Our theme this month is Good and Evil

Oh no! Could it be that I'm good, AND evil!
Our Future: Good or Evil?

by Jenny Ruth Yasi

At a social studies type event at King Middle school my daughter and her classmates were asked their opinions on the future: will things get better or will things get worse? I felt sad when she told me that she and most of her classmates expect the world to deteriorate. Animal extinctions, ozone holes, wars and violence - to our children, all this bad news they read means life is getting worse. Evil is winning, right? Many kids worry that in 100 years, the earth will be used up. Maybe less, there won't be elephants and whales and Bengal tigers, maybe no clean air, water, or trees! Our media has given our children the gloomy view that human beings are failing in every way.

One of my daughters told me several years ago that maybe she liked animals better than most people, because at least animals don't *mean* to be mean. And when we read stories about human violence and see violence in films, or when people behave like idiots or bullies, it can be quite a disappointment. She asked, why are people so mean?

But what's even more curious to me is, why are people so kind? When a dog or a tiger kills a rabbit for example, they don't feel guilty. Humans feel guilt and remorse. Even when taboo against killing is broken, we still know killing is wrong. Animals don't know that. I've seen a cat gobble up a kitten, a flock of chickens gobble up a chick. It animals had as much power in the world as people do, we'd all be in trouble.

One child tried to tell me that pets are so much nicer than people, and I had to explain that when scientists observe wild and feral animals, there is really NOT a heck of a lot of kind generosity and gentleness going on. That's only in the movies. Wild dogs kill each other. I've seen a dog eat a kitten. I've witnessed pet dogs that killed a pen full of rabbits just for the fun of it. Bad as human weapons are, I'm very glad cats don't have bombs. Be proud of being a human. If you and your dog were both starving, if the dog found a chunk of meat in the yard, he would grab it and run under the rosebush to eat it. If you got there first, you'd be divided in two. Domesticated animals aren't very generous, but they become gentle - thanks to generations of being raised, fed and taught by human beings! Human beings, as a rule, teach animals kindness and gentleness.

In Robert Wright's book, "The Moral Animal: Evolutionary Psychology," the author explores research which is asserting that human empathy and compassion are genetic traits, selected because they help to survive. These traits and compassion might be dominant traits, and evolution is leading us to constantly become kinder, because human beings which can't love and care for one another cannot survive. Cooperation works better, in terms of survival, than competition - and this may be true across all species. Mother Nature's big plan in a nutshell is this: Evil loses.

Humans have entire institutions built to support our caring instincts. We have hospitals not only for humans, but also for sick and injured animals. We've begun shifting policies to protect the environment and vulnerable species. If you think this is a violent world, you ought to be impressed back to the Middle Ages where women were owned as property, and routinely hung as witches. Back to when capital punishment involved getting eaten by a lion, tongues were cut off liars, and children were not given much chance to be children at all. There is much evidence, contrary to what you see in television, that life today is better than 1000 years ago, and the future will be better than today.

Okay, so sometimes human goodness fails. Our compassion doesn't always rise to the level of our fear or greed. The eternal battle between good and evil seems to be running a race even closer than between Gore and Bush. That's what makes the world go around.

Here's a handy example: when the "evil" human rights protesters from Kansas came to Maine holding up their cruel, ignominious signs ("Fags Die. God Laughs"), they mostly had an effect opposite from their evil intention. They demonstrated not that homosexuality is ugly, but that hatred is ugly. Evil often works that way. Like a diabolical personal trainer, evil kicks us right off our butts. Facing up to evil ultimately strengthens the good muscle —our compassionate understanding — of human nature. And since we can't escape evil conflicts, we better know how to use it for the good.

When I was a kid, I used to marvel at all the changes my grandparents had experienced — the first man on the moon, the first television and radio, the introduction of Buddhism to the west, the shrinking size of handwriting. But new things have changed a lot for me, too. Growing up, I never imagined cell phones or the internet, seventy years olds who dance for a living, or the kind of social openness which makes room for same sex love and marriages! Change isn't always bad. Today, we have more freedom than in the past. Women vote, pneumothorax is treatable, people understand lead and mercury and prevent poisoning that used to be common. For every war we've ever waged, we've probably avoided two. The United States has achieved diplomatic successes that 100 years ago would have been impossible to imagine.

Fear of the future is a kind of evil that paralyzes, predicting the worst, and making us long to escape. But there is evidence, if we look for it, that we can happily anticipate the future. Don't let the media predict the future. You predict your future, good or evil, by listening to the thumping of your own amazing human hearts.

Like to write? Send your writing to Harbor Voices Box 10 Peaks Island, Maine 04108 or to voices@maine.rr.com

Upcoming themes: February, Love Stories, March, Money, April, Transportation. If you're interested in being a guest editor and putting some writers together on a theme, contact us.

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Today there remains an age-old polarization between those who believe they are in the "good" and those they call "evil." A recent visit to Maine by a flock of fundamentalist parishioners from Kansas serves to illustrate this point. Their strong ideas of "good" (themselves) and "evil" (homosexuals) makes me wonder about the inner, psychological workings of this clan. Is their enemy truly "out there?" Or is it someplace "within." Freud would have considered their protests a straightforward "reaction formation," in which one vehemently protests something which is actually an impulse coming from within. In other words, a "defense mechanism."

Consider the (former) head of the Southern Baptist Convention who helped spearhead the movement to impeach Clinton for his affair with Monica Lewinski. He recently was charged with exposing himself to a male undercover officer in an Atlanta park known for gay "cruising." This was his second charge in a year. Perhaps, as Buddha said, "it is man's own mind, not his enemy or foe, that lures him to evil ways."

In Latin, evil originally meant any word or deed that tended to allure or entice a person into wrongdoing. One could deliver evil, receive it, or worse, voluntarily do both. To "sin" meant to become "off the mark," or to have swayed from a path and become lost. Evil is also linked with the word "error," which meant to wander and stumble into things of unknown origin. Evil was also synonymous with the word "scandal," which described an unfortunate challenge or twist in one's life, an impasse or stumbling block which one metaphorically tripped over from time to time. Both scandal and error included the positive notion that evil is as an opportunity to develop and muster one's resources, and that human and biological "errors" are necessary for the continual evolution of all life-forms.

The word evil also comes to us from the Greek word "diabolo," from which we get our word Devil. In the Greek version of the Bible, the Devil is described as a kind of roving spy who gathers information about people to report to his heavenly master or god. He was notorious for slander and for provoking protests which he in-turn reported and punished.

During the Middle Ages the Devil began to take on the form of an impulsive, animal-like human with horns and a tale. Rabbinical thought linked Satan with "evil impulses" while Christianity spoke of a person being "possessed." Along these lines Freud saw the Devil as representing one's own repressed impulses—a wish fulfillment of desires we dare not admit even to ourselves—like the Southern Baptist apparently discovered.

We all succumb to "evil" distractions now and then. Without them there would not be human, believe there needs to be some room for errors, scandals, and other challenges if we are going to continue to grow and prosper on the path of biological, psychological and moral evolution. To me it seems that the absolute polarization of good and evil is the ultimate sin, in the sense of being "off the mark." Sometimes those who protest "evil" strongly are adrift from their own natural path of being, of being "good." It is at one's own peril that one attempts to define good and evil, for as Emerson wrote, "Every sweet has its sour; every evil has its good."

Behind the scenes:
Guest Editor's Introduction.

A few months ago Jenny asked me if I was interested in being a guest editor for Harbor Voices. This basically entails pulling together the theme section ("On the Topic") of the newspaper, and thinking about the presentation of the theme as a whole. Hopefully, this "Guest Editor" role can get more people involved with the composition of the paper, and give Jenny a chance for her to catch her breath in the other aspects of the paper. Of all the upcoming themes she suggested at the time, I was most attracted to Guest Edit the theme of "good and evil." I suppose it was because of my degrees in philosophy and psychology, and that I currently teach an undergraduate course on Ethics. But soon I began to dread the decision and thought, "how can one even begin to approach such a huge topic in such a small paper?"

Moreover, I worried that either there would be no contributions, or that the ones that did come would be somehow way too controversial or inappropriate.

I'm pleased to report that my concerns were unfounded. Rather, this issue features a plethora of quality contributions - not only from "fact" to "fiction," but also opinions, local music reviews and (check our centerfold) a Scott Nash cartoon! Luckily it's not too difficult to find at least some arguments that make all this fall loosely under our theme of "Good and Evil." If we inspire your thinking, we hope you'll send us your comments.

