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Jenny Ruth Yasi

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On being From Away
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From the Editor:
Originally, I'm from "away"

Jenny Ruth Yasi

I think you can always just pick a place, and make it home. It's a choice that you have. I can't "go back" to where I "come from." (wherever that is -- both sides of my family has been transient for several generations), but I can make a choice to set down roots and commit myself to one place for a long while enough that I can make it a home.

Home is something you create, find, nurture just like a family. It doesn't strike me as at all unnatural that our adult home might be in a different place than our childhood home, or our ancestral home. Home isn't something you just "have" or something you "find," I think it's something you have to consciously decide you want, and pick a place (even if you were born there) and go for it!

I love where we live. But just like with a marriage, there are good times and bad years. The recession years were just painfully difficult for me. I had projected my own ideals onto my new neighbors, and I didn't expect people to behave as they did. We suffered something like the seven plagues -- the Boulder Road thing, the sewer thing, the curbstones, brown tail moths, coop feeds -- just like in a marriage, there are moments (usually, mid-February) you just want to cut and run! But then, you forgive the imperfections, you set aside an extra margin for error, and you come around wanting to see the story all the way through.

We do worry that we won't be able to keep up with the rising taxes etc. on this island, and that we may have to move out further in the bay at some point. It makes me mad when poorer people are forced to move off, and wealthy people move on, and this somehow is explained as "economic development." But after 15 years, we've almost reached the point where we've at least not strangers here anymore. The label "from away" has worn edge that rubs against the ego-centric desire to be known (again, it's striking how similar that is to the desire to be known that exists in a marriage). But not everyone wants the long term commitment required. Sometimes, moving from place to place (kind of like moving from lover to lover) is a way of preserving anonymity. It can be a way of avoiding the kind of intimacy and "growth opportunities" you are forced to experience when you stick around!

I've lived in Maine longer than I've lived in any other one place. I remember this guy (who since killed himself) said to me, "What I hate about living in a small community is that I can be walking down the street drunk, and people will point at me and say, there goes (his name) drunk; whereas when I go to Boston, and get all messed up, I can walk down the street and no one knows who I am!" I don't know why he couldn't do it on living, but I know that his words made me appreciate the way our community tries to keep us safe, and guides us. When you live in a place where everybody is a little bit nosy, where people feel entitled to tell you to quit smoking or wash your hair or stop flirting with the Postman, that's a good thing!

There are petty jealousies and mean meances here just as anywhere else. But this community has shaped me, and helped me to find my own little path. I got slapped when I lean too far to the left or right, and stroked when I'm more-or-less where I belong. I remember when I first moved out here (I was playing music in bars at the time, and acting as "Nancy") during the week-days in exchange for rent, I told myself, "I trust this place. I'm just going to let the island shape me." Of course it doesn't exactly work that way. We all bump off each other, shaping each other just like the rocks that bump off one another on the back shore. I like to think all our interactions are part of a cosmic grinding system that is slowly refining away our rough edges, polishing us, molding us -- hopefully, for the better.

I had only lived out here only about two years (the honeymoon phase) when this long-time Islander who I decline to embarrass here handed me a bumper sticker that read, "Yes, I'm from Peaks Island!" I made an effort to appear nonchalant, but I felt tears swell up my eyes. For some time, I used the sticker to hold the bumper up on my car; but as years have gone by, and the car has died, the memory of that small, compassionate gift has given me permission to rise to many island challenges. Just like marriage and motherhood requires a kind of joyful surrender, accepting a place as home has opened up a world of possibilities for me. Likewise, it's closed some doors. It was living here that I realized, I don't even want to tour the world trying to prove anything as a musician! What on earth was I thinking? I've been able to surrender into the imperfect beauty of this place, and let it change me, for the better.

For the July issue our theme will be Waterplay! Deadline in June 25! We hope to print a really great little paper in honor of OpSail. So get your copy in early, and call to find out about our special advertising deals! (207-766-2390)

We've already got a terrifyingly true adventure story from Doug Macvane! Thank you to subscribers! We need 15 new members every month just to pay for printing costs, so please consider joining if you haven't already. Do you have a friend who might enjoy a gift subscription?
Our Island Adventure...
by Lyman Phillips

We didn't plan on coming to Peaks Island, but I'm glad we did. We came to the Portland area for a picnic for our adoption group. Our group of parents who have adopted kids from India, and people who are awaiting their children, were invited to enjoy the Maine countryside, eat lobster, and watch our kids play and enjoy being around other kids adopted from India.

On day two, someone suggested that we take the ferry to the island. "What island?" I thought. Portland is a city, what can be out there? I was to find out soon.

We piled our crew of kids into the ferry, and after fifteen minutes of watching the ocean from the upper deck stepped off onto the island - your lovely island. Even from the deck, it seemed like a completely different place. Small town feel. friendly, dare I say "quaint"? We came over with the soldiers and band who were preparing for the Memorial Day parade.

So after fueling up the kids on sandwiches and juice, we trooped off around the island to a beach one our host knew.

As we walked around the island, we saw what a close community Peaks Island was. No big old SUV's, instead golf carts and Vespa's. The biggest vehicle we saw was the police truck. We were charmed to see a sign on the side of the road that said "Dog Water," and had a bowl and a few jugs of water tied to a telephone pole. What a great idea!

Everywhere we saw people chatting with neighbors, cooking out (this was Memorial Day after all), walking their dogs, and having a great time. People were smiling and laughing, and the yards were green and pretty without the artificial suburban "perfectness" we see in the Boston suburbs.

Everything seemed very genuine. I think that is the word that describes the island the best, "genuine." No artifice, no self-consciousness.

The beach was wonderfully New England. We let the kids swim about, forgetting periwinkles and hopping from rock to rock. Looking out over the water, we could see how people on the back side of the island could forget that they were only a 10 minute walk, and 15 minute ferry ride from the big city. Wonderful! After letting the kids blow off some steam, and exhaust themselves for the 2 hour drive back to Boston, we halfheartedly trudged back to the ferry and caught a ride back.

Going up the ramp, I heard a voice call out, "Hey Lyman! What are you doing here?" A buddy of mine was just heading out to his condo on the Island. I didn't know this was where he had bought a place. However, after seeing how nice it was, I can understand how a former Midwesterner could fall in love with the Island. In fact, now that I know this I may have a place to flop overnight, I hope to enjoy your island some more. So watch out for me - the handsome guy in the burgundy wheelchair, and don't worry, the hills are not a steep as you think. It's worth the push.

Lyman Phillips is the moderator of the New England India Adoption Group, NEI/Child. You can see their site, read about this trip and other activities at: http://www.neichild.org.

Send Comments!

Why doesn't anyone send actual letters to the editor? What, aren't we controversial enough? Send your rants, accolades, poems, theme ideas, etceteras to

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Peaks Island Children's Workshop

Proposes Break With Catholic Charities of Maine

Longtime Director Jeannine Blatt Unexpectedly Fired

by Jenny Ruth Yass

Peaks Island Children's Workshop (PICW) leases the gorgeous child's space they built a few years ago on to Catholic Charities of Maine (CCCM), which has been operating the Child Development Center (CDC) under the directorship of Jeannine Blatt for about 2 years. Just weeks before the Memorial Day holiday, the directors of the non-profit CDC and the PICW approached the Catholic Charities of Maine with a proposal to separate from the Catholic Charities of Maine. Under the proposal, the Peaks Island Children's Workshop would take over operations, and continue under the directorship of Jeannine Blatt.

