The mysterious life and death of an island man

BY DAVID TYLER

Albert Ventres was wanted to be left to himself. Neighbors respected his wishes and after a lifetime spent on Peaks Island, Ventres died alone in one of his Prince Avenue homes. He was 84.

Proposal, which was made to keep track of Ventres because, in recent years, he was often off the island. "In the summer he would often go away to Pennsylvania. He had land there," said later Gerard. "I felt badly," said Sid Gerard. "I would have gone over and looked in on him, but I never saw his truck." Ventres made it clear that he did not want people coming to his homes to check in on him. "It's a please see VENTRES, page 6.

Concert adds Sankta Lucia procession

God Jul means Merry Christmas in Sweden. This year, the Annual Holiday Concert and Singalong, slated for December 12 at Holiday Concert and show also includes the daughter .

There will be two concert performances at 2:15 p.m. and 7 p.m.

The line-up for the show also includes the Mando Commandos, the Maine Square, starring Reina Blinder, the Peaks Island Chorale directed by Paul Hoffman, and music, the Uncalled Four, and Annie O'Brien and friends.

This popular event is sponsored by the Peaks Island Music Association and is directed by Nancey 3 Hoffman. A suggested donation of $4 for adults and $1 for children is requested. The proceeds will go to a worthwhile charity.

Ferry tickets could go up $1.50 a book

BY DAVID TYLER

Casco Bay Lines tickets could go up between 25 and 50 cents EACH and commuter books could cost as much as $1.50 more as part of a proposed rate hike that is a result of higher fuel costs. The increase would be $5 for vehicles.

Doreen McCann's story

BY MARY LOU WINDDEL

Doreen McCann loves dancing. Thirty years ago, she began suffering from multiple sclerosis, a degenerative nerve disease, and lost her ability to walk unaided. Her speech was also dramatically affected. But she never let her disability keep her from the thing she loved.

To this day, McCann, who recently celebrated her 80th birthday, teaches children how to dance. Her classes are no longer packed like they were in the seventies when up to 30 kids, many of them boys even, would learn tap and other styles of dancing from McCann. But there is still enough interest to keep McCann in form.

On a recent afternoon, two Peaks Island students, Zoe Boyken, 6, and Madeline Curtis, 7, watched McCann's cues and tapped their way across McCann's studio floor. McCann sat in a chair next to the music and moved her feet back and forth to show the girls the steps. And although McCann's speech is unclear, the girls didn't seem to have any problem understanding her.

McCann's assistant and former student, Elizabeth Limmer, 21, danced in front of the girls while also watching McCann's cues. They were rehearsing for their upcoming show, "The Magic Forest," a presentation of Hansel and Gretel.

Doreen McCann's danced will perform in "The Magic Forest," the story of Hansel and Gretel, on Sunday, Dec. 5, at 3 p.m. at the Peaks Island School.

Islander taxes, services at par

BY DAVID TYLER

A breakdown of property tax rates and services at par

A breakdown of property taxes collected from Peaks Island compared to specific spending on Peaks Island by the city of Portland was presented by Tom Fortier, the city's island/neighborhood administrator, at the November meeting of the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association.

Fortier made it clear that the document was prepared "for discussion purposes only." According to the document, which Fortier provided to the Island Times, the city collected $2,915,654 in property taxes from Peaks Island in fiscal year 2004. In return, the city spent about $2.9 million for services to Peaks in the 2004 fiscal year.

Fortier pointed out that the document does not include all island expenditures and it does not break down Peaks Island's share of services provided to all the islands (like the Five Islands, or to the entire city).

Art Astafrain submitted a proposal to the Island Times, asking city officials for this information at the City Council's meeting on Peaks Island in September. Astafrain said he had no agenda in asking for the information. "It's to raise the level of understanding and education for islanders," he said. "I'd like to see it every year. Some people don't understand that when they ask for services—we need this and we need it—that they don't understand how please see TAXES, page 11.
Schmucker, the city's zoning administrator, said that this is just fantastic," he said. There will also be a space near the corner of Island Avenue and Welch Street. Part of the structure will be below-ground, so it will not obstruct the view. It is also being built in the margin of the lot, so no parking will be lost, Winkelman said. In addition, there will be a bulletin board located on the roof of the bathroom. There will also be a space near the corner of the lot, off the Welch Street sidewalk, which will contain two benches. "That's a wonderful by-product of this process," he said. "We're going to create one of those use-second toilet into the structure. He's drawn a sign has been positive. "Lot's of people have reacted positively. "We're going to create one of those little, social eddies." Reaction from island residents to the design has been positive. "Lot's of people have said that this is just fabulous," he said. Winkelman is also working on fitting a senior center constructed between Central and Niman avenues, will provide 11 affordable apartments for seniors as well as being the new home for the island health center.

Winkelman said there are already 10 people on the waiting list for the 11 units, with seven of those names from the mainland. "I think some of the people who don't live on Peaks now, had to leave because there wasn't any alternative," said Winkelman, of the non-islanders on the list. In January, information will be sent out to those on the list. To be placed on the list, call the VOA's Bill Bly, at 773-1140. Informational meetings should be held in March and April, she said.

Federal rules require that applications cannot be more than 90 days old when people move into the building. So about 45 to 60 days before the planned opening, the VOA will send applications to everyone on the waiting list. Once the applications are sent out, the units will be assigned based on who gets their applications returned first. But interested ones will be told exactly what they need for their applications, Wilcock said.

