8-2000

Harbor Voices : Vol 1, No 7 - Aug 2000

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Dee Page and her dogs celebrate the completion of her new sunroom. There are lots of ways to go about making your living space comfortable without spending a fortune. See inside. Keith Holts photo

Upcoming themes:
September — On Being Educated;
October — History;
November — Simple Pleasures;
It's impossible to write about architecture without considering first the context of where we build our houses—in our community, and on our planet earth. Houses have a tremendous impact on both a community and the environment. Some construction serves only to separate and insulate people from one another and the earth. Homes—especially the big American versions—use up incredible amounts of the earth’s limited resources. Architectural masterpieces must be those structures which act as catalysts to bring people and the environment into better harmony, those works of structural art which enrich both our sense of place, and our sense of membership within a whole human community.

In modern, and often transient neighborhoods, houses are too often treated as short-term investments rather than as “homes,” and people in them seem encouraged to separate themselves from their neighbors. But we don’t exist independently. Our individual lifestyle, our very home, has a relationship to the community and to the earth. Have you noticed that where automobiles and mass media rule the landscape, houses are centered on driveways, living rooms centered on VCR’s? When houses are separated from the community — isolated down cul-de-sacs, away from public transportation, centered on corporate messages — when they seemed designed almost in spite of the natural movement of the sun and the seasons, rather than in sync with the environment — we lose our orientation to one another and to the earth. Some houses seem to encourage us to stay indoors so much, that they actually take on the appearance of miniature fortresses. But “Private—Keep Out” signs, fences, pesticide applications, tarmacs and buildings built high off the ground with locking doors leave almost no safe, rather than more so. Homes which don’t rather reflect advances in the heat from the sun and the cooling of the north leave us feeling at constant odds with the forces of nature, and incline us toward using more than our necessary share of the world’s natural resources.

Whenever we build houses without building community, we’re in trouble.

In the Boston Review 25th Anniversary Issue, several authors delve into this issue in terms of a recently discovered relationship between community health and economic differences: They say that research indicates people in communities with lower incomes—but greater economic equity (less division between the wealthy and the poor)—have longer life-spans. They were saying—and this is sort of a gross paraphrase—that it’s best on human health if everyone does their own dirty work, rather than having the poor do more than their share of dirty work in order to support the lifestlyes of the wealthy. Well—duh. But of course, our entire economy is built upon the injustice of the poor doing the dirty work, and doing it for next to nothing.

I really can’t fathom how anyone—not especially the Bill Gates’ of this world—can dare to flaunt the way that they mindlessly take advantage of social inequities and injustices, constructing wastefully massive houses which stand as monuments not only to social injustice, but also to an extravagant thievery and consumption of natural resources that by rights belong to all the earth’s inhabitants. Beauty in architecture must be measured against its impact on society and the environment as a whole. We can make our own homes more beautiful and more safe not by wailing ourselves off from our neighbors, but by building castles beside hovels, but by recognizing our inescapable membership in and obligation toward other people and places, toward the communities where we build. These are the issues that our generation will need to define and discuss, and quickly. But already, “because we can afford to” might not be a good enough excuse to live wastefully anymore.
I am sure that by now everyone is aware of the City of Portland’s plan for the current Bath Iron Works site. The development of OceanGate will forever change the face of Peaks Island. I could be wrong, but all the elements are in place for massive change to occur and there is little anyone will be able to do about it.

The City is actively promoting itself as a cruise ship destination; this year over 50 stopovers are scheduled. This will swell to around 75 visits next year, and the completion of OceanGate coupled with the growing popularity of these vacations should swell the number even more over the next few years. Currently the vacancies who arrive on these ships are largely bussed to Freeport, Kennebunkport, and Kittery — shopping I presume being the intent of this bed and breakfast tourism. My belief is that the City of Portland is well aware of this, and the basic economics will dictate that they need to keep every passenger they can within city limits, and preferably in the Old Port area. This can only occur if the area becomes an outlet mall Mecca. Stores will line Commercial and India Streets, trendy sidewalk cafes will abound, and pedestrian only areas will be favored.

While there may be room for the odd attractive lobster-boat on the waterfront, God forbid that there should be the odor of dead fish in the air. The commercial fishing industry will be compressed towards the fish pier. Downtown wharves will gradually convert over to tourist centered activities and attractions, as the waterfront is gradually beautified and sanitized. No room for fishermen’s bars here. The area we walk through every morning will resemble a cross between Kittery and Old Orchard Beach. This development will of course attract many vacationers to the city in addition to those arriving on the cruise ships; parking in the Old Port area will be an expensive proposition.

The explosion of development in the Old Port will lead to many jobs being created, covering the spectrum of wage levels. Many of these people will not be locals, and they will all need to live somewhere. Hoisting is already in short supply in Portland, and commuting into the waterfront area will not be easy or affordable.

Fortunately just offshore lies Peaks Island, 700 acres just ripe for the picking. Here is a part of the city that is an easy 20-minute ferry ride from the center of activity and no parking problems. Plenty of Summer cottages ready for year round conversion, an infrastructure already being improved, new sewers, better roads, a new recycling facility, and still plenty of room to squeeze in a few more houses, some apartments, and of course the odd condo development. The island will become the trendy part of town to live in, the population will grow and be dominated by year-round residents, as summer cottage owners gradually sell out or convert to year round rentals to take advantage of the rapidly growing property values. More mansion style homes will be built on any lot with a decent water view. Downfront will of course prosper from all this activity, new businesses will open, and eventually of course traffic lights will become necessary once the new Casco Bay Lines super ferry starts operation, bringing daily throngs of day trippers out for a quick visit and tour of scenic Peaks Island.

Slowly the Island becomes absorbed into mainstream Portland, and all this happens with the blessing of the City Council. A small bedroom community will happily be sacrificed for the sake of the master plan. A glossy view of the future perhaps, but one that can all too easily occur. We can all only wait and see...

David Sheppard lives on Peaks Island.
July 14, 2000

Jenny,

I've just finished reading Doug MacVane's article Spikefish and Me in the July Harbor Voices (which is becoming a "must" on my "to read" monthly list). My reaction to his article is similar to the one I had while reading The Perfect Storm. I kept marveling while reading that book... then I continued, spellbound. I could care less about fishing much less the care and maintenance of fishing boats. Similarly, before reading Doug's work, I could have cared less about the detail of making a submarine dive.

I had passed Doug's article several times as I wandered through July's offerings. Once I started reading, however, I couldn't put it down. I'm left with wanting more.

Although Doug chastises himself with his own detail ("at this point I realize that I may be going into too much detail which I didn't intend to do"), I found myself mesmerized by his vivid descriptions of a sinking submarine. The ability to write such passages as "I put my head down and for a brief moment, I spoke to my Cousin Arthur. "Here I come. God I hope it's brief" and "my whole physical system tingled and shuddered with excitement: a tremor radiated through my spine to the top of my head." tell me that Doug should be writing and publishing more.

Your efforts with Harbor Voices are truly appreciated. It provides an opportunity to give voice, in diverse ways, to the richness of our island communities.

In gratitude to you and to Doug,

Jill Tiffany

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Joke:

Q: How do sailors get their clothes washed?
A: They throw their clothes overboard, then the clothes get washed ashore.

Letter to the Editor:

Two issues ago, you carried a photo of two young ladies with the caption which said, "One of these two people was born in Portland. The other is 'from away'. But they forget which.

Knowing these two creative, articulate, award winning honor students which you pictured, and knowing that you know them, I am rather surprised at your reference. Of course they each know and care about their families' history. Most children, by first grade (if not before), are aware of their heritage and treasure it; deepening their knowledge and understanding as they grow.

It feels important to really honor both the root structure that does hold the soil of our culture - the people, the families who have given in any way they could which has helped to create this treasure of a state called Maine, this region, as well as the awakenings this region has occurred with cross-pollination. I did not feel this was clearly expressed in the article about "From Away." Perhaps it was there and the caption threw me off.

Each state, and each country, typically has distinguishable traits, stories, attitudes, often a similar look to their people, and a body language. These aspects are in our blood when our family has been in a place or region for many generations. One can't imagine them there or release oneself from them. It is as important to honor the roots of a culture as it is to honor, by nourishing, the roots and soil of any plant.

If the plant takes root well, after a while it doesn't matter where it originated. In this country, with a visible Caucasian & Black history of only 200+ years compared with the similar European history of over 2000 years, Nippon with over 3000 thousand years of history together, China with its 4500+ year of history... we are best served to simply love where we are, and nourish the bonding so that the root structure sets up well.

Now, when we compare all of the above histories to that of the Paleo-Indians whom some scholars do feel we were in North America 20,000 - 25,000 years ago (most agree with 12,000 - 14,000 years) the question of "from here or away" shifts in perspective. At no other time in history has humankind been as educated - able to have a perspective and to be more conscious. Can we awaken to a conscious, peaceable kingdom? A well-tended garden - soil, roots, foliage... is a beauty to behold.
Dear Editor Jenny,

Thank you for the excellent work on my story; after reading it I experienced a feeling of satisfaction, quiet relief.

I’m posting this note to you in anticipation that you may accept and print corrected errors and an omission that I made. They are found at the end of my story in my Military Service “bio.” It should have read as follows: “Doug retired from active duty, having served 26 years in both Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, and transferred into the Fleet Ready Reserve, June 126, 1967. He was transferred into full retirement Sept. 1, 1971 with 30 years service.

To your civilian reader the brief military “bio” would appear insignificant and unimportant, but to an “Old-hand Seadog” he may want to check my credentials or, assume that I was drunk, that my “gyro had tilted,” and I had drifted off-course. Smile.

Respectfully,
Doug

Casco Bay Ferry Lines travelers got a nice close up view of the Regatta during OpSail 2000. Jenny Ruth Yazi, photo

Subject: Irresponsible journalism.

To the editor:

I must say that I have never seen poorer editorial judgement used by any member of the press (and I use the term loosely) than in the article entitled “Enabling Scams” which appeared in your last edition. Whether the rumors you are spreading are true or not, the way the information was presented was irresponsible and disturbing. You have tainted the reputations of all of the trades people on Peaks Island by being so nonspecific about the subject of your article. Are you going to print every nasty piece of gossip that anyone whispers in your ear? Maybe you should take into consideration the effect it has on the livelihoods of the local contractors when all of them are under suspicion due to your irresponsibility.

