



CREATED BY OUR COMMUNITY FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Peaks voters to elect CBL board members and more on Nov. 4

By Ben McCanna
Peaks Island News

On Nov. 4, Peaks Island voters will fill out municipal ballots with three competitive races and a question. Voters will choose between Pious Ali, a four-term incumbent, and Sam Aborne, a political newcomer, for a three-year, at-large seat on the city council.

Closer to home, Jonah Bradenday, Jerzy Sylvester and write-in candidate Norm Proulx are running unopposed for three seats on the Peaks Island Council. Six Peaks Islanders are running for two seats on Casco Bay Lines' board of directors. Andrew Doukas, Margaret Kelsey and Jennifer Lavanture seek an at-large seat, while Sharoan Cohen, Mark Rogus and Erik Winchester bid for the Peaks Island seat. **See our**

Peaks Island Candidates Guide on pages 2 and 3. The ballot also asks whether voters favor an increase in Portland's minimum wage to \$19 per hour by 2028. Currently, the wage is set at \$15.50. PIC will host Candidates Night on Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 6 p.m. at the Community Center. The event will include a roundtable discussion with the CBL board candidates, plus a discussion of ballot questions.

Peaks Island sees surge of ferry visitors in August

By Ross Sneyd and Scott Dolan
Peaks Island News

The latest ridership figures from Casco Bay Lines show a significant jump in passengers to Peaks in August, although the numbers were relatively flat in June and July when compared to the same months in 2024. CBL's board of directors released data in late September showing ferry ridership to all destinations for the past four years, including the partially completed 2025 year-to-date data. The numbers for August showed a 17% increase in visitors traveling aboard Bay Lines boats to Peaks this year, with 149,359 riders in August 2025 compared to 127,401 in August 2024.

The report provided the first meaningful snapshot of how CBL's hike in ferry ticket prices, imposed June 2024, impacted tourist traffic on its boats to all islands. Though ticket prices to Peaks nearly doubled, from \$7.70 to \$14 for single ticket sales in peak season, it did not deter tourists.

"The results are significantly better than what was modeled," said Jean Hoffman, chair of Bay Lines' finance committee.

Although the report was good news for CBL's bottom line, some members of the Peaks Island Council fear that a swell in summer visitations could overwhelm Peaks' infrastructure and alter the island's culture.

Peaks Island Council member Laura Glendening said she hopes to form a new subcommittee of the council at its October meeting that will focus on boat numbers, the bigger ferry that will soon replace the Machigonne II, tourism and safety.

"I'm looking to have monthly discussions about the future of the island, how to sustain and have a balanced environment," Glendening said.

VISITORS, continued on page 9

Tapping into the community



Heather Wasklewicz/Peaks Island News

Caitlin Osborne, center, a retired dance instructor, leads members of the tap-dancing group Peaks Island Follies through a rehearsal on Sept. 18. The Follies meet every Thursday at New Brackett Church. **See more photos and read the story on page 4.**

Ghost Tour illuminates familiar Trefethen haunts

By Margaret Grace Myers
Peaks Island News

Trefethen, known for its colorful cottages and seaside splendor, may also be home to spectral siblings and prodigal poltergeists.

These spooky assertions came courtesy of Marisa MacIsaac, host of the Haunted Peaks Ghost Tour.

On Saturday, Sept. 20, as the sun burned low in the sky, about 40 people met at the corner of Trefethen and Island avenues for MacIsaac's walking tour, a fundraiser for Peaks Island Historical Society. The group wandered to eight stops, including Reed Park and Trefethen Cemetery, while MacIsaac whispered tales of notable apparitions and the houses they haunt.



Cara Dolan/Peaks Island News

Marisa MacIsaac of the Peaks Island Historical Society recounts the island's spooky history at Trefethen Cemetery during the Haunted Peaks Ghost Tour on Sept. 20.

TOUR, continued on page 19

Peaks Island Candidates Guide



Sharoan Cohen
Peaks Island seat



Andrew Doukas
At-large seat



Margaret Kelsey
At-large seat



Jennifer Lavanture
At-large seat



Mark Rogus
Peaks Island seat



Erik Winchester
Peaks Island seat

Candidates for CBL board discuss issues ahead of election

By Ross Sneyd
Peaks Island News

Six Peaks Islanders are competing for two seats on the Casco Bay Lines District board of directors in the Nov. 4 election.

Three candidates are seeking an at-large seat and three are running for a Peaks Island seat.

Jennifer Lavanture, currently the president of the Bay Lines board, faces challengers Andrew Doukas and Margaret Kelsey for the at-large seat, while incumbent Sharoan Cohen is running against Mark Rogus and Erik Winchester for the Peaks Island seat.

Dave Crowley, an incumbent, is running unopposed for Cliff Island's seat.

Peaks Island News sent a short questionnaire to the six Peaks Island candidates to help voters decide.

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

Why are you seeking a seat on the Casco Bay Lines board?

Sharoan Cohen

Representing islanders is a privilege. Learning from neighbors and visitors alike continues to inform my voice as CBITD endeavors to operate efficiently and effectively to meet demand. Preserving our culturally dynamic and economically diverse community, with particular advocacy for noncommuting islanders, drives my candidacy.

Andrew Doukas

I do not believe the current board is acting in the best interests of the district. They are making decisions based on personal agendas and unfounded rumors. They have jeopardized a business plan that has worked for decades. I have been lucky enough to have experience in business, politics and law that will serve me to make better decisions, for the good of all the people who need Bay Lines to succeed. This includes Peaks residents, its visitors, tourists and trade personnel, and Down Bay residents and visitors whose needs are different from Peaks' transportation needs.

Margaret Kelsey

I'm running to keep island life sustainable and tourism balanced. My connection to Peaks began at age four, when my parents bought a summer house that became my anchor. When my mom moved here year-round, it became my haven and refuge. In 2013, after adopting my son, I chose to settle here because the island offers what every child deserves: safe places to roam, a librarian who knows your name, a café that trusts you, a small school where teachers notice and daily encounters with neighbors who keep a community running. It is a complete, socioeconomically diverse ecosystem — one that exists across the islands. Something this special must be preserved, not exploited. CBL is the bridge to that future, and I want to help ensure it remains strong, fair and responsive to all who live, work and own homes here.

Jennifer Lavanture

I am running for reelection because there's more work ahead. In my first term, we made important progress, adopting a more sustainable fare structure and strengthening financial oversight. Balancing rising costs, dependence on outside funding and the need to maintain affordable service for islanders requires continued steady leadership, and I am seeking another term to build on the progress we've made.

Mark Rogus

As a year-round Peaks Island resident, I want to meaningfully contribute to our community in a hyperlocal organization where one vote truly matters. I can apply my extensive experience and thoughtful leadership to a vital service grappling with passenger experience and financial sustainability challenges. I am highly qualified with more than 20 years as a business executive and director. I currently serve on CBITD's board as a nonvoting public member with solid knowledge of organizational priorities. I am community focused and will routinely conduct outreach to understand islanders' priorities. My votes will be evidence based, focusing on quality, fiscal health and governance. I will offer

several tactics versus one tone-deaf solution aimed at hidden agendas. I will represent community interests directly and help CBITD navigate competing demands while sustaining our essential ferry service.

Erik Winchester

I like to be involved in the community. Similar to my work on the Peaks Island Council Transportation Committee, where I partner with the City of Portland Parking Division, I would use my role on the Casco Bay Lines to advocate for islanders.

As the Peaks Island Representative, I would be an open and transparent contact to help bridge the gap between residents and CBL in a positive, respectful, professional and collaborative way. Additionally, I work in town and use CBL ferry service every day, so I bring daily ridership experience to help with logistics and flow.

The Bay Lines board has been focused recently on its budget. What is your position on the increased passenger fares adopted last year and the vehicle fares this year?

Cohen

Sadly, policy became politicized. Regardless of who or why, CBITD's obligation is equitable access for all. The current rate structure limits affordability for residents and visitors. Service costs and needs are not fully determined. Critical public input,

including fare alternatives, has been disregarded. Congestion remains unresolved. Burden falls on monthly pass holders and infrequent travelers. A system that rewards frequency is the opposite of preserving island life.

Doukas

An increase in fares was due, but the current board overshot the mark by a mile. The monthly passes are a good idea, but not correctly priced. The individual ticket cost is too high. I feel badly for my Portland visitors who are paying \$14 to come visit me. The vehicle fares are also unfair. Revenue from the car ferry far outstrips the costs of running such. Nobody knows what they are going to be charged for any given trip.

Kelsey

Tourism has grown rapidly over the past 15 years, bringing both opportunities and challenges. To preserve the ties that make island life meaningful, we need steady, measurable input from island homeowners and businesses. The recent rate changes do not reflect this; they benefit some while significantly burdening others.

Lavanture

Casco Bay Lines, like many public transit systems, operates at a loss and relies heavily on federal grants to close the gap. While those grants are vital, they are not guaranteed. Pan-

Q&A, continued next page

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Peaks Island Candidates Guide

Q&A, continued from previous page

demic relief funds temporarily offset significant increases in expenses, but those dollars are gone, while expenses remain elevated (CBL expenses grew at twice the rate of inflation). In that context, the decisions to change passenger fares last year and vehicle fares this year were about ensuring the long-term viability of CBL. The board took care to structure both changes to protect year-round islanders, seasonal residents, and frequent users against steeper increases in the future, while reducing the district's vulnerability to fluctuations in outside funding.

Rogus

Aligned with reducing the annual deficit, I supported the passholder approach to both fare increases and the expansion of the passholder vehicle discount days. I back simplifying the current vehicle fares based on length (not weight and class) with longer vehicles paying more than the lowest vehicle fare during the busiest runs.

Winchester

I am in favor of both rate changes. The rates hadn't changed for 15 years. It's unfortunate that it took that long for the changes to happen. I believe if there had been systematic changes over this time the rates would be similar to where they are now and would not be perceived as such an issue. I think the CBL finance committee took

in islander input and made changes that are favorable to islanders taking advantage of the reduced rate passenger passes. While the passenger passes are a large upfront expense, they provide a substantial discount to the purchaser in the long run, benefiting not only daily riders like me but casual riders, too. I believe in CBL's vision statement to not only provide highly reliable and safe transportation to the islands but to be financially responsible and financially sustainable, as well. I also believe in the board's mission statement of making the best decisions for the district as a whole.