Special thanks to all the contributors, and to you the reader who now make this a living, breathing document. And thanks also to Jenny who, this month officially our "managing editor," for creating this "voice" for our harbor.

Matthew Day lives on Peaks Island.
A RESPONSE by

Joel Goodman

The anti-Israel article by Arnold Berndt in your November, 2000, issue, begs for a reply. The half dozen erudite, personal definitions of Zionism printed on the opposite page as the editor’s research into Berndt’s remarks do not begin to address the many misstatements in his article.

Berndt’s statement that Zionism is racism is almost a direct quote from an Arab sponsored UN Resolution, and immediately identifies his one-sided sources of information as pure Palestinian propaganda.

He states that he fled Israel in 1948. This was the year that Israel became a State by UN vote, and the time when many thousands of Arabs were urged by nearby Arab governments to leave their homes temporarily. They were told they would soon return when the Israelis were pushed into the sea.

It almost sounds as if Mr. Berndt was one of those who fled and blames Israel for his error in judgement.

Yes, Israel will welcome Jewish settlers and offers them immediate citizenship. This ‘Law of Return’ was written to give the remnants of European Jewry a country to call their own after the Holocaust. However, Arabs living in Israel today are also citizens and have their elected representatives in the Knesset (Legislature).

Contrary to Mr. Berndt’s statement to the effect that Arabs cannot enter the high-tech sector of Israel’s economy, it is interesting to note that just a few weeks ago a conference organized by the Jewish-Arab Economic Development Center in Herzliya, Israel, began an initiative to integrate more Arab citizens into those industries. Mohammad Zuabi, the Center’s technology coordinator, was quoted as saying that 1,000 recent Arab university graduates in relevant high-tech fields are almost all ready to be absorbed into these industries.

I have no idea where Mr. Berndt got his information about the Arab population being deprived of water. In actuality, Israel never helped itself to water beneath Palestinian lands. Israel obtains about 50% of its water from the Sea of Galilee and the Coastal Aquifer, both of which are entirely within Israel’s pre-1967 borders. Another 30% comes from the Mountain Aquifer system. Over 40 million cubic meters of water per year from sources within Israel is shipped to Palestinian communities in the West Bank and another 4 million goes to the Gaza Strip.

From 1967 to 1995 West Bank Palestinians increased their water consumption by 640% as Israel’s increase of only 142%. This huge increase in Arab consumption was made possible because Israel drilled over 50 new wells for the Palestinian population and laid hundreds of miles of water mains connecting hundreds of Palestinian villages and towns to the newly built water system! The Director General of the Arab West Bank Water Department, Taher Nassreddin, has stated that there were no restrictions on drilling new wells to accommodate the Palestinian population growth. It is important to note, however, that for political reasons some Palestinian towns and villages refused to be hooked up to the new water system. Doing so, the Palestinian officials felt, would legitimize the Israeli occupation. The loss can be blamed on them alone.

The Irgun (not ‘Irgang’) and the Stern Gang’s activities, prior to Statehood, were directed primarily toward the British. Britain was mandated the land after World War I and in order to court favor with the Arabs did everything in its power to stop Jewish immigration. (Remember the film “Exodus!”) These ‘guerrilla’ groups may have done their share of killing, but they did not strafe school buses and bomb innocent shoppers in busy marketplaces as the Palestinians have done these past several weeks.

Berndt laments the fact that America supports Israel. Apparently he does not understand the reasons behind this strong support. A nation does what is best for its own self interest. The US supports the only democracy in the Middle East, Israel. We have vital military bases in Israel, and when push comes to shove in that region Israel is the only country we can depend upon. Our foreign aid to Israel and our supplying modern weaponry to Israel (which they buy from us) is in our best interest.

The peace process that was convened this year at Camp David was doomed because Arafat wants all of the land of Israel. Prime Minister Barak offered 90% of what the Palestinians wanted, more than any previous Israeli government had ever offered, yet Arafat refused. Soon after, the uprisings began, with children in the front lines throwing rocks, backed up by adults with guns, Molotov cocktails, and grenades! The IDF (Israel Defense Force) tried to quell the uprising with rubber bullets and tear gas, but in the face of death-dealing bullets they, as would we, had to respond with the same force. Berndt says the visit to the Temple Mount, a Jewish religious site in Israel proper, by Ariel Sharon with “hundreds of armed Palestinian soldiers” [editor’s note: Mr. Berndt intended this to read “Israeli soldiers”] precipitated the uprising.

Actually, the noting started several days prior to Sharon’s visit.

As I write this the uprising gets bloodier. Hopes for peace are dwindling. But, when the Palestinians finally see that they will not prevail, and the bombs and shelling stop, the US will, hopefully, try once again to become a peace-maker. It is in our best interest. After all, World War III could begin there.

Joel Goodman is a Portland native whose family moved to Auburn when he was in grade school. He has been president of L-A Community Little Theater, the Maine State B’nai B’rith, the L-A Jewish Community Center, the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation, and is now an active participant and director Temple Shalom in Auburn. He cleared several of the facts within this article with Boston-based CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America).”

Svea dances as she tends bar at the Legion, where people remember why war sucks, and aim to make peace instead.
Food for thought...

Another Year! 2001 — WOW!

Another New Year — another page in our history— another chance at life, at reconciliation and forgiveness.

Another opportunity to love ourselves, love our neighbors, to share love, show love by looking and seeing, listening and hearing, speaking and meaning well; and doing with tenderness whatever needs to be done in case of need.

Oh — the blessings we all do have but nothing will come of this love unless we RESPECT! A seven letter word that includes so much.

And it begins with respect for self, for others, for their differences, for all possessions both personal and otherwise, and most of all the wisdom to tolerate.

Who are we to judge another's color, culture, religious and civic beliefs and attitudes? Many people have hidden problems and concerns. An old Native American saying goes — "Never judge a man until you walk a mile in his mocassin." How true!

So in this new Year let us all count our blessings — yes, we do have many. Just stop a minute and think — really think.

And thank your HIGHER POWER!

Praise God!

Marjorie Erico

Hello Jenny,

I thought I'd pass on some photos to you, taken of the Islands' Picnic (coordinated by the Coast Guard and Portland Partnership members) on Cliff Island. School children and their families from Long, Peaks, Chebeague and Cliff come together in October for a wonderful scavenger hunt and picnic. You can ask Barbara Hoppin for details — she was there.

Also, Barbara joined the Cliff Island school kids in making apple cider using an "ancient" press on the island, so I sent that photo along also.

Love "Harbor Voices." Keep up the good work.

Yours,

Libre Cusack

On Cliff Island, pressing apple cider

Corrections

Thank you all for your patience. Our copyediting problems are partly technical (one example: we don't have a printer) and partly overworked human error.

Last month, after moving from a funky computer into a new one, somehow the edited version of Arnold Berndt's story "Fighting over a Holy Place" was replaced in layout with the unedited version. I'm sorry to say this error was discovered only after the paper was already distributed. Arnold was very gracious and understanding, but I felt terrible about it. My apologies.

Right now, each issue surprises us when we see it for the first time in print. By the time our next issue rolls around in February (January, we pause publication for a rest!), hopefully we'll have a working printer, fewer surprises, and Harbor Voices will be able to serve you better. Jenny Ruth Yasi
Citizens for a Comprehensive Plan

By Jenny Ruth Yasi

I recently observed a meeting of the “Campaign for a Comprehensive Plan” on Munjoy Hill. The big agenda item was a discussion of “Neighborhood Planning Units,” which is the system used in Atlanta Georgia to involve community members in city planning. Howard Arnold had put together a “draft proposal” for how community participation might be handled. This was his “rough draft” for a proposal to the City of Portland. The group is still developing the idea, and they welcome and want your feedback.

(Draft) Neighborhood Planning Unit System (NPU)

The Neighborhood Planning Unit system is established to provide an opportunity for citizens to participate in developing a vision and long range comprehensive plan that will be an effective policy guide for the orderly development of the city. The NPU system also provides a way for citizens to receive information concerning all functions of city government and enables citizens to influence city planning and development activity to best meet the needs of neighborhoods within the city.