I understand that right on the front of “Hearing Voices” you say that it contains “fact, fiction, and rumors”. But when you have control of a public forum like this and you print dirt, you do a huge disservice to the Island. I suggest that in the future you leave legal matters to the Police and the courts. You may also want to limit your focus to fact and fiction and leave out the rumor part. I only suggest this because your first attempt at being the rumor police was a miserable failure. You have set a dangerous preceident in a small community which will always be better served by truth and fact than by whatever voices your editorial staff may be hearing this week.

VERY sincerely,
Bob Baker
Peaks Island

Editor’s cautious response: For those who missed the article, Enabling Scams reported that a local person with a prior conviction of fraud was facing new charges in court, in connection with complaints that he bilked several customers out of thousands of dollars in his work as a small contractor on Peaks Island. The individual which the article referred to was sentenced in late July. The article did not list the name of the accused, nor of the victims, but suggested that in fact several contractor/client relationships have soured over the past few years, and that paying a contractor in advance, without a contract, for work that has not been completed, is unsafe.

Bob is not an island contractor.

Our next theme is on “Being Educated.”

Please submit stories, opinions, art, jokes, articles etc. by e-mail, to voices@maine.rr.com or on white paper

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For more information, e-mail voices@maine.rr.com, or call 766-2390.
The Chebeague Island Teen Center is just one room in the Recreation building — but it is full of interesting things to do, as children from several islands here find out.

Chebeague Island Recreation Center
Holds Inter-Island Teen Dance

In July, about 12 students from Long, Peaks and Cliff Islands took advantage of an invitation from Chebeague Island to visit their Recreation Center for a pool party and dance. Volunteers from Chebeague Island provided a scrumptious picnic (hotdogs, hamburgers, fruit salad and desserts). By the evening’s end, we had counted about fifty kids taking advantage of the program. Parents, volunteers and others involved in this facility say it provides a great place for the island community to meet and engage in all sorts of healthy activities.

The swimming pool and the teen center/Recreational facility was built entirely with private donations just a few of years ago. The pool is in a lovely area of the island, and the water is heated, allowing Chebeague Islanders to enjoy a longer season. One youthful looking lifeguard told me that the people who use the pool are very loyal, devoted regulars. “There is some overlap between the bar crowd and the people who use the rec center, but not so much,” she told me, “Usually people who get committed to improving their health aren’t so interested in drinking anymore.”

Another volunteer, Ginger, told me that not everyone on the island supported the idea of building the rec center or the pool. “It really caused some dispute,” she said. “People were concerned about spending money on something which seemed frivolous.” she said. On the other hand, “the Senior Center — the whole community did seem to rally around that.” However, Ginger told me that she has found the recreation center an important addition to the community. “I used to try to meet year-round people, try to involve my children in activities — but since the rec center the whole island just seems so much friendly and more accessible to us.” She describes it as an important part of the social atmosphere of the island as well as a benefit for elders with health problems. “There is an arthritis exercise program, which many people enjoy.”

The Teen Center next door to the pool is really just one room in the rec building (which also holds a large gym, a weight room, bathrooms, a few offices and storage space). It struck me that Peaks Island could create an extravagant teen center out of just one room in the elementary school, if the building could be made available to teens. Chebeague’s Teen Center houses a pool table, table soccer, a computer, a TV outfitted with some video games, refrigerator, sink, couches, and food.

The Chebeague Recreation Center serves all ages, but most especially appeared to interest the health conscious: elders, middle ages, teens, and families with young children. Enjoying sharing the DJ dance, food, and space with kids from elsewhere in the Bay, Chebeague teens practically glowed — definitely with good health, and maybe also with a bit of healthy pride.

The inflatable Polar Bear was a hit in the pool.

Jenny Yori
The former Sue Searway (Dixie Searway’s daughter) and her husband and musician Barry Arvin Young, with their children. Sue lived on Peaks Island in the eighties, and now the family has a home in Buxton. They were involved in Ossipan entertainment.

The big news on the islands have been some bike crashes, a child who hurt his head bad enough for brain surgery, and even lightening which struck a house on the 4th of July— but the good fairies have been watching over us and most everyone is thankfully just fine and on the mend.

The police say they’ve had to go down to the ferry and stop kids from jumping off the roof of the waiting room.

There were 350 road racers on Peaks Island over OpSail weekend for the Peaks Island raceplace. It was fun to see people you don’t ordi­narily think of as runners out there in funny clothes (we only say that because we can’t afford the funny clothes).

There was a summons issued because — can you believe this — someone was caught stealing the flags off House Island.

Rumor: “Someone” saw Bob giving a.k. a. Harry a kiss on the cheek at the Legion Hall. And then they danced together. It was cute.

The deer management commitee will be having a meeting in late August (maybe the 29th?) to bring this winter’s depredation planning to the Peaks Island community for discussion. Good news, a birth control method may be becoming feasible for future years.

We saw a little island road rage between locals and day trippers during OpSail. Where do people think they can go to in a hurry on an island? One guy, when asked to slow down, stopped in front of the Peaks Island FD, got out of his car and shouted “Shut UP!” before he locked around, realized where he was, and decided to drive off slowly…

Peaks Island Elections: Work all day, then go to another meeting? Most people don’t. And yes, we admit that the most recent PINA meeting was kind of exhaustingly boring and long, just as you feared it might be, even though there was an election — Kyra Adkins, Dick Springer and yours truly Jeny Yasi were elected to take a turn on the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association Steering committee. And there was a presentation from Casco Bay Lines. No music, no slide show. But either yours truly was just tired, or maybe this old-fashioned meeting-style of a moderator up front leading questions and answers that we all don’t really need to wade through is SO OLD! Lots of people got through by whispering together in their own mini-discussion groups, so why not allow this whispering by breaking into smaller discussion groups, with coffee and cookies? Shouldn’t neighborhood meetings actually be fun?

John Carroll was selected as the neighborhood representative on the Oceangate committee. Chris Hoppin and Gerry Garnen were chosen for representatives to the Mayor’s Inter-Island Advisory council. We hope they get cookies at their meetings.

Dumb Architecture Jokes:

Q: Where does the billionaire keep his dog?
A: In the dog’s house.

Q: Why did the architect design the billionaires’ house with a revolving door?
A: For the cat.

Wanted:
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and Community Correspondents

Do you wish that more writing from your Portland Harbor neighborhood was included in Harbor Voices?

We need YOU! to help us expand our community coverage.

For a fun opportunity contact us at 766-2390

IN HARBOR VOICES

We can agree to disagree: this is the intellectually open environment we value in our community, and hope to nourish in this forum.

We depend upon donations from members to cover the costs of this journal.

Published by the Yasi/Presqueyes Family on Peaks Island,
Printed by The American Journal in Westbrook
Upcoming themes: Sept. - "I'm Being Educated"; Oct. - "History," November - "Life's Little Pleasures"; December - "Good & Evil"
Editor/Publisher Jenny Ruth Yasi

Layout and photographs are by Jenny Ruth Yasi except where otherwise indicated
Harbor Voices Box 10, Peaks Island, Maine 04108 voices@maine.rr.com 207-766-2390

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Our friends at the American Journal in Westbrook — here is Joe the press operator and editor/writer Ray Foote — are very patient with our learning curve and very encouraging, supportive of Harbor Voices. We couldn’t get by without them.

August 2000 page 7
August 2000 page 8

Sandy Kosel is in chapter two of her life, and chapter two of her 1894 Peaks Island Cottage, which she has owned for 24 years. Four years ago, "it started because we needed more closet space," she says. Sandy and her husband, Howard, had decided to do a little remodeling, and they envisioned a three-month long project. The two agreed upon general contractor Steve Neilson, signed a contract, and sadly just days after leaving Peaks Island for the winter, Howard died of a heart attack. Sandy was still teaching nursery school at the time (she retired in 1998, in her mid-fifties), and decided to wait a year before beginning the renovations. It would be four years before she could actually say she was more or less "done."

Island architect Will Winkleman was another "creative artist" on the project—and his is a name which comes up repeatedly when people discuss the best of contemporary Peaks Island architecture. She poured over plans, designed and redesigned with Will for 18 months. "He told me that I was like a student. That pleased me very much," she says.

The house, although it faces south, was full of the traditional dark woodwork which Sandy wanted to preserve while at the same time make the whole house seem lighter. "It's more difficult in many ways to work with an existing older home than to build new." Like many projects which involve old homes, this one grew and grew and sometimes felt like 'a nightmare for a woman trying to do it for myself. Fortunately, lots of people guided me. It turned into a much larger project than I expected—for example, when you're redoing the insulation for one room, you might as well do the whole house. And when we put on the sunroom, we had problems getting it level with the existing building."

In the middle of the project, she says, she brought in another consultant and based on his advice, "I had to undo some things." Relations between her and her contractors weren't always completely smooth, but she now speaks warmly of everyone involved. "Steve was very amenable to changes," she says. "I'm happy with 90% of the end result. I would have been happier if it had taken one year to complete instead of three," she laughs, "but in all fairness, lots of unexpected things came up. It's not as easy when you're working with an old house and trying to blend the old with the new. We had seen Steve's work in town—he is very meticulous—and I don't think we could have found anyone else who could have done the kind of job that Steve did."

Although Sandy had Steve as a general contractor and Will as an architect (who also did the landscape architecture for the sloping path entryway), she really shared the general contracting job with Steve, by hiring some subcontractors herself for example, and by doing considerable shopping and "scavenging" at yard sales for materials, including vintage light fixtures and other finish materials.

"I saved money by ordering all the windows directly from Loranger, paying for that directly myself. And that helped a lot." She says now she would advise others not to crimp on windows, because they are such an important feature of a house. Like all do-it-yourselfers, Sandy was an avid researcher.

"I looked into many possibilities for the bathroom fixtures—did comparisons shopping and tried lots of variables and finally decided on a "piano leg" style sink. It was quite an expensive fixture, so she bought it and other supplies in New Hampshire, saving hundreds of dollars in tax. She brought fixtures she'd bought at yard-sales to Discount, a vintage housewares shop in the Old Port, for refurbishing. She sanded and refinished trim and matched stain between old and new wainscoting and beams. She had a lot of fun gathering and recycling fabrics for Kerry Flynn to recover her antique furniture "I've kept the flavor of a Peaks Island 1894 cottage, all the nooks and crannies." While the house itself has evolved into quite an island gem, it is clearly the gardens which are Sandy Kosel's particular claim to island fame. In fact, a magnificent lavender which spills out over a stone retaining wall by the road is practically an island landmark. Will Winkleman helped her transforming what was once a steeper entry way into a more gently graded path and—ta da!—two gardens for her to tend as she grieved from her husband's untimely death at only 51 years of age.

