The island meeting on February 28 under the Community Development Act advanced the neighborhood concept of the Casco Bay islands beyond its inception a year ago. We as well as the City Councilors and departmental heads present learned of particular needs on all the islands.

After continued funding of human service programs already in the works, the most crying needs presented were for improvement of small boat public landings, including the one on the Portland waterfront now at a point of discharge of City sewage; and an improvement of the fire protection systems particularly on Peaks and Long Island. The Long Island fire department is volunteer, using equipment provided by the City. While Peaks Island has assigned City firemen, it also depends on volunteers when the alarm is sounded.

The appearance of several off-island property owners added another voice to the deliberations. The Long Island presentation asking for nuts and bolts with which to meet their own needs rather than for a piece of the pie set the tone of the meeting very happily for CMIDA as well as for the City Councilors who will have to make the hard decisions.

Greetings to the Health Study Committee of the Chebeague Island Council. Dr. Michael Taylor of the Dept. of Community Medicine at Maine Medical Center is helping Chebeague pinpoint its needs for health care. Chebeague already has a trained and competent Rescue Squad to answer calls for emergency first aid and transportation to the hospital. There are also a Community Health Service Nurse and two Home Health Aids.

On Peaks, Marge Erico is beginning to phase into the responsibilities she will assume once the health center gives her a base from which to operate. The frustrations of bureaucracy are well enough worked through so that the Health Council owns the building and has started adaptation to have it ready to use early in June. The Health Council is also in a position now officially to accept contributions toward the preparation and upkeep of the Health Center. John Feeney is the treasurer.

On Groundhog Day, along with Philadelphia, New York and Boston, we learned the meaning of "Service is subject to tide, weather and other conditions beyond our control."

A westerly with gusts to fifty made landing the 2:30 boat at Long Island more than difficult. The captain of the 5:30 boat didn't even attempt the run. It required the assistance of the Public Safety crew to hold the gangway steady enough so passengers could disembark at Peaks while the boat was held from crashing into the wharf. When the bow went under twice on the way to Little Diamond the captain gave up and returned to Portland. By eight in the evening the wind had subsided enough to make possible a special run with those stranded on the mainland.

By the next day, the operating mechanism on the Peaks Island car ferry landing had frozen solid, but was thawed in time for the afternoon run of the ferry.
The first to board the Abenaki at Long Island at 3:45 on January 15 was a media photographer who in his hurry to reach a spot from which to photograph the rest of the boarding barely escaped a plunge from the icy slip into the Bay. School Superintendent Harold Reynolds and Nicholas von Hoffmann then stationed themselves to make sure no one came closer to trouble. The first passenger they escorted aboard was a five-year-old child. Then came school committee members having their first experience of visiting Portland island schools in the winter.

What roused the island people to such effective resistance to the threat of closing the Long Island and Cliff Island schools was the stereotype into which the administration had cast parents of school children — a stereotype in which normal parental concern was regarded as merely an emotional reaction that the administration would have no problem in brushing aside.

In commenting on the visit to Long Island, Nicholas von Hoffmann remarked, "The protesters had assigned presentations to several of their number who were disconcerting enough to speak with more light than heat."

By the time of the public hearing on February 9 regarding possible closing of four mainland schools, parents aware of events on the islands were able to make an equally reasoned presentation of concern for their children venturing between home and school. At the February 23rd decision regarding school closings only one of the six schools originally considered was voted to be closed at the end of this school year.

Enough parents seeking an alternate style of life for bringing up families have found their way to Casco Bay islands so that they are a force to be reckoned with. CBIDA is proud to have provided them with a forum for their initial presentation to the rest of the City at the January meeting of the steering Committee.

The table indicating relative cost per pupil in the nineteen Portland elementary schools shows a horrendous cost for the island schools. But nothing is said about the fact that taxes earmarked for education from the islands exceeds what is spent by the City for the education of island children. Perhaps the City's problem is in handling children on the human level that is indicated whenever pupil-teacher ratio falls below twenty. Maintaining a separate table for these schools would go a long way toward correcting the statistical skewing.

Now we have word from Monhegan that the state school funding law threatens the existence of all Maine island schools. Monhegan is asking other islands where there still are schools to join them in meeting this threat.

January 3-23, 1976 on Casco Bay saw no day with an average temperature as high as the freezing point. Add the wind chill factor, and the average hovered well below zero. Imagine what it was to wait for the boat on the Long Island dock!

Portland Head fog horn has been sounding in snow, fog and sea smoke. For the most part the CBL boats have kept their commitments quite well in spite of poor visibility, with most of the cancelled runs coming after dark. Some of us are content to leave the decision as to whether to cancel a run up to the captain, even if it should leave us stranded.