The council shall establish a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) which, with the assistance of the city Planning Department, shall divide the city into a number of Neighborhood Planning Units, each having either a distinguishing characteristic or in which the residents have a sense of identity and a commonality of perceived interest, or both. Factors that may contribute to neighborhood identity include shared development, history, architecture, social and economic relationships, physical boundaries and the existence of one or more broadly representative neighborhood organizations devoted to neighborhood preservation and improvement. The CAC and Planning Department will hold a number of meetings to inform those residing within each unit's boundaries, the purpose and workings of the NPU system. Election shall be held under the guidance of the CAC and the Planning Department for the NPU officers; and each NPU will establish its own bylaws.

How the Neighborhood Planning Units Could Be Established

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How the Neighborhood Planning Unit System Might Work

NPU's meet on a monthly basis to consider community concerns. Membership is open to anyone 18 years or older whose primary residence is within the NPU and any individual, corporation, organization, institution or agency that owns property or has a place of business or profession within the NPU. Each shall have one vote and each may vote in only one NPU. Committees within the NPU may recommend an action, a policy or a comprehensive plan to the city and any city agency on any matter affecting the quality of life of the membership within the NPU. Some of the issues include land use, transportation, zoning, the environment, housing, parks and open space. Plans for construction (outside of routine, ongoing maintenance), both public or private, shall be submitted to the NPU at the earliest practical date for review, comment and recommendation to the appropriate city agency before any approvals for construction shall be granted or any fiscal or other material support be provided by the city. The NPU does not have the power to deny any construction within its area of interest; however, members individually or collectively, may appeal any action of the city or any other government agency. The chair sets the NPU meeting agenda, with assistance from an assigned city planner, who will also be responsible for mailing monthly meeting and agenda notices to the membership and providing technical assistance to the NPU as needed.

Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs), and Private Ownership of the Ocean

Submitted by Peder Ashley

I got this out of a Greenpeace report: “Individual Transferable Quotas (ITQs) would privatize fisheries by allocating exclusive ownership rights to a percentage of the harvest to boat owners on the basis of prior catch history. Under this system, each share would be transferable; shareholders could sell their shares or buy others just as they would buy and sell futures on the commodity market. ITQs would institutionalize the process of consolidation now underway, rewarding those with the largest capital and biggest fleets. Conglomerates like Tyson Seafoods or RGI-owned American Seafoods would be allocated the largest shares, based on the recent fishing history of their boats. They would also be able to buy up additional shares of the fishing quota, taking the politically messy allocation process out of the public’s hands and letting market forces decide who will fish. In short, the wealthiest can effectively buy control over the fishery.”

Those of you who are not worried about our oceans should be terrified about ITQs, because they will also affect the economic well-being of our waterfront, and the environmental well-being of our bay.

Larger trawlers do more damage, hire fewer people, and they contribute less to small business, less revenue to our state. Some of these ITQs could contain lobster landings! Transfer of lobster landing quotas are allowed in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Watch for more information on ITQs in the February issue of Harbor Voices.

Peder Ashley is a fisherman who lives on Peaks Island.
Peaks Deer Management

The rules for distributing deer (whole) which will be called from the herd this year have been set. If you'd like to get a deer, you must be an island resident, must attend the mandatory meeting (see below), must abide by rules of acceptance contract (deer kept on Peaks Island, kept out of public view, disposed of properly). A list by lottery will be developed at the mandatory meeting. Participants will be called according to order of list, and when a deer is available, Participant must accept the deer immediately or be moved to end of list.

Peter Dean, a 27 year island resident, is the one and only designated depredation hunter on Peaks Island. From the beginning he was opposed to a depredation hunt, but "since it needs to be done, I ought to be the one to do it." He is a gun safety instructor with fifty two years of hunting experience.

The period for the depredation hunt is set at January 2—March 1 2001, though it will be assessed at two week intervals and may end sooner. Watch the bulletin board for postings which will notify the public prior to onset of activity.

"This is not an open hunt, this person will not be roaming the island," says Tom Fortier, Island Administrator for the City. "It’s seven carefully selected sights of which public safety was the first criteria." For more information watch island bulletin boards for postings, or call 756-8288.

Mandatory meeting for those who can take an entire deer. Monday Dec 18th 6 p.m. or Thurs. Dec. 21 6 pm Peaks Island Community Room

All Photos on this page, by Steve Schuitt

Whaleback, December 2000  Steve Schuitt photo

"It’s a no-brainer," said Tom Fortier, City of Portland neighborhood liaison, who received several complaints about the reclaim. "It doesn’t belong on the backshore." He’s investigating whether the DPW will be able to remove the material and replace it with dirt, or whether they will just cover the asphalt.

Over the past few years, I have been hearing complaints about how the City is using "reclaimed" asphalt to repair and surface some of the Peaks Island roads. There were a number of people upset a few years ago when the back road to Tolman Heights was surfaced with this material; the old road was just one long set of ruts and the locals liked it that way—if it kept the tourists and other riffraff at bay. The road is still steep and winding, but the smoother surface has held up well for the last three years. And the City has continued to use the stuff to fill potholes and re-surface gravel roads.

Recently, reclaim was used to surface most of the gravel turn-outs along the back shore road, and it was used to build road shoulders. Reclaim is the ground-up asphalt material that is produced when paved road surfaces are removed as part of a construction project. The City has brought a lot of this material out to the island from construction projects on the mainland over the past few years: Now, there is a big stockpile of reclaim on the island from the current Island sewer construction project.

Aesthetically, reclaim looks a little trashy. In some of the reclaim surfaces, I have seen chunks of pavement, some of it with yellow or white paint. It doesn’t ever get smooth like a paved street, although it does stick together over time and it forms a harder surface than a gravel road does. It’s certainly not new, and sure it’s good to recycle stuff, but why is it only good enough for Peaks Island? I don’t see it used on the mainland, but I don’t drive on a lot of gravel roads.

On a recent walk around the backshore, Jenny and I noticed the new reclaim surfaces. We wondered, were there always so many turn-outs along this road? Does every bench need it’s own parking spot, or two? We tried off the paved road, and took the dirt/gravel road toward the new transfer station. Only two cars passed us on this stretch of road, but both times they kicked up a cloud of dust unpleasant to breathe. We held our breath as long as we could. Farther along, there was a stretch of road that was surfaced with the reclaim material, which would have greatly reduced the dust from passing cars, but none passed us here.

So the question is, where is it appropriate to have pavement (or reclaim pavement) surfaces? Yes, the reclaim material will not erode or spread as much as the gravel/dirt surfaces do. Maintaining the road shoulders will help keep the paved road from deteriorating, assuming that’s what we want. Where we allow vehicles to drive on roads (and that’s another question), a surface paved with reclaim is less toxic than new asphalt, less dusty and longer lasting, than dirt. But I don’t think we want to pave over every flat piece of ground that could be used for a parking space. Every time a road is improved, it seems to get wider. The bigger issue is just under the surface (pun intended) of what to me is a smaller concern about the impact of using reclaim on Island roads. It’s not the material that is the problem. It’s what we are doing with it.

Albert Presgraves is a senior civil environmental engineer. He and his wife of 16 years (Jenny Vast) are raising two children on Peaks Island.
Sixth grader Shellbe Flynn from Peaks Island has been thinking about how the homeless prepare for winter, and she organized a successful drive on Peaks Island to donate coats, blankets and towels to the Preble Resource center. Congratulations, Shellbe!!

I got the "Winter Snow Reminder" from John Peverada, Parking manager for the City of Portland. I found it kind of funny where it states, "Contrary to popular belief, the City DOES NOT enjoy towing cars." We never thought it was the City that enjoyed towing cars. But anyway, "The reasons for implementing the snow parking bans are as follows: 1. Reduces snow plowing costs by 20%-30% per storm 2. Allows snow to be pushed directly to the curb, resulting in: a) wider streets and roadways during winter months for driving and on street parking, B) open roadway drainage systems. 3. Removal of on-street obstructions allows for faster plowing speed, thereby decreasing plowing resistance time and eliminating the possibility of unplowed streets. 4. Allows faster response of emergency vehicles during winter storms. 5. Reduces property damage to private property and municipal equipment." So regardless of how the City feels about it emotionally, "All vehicles left on City of Portland streets during a snow parking ban will be towed at the owner's expense." To find out if a snow ban is in effect you can call 879-0300, listen to radio and television broadcasts, go to www.portlandpublicworks.com; check the time and temperature sign above One City Center which will flash "Park Ban," or notice that it's snowing and ask around.

