It is with great pleasure that I sit here writing my first President’s Report to the Cliff Island Seagull (actually, I’d take a lot more pleasure if I was sitting on Cliff writing it). I truly believe that there is no greater place on earth than Cliff Island — when you combine the natural beauty and the great people who make up the community, it’s hard to go wrong! Here in the Persian Gulf, Bahrain is a small island country itself. People talk about “the island” — it doesn’t start to compare to Cliff and I silently take offense to what I think is the unauthorized use of the term “the island.” To me there is only one “the island” and this isn’t it!

I’d like to start this report with a tremendous THANKS to Ruth Mistark for her service as President of the CIA this past year. No thanks to me as Vice-President In Absentia, during the year she guided the CIA and the island to the start of the resolution of the deer issue. Without her hard work and dedication to the welfare of this island, the progress that’s been made to date would not have occurred. Thank You, Ruth!!

Unfortunately, like any issue that impacts more than one person, the resolution is sure to result in everyone being less than totally pleased. However, many people are working very hard to ensure that all voices are heard and to ensure that a fair vote can be held on the matter. Whatever the outcome, we are still all here living together and the community spirit that makes Cliff such a special place, I’m sure, will prevail in order to keep the island so special.

As many of you know, we have a new family with additions to the Cliff Island School who moved into the Thompson house recently. They are Sean and Amy Lent with Connor, William and Cade. A big welcome to them as they adjust to island life. That reminds me that the school is lucky to have Judy MacVane as teacher this year. I would think that when you count the number of years that that MacVane family has been in the school (either teaching or as students) it may be a family record.

Not to make this sound like a campaign speech, but it’s my hope that the CIA can continue to be a forum where the island can hash out solutions to problems and coordinate activities to make a great place even greater. Anyone wanting to attend the monthly meetings is more than welcome or for those who might like to assist with meals and events at the hall, you are certainly encouraged to raise your hand. Any help is welcome.

As I close out this report, for those of you part-timers I missed this summer, I look forward to seeing you in ’03 and hope you have a safe, warm, and enjoyable winter. For everyone else, you can’t imagine how very much I’m looking forward to setting foot on Cliff Island. See you soon.

Steve Little

Thanks, Roger!

The Cliff Island community is always grateful to Roger Berle for all he does for this island—the Monday night concerts, the ball games, the ACE events, ferrying people to other islands and events. This is only a partial list of those things we thank Roger for.     Molly Scheu
Michael Eric O’Reilly will be missed

Michael Eric O’Reilly, 26, of Bay View Road, died June 22, 2002. Mike is loved and survived by his mother, Jane Fisher; two daughters, Taite Briar and Jaida Mackenzie O’Reilly. He is also survived by Jaida’s mother, Crystal Scammon and many friends. “You will be in our hearts and thoughts forever and we will always love you.” A memorial service was held July 5th at the United Baptist Church, Main St., Saco.

— Library Report —

“The Story Hour” was very popular again this year. Virtually every child who attended was able to stand before the group, introduce him or herself, and recite a poem. A prize of an ice cream cone was awarded for these speakings. The amount of ice cream is always commensurate with the length of the poem. Recitations over five minutes in length earn a banana split. Two more children joined the not very long list of those earning the top prize.

The library would like to put up a plaque listing the “Banana Split Stars.” Maura thinks she can remember everyone who should be mentioned, but would appreciate confirmation. If you earned a banana split or are related to one of the Stars, please email Maura at MBERLE1@Maine.RR.Com to make sure the list is accurate.

POST OFFICE HOURS

Mon - Fri
Lobby 8am - 5pm
Window 8am - 1pm
         2pm - 4:45pm
Mail Dispatch 3:30pm

Saturday
Lobby 8am - 12
Window 8am - 11:45
Mail Dispatch 11:30am

www.cliffisland.com
is the official Cliff Island website

E-mail bob@cliffisland.com if you wish to be on the list to receive important news and updates via email.
If your email address changes, let Bob know. He continually updates his list. (Thanks, Bob!!)

