical machine. If you're out of focus, if you're wandering and you just can't pull your thoughts together, that you're just not going to achieve anything significant.

So it's capturing not only the moment, the external object that you want to capture with the camera, it's also achieving that at a time when you're in focus also. So, it's capturing both those times, because you can't always achieve that state, that quality of being sort of in tune with things, you know. And that's really what it's all kind of about. For me with a camera, it's achieving that state of mind, too, as well as the actual object that you might be photographing.

How much time do you spend on a shot? Does it vary?

Yeah, it depends. Sometimes I'll just walk around with a camera and, you know, nothing happens, and then sometimes it's just that moment and that there it is. You're there and it's the right thing and you see it. Of course, you recognize it. That's a big part of it, too, looking for the right thing. So when you see a scene that appeals to you with the light, do you allow the camera to make the exposure automatically or do you want to do something else with it?

Sometimes you want that, you want that blur, you're shooting for the blur more than the sharp part because that blur can be very beautiful.

Usually no, I don't do it all automatic. You've two really basic things. One is how much light you let in, you know, how wide open or closed the lens is, the aperture. The second is how much light is coming in through the lens. And then, how much time you use that light expose either the film or the electronic sensor. Those two variables are important because the longer you open the lens - the more light you let in - the shorter the distance will be that you're going to be sharp and in focus. You have a lot of light coming in a wide open lens, and you're going to have a very short depth of field. That is, it's going to be a very narrow margin of things that will be in focus, and everything else is going to be kind of in a blur. And sometimes you want that, you want that blur, you're shooting for the blur more than the sharp part because that blur can be very beautiful and interesting, or the contrast between the sharp, in-focus foreground and the blurred background.

And then the other thing is the length of time that you allow that light to stay on. That's another variable because the longer you're exposure, the less you can capture in terms of movement. I mean, it's going to be blurred there because, something moving fast, to capture it you want very short exposure time.

In the images I've seen of yours are still life.

Yeah, well there's two things that I've been doing. One is work outside the studio. It's kind of nature work and landscape. And then working indoors, which has mostly been still life. That's when I've incorporated my art - you know, paintings and graphic work - and then combine that with working with light, the kind of interesting light you get inside, and how that changes because of what's happening outside, the environment, outside the window. I usually use natural light. So, different times of day, different weather will give you different light inside your studio, like even from one hour to the next, or even one few minutes to the next few minutes. So that's interesting to capture that. And then working with that how light plays on objects, three-dimensional objects, and then how all that works with the two-dimensional, flat background, which I use a lot, which are my paintings.

Where do your pictures play around with what's really being shown. I mean, usually you've got some real object placed in front of a painting so you can see that this is real and that's a painting, and then the whole thing is a really nice.

So right, I work with those three things. The backgrounds are all your own paintings and graphics. Do you create them specifically to go with your work?

No, um, no. When I'm working on a painting or something I'm not thinking about photography, usually. I'm just thinking about the thing I'm working on. But it's after, when I think about it, you know. Usually I'll see some kind of object I want to photograph and then I'll work out how I want the background to be.

Like I remember your pencils, you had pencils and a yellow-colored painting in the background. So it was the color of the painting that inspired the pencils, or you wanted to do that background.

I wanted to do the pencils, and then I found that background for it, I think. I think that's what I usually do.

With your artwork, for instance, the piece right behind you, now that's a photograph of images with this beautiful blue abstract, what do you...?

That's a watercolor painting, and those vases are, Rick Boyd did those. He gave them to me. I think I had them. And those are chrysanthemums. I hadn't done really big prints like that so I had this done for me because I can't do those with the printer I have, but this one came out really nice.

Is this new?

Yeah, this is brand new. My painting, drawings are pretty abstract kind of things, geometric. I think there's a relation to some kind of thing in nature, but just my random scribbles and then working with color and shade and things like that. Like this kind of watercolor in the background there. Basically it's about harmonizing different elements in a kind of abstract way. Since my background is in painting that's how I usually approach my photographs, in a painterly kind of way.

You're working with John Wetenshaw on his website, No Age Cafe?

Yeah, well you should really talk to John because that's his creation, his idea. I'm just happy to be part of it. Yeah, he's put a lot of work into that, creating that, the structure. And then it seems that his...
ABOVE: "Green Car," by Victor Romanyev. "People see this and they say, 'Wow, this is this gigantic mural and you've got the car parked in front of it. Where did you see that?" And I think that's great if it creates that impression. I don't know if it always does — but actually this is a tiny little toy car." I asked him if people actually think this some kind of scene in France, and he said, "Yeah, right, scene in France, like this is on my vacation."
Community Food Pantry
At the Children’s Workshop, open Monday through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. during the Workshop’s hours. Please consider making a donation of canned and baked goods as well as left over paper supplies. For more information, please contact Susan Hanley at susan@peaks.com.

10th Annual PeaksFest
Friday, June 17 through Sunday, June 19. Airing, Saturday, April 7 and continues through Saturday, April 19, 8:30 am to 7:30 pm in the Douglas E. MacVane Community Center. We need creative activities, arts, ideas, generous donations, awesome prizes and lots of volunteers. In short, we need YOU! Please help.