The Peaks Island Land Preserve is having a meeting December 11th (7 pm Brackett Memorial Church) to discuss their plan to protect Peaks Island recreational open space from development. Their plan calls for PILP to obtain a conservation easement from the City to PILP. This is the approximately 90 acres of land in the center and backshore of Peaks Island, that was originally given to the City by Casco Bay Island Development Association (CBIDA), with the informal intention that the land be reserved for open space. The "gravel pit" and transfer station properties have been set aside from this request for conservation easements. If you're interested, contact PILP at Box 99, Peaks Island Maine, and attend the meeting if you can. It will be important to the City to get a clear indication of island support.

The Loretta Voyer Fund was established this year to support islanders who are receiving radiation or chemotherapy, to get them door to door from their island home, to the hospital, and back. Stephanie Elliot says she appreciates the service very much. "It makes all the difference in the world," she says, "to be able to just ride in a car over and back, and not worry about the cost." Volunteers play many roles in the project, including accompanying patients, and they make difficult treatments much easier to bear. If you wish to offer you help and have not had a chance to do so, please contact Claire or Monique at 766-2220.

Peaks Island Public Safety
We actually had a few crimes in November. A house on Sterling was entered, the laptop and cash taken from the kitchen table. The monks had their car stolen and totaled. Paint was sprayed around. The dog owner was summoned. The police told me that a first offense dog bite costs only about $25, which hardly seems adequate for the offense, but that the victim can act through the courts for a more significant remedy.

In even more disturbing news, a dog bit a person right on the back shore. The person was sent to the hospital for stitches, and the dog owner was summoned. The police told me that a first offense dog bite costs only about $25, which hardly seems adequate for the offense, but that the victim can act through the courts for a more significant remedy.

Peaks Island Neighborhood Association News
• The Peaks Island Neighborhood Association Health, Education and Social Services committee is putting together a survey to begin the process of formally gaining public feedback on island needs. This information could be used (among other things) to inform the design of a closure plan for the "Gravel Pit" located on Upper A Street. There are a lot of different groups all working separately toward the same general goals of meeting community needs and protecting the island quality of life, but what seems to be missing is any sort of rallying behind a comprehensive plan. A survey is an important first step in really measuring and prioritizing island needs, and beginning to design and plan in comprehensive way. If your group would like to collaborate on a community survey, contact 766-2390 or 766-2514, and help get the survey written.

Suelle Roberts has unfortunately resigned from the PINA steering committee due to family commitments. It's a real loss for PINA.

• The Planning and Land use committee is also doing a survey, this one just to measure interest in zoning changes for the Business Zoned areas of the island. The City will be assisting Planning and Land use in their process of looking at zoning issues in island Business zones. If there is interest, this topic will be explored further at the next general meeting.

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Ocean Gateway:
Good and/or Evil?
By Jenny Ruth Yasi

On Wednesday, December 6th, the City hosted a Waterfront Planning Forum that was actually a fun meeting to attend! If you missed it (and you probably did, since only about forty people came), too bad! There was practically a Who’s Who of Portland White Male Leaders. In attendance with Tom Fortier, Phineas Sprague, Alan Caron, Peter O’Donnell, Alex Jagerman, Chris Clark, John Carroll, Don Perkins, Alan Helt, Pat Christian, Lou Ensel (all men) were a smart collection of involved Peaks Islanders, including women, engaged in small group discussions.

And the meeting was actually “facilitated” (not “led”) and with flip charts to record both our worst fears and our highest hopes, and there were many signs that several people in City of Portland Administration actually know how consensus building processes work (except they forget to include women), and they intend to use those processes with Gateway. We even had a chance to communicate our esthetic values by rating images depicting various architectural and development scenarios posted on the walls. The City passed out a list of “Working Principles” which we were asked to rate. Neighbors were impressed, entertained, and hopeful.

All the coy democratic feeling of involvement at the meeting, some feared, might give way to plans that are already made. Even the least skeptical wondered how the City will ever reconcile the various parties who have interests in the waterfront. But also heard were several enthusiastic voices saying, hey, if the City really can incorporate all these ideas, concerns, and dreams — this Gateway thing will be a great thing!

Some of the things that people didn’t want was more light and noise pollution; they were also worried about protecting clean air and water. Preserving the waterfront atmosphere of safety, particularly for island schoolchildren, was mentioned many times. Island parking, and minimizing traffic was a biggie.

Things people did want to see was waterfront access, more places for boats to tie up, a pedestrian friendly waterfront, and an emphasis on prioritizing and preserving residential quality of life rather than catering mostly to tourists. Nobody wanted “Disnification” of the waterfront, and as Cynthia Cole said on leaving, “I just came back from Orlando, and I’d hate to see Portland become like that.” There was a strong desire to see the Portland waterfront continue to look and work like “Portland Maine,” and not like anywhere USA.

Do you get tired of reading what JY has to say? Then write yer own damn news and send it to Harbor Voices. Box 10, Peaks Island, Maine 04108

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American Legion Post
142 wishes to sincerely thank the following businesses and individuals for generously contributing to the Skateboard Park Fundraiser.

To the unspoken people who preferred not to have your names published, our gratitude goes out to you! Peaks needs to provide a place for the children to practice roller sports so they are not in the streets. The overwhelming support has been a great encouragement in this endeavor.
On the Topic

Musings on Good and Evil

By Robert Paradis

What is right and wrong sometimes isn’t very clear at all. Sometimes I feel as though there’s some larger part of the picture and we are not meant to know—even when we are being righteous or wicked. Are there forces we might be tempted to call “good” or “evil”? Are we talking about “forces of nature”? “Human nature”? Behaviors? Or what?

In a talk I attended last year by Rabbi Harry Sky, he spoke of light and dark as metaphors for good and evil. He suggested that we, like our society and dependable neighbors the trees, have in us “acorns” which contain all the information needed to reach our full potential. We each have the ability to reach toward the light and grow, or to settle for the dark and stagnate. In us the dark is the critic, the naysayer—that which is quick to attack our mistakes of judgment, our limitations, and to point them out as evidence of our unworthiness. Our fear of doing the wrong thing might stop us from acting at all. Those who have been hurt deeply by life are especially hesitant to venture into new, scary territory.

In a community of independent, creative, perhaps headstrong individuals a naysayer can rear its head in the form of gossip, judgment, or pettiness. It is sometimes easier to jump to conclusions than to stop a person and ask them how their day is going. In some of us the critic is highly developed—it is hard to resist or overcome. The hope, according to the Rabbi, is that ultimately the light will come to the forefront and illuminate the darkness—that the yea-sayer will have its day.

In a close island community there is great opportunity for doing “good” works. If somebody’s car breaks down you give them a ride. If someone gets off the boat with a large load you help them. If someone drops a bottle while running to the ferry, others help pick up the glass so he can make his day. In some of us the critic is highly developed—it is hard to resist or overcome. The hope, according to the Rabbi, is that ultimately the light will come to the forefront and illuminate the darkness—that the yea-sayer will have its day.

Perhaps all we can do is accept that in any transaction or interaction we have the ability to lean toward yes—to work for a higher good for both parties. Or we can lean towards no—towards criticism and negation of the life of our neighbor’s fullest expression.

Robert Paradis works with wood, words, and young folks and can often be seen running to catch the ferry with his dog Zoro.

On Resurrecting Faded Friendships Following Divorce

By Jennifer Farley

Trying to hold onto past relationships is a good that can become an evil, the proverbial wolf in sheep’s clothing. An especially delicate moment is upon hearing word of an old friend’s new divorce.

About four years ago, on the heels of leaving a bad marriage, I found myself inundated with telephone calls, sympathy notes, and other expressions of concern made by people with whom I had been in touch only two days. Simultaneously, a few of the people with whom I had been extremely close dropped out of sight.

Why? In a nutshell, I think that many privileged, ambitious people in their 30’s can be incredibly curious of other people’s victories, and smugly satisfied with their failures.

Abandoning a marriage—even a troubled one—may not exactly be evil. But it certainly isn’t good. However, ending a bickering romantic charade is like tumor surgery—bloody and painful, but at least there’s the hope of a recovery.

What was terrible about this phase was the feeling that people were trying to push me into a relationship with a man, any man, as if that were inevitably preferable to being on my own. Some people just can’t get used to the idea of a woman who shows up. Going as far as to buy a house—plenty of room for kids—on your own is practically an act of war-like aggression to a few! It’s like, how dare she be so confident of remarriage! Well, let’s see: you cast off the anachronistic patriarchal brainwashing of how men rescue women from fates worse than death, and think of yourself as a buyer, not a seller. If you have true faith in market dynamics, the rest will take care of itself. Single people don’t need to be reminded of the paucity of quality potential partners, or to be set up with unstable, often dysfunctional creeps hyped as “good catches.”