What would your priorities be if elected?

Cohen

Strengthening interisland service including Peaks Island, increasing Down Bay ridership, alleviating need for unscheduled service, reducing congestion. Supporting regional travel, rebuilding our interisland community. Improving health and safety with facility cleanliness and customer care. Notification system to include all service alerts. Expansion, and modification, of the current reservation system to include reservations for residents. Environmental leadership by fully implementing our electronic-ticketing system to reduce plastic cards. Increasing green spaces and maximizing available environmental

information about the bay and island ecosystems. Increasing revenue from incidental tour and charter service. Adjusting rates to market realizing potential revenue with more efficient service for all.

Doukas

1. Reduce single ticket prices. 2. Redo vehicle ticket prices to be more uniform. 3. Ensure access to the Down Bay islands. 4. Explore other ways to broaden access to Down Bay islands. (Smaller, faster boat for additional runs?)

Kelsey

If elected, I'll advocate for practical, step-by-step improvements grounded in steward leadership, ridership data and cost-efficient technologies — with the focus on protecting the diversity and spirit that make our islands so vibrant.

Lavanture

If re-elected, I will continue to work tirelessly to keep service reliable and affordable, while planning responsibly for the future. That means improving operating efficiency, enhancing customer experience through modernization and making careful budget decisions that strengthen CBL's financial position. Just as importantly, I will continue to listen closely to islanders. Casco Bay Lines is the backbone of island life, and my commitment is to

safeguard that role into the future.

Rogus

My three priorities are: improved rider experience (implement electronic ticketing, improve boarding procedures, provide timely service alerts); financial stewardship (publish performance metrics, prioritize cost reductions over fare increases, develop multiyear financial plans); and transparent governance (host real workshops, encourage openness and evidence-based solutions, update bylaws).

Winchester

My approach will be to learn more about how the board and Casco Bay Lines operate. While I have personal opinions, when approaching anything new, I seek first to understand. Continuing to improve the flow of traffic, cars and passengers during the summer season is important to me. I'd like to focus on improvements to the boarding process that can be made. Working with the CBL staff to ensure safety and efficiency, relieve stress and burden of crew members and listening to Peaks Island residents on ideas to make the residential boarding process the best it can be. I would also like to work with the island nonprofits, Peaks Island Council, Casco Bay Lines, City of Portland to make sure that every Peaks Island resident has an opportunity to take advantage of the rate discounts associated with 90-day and annual passes.

Two on ballot for Peaks Island Council, third makes write-in bid

By Scott Dolan
Peaks Island News

Three candidates have come forward for three open seats on the Peaks Island Council in the Nov. 4 election, marking the first time in several years that enough candidates have come forward for all open seats on the board.

Jerzy Sylvester, of Central Avenue, and Jonah Bradenday, currently of Hussey Road but soon moving to Luther Street, each gathered signatures from islanders and submitted papers to the city clerk in time to appear on the ballot.

Norm Proulx, of City Point Road, who is now serving a one-year appointed term on the Peaks Island Council, submitted notice in time to be an official write-in candidate.

In recent years, when not enough candidates came forward to fill all seven seats on the advisory board, the sitting councilors have used their authority under city ordinance to appoint members from the community to fill vacancies for one or more years.

"I don't think there is a big difference between being a write-in and being on the ballot, but I think the big thing is stability on the council, so we don't have councilors terming off every year," Sylvester said.

Sylvester, 26, is seeking a return to the council after leaving the board a year ago, as he and his wife Anna, who is pregnant with their first child, struggled to find housing on the island. Now that they have found rental housing on Central Avenue, he decided to run again.

"I think we got a lot of good done, specifically assisting with the Recode — the housing and zoning code — and the dialogue with the city, and specifically with our policies on giving grants out to island organizations," Sylvester said.

Both Sylvester and Bradenday grew up as



Jonah Bradenday

children on Peaks Island, and each chose to return to live here as adults.

Bradenday, 27, recently returned to Peaks after spending three years in Providence, Rhode Island, as his wife, Hannah, completed graduate school there.

"Lately there is not that much we can do to help the issues we see happening all the time. I've been feeling a little bit powerless. Mostly, I want to hear what people are taking issue with," Bradenday said of his decision to run. "The single most important



Jerzy Sylvester

issue is housing for young people and people who don't have money. More and more, the housing out here is going to short-term rentals and seasonal housing."

Bradenday, Proulx and Sylvester are each seeking election for three-year terms.

The open seats on the council come as its current chairman, Scott Mohler, and Shelagh Reiser, now serving her second one-year appointed term, both declined to run for reelection.

Peaks Island Follies take first steps, while echoing the past



Clockwise from top: Will Green rehearses tap dancing steps alongside fellow members of the Peaks Island Follies at New Brackett Church in September; Caitlin Osborne, a volunteer dance instructor directs the Follies during rehearsal; Joanne Sterling ties her tap shoes before stepping onto the wooden floor for rehearsal.

Story by Timmi Sellers
Photographs by Heather Wasklewicz

With steps and stomps, digs and drops, tap dancing has returned to Peaks Island.

After a decades-long hiatus, a new tap-dancing group has formed. The Peaks Island Follies, composed of about a dozen dancers, rehearses every Thursday, from 1 p.m. to 2, at New Brackett Church. The group made its public debut in June.

The Follies, a mix of beginners and more experienced dancers, are led by volunteer instructor Caitlin Osborne. Osborne, who moved to Peaks from Pennsylvania last year, had recently retired from her job as a dance teacher at Penn State University when she was asked to teach a class on the island.

Osborne, whose professional teaching career spanned 40 years, said yes.

"I get just as much back as I give,"

she said. "In the past decade, I have particularly enjoyed teaching adult beginners, because they bring so much of themselves to the process. It gives me joy to hear someone say I always wanted to try, because [dance is] so freeing."

By January, a small group was tapping at the church every week. Word of Osborne's teaching acumen soon spread throughout the community and the roster grew. Some of the dancers had taken lessons when they were younger. Others were brand new tappers who arrived without tap shoes, but bought them soon afterward.

The Peaks Island Follies held its debut performance in June at TEIA tapping to "Drive My Car" while sporting matching polka-dot ties on World Beatles Day during a concert by the Hedgehogs. By August, the group had rehearsed a second dance routine, to Frank Sinatra's "Too Marvelous

for Words," which it performed at the Lions Club variety show while wearing 1950s-style outfits.

Lynn Heinemann, who hadn't tapped in about 30 years, said Osborne has a knack for meeting dancers at their level. "She mentioned that her superpower was choreographing to the abilities of her dancers," said Heinemann. "She did not overstate that talent."

Sandi Radis also hadn't tapped for decades. The skills are coming back, thanks to Osborne's instruction. "Caitlin is easy to learn from, when I can get my feet to cooperate."

Beginner tappers are enjoying it as well. Will Green, who has experience in other dance techniques, said the physicality of tapping is appealing. "As someone who doesn't swim or ski, sometimes I feel a little left out when people talk about their physical activity. But thanks to this new year-round hobby that doesn't

involve sharks or require a helmet, I feel like I've finally found my thing."

Sarah Cuetera said she struggled initially, but then bought tap shoes. "It was like drumming with my feet, and my whole body went along," she said. "Sometimes you have to repeat a rhythm a long time before your body gets it right. Then when you get it, it's just really joyful."

Heinemann said her return to tapping has been restorative. "I'm so happy to be back in the world of shuffle-ball-change. Getting together with friends to stamp your feet and make lots of choreographed noise is marvelously therapeutic."

The Peaks Island Follies continues the island tradition of tap dance and performance. The late Doreen McCann, aunt of current Follies member Barbara Burkholder, taught dance for more than 40 years, beginning in the 1960s.

For more information, call Timmi Sellers at 831-917-3092.

WEDDING GUIDE

Celebrate like a local!
Island resources that will make your special event even more special!

Entertainment

Corina Spanu Art: Timeless wedding portraits & live event paintings for celebrations — capturing your love, venue, and cherished details.
571-721-8745 or www.corillustrations.com.

Food

Baba's Cafe: We cater homemade baked goods, sandwiches and espresso drinks on the morning of your wedding. Visit www.babaspeaksisland.com.

Gifts

City Point Studios: What better gift for Peaks Island newlyweds than affordable Peaks island artwork. www.citypointstudio.net

Chartered Cove Jewelry: Peaks Island Pendants & Nautical Jewelry. Handcrafted, one-of-a-kind pendants, customizable and engravable to commemorate your special day! Visit <https://charteredcovejewelry.etsy.com>

Island Activities

Mainely Mahjong: In 2.5 hours, a certified American mahjong instructor on Peaks can teach your wedding party the basics! Contact Melanie 214-952-7773

Peaksbeat.com

Music

Accordion Plus: Solo, duo or band. Standards, Jewish, French, Italian, etc. Sing alongs. Party fun! Nancy 3. Hoffman 207-939-0301

Faith York: Piano/organ/vocalist for weddings and events. Various ensembles of singers and instrumentalists available, plus a ukulele band. (207) 766-5763.

Jeff Cusack: Acoustic Guitarist/Vocalist available for wedding ceremonies, cocktail hours and small receptions. Call 207-671-2792 or email jefcusack1954@gmail.com

Photography

Ellie Lafferty: Ellie captures raw and ephemeral moments to create uniquely personal images for every couple. Call (503) 718-8561.

Transport

Peaks Island Golf Carts: Rent our fleet of electric carts for your wedding party. Reservations at www.peaksislandcarts.com

Venue

Fifth Maine Museum: Historic oceanside venue with seaside garden and wrap around porch. Ideal for rehearsal dinners and intimate weddings. Spectacular views included. www.fifthmainemuseum.org or 207-766-3330

Ode to a Wood Stove



Our wood stove arrived through fire. An islander’s house burned down, but the cast-iron appliance endured, blackened yet intact. We bought it for 200 bucks and carted it home, as so much on Peaks Island is carried: salvaged, inherited, bestowed. Freight across the bay is costly, and beyond that, we prefer objects with a history. A stove that has weathered flames before feels different, almost animate, as though it remembers.