Tax cap proposal
Residents of the islands of Casco Bay have had to struggle with some of the sharpest tax increases in the entire state over the past few years, so there's a lot of interest in Gov. John Baldacci's tax reform plan, which he unveiled on Nov. 30. Baldacci's plan does not create any new taxes. It calls for a four-year phase-in of the provision that the state provide 55 percent of education funding. Off that funding, 90 cents of every dollar must go to direct tax relief. Baldacci also said that no Maine resident would have to pay more than 6 percent of their income in property taxes. Single people earning less than $50,000 and couples earning $75,000 would be eligible for refunds up to $1,000 in 2005. That figure would increase to $3,000 in 2009 and be raised to $3,000 in 2011. Any Maine resident with property taxes higher than 6 percent, regardless of income, would be eligible for a tax deferral loan program to help pay taxes. That loan would have to be repaid, with interest, when the property changes hands.

Baldacci also proposes a constitutional amendment to allow cities and towns to freeze the values of the land and homes for Maine residents, when that property is the principal residence. In addition, he wants to cap spending at the state, county and local level by linking it to the growth in the state's personal income. -David Tyler

New cargo ship
Portland's cargo service is scheduled to resume in mid-December. A new company, called Halship of Halifax, Nova Scotia, has chartered the 4,445-ton container ship, Osiris, for the weekly service between Boston, Mass., Portland and Halifax. Maine companies used the service to ship goods to markets in Europe and Asia, through Halifax. That route had been served by the vessel, Shamrock. However, that ship was arrested in July because a Dutch company claimed in Portland District Court that the vessel's owner owed it $14 million. Shamrock, and its crew of 13, sat in Portland Harbor since the arrest, and the fate of the vessel please see BRIEFS, page 3.
BRIEFS, from page 2

was fought out in court. The move also shut down Portland's cargo container service. On Nov. 13, Clarke Inc., a Canadian transportation company, purchased Shamrock for just over $1 million. At the time, there was hope that Clarke Inc. would resume the Boston-Portland-Halifax route, but the latest move makes it unlikely that Shamrock will return to Portland. Likewise, with a crew of 12 mariners, is larger than Shamrock. It also can handle 45-foot-long container units, which is becoming the new standard container length on U.S. trade routes and in Asia. Hal-ship has chartered the ship for three years.

Book signing

Liz Loewald has always been interested in the life of the Russian writer Anton Chekhov. After all, she and Chekhov, who died in 1904, have several things in common. They both were doctors and both struggled with tuberculosis. Chekhov was also an author. So after Loewald retired from the field of psychiatry, she set out to write a book about the famous author's life. Hermitage Publishing Co., in Tenafly, N.J., published it.

"I loved Chekhov's plays and short stories all of my life," Loewald said. Loewald's biography is slanted to how and why Chekhov practiced medicine, she said. Loewald will be signing copies of her new book at the Peaks Island Branch Library the evening of Dec. 14.

One way to relax.

John Whitman, a lawyer and Peaks Island resident, was seen windsurfing in early November. Mike Bryand snapped this photo. When asked what was on Whitman's mind at the time, he said, "My mind was a blank. That's the goal."

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before Christmas.

Happy Holidays Everyone!

Pondhouse Studio - Peaks Island
T's the season for fire safety

BY JENNY YAM

The most recent Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) training session focused on fire safety, and it was quite a revelation for the participants. The first day of the training began with a demonstration on the correct way to hold a fire extinguisher. The instructor explained that it is important to stand at least 10 feet away from the fire while using the extinguisher, and to aim for the base of the fire. The instructor also pointed out the importance of having a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, garage, and basement.

During the training, the participants learned about the different types of fires and how to respond to them. They were also taught how to use smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors effectively. The instructor emphasized the importance of being prepared for a fire by having an escape plan and practicing it regularly.

The training also covered the importance of fire safety in the home. The instructor stressed the need to keep flammable materials away from heat sources and to have a fire extinguisher in each bedroom. The participants were shown how to use a fire escape ladder and how to use a fire hose if necessary.

The instructor also talked about the importance of being aware of the risk of fire in the community. He pointed out that fires can be caused by careless use of cigarettes, overloaded electrical circuits, or improperly stored flammable materials. The instructor also emphasized the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the local fire department.

After the training, the participants were given a certificate of completion and a fire safety kit. They were also encouraged to share the information they learned with their family and friends.

The training was well-received by all the participants, who agreed that it was a valuable and informative experience. They appreciated the hands-on approach and the real-life examples used by the instructor. The participants left the training feeling more confident and prepared to handle a fire emergency in their homes.

The training was sponsored by the Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and the local fire department. The CERT program is a community-based emergency preparedness program that provides training in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

For more information about the CERT program, contact your local fire department or visit the CERT website at cert.granitecity.org.

Perry O'Brien is pictured during his training at Airborne School in Fort Benning, Ga.

Peaks Island native Perry E. O'Brien, 22, enlisted in the U.S. Army on Aug. 27, 2001. He served as a specialist in G-Company, 307th Forward Support Battalion, of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, stationed in Kandalau, Afghanistan from January through August, 2003. During that experience, O'Brien realized that he was philosophically opposed to war. He began the process of applying for conscientious objector status on June 26, 2003. The Department of the Army approved his application, and O'Brien was given an honorable discharge on Nov. 22 of this year.