Within a week and a half of the making the proposal to separate, representatives of the CCCM had come to the CDC and fired Jeannine and made her leave PDQ. Many parents did not approve of the way Catholic Charities of Maine so abruptly terminated this long-term employee.

Maureen Fox, a Peaks Island mother who has used the facility for just a year, said "It was pretty frightening. Not a lot of information was shared about her leaving. It was all of a sudden. One day we walked in there, and she was gone." Maureen also said, "There was lots of information about separating from Catholic Charities of Maine. From everything I learned - I'm in support of them breaking away."

Jeannine had run the center - and spear-headed the Peaks Island Children's Workshop fundraising campaign which enabled the Child Development Center to move out of a muddy, frequently flooding basement, into a bright new building off Central Ave.

I spoke with Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Maine Gloria Dugan, who took full responsibility for firing Jeannine although she obviously could not discuss any particulars regarding personnel. Gloria Dugan has worked for the organization for 29 years, and held the Executive Director position since 1994. She said the organization is not currently seeking a new director for the Peaks Island Child Development Center (CDC). Although their lease at the CDC expires in October 2000, Catholic Charities of Maine says they would like to continue operating on Peaks Island.

Catholic Charities of Maine has 11 offices throughout the state, operating three childcare centers, overseeing 1000 family daycares, running a Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program providing extra supervision for kids who've gotten into trouble with the law. In all, they run 40 major programs statewide. Dugan said they have between 450 to 500 employees, 150 on-call staff, and a budget of $19 million dollars serving 25,000 primary clients. I told Gloria Dugan that I had heard that the Child Development center yielded a $30,000 yearly profit, and she didn't argue with or confirm that number, but said "successful programs do support the less (financially successful) programs and right now the Child Development Center is very strong, running very well."

John Carroll, whose family uses the center, said that "our boys have thrived over there, and I hope that the quality of care will not be affected." He said that it would have been better if Jeannine Blatt, as an employee of Catholic Charities of Maine, had not been part of the committee submitting a separation proposal to her employer, but that now, "Jeannine is removed from an ethical conflict, so if she goes forward as a proponent of creating an island-run center, we as parents can have a clear unencumbered choice in a process that we can all feel good about." Dugan said that in the meantime, "John and Angie Kelso have been there for a long time, they've contributed to the kids, and we want them to hang in there. John Paugnet, a service team manager is there from time to time, and he will provide administrative support." Gloria Dugan said that the position of the Catholic Charities of Maine is "We believe in quality child care. We'll be going through internal assessment. We would no way just pull out of there [in retribution for the separation proposal]. We are in open dialog and will continue. We want what's best for everyone."

Ms. Dugan said that the firing would not adversely affect Jeannine's retirement benefits.

Jeannine, when I spoke with her, said that she was letting other people speak for her for now, and it was she who suggested I speak with Gloria Dugan for more information. For more information about the Peaks Island Children's Workshop, you might contact Peaks Island Children's Workshop directors Larry Walden, Elaina Murdock, Lucretia Dimichelle, or Lalaina Kelso.

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**Peaks Island Beach Sand**

CMP spokesperson Betty Nickerson says the company is done, for the summer at least, with the Centennial beach clean-up. They did find much more extensive pollution than they had anticipated, and although some are saying they didn't replace enough sand, CMP says they wound up replacing 38,000 tons of contaminated sand with clean sand.

CMP, which bought the property in 1965, this year began to voluntarily assess and clean up the contamination caused by the previous property owner, Casco Bay Light and Power. Contamination was found on the beach by neighbors, who also were able to prod the company to extend digging into an abutting hillside. Sure enough, an old oil/water separator tank was found buried and apparently leaking from the hillside onto the beach. The tank has been removed.

The cleanup is a wonderful example of how relatively small community actions can have a big impact. The neighbors who noticed the oil contamination on the beach, reported it to CMP, and kept making phone calls and complaining until the mess was cleaned up - ought to be thanked. Also, the construction workers who noticed the contamination last fall when installing water lines in the area, ought to be thanked for recognizing the problem, and reporting it responsibly. Ms. Nickerson was pleased with the way the Maine Department of Environmental Protection special program for voluntary clean-up of environmental wastes worked. After further in-house assessments of the property (and there will be some input form the Maine DEP), the company will prioritize future work that will be done on the property.

There are no plans to sell the property. It continues to house local CMP offices and equipment.

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**Peaks Island Police Reports**

Things are picking up a bit for the summer. The busiest weekend last month of course was Memorial Day weekend. There was a fight outside the Legion club, police came and broke it up, but no one wanted to press charges. There were two fireboat trips that weekend. There have been some problems with people drinking in public in connection with Reggae Sunday. Police usually issue one warning, then a summons, then they arrest. Randy saw three guys (ages about 13 & 14) throwing rocks off the end of the pier. He made the boys fish the rocks out of the water. The father of one of the boys came down and helped the boys get the rocks out of the water. The officer says that the parents of the boys were informed.

There was a report of an injured seagull on the backshore, but it was dead when the officer found it. It was disposed of. There are MANY dog complaints!

Illegal campers were kicked off Battery Steele. On prom night, there was a car accident, personal damage. There has been some vandalism to cottages on the 14th of May (a door was taken off a cottage), and a half-wooden barrel was stolen from a yard on Briarbrook.

On Peaks Island, in an emergency, you are about 20-25 minutes from EMT treatment, 40-50 minutes away from hospital care. Island Police may assist you with your own medication, but they can't provide you with medication (for example) in the case of a bee sting or asthma. Make sure you keep any medications you might need in an emergency on hand.

The direct number to Peaks Island PD is 766-4411. In an emer-
Portland's Deer Management Committee is now making sure that all the islands have a chance to plan cooperatively together. These committee members are good sports about getting their picture taken. Dave Pederini, Sam Ticker, Phil Rozenbach on Peaks Island. Next meeting is June 13, 6 pm at the PI Community Room

There is a possibility that the Government Pier on Peaks Island (the former military Pier to the south east of the CBL Ferry landing, which is owned by the City) may be extended. Tom Fortier, our friendly Neighbor­hood Island Administrator said he received $25,000 to repair and refurbish the pier, and he said the plans include extending the pier or adding floats to provide public access to the pier. [Piers as everyone knows, are refurbished in order to test the strength of terri­torial aggression in local fishermen].

Another waterfront improvement on Peaks Island will be the removal of old, yucky looking military cables that sprawl down Sandy Beach.

We have toilets! Not to be confused with the Pott-Potties reported stolen in the last issue, the City of Portland has put up portable port­tities on Peaks Island by Jones Landing and the sewage treatment plant (the down-front parking lot). I'm told they were positioned to be easy to find, slightly more visible than last year in the landscape, so if you still can't find them, you must not have to go bad enough.