Postage Stamps

Remember to help our community by buying your postage stamps from the Cliff Island Post Office. If you can’t be here in person, you can purchase them by mail. Contact Postmaster Anna at 766-2051 for the details or print out an order form from the Cliff Island website.
Historical Society

The mission of the Cliff Island Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and make accessible those objects, antiquities, documents, and other items of historical, educational, and cultural significance pertaining to the unique and special history of Cliff Island.

— Houses Day —

On July 27, 2002, twelve Cliff Island houses were on display at the Hall. This exhibit was the first by the fledgling Cliff Island Historical Society.

Displays included photos and histories. Many old postcards and photos of houses, people, and island scenes had been loaned by islanders. Historical accounts included early residents, landowners, and sources of building materials. Visitors to the exhibit were invited to add their precious memories and anecdotes. This information will become part of the Historical Society archives.

Scrapbooks, old maps, and photo albums were available for leisurely perusal. They inspired more comments and detailed reminiscences to be added to the archives.

Chester Pettengill designed note cards to be sold. Sharon Hiltonen knitted a throw and gave it to the Society to be raffled; Barbara Smith was thrilled to have won it.

Officers and trustees were elected July 27, 2002. The officers serve a one-year term.

President Pam Anderson
Vice-president Alice Carter
Treasurer Julie Gess
Recording Sec. Carole Jellison
Corresponding Sec. Maura Chadbourne

Trustees

Faith Rawding three years
Ellen Struble three years
Hani Kenefick two years
Molly Scheu two years
Nancy Benoit one year

The next meeting of the Society will be next spring. Watch “The Seagull” and bulletin boards.

—Questionnaire—

The Cliff Island Historical Society is eager to add more information to the chain of Island history. If you would like to contribute to the project, please respond to this questionnaire. Either send it to one of the officers or trustees or bring it with you on your next trip to Cliff.

Name:
What brought you to Cliff Island?
Were you related to anyone? To whom and how?
Year of first visit?
Did you own or rent?
What house did you stay in?
If rented, who owned it?
If owned, who were previous owners?
List all places you have stayed in on the island.
Please add any history or interesting anecdotes to any of the above.

Last issue featured a photo of two boys. Did you correctly identify Todd and Eric Anderson, now 34 and 32? Can you identify this house? For extra credit, name the fashionable lady on the porch. What book is she reading?
Maura Berle and Tom Chadbourne were married on July 5th. Tom is from Waterford, Maine. Maura knew he might be a “keeper” when he came to Cliff Island for the first time on December 28th, 2000, and loved the island.

Tom has three children: Seth, 28, who was married on September 21st; Adam, 27, who was married on August 24th; and a daughter, Alden, 20, who, Tom says, is thankfully not getting married this year.

Gary and Kelly Profenno have now opened their third self-storage building. Freeport Self Storage and U-Haul is located on Profenno Way in Freeport and Gary is operating the business by himself. Business has been busy and they hope to put up the fourth (and last) storage building in the spring. For storage and U-Haul needs, call us at 865-3920.

Ben O’Reilly, Sr., has been hospitalized and now is in St. Joseph’s Manor due to an infection in his hand. He has been operated on, but the doctors think they might have to operate again and possibly take more of the hand off. Ben was living on the island up until this incident. The family doesn’t seem to think Ben will be returning home in the near future, so they have made plans to close up his house for the winter. Our thoughts and prayers are with Ben and his family.

On August 28 (her birth date) Priscilla O’Reilly’s ashes were buried in a small family service on Cliff Island. Danny and Benny cleaned up an area around the old horsechestnut tree and buried Priscilla’s urn along with her youngest son’s memorial stone (Stephen O’Reilly died many years ago and his stone has been in Limington since then). Danny read the obituary from the newspaper; his wife, Judy, read a prayer; and Kelly Profenno (granddaughter) read an Indian prayer. The area was then planted with daffodil bulbs. Priscilla died on May 22, 2002, after being in St. Joseph’s Manor in Portland for several years.