Now it anchors fall then winter, when daylight thins and nights last long. In these months, some turn to drink, others to screens, and in the hours between the kids’ return from school and bedtime, we turn to flame. A match flares, kindling crackles, and soon the house is redolent with wood-smoke. Without a word, we drift from our corners, set aside our phones and gather. Sometimes we talk, sometimes we let the hush do the talking. If even for a few minutes, the fire gentles us, returning us to a slower, older cadence.

Science has caught up with instinct. Anthropologists suggest that fire shaped human destiny, stretching

the day, inviting stories into the dark, forging social bonds. To tend flame is to brush against continuity — cave dwellers painting by torchlight, farmers burning stubble, mothers drying damp socks. Biologists say the sight of flames lowers blood pressure and steadies the pulse. In one University of Alabama study, participants sitting before a crackling blaze showed measurable reductions in stress and surges of social ease. The flicker of flame is not merely mesmerizing, it is medicinal.

And yet the stove’s magic exceeds the laboratory: a hearth brings not only chemistry but kinship. Each autumn, a bundle of islanders converge at Linda Holtslander’s home on Winding Way to stack her woodpile. Linda is 82, and what might be a chore becomes a pageant: music spills into laughter, neighbors pass logs hand to hand, Simone, Theo, Abel, Peri and Bodi scramble like squirrels atop the growing wood pile. Thermoses of coffee circulate, pockets yield cookies. The labor becomes less about fuel and more about fellowship. Later, Linda rewards all the helpers by donating in their names to Preble Street, extending the warmth outward.

Tide Lines is a monthly exploration of island life, from micro to macro and all points between. Mira Ptacin, a resident of Sterling Street, is the author of nonfiction books “Poor Your Soul” and “The In-Betweens.” She is the 2025-2026 writer-in-residence at Mechanics Hall in Portland.



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Editorial: Informed votes strengthen us

We've all been there. You're standing in a voting booth when you realize the ballot contains names and questions you don't recognize. How did this happen? You thought you were an informed voter.

With that in mind, we applaud the Peaks Island Council's decision to host Candidates Night, an opportunity for voters to meet the six candidates for Casco Bay Lines' board of directors, discuss ballot

questions and more on Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 6 p.m. at the Community Center (see page 1).

We also hope you'll take time to read all about Peaks Island's candidates in our voter guide on pages 2 and 3.

Voting is important. Informed voting is critical. Study the issues. Learn the candidates' positions. And feel free to take the guide with you to the polls on Nov. 4 if you need to jog your memory.

Op-Ed: Vote no on Question 1, Voter ID

By Anne Coughlin and Joanne Sterling

If you think there is no reason to vote this Nov. 4, think again.

Voter ID for ME, a political action committee that formed in support of Question 1 on the November ballot, claims the measure will secure our elections and prevent voter fraud. What it will actually do is make absentee voting more difficult.

There is no evidence that voter fraud is a problem in Maine. As we see every year on Peaks, our voting officials and volunteers are competent, well trained and provide many checks against fraud in the voting process. When suspected duplicate voting or other fraud is reported to the secretary of state, there is a thorough investigation. Fifty-one suspected cases of duplicate voting were reported in Maine after the 2024 election: no wrongdoing was found. Question 1 is a solution in search of a problem.

What is a problem is Question 1 will make it harder for Mainers, including many of us here on Peaks, to vote. Forty percent of all Mainers — and 61% of Mainers over age 65 — used absentee ballots in our last election, according to an analysis of state voting data by the Save Maine Absentee Voting Coalition, a group of 27 Maine organizations that oppose Question 1.

If this referendum becomes law, you will no longer be able to pick up or drop off a ballot for your elderly parent. Your disabled neighbor won't be able to request an absentee ballot by phone. Disabled voters and many of us who are over 65 would no longer be able to have absentee ballots mailed to us automatically every year. Persons who work long hours or multiple jobs on Election Day will have fewer options for voting early.

Here's how absentee voting would change if Question 1 becomes law:

- Ongoing absentee voting for seniors and disabled Mainers would be eliminated.
- The last permitted day for early in-person voting would be moved from three to seven working days before the election, eliminating what history shows are the most popular days to vote early in person.
- An approved form of picture ID would be required (state-issued IDs, passports or military ID) each time a voter requests an absentee ballot, either in person or by mail.
- The number of secure ballot drop-off boxes a town may offer would be limited to one.
- Postage-paid return envelopes would be prohibited, even if a municipality has voted to provide this service.
- Requesting a ballot over the phone would be prohibited, making it harder for those without reliable transportation or reliable internet to request an absentee ballot.

What can you do? Make sure to vote no, either by absentee ballot or in person, on Question 1 this Nov. 4.

Talk to your friends and family. Tell them if this referendum passes, it will affect absentee voters in this state. Explain how it will be bad for Mainers, especially seniors, disabled, working and rural voters who rely on absentee voting. Explain why this is an important reason to vote in the upcoming election.

Share your opinion about Question 1 in a letter to the editor at one of our local newspapers.

Defend the voting rights of Mainers by voting no on Question 1 on Nov. 4.

Letter: Initiative a source of gratitude

On behalf of the Peaks Island Health Association's board of directors, I would like thank the Peaks Island News for its ongoing coverage of our mental health initiative over the last year.

We especially appreciate the story "Mental health services to open on Peaks" in the September issue, which announced our collaboration with Saint Christopher Parish, where clinical services will soon be offered.

I need to extend a word of deep gratitude to the parish community, especially to Fred O'Keefe, who worked diligently as a liaison between the association and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland. We owe him and the church community our sincere

gratitude. We also need to acknowledge the diocese's Rev. Seamus Griesbach and Denis Lafreniere for their generous, compassionate and expert support.

Last, the mental health initiative wouldn't be possible without our task force members Bud Higgins, Karen Peterson and Warren Hathaway, who provide the time, energy and expertise to operationalize our community-based plan for mental health services on Peaks Island. I am grateful to work with such a dedicated and gifted team.

Geoff Phillips McEnany
President, Peaks Island Health Assn.

Letter: Newspaper should build community, not resentment

After six months as editor, Ben McCanna has clearly developed his sea legs, which, as we all know, is the ability to adjust one's balance on a heaving ship without falling over or getting sick. I'm including the definition here because, as a former editor of the last community newspaper, I think this is the perfect metaphor for what it's like to run a newspaper in a small island community, especially one like ours with so much going on that is both magical and sometimes heartbreaking.

McCanna has begun filling the paper with relevant stories and meaningful features about islanders and issues too numerous to list here.

There is something else that is going on with this newspaper, though, that deeply concerns me.

The purpose of a community newspaper is to build up the community, not to foster division and resentment. For a local community newspaper, writing about neighbor disputes requires a careful balancing act between the paper's role as a public watchdog

and a responsible community member. Those making decisions about what to run, where to play it and how much ink a story gets, must first consider the community's need to know versus an individual or family's right to privacy and life free from harassment.

The September issue included a story that made me wince. It was about a young family who recently bought a house and land here, and who had what they thought was a great idea to rent space for glamping. Their neighbors hated the idea, so much so the family withdrew their application to the city. That was all that needed to be reported. Application filed. Neighbors hated it. Application withdrawn. Instead, this was a half-page story above the fold on page 2 with a description of the family, their children and where they lived with quotes from four of their neighbors. If this had been a story of wider relevance, it could have been justified. Instead, it felt like this family was shamelessly and publicly tarred and feathered.

I've seen this newspaper do this time and again,

Peaks Island News

This newspaper is a nonprofit organization *Created By Our Community For Our Community*. All members of the Peaks Island community are encouraged to have a voice in this paper, to contribute their ideas, writing, photography, illustrations and energy.

Our Mission

We aim to create a true community newspaper, delivering news about Peaks Island people, schools, businesses, government, organizations, current events, arts, history and island culture, while being supported by the people who live here and advertisers that connect businesses with locals and visitors alike.

Board of Directors

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Editor-in-Chief – Ben McCanna
Copy Editor – Michael Shavelson
Page Layout – Ben McCanna
Photo Editor – Cecilia Bohan

Photographers – Cara Dolan, Ben McCanna, Heather Wasklewicz

Other team members – Scott Dolan, Stacey Kors, Ross Sneyd

Advertising

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Q&A with Meredith Winn, author of ‘Uncertain Behavior’

By Maxine Eisenberg
Peaks Island News

Meredith Winn has engaged in many creative endeavors, including teacher, seamstress, photographer, freelance writer, magazine editor, printmaker and textile designer. Now, after her recent book debut, she has become a memoirist. “Uncertain Behavior,” a story told in three parts, explores a season in Winn’s life marked by resounding grief, as well as resilience and strength. Winn, 50, takes readers with her as she navigates the loss of both parents and her own bone cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Since 2011, Winn has called New England home. Winn jokes that she is from everywhere because she moves so often. Her son was born in Austin, Texas, where she used to search for homes in the classifieds during his naptime. It was in a search one day that she discovered Peaks Island. Winn says she was inexplicably drawn to the island. She relocated to New England when her son was 6, and went on her first date with her now husband to Peaks Island. They found their forever home on Peaks Island in 2017.



Ben McCanna/Peaks Island News

Meredith Winn’s debut memoir, “Uncertain Behavior,” explores parental loss, a cancer diagnosis and finding meaning along the way.

When did you know that you wanted to write a memoir, and what has the self-publishing process been like?

I’ve always found it easier to express myself with the written word, probably because I was so shy as a kid. I used to write books bound with yarn when I was little (didn’t everyone?) so I suppose writing has just always been part of me. I saw my essays first published in print back in 2007, and I made my bones writing through the early online days of web logs — eventually making my career as a freelance writer and photographer for print magazines. Twenty years ago, the traditional book publishing route had me mailing off proposals and queries with self-addressed stamped envelopes that collected both rejections as well as letters of encouragement from agents. For the last decade, though, I’ve been intrigued by the changing publishing world as print magazines slowly fall by the wayside. Self-publishing was a whole new learning

curve for me, and I really wanted to teach myself the process from a design standpoint. I persevered through sheer stubbornness, with an eagerness to learn.

The book focuses on a concentrated period of illness and loss. Was it written as events unfolded, or did you write it later while looking back?