RULES of the land:
Golfcart Drivers must have their drivers license, or be 21 years of age to putt around the Portland Harbor Islands... You can register your electromo­bile in City hall Room 102, Mon.-Fri., 8-4.

Dogs are supposed to be leashed on the islands (I guess the law en­forcers are feeling they need to be stricter in the summer). Take it seriously! $75 dollar fine. And pick up the dog poop. Take that really seri­ously. $250 fine for the first offense (although, if we know if you get caught it's not really the first offense).

We get a reaction from Bob Cook in our last issue, when we said that he said that we don't need a stationary trash compactor on Peaks Island. What he said was they might not need it for trash, but that they would use it for compacting paper/cardboard recyclables. Apparently a case of wishful thinking on our part. We're told that Peaks Island collected 23,673 pounds of trash this month, and 20,000 lbs of paper recyclables, but we don't have last year's May figures yet: 50% recycled! Congratulations everyone!

Portland Harbor Islands received $11,000 dollars in ice storm damage for replanting trees, and emergency/natural disaster planning.

Congratulations to City Councillor Peter O'Donnell who was sworn in, along with new but also previously used (she joked, "It shows you can recycle almost anything") Mayor Cheryl Leeman. The two served the City in 1988, in the same roles. And they appear to have hardly any word to say to the inauguration ceremony, and it was nice, but weird. Why is it that you can't pray in school, but you are asked to pray to God (a Christian deity) at a City inauguration? We find it disconcerting when people make the sign of the cross at political events — but it would also be weird if there was nobody there channeling Nana. We would have enjoyed equal time for the teachings of the Buddha, but we guess you're supposed to just mentally snap out the word "God" in your brain when you hear it in a political context, and reinvent whatever word's you ordinarily substitute. We were moved by everyone saying the pledge of allegiance together, although Jenny still burps over the "God" part — espe­cially when there's a pronoun that makes "God" a "He."

If you thought the Old Port Festival was a cacophonous night­mare, you'd better plan for O'Sail as though a storm is coming. Stock up on groceries in advance. July 28th, 12-5 p.m. the Harbor is proposed to be closed to recreational boat traffic. Emergency vessels of course will have priority access to the harbor at all the time. The closing is sched­uled to allow time for the Tall Ships to get for More information, you can speak with Jeff Monroe at the Portland Department of Transportation 773-1613.

Chris Clark told me that the City is trying a great new public transportation system out on Forest Ave. They have smaller busses going up and down Forest Avenue every fifteen minutes during the day. Now that is smart. The minibuses are handicapped accessible and they accept bicycles. Yea! (applause applause)

The Peaks Island Land Preserve will be holding election of di­rectors at their annual meeting, July 28th, 7 p.m. at the Fifth Maine Regi­ment. They will also be discussing their efforts at protecting open space land on the island.

The Peaks Island Neighborhood Association will be having their next meeting, June 13, at 7 p.m. They will be discussing zoning, and whether there is any possibility of getting building size restrictions on the island. (ahahahahahah!) The tax assessor will be coming around all summer and fall.

I'm told that evaluations are expected to go up 10%, assuming you haven't put up a new addition, or recently bought your house.

Out of space here (and you should hear my hard drive) and there's still tons more to write about. I wanted to put excerpts from mayor Lee­man's inaugural speech here, but suffice it to say she's another one of the many voices advocating more services to our wealthiest class of people — the elderly — while children and young families (the group most likely to be living at below poverty levels — are going to have to wing it. We're go­ing to need to advocate more loudly for the needs of poor children and young families.

Women veterans (including Pam Richards and Marie Watson) were celebrated this Memorial Day. In the background is a ghost of pa­rades past...

Meeting PILP & PINA
-Jenny Ruth Yasi

The Peaks Island Land Preserve and the Peaks Island Neighbor­hood Association hosted a short meeting in May to announce a proposal that they intend to make to the City of Portland. The meeting, which was confined to just one hour, left attendees with more questions than an­swers.

As issue is approximately 100 acres of City Open Space which includes the 6 acre parcel illegally developed as a gravel pit, but now pro­posed to be restored as public parkland. The Peaks Island Land Preserve will be making a proposal to the City of Portland to have conservation easements put on the deeds to this land, but they sent mixed messages about whether restrictions would include the 6 acre park, and if so, what that would mean to Peaks Islanders who have been hoping to reserve the park land for much needed island recreational facilities.

All present at the meeting agreed that preserving open space on Peaks Island from development is a very important and valuable thing to do. However, it seems that more islanders should participate in decision making about what to do with the new 6 acre Park.

PINA has thus far declined to survey islanders wishes for the prop­erty, or to consider whether they are adequately involving the community in their project. Presumably, if PILP gets the easements, the gravel pit as well as the rest of the open space will be forever protected from any kind of development. There was some discussion about what kind of gardens PILP could allow under the terms of the easement restrictions.

PILP has done an excellent job of preserving significant island open spaces, most notably the association (with assistance from the City) was able to purchase the Battery Steele and place conservation easements on that property. Although steering committee members did not say that they were completely opposed if anyone wanted to try to get to­gether a committee and develop alternative closure proposals (which might include recreational facilities) for the former gravel pit, they made it clear that these organizations would not be soliciting community involvement on that issue. Apparently most steering committee members would prefer to get the easements that will ban any kind of development on the property.

The City has invited islanders to submit suggestions for the clos­ing plan. What would you like to see happen at the gravel pit park? What about the rest of the recreational open space (the other 94 acres)? What do you perceive as Peaks Island needs? Please fill out our survey on page 10 of this issue. Results will be reported in our July issue.

- Jenny Ruth Yasi
Fat Girl at a Wedding
by Megan Wilson

It is late in the summer, and I am flying thousands of feet above the plains of Illinois. I am on my way to a wedding and I am travelling alone. I don’t have a lover, or a date for the wedding. I work sixty hours a week, and I am an introvert. Besides that, I am very fat.

It is to be an “untraditional” ceremony, taking place at sunrise on a beach in Northern Michigan, and I have been asked by my friend and former roommate of three years to read a passage from The Prophet. She teaches yoga in Michigan, and already I am certain that the weekend will be filled with long and colorful skirts flowing over the thin and hairy legs of both young men and young women who are convinced that although almost three decades have passed, they are still hippies because they have dirty hair and drive used cars.

I am sitting in the window seat, and thanks to God, the flight is not crowded. I am surprised to find myself staring out the window instead of reading my book. Not just leaning back and looking out, but putting my face right up to the double-paned-magic-plexi-glass-oval and staring down into the clouds. They are the best kind of clouds - cartoon clouds - thick clumps of white and gray clouds that retain their shape and move slowly and cast dark shadows on the world below. They are clouds with real substance. From this height, the ground is a soft quilt made of green and yellow fabric squares, sewn neatly together and covered in patches of light and shade.

As I stare, a tiny bolt of adrenaline hits me in the shoulder blades and I think to myself, “I’m flying! We’re all soaring thousands of feet above the earth! What a surprise, what a miracle!” It is an obvious realization, and one that seems profound until I hear again the deep scream of the engine, and look to the giant metal wings and cylinders just behind where I am sitting, and it makes sense again that so much weight could be pushed through the atmosphere.