"The garden is a tremendously healing project," she says, and due to its highly visible location she enjoys the added benefit of admirers from all over the world who stop to ooh and aah and chat and share gardening tips at the foot of her lower garden. "People always ask me why don't the deer eat my plants, and I always say it's because my husband is shooting them away." The rose which is over the trellis is a New Dawn rose, a variety which she researched carefully for its resilience from disease and long-blooming period. "I don't like to backtrack," she said, referring to the effort she makes in starting out right at the beginning with all her projects. "I hold off till I can get the quality I want." Howard was very involved with TEIA, and so Sandy also planted a garden around the flagpole there, as a memorial to her husband. "The house isn't the same as it was when he was here," she says, "But before he died he said I definitely do not want to paint the wainscoting. Although it was in some ways more difficult to keep the wood finish, I'm glad I did. It's very warm and cozy."

All these changes have come with a real sense of perspective for Sandy Kosel. "It's not where you live or the house you live in—it's the special people that make this island such a wonderful community of caring. It doesn't matter what you do or how much you make—you can mix with all different kinds of people and have this common love of the sea, the beach, the rocks." Sandy says that she had a big party at one point to acknowledge her healing, and to say that now she's ready to move on into "Chapter 2" of her life. And to her surprise, she really has found a chapter 2. "I'm engaged to be married!" she laughs, and it's to a guy in Washington who heads up profiling for the FBI, so be careful what you say when you're strolling among the roses! For Sandy, the 24 year long adventure on Peaks Island is at a new beginning. "It's really true what people say, that when one door closes, another opens."
We designed and contracted our own low-toxic, passive solar, 2000 square foot home in 1989, when lumber was cheaper, for $95,000. We believe that if we had paid someone else to do the general contracting and labor, this house would have cost at least $200,000. And as we would have had to mortgage that second hundred thousand, we can calculate in what we have paid in interest -- another $100,000 -- to calculate our total savings from taking on our family home as a do-it-at-least-a-bit-yourself project. Doing as much as possible ourselves has had a lifelong impact on our family's finances and lifestyle. It's also given us the luxury of choosing methods and materials so that we've had more control over the kind of impact we make on the environment. Many people in our community have had similar successes designing, building, or "general contracting" (managing) the construction of their homes. In the stories I gathered here, you'll see that each one of these homeowners took their own unique strategy toward getting the house of their dreams on the budget that preserved their quality of life.

We designed and supervised the construction and did quite a bit of labor on our home ourselves -- and this means we shopped for materials ourselves. A former roommate together with Albert designed and built most of our plumbing. We spent quite a bit of time deciding where wall switches and plugs should go, hired an electrician to cough up the house, then went through and installed the actual fixtures, sockets and switches ourselves. We researched, designed, built and installed our own radiant floor heating system (I did this with the help of another woman). We installed a heat exchanger, and made sure our house was so airtight that it could float. I painted and finished floors and walls. Some neighbors gave us a free kitchen stove that we used for ten years.

We gave our project the name of a company, "Island One Design," and thus were able to purchase all our plumbing and other materials wholesale. In buying or scavenging materials many do-it-yourselfers are able to not only save money, they get better quality materials. I get my grout lines on my own. I buy my floor grout at $10 a bag (10 cents a square foot). The problem was, there were only short amounts left in stock. I bought equal amounts of gray and burgundy colored tile and developed a pattern (a Greek looking crossed path), which along with the scavenged clawfoot tub, turns out to be a high point of our bathroom. Barry Shaw looked at what I did in the downstairs hall one day and he asked me, "How come your grout lines are so wide?" Ummm... I didn't want to have to cut all those tiles! He laughed and reassured me, "Well you've got gravity on your side. At least they won't fly up and hit you in the face." Beginners luck -- those tiles still haven't budged an iota.

Many -- but definitely not all -- of us who take the scavenging and sometimes improvisational approach to growing a home never consider for a moment hiring an architect! My thought was, why let someone else do the fun part?

For us, getting out the graph paper and figuring out in detail where we might want our couch and computer and books to go, which way the doors ought to swing -- we loved every painstaking moment. It was comparatively easy for us, because I had built a house once before, and my husband is an environmental engineer with many home-builder skills. And we weren't trying to build a castle.

We also decided at the beginning of our project that we didn't want to "reinvent the wheel" in terms of design. We knew we wouldn't become known as the next John Calvin Stevens, and wanted to have a house which felt traditional, but which made the most of the power of the sun. We played a lot with modified "Cape Cod" with a center chimney designs. We still refer to our house project as our "hundred-year plan," and so it felt right to use as the basics of our design a home style which has withstood the test of time. Simple designs also save substantial amounts of money and they are easier to build. We designed our house to make the most of a 8 foot 2x6 -- no weird length walls or windows. We designed it in a way that would be fairly straightforward for our carpenter -- just one place where the wall bumps out to give shape and a little more space to our small dining room.

We both had been interested in solar and low tox construction, had visited many solar houses. Like most home-architects, we read probably too many books on passive solar design and environmentally sustainable housing. Our project became our obsession and we were avid researchers -- not so much concerned with the outer appearance of a living space, but more with the consequences various building techniques and materials might have over the long-term on the environment and human health. We read a lot about the environmental consequences of paints and formaldehyde and foams. We thought a little bit then about the social consequences of our home design -- but the social issues relevant to home design are so much more obvious to us now than they were then. When we build our homes, we make our political statement to the world, whether we know it or not.

For every aspect of our project, we solicited six different bids for services or materials. I know some people on the island who are currently having to settle with just four bids. Contractors are busier now, but this means there is more value now than ever in doing as much as you can on your own. Even if you hire a crew, your advance work makes you more likely to appreciate what your contractors are doing and to be able to communicate effectively. In our bidding process, we sent out simple plans for our house to six different lumber yards, each of which calculated the materials we would need from our plans and gave us a price. We compared item for item (the lists that they would return are at least slightly different, so you can't simply compare the grand totals), and found that the total actual materials for our house ranged significantly in price. Depending on the supplier, we could have paid anywhere from 25 to 55 thousand dollars for the same materials! It is thrilling to be able to say at the end of the day, "Hey honey, I just found a way to save $20,000 on our windows!" DuBi, we felt we were winning the lottery. We'd sift through lower grade lumber, finding clear wood at a bargain. We got four panel wooden doors at a yardsale. We tore up some flooring in a house that had burnt -- not all our scavenging was successful. The wood had mostly warped, and so we gave some away to another do-it-yourselfer (who had a smaller flooring project), and we burnt the rest as firewood.

Many -- but definitely not all -- of us who take the scavenging and sometimes improvisational approach to growing a home never consider for a moment hiring an architect! My thought was, why let someone else do the fun part?

For us, getting out the graph paper and figuring out in detail where we might want our couch and computer and books to go, which way the doors ought to swing -- we loved every painstaking moment. It was comparatively easy for us, because I had built a house once before, and my husband is an environmental engineer with many home-builder skills. And we weren't trying to build a castle.

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Similarly, bids from carpenters ranged significantly -- with $40,000 difference for the same job. I'm very glad we didn't choose our carpenter according to who was the lowest bidder. We picked Ben Cookman because he had excellent references, he seemed fair and easy to communicate with. You wind up seeing an awful lot of your carpenter on a home building project. You don't want someone hanging around who you don't like. Ben, who didn't smoke, drink, or swear in front of our two year old, gave us a feeling that he was taking as much pride in this hundred-year project as we were.

If you are your own general contractor, finding your carpenter is akin to finding your Holy Man. You want someone you trust with your money, your life, your future home. The ideal carpenter treats the job and materials as any artist does, keeping the site neat and beauti-
ful, being very concerned with keeping leaks out of the floor and sawdust out of the walls. Ben was particularly easy to work with, cooperating with the various changes we made. The luxury and some might say the curse of home design is that sometimes you get to a point where you want to modify your design. For us, just after the foundation was in, we realized that a simple change of the roofline would make a profound difference in our satisfaction with our home—and give us a full-height attic space to boot. If you hire a general contractor, you might ask a contractor how they would respond if you attempted to modify the plans once a contract has been signed. Many will penalize you pretty stiffly. Lucky us—Ben simply modified our contract to reflect a reasonable amount of additional labor. The still unfinished attic gives us a space that is perfect for our emerging teenagers to do all the things they like to do!

We know several families who could have taken out a large home loan but instead, did as we did, keeping overhead as low as possible so that they could afford at least one stay-at-home parent for a decade. We didn’t plan out our entire lives—we just knew that we wanted to avoid taking out loans. You don’t really “see” the money you save initially, but fifteen years later we suddenly notice—my goodness, unlike many of the people around us who are paying car loans and house loans and student loans and consumer credit loans and more loans—we’re solvent. Just barely solvent, perhaps, but keeping the construction loans down made a tremendous difference—approaching middle age, we are economically less burdened. Our construction experience also pays off daily in our understanding of the workings of our home. Any house is practically a living creature in the way they continue to grow and need attention.

So I guess I should admit here that another way to keep overhead down is to never finish your project. I don’t know anyone in a home-made home who can say that it is really “finished.” We still are putting up solar hot water panels. We haven’t finished the attic, nor have we finished facing our chimney with stone—finishing it just doesn’t seem all that important. It’s comfortable. It’s our home, after all, not a still life for a magazine. And an unfinished home pays a little less, maybe, on taxes.

The other day someone came by to see our “low-toxic” house, and it just so happened that on that very day the cat had pooped in the laundry, the dog had chewed on the doorframe, the cupboards had an outbreak of grain moths, and the bedrooms hadn’t been cleaned since I stunned publishing this paper. I had a moment of insecurity, and I asked my daughter if she minded having people see the house when it was such a mess. “Oh no!” she exhaled. “After all, it’s our house.” Our other daughter came running down the stairs, just having stapled a thousand pictures of teddy bears onto the unfinished attic walls. “I just love our house, don’t you?”

Like all home builder-owners, the love you feel for a house you have sweat over yourself is truly awesome. It doesn’t just feel like a project, or an investment—it feels like a home.

This is one old family cottage that is

Not For Sale

Judy knows that modernizing would ruin it.