BY PERRY L. O'BRIEN

It is very strange to be back. Less than a month ago I was immersed in America's most testosteroné-culture, living on a half-acre in an established, ungated development. Now I'm back in Portland, living with horses on a sleepy, one-fuelled culture, living on two-and-a-half nautical miles from Peaks Island. It is very strange to be back. Less than a month ago I was immersed in America's most testosterone culture, living on a half-acre in an established, ungated development. Now I'm back in Portland, living with horses on a sleepy, one-fuelled culture, living on two-and-a-half nautical miles from Peaks Island.

Letters to the editor

Peaks Island Postmaster Bob Swett and mailman Walt Killgallen, who used to deliver mail in Main, stand outside the Peaks Island Post Office.

Small world

After living on Peaks for 51 years, and my mom—Bath Sergeant—went into a nursing home, I decided to sell the family home. My best friend, and also 50-year Peaks resident—Barbara Bisquet-Davis—wept at the idea to sell her and look at property. I had looked a year before in Taos, New Mexico and Colorado. Barbara and Frank showed me around Kingman and Golden Valley, Arizona where they winter every year. I found just what I wanted—a four-year-old, four-bedroom, two-bathroom house with a two-car garage on a half-acre in an established, ungated development with very low taxes. Upon selling the island house I drove down with my five kids that May. My mailboxes are the eight-count lock box-type at the end of my driveway. I soon met most of the mailboxers. One, Walt Killgallen, told me he was originally from Massachusetts and was moving to Portland as there was a slot opening. He gives him a Portland magazine and my son's name, who works at First Financial Mortgage.

When I came to the island on vacation this summer, driving up to the Peaks Island House, I saw a mail truck in front. The mailman was Walt. He was as surprised as I was and asked if this was my island, and where was my old house? What a small world we live in, since Kingman is 3,027 miles (and two-and-a-half nautical miles) from Peaks Island.

Nancy L. Ivers

Kingman, Arizona

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The Island Times is a community newspaper covering Peaks Island and issues affecting Casco Bay. We welcome birth, engagement and wedding announcements, obituaries, notices of community events and more. Contact us for rates. Mary Lou Wendell, call 766-0881; to reach David Tyler, call 797-8104; to reach Marta Alves, call 232-5434. Our e-mail address is times@mainenr.com. For rates, call 766-0951.

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Printed by Southern Maine Newspaper Printing Co., Westbrook.
immensely popular. Alumni chapters sprung up. Pickup football games were organized in different regions of the U.S. and played during reunions. These games were called Cer-eal Bowls.

Then came the crunch. Many college administrators and professors seeing this as a threat to their place in academia, rose up in opposition. Flaky concepts, they shouted. They crinkled with criticism about the test.
O'Brien, from page 4

planned people would say "Hey, you're from Maine, you should be used to this." I would always reply "In Maine, we wear coats when it's mild out."

I am also learning to love cooking again. After three years of eating in a dining facility, the idea of determining the content of my meals and getting to prepare them is very exciting. This, like the joy of washing my own dishes, may wear off soon. On the note of dietary, the idea of determining the content of my meals and getting to prepare them is very exciting. The only way to stay sane is to have faith that the people pulling the strings know what they are doing, that there is a large purpose, that the discomfort or long hours or extended deployments are all part of a grand scheme that you can't possibly fathom. All you have to do is do your part, have faith, and shut up. Maybe I lost faith in the system at some point, and that's part of the reason I'm here, now, writing in my new apartment and looking out the window at the city I missed so much for the past three years.

Of course, all of this excitement about my new freedom is shadowed by regret that I will have friends stuck at Fort Bragg, some of whom will be going back to Afghanistan in the coming months. They hate things there just as much as I did, though maybe for different reasons, and some of them have more than a year left before they get out.

I think that's an important thing for me to remember, that as much as I oppose the wars and the administration that is starting them, I can't forget that many of the soldiers fighting the wars are much like me. They have doubts, too, but they are trying to keep faith in the system that is making them eat bad food, run in the freezing rain, and go kill people in the world in fight battles whose purpose they may not understand.

I miss so much for the past three years. Of course, all of this excitement about my new freedom is shadowed by regret that I will have friends stuck at Fort Bragg, some of whom will be going back to Afghanistan in the coming months. They hate things there just as much as I did, though maybe for different reasons, and some of them have more than a year left before they get out.

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The greatest civilian freedom, of course, is the ability to decide what to do throughout the day. After a few weeks I still occasionally get this panicked feeling that I suppose comes from lack of direction. Of course, this will change once I get a job, but even then I can quit if I don't like the way things are going. In the Army, quitting gets you sent to the prison at Camp Lejune.

I think that the most significant difference between civilian and military life is that the purpose behind your decisions and schedule is totally coherent. Being in the military is like being clergy for strange, cruel god. You get these orders that seem incomprehensible, contradictory, or just insane, but you have to follow them or get punished. You know that somewhere up on high there is someone doing the math, and a slight mix-up could mean months of extra work for you and your unit, or worse.

The only way to stay sane is to have faith that the people pulling the strings know what they are doing, that there is a large purpose, that the discomfort or long hours or extended deployments are all part of a grand scheme that you can't possibly fathom. All you have to do is do your part, have faith, and shut up. Maybe I lost faith in the system at some point, and that's part of the reason I'm here, now, writing in my new apartment and looking out the window at the city I missed so much for the past three years.