A lot of life happened in a short period of time, and writing daily through 2016 helped me process my experience. I wrote it in real time, over the course of one year. This resulted in a 70,000-word manuscript that sat on my metaphorical desktop for nearly 10 years while I figured out what to do with it. To teach myself how to self-publish, I worked with 32 chapters that tied together across three bedside vigils. “Uncertain Behavior” is a short memoir, just over 100 pages, because that felt like a document of manageable size for my first book project.

The prose is often poetic, even when describing difficult experiences. Do you have a background in poetry, or was this a conscious stylistic choice for this book?

I admire poets, much like songwriters, but I don’t have a background in poetry. Traditional poetry feels like a very smartly structured box, and while I appreciate the aesthetics and construction of it, sometimes my writing spills over the edges. I don’t think I can write myself into a neat and tidy box. My English professors, and copy editors, didn’t always like stream-of-consciousness writing or my use of ellipses, but I’ve always written this way because that’s just how my brain works, and so I write how I converse.

The memoir shows how the grief of illness and the grief of loss can intertwine. Is there a message you hope readers take away about the ways these forms of grief connect or differ?

I wrote this memoir when I was freshly 40, and not many of my friends were navigating parental loss. Now, almost a decade later, we’re facing our 50s, and a lot of my loved ones are caring for aging parents. I think life is all connected, and we are all connected, and the more we can share it, the less alone we will feel. It’s a privilege to bear witness to this human experience. Life is weird, right? And we’re all just trying to draw meaning as we bump along our paths. So if our paths have crossed, and you find yourself holding my words in your hands, thank you.

Do you have plans for other writing projects or another memoir?

I write nearly every day, it’s just no longer my day job. But there always seems to be a “next project” on the back burner. It’s currently simmering

there at a steady 50,000 words. I stir it occasionally. My days are mostly spent working as a printmaker and vintage shopkeeper, but I’ll soon be a guest speaker for the University of Maryland, giving a talk about the self-publishing process at a workshop this semester.

Did writing this story make you see this period of your life differently? Has the process of creating a memoir taught you anything about yourself?

In 2010, I completed a 365 project where I took a photograph every single day for 365 days. That project ended up being written about in Ladies Home Journal, much to my father’s delight. That was the first year we navigated my mother’s dementia diagnosis, she was 67, and also the year my son went to kindergarten. At the time, I just needed a lifeline to keep me tethered to Earth, but it also allowed me a lens to study memory and grief, and how they intersect with beauty and joy. Publishing this memoir reminded me of that 365 project. Similarly, the practice of consistency shows us the natural cycle of creativity, and how its only state is ebb and flow. Our job is to just keep showing up.

A photographer chases light, and I think as a writer, I tend to do the same. At the time, writing this particular story felt like an agreement I made with the universe; it was my ticket to survival. Being diagnosed with bone cancer the same week my father died made life rather blurry, and writing was how I made sense of the chaos. So much life has happened since then. So much time had passed between writing and publishing that I was able to look at the book project objectively and also look at my younger self with love, ready to set those words free and make space for a new story.

“Uncertain Behavior” can be found on Bookshop.org and meredithwinn.com.



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Figuring out CBL vehicle fares could take some getting used to

By Ross Sneyd
Peaks Island News

Imagine a line of vehicles waiting to board the ferry to Peaks: a Subaru Outback topped with kayaks; a Ford F-250 with lumber protruding from its bed; and a Chevy Suburban with bicycles strapped to a hitch-mounted rack.

If a proposal for length-based vehicle rates were in place, how would drivers know what they owe? How would ticket agents determine the fares?

Welcome to the complexities of re-structuring rates for all vehicles boarding the Machigonne II, and eventually the Battery Steele. In a phrase, it ain't simple, especially when boat crews and ticket agents are working in the tight, often chaotic confines of Maine State Pier.

"We'll probably have people with

a tape measure in their pocket," said Nick Mavodones, Bay Lines operations director. "We may want to mark some lengths out" on the vehicle lanes.

The rates themselves could be relatively straightforward, although the specifics have yet to be finalized. Vehicles 20 feet and shorter would pay one rate, regardless of what they're carrying and whether or not they're registered as commercial.

The rates would rise for each additional 5 or 10 feet of vehicle length, up to 40 feet, and anything extending beyond the length of each vehicle would count.

The Outback with kayaks might fit in the under-20-foot class. The F-250 might or might not, depending on how long the lumber is. The Suburban probably wouldn't, because the bikes would kick it into the next class.

These classes would replace the weight-based rates that have governed commercial vehicles for years. Bay Lines staff and board members are now trying to determine how to implement such a change.

But making drivers with particularly long rigs pay for the space they occupy on the ferry's car deck is a key driver of the initiative, said Jean Hoffman, who is pushing for the changes in the Bay Lines board's finance committee that she chairs.

"We have a lot of standard-sized vehicles or just-over standard-sized vehicles and with stuff sticking out," she said. "So that's where we need to concentrate to be fair. Also, we are looking to increase revenues."

"If you take up more space, you're gonna pay more money," said Joe Donovan, who is also helping to

develop the new fare structure.

There are a number of ideas floating around Bay Lines headquarters about how to implement the new vehicle-ticketing system if it is ultimately adopted by the board, in addition to painted lines and tape measures.

One idea was to ask drivers how long their vehicles are. But that might not work. "We tried to ask people if they know the length of their vehicles," said Caity Gildart, sales and marketing director at Bay Lines. "We found out they don't."

Another idea is to create a smart-phone app so drivers could type in the make and model of their vehicles, plus anything extending beyond it.

Donovan said he's confident the complications would eventually work themselves out. "I think once it's in place, it becomes even simpler."

CBL hires new general manager

Peaks Island News

A Brunswick man with a long history working in the commercial marine business has been hired as general manager of Casco Bay Lines.

Ben Dinsmore took over the top job at the ferry service in mid-September, succeeding John Warnock, who replaced longtime general manager Hank Berg, but lasted less than a year on the job.

Dinsmore was unanimously appointed by the Casco Bay Lines District board of directors in late August.

"Casco Bay Lines is a cornerstone of our island communities, and we believe Ben not only brings the skills and vision to guide the district forward, but also the ability to lead and support the dedicated team that keeps the boats running every day," said Jennifer Lavanture, president of the board.

Dinsmore is a native of the Maine coast and his father is a captain in the Maine State Ferry Service. Dinsmore has captained large commercial ships, overseen construction of new boats and supervised marine operations in both the oil and gas and renewable energy industries.



Ben Dinsmore

He previously owned R.E. Thomas Marine Hardware, which manufactures components for a variety of vessels, including lobster boats.

"Growing up on the coast of Maine, I developed a deep respect for the working waterfront and island communities," Dinsmore said. "I understand the seasonal rhythms of life on the islands and the unique challenges they bring. Casco Bay Lines is more than a ferry service: it's a lifeline, a connector of communities and a reflection of the people who call these islands home."

Dinsmore graduated from the Maine Maritime Academy and earned a master's of business administration from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He also spent eight years in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

Nate Mills, a CBL senior captain and president of the Maine Maritime Association, the union representing Bay Lines employees, said in a statement released by CBL that Dinsmore would bring "strong leadership" to the ferry service.

"He will be a real asset to our crew and community," Mills said.

Lavanture said there are already a number of initiatives awaiting Dinsmore as he begins the job.

"He has demonstrated a readiness to roll up his sleeves and tackle key priorities, including commercial/large-size vehicle rates, Battery Steele delivery and operational efficiency," she said.

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Warren Hathaway
City employee Mario Proia patches a section of Seashore Avenue with fresh asphalt on Sept. 11. The project, which included several sections of roadway that were washed out by the January 2024 storms, was completed late this summer. The patchwork is a temporary solution to “get us through the winter,” said Bill Patnaude, the city’s liaison to the islands. Permanent fixes, along with the replacement of a seawall, will be done “sometime between next spring and fall.”



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CBL considers new ticket hike

By Ross Sneyd
Peaks Island News

Passenger fares at Casco Bay Lines could rise by a modest amount in the next budget year if a draft proposal advances beyond the discussion phase.

The draft, which was unveiled at a Sept. 10 meeting of the finance committee, proposes a 13% increase in passenger fare revenues through a combination of higher ticket prices and a projected boost in ridership.

Freight revenues would need to be 15% higher under the proposal. Vehicle revenues would rise 20%.

“We talked about getting into the habit of annual or biannual increases to passenger fares,” Casco Bay Lines Finance Director Laurie Bowie said as she presented the

proposal to the committee.

None of those rates could be implemented without a vote of the full board and approval of the Maine Public Utilities Commission.

“As we all know, any changes in fares have to go through a full public process,” said Jean Hoffman, chairwoman of the finance committee, adding that the “details have to be fleshed out.”

Hoffman also said she is committed to reducing costs for families and friends who want to visit island residents, a particular sticking point when ticket prices were raised in 2024. Many people complained that \$14 tickets discouraged such visits, especially for families.

No timeline has been set for when the new rates might be discussed or adopted.

PIC, CBL react to visitor surge

VISITORS, continued from page 1

Another member of the Peaks Island Council, Karsten Rees, said he hopes the subcommittee will address safety concerns on Welch Street, where throngs of uphill pedestrians mix with a rush of downhill vehicles.

Similarly, some members of the CBL board questioned whether the numbers reflected in the report are a blip or whether they should plan for growth in the number of tourists coming to the Casco Bay islands.

“Is that sustainable? Will it continue?” asked CBL board member Bud Higgins, who represents Peaks Island.

Bay Lines managers surmise the

surge in passengers was due to sunny, warm weather, which sales director Caity Gildart called a “primary factor.”

“If you get a lot of fog, you get a lot of rain, your numbers just plummet,” added Nick Mavodones, CBL’s operations director.

Higgins, for one, thinks increased ridership is good for the ferry service, which benefits from higher ticket revenues. “If we’re going to have that, we should welcome it,” he said.

Peaks was not alone in the number of visitors during August. All of the Down Bay islands had similar surges. “The secret’s out,” said James Luedke, who represents Great Diamond Island on the CBL board.

CBL ridership data before and after fare hike

Data from Casco Bay Lines show year-over-year ridership to Peaks Island, from January 2023 and extending through August 2025. Boldface numbers reflect higher ticket prices, which nearly doubled beginning in June 2024.

