How the kindness of strangers built a monument on Peaks Island

BY JO ISRAELSON

I am a sculptor. There are some anniversaries that are etched in my soul. I wrote one day, without even knowing it, that 20 years had passed since the day I first learned to carve stone.

Twenty years ago, I attended my first stone carving class at the Carving Studio of Vermont. When I mailed in my deposit, I added a note that my father was dying, and that I wasn't sure how well my learning would proceed.

The director replied: "You take care of your dad and we will take care of you." I walked through those doors and took my first steps on the path to redefining myself as an artist and learning about the importance of the kindness of strangers.

Taking care of my dad, as it turned out, started with a letter.

Twenty years ago, while my dad retired, he hoped to be able to live on Peaks Island and paint. Unfortunately, he contracted a rare form of cancer and was not able to fulfill his dream.

When my father passed away, his last wish was to have his ashes spread near Pumpkin Knob — his favorite view on the island where our family spent its summers with "Uncle Doug" MacVane.

I am a sculptor. There are Taking care of your friends, and we start with a letter. Page 10.

Free Ride: Tales of the Volunteer Taxi

"Here is the beat up taxi sign that drivers carry on their dashboards," said Jamie Hogan, who made it years ago, which Craig Rosell then had laminated. Cevia once told her that when the "rules" changed regarding taxi parking way down on Welch and staying till the boat left, some of the drivers got hassled by the police. "I thought more legitimate proof that they were really the taxi," said Jamie. "Ha, ha, Peaks Island!" Full story on page 14.

Portland Public Library struggles to keep branch libraries open

Summer resident Michele Franz takes advantage of a beautiful day and the free wi-fi access from the library to work on a document for her art guild two days before heading back home to Vermont.

The Peaks Island branch of the Portland Public Library was the first branch of the Portland Public Library to have wireless internet access, "out of respect for the summer population," said Library Director Dave Podgorsky at a public meeting Sept. 16 in the Peaks Island Community Center.

He said the library intentionally set it up "to give people the ability to camp out on the lawn and use the internet all through the night, if they wanted to. That was intentional," he emphasized.

In the wake of severe budget cuts that forced the library to lay off 10 percent of its workforce at the Main library and temporarily close the Peaks branch in May, members of the library staff and board of trustees launched a series of public meetings at each of the five branch libraries to discuss the financial crisis under which they have been operating, and to involve the community in setting priorities to decide what services can be cut, and what they must try to keep.

Full story on page 17.

PIC, HomeStart begin to repair damage caused in a meeting with City Housing Committee

Since the Peaks Island Council was inaugurated last November, some of its members have become increasingly concerned that much of the authority given to them by the city is not actually being recognized or supported in practice, a point that became painfully obvious at the Sept. 2 meeting of the City Housing Committee with members of the board of HomeStart to discuss the proposed development on Luther Street.

In the meeting, Committee Chair Jill Dawson allegedly characterized the PIC as "an obstacle," and strongly encouraged HomeStart to go to the planning board with the project, which was interpreted by some members of the island council as a mudge-wink signal that the project would be approved as soon as the paperwork was submitted.

In order to be approved by the city in its current design, development would need a zoning variance, which has created opposition from neighbors who say it would ruin the character of the street, and from other island residents who say that the variance would open the door to uncontrolled development on the island.

PIC members Rob Tiffany and Levine Richard spent the last several months studying the island's zoning laws and brokering meetings between HomeStart and the neighborhood so that an agreement could be reached that would satisfy both parties, and also protect the interests of the community as a whole.

By the end of negotiations in August, it was thought that an understanding had been reached.

Board member Ellen Mahoney describes her impressions of the Sept. 2 meeting between HomeStart and the City Housing Committee during the PIC Public Forum Saturday, Sept. 20.

Full story on page 18.

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FRANCES
BY MEGAN JONES

The 74-foot gaff-rigged topsail sloop Frances, was built by her captain and crew on Portland’s waterfront. Launched in the fall of 2003, her design is reminiscent of the 1800s Maine windjammers used up and down the Maine coast for fishing and trade. Her rig is tall and elegant, her sail area and deck space impressive. Her wide beam, shallow deck, and high cap rail design lets passengers move freely about the deck while under full sail.

The Captain, Hasket Derby Hildreth, designed and built the ship. He studied mechanical engineering at the University of Maine and boat building in Washington county. His friend and master boat restorer, Wallace Soule, who is also a carpenter of Freeport, played an integral part in the construction of the hull and finish work. And I, an accomplished sailmaker just out of Bates College with a liberal arts degree and a love of sailing, was the project’s apprentice. Duff, our Jack Russell terrier, was ever present and supportive from stem to stern.

Construction of her steel hull took place in building No. 7 at the old Portland Co building on Fore Street. We fashioned our own steel masts - brake presses made of I-beams, steel benders, and cranes - to lay her keel, pattern her frames, and plate the hull. Our team worked through a winter and a summer to get the steel hull built and spruce spars installed, so that she was launched eight months later, in October 2003. The wood work that adorns her cap rails, decks, houses, and interior were finished during the following winter.

We started Maine Sailing Adventures in hopes of bringing the lore and memory of the traditional windjammer era back to Portland. We are an environmentally conscious group, sailing in the traditional windjammer way without an engine aboard. Maneuvering the Frances on and off the dock with our yawl boat is truly a sight to be seen and unique to our waterfront. We have crewing trips where the guests get to pull the lines, tack the Jib, and hoist the topsail.

Our captain and crew are well versed in local maritime history. A sail aboard the Frances is a great vehicle for understanding history and is used by social studies classes studying the history of coastal Maine. Maine Sailing Adventures also bring a marine science classroom right up on deck with a live touch-tank on board. Two-hour sailing trips incorporate ecology and marine biology lectures, where students of all ages get to learn about the great lobster migration, the life span of a starfish, and the growth stages of hermit crabs as we sail around the bay.

Photograph courtesy of Maine Sailing Adventures: 795-2968

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Energy problems are in the news every day. Peaks Island Tax Assistance - Energy Assistance (PITA-EA) is working hard to raise funds to help our neighbors with their energy costs. Our Loaf and Ladle dinners have been a great success. The food is delicious and the company superb. Fully 100 percent of the funds raised are used for energy assistance. We have raised over $11,000 and are trying to raise $4,100 in the next two months. These funds will be used for energy costs for over 100 families. We are gearing up for another cold and energy expensive winter.

I attended and organized an energy forum in Portland, where we heard some dire predictions about energy. One event was attended by representatives of PROP and Maine 211. Both organizations work to attendees were highly talented, motivated, and paid $4,100 in energy bills for our neighbors with their energy costs. Our families. We would like to help and get help.

Applications for energy assistance are available at the Peaks Island library, the Peaks Island Health Center and the Peaks Island Cafe. Our island clergy who assist with the application process are Pastor Beau Boyle, Father Fred Morse, Pastor Desi Larson, and Retired Ministers Shep Johnson, and Ruth Williamson. They work with applicants and make the final recommendation for up to $300 for energy assistance. Their work sustains our mission.

As an added note, we would like to thank the children of the Brackett Memorial Church Vacation Bible School for their donation of over $180 for Energy Assistance. Thank you to Beau and Michelle Boyle who set up for each of our Loaf and Ladle Dinners. Our cooks arrive to the tables, the coffee made and the lemonade prepared. The work and monetary generosity of the Peaks Island Baptist Church has been a great help to PITA-EA. The congregations of our churches on the island have made very generous donations to PITA-EA. Last but not least, our very supportive and kind island friends who have given their financial support to Energy Assistance.

PITA-EA is helping islanders to get energy saving for their homes. In late October and November we hope islanders will join us as we weatherproof homes. The one thing we all know is that we can save on our energy bills by doing some simple weatherproofing. It is an area where you need help, please fill out an application which can be found on the bulletin board of the Peaks Island library and send it to PITA-EA, PO BOX 126, Peaks Island, Maine 04108.

Merry Makers 4H Club creates a GPS tour of Peaks Island

SHERYL ADAMS

Peaks Island History meets modern technology in a new GPS-guided island history tour. The Merry Makers 4H Club received a 4H Youth in Governance grant to produce this tour. Donors to two Peaks Island Museums, the Fifth Maine and the Earthly Museums, have also contributed.

Organized and led by members Pauline Adams and Chelsea Burnham, this year’s project culminated in a presentation of four packages to Kim MacIsaac of the Fifth Maine and Ron Adams of the Eighth Maine at the Cumberland County Fair on Sunday, September 21st in the 4H Exhibition Hall.