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...
Ventres, from page 6

Ventes was raised on Peaks Island. His father, Albert S. Ventres, was an accountant who worked in Portland, according to Jordan. His mother was Florence Jenkins he was awarded the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal and the World War II Victory Medal. He was released from active duty on Nov. 5, 1946. Willard said Ventres told him he was shot down twice over China during the war.

After the war, Jordan said that Ventres worked for the State Department and then Sikorsky Helicopters, in Connecticut. He left that job and came back to Maine and worked for Singer Sewing Machines in Portland. Jordan said.

Jordan said it was unfortunate that Ventres couldn’t keep his island homes maintained. It was Ventres’ father who had purchased all three cottages. Ventres lived frugally so he could hang on to his property, said Willard. “He burdened himself with all these properties. To him, they were his responsibility. All his money was going into paying taxes. He couldn’t let them go.”

Willard, who always visited Ventres on his birthday, which was Dec. 31, said the last time he heard about him was in the spring, in Portland. Banquer also said the last time she saw him on the island was in the spring, riding his bicycle.

When Willard went to look for Ventres on Nov. 4 he was concerned. “The home looked boarded up, that’s why nobody went in before,” said Willard. “But Willard knew how to get in. He said there was a newspaper from May that had not been opened.”

Banquer was also upset when she heard of his death. “My first thought was, ‘Oh, that’s a terrible thing,’” she said. “My second thought was, it is so Albert, to have lived so autonomously and so self-contained. To have died that way seems in keeping with his boundaries.”

This is one of the two houses Ventres owned on Prince Avenue on Peaks Island. Ventres was found dead in his other Prince Avenue house on Nov. 4.

Both houses are near Josiah’s Cove.

Ventres’ military records that Koppen now has. He was a former teacher. Jordan said. During WW II, he became a first lieutenant, and a pilot, with the 332nd Troop Carrier Squadron, 10th Air force, according to Ventres’ military records that Koppen has. He was raised on Peaks Island. His father who had purchased all three cottages. Ventres lived frugally so he could hang on to his property, said Willard. “He burdened himself with all these properties. To him, they were his responsibility. All his money was going into paying taxes. He couldn’t let them go.”

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  * Jay Soule
  * Marty Mulken
The headbands were going to be the fairy wands taken ry used to play together in music halls in northern England. David was forming with them. The two girls had lots of Cann's classes at Riverton School in Portland. Cann seemed confident that it will all work out. The rest of the performers are from McCann's classes at Riverton School in Portland. They called themselves the Green Trio. This picture was taken in 1937.

Doreen McCann, center, her sister Eileen and brother Terry used to play together in music halls in northern England. They called themselves the Green Trio. This picture was taken in 1937.

Doreen McCann, from page 1 together, but now just David and Doreen live in the big house on top of the hill overlooking Sandy Beach on Greenwood Street.

McCann’s husband, Albert, died earlier this year. David is a good helper, McCann said. McCann directed Limerick to bring out the costumes for the girls, who got very excited when they saw the tutus they were going to wear for the show and the green headbands decorated with big red and gold bells. A few days earlier, Doreen and David went shopping for parts of the costumes at Walmart. The headbands were going to be the fairy bells.

The day of the show, Zoe and Madeline will meet the other girls who will be performing with them. The two girls had lots of questions about the logistics of that, but McCann seemed confident that it will all work out. The rest of the performers are from McCann’s classes at Riverton School in Portland.

McCann inherited her love of dancing from her father. In WW I, McCann’s father, who lived in England, was captured by the Germans. During the four years that he was held as a prisoner of war, he learned to dance from another prisoner who was a dancer. Later on, McCann’s father would teach his wife and three children to dance.

The three children known as the Green Trio, performed in music halls all over England, according to McCann, who laughed and smiled as she recounted her history. McCann pointed to one photo on the wall in her dance studio, which is decorated with many pieces of dance memorabilia and photos. The photo she pointed to was of her and her brother, Terry, and sister, Eileen. McCann was the dancer, she said. Her sister and brother were the musicians. The caption on the photo, written in pencil, said, “These were the days, 1937.”

Just as McCann’s father brought his three children around to perform at dance halls, Doreen did the same. She taught five of her children to dance. Once they got to be pretty good, she would bring them around to perform in nursing homes and other places. McCann moved to Peaks Island after she got married in 1947. She raised all of her eight children on Peaks Island.

Now her son, Peter McCann, 51, who lives in Windham, helps her with her shows. He was one of the five who took an interest in dancing.

Doreen McCann sits as she teaches two of her Peaks Island students, Zoe Kuyen, 6, front, and Madeline Curtis, 7.

Island Police Log

Nov. 5: Hit and run, police department only, Brackett Avenue, EMS call, Elizabeth Street.

Nov. 4: Police and EMS called to unattended death, Prince Avenue.

Nov. 6: Arrest and warrant, no address given.

Nov. 8: Vehicle complaint, Epps Street.

Nov. 9: Animal complaint, Greenwood Street; vehicle complaint, Epps Street.

Nov. 11: Alarm/Burglary, Island Avenue.

Nov. 12: Suspicious activity, Island Avenue.

Nov. 14: Motor vehicle theft, no address given; theft, no address given.

Nov. 15: Suspicious activity, no address given.

Nov. 16: Criminal mischief, Church Avenue.

Nov. 17: Hit and run, police department only, Island Avenue; EMS call, no address given; EMS call, City Point Road.

Nov. 18: EMS call, no address given.

Nov. 20: Loud party, Central Avenue.

Nov. 21: Servile paperwork, Upper A Street.

Nov. 26: Police department called to accident, no address given.