In Judy’s old family cottage, she explains how every article, every piece of furniture has a story to tell. She tells the story about bunk beds that were built for her children when they were young, and about a painting that had been a favorite of both parents, about windows and steps and glass. Judy says that years ago, they used to have more troubles with vandalism, but since we got police on the island, those problems have pretty much evaporated.

A professor of English, Judy’s stays on Peaks Island seem to be full of a richness that comes only when your home is infused with the spirits and memories of people you love.
Making an Architectural Addition

My Sunroom
As told to Harbor Voices by Deirdre Page

The deck on our newly purchased house was a focal point of all the things I'd come to love about Peaks and the south-eastern side of the island. My Grandmother had rented a place on Ryefield Cove every summer since the mid 1930s, so the neighborhood holds a great deal of familiarity, and every view, sound and smell is laden with sentiment. Then there's morning sun, the first wave of sea breezes, the stunning view of Whitehead passage with the tankers and the Scotia Prince disappearing behind the cliffs. Of course everyone loves decks, and this one was special -- but as all decks are, enjoyment of it was limited by seasons, bugs, heat and cold, rain, etc. As time went by, I developed increasing determination to make something of the existing deck that I could use year-round.

I was initially avoiding sunrooms because the ones I had seen or been in, I didn't like. The glass went to the floor, they looked commercial, and they were limited to manufacturer's sizes and shapes. It was VERY important to me to respect the local architectural flavor and style. I wanted a blend of lots of glass with the warmth and tradition of wood and a cottage feel, that would blend in with my house such as it was and the surrounding architecture. I know that porches and sunporches are traditional ways to temper a deck, but a sunroom lets you keep the sky.

Around this time, I was lucky enough to meet Harry (my future contractor's dad) and Angus, his Scotty, on my morning walks. We were chatting about plans, and that I realized I wanted a sunroom. His son was coincidentally building one in New Hampshire at that very moment. Also, the plans to fix my leaky roof had led me to consider doing the sunroom simultaneously, while the roof was going to be off anyhow, and Keith happened to be one of the contractors involved in fixing the leaky roof. My brother Michael came up for a visit, and he was able to interview Keith with all his own knowledge of building and construction, brochures. Mainly, through the grilling from my brother, I knew I had found the right contractor for me.

I suspected big windows on the south wall would be an anomaly to local architecture, though they would give me lots of light. Keith used windows from our former exterior wall on each end of the sunroom, making a perfect match between new and existing architecture.

For a time I researched and wanted radiant heat as a heating method, but because of expense, and concerns about performance due to exposure, I had to rule it out. I also had considered small divided-light windows -- New England style -- as a quaint feature; but was thankfully persuaded that this would be an obstruction and the romance would not have been worth it in the end. This need was met instead with bi-fold French doors (separating the house from the sunroom). Maximum sea-breeze, maximum view.

I was very concerned with all the roof glass about how it was attached to the wooden beams that Unisun uses, and if it would withstand Maine weather, need a lot of maintenance, or worst case, future leaks. After all, this all started due to a leaky roof! What I learned was that Unisun uses a system that has been used for 20 years on glass-on-wood structures, and the key was something called "glazing" which comes with a lifetime warranty. I also had concerns about all the roof glass: would it get too hot? Could it take a hail storm, or branches falling on it, or 4 feet of snow? As I learned, Unisun uses a commercial grade safety glass that shades half the sun, cuts out harmful UV, and has half the heat loss of normal thermal-pane glass. Keith put together a detailed plan of what would happen when -- from adding additional support to the deck, to providing drawings as documents specifying what materials and requirements would be met for local building codes. A contract also outlined a payment schedule and what materials had to be on site and/or installed to receive the next draw (there were five payments in all). He handled unexpected circumstances such as sagging beams which needed to be Jacked up and retrieving a cat from the roof ridge! We didn't have an exact timeline, though he was able to provide a rough idea of when certain materials would be brought on site, and also when we'd be able to hook up with the other subcontractors we would need for the project.

Usually the subcontractors came at leisurely, well-spaced times. But one day, Keith, and his assistant Dean Kamp; the heating contractor and his assistant (the Plante's); and electrician Paul Beaudon and his assistant; and a good old Maine ice-storm all arrived at the same time. A wall (external) needed to be removed, pipe run, wires run, and all work needed to be completed by the 12:45 boat. And I was not only just about out of coffee, but of course, the heat was off, half my lights were out, doors were opening and closing! But the finished product was certainly worth the temporary chaos.

I am still very much in the honeymoon period. I have wondered about the casement windows, as I have been caught off-guard by the rain and have sweat-wondering if the windows are closed, racing home to close them. But they seem like the right decision. I enjoy the clear, unobstructed view they offer, and when they are completely open the sea breeze is priceless. From my experience, I'd advise others who are building a sunroom to keep doors between house and the sunroom. We moved a door from the house to the sunroom so the sunroom can also act as an airlock and mudroom. The theory is that the floor insulation and floor covering materials will hold the heat in the winter and reduce heating costs, so it should be a warm winter spot to leave boots! Keeping a door between the sunroom and the house allows me to regulate both heat and cooling of the main house in extreme conditions. Also, I didn't need to entirely glass the roof in order to get adequate lighting to the back of the sunroom -- a partial wooden ceiling works great.

Having a contractor with whom you have good rapport allows you to satisfy yourself fully on your design tradeoffs and what you will get for your money. Now that the sunroom is complete, I can sit on my former deck and still feel I am outside regardless of the weather. I can see lightning, shooting stars and the rising moon through the roof, but be safe from the rain, cold, and mosquitoes. The wood on the back and side walls gives the room warmth and charm, and seems to glow in the light coming through the roof. My animals seem to love the room too, judging by the amount of time they spend out there.
Working with a Contractor

Many if not most who are building, remodeling, or putting up additions today are hiring a "general contractor," and paying a package price for their completed project. A good general contractor, like a good carpenter, is someone who you will feel beholden to all your life. You'll have photos of this person in your photo albums, you'll feel grateful for the expert who cares for your money and your future home as though it was his/her own. Sometimes, however, entrusting your investment to a less responsible contractor has turned a dream into a living nightmare, where not only is a pile of money lost, but home damages are caused that are difficult to recoup. And contractors get duped, too. What can you do to ensure that your contractor/client relationship is a good one?

Paul Leddy, a contractor on Peaks Island who with his partner Peter Houser (yes, that's really his name) has been working on many of the recent prominent new homes and home additions on Peaks Island says first you might read House by Kidder. Then, ask around for recommendations and "send out bids. But don't decide according to the low bidder. Make sure you are comfortable with the people you hire, familiar with their track record, and past clients. Make sure you have a mutual comfort zone. Find the contractor you like, and then negotiate a price that works." A good contractor can help you find a way to reconcile your project with your budget.

You may have heard some horror stories: these ones happened on the mainland: Person X hires a contractor to remodel a kitchen and family room, paying the contractor up-front, but neglecting to get a written contract. Oops. The contractor comes in, tears the house apart, throws the old kitchen and living room into a pile in the yard and disappears with the money, never to be seen again. Or there is this apparently recurring nightmare of homeowners who agree to a remodeling job which is estimated to cost about $8000. Again, no contract. The contractor collects the $8000 (which the homeowner naively believes covers the cost of materials), but then says the work is actually going to cost more. The homeowner pays ever increasing bills to the contractor, and then - insult to injury - is hit with a bill from the lumber yard, which explains that new materials still need to be paid for.

So, what is "standard practice" in negotiating with contractors? In commercial and public contracting jobs, with budgets that might range from $50,000 and up, my husband the engineer says that it is currently standard practice that 10% of money owed to the contractor is withheld from periodic pay requests until the contractor has finished half of the job. From here on, the buyer pays full pay, leaving the buyer with a 5% "retainer" of the contracted price at the end of the project - and something to motivate the contractor to resolve any problem which the buyer might discover at the end. In a large project, half that retainage may be held for up to a year in order to give the buyer the opportunity to judge the quality of the construction work. Says Keith Hults, another document a consumer can rely on is the architectural or contractor drawings, which outline the method and materials specifications.

For private homeowners, it is not uncommon to negotiate "handshake" deals for small jobs just in order to get something done quickly and inexpensively — but a handshake is not a contract. Neighbors give one another different deals than strangers offer strangers - but beware, friendships can be ruined by the lack of a contract. Get a simple contract and hang onto it, even if you have to write it or draw it out yourself.

All of the contractors told me that although each project is unique, they almost always take some payment for materials up-front. Keith Hults said he wouldn't take a payment on materials until within 72 hours from when he would actually be able to begin building. "I have people who want to give me money to buy materials for a project I won't be starting until this fall, and I won't take it. What if something happened to me between now and then? I wait until I'm within 72 hours from actually starting work on a project before I accept payment for materials."

Paul Leddy and Peter Houser don't take payment for materials until the materials arrive on the site - except they do take 10% of the contracted price for a project (which would include 10% of the cost of materials and labor) as soon as a contract is signed, in order to allow them to reserve a time that they could otherwise fill with other projects. Depending on the job and how well he knows his client, Terry Edwards usually takes fifty percent of total payment when a job is half-completed, and the final fifty percent when the job is completed to the owners' satisfaction.

Each of the contractors I spoke with always write out contracts - even with something small, like a deck — so much as to protect themselves as to protect the homeowner, but the complexity of the contracts vary. They universally guarantee their work and chase down manufacturer guarantees for well beyond what you might expect, because for general contractors, reputation is everything.
Gothic Organic
by Jenny Ruth Yasi

“You’d be surprised how a house can soothe you.”

John and Kathryn Zemanek came to Peaks Island in 1980, and began construction of their “period” home—a craftsman home in the sense of function, gothic in its impressioned embellishments. “While building I keep in mind the spirit and attitude of the era.” He tries to aim each area of the house into a style that “naturally” suits its function.

“A living room shouldn’t be romantic and soothing, but a bedroom should be.” John’s living room is a blend of warm woods taken from various sources. The rafters and ceiling boards are from an old pegged barn in Aroostook County and John gestures to the individual markings of each hand hewn beam “Each one has a story.” Massively beautiful oak panels that embrace one corner of the stone chimney living room were taken actually from an old library ceiling in Michigan. A handrail going upstairs from the living room is handcrafted from the handle of a sickle. “It’s oak,” says John, “and what a nice texture the handle has.” The crown molding of a sparkling stained-glass window up over the stairs is fashioned from the name piece section of a grand piano. One has the feeling of being in a truly living home, where every piece of wood has a story to tell.

