Safe Harbor Great Island plans to replace marina, add boat shop and lift

BY J.W. OLIVER

Safe Harbor Great Island plans to replace its aging marina, install a new boat lift, and erect a 20,000-square-foot building for boat maintenance and repair.

The Harpswell Planning Board approved the project on Oct. 20, subject to various conditions. The company also needs a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and two permits from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.

The boatyard and marina sits on 8 acres between Harpswell Islands Road and Orr's Cove, an inlet of Quahog Bay. It has 1,000 feet of waterfront on the cove, 65 marina slips and 45 moorings. The business operates a storage facility on another property across Harpswell Islands Road.

The business offers 75,900 square feet of indoor storage and stores 220 vessels each year, according to its website. The town's second-largest year-round employer after the school district, it has 47 employees and offers a variety of maintenance, repair and restoration services.

The business was Great Island Boat Yard until June 2020, when owners Steve and Stephanie Rowe sold it to Dallas-based Safe Harbor Marinas. Safe Harbor bills itself as the largest owner and operator of marinas in the world — Great Island was its 100th marina.

Sun Communities Inc., a publicly traded real estate investment trust, acquired Safe Harbor Marinas for $2.11 billion later in 2020, but Safe Harbor continues to operate independently.

Steve Rowe, who now serves as general manager for Safe Harbor Great Island, presented the project to the Planning Board with assistance from Joe Marden, an engineer with Brunswick-based Sitelines.

The project has three parts: the replacement of the marina, addition of the boat lift and construction of the boat shop.

The boatyard started planning for the replacement of the marina in 2018. In 2019, it received a $392,000 Boating Infrastructure Grant toward the project from the federal government.

See SAFE HARBOR on Page 12

By crane, barge and tug, a house travels to Haskell Island

BY CONNIE SAGE CONNER

Maybe you’ve seen a tractor-trailer trundling down the highway hauling a mobile home. But have you ever seen a 73,000-pound, two-story house being moved — on a barge — to an island in Casco Bay?

Probably not. Nor had the barge owner, the homeowners or the crane operator. Nor had flabbergasted neighbors who watched a red tugboat push the barge, with the house perched on top, as it swiftly made its way to Haskell Island.

Karen and Bill Garside plan to build a new waterfront home where the existing one stood at the foot of Intervale Road, off Harpswell Neck Road.

By crane, barge and tug, a house travels to Haskell Island

A crane lifts a house onto a barge for transport from Harpswell Neck to Haskell Island on Nov. 5. (DAVE INSLEY PHOTO)

Safe Harbor Great Island plans to replace marina, add boat shop and lift

Cundy’s Harbor Library renovation a ‘labor of love’

BY DOUG WARREN

Take a precious piece of a small community, polish it up with plenty of volunteer elbow grease, apply an infusion of hard-earned grant money and what have you got?

A gem.

And that’s what the Cundy’s Harbor Library is becoming today, several years into a pandemic-prolonged renovation project that promises even better things ahead.

Sitting on the library’s newly expanded deck on a recent sunny morning as people wave from cars passing on Cundy’s Harbor Road, it’s hard to disagree with the assessment of Linda Prybylo, president of the library board: “The library is like a front porch for the community.”

With the improvements already made and those still in the works, that key role can only get larger.

See LIBRARY on Page 22
It’s Been A Busy Year!
Thank You For Supporting Us!

Join us, as we now support our Harpswell Community this Holiday Season!
Letters to the Editor

Neighbors helping neighbors
I recently broke my arm when I slipped while putting my ducks in their pen at night. The pain was excruciating, and as soon as I was able to walk into the house, I knew I needed an ambulance. Harpswell Neck Fire and Rescue responded quickly and competently. I cannot thank them enough for their compassionate and skillful care, both Chris the paramedic and Harvey the emergency medical technician. They provided me with the best pain-relieving treatment for a broken arm: a triangular bandage and fentanyl. The drivers, too, were top-notch. I can’t express fully the relief I felt in the back of that rig on my way to Mid Coast Hospital. It was a scary night, but I made it back home in one piece.

The next day I was filled with dread — neither my husband nor I could drive and we didn’t have much food. I placed a call to longtime neighbor Peg Newberg, who put me in touch with Harpswell Aging at Home. Within 24 hours, my freezer was literally filled with meals for the next two weeks. Their program Meals in a Pinch is made for just this kind of situation. Three hundred folks in Harpswell are cooking meals for others who need help. I have been growing stronger on HAH’s nutritious offerings, and I am so grateful for their service to this town.

I have lived here for 24 years now. It’s a pretty remarkable place. If you have time, talent or treasure, please consider helping out Harpswell Neck Fire and Rescue or HAH, as they can always use more volunteers and donations. And if you are in need yourself, do not hesitate to call for help. Neighbors helping neighbors — it’s the best way to show you care.

Elizabeth Davis
South Harpswell

Public participation in aquaculture leasing
Like many Harpswell residents, I have become aware of a marked increase in aquaculture operations along our shoreline — and I have only been here since July 2016. The Anchor is informing us about our working waterfront in a series of articles. Ed Robinson has written a great article on “Currents of Change” for Maine’s Fishing Industry” for the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust (July 2021, tinyurl.com/5fu76tnk) in which he interviews Bailey Islander Jim Hayes, the former harbor master for Harpswell.

The Maine Department of Marine Resources (maine.gov/dmr) both administers regulations as enacted by the State Legislature and conducts scientific research.

Members of the public need to know that they are encouraged to participate in the regulatory process of granting aquaculture leases and licenses. The first step is to plug into the application process early enough to have an impact. Under current regulations, only shorefront property owners within 1,000 feet of the proposed site receive a copy of the application.

There are two good websites that provide information on public participation: “Public Participation in Aquaculture Leasing” at tinyurl.com/ydyatk at and “Marine Aquaculture in Maine: How the Public Can Participate in the Leasing Process,” an eight-page brochure (online version at tinyurl.com/4hcab9m).

I have also found the DMR staff (tinyurl.com/4dy3vwp) to be incredibly helpful, whether contacted by phone or email.

Please don’t hesitate to get involved in this important issue affecting our Harpswell shoreline.

Kathy Hirst
Harpswell
BY J.W. OLIVER

Maine School Administrative District 75 will continue to require face masks in all schools until the district’s superintendent deems it safe to lift the mandate.

The MSAD 75 Board of Directors made the decision with a 10-3 vote during a meeting at Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham on Oct. 21. The board had mandated masks by one vote in August, agreeing at the time to revisit the issue in October.

The October vote coincided with rising numbers of COVID-19 cases in the district. From Oct. 5-21, the district recorded 18 positive cases. “We’ve seen a surge in the last few weeks,” interim Superintendent Bob Lucy said. He recommended that the board leave the mandate in place.

Of Harpswell’s four representatives to the board, Linda Hall and Frank Wright IV voted yes, Eric Lusk voted no and Alison Hawkes was absent.

“It is too risky right now for us to not have universal masking because of the way in which COVID spreads. … It could get any one of us sitting in this room. There’s no way around that,” Wright said. “It’s not fear-based. It has nothing to do with fear. It’s just what COVID is. Ergo, it’s incumbent upon us as board members to continue with universal masking at this time.”

Lusk explained his opposition during the roll-call vote. “I like Superintendent Lucy plenty, but I don’t know if it’s right to be dumping it on him,” he said.

Also voting no were Bowdoin representatives Brandy Robertson and Kimberly Totten.

Board members had floated alternatives, such as continuing the mandate in the elementary schools while exempting the high school; extending the mandate until December, at which time the board would reconsider; or continuing the mandate until the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention alters its guidance on the issue. But after much discussion, most of the board coalesced around a suggestion by Topsham representative Mary Hobson to entrust Lucy with the decision.

Lucy had shared the latest data about COVID-19 in the district earlier in the meeting. “I think moving forward, again, I would look at where we are with the data, and is it prudent to take the masks off if we’re still having multiple cases a week and we’re still able to use the universal masking to keep students in school,” Lucy said. “To me, that’s really important.”

MSAD 75 has had 32 cases of COVID-19 in the 2021-22 school year, with 607 close contacts. Close contacts must quarantine, although measures like vaccination and mask-wearing can exempt them from quarantine. Of those 607 close contacts, 453 were exempt from quarantine — 242 because of universal masking.

The meeting was contentious from the outset, when board Chair Holly Kopp said she would not start the meeting until everyone in the room was wearing a mask.

During more than an hour of public comment before the vote, many speakers ignored the one-minute limit and Kopp’s gavel.

A few attendees jeered or shouted in response to comments despite Kopp’s calls for decorum.

A survey conducted from Oct. 13-20 showed that 77.36% of staff and 59.77% of parents or guardians supported a mask mandate. At the meeting, the majority of the speakers — and nearly all the Harpswell speakers — favored a mask mandate.

Margaret York, a Harpswell resident and senior at Mt. Ararat High School, said she would not feel safe at school without universal masking.

“Both my parents have serious heart conditions. So do I, and my grandparents are in their 90s,” York said. “The last time I politely asked someone to pull up their mask, I got coughed on a joke.”

“I don’t feel safe in this school unmasked with people who think this pandemic is funny,” she said. “I’m scared to go to school and I shouldn’t have to feel like that.” Not all students favor masks. Jacob Haskell, another student at the high school, said that all the students he has spoken to would prefer to have a choice.

“No one wants to wear a mask unless you are planning on living the rest of your life in fear of a disease that is not going away anytime soon,” Haskell said.

Harpswell resident Susan Horowitz said the mandate creates an educational opportunity.