Nov. 26: Theft, Pleasant Avenue; criminal mischief, Island Avenue.

Nov. 26: Parking complaint, Upper A Street; police department called to accident, Island Avenue; EMS run, breathing problem, Island Avenue.

Nov. 28: 911 hang-up calls, Brackett Avenue.

Nov. 29: 911 hang-up calls, New Island Avenue.

Happy Holidays from the staff at the Island Times!
Presents of Mind
By Cecia & George Rosol
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Across
1. Thry
2. Color choice
3. Hometown security
4. Staffed animal
5. Price
6. Stocking stuffers for the
7. Exploits
8. Glofun spot
9. Vegan staple
10. Abrasive
11. Try
12. Tan
13. Exploit
14. Slippery, jobless
15. March brings him
16. Gain
17. Round, red gumnut treat
18. Suffolk
19. Seaside species
20. A Traditional
21. Brooded
22. English major's
23. What an urban dweller
24. Garnet of the
25. Ste. Jeanne
26. English
46. Marathon finisher
27. Red bloomers
28. New money
29. March brings him
30. Competitor
31. Montreal attraction in '67
32. Schooly
33. Reason for a 10th at
34. After chicken and before
35. Blue book
36. Appeal
37. Suspicious when smelled
38. A note and
39. ItCger
40. Ag,reement
41. City
42. Polar, for one
43. Reason for a 10th at 38
44. How the other half lives
45. Horse (2)
46. Marathon finisher, perhaps
47. A note and
48. Related through your
49. Let's
50. Maine poet
51. Cure for writer's block
52. Alphabet string
53. Architect van der Beke
54. Played by Marilyn
55. Bed bloomers
56. Commonly worn at 38
57. Bronzed
58. Alpaca
59. New money
60. Slack off
61. Yee haw, PA!
62. Montana attraction in '67
63. Eponymous person
64. Something
65. Rhine
66. Something
67. Something
68. Something
69. Something
70. Something

Down
1. March brings him to mind
2. Tag line
3. Creek unloading
4. Film crew member
5. Salt water
6. Wooler
7. Flyte starter
8. Crickpot
9. What a pearl
10. Nice thought
11. Sound after a short
12. Comic book conversation
13. To celebrate
14. Enemy territory to flex
15. Sock and run
16. Chihuahua name
17. English major's dog
18. Round, red gumnut treat
19. Light (2)
20. ItCger
21. Reason for a 10th at
22. English major's dog
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Support the Island Times by supporting our advertisers.

Starting this month you will see an infusion of downtown Portland ads. Please go out of your way to shop at these businesses. They took a chance on us and now we need to show them that their advertising dollars have been well spent. It's also another way of supporting your community newspaper.

So next time you're in one of our advertiser's shops, mention you saw their ad in the Island Times. We'll appreciate it and so will they.
Give a subscription to the Island Times for the holidays... and we'll give you a collectible button!

The Island Times has begun promoting island artists by creating wearable art. The first 100 subscribers will receive a full color Island Times 2004 collectible button (2" x 2") featuring "Orange Rocks," by Peaks Island resident Norm Prendu. When we run out, more buttons will be available. We know you'll want those too, but they will display the work of a different island artist. So don't wait another minute. Send your subscription today to get your Norm Prendu/Island Times button and start collecting.

The Island Times is a nonprofit community newspaper that plays an important role in island life. In order to provide the news coverage and features of Peaks Island and Casco Bay that people have come to love, we need your support. We need all of our readers to subscribe to the Island Times.

Your $20 will go a long way toward helping this newspaper and our community thrive. Like Public Radio and Television, we can't do it without you.

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Address _______________________
(Don't fill in what address to use, and when to use if you have more than one residence.) Phone number ________

Please let us know what you think of the Island Times.

If you would like to become a member of the Island Times without receiving it in the mail, please check here ______

Send this form, along with your check for $20 made payable to Island Times, to:

Island Times, 161 Ledgewood Road, Peaks Island, Maine, 04108.

Star Gazing

BY MICHAEL RICHARDS

Now the sky is dark enough, it's near impossible to miss the light show as the stars come above as we travel through the night—unless you live in town. All the stars we see, of course, are nestled in our galaxy, which we have named the Milky Way, a typical, s-shaped, spiral disc, barred by a ring of dust. We see the river of stars running over us from east to west because were looking at the disc edge-on. We'd see a lot more stars but for the dust that hides them from us.

Our early ego-centricism is slowly put us front and center in the universe, but science showed that Earth is just one planet among many circling one star among billions of others, all inside one galaxy among countless others. Hold this paper up 10 inches from your eye, and 1,000 galaxies would fit inside this 6, and 10 inside this inside.

There is another galaxy that we can see without the aid of telescopes—our closest companion, Andromeda. It's about 2.9 million light-years away from us, so it's the furthest object that can be seen from Earth by the unaided eye. In Greek mythology, Andromeda was the Ethiopian princess whom Perseus rescued from a sea-monster and later married.

This month, Andromeda floats directly overhead just after sunset, perfect for easy viewing. To find it, first locate Cassiopeia (the Queen, and Andromeda's mother); its five stars form a large "W" tipped on its side high in the northeastern sky. The top of the "W" is deeper than the bottom. Use the deep "W" as an arrow head—it points almost straight toward Andromeda, about three widths to the right. It's a faint oval cloud with a brighter center, and in binoculars it fills the whole field of view.