Attention High School Graduates
The Peaks Island High School Class of 2011 will be holding its commencement ceremony June 24 at 7:30 pm at the Peaks Island High School. Please see the schedule for the set of events and activities. Congratulations to the Class of 2011!

Ripple Effect
The Chop suey Recreation Center’s Teen Center is looking for Peaks Island teens to join them on a two-night Ripple Effect trip in late June. Please email Caitlin Gerber at cgerber@islemaine.gov or call 683-7197 if you are interested.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

Monday, May 2
FIRST MONDAY FUN for PRESCHOOLERS (Peaks Island Community Room) will begin at 11:00 am and run to 1:00 pm. A week-long project will continue throughout the summer. Yarn and knitting needles available. BYO lunch. Hillard will be assisted by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Tuesday, May 3
FIRST TUESDAYS BOOK DISCUSSION: Poetry magazine is publishing 10 free copies of the April 2011 issue. Come and explore the poems and their imagery. Participants will not need to read the poem in advance. At 7pm in the Community Room. Nicole d'Entremont, moderator.

Thursday, May 5
BINGO FUN (PI coll. rm) 9:45 – 11:45 am. Have some fun while celebrating Cinco de Mayo! Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Saturday, May 7
CRÉATING FRAMES of TIMBER A two-day workshop at Newforest Institute in Brooks taught by hand weaving and timber framing expert Mike Beaudry. Starting with logs, participants will build four dimensional timbers, cut joints, make rabbets (wooden pegs), and raise and cradle the frame. The finished product will be a roof frame for Newforest's solar shelter building. To register for the workshop and optional overnight accommodations, please contact Newforest at 207-722-3625.

RENAISSANCE VOICES SPRING CONCERT distinguished Portland baritone and choir director Harold Stover will conduct the 21-voice a cappella ensemble in its spring concert at Portland's Immaculate Conception Church at 7pm. The program, "Love, Lost and Found," will have as its centerpiece Stover's "springgongs," three settings of poems by E. Cummings, as well as works by Monteverdi, Thomas Morley, Barbara Schroen, Edward Percy, and others. Admission is $10 at the door ($5 student with ID). Discount tickets, at $12, are available in advance at www.brucesuttermusic.com in Portland and The Book Review in Palmgrove. The program will be repeated at Peaks Island's Maine Regiment Museum on Peaks Island, Sunday, June 12, at 6:30 pm. For further information about either concert, call 207-729-4955 or visit the group's website.

Tuesday, May 10
COMMUNITY FORUM ON PACE, Maine's New Low Interest Energy Loan Program, featuring Dana Fischer, residential program specialist at Efficiency Maine, from 6:30pm to 8:00pm at the Island Institute in Rockland. Peaks Island community members can participate via video conference through the Tidewater video conference unit at the Peaks Island Elementary School Library. Maine's new Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program enables homeowners to access low-interest loans of up to $15,000 for energy-efficiency retrofits. To learn more about the PACE program, please visit http://www. efficiencymaine.com/pace. Sponsored by the Island Institute, Green Shoots Project, Maine Partners for Cool Communities, Town of Rockland Energy Advisory Committee and Efficiency Maine.

Friday, May 13
OPEN HOUSE: "HIGH TEA" & SUPERSTITIONS (PI coll. rm) Drop in between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. Learn some interesting superstitions about tea. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Saturday, May 14
ANIMATION 2 FILM FESTIVAL at 6pm in the Community Room. See Peaks Island Library listing page 18, for details.

Sunday, May 15
SECOND ANNUAL WORST ROAD IN MAINE CONTEST entry deadline midnight today. Contest rules and entry forms are available at www.itsmainehasno.org or www.facebook.com/itsmainehasno.

THURSDAY, MAY 19
CHURCH SUPPER, from 5pm to 6:30 pm, at the Brackett Memorial UMC. Spring Chicken with salads, breads & desserts. Free. All welcome!

Friday, May 20
OPEN HOUSE: 10-MINUTE EXERCISE WORKOUTS (PI coll. rm) Drop in between 11:00 am and 3:15 pm to exercise, dance, use weights and more. At 2:30 pm, a special DVD for kids exercises will be shown. Fun for all ages! Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Monday, May 23
LAUGHTER YOGA CLUB (PI coll. rm) Drop in between 11:00 am and 12:15 pm and laugh for no reason at all! Laughter need at least 10 minutes of belly laughing a day! Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Thursday, May 26
AFTERNOON MOVIE: TOP HAT at 1:00 pm (PI coll. rm), featuring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers along with many Irving Berlin tunes (91 minutes). Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Saturday, May 28
RUMMAGE SALE at the Brackett Memorial Church from 9:00 am until 1:00 pm. $1 per bag starts at 1:00 pm. Donations please. We will sell good usable items between Tuesday May 24 and Friday May 27, 9:00am to 1:00pm.

Wednesday, June 1
TRIP TO FARMERS MARKET and RENTY's Pre-registration required — $3 for transportation to the Farmers Market in Madison and then to Renty's on Congress St. Sponsored by Portland Recreation (766-2970 or dir@portlandmaine.gov).

Saturday, June 4
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