“We have to bring up people who care about each other and about our community, so the mask mandate is a wonderful opportunity to see that we can teach our young people to care for others,” Horowitz said.

Some board members and speakers said they wanted to re-focus the board’s attention on education, rather than angry...
Welcome to share in the holiday will host a community tree-lighting, 1579 Harpswell Islands Road, at 11 a.m. Local crafters will display from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with lunch at the Cundy's Harbor Community Hall. Meals in a Pinch. Participants will swap the others. Weather permitting, bring a chair and a hot drink to visit with friends and neighbors. Rain date: Dec. 17. Sign up at tinyurl.com/baattwam or call Julie Moulton at 207-330-5416.

Ongoing

The Grand Slammers, an intermediate-level contract bridge group, plays at the town office at 1 p.m. every Tuesday, except holidays. Congenial but serious players welcome. A $2 donation covers card supplies and supports town recreation programs. Because of COVID-19, space is limited to three tables and players should be vaccinated. Masks may be requested. More information: harpswell@me.com.

A mobile food station, free to anyone in need, is available at the town office from 10-11:30 a.m. every Thursday.

The John Leo Murray Jr. American Legion Post 171 meets at Merriconeag Grange at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. The group provides education, emotional support and resources for caregivers. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination required. More information: 729-8571.

The Celtic group Coig performs a Christmas show at the Chocolate Church Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. These musicians play mandolin, guitar, fiddle, banjo and double bass, and sing in three- and four-part harmonies. Tickets: $20 in advance, $25 day of show.

Ongoing

Bath-Brunswick Respite Care, 9 Park St., Bath, hosts an Alzheimer's and dementia caregiver support group from 9:15-10:30 a.m. on the first and third Mondays of the month. The group provides education, emotional support and resources for caregivers. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination required. More information: 729-8571.

TOPS, or Take Off Pounds Sensibly, meets in the basement of the Berean Baptist Church, Brunswick, from 7-9 p.m. on the first Monday of the month. Guest speaker, light refreshments. Masks preferred if unvaccinated.

Dec. 17

The Celtic group Coig performs a Christmas show at the Chocolate Church Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. Singer-songwriter Campbell will perform his Christmas originals and holiday classics in a cheerful, family-friendly show with plenty of opportunities for singalongs. Tickets: $22 in advance, $25 day of show.

Dec. 18

Bluegrass mandolinist Matt Finner teams up with the American roots band Low Lily to celebrate the winter solstice at the Chocolate Church Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. These musicians play mandolin, guitar, fiddle, banjo and double bass, and sing in three- and four-part harmonies. Tickets: $20 in advance, $25 day of show.

Help us Meet our Match!

Through our community’s generosity, HAH has been able to provide:

- 2,189 rides covering 41,653 miles for Harpswell seniors
- 17,832 meals for food and companionship
- 112 home repair projects
- Hundreds of phone calls, visits and other connections with seniors

With additional resources, we can increase support to our neighbors. We value each gift, which makes a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

AHF has been presented with an opportunity from the Merriconeag Fund, which is offering a challenge grant of $10,000 through the end of 2021.

That means all donations will be matched by the fund, which will double all gifts made by Dec. 31, 2021, up to $10,000.

Please make your tax-deductible contribution to Holbrook Community Foundation (with HAH in the memo line), and mail to Harpswell Aging at Home, PO Box 25, Harpswell, ME 04079.

For more information, visit hah.community.

HARPSWELL ANCHOR · December 2021
Construction is underway at the former Bailey Island Motel. (J.W. OLIVER PHOTO)

Bailey Island Motel to become condominiums

The Bailey Island Motel will not reopen for the 2022 season, as the owners transform its guest rooms into a pair of high-end, three-bedroom condominiums.

"We had a phenomenal season," co-owner Jeffrey Raup said, with the motel at capacity most of the time. But the owners’ assessment of the business’s long-term prospects led them to change course.

The 63-year-old building needed major renovations and its modest size would make profitability a challenge, Raup said. The property’s water resources are not adequate for a dozen rooms, along with the owner’s residence and a neighbor’s home that draws water from the same supply. The motel ran out of water in July and August, Raup said.

Each of the new condominiums will measure 2,100 square feet, with three bedrooms and three bathrooms. "Each unit will look a little different," Raup said, and each will involve additions onto the front of the building. The project has town approval, Raup said.

The 1958 motel sits on a 1.05-acre lot just south of the Cribstone Bridge, at the entrance to Bailey Island. Raup and his wife, interior designer Mindy Schwarz-Raup, bought the property from Paul and Rita Dube in March. The owners will continue to live on the property.

The property has a dock and three moorings, so each condo owner will be able to keep a boat there, Raup said.

Raup, who has a background in real estate development, is leading the construction himself, with Schwarz-Raup on design.

Town hires finance and planning help

The town office has two new staff members on board: Margaret McIntire, codes and planning assistant; and Ronda Peek, deputy treasurer and general administrative clerk.

McIntire, of Harpswell, started work Nov. 29.

McIntire grew up in Harpswell and attended Harpswell Islands School — now Harpswell Community School. She graduated from Mt. Ararat High School and earned a degree in community and international development from the University of Vermont.

She most recently worked for the U.S. Postal Service, primarily at the post office on Harpswell Neck.

McIntire’s customer service and organizational skills "will be of great support" to the codes and planning offices, Town Administrator Kristi Eiane said in a memo to the Board of Selectmen. McIntire replaces Diane Plourde, who recently resigned.

Peek joined the staff Oct. 25. A recent transplant to Harpswell, she brings finance experience as a controller at several companies in New England. She will work 20 hours per week.

"She was looking for part-time work, so this is a perfect fit for her and for us," Eiane told the Board of Selectmen on Oct. 21.

In another personnel move, Code Enforcement Officer Tim Clark will take over as interim department head while the current department head, Code Enforcement Officer William B. Wells, is on leave.

Clark "has been handling an incredible workload in that office. … With all the building activity going on in Harpswell, all the inspections that are needed, he’s really just keeping it all together and keeping that office functioning," Eiane said.

The town is advertising for a temporary code enforcement officer to work with Clark on either a part-time or full-time schedule.

"It's a really tough labor market," Eiane said. "It's really tough to find employees right now and to be competitive with wages."

"We're finding that we have to be a little more aggressive about our entry-level pay if we're going to attract quality people to work for the town of Harpswell," she added. "And that is then going to have an impact on our overall pay scale, and we'll need to address in 2022 how to compensate people who have been working for us for a while."

Harpwell backs corridor ban, transportation bond

Harpwell voters favored a ban on the Central Maine Power corridor, a $100 million transportation bond and a "right to food" in November’s statewide referendum. Unofficial tallies were 1,416-913 on Question 1; 1,900-435 on Question 2; and 1,295-1,010 on Question 3.

Harpwell mirrored the state’s vote, with 81.37% of voters in favor of the ban, transportation bond and a "right to food" in November’s referendum.

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Harpwell backed corridor ban, transportation bond

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More than half of Harpswell’s registered voters cast ballots — 2,348 of 4,502.

Harpwell mirrored the state as a whole, as all three questions passed by comfortable margins.

Question 1 as read aloud: “Do you want to ban the construction of high-impact electric transmission lines in the Upper Kennebec Region and to require the Legislature to approve all other such projects anywhere in Maine, both retroactively to 2020, and to require the Legislature, retroactively to 2014, to approve by a two-thirds vote such projects using public land?”

The 145-mile line would bring hydropower from Quebec across the U.S. border and through a remote section of western Maine to Lewiston. Central Maine Power Co. would then deliver the power to Massachusetts, which wants to boost its portfolio of renewable energy.

A yes vote favored a ban on the project’s construction, while a no vote would have allowed construction to continue. Harpswell chose the ban by more than 20 points, with 60.8% of voters on the yes side. Statewide, the Bangor Daily News reported 59.06% support for the ban.

The future of the project remains uncertain amid legal challenges from both sides.

Question 2 asked, “Do you favor a $100,000,000 bond issue to build or improve roads, bridges, railroads, airports, transit facilities and ports and make other transportation investments, to be used to leverage an estimated $253,000,000 in federal and other funds?"

Of the $100 million, $85 million will go toward the construction and maintenance of highways and bridges. The other $15 million will go toward railroads, airports, public transportation, harbors and other transportation projects.

With 81.37% of voters in favor, Harpswell was more enthusiastic about the bond than the state as a whole. It still passed easily, with 72.04% support.

Question 3 asked, “Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being?”

Happy Holidays!
continued from previous page

The amendment is known as the "right to food," but media reports say its effect is not clear. Harpswell voters were less sure of this question, with 56.18% in favor. The Bangor Daily News reported 60.69% support statewide.

Tower ready, AT&T up next

A spokesperson for the builder and owner of the new wireless communications tower at George J. Mitchell Field says the 199-foot structure is "100% complete."

Elizabeth Thompson, general counsel for Blue Sky Towers LLC, said the company expects AT&T to have its cellular equipment "on air by Christmas." AT&T is the only carrier with a deal to have equipment on the tower so far, but Blue Sky hopes to attract three more.

Blue Sky is leasing the tower site from the town and will sublet space on the tower to carriers. The company will also provide space for the town to install emergency communications equipment.

Town officials hope the project will improve Harpswell's spotty cellular service and emergency radio communications.

Comprehensive plan task force appointed

The Harpswell Board of Selectmen appointed a 12-member Comprehensive Plan Task Force on Nov. 18.