That night, at the camp-grounds where the wedding is to be held, I stand in the kitchen doorway and watch the other guests who are trying to put together the most unorganized wedding I have ever seen. Some have flashlights, and they are picking wild flowers in the dark. They are continually distracted by the fragmented conversations going on about them. Others are slowly setting out giant Tupperware containers for the buffet dinner, while another small group continually offers glossy-eyed help and then sits back again when no one can articulate what needs to be done. I am trying not to intervene or scold them for their inefficiency. No one looks at me until I make myself a pita pocket filled with humus and meaty falafel balls. When I make eye contact with a short, dark-haired boy wearing an enormous pair of green corduroys, he tries to hide his awe and disgust with a smile that offends me. I am certain that he thinks I am not supposed to be here because he has never met me before. I know that he will never want to know who I am and what I can do, because my body is fat. I am standing by the ovens in the kitchen, eating my pita sandwich, when my friend enters the kitchen. She walks to me with such a glowing beaming grace that I cannot help but smile and be thankful that I am here. We embrace for a long time.

“Hello, my love,” she says into the thick fold of my shoulder. And then she pulls back and puts her tiny dark hands on my cheeks and looks at my eyes. We talk fast and between laughter and bites of our sandwiches, and it seems to me that the other people in the room have stopped looking at me so much, and now I have become a friend of the bride instead of a fat girl at a wedding. Eventually she is torn away and I finish my sandwich alone. A small girl, probably eighteen, walks to the fridge. She has long red hair that is teased and tangled into a large mass of what may eventually become Caucasian dread-locks. She has braces, and after grabbing a bottle of beer she flashes them at me and says, hey. Suddenly, I just want to go home. To Boston. To my books. To my bed and my cats.

I have a photograph of myself as a little girl. It is pinned to the wall above my bed in my apartment. In the picture, I am at my grandparent’s house in Indiana, and the neighborhood kids and I are playing in their above-ground pool. It must be late summer, and my grandmother, who was also fat, stands in the background laughing and holding her miniature Dalmatian pincher. I am standing at the top of the pool ladder in my favorite bathing suit: dark blue with light blue bubbles on it. My arms are stretched in a V above my head, and my long wet hair is clinging to my face and neck. My mouth is wide open, and my eyes closed tight in laughing speech. My legs look like smooth, white, over-stuffed sausages. A pillow of flesh is pushed under my chin and my body hangs round and full like a sack of sand. There are children in the water, and on the ground, and on the edge of the pool, and while some of them are laughing, and some are quiet with awe, each face is tilted upwards, each pair of squinting eyes is looking to me, standing frozen like some deranged statue, laughing above them, and the ground below.

Megan Wilson lives in Portland.
But I'm Not From "Away," Either
Susan Yasi

Being ‘not from around here’ is a funny thing. The phrase “from away” (as Mainers seem to use it) is the implication that a person who isn’t from here is really from somewhere else, yet that may not be entirely true. If you stay away from the place you once called home long enough (and that’s usually just about a week short of when you think of it) you lose your footing. The idea of “home” becomes it’s like playing a game of Identity Twister, only instead of right foot on left yellow with your hands on right green and left red, it’s your identity which gets twisted. You are apt to lose your balance and sit straight down where you are, thinking of this place as “home,” wherever that happens to be. Of course, you’re still splayed out and off balance, but that’s half the fun. But One forgets that politicians keep on changing in your old hometown. You don’t keep up in your new town (it’s not really your town, not yet). The next thing you know you’re stunned by the sudden realization that you have no idea WHO the governor is. Of anywhere! What was once blissful nostalgia for a loved home becomes a slightly touchy defensiveness and fear of how far those memories have been left behind by the drift of time. You get so you just don’t want to know. You start to suspect (quite rightfully) that you’re becoming an expatriate citizen of a non-existent country. Perhaps Oz? You can tell people all about it, but there’s no visiting because it just isn’t there anymore. My Boston is no longer, you know, Boston-like-on-the-map. Strangely, it’s almost comforting for me to realize that it probably never was.

So people always ask where you’re from and you always have to come up with an answer. It’s a lot like the “what are you?” (referring to ethnicity) question. There are a bundle of choices that can be made at this particular crossroad in any relationship. Let’s see, will I ever encounter this idiot again? Then maybe I’ll say I’m a Smeet exchange student from Canada. . . . huh, huh, huh. Nah, But if she might end up being a co-den­ leader with me in the Tiger Cubs and things could get tricky. I better haul out the Limit­ sted Truth. Oh, I usually reply loftily, I’m from all over. This has the added bonus of keeping them guessing.

How folks do love to compartmentalize acquaintances! This, at least seemingly, in the North. The Northeast loves exotic, Midwest loves Northeast (at least when they are not overwhelmed with jealousy). Almost nobody from the West Coast was actually born there, so they hardly count for this exercise. My time in the Sout­ ern part of the United States taught me that for many people, sim­ ply being ‘not from around here’ is way much enough. It doesn’t really matter where you come from, the local folks don’t care. You’re Not From Around Here. The phrase itself carries more meaning than you might at first imagine. It’s the punchline for many Foolish City Slicker Tales. It can be as double edged as any urban legend. When our hero is the city slicker, the day is won because he has some understanding of events that only could be had by being ‘not from around here’. Of course the reverse true when the hero is the countryman. It can be meant warmly, too, as when someone’s British friend, say, makes a social faux pas and needs to be gently apologized for. Ah, no problem, he’s not from around here (and therefore can’t be held responsible). I used it my­ self, once I’d become fluent enough with the Southern language to use it correctly. It worked wonders for explanation of the various idioms and ways of speaking relatives. Well, yes, my relatives do eat animal fodder (read say products). They’re Not From Around Here. Ahem. Finally, if I’ve offended anyone with my sweeping generalizations about the population in your neck of the woods, forgive me because as you well know by now, I’m not from around here.

Yep, ahh, y’know, (wicked) y’all, aye . . . I’m from all over. Being from away has many and varied faces. If you can keep your balance and laugh at yourself when you sit down inadvertently and abruptly, the faces most often resolve themselves into those of friends. Co-denleaders, maybe, of the Tiger Cubs.

Susan Yasi lives and works in Ann Arbor Michigan, but she has family on Peaks Island.

Racism Here
Keita Whitten

I once was the victim of racism, but now I am an advocate for undoing racism.

Racism is not just about men dressed up in white hoods, crosses burning, or the confederate flag. It’s about being followed around in a store by security, or being stopped by the police for “driving while black.” It can look very nice, like being told, “When I look at you, I don’t see race/color.” Like in class, when all eyes are on me and suddenly I am the spokesperson for ad­ dressing the issue of slavery or civil rights. Or being the token person at diversity training and conferences.

I grew up in the Melting Pot Era when I was told that race did not matter. That we were all the same. Equal. That I had the same oppor­ tunities and rights just like everybody else. I grew up believing this. And in school we pledged allegiance to the flag… "In liberty and justice for all". . . .And yet, in my gut I knew something was wrong, because no matter how hard I tried, I felt I was not good enough. Why can’t I fit in? There must be something wrong with me.

