

Nor By East

A Strange Season on the Islands

In some ways the 2020 summer season is akin to the years following the stock market crash of 1929. Jobs lost. Homes lost. Businesses closed. Inadequate help from government entities. Rising levels of frustration and depression among Americans. The cause of this havoc – the elusive corona virus – has yet to be tamed despite the round the clock efforts of the medical and scientific communities. But the leadership of Governor Mills and Dr. Shah, head of the Maine CDC, have kept infection rates in Maine at one of the lowest levels in the country.

Islanders have responded to the crisis in many ways. Most have been conscientious about wearing face coverings and social distancing. The usual round of fairs, concerts, community meals, dances, weddings, corporate outings, large lobsterbakes and so forth were cancelled. Businesses and organizations have been deprived of the revenue they need to carry them through the winter months. What to do? Some are thinking “out of the box”, retooling activities to take place outdoors where people can more easily distance. Here are a couple of highlights:

Theatre on the Dock at the Trefethen Evergreen Improvement Association on Peaks. The TEIA drama group, the Peaks Island Players, presented *Our Place*, a 6 act play written by Terry Gabbard on the docks behind the clubhouse on August 13, 14 and 15. The attendees sat in chairs on one side of the T shaped dock while the cast of very talented actors performed on the other side. The water was calm; the weather mild; and the sun started to set as the play ended. An enjoyable evening indeed.



*Stephanie Eliot and Captain Joe Litchfield
in a scene from Our Place.*

CBIA Annual Meeting

**September 16, 2020
5 PM**

Due to covid restrictions
this will be an online ZOOM meeting.

Meeting materials and login instructions
will be emailed to all members and posted on
www.cbialliance.net

If you are unable to join in,
Please send your comments to
info@cbialliance.net

Concert on the Water at Chebeague. On August 2 the band *Turd Pollock* gave a concert on a fishing smack off the Niblic Boatyard beach. The band played blues based rock music to a crowd of twenty plus boats (about fifty-four people). The concert was a fundraiser for the Protect Maine’s Fishing Heritage Foundation which is raising money to help Maine lobstering families affected by covid.

On August 20 a fundraiser concert for the Chebeague Island Recreation Center was held in the athletic field next to the school. Circles were drawn on the field so families or “pods” could set up their chairs inside the circles. About forty people attended the concert performed by the *West Enders*.

“Snippets” from Around the Bay...

Hunt for the Great White Shark: Sadly, the first ever fatality in Maine caused by a great white shark happened in the waters off Harpswell a few weeks ago. A long-time summer resident was swimming with her daughter when the shark attacked. (The daughter was unhurt.) Authorities say that it is unusual for great whites to attack a human and surmise that the shark must have mistaken the woman for a seal – sharks’ favorite food. The offending shark is still at large and swimmers and boaters have been advised to be extra careful in Casco Bay.

Oceanside Conservation Trust has acquired two parcels of land on Little Diamond Island. Known as the Putnam Lots, these four acres have been placed under conservation easements in perpetuity by OCT. Most of the purchase price was provided by LDI residents with support from OCT. Congratulations to our LDI neighbors!

Fire Strikes Again: In July fire erupted in the building housing the Peaks Island Post Office. Flames shot 30 feet into the air and were visible from Portland. The rear of the building contained an apartment which was completely destroyed. A firewall prevented the fire from spreading into the post office but there was heavy smoke and water damage. Luckily all was not lost! Gary the mail clerk saved the mail, quickly getting it all outside. The fire marshal determined that the cause was improperly disposed of smoking materials in the apartment. The building will soon be torn down and a new one erected. A mobile post office in a truck is now serving the community.

The Whales of August have returned! In the past few weeks several people have seen a whale cavorting off the backshore of Peaks and in Hussey Sound. A year ago whales were sighted in the same location. A beautiful sight to behold. They are most likely minke whales.

School will Resume on the Islands: Portland School Superintendent Botana has announced that the Peaks and Cliff Island schools will re-open for in person instruction four days per week. Long Island Superintendent Barbara Powers announced that Long Island School will open daily for half day mornings. Classes will resume at the Chebeague Island School 5 days per week with as much teaching as possible taking place outdoors. To ensure safety protocols regarding mask wearing, distancing, and cleaning have been implemented. Middle and high school students will continue to commute to the mainland schools and/or partake of online classes.

Steering Committee

2019 – 2020

President: Candace Myers
Peaks

Vice-President: Jon Kelso
Peaks

Treasurer: Paula Chessin
Peaks

Recording Secretary: Nancy Noble
Long

Corresponding Secretary: Kim MacIsaac
Peaks

Janice Avignon – Long

Marcia Howell - Chebeague

Paul Lusty – Cushing

Beth Newcombe - Peaks

Our Mission

Casco Bay Islands Alliance (CBIA) is the sole bay-wide organization focused on enhancing and protecting the quality of island life and community in Casco Bay.