Hapswell Planning Board Chair Allan LeGrow will lead the task force. Board of Selectmen Chair Kevin Johnson will serve as a liaison from that board. The other 10 members are David Brown, Monique Coombs, Bob Eaton, Amy Haible, Brian Hirst, Ron Hutchins, Pete Lieberwirth, Julie Moulton, Mary Ann Nahl and Phil Taylor.

The Board of Selectmen also adopted a mission statement for the task force, charged with updating the town's 16-year-old comprehensive plan for consideration by the Planning Board, the Board of Selectmen and the voters.

"The updated comprehensive plan shall set out a vision for the future of the community for the next decade or so and an action plan identifying the activities that the town and community need to take to implement the vision," the mission statement reads.

As it updates the plan, the task force "shall involve the larger community in an active public engagement process for developing the vision," the statement says.

A comprehensive plan serves as a guide for the development or revision of land use ordinances, among other functions.

Recycling center offers holiday tips

Harpswell residents can recycle fresh Christmas trees and wreathes at the recycling center and transfer station for no charge until the annual town meeting in March.

The recycling center will have a special hopper for wreaths, while trees should go to a designated drop-off point up the hill at the transfer station.

Ribbons, bows, Styrofoam and plastic wrapping go in the trash. Paper, paperboard, corrugated cardboard and hard plastic go in the recycling bin. Christmas lights and old metal Christmas tree stands go to the transfer station.

The recycling center and transfer station do not accept ashes from fireplaces, pellet stoves or wood stoves. Cooled ashes can be composted or spread on a lawn or garden.

Both facilities will be closed from Dec. 23-27 and from Dec. 31 through Jan. 3.

Maine Humanities Council grant to support Anchor

A $2,750 grant from the Maine Humanities Council will support the Harpswell Anchor's coverage of town government.

The Democracy, Journalism and the Informed Community Grant will fund a proposal from the Anchor titled "Engaging Harpswell in Democracy Through Journalism." The Anchor will match the grant through a donation of staff time and services.

The grant will support the Anchor's coverage of the annual town meeting in March 2022 and the lead-up to the meeting, including the development of the 2022 budget and the municipal election. The Anchor will encourage citizen engagement through the submission of letters to the editor and questions for candidates and town officials.

This effort will seek to better inform residents about town government and engage them in the democratic process of town meeting, where all voters serve as the legislative body of the town.

"This special grant line is supporting projects that encourage Maine communities to engage with the connections between democracy and journalism that are present in their daily lives," said Lizz Sinclair, program coordinator of the Maine Humanities Council. "Democracy demands wisdom and we’re thrilled to be supporting a project that will strengthen the connection, engagement and agency of its community members."

As Maine’s affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the nonprofit Maine Humanities Council uses the humanities — literature, history, philosophy and culture — as tools for positive change in Maine communities.

A nonpartisan, nonprofit news source, the Harpswell Anchor seeks to build community, enhance the lives of Harpswell residents and serve local businesses and organizations with trustworthy local information.

Funding for Democracy, Journalism and the Informed Community grants is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation via the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

GREAT CARE, EVEN BETTER.

Mid Coast–Parkview Health and MaineHealth are bringing the most trusted network in northern New England to our local community.

This partnership strengthens care for our patients, giving them access to some of the best doctors, specialists, and treatments in northern New England while still maintaining their local providers.

We’re excited to join MaineHealth and their vision to make our communities the healthiest in America for generations to come.

Learn more about the partnership at Mainehealth.org/midcoast

Mid Coast–Parkview Health

MaineHealth
Harvesters seek to explore methods for clam aquaculture

BY J.W. OLIVER

Four applications for experimental aquaculture leases seek to explore methods for growing clams in Harpswell’s intertidal zone. If approved, the leases would be the first of their kind in Harpswell.

The Harpswell Board of Selectmen approved the applications Nov. 4. The applicants need permission from the town to lease intertidal lands, but must obtain final approval from the Maine Department of Marine Resources. The DMR will schedule public hearings on the applications.

An experimental lease permits the holder to farm up to 4 acres for three years for the purpose of commercial or scientific research. Two of the three applicants currently have limited-purpose leases, which have caps of 400 square feet and one year.

David Wilson, of Harpswell, is applying for two experimental leases to grow quahogs, razor clams and soft-shell clams in Long Reach and Wilson Cove. He would grow the clams in Middle Bay, according to his application. Like Wilson, he would grow clams on the bottom and in nylon grow bags, using netting or wire to discourage predators. If the sites prove successful, he will apply for standard leases, which can run up to 20 years.

Scott Moody Jr., of Harpswell, wants to farm quahogs on the bottom of a cove between Great Island and Hopkins Island in the New Meadows River. His site would have no gear except for marker buoys at the corners of the lease and every 100 yards, a regulatory requirement. He has no other leases.

The applications include information on other activities in each area, such as recreational boating and striped fishing. One is near an oyster farm and others in areas frequented by poggy fishermen, but Wilson said the applicants’ methods and sites seek to minimize conflict with wild fisheries.

Kevin Johnson, chair of the Board of Selectmen, said that all four lease applications received unanimous support from the Marine Resources Committee.

Members of the Marine Resources Committee spoke about changes in the clam industry that have inspired harvesters to consider aquaculture.

Committee member Mark Leuchtenberger, of Candy’s Harbor, said he put himself through college by digging clams on Great South Bay, off Long Island in New York. He attributed the decline of clam harvesting there to climate change.

Leuchtenberger noted that soft-shell clam landings in Harpswell have dropped by more than half over the last decade, from about 361,000 pounds in 2010 to 173,000 in 2020. Meanwhile, quahog landings have exploded, from about 35,000 pounds in 2010 to 350,000 in 2019, then 231,000 in 2020. Quahogs are also known as hard-shell clams.

The value of the quahog harvest in Harpswell has risen from about $32,000 in 2010 to $545,000 in 2019 and $405,000 in 2020, according to DMR data.

“Climate change is taking away but it’s also giving,” Leuchtenberger said.

Committee member Mary Ann Nahf, of Bailey Island, said that warming waters attract predators of soft-shell clams, like green crabs. Quahogs are more resistant to predators.

Leuchtenberger and Nahf said that other clam harvesters will learn from the applicants’ efforts.

“For many years, I think the harvesters were just worrying about trying to get ahead of green crabs and get ahead of milky ribbon worms,” Nahf said, referring to two clam predators. The experiments with clam aquaculture on inactive flats represent a positive, proactive effort, she said.

Harpswell Harbor Master and Marine Resources Administrator Paul Plummer said the leases will allow clammers to supplement their income from wild harvesting and take advantage of fluctuations in market prices by harvesting their leases when the price peaks. Plummer expects clam aquaculture to become more common, much as oyster aquaculture has in recent years.

A grant from the Broad Reach Fund supports the Harpswell Anchor’s reporting on the working waterfront.
Increases in contracts and staff pay on agenda as budget talks begin

BY J.W. OLIVER

Town officials expect increases in labor costs to impact the 2022 budget, which they are beginning to prepare for the annual town meeting in March.

On Nov. 4, Town Administrator Kristi Eiane presented a memo to the Board of Selectmen outlining “new ideas” that could affect the budget.

Those ideas include completing a reconstruction of Basin Point Road that started this summer; saving a reconstruction of Basin Point; monitoring on a regular basis at George J. Mitchell Field; conducting a study of how to reuse the administration building at Mitchell Field; adjusting pay to reflect a competitive labor market; hiring a seasonal monitor for town lands, and divvying up the first half of $519,000 in federal pandemic relief funds.

For town staff, Eiane proposed to apply the Social Security Administration’s 5.9% cost-of-living adjustment as a base increase, with additional adjustments possible after a review of the town’s pay structure.

“This issue’s going to take a little more work, but at least in terms of submitting a preliminary budget to the budget committee, we’d like the Board of Selectmen to be on board with this 5.9% increase,” Eiane said. Board members expressed support. Rising labor costs will also affect contracts with outside entities like Mid Coast Hospital, which the town pays to keep a paramedic in Harpswell 24/7. “I think we’re looking at a 13% increase,” Eiane said of the Mid Coast contract.

Many of the entities are dealing with the same issues we are in terms of making sure you can attract and retain good employees, and so pay levels, pay scales are being adjusted,” Eiane said.

Another change in the budget will allow for the expansion of the Recreation Department’s mission, enabling the director to serve as a liaison to social services.

“We really want to strengthen those partnerships that the town has,” Eiane said, giving the town’s relationship with Harpswell Aging at Home as an example. “We see this as a way of doing that and really trying to meet the needs of our residents.”

The department would have a new name — the Department of Recreation and Community Services — and would take over the handling of applications for general assistance and heating assistance.

As part of the change, the town would increase the recreation director’s hours from 35 to 37.5 per week. The department’s programs assistant would continue to work 15 hours per week, but the town may add hours for that position later.

The recreation director, along with the harbor master and three town committees, have recommended that the town hire a seasonal parks monitor.

“We’ve seen a lot of people visiting our public spaces. Some of them are in small neighborhoods. There are parking challenges,” Eiane said. Mitchell Field “has some issues where we could use a little more monitoring on a regular basis.” The monitor would work weekends.

The Mitchell Field committee wants to replace the roof of the administration building’s attached garage, which houses the harbor master’s boat, at an estimated cost of $30,000; and to study options for the reuse of the administration building, which will involve $15,000 in consulting fees.

“To have a public process where the community can weigh in on what it would like to see that building being used for is something we’ve been talking about for a while, but we haven’t actually taken the step,” Eiane said.

When it comes to the federal funds, the American Rescue Plan Act limits their use to five categories, with the intent to address the pandemic’s impacts. Those categories include negative economic impacts and public health.