I believed it was my hair, so I straightened it. My skin, so I tried to bleach it. I would stand in front of the mirror each day and prac­ tice holding my mouth a certain way in order to make my lips appear thinner. I wished for hazel green eyes. But no matter how hard I tried to "fix" myself, I began to realize that I could never be the same….I could never be white.

The impact of racism had made me want to be anything but a person of African descent. I didn’t want to be known as “Mammy,” passive, submissive, yes’um, slave, ignorant, savage, jungle bunny, ugly, nigger.

Today I am proud of my African heri­ tage, and I am dedicated to the work of undoing racism because I have two male children of color who I want to see grow up and prosper. My reality is knowing that statistically my boys could end up in prison or, a mother’s worst fear, that I might have to bury them before my time because they were targets of a racially moti­ vated hate crime.

I want to leave you with this thought: No, I do not want to hear anymore how I am such a “strong black woman.” My ancestors had to be. And to paraphrase a brother from “Ebony Embers,” I am not an “angry black woman.” I am a warrior for justice and against injustice. Because for my children, your children, our children, we need to change the perception of what it means to be an American.

Because racism does not start when I walk into a room. It’s already there.

Keita Whitten is an African American woman pursuing a degree in Licensed Clinical Social Work. She is also the coordinator for the Alana Center for Multiculturalism.
Home and Away:
Or you can get there from here.

Matthew Day

Growing up in Maine I learned that people from “away” were people who came here to enjoy our warm, lush Summers and crisp, bright, colorful Autumns. Some stayed a few days, others a few months, and a small number decided to stay and make their home here year-round. There were the hippies and their communes, over-weight tourists in motor homes, and rich people with fancy summer homes. This all added a bit of excitement and enrichment to our sometimes laborious and routine lives, though by September some where happy to see them go. While I was aware of the attractiveness of Maine, I mostly longed to go away. I wanted to visit the places where all those people from away were from.

After graduating high school I boarded a Greyhound bus in Belfast and set out for Los Angeles. It felt exhilarating riding west with nothing but new experiences ahead of me. But soon after I got there I began to feel that LA had nothing to offer me that I couldn’t see on TV. I felt a renewed appreciation for my home in Maine, its cultural history, natural beauty, and the friends and family I had there. I returned after one semester of college. I have gone away many times since, and each time I come back feeling more appreciative of my home here.

Home is the most frequently used noun in the English language. Home describes everything from the warmth of a fireplace to a computer website, and can refer with equal ease to a house, village, city or country. But what is “home” really? Our global culture, shaped by ever-faster means of transportation, communication, production and consumption, has vastly expanded the territory and meaning of “home.” The old homesteads of the past have given way to new frontiers in space and cyberspace. Where generations were once born and buried in the same community, we now live in a society in which for many of us the meaning of “home” has become increasingly blurred.

While home is universally understood, it also has a unique, subjective meaning for each of us. My return home to Maine from LA was a bittersweet experience. I was happy to be back, but something was still missing for me. Slowly, I figured out that I was really looking for my “true self,” or what the philosophers call “Being.” Somehow going away made me more aware of who I was and what I needed to do to come to terms with myself. It was an unsettling experience to feel I was not who I really was and that even though I had come home I was not “there” yet.

Psychoanalysts and existential philosophers talk about a “basic anxiety” which pervades human existence. They argue we are primarily anxious about our eventual and most certain death and the fact that we will never accomplish everything we set out to do. Freud, of course, put the source of this anxiety in unsettling impulses arising from the unconscious. Freud once wrote: “The neurotic is essentially one who is not ‘master’ of his own house.” Whatever its cause, this basic anxiety keeps us away from true Being and a sense of authentic at-homeness. Coming “home,” I found, involves a struggle with this anxiety, a facing up to who and where I was.
For the most part our culture encourages us to flee into false homes and false identities, away from the true home of silent openness to Being. We seek to medicate our anxiety and take refuge in the American Dream Home consisting of comfort, privacy, safety and unabashed consumerism. While much of this is an improvement over the short, harsh lives of previous generations, it also has the unfortunate effect of cutting us off from our community and the natural environment. Worst of all it cuts us off from Being and keeps us in a state of self-alienation or “homelessness.”

On one level, anxiety and depression can be seen as symptoms of a lack of self-understanding as measured by our distance from Being. There is a saying: “All sickness is homesickness.” Too often we treat the symptoms of our homelessness rather than looking for a cure. Yet symptoms of ill health are often the very signposts we need to follow in order to find our way home. When we are able to recall who we really are, we are healed, we are home again.

I think many people are drawn to Maine in order to learn how to be at home by observing how we do it. I noticed this when I lived on Mt. Desert Island, where it is common for tourists to “gawk” at local people in their yards and houses. I notice this even more now here on Peaks Island. As people from away amble through our quiet streets and see our homes they can imagine themselves in our yard or kitchen and feeling at home there. They are looking for the lost art of dwelling, of giving oneself to the soil, of fixing and maintaining their own house, of being with others - and finding oneself there.

Sure, many people from away are primarily interested in viewing the coastline or camping in the forests, and many more seem only interested in shopping and entertaining themselves. But deep down, I believe, they are most interested in seeing how we Mainers live because here we are still connected to the land and to cultural traditions. The swelling value of real estate in places like Peaks, I would argue, is in large part a result of a growing demand for a sense of being at home. It is unfortunate when some people don’t seem to “get the picture” and build homes on Peaks that don’t look or feel like they belong here. On the other hand, it is fortunate when long neglected homes are restored and given new life by those from away.

We must remember that most “native” Mainers are originally from away, having descended from European immigrants. The Pilgrims came to make a new home in America, but to a large extent they brought their own “homes” with them. Interior comforts and decorations, privacy, the nuclear family, and the Cartesian “rational self” were all originally imported (from away) to this land we now call Maine.

Mainers are legendary for their self-sufficiency and self-reliance and for their ability to face up to environmental, physical, and psychological challenges. One of our most prized traditions is our Yankee independence and creativity when it comes to making our homes. But along with any strength there is a weakness. Mainers can be cold and aloof and sometimes succumb to depression, loneliness, drugs or suicide.

The truth is, we Mainers need those from away. Without them we would falter in our own cultural homesickness. With them we can learn and appreciate new things and ways of being in the world which you can’t quite get through TV or the Internet. By opening ourselves up to people from away we might come to appreciate and care even more for our own homes and our own Beings. The way “home,” the way to the things nearest to us, is made possible by a detour through that which seems most distant and sometimes strange, like those “from away.”

We must leave home in order to find it. Perhaps this is why people go away in the first place, so that they can return to themselves and their homes with a new appreciation. I like to think that people from away return home to their bungalow in New Jersey or wherever with a better sense of their Being and a renewed care about their particular region of concern. Perhaps they will start a home-improvement project or plant a garden. But if they return home and decide to move here, I hope they join us “natives” in basking up to the cold, dark Winters and raw, damp Springs of Being and that we might all be of comfort to each other on the sometimes treacherous and sometimes smooth roads leading home and away.

Matthew Day writes, teaches psychology and philosophy, and currently makes his home on Peaks Island. He can be contacted at homewrit@homewrit.com.
Give Us Feedback—And Register to Win A Prize!