	2023	2024	2025
January	30,215	26,602	29,599
February	25,255	26,511	23,024
March	26,384	31,575	29,595
April	40,275	38,218	36,347
May	66,540	58,110	55,561
June	85,644	94,661	95,230
July	131,869	138,236	137,806
August	129,750	127,401	149,359*
September	87,891	82,490	
October	60,657	61,767	
November	38,620	37,019	
December	33,182	31,730	

* Shows a 17% increase from previous year

Have an idea for a story you’d like to see in Peaks Island News?

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Students, faculty return to the Brick School for the start of a new year



Photos by Cara Dolan/Peaks Island News
School Librarian Bridget Joyce holds the door as students file into Peaks Island Elementary School on Sept. 2, the first day of the 2025-26 school year.



Sarah Goodman hugs Asher Goodman before the start of his first-ever day at PIES.



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Students interview Peaks Island Elementary's newest educators

Editor's note: Peaks Island Elementary students began the school year by welcoming newcomers Bill Anton, teaching principal, and Morgan Burkholder, fourth- and fifth-grade teacher.

To help introduce these educators to the island community, Burkholder's students brainstormed a series of elucidating questions, then young interviewers Colin Meharg and Simone Ptacin-Jackson posed the questions to Anton and Burkholder, respectively. The results are collated below.

What are some things that you really enjoy about working at Peaks Island Elementary School?

Bill Anton: I love my morning commute on the ferry. It is a meditative beginning to my day. I love the walk from the ferry to the school. It gives me an idea of what my colleagues and students experience. I love the opening of our day, and when our students are playing and the fifth-graders do the announcements. I love the positive energy of all my colleagues, and all the dedication and care they give to the students and the Peaks Island community. I love how the students are kind to one another, constantly curious and very engaged learners. I love



Bill Anton

learning about all the unique things about Peaks Island, like the summer sailing programs and the ongoing community events.

Morgan Burkholder: Some things I really enjoy about working at the Peaks school are the community involvement and how close-knit the school is. I love the before-and-after-school get-togethers on the playground between students, teachers and parents. My commute is also the best.



Morgan Burkholder

What is your favorite color?

Anton: My favorite color is blue.

Burkholder: My favorite color is green.

Mr. Anton, what do you like about being a principal?

Anton: I love trying to create conditions for success for my colleagues and students.

Mrs. Burkholder, what is your favorite subject to teach?

Burkholder: I love teaching it all. I feel like I can be creative and fun in all subject areas. I love incorporating games into learning. But, if I had to choose, I love ELA (English and language arts) the most. I love to read and how it can take you anywhere, and I want others to feel that way, too.

If you could do any other job what would it be?

Anton: Game show host.

Burkholder: Definitely marine biology. I wanted to be that since I was a kid, but unfortunately science and math in high school and college were really hard.

What is your favorite sport to play? Did you play any sports growing up?

Anton: My favorite sport to play is sand volleyball. Growing up, I played baseball, tennis, badminton, basketball and soccer. I lettered in badminton in high school.

Burkholder: My favorite sport to play is basketball, and I played year-round since I was a kid. I traveled all over the east coast playing with AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) and travel teams, and then played the regular season with my high-school team. Go Orono Riots!

If you could meet any musical artist who would it be?

Anton: George Benson.

Burkholder: Taylor Swift, of course.

What advice would you give to kids who want to be a teacher?

Anton: Work hard, be kind, stay curious and go to school for teaching.

Burkholder: My advice would be to stay curious, never stop learning and to always practice patience and kindness.



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PIES joins worldwide cleanup



Pat Crowley-Rockwell

First-graders Eben Feldman-Orr, left, Ruby Marot and Milo Ryan collect litter alongside Centennial Beach on Sept. 11. All PIES students participated in the 2025 International Coastal Cleanup, joining millions of worldwide volunteers. On a local scale, the students picked up nearly 100 cigarette butts, plus washed-up commercial fishing gear.

Island's past meets present as Civil War veteran honored by descendant

By Holly Hurd-Forsyth and Ben McCanna
Peaks Island News

Geoff Phillips McEnany vividly recalls inheriting his great-grandfather's trove of Civil War memorabilia.

"It was like Christmas. 'Oh my gosh, look at this stuff,'" he recalled thinking. "But then I had to learn what it all meant."

Thus began his years-long journey to study and preserve Oliver Leavitt's legacy as a Civil War combatant.

That effort culminated on Aug. 30 with a dedication ceremony at Leavitt's Falmouth grave and, later that same day, Phillips McEnany's induction into the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War during an event at Fifth Maine Museum, where much of Leavitt's memorabilia is now displayed or archived.

Leavitt, who died in 1941 at age 97, had a long history on Peaks as a summer resident. His Civil War service may have led him here.

He was born in Dixfield in 1845. He joined the Union Army when he was 19 years old, mustering into the 32nd Maine Regiment in March 1864. He saw his first battle at The Wilderness in May of that same year.

The 32nd Maine fought some of the bloodiest battles of the conflict, including Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg and the infamous Battle of the Crater.

"Most of the 32nd was wiped out," McEnany said. "My great-grandfather ascribed his survival to having been a hunter in Maine. He knew how to use a gun."

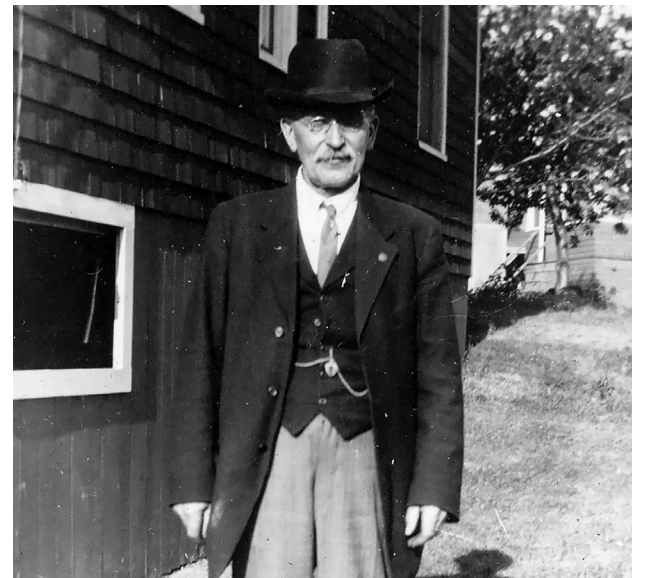
The regiment's few survivors were consolidated into the 31st Maine in late 1864.

In March 1865, while on duty at City Point, Virginia, an important military headquarters,



Ben McCanna/Peaks Island News

Above: Geoff Phillips McEnany, right, great-grandson of Civil War veteran Oliver Leavitt, shakes hands with Steve Gibbons, an officer of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, after being inducted into the group during a ceremony at Fifth Maine Museum on Aug. 30. Right: Oliver Leavitt on Peaks Island, circa 1915.



Courtesy of Geoff Phillips McEnany

Leavitt overheard a conversation between General Ulysses S. Grant and President Abraham Lincoln, who was visiting the camp for an inspection. The president and the general were discussing the source of nearby cannon fire.

Leavitt talked about that brush with fame during an interview with a newspaper writer in the early 20th century.

"Mr. Leavitt still remembers Lincoln's tones

LEAVITT, continued on page 13



Fred Rainbow: A lifetime of memories within a memorable house



HOW I LANDED
ON PEAKS

BY
STACEY
KORS

If you ever visited Duffy's, the one-room hardware store that graced Island Avenue from 2014 to 2022, and happened to find it open during its rather unpredictable business hours, then you've met Fred Rainbow. A soft-spoken man with a mellifluous, honeyed lilt and, as a former bookseller, a near-reverent appreciation of a good read, the native Floridian has had a surprisingly long connection to Peaks Island — and the Park Avenue house in which he and his wife Betty Ann reside. Here, Rainbow provides a glimpse into his, as well as our island's, history.

My folks met in Jacksonville, Florida, when my mother was in the United States Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS) during World War II, and my father was a Merchant Marine officer. They got married after the war. My father told my mother, "we can live anywhere where it doesn't snow." She decided to stay in Florida.

My mother was from Boston, and had grown up in the summers in the house Betty Ann and I live in now. My great-grandmother Jennie O'Dowd owned the house. My mother first came to Peaks before her first birthday, as did I. (And, with many blessings, the same can be said for all three of our grandchildren.)

Mary Grandfield, my great aunt, owned the house when I was growing up. I came to stay with her every year of my life, until she died in 1964. She was the kindest person you might wish to have in your life. I would catch small mackerel, clean them and bring them home. She would cook them for me on her huge cast-iron coal stove, and say, "Oh no, I'm not hungry, you eat them, dear."



Ben McCanna/Peaks Island News

Betty Ann and Fred Rainbow outside their Park Avenue home, which has been in Fred's family for several generations.

The house had one indoor running-water spigot and no other indoor plumbing. It had an indoor "outhouse" that was in the buttery (pantry). We had a "two-holer," and I would go in carrying a can of Lysol, spraying it in well before me. It was kind of unusual — and unnerving for many people. Fortunately, it meant that my mother's siblings never took to the place, but my mother and I certainly did.

When Mary died, the house passed to my mother. That's when it became a more modern home. My father had indoor plumbing put in, rewired the house and took out a dangerous chimney. After my mother died in 1993 the house became mine. We continued to come up to Peaks when we could, and had to rent the house by the week in summer so we could afford to keep it.

The house was originally built by Frank Lavorasalle around 1904 (thanks to Kim MacIsaac for the info). It was called the Sicilian Castle, and featured Victorian gingerbread trim and fabricated shingles,



Photo courtesy of Kim MacIsaac

The so-called Sicilian Castle as it appeared in the early 20th century.

flattened and cut from carbide tins from the power plant, that looked like scallop shells. There was a tower with wooden guns and painted tin torches with white bottoms and red flames, which looked like fires were coming up. I am sorry that we didn't save all that stuff. There was also a detached carriage house that is no longer there.

Betty Ann and I moved up here permanently in 2010 when we retired from bookselling. Worried about how we would take the winters, we did not sell the house we had in Gainesville for three years. But we have never looked back from that. I have loved Maine all my life, and Peaks Island has always been good to me.