It was first cataloged as "Little Cloud" by Peruvian astronomer Al-Sufi in 988 AD, and dubbed M-31 by French comet hunter Charles Messier in 1774. Fuzzy though it may appear, it contains 400 billion stars, forming a double nucleus, the largest of which is a huge black hole with the mass of 30 million Sun's. Andromeda is twice the size of our own galaxy, though ours is densely packed.

Both are far by the biggest galaxies in our Local Group, which contains dozens of smaller galaxies orbiting around them. Andromeda is spinning toward the Milky Way at over 600 miles per hour, and may be expected to merge at some distant point in the future. Don't worry, it happens all the time, and stellar collisions are highly unlikely, given the vast amount of space between them.

Closer to home (well, only 800 million miles away), Saturn is coming into prime-time viewing, rising at the east at 8 p.m. early this month, just below the bright stars in the morning. The Geminid meteor shower peaks tonight, and early tomorrow morning.

Among the planets, the sun rises at 7:11 a.m. at its southern-most position along the eastern horizon, sets at 4:38 p.m., and is at its southern-most point along the western horizon. Mark these points in your memory, and compare them with your solar solstices—what a change six months can make!

1st: Venus appears very near Graffias, the beta star in Scorpion. Dec. 21: Winter Solstice ("sunstop") . The Sun is at its southern-most point along the western horizon, and curries very fast. If you're clear, get up by 6 a.m. to catch it.

2nd: Full moon rises at 3:54 p.m. and sets at 7:38 a.m., so those on the 4:30 p.m. boat home and 7:15 a.m. boat to town will get an eyeful if the horizon is clear.

3rd: The moon's again at apogee, decreasing the combined tidal effects of a nearly full moon on one side of Earth and the sun on the other side. Mercury is at its highest point above the horizon, and it will now start down again in the pre-dawn sky as it speeds around the back of the sun.

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION at Peaks Island Baptist Church

Where: 323 Pleasant Ave., (Old Monastery)
When: Wednesday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m.
What: A Christmas service to honor the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ

Illustration by Jamie Hogan

December/January 2005

22 degrees above the horizon) no wonder it's cold here. International Space Station is visible at 4:04 p.m. tonight as it travels from northwest to southeast, so those on the 4:30 p.m. boat can see it, weather permitting.

Dec. 6: Last quarter moon is high at sunrise and the moon was at 0.66 away from (Earth) on Nov. 30th, so barely six feet separates high and low tides. Mars is just to the right of Venus in the pre-dawn sky. Each day, Venus drops a little lower, and Mars rises a little higher, so they'll separate more as the months progress.

Dec. 7: The crescent moon occults (passes in front of) Jupiter. Jupiter rises in the early morning, beginning at about 4 a.m. and ending about 5 a.m.

Dec. 8: Venus and Mars line up with a crescent Moon this morning, for those on the back deck of the 6:15 boat to town this morning.

Dec. 10: This morning, and the next two mornings, the outer eight planets (aside from Earth) line up from east to west in their proper order from the Sun (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto). It hasn't happened for several centuries and won't occur again for a few centuries more. See if you can look—you might see all but the last three planets. As a bonus, a slender crescent moon sits just below them all.

Dec. 11: New moon means no moon to light the sky—a great time for hunting galaxies.

Dec. 12: The moon is now at perigee (closest to Earth and nearly new, combining its gravitational pull with the Sun and making tides extreme) over 13 feet difference between high and low tide today and tomorrow, and currents very fast.

Dec. 13: "Spring tide" is high at 11:23 a.m. and low at 3:54 p.m. so you can walk off the 5:35 p.m. boat when it lands at Peaks tonight. The Geminids will be above peaks late tonight and early tomorrow morning.

Dec. 17: Tonight the moon is at its maximum illumination this month, timing Mare Crisium (Sea of Crisis) our way by nearly 9 degrees.

Dec. 18: First quarter moon is high at sunset, dividing its pull with the sun and moderate tides and currents.

Dec. 19: Venus appears very near Graffias, the beta star in Scorpion.

Dec. 20: Full moon rises at 3:54 p.m. and sets at 7:38 a.m., so those on the 4:30 p.m. boat home and 7:15 a.m. boat to town will get an eyeful if the horizon is clear.

Dec. 27: The moon's again at apogee, decreasing the combined tidal effects of a nearly full moon on one side of Earth and the sun on the other side. Mercury is just above and Jupiter is just below, so it should be easy to find for a change.

Dec. 28: Mercury is at its greatest elongation from the sun, from our perspective, and it will now start down again in the pre-dawn sky as it speeds around the back of the sun.

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TAXES, from page 1

much it will cost.

Fortier said he did the research in order to come up with the figures. "It's my assumption that Peaks Island residents don't expect parity with the mainland, but they do expect responsive, efficient services," he said. For example, islanders don't want their roads paved in the same way it is done on the mainland, in order to preserve island character, he said.

The document was presented for informational purposes to improve communication between islanders and city officials. "If there's an issue of concern, let's talk about it," Fortier said. "Let's not use this document against the city.

"What we did find is that it is very expensive to operate on island communities," he said. "It's more expensive to live on an island than to live on the mainland, and that is also reflected in the city budget.

There are also instances where costs are reduced for island residents due to being part of the city. For example, everyone in Portland pays the same sewer rates, but sewer projects on the island are more expensive than on the mainland.