The tour consists of 19 points that have been plotted to GPS units, along with directions to get to each point. Recordings were made to MP3 players (recorded by the island’s own Don Perry...), thank Don! You at each point a description of the site can be listened to by the person touring. A flip-book of pictures with the descriptions was also made for people who would prefer to have visual cues and for the hearing impaired. The museums are both open seasonally. The Eighth Maine is closed for this season and will re-open in the spring. The Fifth Maine is open until Columbus Day weekend.

For anyone who has their own GPS unit and would like to take this tour now, or for those who would like to preview before venturing out, visit www.everytrac.com. There, search for Peaks Island Tour where you can preview the tour or download the coordinates and view pictures and descriptions of the historical sites.

This tour is a great way to enjoy Peaks Island, as it takes you around the whole island. Peaks Island has many walking paths that lead between the roads, and this tour utilizes some of these traditional public walkways. The trail heads for the public walkways are well-marked on the GPS units for those not familiar with the island. The island is about 5 miles in circumference and much of this distance is traveled in this tour, so try to travel a few hours there. This would be a great hike for a leased dog, although not recommended a ferry ticket to get to island and back, as well as the people.

Lines from Casco Bay Lines

BY CHRIS HOPPIN

Many islanders ask why the Casco Bay Island Transit District that operates our ferries doesn’t offer special discounted rates. The simple answer is that transit districts accepting public funds from federal and state governments cannot discriminate ticket prices based upon residency.

However, we do offer legal rate discounts worth reviewing. The major way our rural travelers get around is through the cheaper Winter Rate Schedule that begins Oct. 14 and runs until mid-April. These reduced rates are approved by Maine’s Public Utilities Commission and are displayed at the ferry terminal ticket counter, and on line at www.CascoBayLines.com. Single tickets are the most expensive. Committee books of five tickets for individuals or families offer considerable discounts, and even more savings are provided through monthly passes. The greatest savings are achieved with the annual pass. All passengers should explore these discount options.

Savings are also available for dogs and bicycles. For example, individual pet tickets cost $3.75 each; a book of five tickets ($15) lowers the price to $3.00. Similarly, the single $6 adult bicycle pass goes down to $3.10 with a "5-book" ($15.50).

While working hard to reduce all of its costs, CBITD has also applied for a government grant to obtain a new ticketing system that could lead to more savings for frequent travelers. Special transit cards would have magnetic strips recording its financial value much like retailer’s gift cards. If installed, CBITD will be able to offer volume or quantity discounts. We hope to receive information soon as to whether the grant will be approved.

Meanwhile, the CBITD has been looking for other ways to reduce costs. Fuel consumption is down, thanks to the efforts of our excellent staff, and we obtained a fixed price contract for future
Peaks Island comedian launches national tour

Raising awareness about the soldiers lost in the Iraq war

Peaks Island resident and stand-up comedian Mike Sylvester will tour the country with his cousin Boss, a rapper and stand-up comedian like Sylvester will tour the country in order to remind people of the extensive loss of life caused by the Iraq war.

The four-day, dubbed "WMD: The Words of Mass Destruction Tour" will be launched from Levant, Maine and involve the performance of a one-minute stand-up routine for every US Soldier killed in the Iraq war until they reach Los Angeles, California. As of Sept. 12, that total was over 4,600 lives lost.

"It is over eight hours of performing a day," said Sylvester. "The idea is to drive and stop at laundromats, supermarkets and clubs we set up beforehand. Anywhere there are people, we'll stop and perform."

The inspiration for the tour is Gerry Bosco, Sylvester's uncle and Boss' father, who died last year at the age of 38. "Gerry touched so many people with his humor and he inspired both of us to perform. At his funeral, people couldn't stop talking about the kind word he said at a low moment or the joke he told you when you really needed a laugh," explained Sylvester.

Yet if his passing was too soon, he couldn't help thinking of the thousands of Gerry Moments that the friends and family members of those soldiers never get to have.

The goal of the tour, therefore, is to remind people of those lives gone silent as they should keep those folks in their mind. "We know that every soldier is tight and that the fear-mongering is lip deep," said Sylvester, "but we think that, however people are feeling, they should keep those folks in their mind."

Sylvester and Boss will be performing a fundraiser at the Inn at Peaks Island (TBA) will ask people to donate in honor of the soldiers in order to cover the cost of the trip and publicity as they go. The two will share their journey on Facebook and YouTube so that people can follow their journey.

"I don't want to preach to people how they should vote," said Sylvester, "but let's just say my candidate rhymes with Yo Mama."

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Mass consultant presents cost analysis of Casco Bay Lines


Conducted this summer by Massachusetts consultant Jim O'Connell as a condition of the 50 cent surcharge CBITD implemented last May. Among other things, the intention of the study was to discover if the current rate structure is reasonably allocated to all the Casco Bay islands, and whether it meets the requirements of the legislative authority under which the CBITD operates.

The report was a month overdue. It had been a critical part of the agenda for last month's committee meeting, which Chair Chris Hoppin had spent most of the year organizing, so that the information could be used to discuss how rates should be adjusted in the future.

When it was learned the report would not be available, CBITD board member Frank Perretti said at the time that the fact it had also been contracted with an outside consultant was several minutes late in appearing, members of the committee briefly discussed an communication from the Public Utilities Commission stating that its decision not to investigate the surcharge had been ratified on Monday, Sept. 15, making the rate increase "a completed issue with the PUC," according to General Manager Catherine Debo. The committee killed a little more time in half-hearted discussions of freight and vehicle surcharges, but eventually fell silent while waiting for O'Connell to arrive and present the results of the study. "I mean, this is the 800 pound gorilla," said Debo.

When O'Connell did arrive, board member Perretti seemed to be the only one on the committee to voice any serious objections to the results, even disagreeing with the way ticket sales were counted. However, questions asked by members of the audience indicated that they also thought the study was flawed.

The committee members had hoped the study would give them a set of objective indicators they could use to set ticket prices, but O'Connell said he found no universal items to track. "There is no such thing as a magic number," he said, "such as cost per mile to determine equity (sic) of rates." He also said that, to his knowledge, most ferry systems are much simpler than CBITD's, which has a bigger percentage of unallocated costs than others with which he is familiar. "There are no ferry's I am aware of that are profitable," he added.

According to O'Connell's report, there were 296,000 one-way passenger trips last year, of which 23 percent went to Peaks Island. The study also showed that ticket sales from those passengers generated just under 40 percent of the $1.1 million cost of operating the ferry service, and even with our service, freight and mail revenues added in, the district would still be about $1.8 million short without governmental grant money and revenue from the charter tours. The report also noted that income from the transportation of vehicles was not allocated "to a specific island, but rather, as revenue to CBITD in general."

The greatest controversy in the report centered on how operating costs and the over-award were assigned to the islands, which O'Connell allocated based on the number of passenger rides. The consultant found no correlation between the number of boat trips made during the year and the operating costs, however, he found that he could relate it to the number of riders. CBITD Treasurer Bill Overlock asked if it was "normal" to allocate costs in that way.

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"Many costs have to do with terminal costs, personnel," said O'Connell, and noted that expenses followed the volume of passengers. He said that, for instance, because people usually travel with their freight and vehicles, the costs of shipping these materials from the site of the crew needed, to the choice of vessel, to the hours of operation — follows the number of passengers.

But a member of the audience contended that expenses are outgrowing revenues, particularly in personnel costs, and suggested that there were unnecessary, overlapping, or overpaid positions. According to the study, personnel accounted for slightly more than 32 percent of CBITD's total expenditure, boat costs were almost 31 percent, and 17 percent was in building and office expense. The idea that the CBITD operation is top-heavy was dismissed out of hand by members of the committee, and crew costs were explained as being dictated by safety rules and union labor requirements.

As the discussions progressed, it became clear that some of the committee had trouble finding ways of improving the profitability of the operation by modifying the way rates are structured with increasing ticket prices, but O'Connell seemed skeptical of that idea. "We're talking about a 30 percent short-fall," he pointed out.

Board President Jim Phips wanted to know how the revenues could be used to simplify rates, which led to a question of creating pricing zones. Board member Dan Doane, "We spent a year looking at zoning and in the end it didn't look feasible. I don't want to go back there again." O'Connell suggested, "We have all the data, do some what-if's: What if you only have two rates? What happens?" Although the board had hoped to find a set of expenditures that could be related to the cost of boat tickets, O'Connell said in the report that he found no evidence such a relationship existed. Instead, he suggested that "the directors have been able to combine and balance economic and political considerations in a way no template or formula could," and applauded them for delivering "affordable, year-round passenger, freight and vehicle transportation," which someone later interpreted to mean that apparently O'Connell got $10,000 to tell us the board is really good at winging it.

Fuel purchases (fuel costs dropped slightly since the agreement was made, so we are trying to re-negotiate). Financial details are now available on the website.