Eiane’s memo provided a list of priorities for those funds with ballpark estimates: comprehensive planning services, $90,000; chest compression machines for emergency medical services, $36,000; ventilation improvements at the town office, $30,000; a technology consultant and/or website upgrade, $25,000; a consultant to analyze needs and options for workforce housing, $15,000; and consultants for broadband and emergency communications, $10,000 each. Those estimates total $216,000, which leaves $43,000 to allocate.

A grant from the Maine Humanities Council supports the Harpswell Anchor’s reporting on town government.

Holiday Pop-up Shop

Wednesday, December 8, 3-6 p.m. at Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, 153 Harpswell Neck Road

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• Photo note cards
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For sale from the Harpswell Anchor:
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Other books for sale:
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Filling Deadline January 11, 2022
Town Meeting Saturday, March 12, 2022

-- Catherine Doughty, Town Clerk, 833-5822
Climate project to examine flood risk at Garrison Cove

BY J.W. OLIVER

A grant from a state climate initiative will allow Harpswell to study the risk of flooding at Garrison Cove town landing and plan for upgrades.

Harpswell joined with the towns of Phippsburg and West Bath, as well as the Casco Bay Estuary Partnership and the New England Environmental Finance Center, to request the $28,000 grant from the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future.

The project will analyze one town landing or wharf in each town and develop cost estimates for upgrades that would protect them against impacts from current and future sea level rise and storm surge.

The state program, the Community Resilience Pilot Project, aims to help towns prepare for the effects of climate change and to develop climate planning models for other municipalities.

In June, the state selected the Harpswell project and two others to kick off the program.

"With increasing storm events, droughts, and rising sea levels, Maine’s climate action plan calls for empowering communities to help them become more resilient to the impacts of climate change," Hannah Pingree, director of the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, said in a June statement. The projects “will help inform the state as it seeks to increase both funding and technical assistance to support crucial resilience planning for Maine's cities and towns.”

Donations to the Maine Climate Council will pay for the projects. The announcement called the grants a “milestone” in the implementation of the state’s four-year plan for climate action, dubbed “Maine Won’t Wait.”

The engineering firm Baker Design Consultants Inc., of South Freeport, will lead the local project. "The firm has extensive experience in marine engineering and waterfront design," including work in the area of sea level rise, according to the grant application.

The firm will document the conditions at each property, compare current and projected levels of flooding, determine an acceptable level of flood risk, evaluate options to maintain each property's usability, prepare recommendations and cost estimates for improvements, and develop an implementation strategy.

The town then hopes to secure a second grant that would cover the recommended improvements.

"The unwritten promise in this whole process is that there's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow," Town Planner Mark Eyerman told the Board of Selectmen on Oct. 21. The state has indicated that it will have money available for construction.

The Garrison Cove town landing consists of a boat launch and parking area near the northern tip of Bailey Island. Improvements to the facility could have benefits beyond flood protection.

Mary Ann Nahf, chair of the Harpswell Climate Resilience Implementation Task Force, said the facility needs repairs regardless of sea level rise. If the town incorporates the recommendations from the study into repair plans, a future grant could address both issues.

For their projects, Phippsburg and West Bath want to examine Sabino Landing, which provides public access to the water for commercial fishing, aquaculture and recreation.

A grant from the Broad Reach Fund supports the Harpswell Anchor’s reporting on climate change.

An upcoming study will examine flood risk at the Garrison Cove town landing and options to protect it. (BILL MULDOON PHOTO)

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Even as the weather cools, it is a fantastic time to sell. If you're interested to hear what a pair of full-time local brokers can do for you, just give us a call!
A visit to Harpswell: Couple from Harpswell, Maine explores Harpswell, England

BY JONATHAN BARRETT ADAMS

During a trip to England in September of this year, my wife and I took a daytrip to Harpswell, Lincolnshire, the original Harpswell after which our Maine town was named. We first learned that Harpswell had been named after the Lincolnshire village from a book of Harpswell history gifted to us when we moved here 10 years ago. The lifting of travel restrictions and a series of negative COVID tests enabled us to take a long-delayed trip to my wife’s native England, and Harpswell ranked first on our itinerary of destinations. Blessed with fine weather and prepared with Google Maps directions that proved mostly accurate, we set off.

Harpswell, Lincolnshire, lies some 5 miles east of Gainsborough, a town on the river Trent, where our Google Maps printout indicated a quick succession of rights and lefts that flummoxed my efforts as navigator and briefly led us astray. My wife asked directions, and in the end a simple right turn would have sufficed. Headed in the right direction, a town on the river Trent, where our Google Maps directions that proved mostly accurate, we set off.

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Harpswell consists of about half a mile of gently winding single-lane road lined with trees, along which lie some half-dozen houses and an ancient church with a working farm adjacent. At the last census, in 2001, the population was 65. The focal point of the village is St. Chad’s Church, which dates from about 1042 and boasts one of the few remaining complete Anglo-Saxon towers in England. The church was built near a spring that was the site of ancient pagan water worship, the origin of the “well” component of the name Harpswell, “harp” signifying “a swell.” Additions were made to the church in the 13th and 14th centuries, and it was restored in the 1890s.

Intrigued to hear of a St. Chad, I consulted the oracle of Wikipedia to learn that Chad was a seventh-century Anglo-Saxon monk, monastery abbot and later bishop, who was subsequently canonized. During his lifetime, a plague estimated to have lasted roughly 25 years swept through Britain and Ireland, claiming innumerable lives, including those of Chad’s elder brother and many other churchmen. Evidently, Chad interpreted this and other events as signs of the approach of the end times and Judgment Day.

At the entrance to the church grounds, a wrought iron gate incorporating the title “Saint Chad’s Harpswell” refused to budge, so my wife swiveled herself over the surrounding low stone wall and photographed the church, including part of a small cemetery. We did not attempt to enter the church itself, feeling vaguely like trespassers and having only limited time to explore, though apparently it is open to the public. Adjoining to St. Chad’s is a working farm called Church Farm, where the hum of machinery emanated from a large metal barn full of grain.

Resuming our drive through Harpswell, we stopped to talk with a lady walking her dog, who said she’d lived there for 14 years and loved the village. At the far end of the village, we stopped to take photos of us holding a copy of the Harpswell Anchor in front of the Harpswell sign. A couple heading into the village kindly took a photo of us together. Then we drove back, and my wife put the Harpswell Anchor inside the village notice board. We concluded our visit by driving out of Harpswell along a narrow, flat, mostly straight road through several miles of farm fields punctuated by the occasional farm. Across this landlocked Harpswell, a wind blew much as it does in our own coastal Harpswell.

The author and his wife have lived in West Harpswell (USA) for over a decade. They are locally known as Fish & Chips. &

A good read: Jonathan Barrett Adams and Laura Nancy Adams, of Harpswell, Maine, display a copy of the Harpswell Anchor’s September edition during a visit to Harpswell, Lincolnshire, England.

HARPSWELL
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Safe Harbor
From Page 1

"It's a replacement of our existing marina, which is old and aged and broken," Rowe said. Last year, windstorms caused "a lot of damage" to the docks and some boats, he added.

The new marina will extend about 100 feet further to the north, but will not extend any further out into the cove. It will have 15 fewer slips — 50 instead of 65 — but will provide more room for boats to maneuver.

The other in-water part of the project is the installation of a Marine Travellift, which will extend into the cove on two 165-foot piers.

"Today, we haul all of our boats on a hydraulic trailer, which is run into the ocean on a cable," Rowe said. Boats are maneuvered onto the underwater trailers and then hauled out by pulling the cable out.

Rowe called it a "very finicky" method. "Most people don't do it this way," he said, and the Travellift has become "the standard in the industry."

"This improvement will allow us to be more productive but also to improve the safety of both the boats and the hauling crew as we conduct our hauling operations," he said.

The Travellift can handle boats up to 75 tons, 15 tons more than the trailer's maximum of 60 tons. But the marina does not intend to service bigger boats. Rowe said the marina currently focuses on boats up to 60 feet and will continue to do so.

The final element of the project is the construction of a building for boat maintenance and repair.

The boat shop and the Travellift pier will go up on a pair of 1-acre lots south of the main property. Safe Harbor acquired the land in April.

One of the properties has more than 70 years of history as working waterfront — as a facility for commercial fishing and dock construction, as well as boat repair and storage.

"We intend to preserve this site as a working waterfront facility, but focus it on boat repair exclusively," Rowe said.

In addition to town approval, the company needs a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers, which will look at hazards to navigation and plans for in-water construction; and two permits from the DEP — a Natural Resources Protection Act permit and a storm-water permit.

For the Natural Resources Protection Act permit, the DEP considers impacts on fisheries, natural habitat and water quality, among other issues.

The project needs a stormwater permit because it proposes more than a half-acre of new "impermeable" surface, such as pavement or structures, which will increase the volume of runoff into the cove.

The marina will treat the stormwater with a system that meets DEP requirements.

Safe Harbor expects answers on both DEP permits in January.

Planning Board member Amy Haible raised concerns about the project's impact on fisheries and water quality. She noted that the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust has cited Quahog Bay's vulnerability to habitat and water quality, among other issues.

"There is not enough information for me to believe that there's going to be some impact on fisheries based on the new construction and the stormwater runoff your project is going to produce," Haible said.

The final vote, to find the entire project in compliance, was 4-1.

Rowe expects construction to begin in September.

A grant from the Broad Reach Fund supports the Harpswell Anchor's reporting on the working waterfront.