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Civil War veteran's legacy continues on Peaks

LEAVITT, continued from page 12

... but to his mind there was nothing extraordinary about his voice," the article states. "It was pleasant. His voice carried clearly. But it was just such a voice as the average man has."

During that same presidential visit, while Leavitt was on guard duty, Grant approached him to shake his hand.

"He basically thanked him for the work he was doing," Phillips McEnany said.

Leavitt met Grant a second time after the war during the Grand Review of the Armies in Washington, D.C., in May 1965.

"The president was there. Grant was there," Phillips McEnany said. "Grant saw my great-grandfather, and according to the story, he came and he shook his hand again. He said, 'I'm glad you made it.'"

It's probable Leavitt's first visit to Peaks

Island was for a military reunion with his brothers, William and Winfield, who also served in the war. (William was a soldier in the 8th Maine Regiment, whose namesake lodge served as a summer home for veterans.)

Leavitt evidently liked the island, and he soon became a summer resident. His extended family followed him.

The Leavitts owned two cottages on the island, where multiple generations enjoyed summers. Aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and friends gathered together year after year through 2004 when the last of the cottages changed hands.

Phillips McEnany, who grew up visiting Peaks, moved to the island year-round in 2021. His Spruce Avenue cottage, Finally Home, is not far from the Eighth Maine Lodge and Museum, the site where the Leavitt family history on Peaks likely began.

Harnessing the power of artificial intelligence with Alex Denniston



IT'S A
LIVING
BY
SUSAN
HANLEY

When I asked Alex Denniston what he does for a living, he took a deep breath. This was not his first time trying to explain what is a very niche job.

The short version is that Denniston, 39, works for Factor, a New York-based law practice, where he helps companies understand how artificial intelligence (AI) can help them accomplish legal work at scale. Think mergers and acquisitions, contracts, regulatory compliance, and so on.

Denniston and I talked for about half an hour before I felt like I had some understanding of what he does. Beyond being an AI novice, I was a bit of an AI skeptic. I didn't understand it and I didn't like it. But it only took a quick demonstration to convert me into an AI believer. And that's what Denniston does. He creates the aha moment that makes everything crystal clear.

What do you do at Factor?

I run a professional collective for companies that are trying to figure out what AI means to them, companies like Microsoft, Adobe, GSK, and HSBC. The legal departments at these companies are doing similar things but the companies aren't in competition with each other so they're willing to share ideas. I put together programming for these companies to come together and compare their experiences at roundtables and in-person gatherings. I also run AI training initiatives for companies.

What is your typical day like?

My company is fully remote with about 500 people, so I work from home. I have a team of five that I manage directly. A typical day is some combination of online meetings and getting work done in between. A lot of my team is based in Northern Ireland, so the difference in time zones means I have to not panic when I wake up and see all the messages and emails on my phone already.

How did you get into this line of work?

I went to school for mechanical engineering and my first job was being a professional inventor to help companies figure out new products and new ideas. I was working in Boston and when I moved to Maine, I got a job with a company called Theory and Principle. They built custom software and products related to the legal field. Sort of like Turbo Tax takes out the complexity of taxes, they made products that took the complexity out of legal tasks for large corporations or individuals. When they got acquired by Factor, I got a chance to work in a new direction.

How do you describe AI?

It's very cutting edge. I com-



Ben McCanna/Peaks Island News

Alex Denniston is accompanied by Daisy, left, and Milo while sitting on a bench outside his dock house where he sometimes works.

pletely understand the apprehension and worry that people have around AI. It is very confusing; the space itself changes so quickly. But it's not a robot that you can off-load work to. It's more like an Iron Man suit that you can put on top of your existing skills to enhance your capabilities. The line I've heard is, "You are unlikely to be replaced by AI, but you might be replaced by a person who is good at using AI."

How do people get good at using AI?

In theory, anyone can use AI to do impressive things or solve interesting problems. For example, there's this new thing called Vibe Coding where you can describe what you want a computer program or video game to do, and AI can write all the code for you. It's not perfect and we're not even remotely close to replacing programmers, but it's getting there. Because it is such a potentially powerful tool that can be used by someone with no training, that's a new paradigm. But with huge power, comes huge responsibilities. There is a lot of concern and work on AI scams. There are AI voice scams where (an AI-generated voice of) a family member calls asking for money. They're very convincing.

How do people respond to AI being incorporated into their work?

What people are finding out is that the challenges are not technical challenges but things like change management, team dynamics, organizational psychology. It's just dealing with those challenges as it relates to this new technology. It's just the next version of sea change. What happened to the workforce when we added electricity? What happened to the workforce when we added computers? What happened to the workforce when we added the internet? Now, what happens to the workforce when we add AI? The companies that are seeing success in AI are the ones who are successful

human leaders, not just the most technologically savvy ones.

What is your favorite thing about your job?

It's fun to be working in a space

that is so new and exciting. I like trying to solve tricky problems and these are tricky problems. It's big change at big scale with a lot of uncertainty and a lot of human elements – that's all really interesting to me.

VOTE SAM ABORNE

TUESDAY NOV 4th

CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE



Why am I running? My decision to jump into the race was based on a desire to restore hope and renewed enthusiasm for Portland as a safe, livable city for its residents. I am a problem solver at heart and professionally an engineer with a reasoned, common sense approach to issues while balancing the needs of those affected.

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EVERYONE DESERVES A CITY WORKING FOR THEM!

GET IN TOUCH WITH SAM

📍 samaborne4portland

✉ samaborne4portland@gmail.com

🌐 www.samaborne4portland.com



Paid for & Authorized by Candidate, PO Box 10094 Portland 04104

An Open Book from the Peaks Island Branch Library

By Rose Ann Walsh
For the Peaks Island Library

Crisp air is here and we are settling into fall. Looking out our windows during October, we hope to see changing colors and beautiful sunsets. And, as we look out, we also hope you'll be looking in. Our deep windowsills are perfect for displaying books, and we take full advantage of them. If you see something you like, stop in, call or email the library, and we will set it aside for you. Take full advantage of your library card, as we do with our library windows, which we try to change more often than the seasons.

Halloween fun
All ages are welcome on Tuesday, Oct. 28, 3:15 p.m. – 4:15, as we craft Halloween decora-

tions. We will supply all the necessary materials.

Weekly Friday storytimes
10:15 a.m. — Rhythm & Rhymes, infants – age 2
10:45 a.m. — Preschool Storytime, ages 3–5

Writing group for children in grades 3, 4 and 5
3:15 p.m. Fridays. Pencils, journals, and snacks are provided.

Adult writing group
9 a.m. Saturdays. Each group meets for 45 minutes in the library; drop-ins are always welcome.

Adult book discussion
On Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 7 p.m., the group will meet to discuss “Frozen River” by Ariel Lawhon. Contact the library for a copy of the book. All are welcome.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Peaks Island Library.

Games and puzzles for all ages
We have playing cards, puzzles and building toys for young children downstairs. There are Legos, board games and puzzles upstairs for all ages.

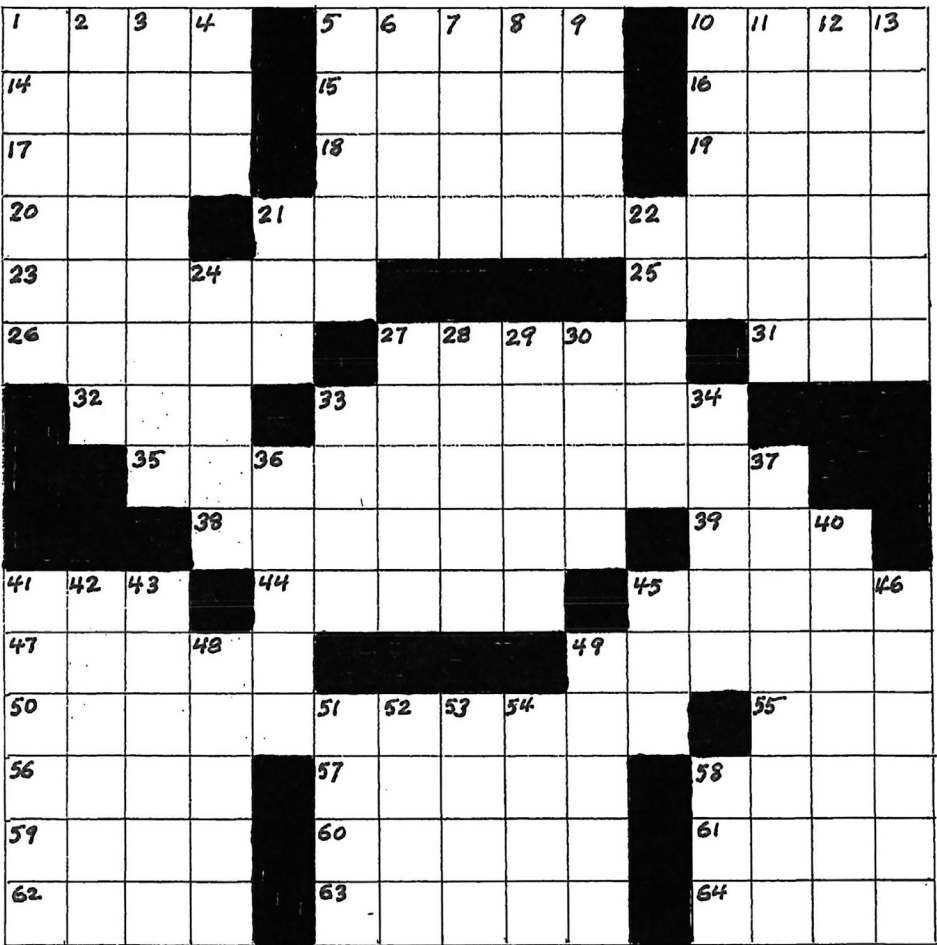
Crossword puzzles and coloring pages for adults
Enjoy the Portland Press Herald, daily crossword puzzles, word puzzles and coloring pages at the library. Complete one at the library or pick one up to take home or for the boat ride.

Hopefully, we have something for everybody. Stop in Tuesdays noon–6 p.m.; Wednesdays 9 a.m.–noon; Fridays 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Saturdays 9 a.m.–noon. Find us at 766-5540, peaks@portlib.org or portlandlibrary.com/locations/peaks-island-branch.