John Zeemanek has been collecting moldings, vintage hardware, windows, fixtures, and clocks since he was a teen—it seems to be in his blood. Originally a clockmaker and restorer by trade (every five years or so he goes up the Brackett Memorial Church belfry on Peaks Island, to lube the pulleys and check the movements. Bells, he says, function very much like clocks), this led to a natural interest in cabinetry and carpentry, and a love for vaults, arches, steeples.

“As a clockmaker, I got into a lot of grand old homes, churches, steeples, attics. There were no manufactured rafters in those days. In the old buildings, roofs were magnificent, the supports works of art, almost medieval, a whole vernacular of wonder.” John points out the joists, beams and cross supports in his own house, which sculpt a spiraling tower and romantically open roofed attic. “Every single rafter has a reason.” He explains how the force of wind actually adds weight to a house, and follows each joint along explaining how the beams distribute and share the load. “How many new homes have an attic that is functional? New England is probably the last area of America where you can go and step back into the period,” he says, meaning a period of great old gothic Victorian and craftsman homes with open rafter attics. But “attics are being lost as quickly as old barns...” In his attic and tower space he has places to sit and think or read, or gaze out over rooftops and trees down toward the sparkling Portland Harbor. Porches have handcarved balustrade, stones and brickwork open from both his living room and off the kitchen. Architectural sculpting is carried outdoors into a romantic/gothic landscape. I glance both ways in case Robin Hood may come galloping from around a pine.

“I’m 55, and I’ve worked for myself my whole life,” he says. “To become a 4X8 man—I couldn’t do it.” All his lumber is full dimensional lumber, and he points out how well this rough cut lumber fastens. “Maybe the rough is a little bit harder to handle, but it takes a bigger nail.” He points along the inside of his roof and outer walls in the tower. “No nails come through when it’s sided. In a modern house it looks like a porcupine, thousands of nails not even functioning.” He mimics the sound of a nail gun, “boom, boom, boom, hoping there’s a strike.”

John got a degree in English, social studies and journalism, and his entire approach to his home is not only physically sculptural, but also poetic. Words are very important to his conceptualization not only in regards to the idea of “periods” from his point of view—which can be chosen for their functionality and effect in various areas of the home, creating an entire whole complete and living world for the inhabitants—but they are also literally scrawled in subtle spaces between walls. He leaves messages—verse and little poems, maybe a section of a newspaper—for some future craftsman who might find it. “Sometimes I write on the back of something ‘why are you tearing me out?’

John and Kathy have another home in St. Augustine Florida where the family with their two children live and work during the winter. Kathy says that the projects are “never totally complete, we’re always refining,” but she has over the years found a place for everything. The overall effect is a home that’s warm and fun. “You’d be surprised how a house can soothe you. Peace and quiet and architectural embellishment can bring you into a beautiful mood of romantic implication. Old houses watch themselves when you’re gone. They’re living organic things.” Although their house is not actually old, it has a feeling that it has been there forever. Wind rolls up the hill from the shore and the houses manages to both hug the landscape and climb up startled into the trees. “It’s a whole nostalgic adventure.”
The Home That Ted (with his friends) Re-Built
by Jenny Ruth Yasi

Ted Haykal bought "Webber's Store," a building by the TELA tennis courts which had been a Peaks Island general store since 1906 – in 1981. "It was poor starving artist buys first house," Ted says now. "When I found the place, I had so little money to work with, it was the secretary at Port Island Realty who helped me find it." She just gave him keys to every falling down handy-man special on the island. "I was interested in the hip/pyramid roof," he says of the building he bought. "The corners were positioned north, east, south, west, just like the pyramids in Egypt. I was excited about that. It was a matter of restructuring the entire building."

Other than that fundamental structural advantage, and a lovely view toward Great Diamond and Portland Harbor, the building was a mess. Full of store remnants ("It still had registers, deli-cases, even spices still on the shelves"), the sheathing under the clapboards and structural 2x4's were rotted. The house didn't have a lot of interior character - just green and beige walls. There was a lump of dirt outside the house that caused water to run into the basement. And Ted was an artist, not a contractor. "I had to learn how to be a carpenter."

"I decided I'd practice in the basement," he says, and after emptying out truckloads of store debris and fixing the water problems of the basement, he had organized a space which would serve as home while he worked on the upper levels. The project - which has evolved over a decade, gaining towers, glass walls, open communal space and quiet tucked away niches - has been funded with Ted's work as a fine artist. He works for a while, saves up for a portion of the project, and then in a burst of creative labor that often involves friends, neighbors and his apparently endless supply of cousins - he'll complete another phase. Over the years, it is not only the physical shape and space of the building that has evolved, but also his ideals of what he would like to do with it.

"When I first got it, everyone expected me to reopen the grocery store. As an artist, I wasn't planning on opening a grocery store, but I got nervous because everyone had all these romantic stories to tell. I didn't run wiring through one wall in case I needed to tear that wall out to eventually run some kind of food service. But that wasn't my gig." When winters started seeming like the end of the run, he'd complete another phase. Over the years, it is not only the physical shape and space of the building that has evolved, but also his ideals of what he would like to do with it.

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"Originally, it was going to be my home and studio. But it's always been a community space - in the late 1800's it was a dance hall. Making it into a learning center is a way to give something back to the community. There have already been some good classes here. I opened it prematurely as a learning center one year. It was successful - and overwhelming." He realized he wanted to expand the space to overlook the Diamond Island. He added exterior decks, and a tower with a meditation space to help connect the decks.

"And I wound up putting a second tower because I'd taken up the upstairs as a gathering space, and I needed the bedrooms."

In this organic quality - and with the quality of fine materials he has scavenged, reclaimed and recycled - his approach seems to have much in common with John Zemanek. He points out doors and windows reclaimed from big trash pickup. He got beaded oak panels from the old Morrill School in Portland. He favors towers and turrets and duplicated the pyramidal ceiling of the main roof several times throughout the house. But Ted is not a traditional married guy with 2.5 kids -- this whole project has evolved according to his sense of living in the midst of a "non-traditional" family of friends, so why would he want a traditional home?

The communal spaces are large enough to bring the gargantuan furnishings he's collected over the years – an gigantic table, gigantic marble counter top, a gigantic puppet theatre he is building – into a comfortable perspective. The private spaces are tiny and tucked away, retreats from a big, inclusive way of life.

"Cindy suggested the right place to put a hot-tub," he says. "And Brie's favorite colors are purple and green, so that's how we chose the colors of the one of the stained glass windows. Lots of dinners with lots of friends are "part of the amorphous resolution of the structure." It still isn't done – but with a crew of friends (some are usually from Key West) living with him now and eager to get on to the next phase of finishing the upper levels, it seems the process is what really matters the most. "I like the idea that everybody's energies are part of the infrastructure."

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Housemate/Handyman situation desired. Reliable middle-aged man (an engineer by profession) seeks housemate and/or handyman situation for the summer here on Peaks Island. Non-smoking, non-drinking. For more information please call my cellular phone (it's a local call from Portland) at 415-4098

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HARBOR VOICES
Dance Party
Thursday August 24th
Jonas Landing
Peaks Island 6-9 p.m.
with the Sean Mencher Band
Join us, meet the writers, share your thoughts
HARBOR VOICES MEMBERS enjoy free hors d’oeuvres

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Membership in *Harbor Voices* is $30 per year. You're buying a community yearbook, only receiving it on the installment plan...

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Membership form on page five.

**Jokes:**

What does Bill Cosby say when he answers the phone??

Jell-o?  
*Celia Brown*

A businessman walked into a Portland bank and asked for the loan officer. He said he was going to Europe on business for two weeks and needed to borrow $5,000. The loan officer said the bank would need some security for such a loan. The business man then handed over the keys to a Rolls Royce that was parked on the street in front of the bank. Everything checked out and the loan officer accepted the car as collateral for the loan. An employee then drove the Rolls into the bank's underground garage and parked it there.

Two weeks later the businessman returned, repaid the $5,000 and the interest which came to $15.41. The loan officer said, We do appreciate your business and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a bit puzzled. While you were away we checked and found that you are a multimillionaire. What puzzles us is why you would bother to borrow $5,000?

The business man replied, 'Where else in Portland can I park my car for 2 weeks for 15 bucks?'

*Travis Dobson*

Once upon a time there was a town with a new church steeple with a bell that wouldn't ring. People came from miles around to try it. One day a small fellow came up to the priest and said I can do it'.

The priest said Ok, try it.' The little fellow went to the steeple, took three steps back and ran into the bell with his face.  
BONG!! The bell rang and he was hired. One windy day as he took his three steps back to ring the bell, the wind moved the bell. The little fellow missed the bell and fell out of the steeple. He landed in the middle of the plaza where people gathered to see what happened.

The priest came through the crowd and asked, Does anyone know this fellow's name?' Just then one person replies, I don't know his name, but his face rings a bell!

**Favorite Things About Buildings...**

My favorite thing about the Empire State Building is its height.  
*Travis Dobson*

My favorite thing about my house is that it has a cozy living-room.  
*Sophi Pregraves*

My favorite thing about my house is its color.  
*Jaimie Pinkham*

The Marriott Hotel in New York City has a restaurant on top of it with glass walls. While you're eating there, it spins around so you can see all of New York.  
*Jessie Hawkes*

In Quebec City there are tons of churches, including one that has all these bones of saints. They had a whole wall of saint bones, arranged into patterns. In that church, they painted the pillars and walls to look like valuable jade and marble, and they put gold stuff on the ceiling. The church, which used to be part of a monastery, is mostly a museum now, and its really interesting how they raised the old architecture with some new stuff. You'd go through this big stone staircase, and it was all open to the light with a new glass ceiling.  
*Echo Pregraves*

In Freeport, the McDonald's is inside a house, because they want their town to stay old-fashioned, and they do the same thing with mini-malls—they have to put them in mansions. I think its cool because inside they've still got the fireplaces and everything. *Shelbie Flynn*
In those years, your parents were still real small. Matthew was living upstairs from us — he used to come downstairs most nights and tell us all the stories of his day. He had just finished college, he was fishing, and looking to buy a house and marry. He and Maggie seemed a sure thing, but housing on the island was hard to come by. Even though it was a “sellers’ market,” no one had anything they were willing to sell.