Since the last newsletter Barbara Paul of Sturdivants Island has become a member of CBIDA. Her winter address is 27 Yankee Drive, Yarmouth, Me. 04096
The Chebeague Island Library was one of six winners of 250 children's books in a contest conducted by the Maine State Library for proposals to expand children's services in libraries serving populations of 5000 or less.

Chebeague Island high school students are unable to use the Greeley library after school hours, as they must return to the island on a 2:20 boat. So the Chebeague library is instituting a study hour from 6 to 8 on Thursdays, during which the librarian helps with research materials and provides reading matter as called for.

At the December steering committee meeting the areawide water quality planning program was presented under the sponsorship of the Greater Portland Council of Governments. During the discussion we learned that the Associations of both Great and Little Diamond Islands have sponsored locally developed sewage disposal; and we recalled the problem that Cliff Island presented to the City at the Community Development Act hearing held February 15, 1975. "We have to get our water from the ledge and we're worried about returning sewage to the ledge. We need a special city survey to find alternatives to disposing of raw sewage in our rocky ground or dumping it into the Bay."

Robert Hickok of Long Island was appointed chairman of a committee to work with the GPCOG in an effort to secure higher priority for consideration of private effort towards improving the water quality of Casco Bay. Sister Nola Wells of Little Diamond Island and Gretchen Hall of Peaks Island are also on this committee.

At a meeting of the committee with Esther G. Lacognata and John McGrail of GPCOG, Ted Rand of the City Planning Board, and Jerry Holtenhoff of the City Planning Staff, it developed that full use would be made of island input in studies of the water quality situation on each island.

The joint efforts of the city, the GPCOG staff, and the CBIDA would be focused on discovering practical solutions to the problem of sewage disposal from property situated on ledge that does not permit installation of the conventional septic tank with drainage field.

A letter from Acting Manager Neal W. Allen indicates that the City has asked the State Legislature for a two year waiver of the October 1976 deadline for the end of direct discharge of private sewage into Casco Bay. If this is granted, it would give us added time to come up with a solution to the problem that affects not only Cliff Island but also the ledge areas of all the Casco Bay islands. The added time would give the City opportunity too to recognize in its plumbing code that appropriate sewage disposal from summer cottages does not require the same standards as from houses occupied the year round.

The warming sun is long gone and the heavy dark comes early to our nestled island home.
The silent nights are long and chilling at the waning of the year.
How quickly came December.

from the recently published prose writings titled "Weavings and Meanderings" by Angel B. Sterling.
At the February meeting CASCO BAY ISLAND DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION voted to intervene at the CBL hearing before the PUC, and to engage Peter Murray once more to represent us. The following outlines the position we plan to take.

1. We want to maintain the current level of service, which, contrary to numerous published reports, has been substantially improved over the past 15 years.

2. Further improvements are to be desired, especially a new car ferry and better schedules for islands down the Bay.

3. We recognize that transportation is an expensive proposition, however you cut the pie. And we feel that private enterprise, with its freedom to conduct a growing tourist business, is the better system as opposed to any public or quasi-public operation.

4. However, we feel that both the City and the Department of Transportation have an obligation to help resolve the current problems in a manner that the residents of the islands can best be served within the limitations of what they can afford to pay. The current rate request is beyond that limitation.

5. With the assistance of our attorney we will seek consultation with all parties concerned, as well as with those who have not to this point accepted a share of that concern.

We want to go through this next of the many recurring transportation episodes with good will and reason, with careful analysis of the facts, and without prejudice. Only in this rational way can we arrive at the best possible solution. Toward this end, we invite the cooperation of all island residents and public officials.

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At the CBIDA January meeting Mr. Philip Jenkins called our attention to the fact that Fort Gorges needs to come under the wing of some organization such as ours. Since 1960 the City has had responsibility for maintenance of Fort Gorges as a National Historic Monument. With the lack of focused citizen interest the City has been able only to encourage viewing the Fort from Eastern Promenade, and to allow people to visit the Fort at their own risk. Mr. Turner of the Planning Board and Mr. Parent of Parks and Recreation showed their personal interest in the adequate preservation of Fort Gorges by coming with Mr. Jenkins and sharing with us their real concern for the Fort.

Little Chebeague Island and Jewell Island belong to the State of Maine, and are available for recreation on the same basis as Fort Gorges, since the State has no more money than the City for development of recreational facilities to the point where they can be advertised to the general public. The interest of CBIDA in these islands could be of help in their environmental protection now, and in the guidance of the direction of their development when the State of Maine is ready for that.

Conditions weren’t beyond the control of the Peaks PWD crew when the sanding truck broke down. They loaded sand into a small truck and spread it with a shovel from the back as the truck inched along. They ran out of sand just as Island Avenue reverted to bare road. Did they call mainland departmental superiors for more sand? Previous experience had taught them they would get a quicker response if they worked through CBIDA.