Other cost-saving measures under review include changes to carpet cleaning, boat maintenance, and other services. CBITD eliminated water cooler service because it became too expensive. We now ensure that the vending machines carry bottled water (the water fountain in the terminal will remain open). We also investigated reducing the number of ferry trips, but that idea has been tabled for the time being.

Several islanders have asked about the $2,000 credit card fee, which is a cost of doing business that has been steadily rising since credit card service was implemented several years ago as more and more passengers use the convenience of credit cards for purchasing their tickets. By state and federal law, the CBITD cannot discourage people from using credit cards by charging a fee or setting minimum charge amounts, but we can encourage them to use cash, and are looking into establishing cash discounts, and of installing our own ATM in order to lower the credit card fees, as well as to generate some additional income.

The board's adoption of a 50 cent-per-ticket fuel surcharge in April also required that an independent cost analysis be conducted, which was done by Jim O'Connell of Gillespie O'Connell Associates. The results were presented at the monthly Rate Structure Committee meeting on Sept. 13.

His 20-page Rate Structure Analysis (available on-line) reports that the District's $3.1 million operating expense is offset by a combination of revenues from tickets sales and other sources that generates the ferry line to break even. Sales of passenger tickets account for $2 million, while revenue from vehicles, tour boats per year, and the US Postal Service total $1.34 million. Government subsidies and grants total $711,073. Bay Mist charters, cruises and tours total $659,297, and miscellaneous income adds another $65,965.

Cutting the 1981 Charter from the Maine State Legislature and rulings from the State's Public Utilities Commission, which required the CBITD to cross-subsidize travel to and from the islands, the report found ticket prices "reasonably equitable". It also recommended another review of freight and vehicles prices, which will be addressed in the future. The consulting firm is expected to provide a "template" for compiling specific boat and ferry trip costs in the future.

Another project designed to help offset costs is the Intermodal Transportation & Welcome Center which includes an expanded parking facility. The project has been proposed by a special committee of CBITD board members Chris Hoppin, Frank Peretti, and Steve Macias, along with the general manager, Catherine Debo. The District is seeking outside funds for the project, which it believes would generate more income and provide additional parking spaces at the ferry terminal, offsetting both ticket prices and parking costs.

InterMed closes the gap to health care electronically

BY KEVIN ATTRA
BASED ON A PRESS RELEASE PROVIDED BY ANGELA SMITH

Three decades ago, a small group of Peaks Island residents banded together to establish the Peaks Island Health Center. Residents and visitors alike have benefited greatly and, perhaps, the best is yet to come. In February, the physician-
in-training...
Community Letters

Community Garden Proposal

Pet Mike Murray's recommendation I've met with the Pea k Island Council with a formal proposal for the establishment of a community garden on Peaks Island, hoping to eventually invite adults to the tending, very and seemingly similar in John Park.

As many islanders have little or no arable land, too much shade and no soil, thi s notion has meet overwhelming enthusiasm as well as inspired reflections of many plots that have fallen that or lost stream. With the council's endorsement, and possi bly a financial nod from the city (capital improvement project), the initiative would have the proper fuel to succeed.

The mission inspires to create a protected common ground for island adults. My vision includes a dedicated plot for children, a bulletin board for sharing events and ideas and hopefully regular "potluck" picnics to enjoy our harvests. Naturally, funding is a very t ailing element. Some money would provide the necessary fencing, hardware and soil, and most importantly, the water well.

Armed with a budget of $25 for the tape, any survey revealed that a 16,000 sq ft garden could provide about 40 sites. Dates for the garden could be distributed by lottery and rotated each year. I've established an email avenue to publicize on bulletin boards, the Star and the local newsletter. A community garden is a small design team of architects, carpenters and landscapers with whom we will enjoy a gentle and efective enhancement, ultimately becoming a welcoming community space.

Thank you for your timely interest and attention to this project. Contact Justin at: Peaks Island Community Garden@gmail.com.

Annual flu shots scheduled for Peaks and Cliff Island residents

Hello, My name is Ruby Spicer, and I'm coordinating the City of Portland's annual series of eight flu prevention clinics. For more information, please visit the website: Peaks Island Community Center.

I would like to invite you to our flu prevention clinics. The annual flu shots are scheduled for October 29, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Peaks Island Community Center, and November 9, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Cliff Island Community Center. (Information is also available at the City's Flu Clinic Hotline: 871-9243)

Please remember that for the flu vaccine to be effective, it is important that people get vaccinated. The flu vaccine provides protection against the influenza viruses, which are the major causes of illness and hospitalization.
YOGA FOR LIFE
A yogic perspective on health and simple living
BY REBECCA JOHANNA STEPHANS

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

Boat
Begin lying face down on your yoga mat with your arms resting palms down a little distance from your torso. Take a few slow abdominal breaths to ground yourself and gently stretch out your lower back. Elevate your body by picking up one leg at a time, stretching it long behind you and putting it back down. Press your pubic bone gently towards the floor. This action will tilt your pelvis to protect your low back, engage the gluteal muscles, and inwardly rotate your hips (you will feel your heels moving towards each other). Slowly lift your shoulders, arms and legs away from the floor. You may want to lift and lower several times before holding the posture. Do not hyper-extend your neck. Hold the posture for 5 full breaths and then rest. For strength building, repeat several times and work up to longer holding. Rest in child pose.

Upward Facing Boat
Sit up tall with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Tack your hands behind your thighs just above your knees. Lean back a little bit, keeping your spine straight. Lift up one foot at a time, bringing your lower leg parallel to the floor and establish your balance. For more challenge, release your arms and stretch them out beside your legs. For even more challenge, straighten out your legs. Hold the posture for 5 full breaths and then rest. For strength building, repeat several times and work up to longer holding.

Kneeling Stick
Begin in table pose on your hands and knees. Spread your fingers out wide and make sure your weight is well distributed through your whole hand, and not heavy in your wrists. Gently engage your abdominal muscles to support your back. Lift your right knee and pull it in toward your belly. It is okay if your back rounds a little. Hold for several breaths. Straighten your leg back behind you parallel to the floor. Make sure you don't rotate your hip. Hold for several breaths. For more challenge, lift your left arm and stretch it out in front of you. Repeat both movements on the other leg. Rest in child pose.

Goddess
Stand with your feet comfortably wide. Bend both knees while externally rotating your hips so that your knees track over your ankles. Do not let your knees collapse inward. Actively lift your lower belly and lengthen your tailbone toward the floor to support your low back and prevent an exaggerated lumbar curve. Bend both elbows with your fingertips pointing toward the ceiling and your palms facing your ears. Gently draw your shoulder blades toward your spine to engage your middle back and open your heart. Keep your spine upright so your shoulders stay aligned over your hips, not leaning forward. Hold the posture for five full breaths and then rest. For strength building, repeat several times and work up to longer holding.

Pause:
To complete your practice, curl up in child pose and rest once more. Close you eyes, breath slowly and feel the effects of your movements. Give thanks for your practice and ask that it enhance your well-being.
For the love of Peaks!

FRAN HOUSTON: Well someone else would have.

AR: So, it was just on impulsive.

FH: A strong one.

AR: Yes, and we found (we were both working in town) but we just loved living here. We lived there for 10 years before we found this place, I mean that this house wasn't here.

FH: So it was sand?

AR: Well, no, there was a house, and it still7houses the studio. John and I came over here with compasses and so on. We spent about two hours wanting to get situated so we get all the right tight lines and everything. Oh, the old house was perfectly sited, we finally found out, so we just kept it and added on, and that's where Vic has his studio now. It worked out very well for us. And there were no, I mean they [prior owners] had lived here a long time. And in fact, we found something in our backyard. A friend of mine came to visit on her horse, backed up to the back steps (of course, we don't really have much of a backyard, it's all out here) and all of sudden one leg of the horse went down into the earth, and I thought, oh my god, her horse's leg is gonna be broken, you know, in my backyard. Anyway, the horse got out and was ok, but then we could see something down in there, so we dug it up and it was full of old cans, storage space for home canned things, jars and jars.

... We were just in the process of building onto the old house, and one of the carpenters who was helping us said he really would like to have some of the jars. I thought, Oh what am I going to do with these? Wash them and sterilize them? There were 25 or more, so he took them all and what he did was to do what I would have had to do, throw the stuff out you didn't know how long it had been there, or anything about it and then sterilize them. Well anyway, once we saw this piece [of land] and the view, I mean we were...

FH: In love?

AR: Yes. We liked living in the other older house, but it really didn't have a view and was only a block from the cliff. That's where it was, over in that area. So we took the Shelter Institute course on how to build a house, they'd just started, and we took, I think, the first course they gave. It was in Brunswick and they really didn't have a place like they do now where you'd be able to do everything. They just had a room that they rented. We drove over 20 Monday nights. We had to pick up something for dinner, we were both working, and drive over and it was from seven to ten, I think, then we...