I guess that means the economy was good. Lots of houses on the island had been sold a few years earlier — in the “buyers’ market” — when times were tight for everybody and Maine people traded off old family homes for cash earned in New York. But in the years I’m talking about, times weren’t tight. Not exactly. The people who had money were rich, and those of us who didn’t have it seemed like money could land on our doorstep any day. The landlords who had moved in from New York those few years earlier seemed to know as soon as they arrived that they ought to be collecting more in rent. A house with a view like the one we live in — well you can’t rent a place like that in New York for nearly any amount of money. So with summer visitors and tourists looking for bargain vacations, there were quite a few more people looking for a place to stay than there were places to rent. You’d hear Jack listing all the people who’d moved off as though it was evidence of what Jack had to look forward to.

“Connie moved to Alaska. Nancy and her family moved to Boston. Bill and Leslie and their kids went out west, to Kansas wasn’t it? There is life after Peace Island, Matthew. Get a grip. Start looking on the mainland.”

“But I don’t want to live anywhere else, Jack. I’ve lived here since I was fifteen years old.”

“Well I’ve lived here almost all my life, my parents, my grandparents lived out here too, but I can read the writing on the wall.” Jack had been expecting that he’d be moving off ever since my sister sold the old family place to his cousin. He and Judy and your parents had been bouncing around in temporary places all that winter. They needed to get a place to just unpack the clothes and stay year-round.

“We’ve been looking at a place out in Westbrook,” he told Matthew. “The rents are cheaper there, it’s not a bad little town. You can walk all over and we won’t have to buy boat tickets. Maybe we could actually save up, and buy a house.”

You could always tell the two of them from across the street by the way the one of them was always waving the smoke out of his face. Jack smoked too much. “Yeah…” They were putting their heads together. “But you’d think we could come up with something on the island.” Matthew stowed it on, hugging himself as he did. It was a chilly summer. He’d say, “I don’t need a castle.”

“Me neither de-ah,” Jack sometimes brought out the Maine accent for fun, but he didn’t use “dear” with everyone the way some of them did. It was just the way he joked around with Matthew. But mostly Jack smoked more than he talked. Matthew was the big talker. He was on this kick of trying to get everybody to visualize the future. In the long run, it was a good thing for Jack.

“Hey, Jack…tell me about your idea of the ideal place you could live. You know? Tell me about your dream house, your dream living conditions.”

“God, I can’t even think that way Matthew. I’m thinking easier park right now, you know?”

“How are you ever gonna catch what you want if you can’t even imagine what you want? You’ve got to know whether to drop a trap or trawl a net, don’tcha? Come on, Jack,” Matthew had taken training once that made him talk like this: “Form follows thought. Verbalize the dream. Tell me what you want out of life. Just make it real in your mind.”

Jack laughed at this kind of stuff. He was the kind of guy that was always covered in wood shavings, a bear of a man, never even brushed ‘em off his leg, he just liked to let things lay. But Matthew was pretty good at dangling the bait till he took it.

“What the heck,” Jack says. “Well, you know I’d like to have woodshop.” Jack was in the carpentry trade. He had an idea about making wooden toys one day, planning for the day that climbing houses might be a pain. “And when I was in the military, they stationed us for training in France. There were these little tiny villages, all walled in, made of…well geez, looked like sandstone, or dried up dirt. Stucco, sort of. And all the little houses were built with noks and crannies around the inside of the wall. Small, and cozy, like living in big clay pots with windows. Thatch roofs. They were all grouped around a shared courtyard, and a chapel that everyone used. When I saw that, I thought, man, that is the perfect design!” They were talking and reading the bulletin board at the same time as they often did, picking up tacks off the sidewalk and pushing them back in where they might have fallen off. “Give me just a little shack in any cozy village, wall it off from the crazy world…”

“Only problem is, we are the crazy world.”

“You know what I mean — where the kids can run around and be safe. Where Judy could step out the door and have tea with the neighbors any time of the day. Where we could have a garden…”

“…even in the middle of winter!” Matthew had a greenhouse he’d just built, so he pictured that of course. He told Jack, “And if you’re saying that the neighbor’s house is just as important as your own, I’m right with you on that. Cause when I’m old, I want a neighbor who’s stuck around long enough that they can remember me when I’m young.”

Your grandpa Jack had a way of looking down when he smiled. “That’s just what I mean,” he said. “So you, then,” he turned the conversation back to his friend, “it’s your turn now. Visualize.”

Matthew was always chewing off the corner from an envelope when he spoke — he claimed it helped him to think. He said he pictured Maggie there first of all. Pregnant.

It was a joke between them. Jack had the three kids and he was always pushing Matthew to join the Daddy club. So they teased back and forth about who’d have how many. But Matthew was not really in any rush to have kids. They were heading down to the ferry boat, waiting to the mail to come in. “It would be nice to have a little view. I think Maggie’d like that. Even just in the winter, to see me coming in off the water.” He got more serious. “And sun. It would be nice to get heat from the sun. A nice garden spot’d be nice, too.” The boat had come in and people were saying hello. You’d have had to stop any conversation just to say “hi” fast enough in response.

“Well, good neighbors, that’s the thing I like the most about living here.” Eisenhower Montague, who up until that time had only summered on the island, joined them on the bench, sharpening Jack and Matthew around the shoulders. He was one of the wealthiest men on the island, but among the most generous and humble. He never thought his money made him any smarter than anyone else. “So I tell you what. I’m thinking about moving here year round.”

“You and everybody else, Eisenhower,” said Matthew.

“Yeah, good luck boy,” Jack coughed, and lit another cigarette. “We’ve been looking for a place for years. What makes you think you’re going to find one?”

“Thirteen million dollars.”

“Thirteen million dollars?”

“Yeah. The stock market did really well the past few years. Tripled! Lucky me, my mother bought in to all kinds of tech stocks when I was in college. Gentlemen, believe it or not, now I’m richer than the entire Madnaddock County. And this is the

(Continued on page 15)
place I want to be. I’m going to be here. I shall.”

“So who’s house are you going to buy, then?” Jack was doing nicely, Matthew told me, in being encouraging to Eisenhower because Jack, sometimes got defensive over the way rich people seemed to be ruling the world. But it was hard to
blame someone like Eisenhower for economic injustice. Eisenhower had never taken any special pride in having so much money.
It just seemed to land on him. In fact, hardly anyone except our family and your family realized how wealthy he really was. And for
him, the money was a burden. He knew that “unearned income” is always earned by somebody, but who? It just plagued him,
trying to figure out the responsible thing to do with it. But at least he had apparently decided that making a real home for himself
was an ethical investment—and I guess it was no matter how much money it took.
“I want to design my own place,” he said. “I have the whole thing planned out. I’m going to call this my “poet
bachelor abode.” He hadn’t published much at that time. Who could have expected the way his poetry was going to take off?
“I will have the appearance of something out of Swiss Family Robinson. There will be the tree-house element, with skylights that
open romantically over the bed. There will be a hot tub. There will be stars at night.”

“I think the stars come with, there Eisenhower,” Matthew patted his buddy on the shoulder. Here was the wealthiest man
Matthew had ever known, still drinking out of a mug he carried around because he hated to waste Styrofoam. Eisenhower was
wearing one of three pairs of pants he owned. Some people don’t get turned by money, and Eisenhower was one.
Eisenhower said, “I’d like it to be a small place. I don’t want an energy hog. Just a nice simple house, easy to keep clean,
and gentle on the environment. With fake fur rugs by the fireplace.”

“Well, good luck to you de-ar,” Matthew always felt weird saying that, but it got a laugh out of Jack. He was trying not
to feel like a total loser, which was always a challenge in comparison to Eisenhower. “And I’m sure you’ll have it just the way
you like.”

“Don’t be too sure, Matthew my friend.” Matthew said, “I’ve set my sights on a particular piece of property on the
back shore. I had heard it would go up for sale, but now for some reason the owner is stalling.”

“And just which place is that?”

“The Craven Land.”

“Oh!” Everyone on the bench plus three women passing by overhead and gasped in unison.

“Now there’s a spectacular piece of property.”

“You’d better believe it.”

The Craven Land was just down a dirt road and a winding path from the back shore, but tucked up high enough that you
could stand on the ground and feel you were looking all the way to Portugal. The soil there was pristine—deep and rich and
thick. There were roses, wild Maine dogwoods, apple trees and fairy grass fields that had come up along the pond side of the
property. It was tamed, if you will, but a rare island haven. The woman who owned it, Ms. Riche, lived in the second biggest house on the
island, and had bought this property because it had been a good deal twenty years earlier, and she could afford it.

“But money doesn’t mean anything to her,” Eisenhower said miserably. “I offered her one million. She said forget it. I
offered her three million. She won’t even return my phone calls.”

“Life is freaking tough, Eisenhower,” Jack leaned back in his bench. If Eisenhower was having problems finding a place,
what hope could Jack and Matthew possibly have? “I wouldn’t mind a place like that neither. There’d be room for the kids, and
the grandkids…”

“What’s the problem boys?” Jenny, the island real estate agent, came plodding up the hill pulling a cart full of groceries.

“You all look worse than I feel. Is life really that bad?”

“Oh it’s tough,” Matthew was speaking sarcastically. “I’m twenty-eight and still living upstairs from my parents; Jack
here is head of a near-homeless family, and Eisenhower here with all his money can’t get Ms. Riche to sell off her Craven pur-
cel.”

“Geer, if all it took was money, Eisenhower, the place would be yours! But don’t give up yet, man! She put it on the
market!”

“What in tarnation are you talking about?” Jack liked to talk like a southerner too, sometimes, just for effect.

“We had to draw up a contract for it today, with a bunch of other legal papers. She wants the right person to win it.

She’s doing one of those essay contests.”

“An essay contest? Are you kidding? How much does it cost to enter?”

“Two hundred bucks. But she needs to get over a thousand entries before she’s legally obliged to give the Craven Land
away.”

“Oh my God! Oh my God,” Matthew told me they all went into something like a state of shock, they wanted that land
so bad. Knowing Matthew, he was holding himself and jumping up and down. And Jack and Eisenhower would lean way over,
and straighten back up, several times That was how most island men handled shock in those days. Then they’d all go down to the
Legion.

At first, Matthew and Jack thought they’d team up and split the cost of one entry. Jack even gave up smoking, just to
help save up the money.

“So what do you want it to say?”