TOWN OF HARPSWELL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Code Enforcement Officer
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The Town seeks candidates for the position of Code Enforcement Officer and will consider candidates interested in a full or part-time schedule with benefits. Primary functions of the position include but are not limited to the processing of applications for building, plumbing, subsurface wastewater disposal, floodplain and wharf permits. This position involves extensive interaction with the public. The successful candidate will be expected to become familiar with local land use ordinances as well as the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC). Certifications in Code Enforcement, Local Plumbing and MUBEC will be required over time. Preference may be given to candidates with current or previous certifications and/or extensive experience in either building trades or municipal government.

The job descriptions and employment applications are available online at harpswell.maine.gov or in person at the Harpswell Town Office, 263 Mountain Road. Both positions will remain open until filled.

-- Catherine Doughty, Town Clerk, 833-5822

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Harpswell native brings ‘comfy gourmet’ style to Iris Eats

BY J.W. OLIVER

A South Harpswell native has returned from a career as a yacht chef to open a year-round cafe, Iris Eats, at Safe Harbor Great Island.

Iris Eats will have a "soft open" on Friday, Dec. 3. The cafe will serve a style of food that chef and owner Elyse Dana calls "comfy gourmet."

"Comfy gourmet" is comfort food, but "elevated," Dana explained.

The menu will feature "a lot of things that are kids’ favorites but you wouldn’t feel bad about eating as an adult," she said, "and things that are easy to take out on a boat or take on a hike or take to a party." Examples are "interesting grilled cheeses," "fresh and delicious salads," and "a lot of homemade soups," as well as baked goods and breakfast sandwiches.

Dana’s specialties are charcuterie boards and grilled cheese sandwiches. She uses high-quality local ingredients in both.

Baked goods will include cinnamon buns and other sweets. "My baker makes the most delicious whoopie pies," Dana said.

She plans to sell beer and wine by the bottle, but does not yet have a license to serve it. Once she secures her license, she will add beer on tap and wine by the glass.

Iris Eats will offer counter service and takeout items. The cafe has five tables inside and four on the deck.

Dana has one employee, the baker, and hopes to eventually add three more.

"I moved back to Maine with the idea of owning my own business,” said Dana, who now lives in Brunswick. She operates a “side hustle” out of a camper-trailer in Brunswick. She operates a "little turquoise retro-looking truck" out of a camper-trailer that she calls Iris. She describes it as a "little turquoise retro-looking thing" that started as a "gourmet grilled cheese-slinger" and grew popular at weddings for food and drink service.

Dana continues to operate Iris, but wanted something bigger. She inquired about the space at Safe Harbor last winter, but it wasn’t available. The building was most recently home to a seasonal cafe, Craft Kitchen and Provisions.

In August, Safe Harbor contacted Dana. "I felt like it was an opportunity I couldn’t say no to," she said.

She has updated the space with a new counter and tables. Brunswick artist Rachael Nimon painted a mural on an inside wall.

Dana did not set out to become a chef. She grew up in the Given House, a former boardinghouse on Hurricane Ridge in South Harpswell. Her first job was as a server at the nearby Auburn Colony. She attended West Harpswell School and graduated from Mt. Ararat High School in 2004.

She studied horticulture and landscape architecture at the College of the Atlantic, in Bar Harbor.

During a semester in the U.S. Virgin Islands, she worked for a business called On Deck Ocean Racing that operated high-performance racing sailboats. When cruise ships would come into St. Thomas, On Deck would offer passengers a taste of America’s Cup-style racing.

While there, Dana would see mega-yachts come and go, and started to grow curious about life as a crew member.

Another influential experience was a semester in Italy, where she went to help restore sunken gardens. "I learned to cook real Italian food in Italy, but because I had to, not necessarily because it was something that interested me at that point,” she said.

After graduation in 2009 and a stint as a crew member on a sailboat, she ran out of money and wound up back in Maine. An online job search led to a position as a stewardess on a 112-foot motor yacht. She accepted the job on a Friday and started work in Florida the next Monday.

One night, the owners of the boat asked her to make them dinner. "They had a reservation canceled on them or something," she said. She remembers the meal: pesto prosciutto-wrapped chicken breast with a citrus asparagus risotto.

Her employers were "blown away" and more requests followed. "I became their full-time chef when they bought a bigger boat," Dana said.

She would spend 10 years on yachts — about a year and a half as a stewardess, the rest as a chef.

Iris Eats is at 419 Harpswell Islands Road. Winter hours are 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday-Sunday. Dana plans to have a grand opening in the spring and extend her hours for summer. ✯
BY MAINE CRAFTS ASSOCIATION

The Maine Crafts Association, a nonprofit that builds upon Maine’s rich craft traditions by nurturing a vibrant, supportive, inclusive craft community and strong individual craft artist practices, has named artist, author and educator Tim McCreight, of Harpswell, as a 2021 recipient of its Maine Craft Artist Award.

The award recognizes McCreight’s commitment and dedication to the craft field, as well as his high proficiency in the technical understanding of many aspects of fine craft. In 2009, the Maine Crafts Association began to annually honor individual Maine craft artists in recognition of their exceptional bodies of work and contributions to the field. The award bestows prestige and acknowledgment, conferring upon the artist’s work a distinguishing mark of excellence.

The award juror is guided by these benchmarks: excellence in craftsmanship, inspired design, a singular voice or style, and a career of service to the field. The 2021 awards were selected from many deserving peer nominations by Maine Crafts Association founder Carolyn Hecker.

Perhaps most widely known as a leader in craft publishing, McCreight has produced more than 20 highly respected texts dedicated to the technique and design of metalsmithing and jewelry making. His works are known for their comprehensibility and clarity, including “The Complete Metalsmith,” known as a staple text in most metals education programs. The text is widely revered by students and accomplished craft artists alike.

His publishing company, Brynmorgen Press, founded in 1985, produces texts on a wide variety of craft media, written by renowned makers. Additionally, McCreight has created several videos dedicated to teaching techniques and has developed apps for mobile devices to connect with the modern maker.

Dedicated to furthering the education of younger generations of metalsmiths and designers, McCreight has taught full time for more than 25 years at institutions that include the Maine College of Art & Design. He has taught hundreds of workshops throughout the United States, as well as in Canada, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

McCreight has served on the boards of the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, the American Craft Council and the Maine Crafts Association. He has also served as the presiding member of the board of the Society of North American Goldsmiths.

In addition to his long-standing career as an author, craft educator and board member, McCreight co-founded the Toolbox Initiative, a nonprofit program to correct an imbalance of resources affecting jewelers and craftspeople in West Africa. The program accepts and distributes donated tools, and uses funding to purchase harder-to-acquire tools for distribution to makers.

“Tim McCreight is a legend in craft, in Maine of course, but far beyond. His work, creative voice and craftsmanship are only outshone by his own expansive career in education, leadership in developing precious metal clay as a craft medium, and his admirable Toolbox Initiative,” Hecker said. “His deep dedication to the field, the artists and the medium is seemingly endless and generously shared through his books, his initiatives and as an educator.”

“I am grateful to have the opportunity to honor his legacy in this way, through the Maine Crafts Association, where I witnessed the beginnings of his incredible career as a peer and friend,” Hecker said.

The other 2021 recipient is Marijan Baker, a potter and educator who lives in Yarmouth.

The Maine Crafts Association presented the awards during a ceremony at the Maine College of Art & Design in Portland on Nov. 23.
HARPSWELL ANCHOR · December 2021

HOLIDAY LIGHTS DAZZLE AROUND HARPswell

BY CONNIE SAGE CONNER

"All the Christmases roll down toward the two-tongued sea, like a cold and headlong moon bundling down the sky that was our street; and they stop at the rim of the ice-edged fish-freezing waves..." — Dylan Thomas, "Child’s Christmas in Wales"

From Cundy’s Harbor to Bailey Island, Great Island to Orr’s Island, and Harpswell Islands Road to Harpswell Neck Road, dazzling holiday lights illuminate the darkness enveloping our town this time of year. Soon, snow will cloak evergreens in gossamer and shoreline ice will sparkle like the queen’s tiaras.

Winter is special in Harpswell. There is less traffic, only the hearty stick it out through mud season, and we gather around blazing fires to read books and tell tall tales.

And then there are trees beckoning us to clothe them in twinkelng lights. The nearly five-story blue spruce in front of the town office each year after Thanksgiving — not before — and wraps commercial lights round and round and round the spruce.

“It’s something I do for the town,” Vail said. “Everyone enjoys it.”

Vail planted the tree when it was a 6-foot-tall teenager and has been illuminating its boughs for a decade, switching to brighter commercial lights last year.

“It’s just one of those things people do because it’s a nice thing to do,” Vail said.

And if you’re driving on Orr’s Island near the library, look for the enormous, sky-high angel adorning one of Vail’s own trees.

Throughout Harpswell, lights and decorations appear in windows and yards. There are blow-up Santas, reindeer and candy canes. Fresh wreaths grace doors and, of course, there’s caroling and cocoa to warm the body and the soul.

An outdoor Christmas celebration is set for 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 4 at Centennial Hall by the Elijah Kellogg Church on Harpswell Neck Road. The Harpswell Garden Club and the Harpswell Historical Society jointly host the public event and provide cocoa, coffee and cookies. Sue Luce, music director at Kellogg Church, leads a carol sing.

The traditional Christmas craft fair and lunch at the Cundy’s Harbor Community Hall, 837 Cundy’s Harbor Road, will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., also on Dec. 4. Don’t miss the steaming hot fish chowder.