Once I got used to the split, I found that I wanted space, and sometimes even had to fight for it. Why should I let nosy people magnify and telegraph the occasional downsides or foibles of my unattached status to justify their own decisions to remain full-time in stable, unhealthy relationships?

Eventually, I realized that if you’re going to start over, just plunge in. But beware the sudden arrival of toxic people who are stuck in new subconsciously, they can be emotional terrorists, poisoning as buddies. The divorced people with whom I consulted about this article had similar experiences, so it must be quite common.

Post-marriage, I emerged stronger and more resilient. And, ironically, more prosperous as a single woman than I would have ever become in that particular relationship, because I’d learned to take considered risks. It worked out great for my ex-husband, too. He’s in Brazil right now, doing fine. We just weren’t better off together than we are apart. Also, I made a slew of genuine new friends.

But mostly, I grew wise to the so-called concern of people I was correct to drift away from in the first place. That doesn’t mean I never talk to them. I just see them as seldom as possible, and when I do, I make an effort to feed them what they want to hear. It’s survival by means of a little stealthy humor. You get through that weird phase where people don’t know what to do with you because you’re a single female, staking out your own place in the world again. Moreover, you realize much of the unease around you has lots more to do with the balance of male-female power in your friends’ enduring romantic relationships than it does your apparent lack of one.

Though it may be, always remember that misery loves company, and can often pose more of an opportunity than a crisis. So unless you are entirely conscious of your motivations, don’t leap to resurrect a faded friendship solely upon news of a marital split. You might instead take a long look in the mirror.

Jennifer Farley is a professional writer who divides her time between New York and Peaks. Most recently, she’s been writing for AlleyCut News, a magazine that covers the business of New York’s Sisicon Alkey. Before moving to Peaks, she lived in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, and she’s also spent considerable time abroad, living in Singapore, Italy and England.
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The drums beat. The voices chant. The spirit of life is affirmed. You commune with nature. You forget your guilt. You don’t worry about pretense or sentimentality. You allow yourself to live freely, as yourself, with your tribe. The tribe of Woman. I can only imagine how you commune with nature. You forget your guilt. You don’t worry about what they want from their ritual and they go for it. Like the cover much fun it must he to walk the earth as a sister of rhythm!

In a well-recorded set of songs and rhythms (many of the sources are listed as coming from tribal West Africa), Inanna knows about presence or banality. You allow yourself to live freely, as yourself, with your tribe. The tribe of Woman. I can only imagine how you commune with nature. You forget your guilt. You don’t worry about what they want from their ritual and they go for it. Like the cover much fun it must he to walk the earth as a sister of rhythm!

The production is clean and clear. The package is nicely presented. Even if I found myself a little uncomfortable singing along with a repeated line like “We are all rainbow people,” my kids certainly didn’t mind a bit - they bounced around the house until it was over. If you’d like to forget your worries and simply celebrate the sisterhood with some good, clean rhythmic fun then Skin and Bone will make you happy. For more info, see: inanna Web Site: http://home.maine.rr.com/inanna

CHRIS MOORE’s cd is reviewed on the next page. He returned to his home state of Maine in 1989 and has since become known as one of the finest songwriters and mandolinists in the northeast. He has performed at clubs, concert venues, and festivals throughout the country with Rust Farm, the band he leads with Boston guitarist John McGann, and has played with with Tim O’Brien and Darrell Scott, The Beacon Hillbillies, Carol Noonan, Stain Cleaves, the Foggy Brothers, Knuts and Crosses, Shankar, Curtis Harvey, and on Public Radio and Television. In addition to the songs and instrumentals he writes and performs with John, he has composed dance scores, recorded soundtracks, and has been a classical soloist with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. So obviously, he knows what he’s talking about.

Do you organize Portland Harbor area community events? Send your info to voices@maine.rr.com or to Box 10, Peaks Island, Me. 04108

Island Holiday Events

On Sunday December 10th, the 14th Annual Holiday Concert, sponsored by the Peaks Island Music Association, will take place at the Brackett Memorial Church. There will be two shows, at 2:15 and 7 p.m., so more people can enjoy this popular event.

The program will not deviate from the success of previous years by including the Peaks Island Choral, Casco Bay Tummilers Klezmer Band, the Maine Squeeze Accordion ensemble, and the Holiday sing-along, though (as usual) there will be surprises.

In past years, we’ve had Kwanza candles, danced between the pews (to Klezmer music), sung the Hallelujah chorus to Handel’s Messiah and done a Buddhist chant (all in the same night). It’s the perfect place to really feel the spirit of the season. Be there. $4 adults, $1 child donation.

Come join the Second Annual New Year’s Walk around Peaks Island on Sunday, December 31st at noon.

If it’s a great way to begin your resolution to be healthy and happy (walking works better than Prozac) and celebrate with your neighbors another millennium of a beautiful planet. Some people go entirely around the island and others join for only a portion. Either way is fine. It takes one hour to walk around Peaks Island.

The walk begins and ends at the Community Room (Library), and there will be cocoa and donuts (oops, so much for the resolutions) at the end. Go. It’s fun!

Slides and Movies At the Community Room

Slide show: Lithuania with Nancy 3, and Julie Goell Jan. 4 at 11 am and Jan. 5 at 7 p.m.
Movies: 12/16 6pm: “A Hard Nut” unrated, 85 min.; 8pm: “Runaway Train” R 111 min.

Free, sponsored by Videoport and the Peaks Island Library. Children under 10 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Parents, please be mindful of ratings.
Jeff Cusack:

Rust Farm: "The Snows of March"

Harbor Voices Peer Review
By Tom Faux

In the summer of 1976 I hitchhiked around the country for the first time. Except for the armed drunk in the stolen Mustang the rides were pretty good in the east, thumbing was still considered normal behavior for 18-year-olds in those years and there were plenty of long-distance drivers looking for conversation, or at least listeners. By the time I made it out to the flat corn and wheat country however, the streams of willing chauffeurs had thinned and the temperature had begun to really climb. Missouri and Kansas were hot and sweaty; the eastern Colorado plains were sizzling. I haven’t forgotten the shimmering of the tar as I stood in 102 degree shade outside of Wiggins, Colorado, dangling my thumb for hours. And I’ll surely never forget flagging the late afternoon ride that took me from that smoking prairie up into cool Boulder, then on up across the continental divide. Through the starlit evening we listened to Doc Watson on the convertible’s 8-track, and in my mind there will always be an association between the sound of a smooth flat-picked steel-string guitar and the rejuvenating night breezes of the Colorado high country.

Listening to “The Snows of March” evoked that trip for me, partly for the clean and stylish mandolin and guitar picking by Chris Moore and John McGann, but mainly because of the sense of freshness about the whole production. To call a music recording “refreshing” is a promoter’s cliché that should be given plenty of space in a review, yet Chris’s sometimes dark, often surreal poetry really is a relief compared to the usual cathartic product of the “contemporary singer/songwriter.” The lyrics of these songs speak of everyday life in cryptic language that complements the clean melodic lines, while evoking the deep invisible forces that move our lives: fear, aging, love, the mystery of death. The title song “Snows of March” tells of a family compelled by some wayward spirit to wander out onto the perilous ice of a northern lake. The poetry is spare, and allegorical, and the effect hair-raising, particularly to anyone who has been moved to venture onto the thin ice.

Across the frozen forest floor
With blank expression trod the four
Out to the edge of Highland Lake
’Twas here they made their last mistake

The instrumental work on this CD is, as one would expect, extraordinary. Chris’ mandolin playing is familiar to Portland audiences — strong rhythmic drive, clear tone, intricate cross-picking. If Chris is the wheel that keeps the train rolling, John is the silver paint on the engine. John McGann has been called a musician’s musician — an astounding guitarist known mainly to aficionados. He weaves melodic lines that owe their existence to the flat-picking tradition of Doc Watson and Clarence White, but also to John’s years of transcribing the solos of players as disparate as Hendrix and Dolphy. Although bluegrass provides a historical context, the original instrumental numbers on this recording are several generations of complexity beyond Bill Monroe and draw on many threads of American music. And Moore and McGann have great tone. Bassist Jim Whitney is a steady and driving presence on the recording — a solo or two from him would not have been out of place.