FH: Would catch the last boat.

AR: Well, sometimes we wouldn't, we had friends in town that we'd move into the house, and go to sleep, and leave before they got up. [Laughter] I tried to make them use it and so it didn't look too much a fright.

Have you lived on Peaks for a long time? Do you have a Peaks Island story to tell of memories from childhood or that illustrates why you love living here? Please email or call Fran Houston. She has already heard some great stories and she wants to hear yours. fran_houston@btotmail.com, or call 766.2286.
Jewels of Peaks Island

BY JERRY GARMAN

Peaks Island changes when summer ends and the people from away leave the island. There are fewer cars, people, bikes, pets and trash. There is also less sea glass. Over 4,000 exploring the island. There are fewer cars, people, beachcombers have made a large dent in this natural resource. One would think that there would be a limitless supply of this attractive collectible; as long as the ocean waves sweep ashore, the glass should follow. Traditionally, this supply was created by shipwrecks of vessels carrying pottery, china, jars, ceramics or bottles which were broken, and "each fragment rolled on a beach with the everyday lottery of tides, currents and chance."

Scientific analysis and historical records have made identification of these sea jewels possible. Apothecary bottles dating back to 1676, pieces of Fiesta ware, from 1943 to 1953. Coca Cola bottles were Georg Green, and amber Clorex bottles were last used in 1962. An old sarsaparilla bottle would probably have been manufactured in Belfast, Maine, and a piece from a clay pipe can date to 1680.

These sea-blushed artifacts are judged based on their overall smoothness, frostiness of surface, shape, size, and color (rarity, orange, red, yellow, cobalt blue, turquoise and black). With the help of a hammer and wooden box I attempted to establish the current inventory of island glass. First I conducted some standardized tests. I found that a broken wine bottle yielded 100 shards of glass, a beer or soda bottle only 50. A pocketful of sea glass will contain 30 pieces, while a small sand bag can have 150.

My personal collection rests quietly in pastel-colored lobster bait bags hung like largefruits on an antique wrought-iron coat rack, making it the only sea glass tree in the state, but I have never been in any island cottage that did not have at least an ashtray, mason jar or lamp full of sea glass. So I figure that 900 cottages times 150 pieces of sea glass each equals 142,500 pieces in inventory, or the equivalent of some 1,425 wine bottles. (I am positive that island consumption exceeds 1½ bottles per cottage). To my knowledge there has been no major shipwreck in the last 100 to 125 years. Several lobster boats, sailboats, and power boats have either gone aground or sunk, but none were later washed up on our much less sea glass potential. The only possible source could have been Fort McKinley on Great Diamond island, site of bottle discharge from the old Officers Club (closed in the late 1940s) This glass would have to find its way out of the cove and travel one-half to two miles on an incoming tide to reach Peaks western beaches.

What then in the present source of our glass, and how can we guarantee its presence? I must confess that I have seeded some of my broken wine bottles back into the sea at low tide (the glass has disappeared after only 10 tides). It is clear that an organized effort must be put in place which would guarantee a supply and perpetuate this wonderful adventure.

First, I propose a "Tithe for Tides" commitment: each cottage would annually return 30 percent of their inventory back to the sea at dead low tide. Second, we should create a "Sea Glass Trust Fund," which would acquire the best colored, used bottles back from Hannagan's store, and the most colorful of the filled wine bottles and soda bottles currently available so they could all be broken up and re-seeded into the sea. Note: filled bottles would be emptied at each scheduled board meeting before glass processing begins. The rapid conversion of wine bottles to bag-in-a-box, plastic and tetrapak give these programs a new urgency.

If we all join in this process, which I call Pleasure Recycling, future generations will always be guaranteed the opportunity to discover and own some Peaks Island jewels. What other island activity offers fresh air, sunshine and exercise with a reward? Remember a happy sea-glasser is a happy islander.
Kindness of strangers

Below: The granite I chose for the memorial is Canadian black granite, which I picked up in Barre, Vermont and had a section removed to create the setting area. It is one of the hardest stones to carve (my mentor recently said, "You can't carve that stone like you did." Good thing she didn't tell me that before I started). August 2: To build a footing for the monument, we carried 80 lb. bags of concrete to the site, rolled a mixer down, got hoses hooked up and built a form (below left) to hold the concrete. Then we drilled rebar into the hole. During the pour we added more rebar when the concrete was half-way up. This foundation will never have drying stresses and thawing because it's tied into the ledge.

This is how we think: first we pile up the stone, then we try to envision how it would look with part of the stone removed; then we sit down and see how it feels. Gary Havensmich (above) my granite guru, tried out the potential - it would look with part of the stone removed; then we try to envision how it would look. (Below left) to hold the concrete. Then we sat down and see how it feels. Gary Havensmich (above) my granite guru, tried out the potential.

This is how we think: first we pile up the stone, then we try to envision how it would look with part of the stone removed; then we sit down and see how it feels. Gary Havensmich (above) my granite guru, tried out the potential.

The Haergars (above) supervised and let me do this. After all, I would lose the time it would take to let me do this? After all, I would lose the time it would take. As everyone said, what did I have to lose? Well, I would lose the time it took to research the records to find the owners. I would lose the cost of so many class stamps. But what were the chances that anyone would agree to let me do this? After all, I would be writing to complete strangers who would never have known my dad, my family, nor me. I concluded the letter this way: I would like to create the bench from a large granite boulder. A section of the stone will be removed to create a seat and an image inscribed. The stone will then be placed in such a way to blend into the landscape. (Please see the attached ROUGH sketch for an idea of the finished piece.) I mailed the letters on the Yartzeit (the anniversary of his death according to the Jewish calendar) and I waited. I also wrote a proposal to create a memorial bench for placement on Peaks Island, which was a slightly problematic spot. It seemed as if there would never be a place for a permanent marker.

But in many conversations with friends, I was encouraged to contact people who owned property near Evergreen Beach and on Pumpkin Knob. As everyone said, what did I have to lose? Well, I would lose the time it took to research the records to find the owners. I would lose the cost of so many class stamps. But what were the chances that anyone would agree to let me do this? After all, I would be writing to complete strangers who would never have known my dad, my family, nor me. I concluded the letter this way: I would like to create the bench from a large granite boulder. A section of the stone will be removed to create a seat and an image inscribed. The stone will then be placed in such a way to blend into the landscape. (Please see the attached ROUGH sketch for an idea of the finished piece.) I mailed the letters on the Yartzeit (the anniversary of his death according to the Jewish calendar) and I waited. I also wrote a proposal to create a memorial bench for placement on Peaks Island, which was a slightly problematic spot. It seemed as if there would never be a place for a permanent marker.

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hips in the fall and maple syrup in the winter.

We e-mailed. Their Peaks Island home overlooks Pumpkin Knob, they wrote. In March, I visited the property and explored it in snow up to my waist. In further e-mails I learned that they were supporters of the arts, who volunteered at their local thrift shop, and gave their time and energy to both their winter and summer communities. We finally met.

If I mentioned the name, Haeger, to anyone on the island, people invariably describe them as generous. And they were generous with their trust in me. In my e-mails I learned that my waist. In further e-mails I learned that they were generous with their trust in me. In my e-mails I learned that my company was always doing laundry and flipping up the journey with visits with other sculpting friends. They convinced me that I needed a compressor. Renting one proved to be unfeasible, but one day I was doing laundry and flipping through an Uncle Henry's, and there was a used one for sale in Lewiston—just the exact size that I needed. I bought one.

Then the rain began. I erected a tent over the workshop, but it didn't keep the rain from accumulating around my feet, nor did it stop my toils from rusting up, almost overnight. The rain continued daily, as if Peaks Island had moved to the Caribbean, and standing in a sea of mud one day I realized I should have brought my hip boots. But we had wonderful rainbows. A month passed before I could start, and I thought, 'Now it's time to get an artist.'

I found Chris and John Kang who dug the hole for the foundation. They had been in less than two feet, which was a blessing because otherwise they would've had to dig it four feet deep. I learned some of the difficult things about life on an island. For instance, I lost a few days of work time because my tools had to be shipped to Vermont for sharpening and I had to pay for them. I broke my godt tell, so when I express mailed a broken air-hammer from the island to a shop in Barre for repair, I found out the hard way that express mail doesn't even go to Portland until 5:45 p.m., and then it spends the night in a processing center. I could have just driven it there myself, it's only four hours away.

To use the compressor outside, I needed to have a Gulf outlet installed and to purchase special extension cords. I had to construct work benches and lay down hoses. I had to order my plastic rafters. I needed a front end loader to dump my trash. I needed a front end loader to move my trash. I needed a front end loader to move my trash.