Stock up on gifts to support the Harpswell Anchor and Harpswell Heritage Land Trust at a holiday pop-up shop and book signing on Dec. 8 from 3-6 p.m. at HHLT, 153 Harpswell Neck Road. Ed Robinson, Emma Levy, Bill Snellings and Jerry Klepner will autograph books.

The Brunswick tree-lighting ceremony was scheduled for Nov. 27, but you can still get in the holiday spirit when you’re in town.

Hanukkah this year is from Nov. 28 to Dec. 6. Kwanzaa celebrations are Dec. 26 to Jan. 2. Check with area synagogues, churches and gathering places for special holiday services and events.

Connie Sage Conner is a retired editor of The Virginian-Pilot and author of “Frank Batten: The Untold Story of the Founder of the Weather Channel.” A Harpswell resident, she serves on the Harpswell News board of directors.

Arborist Tim Vail drives his bucket truck to the town office each year after Thanksgiving — not before — and wraps commercial lights round and round and round the spruce.

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And if you’re driving on Orr’s Island near the library, look for the enormous, sky-high angel adorning one of Vail’s own trees.

Throughout Harpswell, lights and decorations appear in windows and yards. There are blow-up Santas, reindeer and candy canes. Fresh wreaths grace doors and, of course, there’s caroling and cocoa to warm the body and the soul.

An outdoor Christmas celebration is set for 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 4 at Centennial Hall by the Elijah Kellogg Church on Harpswell Neck Road. The Harpswell Garden Club and the Harpswell Historical Society jointly host the public event and provide cocoa, coffee and cookies. Sue Luce, music director at Kellogg Church, leads a carol sing.

The traditional Christmas craft fair and lunch at the Cundy’s Harbor Community Hall, 837 Cundy’s Harbor Road, will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., also on Dec. 4. Don’t miss the steaming hot fish chowder.

Stock up on gifts to support the Harpswell Anchor and Harpswell Heritage Land Trust at a holiday pop-up shop and book signing on Dec. 8 from 3-6 p.m. at HHLT, 153 Harpswell Neck Road. Ed Robinson, Emma Levy, Bill Snellings and Jerry Klepner will autograph books.

The Brunswick tree-lighting ceremony was scheduled for Nov. 27, but you can still get in the holiday spirit when you’re in town.

Hanukkah this year is from Nov. 28 to Dec. 6. Kwanzaa celebrations are Dec. 26 to Jan. 2. Check with area synagogues, churches and gathering places for special holiday services and events.

Connie Sage Conner is a retired editor of The Virginian-Pilot and author of “Frank Batten: The Untold Story of the Founder of the Weather Channel.” A Harpswell resident, she serves on the Harpswell News board of directors.

The distinct crisscrossed design of Harpswell’s Cribstone Bridge allows the ebbs and flows of the ocean to pass through without compromise to its structure. Made from local granite and using no adhesives, this unique and ingenious design embraces both strength and permeability.

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The Cribstone Bridge Collection

For A Life Worth Celebrating
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To everything there is a season — even in Harpswell’s fisheries

BY SUSAN OLCOTT
With the change in time, the increased breeze and the piling up of leaves, it is clear that the season is changing. It’s not that we have recently begun the official season of fall, but rather that we are entering late fall, when the changes are starkly apparent. Most of us see these changes on the land, but those working on the water experience them more directly, and in ways that impact when they fish, what they fish for and where they fish.

Seasonality in fisheries was the topic of a recent event entitled “Fishing Through the Seasons” that was presented by the Cundy’s Harbor Library, the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association, the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, the Holbrook Community Foundation and the Harpswell Anchor. It was part of the “Living and Working in a Waterfront Community” conversation series offered by the partnering organizations.

The panelists were Tom Santaguida, who has been fishing for more than 50 years for a variety of species and now focuses on lobster and crab; John Herrigel, a member of the New Meadows River Shellfish Co-op and partner in Maine Oyster Co.; and Monique Coombs, director of community programs for the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association and member of a multi-generational fishing family on Orr’s Island.

The presentation included a walk through the seasons, beginning with fall, since that’s where we currently are, then into winter, spring and summer.

Fall is one of the busiest seasons for most fisheries, with water and weather conditions good for harvesting. It’s the season where you can find the greatest variety of local seafood — oysters are at their peak, lobsters aren’t too far offshore, bait fish are still around, and the coves haven’t iced up for shellfish diggers. This is a very busy time for everyone working on the water and trying to get in as much harvesting as possible before winter.

Winter brings a kind of bed-down for some fisheries, with oyster cages being sunk to the bottom and inshore traps being hauled out. For others, like scallopers, winter is prime season. Many in the lobster fishery add scallop fishing in the winter. When spring comes, there is sometimes a bit of a break, but soon it’s time to get ready to go all over again — to pull the oyster cages to the surface, repair nets and get traps back in the water. Summer can be a marathon of activity for some fishermen who try to get out on the water when the weather is best and tourist season is at its peak.

While there are many differences between what happens in say, the lobster fishery versus the pogy fishery, the similarity is that the harvest of any type of seafood has its own seasonal cycle and rhythm. These cycles shift from year to year, but a bigger shift has occurred in recent years.

As Tom Santaguida put it, “For a guy my age, it’s nice to take it easy in the winter. I used to go hard and I can’t do that anymore. It works for me, but for the young guys, it’s tough. You used to be able to fish for different species at different times of year, but those seasonal opportunities don’t exist now. Either the resource isn’t there anymore or you can’t get a permit.”

Because fishermen are now often limited to a single species or group of species, like groundfish, they have to make the most out of that season. This can mean staying on the water later into the season or heading further offshore. It requires people to go out in rough weather and stay out overnight since they are further from shore. This has been particularly challenging this year with the shortage of labor leaving many people to fish solo, which is not an ideal situation.

Another major shift in the seasonal cycles of Maine fisheries has been changes in ocean conditions. These cycles have never followed a set schedule. You can’t pick a date on the calendar and say, “That’s when it’s time to take traps out.” It changes every year depending on the particulars of that year. In recent years, those dates have become less predictable. Warmer waters in the Gulf of Maine mean that target species stick around longer. But increases in severe weather events can make it trickier to get out on the water.

Strange species have been showing up as well. With changes in ocean currents, warmer waters and increased storms, oddities show up in nets, cages and traps. Spanish mackerel, typically the star of Maryland seafood, have been showing up in Maine. What effect they might have on local species is hard to predict, but their addition to the Gulf of Maine ecosystem is certain to have some impact, whether they become a nuisance or a direct threat to a commercially harvested species.

While we are now officially heading out of fall and into winter, there is still plenty of local seafood to be enjoyed. And, as Monique pointed out, you can freeze just about any type of seafood to enjoy it year-round. This is a great way to support local harvesters and connect with Harpswell’s heritage.

If you are interested in listening to the recording of “Fishing through the Seasons” or learning about upcoming presentations in the “Living and Working in a Waterfront Community Conversation Series” that the partner organizations plan to offer in the spring, please email Julia McLeod at outreach@hhltmaine.org.

Susan Olcott, of Brunswick, is the director of operations for the Maine Coast Fishermen’s Association. She has a weekly column, “Intertidal,” in The Times Record, and writes for Maine Women Magazine.

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From the staff and trustees at Harpswell Heritage Land Trust

We wish you a joyful holiday season!

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Mid Coast Senior Health
**Thinking in Public: 21st-century plague**

BY BUTCH LAWSON

This, the plague of the 21st century, seems to me in many ways an endless case of déjà vu. Some of the challenges that we faced in the past year and a half I can remember being warned about in my childhood. These things aren’t new, they are merely forgotten, and it would have been helpful to have taken a few of these experiences along with us to the future just in case.

As a youngster, I clearly remember a family in our neighborhood having a bomb shelter behind their house. It was fascinating. In 1955, such things were all the rage among folks who feared attacks upon our homeland. Our neighbors planned to be among the survivors when the dust and fallout settled.

It was an interesting bunker, with shelves of canned goods and dried foods, boxes of Kool-Aid powders in a variety of flavors (think ancestor of Gatorade but with lots more sugar), stacks of rolls of toilet paper (more on this one later), cases of Sterno, sanitary and cleaning provisions, first-aid kits filled with the essentials for medical emergencies, like aspirin, Merthiolate, mercurochrome, a tourniquet, assorted sizes of Band-Aids, adhesive tape, rusty scissors and other important life-saving items, such as paregoric, Butch wax and a ukulele.

In television Westerns and movies of the day, there was sometimes a scene in which a traveling frontier doctor arrived at a remote cabin in the nick of time to attend the birth of a pioneer woman’s child. As he climbed down from his buggy with his physician’s bag and stumbled into the cabin, he might holler, “Somebody boil some water and get me some clean sheets!” Perhaps that’s why, in the bomb shelter, a stack of old sheets and bedding was stationed by the first-aid supplies. I thought they might be for boiling in the event of an unexpected birth. Water was available in the bunker from several filled drums lined up along a wall. I don’t recall the method of heating it. It’s not likely that cans of Sterno would be sufficient, but maybe sheets soaked in lukewarm water were considered sufficient tackle for obstetric use.

In the beginning of our most recent pandemic, there were unexpected shortages of essential goods, not because the supply chain was inept, but because demand went overnight from normal to stupid. If we all had well-provisioned bomb shelters, we wouldn’t have been using that ridiculously inadequate, single-ply, see-through bum blotter that is more suited for lampshades or craft projects than it is for any use involving the delicate parts under your fig leaf. That stuff is what you save for the privy if your guests have stayed longer than a week and you don’t have extra sheets of 120 grit in the garage. It’s not for daily use. Or even once. It ought to have a warning label reading, “For delicate craft projects only. NOT INTENDED FOR NOR SUITABLE FOR PERSONAL HYGIENE USE.”