1. Do you live here, visit, or summer here?
   A. we live here year-round
   B. we vacation here occasionally
   C. we spend more than 2 weeks per year on __________ island.
   D. I just come out for the day; then I go home to __________.

2. What do you dislike about this paper?

3. What do you like about it?

4. Would you be interested in being more involved with this paper? How?

5. Would you be interested in a writer’s workshop if we organized one?

6 How many children do you have, and about what ages are they? (teens?)

7. Do you feel that your children have plenty of good things to do on the islands, or do you feel that there is a lack of programming for young people on the islands?

8. If you are on Peaks Island, what would you like to see happen at the former gravel pit at the end of Upper A. Street?

   1. Nothing — let it revert to a wild area
   2. Put in some sort of simple recreational facilities — maybe a community swimming pool or a community skating rink.
   3. Let the city do whatever they want there.

4. Whatever happens there, I want to be involved in the decision making process.

Rate the following Organizations according to how much you participate in their decision making process.

0 = I do not participate in this organization at all.
1 = I participate, but I feel in frustrated in the way this organization works.
2 = I participate, perhaps in small ways, but I feel that I can have an adequate amount of influence in this organization when I want to.
3 = I participate and feel really good about my involvement with this organization.

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Would you be willing to be interviewed for a story related to this survey?

Name and phone (optional)  

Thank you! We will put all the signed surveys into a hat, and have a drawing for a small thank-you prize, which will be announced in the next issue.
Marketing Director

Harbor Voices is seeking a marketing director
Are you excited about community journalism?
Base pay plus commission
write to Box 10, Peaks Island

Six years ago, thanks to Marsha, Robin, and eager students, I began teaching yoga on peaks. Now, Peaks is also my home. Thanks!
Rebecca Stephens

Battery Steele has a long and somewhat twisted history. Did the Battery affect your life in some way? Do you have a story or some thoughts that you would be willing to share as part of an oral history project? 766-5792. Thanks.

Inanna
Sisters in Rhythm
summer workshops
performances & cd's
http://home.maine.rr.com/inanna
July Workshop for women with
Ubaika Hill
775-7185, or 781-8954

Members can use bulletin board space for free.
PINA Meets June 13 7 p.m.
PI Community Room

Nancy Crickett
Singing Rocks
a CD of original music from Peaks Island,
hearn clips at http://maine.rr.com/singingrocks
$10
Mail to Box 10
Peaks Island Maine

Walk with the One You Love around Peaks Island, gay & straight together
Sunday afternoon, June 18th
Everyone should feel safe to walk with the one they love without fear of harassment
Starting at 9:45 a.m. at the kiosk, just as you come up off the boat to the top of the road (overlooking parking lot)

Summer Rental
3 Bedroom House, Non-Smoking. Available weekly or monthly.
Quiet, pretty.
Call 207-766-2192 or 973-694-5283 for information

Benefit Contra Dance
Heck Yes!
Sat. June 24 6:30-9:30,
at Brackett Church, Peaks Isl.
Celebrate the Solstice with the Sea Slugs
contra dance & silent auction to benefit Stephanie's battle with breast cancer
$7 donation
$15 per family

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For more information, e-mail voices@maine.rr.com, or call 766-2390.
Back issues available for $3 each.Feb: Love Stories, March: Near Disasters, April: Animal Stories, May: Dirt
Editorial

Freedom.
by Shellbe Flynn

This is what you think of when you think of America. You think of our rights like having our own religion and the freedom of speech. You think of all the different culture and nationality that have come here, to America, because of our rights.

When you live in America, you have special rights and responsibility. We have the freedom of religion, so we can worship however we want. We have the freedom of speech so we can say whatever we want.

In America, you race doesn't matter. You could be black white, Indian, Chinese, and walk into any store you want. That is why your race doesn't matter.

In the Philippines, people don't have enough to eat and the children can’t go to school because they have to work to make money for their families. But in America, if you don't have enough food, people should help you, and give you food. And all children in America have the right to go to school and get a good education.

America has been in a lot of wars. We have protected countries that don't have strong enough armies. People have died in these wars, but they chose to protect a great country like America.

America is a great country. I'm glad I live in America, because I have the rights of freedom, speech, and religion. I have a say in what will happen to this beautiful country. If you are over eighteen, you can vote for the president, or to establish another national park. This is why I'm glad I live in America, a country of freedom.

Shellbe Flynn is ten years old, and lives on Peaks Island. Her's was the winning essay for the Peaks Island American Legion's annual contest.

News — Summer Vacations!

These Long Islanders are getting ready to graduate! Congratulations!!

Summer Activity — Eat an unusual fruit
For example the Kumquat!

You have to bite into a kumquat. At first it's sour, then it's sweet. Kim demonstrates, and then has another!

Nest month our theme is WATERPLAY! Do you have any good jokes? The best joke wins a prize! Send stories, jokes, drawing, cartoons, essays to Box 10 Peaks Island, or voices@maine.rr.com

There is only one road on this map that has the same way off and on the page without connecting to any other road. It is a road in itself. Can you find it? puzzle by Ralph Morris, Peaks Island.
From Here, There, or Neither Here Nor There
Are you a "local," "from away," or neither? Take this test and find out!!

1. If you could choose any form of local government, you would choose
   A. democracy
   B. anarchy
   C. Seth

2. What's the best way to serve lobster?
   A. Steamed
   B. Raw
   C. a. a sleep over.

3. When you dream,
   A. You dream you are swimming
   B. You dream you are tapdancing
   C. You dream that you lost your boat pass.

4. The most embarrassing thing that you've ever been caught doing is
   A. sneezing boogers out your nose
   B. talking In a lobster
   C. filling out this survey

Suggestions I would make for improving the islands
A. Give everybody a pony
B. Ban cars on Sundays
C. Ban surveys

Results: First of all, there are no results to surveys like this! No one (almost) from here would fill out this thing! Think about it. Did you answer the census questions? If you filled it out partly, or just in your head, but thought it was stupid the whole way, you are from here! But you also have a good firm grip on the outside world.

If you answered mostly "A's," we hope you will consider joining the committee to get all island kids a pony. If you picked mostly "B's," you should learn how to cook lobster. If you answered mostly C's, or a mixture of A's, B's and C's, you may or may not be from away—but you take something from the Islands with you, wherever you go.

Have a Great Summer!
send jokes, cartoons, stories, news & opinions to Box 10 Peaks Island, and we'll print them!
In our next issue, the theme is "Water Play."
Deadline: June 25

Jokes
A tourist pulled up to the general store and a big dog jumped off the steps and started barking at him. The tourist called out to the storekeeper, "I hope your don't won't bite!" The storekeeper hollered back, "Oh no, my dog won't bite!" So the tourist hopped out of the car, went up to the store, and the dog practically chewed his arm off! The visitor said to the storekeeper, "Hey! I thought you said your dog wouldn't bite!"
"I did," said the storekeeper, "But that's not my dog!"