Your Grandpa Jack was an honest guy. He said, “I want it to say, “If I win this property, I’m going to sell it for three
million to EisenhoweR Montague and then quit my job, stay home with the kids, and be happy for the rest of my life.”

“It’s that all?”

“Yup,” Jack said, “Pretty much.”

“Jack, if we write that, we will never get that place! And I don’t want the breaking three million dollars!”

“One point five,” Jack corrected him, and twiddled his thumbs.

“What the hell?” Matthew hated to argue. “Listen, I’m not going to team up with you if you do it that way. Here Ms. Riche is
trying to do the right thing by the community and you’re just out for the money.”

“Well that’s what my cousin did—he just took Nana Rose’s house, sold it off for a pile and split. It worked out just fine
for him! Listen Matthew if you don’t like it just lump it. I’ve got it all wrin up’ you’ve got the $200 bucks. You just
write your own damn essay.”

So when Matthew realized how bad of a writer Jack was, he figured he’d better cough up the money himself and send
in his own entry.

Pretty much everybody on the island and for four counties around were writing essays. Jenny the real-estate agent said
she was up to the first thousand within a week of the announcement in the papers, and she figured a second thousand were taking
their time and revising. The deadline was for September first.

“Who’s going to judge this thing, Jenny?” Matthew asked her.

“Ms. Riche of course,” she told him. “Ms. Riche and her friends from Boston.”

Over the next few months, people inquired gingerly amongst one another to find out what sorts of things people were
writing and how much effort they were putting into it. Everyone seemed to feel that originality would count.

“What you got there, Eisenhower?” Matthew caught the bachelor-poet sitting with an open notebook at the café.

“Here, I’ll read you just a tad, just to test it out, see how it effects you. Let’s see...”
"The wet soil parted by the deeply rooting trees
is a place where long I've longed
to lick the nectar with the bees.

A simple starry night, a warm and sensuous bath
and willingly I'd share this dream with the lady love who might dare ask.

Matthew took a breath. "Hm! Well, that certainly should catch Ms. Riche's attention. You weren't thinking of inviting her to the hottub by any chance, were you?"

"Why? You don't think I should? I thought it was subtle enough, I mean, that would be nice...I mean...

I think it's great Montague. Just great." Matthew couldn't knock anybody else's effort. He hadn't written a thing yet. He didn't even have the two hundred bucks. Maggie called to invite him over for supper. The entire meal, he seemed distracted.

"I think you're taking the whole thing too seriously, Matthew. Do you know how many entries she's up to now? I've heard she's pulling in something like 400 everyday. And this has been going on for three weeks! The chance that this is going to be worth your two hundred dollars is next to nil." Maggie had her thick curly hair in braids. Matthew couldn't resist the urge to give one a tug.

"I still want to do it. Maggie. I couldn't live with myself if I didn't."

"Yeah, I know." Maggie laughed, her brown eyes twinkling with pleasure. "That's why I'm giving you $200 of my money to waste. I can afford it better than you can. I had a good night waiting." I still want to do it. Maggie. I couldn't live with myself if I didn't."

"I can't take this from you Maggie!"

Matthew shrugged. "I've got writer's block. Jen! I can't think of a freaking thing to say. It just means too much to me. You know, I was looking at my address book, and I was thinking about all the people who come and go off this island, all the phone numbers on my file that are wrong now. I'd take that nice piece of land. But at this point, I'd just take any place, you know? Some little falling down tar-paper shack, or that tin building down at the dump! Hey, that'd be great!" Jenny smiled, but Matthew appeared to be practically crying.

"I can't live any other place! You know it just all seems so futile Jenny because even if I won that place—which sure don't seem likely—I haven't got two cents to build anything on it.

"You can always set up a teepee," she says.

"You know the cops would never allow that. Teepees don't make code.

The roses had gone by and bright red hips were ripening, sending a sticky tangy fragrance up the hill by the ferry dock to the coffee shop. 'Don't you worry about Maggie, you know,' Jenny says. 'She won't care where she lives as long as it's with you.'"

"But I'm not going to take her off this island. She's just got too many generations of fisherman in her to move to the mainland.

"Well,' Jenny squinted and pushed out a bottom lip. 'Why doncha just write that?'"

September first came and went faster than it seemed to at the time. Everyone was eager to get the results of the contest. Ms. Riche and her Boston buddies had been reading and categorizing the essays as fast as they could come in. Me and Grammy Parker actually were on the committee, not that we judged the essays you understand, but we put them into bins according to the way the various judges had graded them. There was a bin for "sappy," and I happened to see Matthew's essay go there. There were bins for "poetic," "unreadable," "obscene," and "funny." I can't really remember all the categories.

There were like twenty of them. Any essay that didn't make it into one of the categories just went into the trash. And then Ms. Riche decided she was only going to select from one category. Funny. She read all of the funny ones.

As you can imagine, it just about caused a new island holiday when Jack and Judy won that piece of property. "But I wasn't being funny," Jack, as usual, couldn't leave well enough alone. He told Ms. Riche, "I was being serious," that cracked her up. She practically fell over laughing. "Well you just go ahead. You just go ahead and sell that land to Eisenhower Montague."

But of course he couldn't. It wasn't that Eisenhowser didn't have the money, he did. But Jack couldn't let go of the only piece of land for sale on the whole island: "I can't do it Eisenhower," he said. "I'm sorry. I've just got to find a way to live right there. Maybe I'll just put up a teepee." But Jack had to do it. Maggie. I couldn't live suddenly his eyes all lit up. "Well, men, how about if we make one mother a deal.

"Pull yourself together Matthew, drunkenness is not becoming." Eisenhowser's voice was more terse sounding than usual.

"I just mean that Jack gets the place and not you, Eisenhower. All your money just means nothing. Hehehehehehehehehehehe!!"

"But Jack had done it. Maggie. I couldn't live suddenly his eyes all lit up. "Well men, how about if we make one mother a deal."

The deal was for a little stone-walled village, a co-housing agreement between the three of them men, Maggie, and Judy. They made a hundred-year plan for the place, which included provisions to make room for grandchildren who might want to stay on at the Craven Land. Eisenhowser pumped the deal with a generous amount of money. Jack and Matthew wound up doing quite a bit of fancy carpentry and what-not. The place as you know is one of a kind. They didn't make stone walls exactly, although there is a lot of stone, and arched door ways, and when you see the place now, you're gonna think you're stepping into a miniature medieval village in England or France. It's real pretty. Maggie and Judy were always good to each other - and they had a heck of a lot of fun raising your parents together. And Eisenhowser - I don't think he ever minded having women around, even married ones, to share a hot tub once in a while.

Join the Conversation
see page 5 for membership details
Silent witnesses: the gray sky, exposed rocks and mudflats reach eastward. The ocean has spilled itself onto the other side of the world. 'Dear God,' whispers Edwina, "what is happening to me?"

To regain a sense of composure, she tries to focus on her many blessings: husband, health, house. Stepping back from the rail, she leans tentatively into the curved, shingled wall of the addition. As the events of the day parade before her, her mind searches for a clue to the origin of this despair. She recalls a brief exchange which took place this morning between herself and the architect. After a final inspection, he stood on the porch casually tapping the handrail as his twins pushed their legs in and out of the space between the rails. "I designed the balustrade four inches higher than the code specifies," he said to Edwina with obvious pride. "A gift. Much safer for children."

'I see tiny limbs getting stuck in the balustrade's negative spaces,' Edwina hears herself tersely reply.

Again and again, she picks through this exchange. As much as she'd like to erase her response, Edwina is most puzzled by the architect's presumption regarding children. Does he envision something in her future which she dreads not imagine? Can she reframe his words, make them the gift, use them to fill her with hope once again?

She recalls the day when the architect and her husband hesitantly showed her the plans for the post modern addition, a Master bedroom suite with a curved pillarred space for a nursery. Sam, inspired by the design, obliquely maneuvered into the subject, "I love the shape, the space it adds to our bedroom," he said urging her approval. "We can leave the option open, don't you think? Who knows, meanwhile you could use the space for painting?"

Edwina hesitated a moment, then said, "Of course, I must keep painting the ocean."

Lunchtime comes and goes yet Edwina is far from being hungry. She stands inside the French doors leading to the new porch, observing the railing's every detail. The positive, each pristine wooden rail, is balanced by its exact negative, turned upside down. She gazes through the line-up of balusters, squinting, trying to create an optical illusion, a technique she learned in art school that forces whatever is horizontal in the background to press forward against the edges of a vertical in the foreground. The result is a dynamic interaction between the two planes. Try as she may to lose herself in her effort to urge the ocean to come forward, Edwina's doubts regarding herself and children do not recede.

There was the day last week. She was outdoors beginning a new painting when the architect appeared for an unannounced inspection, twins in tow. Assuming Edwina would be thrilled to have them in her charge for the morning, he went about his business. At one point while still trying to paint, she caught the boy sliding down the rail. As she was scolding him, the girl darted off, crossed the promenade and descended over the rocks to the water's edge. When Edwina turned back to the house, the boy was nowhere in sight. Clearly, neither she nor her house was cut out for children.

This evening, the first after the completion of the addition, Edwina and her husband relax on the porch outside the Master bedroom. In high spirits, Sam has mixed his best Margaritas for the occasion. Edwina absentely reaches from her lounge to take a salt-rimmed glass from him, keeping her other hand in front of her face, thumb and forefinger forming a circle. With head stretched high to clear the railing, she gazes through her circle while at the same time gauging Sam's every move, waiting for the right moment to again broach the subject, to further explain her need to keep painting.

Sam is used to seeing his artist wife so engaged. She is ever on the lookout for a picture to 'frame', a hint of order in the cosmic disarray she encounters. In public, he professes to be in awe of her talent. However, on more than one private occasion, he has urged her to try a more expressive style, to let go, to venture into Surrealism. Upon seeing the Oakhurst Dairy blimp which hangs untethered over the swelling ocean, he dramatically exclaims, "Such a beast, Edwina, listen, it is meaning! Why not put a blimp in one of your paintings?"

"Dirigible," says Edwina, feeling somewhat negated. She continues to move her finger-frame along the promenade, stopping at a telephone pole.

"Sam," she says, taking a gulp of her drink, "is that pole crooked?"

"What pole?" asks her husband, sounding like he never gave a thought to how power reaches their house. Lifting his hand, he forms his own circle and locates the pole in it. It rises up through his frame, crosses the horizontal swath of promenade, and stops above the ocean's edge right under the blimp.