The production was enhanced by the presence of producer/fiddler Tim O’Brien. The multi-instrumentalist (and longtime stalwart of the bluegrass group Hot Rize) contributed some lovely violin and bouzouki parts to the songs, as well as bringing a fine sense of musical balance to the recording as a whole. The CD was recorded in the stone house in Peaks Island’s Tolman Hights, with a minimum of overdubbing and fancy studio tricks, as they say in bluegrass, “strictly clean and decent.” Even the artwork on the CD cover should be mentioned — a snowy deep forest scene in late afternoon shadow, a detail of a painting by Melissa Hall. This is an exceptional recording — sweet picking, engaging songs, and an uncommon array of musical elements. Music from the high country.

You can find Rust Farm’s “Snow’s of March” at Amaduce Music in the Old Port, or you can order it from the John McGann website: http://www.johnmcgann.com, or you can get it from Chris the next time you see him on the boat.

Tom Faux hosts “Le Potage aux Choux,” a French-Canadian music program, Thursdays from 11:30-1 on WMPG-FM, 90.9. He is also a Sea Slug, which doesn’t worry those of us who know what a Sea Slug is.

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Jeff Cusack: 43/70

43/70 by Jeff Cusack (who lives on Cliff Island) is an uplifting CD that paints a picture of our beloved Maine in beautiful arrangements of catchy melodies, rich harmonies, empathizing lyrics, and a band full of energy. Jeff Cusack has a style of his own but I couldn’t help but hear many styles of music embedded in his style. The songs flow nicely together but each has their own unique sound, which makes it interesting, and leaving you eager to hear the next tune.

The CD starts off with “If I could only be dreaming” which is probably the poppiest tune on the CD. Each verse builds till you can just imagine the frustration of not being able to sleep. And finally by the end you are ready to dream. This song never loses energy and the guitar solo makes you want to dance.

You get a little taste of a jazzy feel in “The Field”, which is track 7, a punchy tune with cool drum fills and breaks. The more I listen to this CD the more I like it! It’s amazing the talent we have out here on the islands.

“The way life should be”, a Maine slogan and also the title of the 3rd cut on the CD, takes you on a journey of Maine, visualizing all your favorite places. It reminded me of how lucky we are to live in Maine, as the song says “The way life should be, one with nature, where your spirit is free.”

Slightly between pop and folk you’ll get “Hear Me Out”, “Shipbuilder”, and “My time to Live”. My personal favorite, Track 5, “My Father’s Son” has a Celtic feel and it is just beautiful. This is an instrumental song featuring fiddle harmonies that take you on your own journey, inspiring one to remember their roots.

The song ends with a powerful ballad “Stronger Everyday”. This is a beautifully written CD sung by the warm voice of Jeff Cusack. It’s one of those CDs you want to sing along with. The harmonies are so pretty, the band is tight, and the subject matter is about real life.

By Victoria Morris, a member of Inanna - Sisters in Rhythm.
RENAISSANCE VOICES

"Christmas with Renaissance Voices," a program of seasonal music spanning six centuries, will be presented in Portland, Friday, December 22. The 14-voice a cappella ensemble, directed by Harold Stover, will perform at the Chestnut Street Methodist Church (behind City Hall) at 8 p.m. Included in the program are works by, among others, Josquin, Praetorius, Palestrina, Clara Schumann, and Peter Warlock, interspersed with a selection of carols from around the world.

Renaissance Voices has been entertaining in Portland and throughout Maine since 1994 and, in December of last year, the group appeared live on Maine Public Radio.

Stover, a graduate of the Juilliard School, is well-known locally as Organist and Director of Music at Woodfords Congregational Church and as an instructor in Music Theory and Composition at the Portland Conservatory of Music.

Following the concert, the audience is invited to join the singers for refreshments. Admission is $10. For further information, call 766-0059 or visit the group's web site at www.RenaissanceVoices.org.

A Traditional Chinese Folk Tale
(re-told and amended by Jenny Runh Yasi)

A farmer had a prize-winning stallion, and one day it broke out of the barn, ran out into the forest and was lost. The farmer's neighbor saw the horse disappearing, and came out to offer the farmer his condolences.

"What a terrible thing," he said, "to lose a good horse like that."

"Well I can't tell," said the farmer, "if it's good or if it's bad."

The next day, the stallion came trotting back to the farm, followed by a wild mare. The horses went right into the barn and found a stall.

The farmer went down, closed the gate and dropped in some hay.

"Wow, will you look at that," shouted the neighbor. "That's great."

"I can't tell if it's good or if it's bad," said the farmer.

The next morning, the farmer's son went into the barn to feed the horses. Accidentally, the boy frightened the wild mare, who reared up and trampled him nearly to death. The farmer heard the commotion, found his son, and was carrying him to the hospital. The neighbor passed, stopped to give them a ride.

"I'm so sorry," the neighbor said. "What a terrible accident."

"I can't tell if it's good or if it's bad," said the farmer.

In a few more years, the country was at war, and all the young men were called to fight; all except the farmer's son, because now the boy was crippled.

"Well at least that's good," said the neighbor. "Your son doesn't have to fight."

"I can't really tell," said the farmer. "If it's good or if it's bad."

The farmer and his son worked together in the fields, and they had to work hard growing the food. Thanks to the war, many industries began to prosper and the area around the farmer and his neighbor turned into a small village. When the war ended, there was a small economic boom and a millionaire came and offered the farmer a pile of money for his land.

"Whoohoo!" hollered the neighbor. "You're doing good now! You're rolling in the dough!"

"I can't tell if it's good or if it's bad," said the farmer.

His real estate prospered, but then his taxes went up. He and his neighbors both had to take in boarders. This was both good and bad, because the boarders helped out around the property, but they also had wild parties at night.

The country was one of the most successful countries in the world, and it was a democracy, which good as it sounds, had its problems. For example, in the year of the farmer's sixtieth birthday, there was an election which was terribly close. The son worried aloud to his father. "The stock market is going crazy ever since it was discovered that the voting machines didn't really work, and now we don't know if they guy who really won the election will be the same as the guy who becomes our President!"

"I can't tell if it's good or if it's bad," said his father.

"You always say that," the son shouted. "Dad, this time you're wrong! This is bad! Sometimes you need to admit when something's bad!" And the son ran off to be alone.

The farmer went to his neighbor. "I'm so upset," the farmer said. "My son is furious with me. It's terrible."

The neighbor said, "Oh I don't know. Maybe it's bad, or maybe it's good."
BLISS
K. E. Sherburne

With the passage of time the beach at Pine Point attracted Mrs. Constance Hale more and more strongly. Now eighty-one years old, she had spent every day of her married and widowed life, morning and afternoon, spring, summer and fall, sketching and painting the infections of the ocean from this beach, though angina and its attendant swollen legs, along with the meandencies of weather, had kept her now and again from her appointment.

Constance had deliberated long ago over her route to the beach. From among the ten or so short streets leading from East Grand Avenue to the water, she had fixed on Bliss Street, quite simply because it lay parallel to Granite Street. She relished the self-imposed daily election of what she conceived as the better alternative between two conditions of the human heart.

Sketch book, pencils, erasers and sharpeners in a market tote in her right hand, a plastic-webbed beach chair (orange price sticker still in place) under her left arm, she strode the one hundred nine paces from East Grand along Bliss to the beach. A two-day nor'easter had kept her at home. On this gorgeously sunny last Wednesday morning of November, she needed to let the roiling surf of the bay wash through her heart and pour onto her sketch pad, as she liked to put it.

"Yoo-hoo, Mrs. Hale!"

Constance turned and, because her hands were full, she merely nodded at the already looming Hester Sparks. She would not wheeop into the sun-washed quiet of the morning, but she would wait for Hester to catch up.

Each woman had been shaped by time and experience as differently, say, as by Botticelli, on the one hand, and by Benton, on the other. Defying gravity in her infinite enthusiasm, Constance Hale was sparsely articulated, sinewy. Her hair, once auburn and the object in younger days of her husband Thrulow's pleasure, was neatly bobbed. Today she wore soft faded jeans, a heavy cardigan hand-knit in pastels, and while walking shoes. As she watched Hester planing toward her along the sandswep street, her eyes were keen and luminous blue.