Lost
A visitor came to the Island, trying to find out where a certain Rodney S. Shenigan lived. After thoroughly checking out the visitors' credentials and the reasons for trying to find Rodney, it was explained that Rodney lived in the Old Smith place.
"Which is that?" asked the visitor.
"Well, do you know where Nancy and Steve Bucking used to live?"
"Well, no, I don't," replied the visitor.
"Well, do you know the big pink house, right around the corner from old Man Roster, you know, the man that has all those cats?"
"Um..." said the visitor, "no, I'm afraid I don't."
"Well... You see that place right there?"
"Yes," said the visitor, "You mean the pink place next door to the Post Office?"
"Yes, that's where Rodney lives," said the local.

What did the trapeze artist do on vacation? He just hung around for a while, and then he really let go!

What did the psychologist do on vacation? She went nuts!

Here is the solution to last month's puzzle:
And yes we know this is upside down. We just didn't want to confuse anybody any further!
puzzle by Ralph Morris, Peaks Island

Alex and Riley both, in a way, could be said to be from Australia...

Everyone looks forward to summer when they can see their island friends again...

May 2000 13

One of these two people was born in Portland. The other was born "from away." But they forget which.
The Biggest
by Jenny Ruth Yasi

It was the biggest house they'd ever seen built on the island: two kitchens, ten bedrooms, six bathrooms, "all for a single woman with no kids," sneered Millie Brooks, mother of six who ran the local hair salon off her living room. "What a waste!"

"Maybe she'll let yer kids use a bathroom or two on Saturday nights, in exchange for a regular cut," said Henry Blue, manning the checkout. "I hear her hair needs a good cut."

"I would never, ever, cut that woman’s hair." Millie did hair and also groomed animals, but she was particular about her customers. "I turned down Roger Nagel's poodle. I'm turning down Courtney Rose. I can't work for rich people. It ticks me."

"But I stay out of things like that," Henry Blue cautioned his customers to remain calm. "When you're a shopkeeper like I am, you learn that these things happen. People get all upset over it, and then after a few years everyone has a job over there." He pointed, twirling his finger toward the brightly roofed edifice which could be seen looming over the trees from every spot on the island. "We'll get used to it."

Mr. and Mrs. Whipple, retired professors of political philosophy, had been trying for years to raise funds for a community library. They were the first to openly appreciate the mansion. They surveyed the building's six staircases with the awe from the Loudreamers. "What a library that would make! And with room in the basement for a High School!" Mr. Whipple felt it was his duty to promote this idea many times a day. Mrs. Whipple was less enthusiastic. "I won't have any High School in my basement!" (she was hard of hearing). Originally from Maryland, the Whipples had been socialist in their younger days, and they imagined that all people with money felt beholden to the rest of the society. "And no hairs, you see. Isn't it obvious? She has to do something with her money when she dies!"

"Now that you mention it, it does seem, with that stonework, the entrances, that this structure is destined to eventually become a public space," Eisenhower Montague, a marriageable stock broker from New York who'd summered since childhood on the island, suggested he could meet this Ms. Rose himself and help her reflect upon her estate planning. People began to steer him away from the millionaire in grave concern that if he should fall in love, this would be capable of totally fucking up available opportunities for everyone else.

Thus island sentiment cleaved neatly into two, as usual, adversarial points of view. The one suspicious and morally enraged, and the other in favor of a warmer welcome. Ms. Rose, in spite of her aversion to all native species in the area, and in spite of her terrifyingly large hair, was believed by the latter to be a misunderstood, and (except for the hair) a lovely person. In general, a pragmatic approach toward the newcomer was advised.

Beverly and Harry Weismith lived right behind Ms. Rose’s summer mansion, and had, in fact, sold Ms. Rose the property. For some reason, they had never made a lot of friends on the island. Beverly Weismith’s favorite former sport (in Connecticut) had been social climbing, and so it was the Weismiths—who’s views to the sea had been blocked by the mansion—who paid Courtney Rose her first visit.

They had noticed, after making a tray of chocolate chip cookies, Ms. Courtney Rose reclining on a teak lounger perched as on a stage, outside double large glass doors facing the narrow island road, the side of their house, and the endless ocean. She wore only the tiniest top and the tiniest bottom, and Harry, glancing out a window of his house mused aloud, "Is that a thong?"

Beverly hoped Ms. Rose could turn out to be just the new friend she had long been looking for, and so she began referring to her as "Courtney."

"I'm going to bring her over some of these cookies, and just welcome Courtney to the neighborhood," Beverly said, "And hopefully, she added, "Courtney won't object if we just keep using the trail to the ice-pond. The new fence which Ms. Rose had installed on her property was blocking access to the island nature trail, and it still shocked them to look at it.

"It's just for the deer, Bev," Harry reassured her, still gazing toward where they used to watch the moon rise over the ocean. "No one is going to block off a right-of-way on the island, no matter how many bathrooms they've got." The couple walked out across their native species gardens and tapped on Ms. Rose's gate nervously.

"Oh hello!" Beverly called, Harry pushed the gate open, and the couple trespassed gingerly onto what used to be a patch of trailing arbutus. Ms. Rose had removed the plant, and installed a garden of imported clipperings she’s collected around the world (bamboo, a flowering vine with nondescript flowers, a thorny bush with tiny bells). Having only been there a matter of weeks, the garden already looked full and exotic. Ms. Rose lay sprawled out as though she was the central element of the garden design. Her finely woven hat and huge leopard print sunglasses almost completely obscured her lace, cottony pink hair.

"Can I help you?" Ms. Rose asked, her voice quivered slightly. "I need to be totally tanned by Thursday morning at the latest, for guest. And I need to find someone to do my hair. Entertaining is an incredible amount of work."

"Beautiful day! I brought over a little something, just a little welcome, a little something, Courtney..." Her voice quivered slightly. The hat rotated slowly to the left, away from Beverly Smith. Ms. Courtney Rose was gazing out to see, musing, "Did you knock at the gate?" Ms. Rose was drinking champagne and orange juice.

"Why no," Beverly giggled, "I mean, yes, well, it was open actually, sort of..."

"You may not realize this, Katie darling," the voice was languid, tinged with a crisp tobacco rasp, "but at this very moment, I am just so incredibly, incredibly busy."

"Busy?"

"I need to be totally tanned by Thursday morning at the latest, for guests. And I need to find someone to do my hair. Entertaining is an incredible amount of work."

"The hat swivelled around toward Beverly, bright red lips below tiny black sun-
glasses pursed for a moment of sudden interest. 'Unless...you wouldn't be looking for a job, now dear, would you?''

"Oh no," Beverly blushed, "The only groomer on the island is Millie Brooks," and her voice strained for cheeriness, as each thing she said sounded more idiotic that the last. "No, um...what I mean is..."

Harry stood two steps behind his wife and stared, actually at the view this time, which startled him in it's familiarity. This view had once belonged to him. He stood with his mouth open, and Beverly misunderstanding, kicked him. He turned toward the cookies, which his wife was setting by Ms. Rose.

"Well, I'll just leave you these cookies, then," swishing at her husband's hand, which swiped at a last cookie.

"I don't eat cookies." Ms. Rose continued to gaze away, as she readjusted her hat which it seemed the aggressive pink hair might push right off. "But I'm sure that my groundkeepers will just love them. Oh! By the way, I'm so sorry you won't be able to use the trail to the ice pond any longer. But I'm sure you understand my need for privacy. And really now, you must be going. Goodbye dear!" And she rolled onto her side, forcing Beverly to hasten her husband away from this near perfect end, and announce for the next week to anyone who cared to listen that she herself would never wear a thong, that the contraption appeared to be incredibly uncomfortable. "And you can bet Ms. Rose paid a fortune for her wedge, too," the postmaster put in, "Everything she wears seems to be coming in by catalogue."