The trees were now leaffing out. I worked in a parking area near the site, from which I could see the water. Each day, I worked to the sounds of lobster boats, dog barking, busy bells. Every day was a gift. The imagery on the piece evolved from the environment in which I worked. I only fielded one noise complaint—my choice of music, not the compressor, done.

The trees filled in. In two years from the receipt of the letter, I dedicated the j凭着 plant garden and granite benches to the memory of my father. The monument bore no resemblance to the original design. This place had altered my artistic vision the people of Peaks Island altered my sense of being an outsider. On the day of the installation, a small group of supporters and curious onlookers came to watch the proceedings and applaud. A monument was installed. Each person took a turn sitting on the bench and having their photo taken. All who had begun as strangers I now counted as friends.

A study was done to explore people's willingness to help someone during a chance encounter on a city street. The results varied considerably around the world, but indicated that low population density was the best predictor of helpfulness. From the moment someone offered a ride from the ferry as I struggled with my gear to the day we installed the bench at the site, I depended on

Robert Levine, one of the advantages of testing so many places is that we could see how other social, economic and environmental indicators correlated with our experimental results. Art and away the best predictor we found, was population density. This parameter was more closely tied to the helpfulness of a city that were the crime rate, the pace of life, the prevailing economic conditions or environmental pressure—say, noise or air pollution. We could readily make a case that, overall, people in more crowded cities were much less likely to pick up the phone to help. New York was Exhibit A.

This finding is easy enough to understand. Crowding brings out the worst in us. Urban critics have demonstrated that squeezing too many people into too small a space leads to alienation, anonymity and social isolation. Ultimately, people feel less responsible for their behavior toward others—especially strangers. Premack had shown how city dwellers are more likely to do one another harm. Our study shows that they are also less likely to do one another good and that this apathy increases with the degree of crowding.

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ACROSS
1- Iron hook with a handle
5- Low plant with many branches
9- Residence
14- Projecting columns at end of wall
15- Fasten, at sea
16- Gradual
17- Attack a fly
18- Premium
19- Excel
20- Exceptional, sensitive
23- Large, or pitcher
24- Cropped position
25- Negotiating parts
28- Books of maps
31- Madrid Mrs.
32- More robust
36- Brazilian popular music
37- Large jug of pitcher
38- Retire
42- Principal
43- Corvet
44- Small branch
45- Foul
46- Misgovern
47- Become firm
50- Dispenser candy
51- Sisters
52- Pose
53- Entreaty
54- Tolled
55- Cut
56- Edible corn
57- Hip bones
58- Cereal grain
59- Resting place
60- Before

DOWN
1- Deep wound
2- With skill
3- Failure
4- Not as many
5- Hunting dog
6- Hill
7- Ollie's partner
8- Panama and bowler
9- Barbed-wire barricade
10- Contradict
11- Norwegian king
12- Go out with
13- Storm center
14- Give guns again
15- Pertaining to the small intestine
16- Colic position
17- Pertaining to the kidneys
18- Hurricane tiki
19- Spanish hero
20- Grant portrait
21- Travel on snow
22- Moves through water
23- Theatrical entertainment
24- Give it
25- Great length of time
26- Greek vowel
27- Uninsane
28- Pertain to punishment
29- Post
30- Entreaty
31- Told
32- Cut
33- Give it!
34- Greek vowel
35- Edible corn
36- Hip bones
37- Cereal grain
38- Resting place
39- Before
40- FedEx rival
41- Sports area
42- Interfere
43- Finland hero
44- Greek vowel
45- Great length of time
46- Greek vowel
47- Uninsane
48- Pertain to punishment
49- Post
50- Entreaty
51- Told
52- Cut
53- Give it!
54- Greek vowel
55- Edible corn
56- Hip bones
57- Cereal grain
58- Resting place
59- Before
60- Before

ISLAND TIMES
This Month's Contributors

Thanks to the following people who volunteered their time and talent to produce this issue: Mike Richards, Justin Palmer, Chris Hoppin, Fran Houston, Art Astarita, Rebecca Stephans, Jamie Hogan, Jerry Garman, Cynthia Mollus, Jo Israelson, Craig Davis, and Mary Lou Wendell. Special thanks go to Jack Shallow for production software.

The Island Times is on-line, thanks mostly to the work of Pat Kelly. Please check us out at www.islandtimes.org.

aisle to isle

Tuesdays - shop for groceries before 11:30am and they will be delivered by Casco Bay Lines to Peaks Island that afternoon.

For more information inquire at Forest Ave. Hannaford or call 761-5965. Normal Don't Fee Applies.
October 2008

Star Gazing

BY MIKE RICHARDS

October is the month for ghosts and goblins, as the sun slants low over the gray horizon, and darkness bites a bigger chunk from every passing day.

In the mid-19th century after a water-fungus spread from Mexico across the Atlantic to Europe, a potato blight struck, hitting Ireland the hardest because so many mouths depended on it. The ensuing famine forced a million Irish to emigrate to America, and in their bags, they brought along the ancient Celtic custom of Halloween.

The holiday when spirits walk among the living and wear costumes to confuse the ghouls, carrying gard- lamp to light the leaf-strewn pathways and fraying protection from mischief folk candy, corn balls and other treats. The Celts set the date of the festival the full moon, that bright yellow star is Capella, the hem of his coat. At his feet, clustered closely together near the horizon, are the seven sister stars of Pleiades, and just to north, that bright yellow star is Capella, the alpha star in Auriga, the Charioteer.

The Calendar:

Oct. 1 - NASA’s 50th birthday. Thanks for the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs and for the Space Shuttle fleet. The frosting on the cake is a thin crescent Moon with Venus just above it at 7 p.m. dawn-front.

Oct. 5 - The Moon’s at apogee tonight, 25,000 miles further away than it will be in a fortnight.

Oct. 6 - A distant waxing gibbous Moon sits just below and right of Jupiter tonight. The next week is best for Moon-watching, as the shadows on the surface bring out the topographical oddities of our closest celestial neighbor.

Oct. 7 - First-quarter Moon is highest at sunset, now at 6:13 p.m. Titles are near this morning, with barely 5.2 feet between high at 5:25 a.m. and low at 11:15 a.m., but in two weeks, when the Moon comes closer and gets full, they’ll more than double in size.

Oct. 14 - Full “Hunter’s” Moon sets at 6:38 a.m. and rises again at 5:32 p.m. If the eastern horizon is clear enough, these folks on the 6:15 boat home to Peaks tonight can watch it climb slowly out of the ocean.

Oct. 15 & 18 - Weather permitting, this may be the best weekend to land boats, at the tide’s high at 2:03 p.m. Saturday and 2:58 p.m. Sunday, though by 6 p.m. the sun has set.

Oct. 21 - Last-quarter Moon is highest at sunrise, now at 7:02 a.m. The Orionid meteor shower peaks tonight. Best viewing is in the wee hours of the morning, on the backshore looking south between Orion and Gemini.

Oct. 25 - Venus is just a couple fingers apart from Antares, the red giant star that is heart of Scorpio.

Oct. 28 - New Moon means no moonlight to wash away the contrast, so the Milky Way should really stand out as it stretches across the night sky.

Oct. 31 - At sunset, another thin crescent Moon is bracketed by Antares below and Venus above. Sun sets at 5:33 p.m., later than we’re used to for Halloween, since Daylight Saving Time was extended, but it’s Friday — no school tomorrow!
Free Ride: Tales of the Volunteer Taxi

BY JAMIE HOGAN

We came, huffing up Welch Street with our suitcases, and paused at the intersection of Welch and Island Avenue. When we’d reserved our summer cottage for a week on Peaks Island, we were told we didn’t need to bring a car, there’s a taxi, but only minibuses, spunkier cars, and decorated golf carts passed by us. So we hunched uncertainly down Island Avenue until a gregarious lady named Blanche happened by, and knew just where our cottage was. Welcome to Peaks Island, 1992.

Fast forward through 10 years of occasional van rides with the Town Taxi drivers, Lloyd Hamilton, Dot Flynn, Pat Murdoch, and Kathy Hannon, and there I am, discovering, for the first time, that there is a volunteer taxi on the island. Really, Dot, I didn’t just call up these strangers and bother them for a ride to the boat? Yes.

Unlike other Casco Bay islands that merge tours, freight, and transportation into a single service, Peaks Island keeps them separate. Sometimes after the Town Taxi stopped running on Peaks, the City called Bill Hall, who was Peaks Island Council president, who started the volunteer taxi system. Judge Carl Irnmah, who has been co-coordinator of the taxi with Nancy Hall, has never taken the taxi herself, but she recalls that her mother used to take one, an old VW box. “She was always anxious to get on early, because it would fill up. This was back in the day when you bought a return ticket to Portland from a bread truck downtown.”