Hester no longer had the shifty eyes of the often shamed wife, pampered only as long as she kept an obedient silence. Since Burleigh's timely death Hester had become, in every way she was capable of imagining, excessive. For example, seated much of the day in front of Court TV—the legacy of her absorption with the much touted "Trial of the Century"—she'd taken to indulging indiscriminate hours her lapse for chocolate brownies under chocolate ice cream under chocolate sauce with a dollop of whipped cream. Today she was enveloped in a luxuriantly floral granny dress under a voluminous hooded cloak whose billowing folds were barely held in check by a pair of arms in a reindeer pullover. She was shod in black Reeboks against the vagaries of Maine weather.

"You love and tried to secure Constance's left arm but ended clutching only the beach chair. "When I saw you crossing the avenue, I thought I had something I wanted to tell you, and now I can't remember what it was." She laughed; she rather enjoyed her unce censored lapse of memory. "I just swore with the much touted 'Trial of the Century'—she'd taken to indulging indiscriminate hours her lapse for chocolate brownies under chocolate ice cream under chocolate sauce with a dollop of whipped cream. Today she was enveloped in a luxuriantly floral granny dress under a voluminous hooded cloak whose billowing folds were barely held in check by a pair of arms in a reindeer pullover. She was shod in black Reeboks against the vagaries of Maine weather.

"I remember too many summers ago," Constance said. "you called her a God-send comfort in your house."

"Well, she can't be any kind of comfort to me now."

The sea was churning and pounding the beach. In spite of the sun, the water was steel gray at the shore line, though it was deep blue some yards off shore, and around Stratton's Island green. High tide had swallowed much of the beach; the remainder was mottled with black seaweed and driftwood cast up in the surf.

Hester, again at her side now that they had emerged onto the beach, motioned at the tote bag. "You still drawing, Mrs. Hale. I can't see what's so interestingly boring."

"No two people see the same rainbow."

"Huh? Oh, now I remember. It's Kyle."

"Kyle Philips?"

"Yup. He's back."

Constance moved up the beach toward the long white metal that used to be a clampike. Left hand shading her eyes, she looked out over the bay; she studied what vantage point she might take up for her drawing.

"He brought someone with him," Hester said. "A man friend. He said he was an old Air Force buddy. From Illinois, I think."

"He's a good neighbor. He's been a comfort since Thrulow's passing."

"Well, she can't be any kind of comfort to me now."

"You still drawing, Mrs. Hale. I can't see what's so interestingly boring."

"No two people see the same rainbow."

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"He brought someone with him," Hester said. "A man friend. He said he was an old Air Force buddy. From Illinois, I think."

Constance contemplated the beach from the comfort of her chair. She leaned forward. Maybe three yards closer to the water lay a bit of sea wrack. Its blackened fronds had entangled the half-shell of a razor clam and its tissue was attached, in a death grip it seemed to her, to a smooth-worn gray stone. All had been cast up onto the beach by the previous day's nor'easter. She abandoned the seat and, taking her book and a couple of 4 B pencils, lowered herself onto the sand to focus on this vignee of destruction.

Hester appropriated the chair, stretching her Reeboks at full length before her. "I don't understand it," she said.

"It is a mystery," Constance said. She let her pencil define areas of light and dark over the rough surface of the paper. The brightness of the surrounding sand made a study of the seaweed, stone, and shell seem to her somehow darker still. There was, however, a fascination in the image; it was not entirely morbid, a certain light shine through it. Vulnerability. Virtue. She said, "These things make us pause in wonderment."

"Exactly! I wonder how come Kyle never has a woman in his house. You never see a woman coming out of his house."

"Constance concentrated on the apparent smoothness of the stone, the brittleness of the wrack, the fragile lustre of the shell."

"And now," Hester continued, "he's home from... wherever... with that fella. He says they're going to live together. Did you ever hear of such a thing? Disgusting!"

"Constance put her pad and pencil beside her on the sand. "What's disgusting, Hester?"

Hester pulled her cloak tight around her. "Oh, you artistic types! You never share the common view. I say to them, 'Come right out here and show us what you do.' Disgusting!" Approaching seventy, she had taken it into her mind that advancing age had somehow earned her the right to speak whatever was in it.

"I remember how come Kyle never has a woman in his house. You never see a woman coming out of his house." She said, "Exactly! I wonder how come Kyle never has a woman in his house. You never see a woman coming out of his house."

"Constance concentrated on the apparent smoothness of the stone, the brittleness of the wrack, the fragile lustre of the shell."

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Hester pulled her cloak tight around her. "Oh, you artistic types! You never share the common view. I say to them, 'Come right out here and show us what you do.' Disgusting!"

"Constance nodded toward the path which passed through the dune grass off Bliss Street. The two men were making their way down the beach.

Kyle, about three and a half inches over six feet, looked only a little taller than his friend, who at a distance seemed slight of build despite the bulky
Kyle was dressed in a sweat suit and wool-knit sweater, which did little to hide his developing paunch. He was a good cook, and it showed. They were laughing as they strolled through the sand towards the ladies.

"Constance!" Kyle bent down and pulled her to her feet, "By God, it's nice to see you." He looked over the chair. "Hettie." He turned back.

"I'd like to introduce my friend, Paul Clemente, formerly of Gary, Indiana. We were in the Air Force together back when most airplanes had propellers, stationed in San Antonio, then Monterey. We lost track for quite a while after he was shipped to Korea and I was sent to Germany. Constance. Paul, Paul, this is my good neighbor, Mrs. Thurlow Hale."

"I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Clemente," Constance said. She looked over at Hester, who had not yet stood up. "I was told that you were home, Kyle. I'm glad."

"How in not more than an hour ago," Kyle said.

"I hear that Mr. Clemente is going to stay for a while."

"The name is Paul, Mrs. Hale. Yes, Kyle has invited me to stay with him as long as I want. We seemed to hit it off pretty well in earlier days, and we survived our trip down memory lane in Texas and California. We'll see what the future holds."

"Well, welcome to Pine Point."

"It's a far cry from Gary. And I think the better for the distance," Paul's attention seemed arrested by her sketch pad lying on the sand. "What but design of darkness to appall? - Of design govern in a thing so small.

"I majored in English," he said, "I love poetry, especially Robert Frost.

"If you stay around long enough, I think we'll become fast friends," he hesitated. "Paul."

"Poetry, too," Hester said from the chair. "Hm?" She pulled the hood of her cloak over her head against a sudden chill she felt in the air.

Constance and the two men looked toward Hester, waiting for her to continue. She didn't. Rather she seemed to study her feet with which she began to make holes in the sand.

"It's near forty years since I last saw Paul, though I've thought about him a lot. But if I hadn't just by chance read the magazine story, it wouldn't have occurred to me to look him up again."

"All right now," Paul said.

"Well, I'm proud to know you," Constance said. "You read about him in a magazine?"

"Yep. An article on the new demands of teaching. And there was Mr. Clemente's name," he gave Paul another squeeze, "the recipient of a humanitarian award. So I looked him up on the Internet and called."

"And here we are," Paul said.

"How come I never see any women coming out of your place, Kyle?" Hester said.

Kyle looked around and turned to her. "Because I never invite any in, Hettie."

"Constance shrugged. "You'll have to pardon Mrs. Sparks, Paul. She tends toward myopia, it seems." She let herself down onto the sand again and picked up her pad and pencil."

"There's nothing wrong with my eyesight, Mrs. Hale," Hester said. "Even I can see the obvious."

"Kyle said, "We'll see you later, Constance. Maybe you'd like to drop by tomorrow? Around one? For a holiday drink and turkey and trimmings?"

Constance nodded, but she was wrapped up in her drawing again. Kyle and Paul, without taking leave of Hester, headed down the beach in the direction of Old Orchard. They stopped at the water's edge, and Paul danced around Kyle, feinting and sparring. Then he delivered a punch to Kyle's upper arm. Kyle grabbed Paul at the waist, and it seemed for a moment as though he would throw him to the sand. Instead he gave Paul a back-thumping hug, an acknowledgment of affection and pleasure at reacquaintance. They searched, they found, they had all those years of military service.

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A tensely quiet moment passed. A word shot into the sand at Hester's feet. Perhaps a cloud passed in front of the sun. For, though Constance had not heard Hester exactly, it seemed to her suddenly that the sun and the sea and the surrounding beach had been subdued. In that darkness she bent closer over her drawing. There, suffering the unbreakable grasp of the dead, dry seawrack, lay the stone, with its muted striations of white, and gray and black, its tiny seaworn fossil, the passionate journal of violent realities, of sublimate interrelationships, of life itself.