Crossword challenge: OK, boomer

By John Whitman

- Across**
- 1. Long ago princess of Kiev
 - 5. Behaved
 - 10. Rifts
 - 14. Concern
 - 15. Durable twill fabric
 - 16. Got it
 - 17. Gelling agent derived from seaweed
 - 18. Swift
 - 19. Semi-wig
 - 20. Harry to Charles
 - 21. #1 hit by 40 Down (2005)
 - 23. Without any question
 - 25. James Bond's favorite car
 - 26. Noted American playwright, between O'Neill and Miller
 - 27. State with largest contiguous wilderness in Lower 48
 - 31. ___ roll
 - 32. Hair color
 - 33. Word to describe 35 Across
 - 35. Most famous person ever to come out of Reading, PA
 - 38. Newborn
 - 39. Pertaining to the Ocean State (abbr.)
 - 41. “The Railsplitter”
 - 44. Badger dens
 - 45. Derogatory term for German soldier
 - 47. Founder of modern sculpture
 - 49. Chinese tangerine tree
 - 50. Follow-up to “Cruel Summer” (2023)
 - 55. Called out by the ref
 - 56. ___ boy or girl
 - 57. First electronic digital com-



- 58. puter (1946)
- 59. Fencing weapon
- 60. Christmas in Cannes
- 61. Of course (slang)
- 62. A football field is slightly larger
- 63. “Old Hickory”
- 64. Canadian rapper with five Grammys
- Alternative names (abbr.)

- Down**
- 1. What AOC and Bad Bunny have in common
 - 2. Car company purchased by 25 Across
 - 3. Most magnificent
 - 4. ___ Lingus, Irish airline
 - 5. Angry and bitter
 - 6. Bloke
 - 7. Inside info

- 8. Woman's name, and city in Oklahoma
- 9. Bird killed off by humans
- 10. Presents
- 11. Attack, in Madrid
- 12. Mountain piled on another by the gods (Greek mythology)
- 13. ___ Gomez, singer/actor
- 21. “___ a Rebel,” (#1 hit in 1962)
- 22. Ruth's mother-in-law (Old Testament)
- 24. Joel Coen's brother
- 27. No way!
- 28. Get rid of rodents
- 29. Helpers (abbr.)
- 30. Mr. Hockey for five decades
- 33. Succulent
- 34. Zac ___, actor
- 36. On/off
- 37. Clock talk
- 40. Colombia's global superstar
- 41. ___ Grande, pop icon with 4-octave range
- 42. Home of Jarren Duran and Garrett Crochet
- 43. Revised for publication
- 45. Something taken but not given
- 46. Organic compounds
- 48. Birthplace of Christopher Columbus
- 49. Pocket, in Montmartre
- 51. Offer for sale
- 52. Old Norse warrior
- 53. Ora or Hayworth
- 54. Negative acknowledgement of unreadable data (abbr.)
- 58. Controversial branch of U.S. DOT

Answers on page 19



History • Legacy • Community

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Arts Beat: Father and son printmakers, but in different media



**ARTS
BEAT
BY
JAMIE
HOGAN**

The T-shirts are eye-catching. A haunted stump with a single eye. Anchors and antlers. Crossed hatchets. There is something old-fashioned and Maine-woody about the images and something contemporary about the texts. “The Sea Hates A Coward.” “Head North.” The combination is humorous and energetic. Or, as Alfred Wood, the shirts’ creator, says, “They were inspired by beat-up trucks and whiskey passed around a bonfire.”

They were also inspired by Alfred’s son, Jackman.

Alfred, 65, is the founder of Blood & Whiskey Studio, a line of silk-screen-printed clothing and accessories established in 2015. Blood & Whiskey was forged from an aesthetic that combines 19th-century wood typefaces with detailed drawings of trees, antlers, skulls, cowpoke crows, narwhals or a menacing octopus.

“I wanted to do stuff that is Maine slanted,” he said, “but stuff that a Mainer would buy.”

Alfred was drawn to printing as a teenager after his older sister, Marjorie, sold her letterpress printing business, Blue Mountain Printmakers, to a Boston company. Alfred used her idle equipment to explore poster printing.

“Early on,” he said, “I did a lot of band posters.”

He spent a year learning offset printing at Central Maine Vocational Technical Institute (now Central Maine Community College) before transferring to University of Maine at Augusta to study art.

Alfred started out in advertising, working for about nine years at Swardlick Marketing Group in Portland as an illustrator and designer. “It was all analog back then,” he said. “All that stuff is in the boneyard now, like typesetters and paste-up and the giant stat cameras. It was cool to be there but it was tedious.”

After 12 years at the Portland Press Herald as a staff illustrator, Alfred began freelancing. But his clients were drying up. “I asked myself, what can I make and sell with my limited abilities and not rely on somebody else’s business?”

That’s where his son comes in. “I feel like I ignited a fire in him for screen printing,” said Jackman, 38, who studied printmaking.

“Jackman had an etching of a hatchet that was really cool,” said Alfred, who employed it in a design that forms a shield with “work hard” and “play hard” beneath a Maine banner.

Jackman earned a degree from Rhode Island School of Design in 2010. Growing up in a family of artists, Jackman said, “it was impossible to avoid.”

“My parents instilled art in me, my mom (artist Diane Wiencke) more than my dad. She was an art teacher at Deering High School. When it came



Ben McCanna/Peaks Island News

Above: Alfred and Jackman Wood outside the studio where Alfred silkscreens his line of clothing. Below: Jackman Wood displays woodblock prints of derelict structures. Bottom: One of many T-shirts designed and printed by Alfred Wood.

time to go to college, she was the one pushing me to apply to [art] schools.”

He loved life drawing and figure drawing courses and found block printing and lithography intriguing, more for the carving than the “repetition of editions.” His subject matter was mostly nude figures. “I would go through my sketchbooks or pads from drawing class and just choose compositions that I liked, leaving out the faces and making it more abstract. I would transfer them to stones, or etching plates, or wood blocks.”

Last fall at the Peaks Island Branch Library he exhibited a series of woodblock prints along with some of the original carved walnut slabs, featuring old houses and barns that have caught his keen eye.

The prints are black ink on white paper, stark portraits of decaying structures leaning into neglected yards, vessels of phantom spirits and time gone by. To some, the houses may look haunted, on the edge of collapse. Yet the deliberate strokes carved into the wood’s grain eternalize every sagging plank and crooked windowsill. Whether pounding nails at his day job as a carpenter or inking blocks as a printmaker, Jackman embodies his devotion to building a life with his hands. A possible show at a gallery in Belfast beckons.

His father is more the silkscreen man, and he sometimes uses a computer and scanner to create and assemble his graphics for Blood & Whiskey Studio. Jackman, though, won’t touch the digital stuff.

“We definitely have a good relationship and love each other,” said Alfred. “But working together, we sometimes crack heads. He’s a taskmaster.”

They don’t butt heads about one thing: the real artist in the family. “It’s my wife,” said Alfred. “My son and I are pretty good, but Diane’s the real artist.”



Photos by Jamie Hogan



VOTE

Mark Rogus

Casco Bay Island Transit District Board

Peaks Island Representative

NOV 4th



30+ years executive experience in finance and governance

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Raised in a Casco Bay community

CBITD faces serious challenges: uncertain federal funding, rising costs, large deficits and opaque governance.

MY FOCUS

IMPROVED RIDER EXPERIENCE

Electronic ticketing
Congestion and boarding

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Publish performance metrics
Cost reductions before fare hikes

TRANSPARENT GOVERNANCE

Accountability for the Staff and Board
Public workshops versus 3-minute public comment moments



VOTE
Mark Rogus

Sustainable Ferry Service = Stronger Island Community

How to spot Andromeda from the Back Shore with the naked eye



**SKY
WATCH
BY
MICHAEL
RICHARDS**

Each October day brings a longer period of nighttime.

At the beginning of the month, the sun will rise at 6:38 a.m. and set at 6:21 p.m. As the month advances, we'll lose about 2.5 minutes of light every day. By Halloween, we'll have lost 45 minutes of sunlight on either end of the day, for a total of 1.5 hours of diminished light.

The sun's position on the horizons will likewise change, with sunrise and sunset creeping one-half degree farther south each day. Instead of the Northern Hemisphere pointing toward the sun during the day, it's now beginning to point away from the sun. Deciduous trees will respond accordingly, with green leaves turning shades of red and yellow.

The summer constellations now set early in the evening, with Arcturus, the red-giant star in kite-shaped Boötes the herdsman, bright in the west over Portland. Next to Arcturus is Coroneae Borealis, shaped like a smile. Every 80 years, one of its smaller stars goes nova and brightens immensely. That recurring event is overdue and keeps astronomers up at night.

Turning your gaze through the key-stone-shaped chest of Hercules, you'll be drawn to bright-white Vega, a fast-spinning star in the constellation Lyra, which is almost directly overhead at dusk. Now is a good time to find the Ring Nebula, a remnant from a nova, between the two stars at the far end of the lyre. Next to it is the cross that marks the wings of Cygnus the swan, flying high overhead. Rising in the east is the big W of Cassiopeia the queen, sitting on her throne.

Over Casco Bay at dusk, Pegasus the flying horse lies with his square back on



Jamie Hogan

the eastern horizon, kicking his hoofs upward. Just inside his third leg lurks the Andromeda Galaxy. At 2.5 million light-years away, this galaxy is one of the farthest objects we can see with our naked eyes. The deeper V of Cassiopeia is an arrow pointing the way, and then the knees of Pegasus' hind legs lead you to it. Use averted vision, a technique of looking just to the side of a faint object, and it will appear as a cloud. Then use binoculars to get a good look at Andromeda, which is on a collision course to merge with our Milky Way 10 billion years from now. (I've marked my calendar and will give you all a month's notice.)

Oct. 5

Tonight a nearly full moon passes over Saturn. The Camelopardalid meteor shower peaks just before dawn, and

Earth's oblique angle to the meteor path will produce some long streaks. The moon will be a nuisance in the west, but if you're up before dawn, look northward.

Oct. 6

Harvest Moon rises over the bay at 5:51 p.m. and sets over Portland at 5:57 a.m. If the weather cooperates, an evening Back Shore stroll will be moonlit.