Eleanor Moore, a recent volunteer driver, said, “The taxi isn’t for people who can’t get around. It’s for people like me.” She resisted doing it at first, being unsure of how to handle the problem of getting the fare. She’s been on the list of drivers for four months, she’s had only two riders.

For my husband and I, volunteering one day a month seemed like an easy commitment to make, and our experience with drivers never fail to make the day memorable. Diana Moshay, driving for three years, echoed this sense of connection. “We all move in our own routines. This vehicle of vehicles provides a momentary connection to our community that is quite amazing,” she said. “It’s a good way to get to know people you might not otherwise meet.”

By instance, when she was called upon to drive an elderly couple she discovered that the husband’s daughter was her first cousin at Smith College. On another trip, she picked up a woman at Hingham who was nursing an arm injury and could not walk home with her groceries. They shared a stern but honest conversation about the up-coming election that spurred Diana into political action since she got home.

Harris Kennedy has been driving the volunteer taxi for about a year. He enjoys volunteer work and says, “I feel less guilty driving a small taxi than I do the back seat.” He, too, enjoys meeting both the Islanders and the folks from away. With other drivers like Deb Kendell, who laments about the future viability of the volunteer taxi service.

Even Mr. Braun has been driving for six years. On a recent September Monday, he picked up a local couple for a ride to the ferry, and asked them what they thought about the taxi-service. “I wish we could pay you,” the husband replied. His wife pointed out that no payment can be taken due to legal and liability issues. Marty suggested that, since they already likely volunteered plenty, in the past, “we’ve just paying you back.”

At the dock, she slipped him a hug of her appreciation.

Betty Sterling is a regular passenger of the volunteer taxi service. “I don’t know what I would do without it,” she said. “I can’t go out of my house alone. It’s a great feeling getting down my front steps. I’m handicapped. The driver helps me into the car and takes me right down onto the dock. The police allow that for somebody like me. And then the deck hands bring along a wheelchair and wheel me onto the boat. I wouldn’t live anywhere else. This is the best place on earth!”

Still, the responsibilities of transporting passengers, sometimes fragile ones, can be big. Diana believes a more creative solution would be found, perhaps involving a municipal subsidy that reimburses drivers for gas.

Rose Rosel realized the irony of how understated the system is when her husband was unable to drive her to the boat one day. It never occurred to her to use the taxi until he insisted.

With the departure of the Roeds from the island this fall, along with the other summer volunteers, Cesia is doubtful about the future viability of the volunteer taxi. “It’s the only City did something,” she said.

In the meantime, you still get a free ride. Check the Volunteer task force numbers. Better yet, volunteer to drive or be a volunteer coordinator by calling Nancy Hall at 768-2214. As she says, “It’s about neighbors helping neighbors. If you can’t bother a neighbor, then don’t bother to live here.”

Let’s keep an experienced business voice in Augusta!

Maine is a challenging place to run a business and create new good paying jobs.
I’ve lived and worked in Maine my entire life and owned and operated my own company, for the service business because you can’t pay. They think they’re imposing.” Then she finally realized that Celia Catewell often bought back a few oranges to give to the driver, for her trips to town.

In fact, volunteer coordinator, Nancy Hall, who is also a driver, has never taken the taxi herself, but she recalls that her mother used to take one, an old VW box. “She was always anxious to get on early, because it would fill up. This was back in the day when you bought a return ticket to Portland from a bread truck downtown.”

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Still, the responsibilities of transporting passengers, sometimes fragile ones, can be big. Diana believes a more creative solution would be found, perhaps involving a municipal subsidy that reimburses drivers for gas.

Rose Rosel realized the irony of how understated the system is when her husband was unable to drive her to the boat one day. It never occurred to her to use the taxi until he insisted.

With the departure of the Roeds from the island this fall, along with the other summer volunteers, Cesia is doubtful about the future viability of the volunteer taxi. “It’s the only City did something,” she said.

In the meantime, you still get a free ride. Check the Volunteer task force numbers. Better yet, volunteer to drive or be a volunteer coordinator by calling Nancy Hall at 768-2214. As she says, “It’s about neighbors helping neighbors. If you can’t bother a neighbor, then don’t bother to live here.”

Let’s keep an experienced business voice in Augusta!

Maine is a challenging place to run a business and create new good paying jobs.
I’ve lived and worked in Maine my entire life and owned and operated my own company, for the service business because you can’t pay. They think they’re imposing.” Then she finally realized that Celia Catewell often bought back a few oranges to give to the driver, for her trips to town.

In fact, volunteer coordinator, Nancy Hall, who is also a driver, has never taken the taxi herself, but she recalls that her mother used to take one, an old VW box. “She was always anxious to get on early, because it would fill up. This was back in the day when you bought a return ticket to Portland from a bread truck downtown.”

Eleanor Moore, a recent volunteer driver, said, “The taxi isn’t for people who can’t get around. It’s for people like me.” She resisted doing it at first, being unsure of how to handle the problem of getting the fare. She’s been on the list of drivers for four months, she’s had only two riders.

For my husband and I, volunteering one day a month seemed like an easy commitment to make, and our experience with drivers never fail to make the day memorable. Diana Moshay, driving for three years, echoed this sense of connection. “We all move in our own routines. This vehicle of vehicles provides a momentary connection to our community that is quite amazing,” she said. “It’s a good way to get to know people you might not otherwise meet.”

By instance, when she was called upon to drive an elderly couple she discovered that the husband’s daughter was her first cousin at Smith College. On another trip, she picked up a woman at Hingham who was nursing an arm injury and could not walk home with her groceries. They shared a stern but honest conversation about the up-coming election that spurred Diana into political action since she got home.

Harris Kennedy has been driving the volunteer taxi for about a year. He enjoys volunteer work and says, “I feel less guilty driving a small taxi than I do the back seat.” He, too, enjoys meeting both the Islanders and the folks from away. With other drivers like Deb Kendell, who laments about the future viability of the volunteer taxi service.

Even Mr. Braun has been driving for six years. On a recent September Monday, he picked up a local couple for a ride to the ferry, and asked them what they thought about the taxi-service. “I wish we could pay you,” the husband replied. His wife pointed out that no payment can be taken due to legal and liability issues. Marty suggested that, since they already likely volunteered plenty, in the past, “we’ve just paying you back.”

At the dock, she slipped him a hug of her appreciation.

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What happens to the rain that falls on the plains?

BY ART ASTARITA

Does it seem to have been one of the rainiest summers in memory? Your feelings are correct. Total rainfall for the year, from January through August, is 37.24 inches, well above the normal of 28.01 inches. So far, this year ranks ninth as the wettest period on record.

The past month of August, in fact, was the seventh wettest year on record with 6.28 inches, more than twice the normal rainfall of 3.05 inches. Of course, all local weather gurus have more locally accurate data from the Portland Jetport than these figures, which came from weather stations in Bangor and beyond.

With all the precipitation this year, some of the water levels in our lakes and aquifers around the state are at or near the highest on record. According to the Maine Geological Survey, Maine receives an average annual rainfall of 42 inches (24 trillion gallons), of which 50 percent goes directly to runoff, another 35 percent evaporates back into the atmosphere, and the remaining 15 percent ends up as groundwater.

This means that about 65 percent of our precipitation either flows through fractures in bedrock and emerges at a discharge area, or flows through the soil to rivers, wetlands and the ocean. Think about all the rainfall that runs down the street into storm water drains. The rain cleans the streets of dirt, oil, grease, gasoline, brake and power steering fluid and carries it all to the ocean. Let's be cognizant of this in order to correct any leakages from our automobiles, and be wise in our use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Typically, groundwater discharge areas surround our islands, and are usually associated with abrupt topographic changes near the coastline; however, this is not an exclusive statement. As a rule, water in a loaded aquifer will leak out from cracks in the bedrock where it comes in contact with a less resistance surface, such as a sink where the rock formation actually emerges from the ground and forms a fresh water spring. Rock formations in the Casco Bay area fracture in three dominate patterns: a vertical fracture trending north-northeast, another vertical fracture trending east-southeast and a third nearly horizontal fracture that can intersect the other two and divert any water flowing through them.

The "horizontal" fractures are the ones that can cause water basements. Rain, for instance, can cause wet basements in houses, even houses on high elevations, if the fracture structure is in proximity to the house, the more water pressure (or hydraulic head) there will be. This is good for recharging private wells, however, it can also push a lot of water through those lateral fractures. It could also create a high volume of surface water run-off during rain storms, which can cause erosion damage among other problems.

How can you prevent groundwater or surface water damage in your home? The obvious answer is to keep it away from the house, and the way you accomplish that depends upon many variables, paramount of which is the depth of the water table. A high water table will limit the amount of pitch you can give to any drainage system; therefore, will also limit the distance you can channel water away from the house.