Hester leaned forward. "Lord, Mrs. Hale, a rock? So much attention to a rock?"

"God is in the details," Constance said.

"No, here you go again, well, I know some poetry too: "God's in His heaven; All's right with the world." God is in heaven, right where He ought to be, watching over the creation as He made it. Details, as you put it, just mess up the divine plan."

She squinted at the paper. "A rock is a rock. It's when it decides to act like an oyster that you get trouble!"

She nodded sharply and sat back in the chair, on her brow the glow of triumph. Of course, her head got in the way of it.

Putting her drawing onto her lap, Constance gestured with her pencil beyond the ocean beyond the bay. "I suppose it's convenient to keep divinity way out there. Then we can convince ourselves that matters here—on our very beach— they are all confusion and ignorance, without substance or virtue. Beyond our help or responsibility. Like in Plato's cave."

They returned to silence. The razor clam, which had in life housed bulging flesh in its scaly shell, now, under Constance's pencil, lay like a shard of porcelain locked in the gritty snarls of seawrack. She thought, the merest movement of nature had bound these creatures inexorably to one another.

"I am a Christian woman, and i love my God," said Hester.

"And He said to love your neighbor. Everything else is politics and law enforcement."

"Certain things you can't love, Mrs. Hale."

Hester's head wagged in the direction of Old Orchard Beach. "They go against nature and divine law."

She not at all subly stressed the first word. Now the sun brightened again. Constance suddenly caught her own shadow hovering over the drawing. She traced its outline lightly on the paper, and began to shade it in with her finger tip. Here it obscured, there it deepened, the outlines and the textures and tones of the rock, the shell, the sea wrack. Did it represent a menace? Was it an all-encompassing being brooding over these things? She did not know.

She did not see that there is always an attendant shadow. It puts things in relief, gives them their particularity. She had spent her life recording those particulars in her sketchbooks and in the watercolors from her sketches. They had always fascinated her, yes, and fulfilled her, though she had never felt the need to articulate the cause of either. Her work, she thought, was articulation enough. One needed only to look.

She looked in Hester's, whose face was softened toward the dazzling purity of sky. In Constance's ear rang the old psalm: Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow: I shall fear no evil. She looked down at her drawing where three vulnerable creatures clung together under a not-quite definable shadow. A palpably indifferent cause had brought them thus together. Where she had decided to draw them. I shall fear no evil, the palm fairly sang in her head, for thou art with me. That was it, she thought: at the heart of it all is that someone or something wants to be with you. That alone is the gift that makes existence endurable.

She stood up. She gently tore her drawing from the book. She offered it to Hester. "Here," she said.

"What is it?"

"It's a kind of gift."

Perhaps sun-dazed, Hester lurched to her feet. "What is it?"

Constance hurriedly picked up her bag, gathered her book and pencils into it. She could not bear to look at Hester alone on that expansive of beach, where the fullness of the moonlight, sun, she was standing on her own shadow. Constance reclaimed the beach chair. Using it as a support, she headed up the beach. She followed the path up through the dune grass toward Bliss. K. Sherborne lives in Scarborough.
It's the age of Aquarius, Ginger. Do you mind if we go vegetarian?

The Myrrh Remedy

We know these chickens very well, and one got its back ripped off by a dog. It's terrible! But every once in a while, a dog attacks a chicken. If this happens, we make a paste by mixing myrrh gum powder (it's the powdered resin from a myrrh tree) with water. This dries like a second skin on the chicken, and even though the chicken looked REALLY TERRIBLE, it's amazing how quick they heal up. In February, we'll show you a picture of this chicken, and most likely she'll be good as new, with all her feathers (but they might come in weird).

Many thanks to the Lion's Club on Peaks Island for sponsoring after-school basketball with Brad Barkholder.

Send your poems, stories, artwork, JOKES, and news to the Harbor Voices: attention Kids Only Editor Sophi Presgraves, Box 10 Peaks Island 04108. You can also send stuff e-mail to: Voices@maine.rr.com.

Our next deadline is January 26, for the February issue.

Our theme in February will be "Love Stories".

The skin got ripped all the way off her back (under her wings). It was sad. But amazing how she's already healing!

Art by Kawtar Azzouz, age 8
High Honors for generosity & community spirit go out to the following 62 Members, who supplied the funds necessary to bring Harbor Voices Monthly to well over 5000 readers in our first year!


78 Writers and Illustrators this year made Harbor Voices a great read!

Let’s hear a big heap of applause for ...


If interested, call 766-5708 to subscribe to the community forum.

In addition, we’d like to thank anybody we’ve inadvertently left out of this list, and the many additional people who were the subject of our stories, and the many people who generously allowed us to take their photographs. We’d like to thank all those who submitted news, letters, hot tips, photos, stories, poetry and advice, and a special thank you to that group of people who are at this very moment working on a story for Harbor Voices. And one big thank you to the folks at The American Journal in Westbrook and at Xpress Copy in Portland.
## Harbor Business Directory

### Contractors, builders

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<tr>
<td><strong>Unisun</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>solariums, sunrooms, general contracting</td>
<td>766-5780 Keith – 223 Island Ave. Peaks</td>
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<td><strong>Island Bay Services</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>766-3375 Covey Johnson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Backhoe Work, Earth Work Contractor</td>
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<td><strong>Terry Edwards, Creative Landscaping</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Snow plowing and removal</td>
<td>207-766-5660</td>
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<th>Company</th>
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<td><strong>Gilbert’s Chowder House</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>92 Commercial Street • 871-5636</td>
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<td></td>
<td>GREAT CHOWDAH</td>
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<td><strong>The Breakaway Lounge</strong></td>
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<td>35 India Street • 541-4804</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Music and Dancing Just a Short Walk From The Boat</td>
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### Restaurants, Clubs

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<td><strong>Drydock Restaurant &amp; Tavern</strong></td>
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<td>84 Commercial St. 774-3550</td>
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<td>Raw Bar &amp; Second Floor Seating</td>
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<td><strong>Bakehouse Café</strong></td>
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<td>205 Commercial Street</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Portland, Maine</td>
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<td>207-773-2217</td>
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<td><strong>Baking to warm you up</strong></td>
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<td>Portland Museum of Art</td>
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<td>7 Congress Square Portland, Maine</td>
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<td>December 21-February 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Will Barnett: A Timeless World</td>
<td>10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tues., Wed., Sat., Sun.</td>
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<td>till 9 p.m. on Thurs.&amp; Fri.</td>
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<td><strong>African Museum of Tribal Art</strong></td>
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<td>Free admission 10:30-5 p.m. Tues.—Sat.</td>
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<td>122 Spring Street Portland</td>
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<td><strong>City of Portland Liaisons for Island Issues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Fortier, Island Administrator 756-8288</td>
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<td>Lt. Ted Ross, Portland Police 874-8569</td>
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<td><strong>Brackett Street Veterinary Clinic</strong></td>
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<td>192 Brackett Street Portland</td>
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<td>207-772-3365</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Casco Bay Lines</strong></td>
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<td>For schedule information — <a href="http://www.cascobaylines.com">www.cascobaylines.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Pet Positive</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>P.O. Box 6247 Cape Elizabeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLICKER OBEDIENCE TRAINING</td>
<td><a href="http://www.petpositive.net">www.petpositive.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FETCH</strong> <em>We Deliver to the Islands</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>On top Munjoy Hill with holiday gifts for friends and beasts</td>
<td>773-5450 <a href="mailto:fetch@maine.rr.com">fetch@maine.rr.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Island Recreation and Horse Camp</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeanann Alves-O'Toole</td>
<td>P.O. Box 51 Peaks Island, Maine 04108</td>
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<td>207-766-2763</td>
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<td><strong>Your business here.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>$150 per year (11 issues)</td>
<td>766-2390 <a href="mailto:voices@maine.rr.com">voices@maine.rr.com</a></td>
<td>Box 10 Peaks Island</td>
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Yes, Please make sure our business is included in the Harbor Voices Business Directory!

Company

Your name

Address & phone

website and e-mail address

Send camera ready copy, or plain text, to Harbor Voices Business Directory, Box 10 Peaks Island Maine 04108.

Include your annual payment of $150 (covers 11 months), or we will bill you. If you need us to do a layout, there may be a $25 charge.

Contact us at (207) 766-2390 for more information.

Page 19 December 2000
Clay By the Bay

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