Astarita said it is important for Peaks Island residents to know what services cost in making decisions about what is best for the island. "People do not get involved in making those decisions," he said. For example, if islanders say that the island needs more sidewalks, it is possible to find out how much did we get for $7,000?" And if islanders complain that we're not getting anything, then we can say, "Here it is, and then we can debate."

Chris Hoppin, who has also been interested in receiving this type of a financial breakdown from the city, praised Fortier for providing the information. "It took quite a bit of digging to do this," he said. "I'm pleased that he did it."

Hoppin, like Astarita, sees the information as educational. "As a citizen, this is information that is helpful to understand how expenses are allocated," he said. "We should see this information to better understand how our city works.

Fortier's breakdown for Peaks Island-specific expenditures breaks down spending into six main categories: public works, parks and recreation, school department, police department, fire department and housing and neighborhood services (Housing and Community Development funds). The spending for public works in fiscal 2004 was Salaries, supplies and equipment, $149,576; sidewalk for Island Avenue, $7,000; Trefethen drainage project, $14,300.

Spending for parks and recreation: Playground installation/woodchips, etc., $2,000; playground equipment (HCD), $10,000; irrigation, $200; tree work, $2,025; after school programs, $2,000; Peaks Island Children's Workshop (HCD), $2,000.

School Department spending: Elementary school budget, $307,085; Peaks' students to mainland schools, no figure; ferry service, $20,000; non-student transportation, $32,796; food transportation, $484.

Police Department, salaries, benefits and equipment, $93,849; Fire Department: Fire Boat, $60,100; Island Watch, $29,569; fire truck, $1,000; Fire Inspection, $160,000; Housing and Neighborhood Services (HCD funds): Eleven rehabilitation projects on Peaks (2003), $176,164; proceeds from sale of the health center to senior housing project, $189,900; capital improvement fund (senior housing project), $150,000; demolition of Herman Street property to senior housing project, undetermined value.

Fortier also noted that there were other known expenses that he did not have figures for such as: deer management, Brown Tail Moth control, portable bathroom rentals, public bathroom engineering and abandoned vehicle removal.

He didn't break down the island's share of amenities used by all Portland residents and paid for by general city revenues, such as the city library, regional waste system, parks and ball fields, Hadlock Field and Merrill Auditorium, for example.

Writers Wanted

The Island Times is looking for people interested in reporting and writing about Peaks Island and Casco Bay Islands and Issues.

Please Call 766-0851

December/January 2005

ISLAND TIMES

PAGE 11
Fairies come to life at Sue Hanley’s house

BY DAVID LEE

This Christmas, for the second year, Susan Hanley has created elaborate island fairies. She uses pipe cleaners for the bodies, which are wrapped in embroidery thread. She paints wooden beads to make the heads, dyes wool to make the hair, and uses acorns wrapped in embroidery thread to make the fairies’ clothes. “It’s really fun to rip flowers apart,” she said.

Finally, she creates an elaborate box complete with that fairy’s history and purpose. The fairies are named for peaks on Peaks Island and the dogwoods, because we build fairy houses out in the woods,” she said. “We started to get the idea of making these boxes from places on Peaks Island and then we started to make up these stories of where they would come from, and what they would be good at.” Hanley has also added toys and furniture for the fairies, such as rocking chairs and wagons.

It’s one of the many projects that Hanley works on every year. Three years ago, she had devoted herself to fibers art, after working for 11 years as a photolithography engineer at Digital and National Semiconductor. “So now the Peaks Island Children’s Workshop has brought her back to the top of her creativity,” Hanley said. “Come down and hook them up with the children at the workshop.”

In November, Hanley began as the children’s workshop’s first volunteer coordinator. The position was made possible by a five-year grant from the Peaks Island Fund. “There are so many people on the island that have so many talents,” said Colleen Mitchell, the workshop’s executive director, who won the grant proposal. She sees Hanley as creating a data base of talented islanders, in the arts, and will work to combine the workshop and share their accomplishments with the island.

It’s something the workshop has wanted to do for some time, according to John Kebo, the new volunteer coordinator at the Peaks Island Children’s Workshop. “We’ve been trying for a long time to get people involved with the island’s history and purpose. It’s really something that we’ve been wanting to do for a long time,” he said.

Hanley also believes many talented islanders may not have thought about working with children. “People may not have thought about working with children. We’ve been wanting to do something like this for a long time.”

Meet the Author

Sue Hanley is the new volunteer coordinator at the Peaks Island Children’s Workshop. She makes beautiful fairies in her spare time.

Christmas coffee

On Sun., Dec. 4, from 10 a.m. to noon, Mitchell Murdock will be signing copies of his book, “The Magic Forest,” based on an idea who’s out there and something he’s thought of, “I envision part of this job as being a data base of talented islanders, in the arts, and will work to combine the workshop and share their accomplishments with the island.”

New lecture series

Starting in 2005, there will be monthly lectures offered on Tuesday evenings from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Community Center. The results will be compiled and made available to the CERT team. Thanks to Michelle Traves, at P.O. Box 36, Peaks Island.

Renaissance voices

“Christmas with Renaissance Voices” will be presented Sat., Dec. 18, at 8 p.m., at the Chequesset Street United Methodist Church, on Chequesset Street between Cumberland Avenue and Congress Street in Portland. The concert features an 19-voice a cappella ensemble, under the direction of Harold Stover, performing music of the season by French, Spanish, Italian, English and American composers ranging from the 15th to the 21st century. The program will also include the world premiere of a new work by David Starbird, performed by the 19-voice a cappella ensemble, under the direction of Ann Krames’ “Alleluia.” Admission is $12 at the door, or $10 in advance (www.renaissancevoices.org) or at Starbird Music in Portland. 766-0059 for more information.