"Looks fine to me," he says firmly as if to make it so. Assuming that Edwina is edging in to negativity, Sam speaks in a low voice, echoing the architect's words, "The balustrade, that extra four inches on each baluster, shields us somewhat from the impulsive nature of the world, don't you think?"

"If the pole is straight, Sam," says his wife, sitting up in her lounge, "then the whole railing is crooked. The vertical axis of the space between the rails should line up with the pole, right? The handrail with the horizon, right? Look, something is misaligned. At the north end of the balcony, in my circle here, the handrail slants above the edge of the horizon. I see a sliver of sky."

Edwina stands up and moves to the railing, prepared again to walk her husband into the true nature of her painting. Sam moves into Edwina's chair to view the railing from her perspective. They have been married just short of two years, time enough for him to have mastered an array of tactics intended to diminish his wife's visions of impending doom. "Yesterday," he says, twisting a ribbon in Edwina's skirt, "I noticed the other side was off. That means the world has slightly shifted."

Edwina reconsider's her need to draw Sam into her work. Pushing away his hand, she retorts, "We were not here yesterday."

"Well, then two days ago," says Sam pulling himself up out of her lounge.

(Continued on page 21)
He goes into the house and comes back with a second Margarita. "Where's that level," he asks, on a different tack.

"What do you mean, level?"

"That thing I used to balance the washer, you know. It has the tiny window in it, blue-green liquid, clear bubble of air. When the washer was plumb, remember, the bubble rested exactly between the two lines. What box did you pack it in?"

The next evening, after painting all afternoon out on the porch, Edwina again sits with Sam drinking Margaritas in the shadow cast by the balustrade. He places the level on the handrail. The green bubble in its window comes to a place of stillness slightly off center. South.

"Confirmed," says Edwina picking blue paint from her nails, "the rail is crooked."

"No!" exclaims Sam. "The whole house has shifted. Winnie! Get up! We must move all the furniture. To the north side. In each room. The house will then shift back."

"Don't call me Winnie," Edwina pleads. "It sounds so... old. Which reminds me. I must tell you, I need to keep painting the ocean. 1..."

"Did you ever imagine, Edie," he excitedly interrupts her, "that we, the earth are the bubble, that we bob around in some window, that something beyond comprehension holds the level. Where are we, really? What is this frothy illusion of stillness in which we sit, at the mercy of whatever mood this thing is in? Even with this year's disasters, the planet has not taken a nosedive, fallen into a distant black hole. Most weather, wouldn't you agree, fits into the realm of normal? I bet you tomorrow that handrail will be high on the other side. South. Your ocean is shifting."

"It's a bet," declares Edwina, half comforted by Sam's use of your. "I say tomorrow the railing will be high on the North. The same as today, crooked. Look at the stories in the Bible," she says, adding weight to her wager. "Thousands of years, everything is always the same. Crooked." In her head, Edwina lines up all the Little Old Testament evils she remembers from Sunday School. Her stomach registers disagreement with the salty Margarita.

Sam reaches over to touch his wife's cheek. "Hmm. Such hot cheeks. Paint fumes? Passion? Too much salt?"

Edwina's tingling cheeks remind her that tonight she failed to let herself be known. Though Sam's way with words can be intimidating, she blames herself for not taking the chance, bursting into the banter to bring up the topic of her ocean. She cannot fathom how her husband could relate to her overwhelming self-doubts: that she has squandered precious time painting, that she is guilty of too much looking back, regretting. And what on earth would he say if she told him her deepening suspicions, that yes, the architect might be a messenger of God, creating a weak house as just punishment for her sins? Most of all, she fears that her faith in 'for better or worse' disappeared after she failed at having a baby.

Edwina doubts that she will ever be ready to tell Sam that her paintings of the ocean are not representations at all. She regards the act of painting as a prayer, a petition for something desired, similar in spirit to the cave paintings at Lascaux, where by first capturing the image of a beast that could kill, the maker would be sustained by the actual beast.

"Samuel," she will not dare to say, "I fear I am out of control, like the ocean. When I paint it, I lose myself, my demons."

"Symbolism, Edwina?" Sam would have asked with a knowing tone in his voice. "The ocean is you? You think by painting it again and again, the void in yourself will magically be tamed?"

Tonight as Sam hugs the far north edge of the bed, Noah appears in Edwina's dream curving -- of all things -- the level. "It's a spirit level," he says, flinging it up in the air. "I used it to build my ark."

Initially, the dream is lucid. Edwina remains outside of it, aware of her power to control its events. Noah speaks again as he regards the airborne level. "In the story of the Ark, God says he will not have to flood the earth like that again. However, the pains of beings suggest that all things come in twos."

Sam appears on the deck in front of Noah. "God will henceforth make symbolic floods. So all is safe Edwina, calm yourself. We get a second chance to go forth and multiply."

His interpretation is convincing. Edwina steps into the dream, inspired, urging a monstrous wave towards their house. On its crest rides the spirit level. As the wave reaches the porch, it bursts through each baluster's negative space, pushing forth fleshy, bouncing shapes.

"Children flood your house," shouts Noah.

"A Surreal creation," laughs Sam.

"The Second Coming of Water," murmurs Edwina, satisfied with the name. Her body pushes north, into her husband's tractable curves.

\[\text{Susan Helter Webster lives on Peaks Island}\\\text{Balusters hand-carved by John Zemanek.}\]
The red tower house is a landmark on Peaks Island, and its design has inspired several other tower homes.

Contractor Barry Shaw is highly admired on Peaks Island for his craftsmanship in stone and wood. Here he is climbing around up in a tree-house style tower, pointing out distant landmarks.

We imitate architectural stylings — and one feature that is very popular on the islands is the tower, or a variation of the tower. Towers become our hide-a-ways as well as our lookouts.

The tower on a house known as "the castle" originally housed a cistern — state of the art technology in its time, it allowed pressure water for the householders.

Claudia's interesting and unique tower-styled home used to be a public utility. Claudia is a well-respected island artist.

The Fifth Maine Tower may one day become a museum library.

Crossword — Minor Disasters
by George and Cevia Rosol, Peaks Island

We imitate architectural stylings — and one feature that is very popular on the islands is the tower, or a variation of the tower. Towers become our hide-a-ways as well as our lookouts.

30. Greek heroes
34. He gets no respect
36. This may cause Spring set-back
38. Squander
39. Islander's catastrophe
43. Sooner to Burns
44. Colline, e.g.
45. Female moniker
46. Mr. Reister Doister
49. Likewise
51. Plants supplying seeds for canola
52. Reaction to a minor disaster
54. Arm, for instance
56. Disaster not worth crying over
59. Knack
61. Nice Amy
62. 1972 U.S. Open champ
65. Jacob's brother
66. This is to say (2 wds.)
67. Aromatic herb
68. Loo, for instance
69. Seed coat
70. No-see-um

Down
1. Sick of Dijon
2. Get a load of this
3. A Turner
4. Lame ducks
5. Spanish hang-out
6. Hell (2 wds.) furry
7. Bowfin, dogfish

Sariantal disaster (with 10 across)
5. Full moon, for example
10. See 1 across
14. Pavarotti vehicle
15. Japanese lo-mien
16. Egyptian wader
17. Contact
18. ___ to weep (Eccles.)
19. Precedes majesty
20. Mane problem
23. Here the Prince has class
24. Style of film
25. Eastern ruler
28. WWII ration watchdog

8. Courses
9. Diciembre follower
10. First lady, in masculine form
11. Mind
12. Lily of France
13. Dir. Kezar Falls to Portland
21. What "only (Kilmer's) God can make"
22. Catch on
25. Gun supplier
26. A Shearer
27. Automobile fiasco
29. Softly
31. Sound of rear-end accident
32. "arh sounding
33. Eye problems
35. Football stats
37. Reg.
40. Disregard (2 wds.)
41. 1938 Nobel prize winner in physics
42. Qualifying
47. This toy's a corker
48. ___ polloi
50. Senior
53. Pigtail
55. After "going to St. Ives"
56. Stocking mishap
57. Scots urchins
58. These go under sheets
59. Tom, Dick, and Harry
60. Start of 1930 Faulkner title (2 wds.)
63. Nest egg
64. Apr. start-up
Join in the conversation
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Fact  Fiction  Rumor

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Send copy and checks to Harbor Voices, Box 10 Peaks Island, ME 04108.
For more information, e-mail voices@maine.rr.com, or call 766-2390.
## Harbor Business Directory

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casco Bay Kayak Rentals</th>
<th>The Breakaway Lounge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(207) 766-2650</td>
<td>35 India Street * 541-4804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the beach to the right of the dock as you arrive on Peaks stable, ride on top kayaks</td>
<td>Live Music and Dancing Just a Short Walk From The Boat</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unisun</th>
<th>Gilbert’s Chowder House</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>solariums, sunrooms, general contracting</td>
<td>92 Commercial Street * 871-5636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>766-5780 Keith ~ 223 Island Ave. Peaks</td>
<td>GREAT CHOWDAH</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Island Bay Services</th>
<th>Small Boat Maintenance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>766-3375 Covey Johnson</td>
<td>specializing in wherry and tender care, also marina grocery getter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backhoe Work, Earth Work Contractor</td>
<td>George Johnson Hamilton — 758-7779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:george.hamilton@maine.edu">george.hamilton@maine.edu</a></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Casco Bay Family Bike Rentals</th>
<th>The Sean Mencher Combo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>92 Commercial Street 04101</td>
<td>Happy Music for Weddings, Graduations, Birthdays, celebrations of every kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Daniels (207) 415-1254</td>
<td>766-2611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fax:(207) 799-7214</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FETCH <em>We Deliver to the Islands</em></td>
<td>Pet Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munjoy Hill’s Alternative Pet Supply Store</td>
<td>P.O. Box 6247 Cape Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>773-8450 <a href="mailto:fetch@maine.rr.com">fetch@maine.rr.com</a></td>
<td>CLICKER OBEDIENCE TRAINING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 Congress St,Portland</td>
<td><a href="http://www.petpositive.net">www.petpositive.net</a></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th>Island Recreation and Horse Camp</th>
<th>City of Portland Liaisons for Island Issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeanann Alves-O’Toole</td>
<td>Tom Fortier, Island Administrator 756-8288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.O. Box 51 Peaks Island, Maine 04108</td>
<td>Lt. Ted Ross, Portland Police 874-8569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207-766-2763</td>
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