It's possible that when trying to solve a problem like this, a form of Newton's Third Law of Motion may apply: for every problem solved, there is an equal and opposite problem created, like putting up gutters to keep water out of your basement only to end up causing a flood somewhere else. Once you understand the slope, soil and rock conditions in your area, some ideas to correct basement water or surface ponding issues could include:

1. Sealing basement walls.
2. Installing interior and exterior basement drainage pipe to direct the water away from the house.
3. Constructing an upslope swale to channel water away from the house.
4. Caching roof runoff with a gutter or ground drain and directing it through a pipe away from the house.
5. Making sure the ground slopes away from your basement foundation.
6. Constructing catch basins to intercept surface water and allow extra time for infiltration.
7. Making sure windows, doors and roofs are in good repair.

Fighting Mother Nature is fruitless. Understand the "lay of the land", the grade or slope, and try to visualize the natural flow paths and work with them. Get out in a rainstorm to actually see where the water goes. The sustainable solutions should then be evident.

Arthur Astarita is a geologist and Water Resource Specialist with RCAP Solutions, Inc.
Art Sightings

STORY & PHOTOS BY JAMIE MCGON

AT THE MECA

The current show at Maine College of Art's ICA Gallery, Ruminant, is the first of MECA's Faculty Selects series, bravely partnering with the tradition of unjuried all-faculty shows. Two MECA professors, Adrienne Herman and Long-Wen Tsai, chose a personal peer from elsewhere to join them, Yoonmi Nam and Yumi Janairo Roth. Their works collectively explore familiar subjects with new meanings. All of the artists in this exhibit ask us to ponder what is right before our eyes, the obvious, mundane things, and then in their hands, they make it new. Long-Wen Tsai has made large-format photographs of water puddles on rooftops to show us the surprising beauty of reflected sky and architecture. Adrienne Herman has arranged people's, pets and cars on a large wall, some too high to read, but all handwritten compulsions to accomplish something utterly mundane - "call Bill, "buy snow," "sweep out the garage" - and made them a narrative mural of good intentions. On another wall, she greatly enlarged some individual facts, and turned the ephemeral act of setting goals into a monument. Yumi Janairo Roth has fashioned mandane, utilitarian objects into ornamental sculptures, such as the Disco Barrie, a sawhorse covered with small faceted mirror tiles. It was my favorite - if only I'd had one in the 80s! I was most intrigued by Yoonmi Nam's sumi ink drawings on mulberry paper, images of rubble and collapsed buildings, done with breathtaking control. The lines hung in white space, as much about what was left as what was put in. She was born in Seoul in the Korean War era, and learned to draw by copying Western art.

At that time "all things Western were good", but after earning degrees in printmaking, she taught herself to paint based on centuries-old Chinese techniques found in an ancient text. In time her own style emerged based on the Chinese tradition. She currently lives and teaches at the University of Kansas.

In the current economy, it's too high to read, but all printed and written all their clothes and what-not, from Cormac bought the small general store Pearls Seaside Market and Cafe, and people for groceries, because that's the day Hannaford's delivers. For instance, when she saw the for-sale sign, called her husband, who laughed and said "let's go for it," put the house on the market, quit their teaching jobs, and moved here, all within a couple of maybe, Steve never saw the place until they moved in. "We knew it was a risk," she said, "but we only live once."

In the current economy, it was a very big risk, especially trying to sell a house in one place while trying to buy in another, but the Cormans' act of inspiration has already paid off in one way. Their home in Cape Charle's area just was located next to a small church that wanted to expand, and the ministry bought it in mid-September. The Cormans are currently undergoing the process of having to come to the island without a solid housing arrangement, jobless, to start a business at the worst time of year in one of the worst economic crises in history. Who needs an apothecary when you get pearls without it? Pearls Seaside Market and Cafe is open Monday and Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Closed Sunday, and on Thursday she goes into Portland for groceries, because that's the day Hannaford's delivers.

What's New

I've noticed a thread running through Suzanne Parrott's new work, opening Oct. 9 at the Gem Gallery, when Ronda Dale will provide music against a backdrop of fiber art based on Parrott's earlier paintings. She sketches the designs of figures - some nude, some falling, diving, or swimming - does and boils the wool, and sews unique textured garments and rugs, bringing all senses into the act. Some sketches on paper become paper garments and bags. An artist's reception will be held Oct. 10 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

I discovered a fairly unique art store the other day while I was killing time between boats in Portland. It's called Eli Planth at 253 Congress Street, a sunny and spacy studio that features "evidence of a handmade world," including a collection of embroidered hang bags, needle books, magnets, magnets, candles, and so-called "compost" art. I walked in on the opening day, was drawn to a display of silkscreen posters by local artists around New England, and was delighted to discover that when you buy something else, you can pick up a free felt bag, silkscreened on the premises with the artists' names. I left with the warm feeling that art is everywhere, in the crafting of our objects, our delights, our world.

Peg's Pots, etc.

CERAMICS GIFTS PARTIES

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PEG ASTARITA www.pegspottery.com

Lists by Adrienne Herman and Disco Barriers by Yumi Janairo Roth at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Maine College of Art

Milli's store on Cliff Island turns into Pearls

STORY & PHOTO BY KEVIN ATTRA

When Mark Millington packed up for the Anore Islands, it didn't take long for someone to buy his business. Johanna Cormau bought the small general store down the wharf in mid-July, took possession in mid-August, called it Pearls Seaside Market and Cafe, and noted the business hours: "There's no apostrophe in Pearls," she says, "it's quick to point out, but doesn't explain why."

Maybe it's because she's used to small spaces where there's only room for the essentials. For instance, when she moved up with her husband, Steve, their two children and three cats, along with all their clothes and what-not, from Cape Charles, Va., they were packed so tightly inside their little car that the kids had to ride best-wise to accommodate the cats. On the other hand, it might just be that she's got no time to waste on something as frivolous as an apostrophe. For instance, she was here on vacation with the kids when she saw the for-sale sign, called her husband, who laughed and said "let's go for it," put the house on the market, quit their teaching jobs, and moved here, all within a couple of maybe, Steve never saw the place until they moved in. "We knew it was a risk," she said, "but we only live once."

In the current economy, it was a very big risk, especially trying to sell a house in one place while trying to buy in another, but the Cormans' act of inspiration has already paid off in one way. Their home in Cape Charles area just was located next to a small church that wanted to expand, and the ministry bought it in mid-September. The Cormans are currently undergoing the process of having to come to the island without a solid housing arrangement, jobless, to start a business at the worst time of year in one of the worst economic crises in history. Who needs an apothecary when you get pearls without it? Pearls Seaside Market and Cafe is open Monday and Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Closed Sunday, and on Thursday she goes into Portland for groceries, because that's the day Hannaford's delivers.
Library struggles to keep libraries open

BY KEVIN ATTIA

More than 50 people attended a meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 31 at the Peaks Island Community Center. The meeting was to discuss the future of the Portland Public Library system in the wake of severe budget cuts that resulted in the closure of several branches and drastic cuts to operating costs.

The board of trustees spent 1 1/2 hours in a meeting with an all·immute slide presentation during the 1 1/2 hours of the Portland Public Library's membership representatives. Several representatives were on hand to answer questions and provide information on access to resources both locally and internationally.

A member of the Portland Public Library's staff explained that the libraries in local schools and colleges, the size of the collection available in the Portland Public Library is approximately 600,000, but another 1 million can be accessed through the state, and there is unlimited world-wide access through the On-line Computer Library Center, a not for profit computer service and research organization whose systems help libraries locate, acquire, catalog, and lend materials.

The board of trustees wants to increase the capacity of the library's network to expand and the public's capacity. From what we know, we're the only rich and privileged members of society, but in this country they become public institutions so that access to education would be available to everyone, allowing an informed citizenry. "Funding the library," he said, "is a proper function of the city government."

"Last January the City cut the library's budget by $25,000, then in March it informed the trustees that the library would be flat-funded, which meant there would be no cuts to operating costs. That forced the board to seek funding elsewhere." He added that in towns such as Saco and Gorham, people in the community believed the library was "like a drunken sailor" on the library system, and there was a sense of "help us do it." "The Council bears us up in all the time," he added, "and a board member of the West End Neighborhood Association objected to the idea, and the executive director of the library association said that branch closures."

"Why was that the solution?" adding that "there should let the library know what the impact of that," he said, "You surprise them at what their budget cuts did, they had no idea now those cuts would proceed in the future of the Portland Public Library."

When another $50,000 was cut in April, the board closed the Reiche branch.