Chuck Mistark has participated in four bike rides recently: Menominee River Century, 78 miles; Titletown Tour Bike Ride, 63 miles; Dells of the Eau Claire Bike Tour, 83 miles; and Door County Century, 63 miles. Each of the bike rides were quite an accomplishment because temps were sometimes close to 90 degrees. Chuck and Gina live in Marinette, Wisconsin, and miss the island. They try to get back to visit Ruth and friends once a year—preferably in the fall.

Heidi’s dream has always been to be married on Cliff Island and it all took place on August 3rd (her grandfather’s birthday!). Heidi is the daughter of Tom and Anne O’Reilly, and the granddaughter of Mrs. Louise O’Reilly. Heidi and Eric thank everyone for all their best wishes!

William Katahdin Jordan (7 lb, 2 oz) was born August 30th in Mercy Hospital. He and his mother, Ellen Belknap, are both thriving.

Nick Walker passed away on Friday, Sept 20. The pneumonia, he had been battling for months, caught up with him again.

Heidi and Eric strike a beautiful pose against the backdrop of the ACE field. (Photo courtesy of Anne O’Reilly)
Let me qualify this by saying this is only “my” opinion, and since a majority hand show vote (August 15, 2002) chose that “something” must be done about the deer situation, what I say changes nothing... yet I must speak.

Habitat: We have been informed how deer change the habitat. Yet, have we really owned up to how “we” change the habitat of a place? The deer simply eat what they need to survive, make small trails, and move on. As humans, our needs are far more complex and we have not yet learned how to blend into the environment as deer have. We cut, bulldoze what is in our way. We build roads, build houses, dig holes in the ground for water and septic systems, drive golf carts, cars, trucks, etc. We clear land for ball fields and tennis courts.

I am not saying these things are bad, just that we do this. Imagine a spaceship flying close to the land. An unfamiliar “species” looking down at the two groups here—the deer and the humans—and asked “Which group has caused more damage to the habitat?”

Why do we think we are superior to the deer? Why do we think we have the right to thin the herd—to control the herd. Is it because we have more power? If there were no people on Cliff Island, nobody to control the situation, the deer herd would regulate itself. Survival of the fittest. Yet, it is not in our nature to just let it be. Living with animals is not familiar to us. This summer I heard there were 400 people on Cliff. I imagine there are fewer than 40 deer, yet the judgment/concensus says there are too many deer. Perhaps the deer think there are too many of us.

As to gardening, successful ways have been found. And don’t forget that this is the farthest island out in Casco Bay that the ferry services. Again, it is human nature to be drawn to the “wild” and then to recreate the “civilization” that we left.

As to the Lyme tick issue: several meetings ago I mentioned the possibility of dogs bringing these ticks to the island. It did not get the attention I thought it deserved. Last night, a veterinarian said that indeed the incident of Lyme Disease in dogs is rising. Consider this: over 200 deer were killed on Peaks Island and not one incident of Lyme tick was reported. Overall, it seems the deer have not yet been infested, but look at the number of dogs being brought to the island from heavily infested tick areas, by summer renters, and day visitors. Have these dogs been de-ticked? The finger may be pointed in the wrong direction. If there is a serious concern about Lyme Disease, face this issue. Alert your summer renters, your friends, post a sign down at the wharf. No dogs allowed unless they are regularly de-ticked.

In ending these thoughts, I would like to say a tremendous thank you to Cliff Island for the five years I have been graced to live here in relative “non-change.” For the opportunity to witness rainbows, to see fawns so close as to notice the varying spot patterns on their backs. To stand within a yard of a young buck with velvet spike-horns. To watch big bucks running free on the edge of a beach. There are not many places left that our children get such opportunities.

Cliff Island is not escaping change. Change is the constant. We now have the majority vote to “manage.” There are fewer and fewer wild places left. Left, allowed to just be. The signs of the times have found Cliff. The management plans for natural resources... so if or when a deer reduction option is put into effect, the energy of the island will be forever changed. This I feel very sad about, but then again, this is not wild kingdom, is it?