Our Vision

CBIA envisions that the Casco Bay islands will thrive and lead as sustainable communities of natural grandeur, with rich and unique cultures and histories separate from, but interconnected with, their mainland neighbors.

*CBIA welcomes submissions to
Nor by East
which is published three times per year.
Please submit yours to:
Newsletter Editor Kim MacIsaac
the gooseleroy@gmail.com*

*Don't forget to smile!
Sign up for smile.amazon.com.
A small percentage of your
purchase cost will be donated
to CBIA.*

Keepers of the Lights

Mystical, magical, and sometimes dangerous places to be, lighthouses can inspire and awe. The men and women who labored to keep the lights burning are too often unappreciated and unrecognized. Today the United States Lighthouse Society works to remember the men and women who dedicated their lives to keeping the lighthouses, lightships, and navigation aids in good order through all kinds of weather.

The gravemarker program is one of the USLS's initiatives to honor these brave men and women. On July 25, 2020 the Peaks Island community gathered to memorialize the six lighthouse service members buried on the island. Three – Robert Thayer, James W. and John T. – were part of the Sterling clan. A fourth, James Brackett Jones, was a descendant of the first family to settle on the island in 1762. The sixth keeper is a mystery: Captain John A. Shaw who served as the first keeper at Matinicus Rock Light 1827-1831. He became ill and was transported to the hospital in Portland where he died in 1831. No information has been found as to what his connection to Peaks and the Brackett family may have been.

Maine historian Herb Adams spoke about the importance of the Lighthouse Service to all manner of vessels traversing the coasts of the United States. In his

words, “the Peaks men and the Peaks women they married.... Represent almost 200 years of service in coast keeping – Some 7 different lights, from the very first, Portland Head (1791) to among the very last – Spring Point (1897). And for 3 different light they were the very first keepers – Matinicus,- Halfway Rock, - and Spring Point..”

Herb was joined by several members of the Sterling and Jones families as a lighthouse service medallion was unveiled at each gravesite. Longfellow's poem, *The Lighthouse* was read by Peaks Historical Society President Jon Kelso. The program concluded with the recitation of *The Lighthouse Keepers Prayer* by Rev. Will Green, pastor of Brackett Memorial Church.

This was truly a community event sponsored by the Peaks Island Historical Society with support from the Peaks Island Lions Club and the Pond Grove Cemetery Association.

It seems that it's quite unusual to find so many members of the same family serving in the lighthouse service. (Research is ongoing and two more Sterlings who served have been found, though they are not buried on Peaks). Herb is writing an article about these men which will be published in the *Lighthouse Digest*, a national publication.



Herb and Jon address the crowd.



photos courtesy of Kathy Newell



Anne Sterling

Response to Dredging Portland Harbor in 1956

Beth Paton Childs, whose family cottage is just yards from where the pipeline went underwater in Hussey Sound, remembers the constant din and clanging of rocks as they were pushed along into the sea. It went on twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. She also spoke about the wooden bridges erected over the pipeline where it crossed streets on Peaks – fun to run over for a child.

Newlywed Vivian Parker recalls her husband David worked nights on the pipeline “walking the line” to look for leaks. David, who was attending college at the time, was ecstatic because the pay was double what he was making in his summer job painting houses with Norton Montgomery and Gil and Larry Hasson. Plus the pipeline went right by the MacVane's home and the father, Jim, would always offer him use of the facilities during the shift. She also remembered that lobstermen whose usual areas where they set traps were off limits were offered jobs working on the dredging project.

Great Diamond Islander in Mission Control...

When Space Dads Bob and Doug blasted off for the ISS station and then returned to earth recently, Casco Bay had its own special connection to the mission. Emily Briere, who lived full time at Diamond Cove on Great Diamond Island for a few years early in her childhood and then summers and holidays thereafter, was "on console" in Mission Control in California overseeing the mission booster firings that got the astronauts aloft and back again.

When she joined SpaceX after getting her Masters in Aeronautics & Astronautics at Stanford University, she was the first female engineer in the heart of SpaceX – Guidance and Navigation Control (GNC). She joined 30 male engineers in configuring the brains for each mission; the algorithms for navigation and configurations for the spacecraft and engine burns literally guide the spacecraft where it wants to go. She holds the NASA record for the most on-time delivery of payload to the International Space Station, arriving less than a minute off projected arrival time, after having traveled tens of thousands of miles through multiple precision burns -- a feat which earned her a prestigious six pack of beer from NASA!