Community Notes

Meet the Author

On Sat., Dec. 4, from 10 a.m. to noon, Mitchell Murdock will be signing copies of his graphic novel, “Heropix,” at the Peaks Island Library. Everyone is invited to come, from the history of Peaks Island to the present, and learn how this Peaks Island School graduate (2001) created and illustrated his first novel.

PILP volunteer day

Peaks Island Land Preserve is looking for volunteers to participate in a data collection event on Sun., Dec. 5, from 1-4 p.m. We will meet at the Land Preserve property on Elizabeth Street. Volunteers will be trained as a group in basic forest measuring techniques and the basic functions of the Preserve. The training will be followed by an introduction to the Preserve. There will be at least one experienced member present.

New lecture series

Starting in 2005, there will be monthly lectures offered on the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. in the Community Center, starting in January. We need your help to give up to a total of 6 lectures. All topics are welcome, from history of Peaks Island to how to grow a vegetable garden to a slide show of your adventures in East Asia. We need you in advance. If we can’t fill the time of a lecture, we will be paid for it. The fee is $250 per lecture.

CERT training

More than two dozen islanders have begun to learn how to augment the Portland Fire Department in emergencies like a fire, flood, tornado or terrorist event. The Fire Department has conducted two training sessions for Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). In November, CERT team members learned new fire fighting techniques, types of fires and how to put them out. The Fire Department conducts annual checks of fire extinguishers on Peaks Island each July and will develop a special discount program for residents to purchase units for their homes. CERT’s next training session will be on Thurs., Jan. 6, 2005, from 6:30-9:30 p.m. at the Community Center. Are you interested in helping in an emergency, but can’t commit to being on the CERT team? Here’s another option: Fill out the Emergency Response Survey. Do you have special skills or equipment that might be useful in an emergency? Are you willing to be creative? she said? And Mitchell said that volunteers will get staff support and assistance when they come to the workshop.

In addition to creating art for her company, Fiber Island, Hanley also offers summer camps for children. This past summer, she and a friend offered a week-long fiber arts camp in which children were taught to knit, do natural dying, make flower fairies, and create a slide show with handmade, hand-knit animals, among other projects. For the summer of 2005, they plan to work with the children to teach them to dye silk and create their own fairy costumes, and “then we’re going to put on a play, being these island fairies,” Hanley said.

Hanley was attracted to the job of volunteer coordinator for the Peaks Island Children’s Workshop because she was first exposed to the arts when she was a young child. “It’s just come up in a house where we’re very creative,” she said.

That’s my take on the whole thing, to start kids when they’re young,” she said. “Even if it’s something you leave for a little while, because you’re going through a whole bunch of distractions in adolescence, you come back to it. It’s great to get the kids going when they are young.

It is important to be supportive when teaching children to be creative. She said, her mother was somehow able to knit for 45 minutes, "then rip out all her work and hold a single hole in it. "I think it gets people turned off when you’re too picky," she said.

"I like to really encourage kids, like I like to focus on the element of success so that kids have a positive feeling about what they’re doing.

For your help!

On Fri., Dec. 10, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Sue Hanley will be hosting a book signing at the Peaks Island Children’s Workshop. The event is open to the public and will include refreshments and a raffle for a custom-made fiberglass fairy.”

Parking available

The City of Portland has a number of parking permits available for the outside lot, located at the end of the city driveway in the old Bath Iron Works parking area. The fee is $80 per month. islanders will receive priority for these spaces. Once filled, a waiting list will be created. There are spaces available for the winter only (Nov. through April 30) in the old “islander lot” on Free Street. The fee for the winter is a flat $100. The lot has been upgraded within the last year and now has better surfacing, lighting, security systems and improved parking enforcement. Proof of island residency is required. For information or want to sign up for a parking space, call the Police Department at 521-6978 or the Waterfront Office at 541-6930 or 541-6934. You can also stop in at the guardhouse located at the entrance of the Marine Park.

Christmas with Renaissance Voices

“Christmas with Renaissance Voices” will be presented Sat., Dec. 18, at 8 p.m., at the Chestnut Street United Methodist Church, on Chestnut Street between Cumberland Avenue and Congress Street in Portland. The concert features an 19-voice a cappella ensemble, under the direction of Harold Stover, performing music of the season by French, Spanish, Italian, English and American composers ranging from the 15th to the 21st century. The program will also include the world premiere of a new work by David Starbird, performed by the 19-voice a cappella ensemble, under the direction of Ann Krames’ “Alleluia.” Admission is $12 at the door, or $10 in advance (www.renaissancevoices.org) or at Starbird Music in Portland. 766-0059 for more information.

Classifieds

Looking for musicians

Peaks Island Land Preserve seeks musical buddies willing to rehearse, share gigs, develop a fresh musical atmosphere. I’ve made several arrangements of songs found at www.cdbaby.com/yasi, got national airplay with “Stafford” in 1993 and again in 1997. I was invited to perform with the Bonheur, with members of Paul Winter Consort, and others. Past performances include Maine Festival of Chamber Music, Common Ground Fair, LA Arts, etc. I’m most at home playing folk clubs, music festivals, rallies, and for children and families, I’d like to play more weddings. Call Jenny 766-2390 or e-mail voices@mainehound.com.