"Mink are small, sharp claws, and very short legs. Their partially webbed feet make them excellent swimmers, which explains how they came to occupy so many of the islands in Casco Bay. Mink are carnivorous, able to capture prey on land and in the water. Unlike some relative otters, mink can dive underwater, going as deep as 15 feet to catch fish or frogs. On land, they'll go after birds eggs, snake, mice and voles - generally whatever prey is available. "Mink are a serious problem on islands that are more than a mile from the mainland," said Brad Allen of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. "They eat the young and the eggs, and they often kill more than they can eat. "If there are problems, the island owner should get rid of the mink," he said."

Peaks Island resident John Carroll told first-hand about the tendency of mink to slaughter birds. Carroll was raising chickens, and came home late one Saturday evening to find that all his chickens were gone. "There were 12 of them, they were nearly four years old and we were looking forward to their eggs. They were scattered all over the yard, not chewed up, just dead," he said. He had heard rumors of a fisherman and a bore who said that mink had killed them. "I had heard rumors of a fisherman and I'd heard of mink on other islands and have seen them on other islands," he said. The mystery was solved the next morning, when Carroll's cat came through the cat door "screaming a long, dark furry tail. We were hoping it wasn't alive, whatever it was, we were surprised that it was freshly killed," he said. "We went on the window to see what it was. It had been caught, cut off and was in a patch on the chin." It was indeed a mink.
AT THE GEM GALLERY

Oct. 10 to Oct. 19 - "Woof 'n Bare," new work by Suzanne Petrot, opening on Friday, Oct. 10, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. to show her work being made of cloth, paper and felted wool in unique pieces of clothing, rugs and two-dimensional art.

Casco Baykeeper Joe Payne of the Casco Baykeeper Alliance, has been working on Peaks Island in the varied media of painting, printmaking, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, photography, printmaking, assemblage, fiber arts and writing. The gallery mission is to "share and sell fine art and contemporary crafts and to reach out and create an inviting, professional, friendly space that encourages, and celebrates art." Solo exhibitions, group exhibitions and change weekly from Thursday through October. Larger theme shows are held in the month of November.

She will be in Maine to support local waterkeeper programs like Friends of Casco Bay. "I always wanted to visit Maine," she says. What a treat it will be to experience that beautiful part of the country, along with supporting Joe Payne, the Casco Baykeeper, and Waterkeepers Alliance.

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Peaks Island Council Race

Two Seats, Three Candidates

by Kevin Attra

In the race for two positions available on the Peaks Island Council this year, Rob Tiffany is the only incumbent. Kathryn Moskay will vacate her seat at the end of this term, and the new

candidates, Mike Richards and Kim Dervis, are vying for the open seats. Dervis, who seeks the seat in the first place, because two persons must be elected to the council, it is possible that Tiffany could lose his seat if both Richards and Dervis receive more votes.

The council was formed last November through an ordinance enacted July 16, 2007 by the Portland City Council, after a referendum to secede by the people of Peaks Island. Residents were so kind and helpful to me during this time, making the dinner, collecting things I might need for Tyler's arrival, even painted Tyler's room while I was in the hospital.

The Peaks Island Council is a representation of the island to the larger community. As a member of the PIC, I was very sick when I had no major restoration projects in mind. I have spent hours researching, learning about, and participating with islanders and the City Council, I wrote monthly updates for the Portland City Council, the PIC and the islanders first elected their council members. I publicly stated that the success of the PIC will be measured entirely by how effective it is at convincing the city to do what Peaks Islanders want. I have seen only successful, and that needs to change, effective immediately. My goal as a member of the PIC is to make the PIC, and its voice on crucial island issues be heard in City Hall and at the state legislature; (3) hold the city accountable to the PIC's requests and resolutions; and (4) increase the PIC's visibility on and outside Peaks Island.

I have been encouraged by Peaks Islanders' support in the past and, if elected to an Islander's seat at large, I can get the PIC and the City of Portland to take action on their behalf.

Kimberly Dervis

My name is Kimberly Dervis. I'm 30 years old. I have two children: Dianne, age 8, Tyler 4 mos. Dianne attends Peaks Island School. I've lived on Peaks for 5 years. I have a BA in Government from Suffolk University, I've been active since the founding of Friends of TEIA, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

I'm running for Peaks Island Council to make sure my activism close to home. Peaks is a wonderful place to raise children. I'd like to help make it even better. Having Dianne at the elementary school on the Island has been a positive experience for her. This year, she is in Mrs. Litchfield's third grade class. The school community is small and able to respond to parents concerns. The elementary school is a key piece of the Peaks Island community. To this moment there are no worries about the elementary school. At times, it has been a worry that the Island school could be eliminated. Keeping the elementary school successful is a priority for me. I started the PIC in 2007 as Peaks Island School, Volunteer Coordinator for No on 1 campaign will be unable to pay their taxes or heat their homes. I have been impressed by Peaks Island Tax Assistance. From a small community like Peaks the support has been amazing.

I am 36 years old and a native of Maine, as were my parents and grandparents. Pam and I moved to our house on Daniel Street in 1997, where we raised our two sons, who went through Peaks Island Elementary School, King Middle School, and Portland High School. I have worked as an attorney for the past 28 years. I am a Director at the law firm of Troubh Heisler, with an office on Congress Street in Portland, where I limit my practice to workers' compensation cases. I was vice president of PINA and chair of the PIC, and I am now on the board of the Friends of TEIA, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

I'm running for Peaks Island Council in order to add my energy and expertise to that of the other PIC members. I will promote the PIC as an advocacy group for Peaks Islanders in their new relationship with the City of Portland. I know that Peaks Islanders have concerns that are unique to them and that require a strong voice to be heard in City Hall. I see financial and other pressures on Peaks Islanders that greatly exceed those of other Portland residents, and I want to identify islanders' special needs and ask the city to focus on taxes, on how to make Peaks Island as affordable to live for all people and for future Peaks Islanders. When the City of Portland formed the PIC and the islanders first elected their council members, I publicly stated that the success of the PIC will be measured entirely by how effective it is at convincing the city to do what Peaks Islanders want. Thus far, I have seen only marginal success, and that needs to change, effective immediately. My goal as a member of the PIC is to make the PIC, and its voice on crucial island issues be heard in City Hall and at the state legislature; (3) hold the city accountable to the PIC's requests and resolutions; and (4) increase the PIC's visibility on and outside Peaks Island.

Michael Richards

I am 56 years old and a native of Maine, as were my parents and grandparents. Pam and I moved to our house on Daniel Street in 1997, where we raised our two sons, who went through Peaks Island Elementary School, King Middle School and Portland High School. I have worked as an attorney for the past 28 years. I am a Director at the law firm of Troubh Heisler, with an office on Congress Street in Portland, where I limit my practice to workers' compensation cases. I was vice president of PINA and chair of the PIC, and I am now on the board of the Friends of TEIA, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

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Robert Tiffany

Thank you for electing me to this first year of the Peaks Island Council. For me, it has been an experience of learning with all of its accompanying frustrations, growth and joys. I am starting all over in my term now because I want to continue to represent all islanders as we continue to work with the City Council on island needs and issues. In this first year, I focused on working on affordable island living and on communication issues between the PIC and the City Council. I wrote monthly updates for the STAR, prepared articles for the Island Times on issues important to islanders that needed to be widely known and discussed, participated in all of the Mayor's Island Advisory Council meetings where I created and shared minutes with the Island Council, and served on the council at large, assisting in setting up and utilizing the council's website, and worked on the subgroup who is preparing the interim ordinance to allocate the $50,000 provided by city monies.

I was concerned to tackle the issue of island zoning mainly because, although I had little direct knowledgeso the experience of the issue, I realized how significant and vital this area was for the present and future of all islanders (I own no property or land other than our own and have no major restoration projects in mind). I have spent hours researching, learning about, and participating with islanders and the City Council, I wrote monthly updates for the Island Times on issues important to islanders that needed to be widely known and discussed, participated in all of the Mayor's Island Advisory Council meetings where I created and shared minutes with the Island Council, and served on the council at large, assisting in setting up and utilizing the council's website, and worked on the subgroup who is preparing the interim ordinance to allocate the $50,000 provided by city monies.

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Luther Street affordable housing project. As a result of the research done to report on the problem of affordable housing, I see a network of unimportant issues from the 1985 zoning changes that need to be addressed. I have now brought together a diverse committee of interested islanders to work on creating affordable housing solutions over the next few months. This work is just beginning. I am eager and committed to continue this work in the area.

Though affordable living and communication issues remain a main focus, I am interested in and dedicated to working on the issue of educating the City Council councillors on what it means to live on an island. Though a few councillors have some knowledge of how we lead our lives, my experience, most do not. My goal is a simple one: I want to educate them and make sure our Councilors are prepared to work in an area that is crucial to the future of our community.