Oct. 8

The moon reaches perigee today, its closest approach to Earth this month. It pulls the tides higher and lower (more than 13 feet of difference), especially as the moon was just full. The high tides are now ideal for hauling boats. The lower tides of course are great for clamming. Tonight at dusk and just overhead, the Draconid meteor shower will peak.

Oct. 13

The last-quarter moon is highest at sunrise. The next few days are best for viewing the tortured lunar landscape. With no atmosphere to protect it, the moon bears the circular scars of meteorites big and small that bombard it daily. Meteorites strike Earth, too, but most meteors burn to ashes high in our atmosphere, sprinkling 100 tons of dust over Earth each week.

Oct. 18

The Geminid meteor shower peaks this morning between midnight and dawn in the northwest sky.

Oct. 19

An hour before dawn the waning crescent moon rises just below Venus on the eastern horizon.

Oct. 21

The Orionid meteor shower peaks tonight. Best viewing is eastward just before dawn, and, with a new moon today, the sky will be dark. If it's a clear night, you might see a meteor every few minutes.

Oct. 24

The moon's at apogee today, the farthest it gets from Earth this cycle, moderating ocean tides to barely 5.5 feet between high and low. The Leonid Minorid meteor shower peaks this morning before dawn.

Oct. 29

Mercury is at its greatest eastern elongation from the sun, and it's visible for an hour after dusk. It's small and fast moving, however, so it's hard to spot on the western horizon, even with binoculars. The first-quarter moon is highest at sunrise.

Oct. 31

The sun sets on Halloween at 5:32 p.m. and will not rise until 7:16 a.m. on All Saints' Day, giving us plenty of darkness for jack-o'-lanterns and trick-or-treating.

OBITUARY

Karen Elizabeth Taylor Oct. 9, 1936 - Sept. 1, 2025



Karen Elizabeth (Dill) Taylor passed away peacefully at her Peaks Island home on Sept. 1, following a long struggle with metastatic cancer. Known to all as Kay, she insisted on coming home from care on the main-

land to spend her final days enjoying the ocean views she so loved.

Kay was born on Oct. 9, 1936, in Ferndale, Michigan, to Jay Edwin Dill and Elizabeth Almira (Foster) Dill, followed 14 months later by her brother Robert. The Dill family eventually moved to Ontario, New York, where Kay graduated high school in 1954. Afterward, she attended Bates College.

Kay graduated from Bates in 1958 with a degree in Spanish, and, ever the adventurer, she traveled to Madrid, Spain, to pursue her master's degree. There she met and married Carlos Peñalver in 1960. Soon after, the young couple moved to the United States, and taught in Palos Verdes, California, where twins Elizabeth (Lisa) Maria and Juan Rafael were born in 1961. Another daughter, Marina Ilene, was born in 1965 following a move to work at the Wilbraham Academy in Massachusetts.

In 1969, the family moved to Spain so the kids would become fluent in Spanish and get to know their

relatives there. In 1970, the family returned to live on the Ontario farm with Kay's widowed dad. Kay taught Spanish and English as a Second Language for 13 years while Carlos pursued a career at Eastman Kodak. Farm life let Kay indulge her lifelong passion for animals, with horses, dogs, cats, chickens and goats a part of daily life.

In 1983, when the marriage ultimately did not work out, Kay returned to Maine to start the next chapter of her life, which would last more than forty years.

Kay reunited with her college beau Gene Taylor. They moved into the Taylor family cottage on Peaks Island and she quickly became an active member of the island community, performing in a Neil Simon play at the Lions Club theater her first summer here. Her activities included tap dancing; hosting the Spanish club El Grupo; protesting the Contras; and serving on the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association for many years, addressing issues like moths,

deer and two secession movements. Kay was also integral to the creation of the Peaks Island Health Center, working diligently to form connections as medical establishments came and went. Kay was a member of book clubs; helped assemble the Peaks Island STAR; worked a table during elections; played with the Peaks Island Ukes; painted with friends; and sang in the choir at the New Brackett Church. Kay was also known for her love of horses, and was often seen riding on island roads.

Kay was predeceased by Gene Taylor, who died in 2022. She is survived by her brother Robert P. Dill, and by her children Lisa Peñalver, Marina Peñalver and Doug Wilber, Juan and Meryl Peñalver, Brad and Sharon Taylor and Carol Taylor, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Kay asked that any donations be made to the Peaks Island Fund, peaksislandfund.org, which supports many causes so dear to her heart. Kay's full obituary is at athutchins.com.

Ghost Tour serves fun, spooky tales, but proven history steals the show



Cara Dolan/Peaks Island News
Attendees of the Peaks Island Historical Society's Haunted Peaks Ghost Tour gather outside the former convent at Pleasant Avenue and Belvedere Road on Sept. 20.

TOUR, continued from page 1

Trefethen's ghosts, MacIsaac explained, are much less spirited than specters elsewhere on the island. Trefethen was developed specifically for well-to-do visitors who would rent cottages or rooms for the summer during the late 19th and early 20th centuries — a period when the island's southwest side, by contrast, was bustling with gaudy amusements.

Perhaps in keeping with Trefethen's demure nature, its ghosts are up to relatively demure hijinx.

One story begins with a woman whose husband was lost at sea. After a period of mourning, she remarried, only for the first husband to return alive. She left Peaks in the wake of the

controversy, but her spirit returned after death, loitering in the entrance of her former home. MacIsaac recounted a story of her own mother attending a sleepover at the house, where she fell asleep under the covers only to wake atop a perfectly made bed.

Another tale involves a depressed traveler who booked a room in one of Trefethen's cottages and attempted suicide. His attempt failed, but, much later, when he eventually died, his spirit returned to the island. He now haunts the third floor of the cottage where he once stayed, MacIsaac said.

At the "most haunted" house on the tour, sister and brother phantoms play with living guests' hair, open windows and throw parties with no humanly host. The pair are tied to this house, the story goes, because they

had been cheated out of it by a property owner taking mortgage payments from two separate parties, and the siblings losing out. The brother, Joshua, hanged himself when he found out what had been done.

The tales of spirits were fascinating, but the most compelling characters needed no haunting hook. The tour stopped at the former Baptist church, on Pleasant Avenue, where MacIsaac told stories about the very real, very alive nuns who lived there when the property was a convent — how they taught painting in the basement, and one played harmonica at the variety show. After the nuns gave it up, the cottage was passed along to a group of monks who were notorious for "always ringing a bell," which was also why the group "didn't last long."

And it is indeed a testament to history — and the Peaks Island Historical Society — that those moments of very real island history often shone brighter than the spirits who headlined the tour. Some of these stories are commonplace for those of us who have lived on the island for a while now — Peaks as the Coney Island of Maine, and later a hub for the military — but even well-known histories can glimmer anew on a cloudless night.

Other, less-familiar stories — of ice being harvested from Ice Pond and shipped hundreds of miles away, or Peaks' reputation as Welfare Island due to the preponderance of empty and cheap houses — were gripping, revealing a past that had long been buried.

Crossword solution - Puzzle on page 15

56	A	N	D	Y	63	D	R	A	K	E	64	A	K	A	S
59	N	O	E	L	60	N	A	T	C	H	61	A	C	R	E
56	A	T	A		57	E	N	I	A	C	58	F	O	I	L
50	I	S	I	T	51	O	V	E	R	N	52	W		T	K
47	R	O	D	I	48	N		P	O	N	49	P	O	N	K
41	A	B	E		44	S	E	T	T	S	45	B	O	C	H
47					38	N	E	O	N	A	39	R	I	S	
35	T	A			36	L	O	R	S	W	37	F	T		
32	A	S	H		33	A	W	E	S	O	34	M	E		
26	O	D	E	T	27		I	D	A	H	28	O			N
23	I	N	D	E	24						25	A	S	T	O
20	S	O	N		21	H	I	P	S	D	22	N	T	L	I
17	A	G	A	R	18	R	A	P	I	D	19	F	A	L	L
14	C	A	R	E	15	C	H	I	N	O	16	I	S	E	E
10	O	L	G	A	5	A	C	T	E	D	10	G	A	P	S



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Peaks Plumage: Great blue herons are abound on island

Story by Sam and Patty Wainwright
Photographs by Ben McCanna

Great blue herons, the largest of the herons, are routinely seen wading in the waters near Picnic Point, Woodlanding Cove, Brackett Marsh, Spar Cove, Ice Pond and Centennial Beach.

These gray, white and rusty-brown birds stand roughly 3 feet tall with S-shaped necks, long legs and spear-like bills. Great blue herons weigh up to 5.5 pounds and sport wingspans of 6.5 feet. They can launch directly into flight from the water, requiring no runway. In flight, they look like pterodactyls with slow wing beats, up to two beats per second, allowing long-distance travel.

Populations of migratory and non-migratory great blue herons occur over large parts of North America, Central America and the northern coast of South America. This widespread heron is also found in the Caribbean, Galapagos and Hawaiian islands. In Maine, most individuals migrate south for the winter, leaving behind a small population of hardy birds.

Great blue herons' favorite habitats are coastal marine, brackish and freshwater marshes. Breeding colonies may include hundreds of pairs located in trees on islands or within wooded swamps — isolated areas to avoid conflicts with humans and predators.

Locally, they breed on Ram Island from May through July, and frequently forage along the coast. During breeding displays, they use flamboyant plumes on the head, neck, breast and back to impress potential mates.

Feeding occurs day or night, mainly at dawn and dusk, primarily on fish but also amphibians, invertebrates, reptiles, mammals and birds. They walk slowly, looking straight downward from an upright posture to minimize glare, standing motionless for long periods, finally unleashing a lightning strike at their prey. In winter, they may stalk any animal within striking range, even on dry land. They consume about 300 calories a day during non-breeding season to more than 1,000 calories when feeding small chicks.

Sam and Patty Wainwright are island residents who studied birds professionally. For this inaugural Peaks Plumage entry they referred to "Handbook of the Birds of the World" from Lynx Edicions and birdsoftheworld.org from Cornell Lab of Ornithology.



A great blue heron perches off Centennial Beach as the Aucocisco III approaches Great Diamond Island on Sept. 11.



A great blue heron and a duck meet in the fog off Centennial Beach at low tide on Sept. 10.



A great blue heron sunbathes while perched in a tree alongside Ice Pond on Sept. 3.



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