Ordinarily, I place germs and cooties in the “useful” column, right up there with Wonder bread, helping to build strong antibodies 12 ways. So in spite of my inventory of Gojo hand cleaner and shop towels, I was unprepared for the enforced hand-sanitizing and masking exercises we enjoyed. Not counting tequila that time in Malta in ‘68, I have never been made sick by something I ate or drank. I wore a paper mask once when I was helping to replace the asbestos liners in some heat-treating furnaces, but in all my days, I never had used hand sanitizer before it became a “thing” last year. Now, of course, I have more of the stuff under the kitchen sink than I could use in a dozen lifetimes. Bring on the apocalypse. I have hand sanitizer and masks up the wazoo.

But wait. On second thought, I have a bomb shelter to dig.

Butch Lawson is an observer of life. He lives on Bailey Island.

Almost done Two new compactors are in place at the A. Dennis Moore Recycling Center and Transfer Station in Harpswell. This year’s construction project was nearly complete as of mid-November, with electrical work on the compactors still to come. (J.W. OLIVER PHOTO)

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Student Voices: A little compassion goes a long way

BY LUCY NELSON

In the fall of 2020, Mount Ararat High School opened a brand-new campus on Eagles Way. In the past year, not only have we gotten a new school, but we have also gotten a new principal, new teachers, new school board members and, for the first time in almost two years, the entire student body has been back together in school five days a week.

As a current senior at Mount Ararat, I have had the opportunity to learn in both the old and the new school buildings, and to learn under both our past and our new principals. I believe the changes we are experiencing are certainly enhancing our learning environment.

Although I have experienced a multitude of changes during my time at Mount Ararat, the amazing teachers we have are an unwavering force. Whenever I face difficulties in my personal or academic life, I know that the teachers at Mount Ararat will be willing to help me.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the school system in unimaginable ways, and teachers have gotten hit especially hard. My mother and grandmother work in elementary schools, so I have a first-hand perspective on the stress that the faculty in schools face.

Last year, during the height of the pandemic, I found myself struggling to find the motivation to do my work and I had a more difficult time learning than usual as we faced less in-school instruction time. I can certainly thank my adviser for ensuring I didn’t fall behind. She consistently checked in on me and made sure I was doing alright in school and always encouraged me whenever I stepped into her classroom.

The incredible faculty at Mount Ararat truly ensures that the learning environment is welcoming and prioritizes the well-being of the student body.

Anytime I come to a teacher with a grievance or struggle, they are validating and kind. When I think of a teacher who truly impacted my experience balancing the pandemic, schoolwork and extracurriculars, my mind immediately goes to my English teacher. He taught Advanced Placement Language and Composition last year, a difficult class that demands a lot of its students, but my teacher made our class enjoyable. In addition to learning about standard grammar conventions and how to format an MLA essay, all the students in my class learned about themselves. He often allowed us to talk about current events and how we felt about the world around us — he offered a safe place for his students to examine their opinions and beliefs.

When the world was so uncertain, I was able to find a constant in that class. It was consistently interesting, challenging and engaging.

Throughout the pandemic, the Mount Ararat faculty has remained compassionate, encouraging and kind despite the trials and tribulations they have faced. As Mount Ararat continues to change and grow, the teachers we have at our school remain remarkable.

Lucy Nelson is a Harpswell native and a senior at Mount Ararat High School. She dances at Maine State Ballet and is involved in Student Senate and the National Honor Society at Mount Ararat. &

Just one more month left to our 2021 NewsMatch Challenge!

With great thanks to the national NewsMatch program and our five local business sponsors, every tax-deductible gift we receive from November 1 to December 31 this year will be matched dollar-for-dollar.

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Hauling traps: A young fisherman's perspective on offshore wind and right whales

BY JOCELYNE COOMBS

The crisp, cool air fills my lungs as the sun peeks over the treetops. Walking down the old, rickety wharf, my boots stomp against it, making a clunking noise. Pulling the tray of bait with my brute strength, I make my way to the slippery slope we call our ramp. Down on the float is a beautiful green 21-foot privateer with a 115-horsepower Yamaha outboard, named Orca. My name is Jocelyne Coombs. I am a junior at Mt. Ararat High School and I have been lobstering for five years. I am a proud member of the fishing community.

I believe it’s important to listen to those who witness changes firsthand. Most everyone has tunnel vision. They look straight ahead and don’t look at the amazing views around them. Those views are other people’s perspectives and beliefs. Fishermen are fighting for their livelihoods, and are at odds with the government and experiments. Experiments are not good when they jeopardize the lives of others. I believe if you don’t know firsthand how it will affect people’s lives or the ocean, it’s not a good idea. I don’t trust anyone’s hands with the lives or the ocean, it’s not a good idea. I believe it’s important to listen to the fishermen and move them to where others are located, making those areas fill up with even more gear, affecting more fishermen. Would these floating windmills even be able to keep up with the ever-changing tides and growing winds in the Atlantic Ocean? The chains to keep them in place have links the size of a pickup bed. There would be so many of them that could interfere with the lives of marine animals.

I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up. I’ve heard a statement about these windmills: “It would be like placing a food processor on the floor of the ocean.” It would muck everything up.

But the fishermen have. The only valid reason I can think of as to why they want to put the windmills on the ocean is because then no one has to look at them. Fishermen are the ones who will have to see them and see how much it is hurting their industry. It’s quiet until I get down there on our boat. With everything else set in motion, I push the down button on the throttle to put the outboard in the water. With everything running, I press the button to turn the electronics on. With everything running, I grab my bright-orange and black oilskins and throw them onto the roof to hop onto the deck. Back on the boat I go, holding onto the roof to hop onto the deck. One last time I check over everything, and then I go to the stern to untie that part of the boat. I toss the rope onto the float and then go to undo the other line in the front. With both lines untied and on the float, I kick my leg out and push off the float. I put her in gear and hope for a good day of bug-filled, money-making traps. Windmills are not the only thing jeopardizing the fishing industry. Right whales are migratory mammals that come through the coast of New England. They are whales that were hunted back in the day for their blubber. They were the “right” whale to hunt because they would float on the surface, making it easier for the hunter. They have been classified as endangered and fishermen are being blamed. Scientists have come to the conclusion that these whales are getting entangled in our lobster gear and it’s killing them. It’s easy for them to point fingers and create regulations that they think will help their population. Again, I believe in firsthand experience. Fatal entanglement in the state of Maine has not been recorded. I have yet to meet a fisherman who has seen a right whale. Still, we get the repercussions of this whale’s existence.

I am proud and believe we, the people of the fishing industry, can stand up for ourselves and keep creating jobs for kids like me to continue this heritage that is valued in Maine.

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ISLANDS COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are a non-denominational church on Bailey Island dedicated to supporting and serving the community’s needs.

Worship Services: Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

We Welcome You!

Jocelyne Coombs measures a lobster. (BRITTANY HYDE PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO)

BY JOCHELYNE COOMBS

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We Welcome You!
Maine Squeeze: A crossword by Tyler and Lew Hinman


He lives in San Francisco and works as a software development engineer with Youch, a company focusing on insurance products for startups and entrepreneurs. His parents, Lew and Krista, live in South Harpswell.

Solutions are on Page 22.

ACROSS
1. Brother of Zeus and Poseidon
2. Free stuff
3. Infrequent hit
4. Name on a fast train
5. Editor’s mark
6. Napkin covering a Chinese egg
7. Southern Harpswell.
8. His parents, Lew and Krista, live in
9. Men’s Readjustment Act of 1944
10. Airport guess, in short
11. Final transports?
12. Connects with (in two words) or on “Cheers”
13. Character’s name often shouted
14. Author Dahl
15. Outer, at the beginning
16. Name linking ballplayer Pee Wee and actress Witherspoon
17. Smell
18. Sot
19. Suffix on an artistic movement
20. Top colored like an Asian fruit?
21. His invention has its ups and downs
22. Name linking Congressman Darrell and actress Rae (though pronounced differently)
23. "Chinatown" genre
24. Olive-legume hybrid?
25. Alternative title for this puzzle (except it refers to the wrong state)
26. Wore a smug smile
27. Olive-legume hybrid?
28. Hairy member of the Addams family
29. They wondered who let the dogs out
30. Deciduous plant
31. "Tis better to bear the ___ we have than fly to others that we know not of" — Shakespeare
32. Very, in slang
33. Red blood cell deficiency
34. Admission from the dishonest
35. More fond of giving orders
36. Semisoft product of the Alps’ Aosta Valley
37. Alternative title for this puzzle (except it refers to the wrong state)
38. "Feline" term for someone’s response
39. Annoying
40. Like cheeks on a November day
41. “Tis better to bear the ___ we have than fly to others that we know not of" — Shakespeare
42. They often have sloped sides slopeside
43. Semisoft product of the Alps’ Aosta Valley
44. Rocky peak
45. Name linking ballplayer Pee Wee and actress Witherspoon
46. Frequently numbered rds.
47. A Dutch DJ (one word)
48. Utterance after a trip
49. Bicycle descriptor
50. Akihito and Naruhito
51. Comedian Notaro
52. Admission from the dishonest
53. Olive-legume hybrid?
54. Suffix on an artistic movement
55. More fond of giving orders
56. Woman at the Cannes Film Festival
57. Otherwise pronoun
58. Utterance after a trip
59. Alternative title for this puzzle
60. Very, in slang
61. To love ___ is the beginning of a lifelong romance — Oscar Wilde
62. Flexible ___ (winter toy)
63. Flexible ___ (winter toy)
64. Wading birds that might breed
65. Nick Charles’ partner
66. Possible “Who’s with us?” response
67. Lovely meter maid of song
68. Name linking Congressman Darrell and actress Rae (though pronounced differently)
69. Frequent Harpswell sight
70. Casper’s unattractive sibling?
71. Vitamin Shoppe rival
72. Shade
73. Number of times for a charm, in Rome.
74. Number of times for a charm, in Rome.
75. Nightingale or Ratched
76. Name linking ballplayer Pee Wee and actress Witherspoon
77. Sykes of “Black-ish”
78. Name linking ballplayer Pee Wee and actress Witherspoon
79. Diamond fault
80. Old-fashioned expression of surprise
81. Napkin covering a Chinese egg noodle dish?
82. They often have sloped sides slopeside
83. Rocky peak
84. “O ___, does that ...”
85. Fret clamps
86. Name linking ballplayer Pee Wee and actress Witherspoon
87. Line of soup?
88. Napkin covering a Chinese egg noodle dish?
89. Yeasty thing
90. Napkin covering a Chinese egg noodle dish?
91. Napkin covering a Chinese egg noodle dish?
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hour and a half.