By mid-summer, Ms. Courtney Rose was the largest minimum wage employer on the island. She had a kitchen staff of four, a wait staff of fourteen, and she had credit with nearly every island enterprise. She had guests every weekend. "I wouldn't mind," said Mr. Henry Blue, as the groceries unloaded from the ferry boat "but she special orders things like caviar, soymilk and wild rice that I have to order by the case, and no one else will eat them! What's wrong with italian food?"

"What I want to know," said Millie Brooks, "Is what she is eating that makes her hair grow like that?"

The Harbor Ferry lines ran an extra boat that Sunday, transporting the entertainment and off-island help for Ms. Rose's party. On-island would-be caterers and muscians were furious.

"I wouldn't mind," Harry and Beverly said, "But she didn't even invite us, and we have to listen to the music all day!" Ms. Rose paid the local police and DPW to have boulders placed across the road, and to guard the perimeters of her property and the adjoining public beach with firearms. The police became confused about who was delivering these orders (they had the mistaken impression that Ms. Rose worked for the federal government) and they complied.

"But this is a public beach." Harry and Beverly had invited in-laws up from Massachusetts, and planned a lobster bake on the beach. The uniforms laughed, eyebrows bouncing. "Do you know how much property tax Ms. Rose pays every year? Do you think she appreciates being hassled on the one day she has a big bash at the cottage? C'mon now folks, it will be more comfortable in your dining room, anyway."

Local elected officials, after being contacted many times did come out with a letter of reprimand three weeks later, but by then, boulders, blockades and guards were gone, and Ms. Rose had returned to her year-round place in D.C. The islanders breathed a sigh of relief. They had made their point. Ms. Rose had returned to her year-round place, which they now mistakenly believed had been purchased by Ms. Rose.

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The local newspaper finally published the "House Beautiful" styled story they'd written over the summer, which described the intricate details of the gourmet kitchens and the challenges that had gone into carving the whole bone mantelpiece. The exotic and medicinal nature of her garden attracted more interest. People came by and stole a few clippings and roots ("this, sir, is barberry."). Millie told her children. "I think it's good for your hair."

A rumor circulated that Ms. Rose had gotten drunk at least twice with the local plumber. This literally plunged Eisenhower Montague into a fit of depression. He got out of the stockmarket, moved to the island year-round, and for the next twenty years he made a living on odd jobs, and he got some erotic poetry published.

The island, in short, had found an emotional niche for Ms. Rose which related heartily upon the promise of her eventual philanthropy. But in October, barely six months following her arrival, the stock market wobbled and the cash flow of Ms. Rose suffered in the extreme. She moved from her winter abode leaving no forwarding address and paying no island bills. Millie Brooks annoyed everyone by saying "I told you so."

She also offered free cuts until times got better.

Soon, a Boston Bank hammered an "auction" sign onto the structure, and sold it and reclaimed it several times over the next thirteen economically rocky years. For several years the building was left vacant, and then it became (according to these records) heavily infested with carpenter ants, with renovations estimated to run into the millions of dollars. Friends of Island Insects used the infestation to motivate ant-lovers to consider re-purchasing the property. To everyone's surprise, Millie Brooks, mother of five, had been carefully siphoning away her haircut money and she largely financed the community purchase of the property just after it had begun to collapse and been condemned and burnt as an exercise by the fire department. There are photographs in the Portland Press archives of the towers up in flames. They say you could see it burning all over the bay.

Mr. and Mrs. Whipple have died of course, and left their own home to the island. The Whipple Library today is a statewide resource for its collection of socialist literature. There's still no High School out there. though the library is of great use to home-schoolers.

For the last few years of their very long lives, Beverly and Harry Wellsmith again enjoyed an unobstructed view of the ocean, which by then had completely washed away and redistributed Ms. Rose's gardens. The imported plants began to appear naturally in the landscape, and became important habitat for yellowfinches, and indigo buntings, and today they mark the opening of the community nature trail.

All this happened many years ago, the people have died and moved on. I did ask Millie Brooks' grandson, Burt, if he'd ever heard the story of Courtney Rose, and all he could remember was that she was a client of his grandfather who had really incredible hair. "Everybody was envious," he said. I asked around about the big house, after checking into the deed for purposes I can't say just yet, and over the years that story has been confused too. People say Courtney Rose gave the place to Millie Brooks, for taking care of her hair. They say it was Millie Brooks who just let the place fall into disrepair, because she'd always been contented with a simple life.

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City of Portland Liaisons for Island Issues
Tom Fortier, Island Administrator 756-8288
Lt. Ted Ross, Portland Police 874-8569

YANKEE DOODLE
by George & Cevia Rosol

Across
1. Quick Draw’s sidekick, _____ Loorie
2. 1928 Camp David guest
3. The original one was in a garden
4. Well done
5. Tropical sightseeing boat, for example
6. Yankee quote, Part 1
7. Portland’s Eastend, once
8. Marks, _____, African-American writer
9. Dir. to photo lab
10. Don’t ___!
11. Degree of law
12. Number of fingers in a half-barrel
13. Title of Jean Carbon 1
14. He won a prize for “MS. Found in a Bottle”
15. _______ of Juaa Carlos I
16. _______ Announced
17. _______ on the moon
18. _______ can prevent forest fires
19. Yankee quote, Part 3
20. _____ for occasions for fireworks in Vietnam
21. Special person
22. To a Yankee, not necessarily better
23. Hot tub,____!
24. Hotfooted
25. Someone who’s revolting
26. Super material in the present tense
27. “...as in heaven, so ______” (Luke 11, King James v.)
28. Messy picnic game
29. Simba’s home
30. Something you might be out of
31. Triangular sign
32. Poetically, dried up (not exactly writer’s block)
33. Bugs’ voice
34. “If you _____ it, you’ll be sorry!”
35. Yankee quote, Part 2
36. Incan, for example
37. Rights act since the 60s
38. Spooky lake?
39. First of 26
40. _______ since 1978
41. _______ measurement (abbrev.)
42. JFK announcement
43. Pitch control
44. _______ for The Boat
45. _______ to the Islaand...”
46. _______ for Island issues
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Down
1. Gewgaws
2. Let off the hook
3. Fred Waring’s non-musical invention
4. 16th Hebrew letter
5. Dickens’ Miss Havisham, for example
6. Eastern U. S. Mtn. range
7. Only RI is smaller
8. Goose
9. River order
10. Mlle Jeanne d’Arc
11. What’s that iguana doing on a leash?
12. Still on the marker
13. “______ can prevent forest fires.”
14. Yankee quote, Part 3
15. Occasions for fireworks in Vietnam
16. Special person
17. _______ to a Yankee, not necessarily better
18. Flashbulb gives this
19. Hot tech stock
20. Yankee quote, Part 4
21. Film maker
22. _______ to the Islands...
23. _______ for Island issues
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