For the SpaceX Demo2 mission recently, she was Prime Navigation Officer in Mission Control when they took over from Launch Control – hand off from Launch to Mission

Control happens when the spacecraft separates from the two stages of the Launch vehicle – and she oversaw the “boost burns” that elevated Endeavor to the ISS. She worked with Bob and Doug in their simulations preparing for the mission, working through a long list of contingencies that could go wrong in from Launch Control – hand off from Launch to Mission Control happens when the spacecraft separates from the two stages of the Launch



vehicle – and she oversaw the “boost burns” that elevated

Endeavor to the ISS. She worked with Bob and Doug

in their simulations preparing for the mission, working through a long list of contingencies that could go wrong all aspects of the mission. She is now working with the team for the upcoming four-person Crew1 mission, slated for Oct 23! So when you watch that mission, look out for Emily in Mission Control!

Special thanks to Emily's parents, Holly Fitch and Danny Briere for submitting this story and photos

News From Casco Bay Lines

To the dismay of many Peaks Islanders Casco Bay Lines is moving forward with the building of a 600 person/16 car ferry. The Federal transit Administration has awarded CBL a \$3.2 million grant from its Passenger Ferry Grant Program to purchase a diesel-electric hybrid propulsion system. This system is expected to eliminate some 800 tons of carbon emissions while reducing fumes, engine noise and vibrations. According to CBL's website “The funding means that Casco Bay Lines will be one of the first public passenger ferry systems in the United States to fully utilize diesel-electric hybrid propulsion and quick-charging technology.” Another \$750,000 has been provided by U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Environmental and Technical Assistance Program to monitor the system's performance.

The covid pandemic has brought many challenges to CBL. Measures have been implemented to keep the crew, staff and passengers safe and the ferries and terminal clean. Not all passengers had been complying with Governor Mills' directive that face coverings must be worn in public places and on public transit. In response CBL hired an “Ambassador” equipped with a bullhorn to announce that face coverings must be worn. The “Ambassador” as well as crew randomly patrol the ferries to remind those who have removed their masks to put them back on. To the relief of many islanders, the crowds of visitors have been far smaller than in previous years. So covid restrictions have been a bit easier to implement.

CBL's efforts have not gone unnoticed. The Long Island community held a Casco Bay Lines Appreciation Day in early August to thank the crew and staff for keeping service running smoothly. Signs were made (some posted in the terminal). Groups met each ferry stopping at Long and distributed treats to the crew. Earlier in the summer CBIA provided 300 masks that could be given to anyone coming into the terminal maskless. Another \$600 was given to CBL to purchase lunches for the crew.

On August 29 a reduced ferry schedule to all islands will begin. Log onto cascobaylines.com and download a copy.

About Our Grants...

For several years CBIA has awarded small grants to island non-profits in support of projects that benefit out island communities and Casco Bay. In the spring of this year a number of requests were received for some very worthwhile projects- some of which were to take place this past summer.

Given the seriousness of the covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions and protocols, your CBIA Steering Committee decided to postpone viewing and awarding grants this year. Committee members felt it was more important to direct those monies slated for grants to help address the covid crisis. In addition to providing masks and meal money to Casco Bay Lines, CBIA donated \$2000 to the Island Commons Senior Living Facility on Chebeague to purchase Personal Protection equipment (PPE) supplies for its staff and residents.

All grant submitters were notified of our decision. All graciously accepted our decision. One remarked that she expected grants to be cancelled for this year.

CBIA plans to review the 2020 grant requests and contact those who submitted them as soon as the public health situation improves and restrictions are loosened.

Membership...

CBIA depends upon the support of its members and friends to continue its efforts to preserve and promote Casco Bay and her island communities – her environment, culture, traditions and history. Like so many of you CBIA's finances have been hurt due to the economic downturn.

While we do understand that your family's economic welfare is a priority, we do hope that you will still choose to support CBIA in any way you can. One way is to pay your annual dues. Simply complete and return the form below with a check to:

CBIA
PO Box 21
Peaks Island, ME 04108

or
logon to our website
www.cbialliance.net and pay via credit card.

Anyone renewing or becoming a member at or after our virtual Annual Meeting on September 16 will be considered a member for 2021.

Thanks for your continued support!



PLEASE SEND US YOUR CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION

**Casco Bay Islands Alliance, Inc.
P.O. Box 112
Peaks Island, Maine 04108**

Name: _____

Winter Address: _____

Summer Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Island Affiliation: _____

I would like to make an additional tax deductible donation of _____

Membership Fees	
Family	\$15
Supporting	\$25
Sustaining	\$50
Patron	\$100

Casco Bay Islands Alliance, Inc.
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A beautiful sunset over the Diamond Islands