Moving the structure was “the easy part,” said new owner Tucker Lewis. The logistics were the hard part and it took months to juggle all the moving pieces. “Everybody on the team came together,” he said. “It was an amazing group of people.”

Because of heavy rains, days earlier it had taken crane operator Rick “Tippy” Gagnon nine hours to maneuver the crane into place to hoist the house, said Jonathan Donahue, director of operations for Keeley Crane Service in South Portland.

The entire process of loading and unloading the house “wasn’t hit or miss,” said David Winslow, whose barge business is also based in South Portland. “We made sure the cranes had reach enough and that I could get close enough.”

Although Winslow had never been part of an ocean barge move to Haskell Island, another house was relocated to the island by horse-drawn sleds on ice years ago, Lewis said.

“Jim Noyes, who is in his 80s but I’m glad it wasn’t torn down, “ said the elder Tuttle, alcohol would have been transferred off a ship to a smaller boat, then unloaded on shore and carted up the hill. It wasn’t uncommon to smuggle liquor along the coast, including from where the house was moved, he said.

Bill Garside said he likes to think that he and his wife did their part for the environment by not tearing down the house that was taken to Haskell Island. The Harpswell Planning Board had told him it was a perfectly fine house, so “why get rid of it?” Instead, the house was “recycled,” he said.

Lewis, the new owner, wouldn’t say how much it cost him to move the “free” house, but he’s happy to say how much it cost him to move it to Haskell Island, where the family will spend summers.

On the day of the move, the ocean was as calm as a millpond. Locals vied for the best spot to watch the spectacle — a welcome relief from COVID fatigue — and one group of friends and neighbors gathered on Beckey and Pat Gallery’s deck.

Betsy Eaton, a previous owner of the house, watched the barge move past Graveyard Point and around Pinkham Island on the way to Haskell Island. “My heart hurt but I’m glad it wasn’t torn down,” she said.

Eaton bought her original house on Intervale Road in 1985. It burned to the ground in the winter of 1996, when she was living in New Mexico. She rebuilt the 1,500-square-foot, three-bedroom house and sold it to the Garsides in 2018.

A circle on navigation charts marks where the house was located. Ralph Tuttle, 89, of Auburn, said in a phone interview that the road was known as Rum Runners Alley during Prohibition, not Intervale, because booze was rumored to be secreted in a garage up the hill.

“The garage seemed to be common knowledge,” said Tuttle, whose aunt and uncle turned it into a small camp after Prohibition. He later tore it down and built a house, where his son, Jonathan, now lives part time.

If the bootlegging story is true, said the elder Tuttle, alcohol would have been transferred off a ship to a smaller boat, then unloaded on shore and carted up the hill. It wasn’t uncommon to smuggle liquor along the coast, including from where the house was moved.

“We love Harpswell,” he said. “It’s a fantastic, welcoming town with great people.”

Connie Sage Conner is a retired editor of The Virginian-Pilot and author of Frank Batten: The Untold Story of the Founder of the Weather Channel. “A Harpswell resident, she serves on the Harpswell News board of directors.”

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Masks

time-consuming debates about masks.

Holly Blanc, of Bowdoin, said that she left the district after 20 years as a teacher because of the animosity on display at the meeting.

“The divide, the lack of morals, the lack of empathy being shown towards other humans in this room is disgusting. … It’s truly disturbing how people are treating other humans in this room, and it’s been going on for years,” Blanc said.

Kopp expressed a desire to move on from the mask debate.

‘I would be in favor of continuing our mandate … and having our superintendent come back to us with the recommendation to discontinue masking when we see a change in what’s happening,’ Kopp said. ‘That’s what we’re paying our administrators to do.’

‘I am tired of responding to hundreds of emails, and this is not what I want to do being,’ Kopp said. ‘I want to talk about, what are the goals of this district? Where do we want to be in five years? You know, we’ve got work to do, and we’re consumed, yet again, with hours talking about masking. I’m ready for us to move on.”

In addition to Harpswell, MSAD 75 includes Bowdoin, Bowdoinham and Topsham.
Library
From Page 1

What started as a project to address drainage issues and improve wheelchair access at the library has grown into an effort to create a real community resource.

"We're one of only a few fixtures in Cundy's Harbor that's open year-round and offers a place to connect with people, in person and online," said library Director Heather Logan, who took over the position last February.

The project is being funded by donations and with seed money from the Alfred M. Senter and Bailey Family foundations, along with federal funds in the form of two Cumberland County Community Development Block Grants totaling $116,460. The town of Harpswell, which also kicked in $6,000 to help with renovations, played a key role in getting the grants.

"Terri Sawyer at the town office made us aware of the available grants and helped us get the funding we needed to make this renovation possible," said Dianne Chilmonczyk, the library board member who wrote the lion's share of the proposal.

So far, along with the expanded front deck, convenient handicapped parking space and new wheelchair ramp, repairs have been made to the exterior of the building, the landscape has been graded and improved to eliminate flooding, and moisture abatement measures are underway in the basement. Still to come are gutters, window sill repairs, vinyl siding, interior lighting, electrical upgrades, heat pumps, a new back door and new furniture.

"The library was in need of many repairs and improvements, which were critical to assure the future availability of this valuable community asset," said Sawyer, deputy town administrator and treasurer.

"The town, in partnership with the library, is committed to seeing these improvements accomplished." Beyond the vital grant funding for the project, the ongoing renovations really are a "labor of love," according to Logan. "The deconstruction in the basement has been done by volunteers," she said. "And we'll never be able to thank Duane Webber enough!"

Prybylo estimated that Webber, president and co-owner of R.A. Webber & Sons, which provides septic and construction services in Harpswell and beyond, has donated site work and materials worth more than $27,000.

Webber says he's been more than happy to help. "The community has been awful good to us," Webber said. "This is where we were raised and where we work. It's a good feeling to be able to give something back. It's very important for everyone to have a place they can go and get the information they need."

The Cundy's Harbor Library has been a labor of love from the beginning. In January 1958, following the death of Hale Pulsifer, bequests in his memory were placed in a fund to be administered by a board of trustees seeking to establish a library. Planning immediately began to find a suitable site and building.

Richard Hatch agreed to sell, for half-price, a small house on his land on the Cundy's Harbor Road. Robert Watson and Marian Jordan deeded a parcel of land opposite the old schoolhouse for the site. The building was moved to its present location in October 1959. Volunteer help was employed in constructing the foundation. After that, remodeling progressed rapidly.

The grand opening of the building was held June 30, 1960. A small cannon was fired to let the community know the library was open and functioning.

Today, according to Logan, the library has a collection of 5,301 books, with a particular focus on Maine writers and volumes on the maritime history of the state. It also has free Wi-Fi and a charming children's room that features a picture-window view of the lovely water-front park behind the library and the harbor beyond. "They call us the little library with the big view," Logan said.

As director, Logan oversees fundraising, outreach, policies and the library's strategic plan. Assistant Librarian David Perrier checks books in and out, and also offers tech help to patrons during the library's regular hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Board Treasurer Rachel Miller said the library's annual budget is $48,800, with $25,000 coming annually from the town and the balance made up from community donations. This year, the library is seeking $35,000 to help extend its hours and make it more user-friendly for families during after-school hours. Plans are also in the works to join the Maine Integrated Library System, which will help expand the library's offerings through the statewide network.

"Beyond the books, libraries are really about conversations and eliminating isolation," Miller said. The COVID-19 pandemic and renovation work have limited access to the library in recent months, but now it is open to the public (although masks are still required) and Prybylo looks forward to the return of popular community events and the completion of the project. "Pre-COVID, our community programming was really popular. We look forward to resuming it when we can," she said.

Along with the Orr's Island Library, the Cundy's Harbor Library draws people from all over Harpswell. Having those kinds of connections in a town sometimes separated by its geography is important. Sawyer said the town's role in the renovation project has been rewarding. "It has been a pleasure working with the library's dedicated volunteers," she said. "There has been great support for the project, including donated labor, materials and many volunteer hours. Harpswell has many gems, and the Cundy's Harbor Library is certainly one of them."

For more information on volunteer opportunities or to donate to the Cundy's Harbor Library, go to cundysharboro.me or call 207-725-1461.

Doug Warren, of Orr's Island, retired from a career as an editor at the Portland Press Herald, Miami Herald and Boston Globe. He serves as vice president of the Harpswell News board of directors. &
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