None of us is the ultimate authority here. We stumble along, knowing in our hears that it is love, compassion, letting go judgment, the need to be willing to rise above our conflicts and find the place within us that joins us together—not separates us. This is the real challenge. This is the point of power. One day at a time.

Kat Farrin
— Tennis Report —

Another drought has allowed for yet another banner year on the court. The court was well utilized with the only lull being the round robin. We need to get some of these young budding stars onto the tournament circuit!

Thank you’s again to Leo Carter for his commitment to teaching our youth with such generosity and skill. When he was unavailable, Tom Struble was a willing and competent substitute—thank you, Tom. Bob Hiltonen continues to organize the round robin. Despite the waning participants, he sets up the play and we thank him. Hani Kenefick doggedly continues to pursue the feasibility of new fencing.

The only glitches came in the height of the season when court time was at a premium, and the court was in action 12 hours a day. The phone starts ringing with complaints when the rush is on. A couple of helpful reminders: Please sign up only one day ahead. Also, if you cannot use court time that you have signed up for, please erase your name promptly to allow others to use this slot. For the most part, it all runs remarkably smoothly and with fairness.

We shall see you all out there next season. Thank you for making tennis a fun part of life on Cliff.

Kris Saunders

— 50 Is a Very Good Year! —

By all accounts, it was a heck of a party! The self-appointed “flower children” of Cliff Island (aka, all those born in 1952) threw themselves a 50th birthday bash on July 20 and invited everyone to help them celebrate. Jenny Scheu, Liz Ryan, Molly Seagrave, Bob Howard, and Michaela Pontoppidan organized the event with help from other “celebrants” (and even some “non-coms!”). Highlights included an impressive turnout of 50-year-olds (thanks to Bob’s email entreaties); beautiful handmade garlands of island flowering vines (kudos to Michaela); “hippie pad” decor and accessories (not to mention an awesome cake) thanks to Liz; flawless planning, generous supplying and expert directing by Jenny; and a fully customized playlist for the “era” by our fine DJ, Jeff Cusack. Judging from the packed dance floor and hilarious line dances, all ages enjoyed the evening!

Last, but hardly least, the serendipitous timing of ACE’s 25th Anniversary Fireworks on the same evening (coupled with heroic efforts by Roger and Finestkind helpers to move them to the dock) made the night utterly magical. The eye-popping display rivalled any I’ve seen and the duration was truly indulgent—a grand tribute to a great organization!

Molly Channing

“I’m telling you there’s more of them every year. We have to kill them before they kill us.” (Copyright 2002, Brock Cole)
On August 25th there was a celebration for Chester Pettengill at the Church in appreciation for his 50 years of piano playing. Many people took part with music, poems, and tributes. There were refreshments on the lawn following the event. A book was presented to him filled with heart-warming messages, poetry, and thanks. The book was a surprise, along with another gift which he will enjoy through the winter. We are all so grateful to Chester for his kindnesses, his good humor, AND his piano playing. He is a true hero to many, many people on Cliff Island.

Molly Scheu

Thanks, Chester! (Photo courtesy of David Balderston)

— PTC Report —

I can hardly believe that today is Labor Day. Over the last couple of weeks the Island has gotten very quiet. That is the official sign of fall around here. After all the people we had on the rock this summer, it almost seems like a ghost town instead of a coast town. It takes a while to readjust.

Some of you may or may not know that Stephanie Howard-O'Reilly resigned as teacher this summer. We want to thank her for the two great years that she was here and to wish her the very best of luck at her new teaching job! We'll miss you!

So who's the teacher? Judy MacVane is! Welcome to the Cliff Island School! We are all looking forward to the new and creative ideas.

We also want to welcome four new students to the school. Samantha Crowley and Dylan Griffin will be starting Kindergarten, and Conner and Will Lent will be starting 2nd and 4th grade. We have 10 students attending this year. We hope that all of them have a great school year in our newly painted and carpeted classroom.

We want to thank all of you for donating your returnable bottles and cans to the PTC fund. We received $1,600 from those returns. We also want to thank the volunteers who helped us bag and box up those bottles and cans. It isn't exactly a fun job, but when a lot of folks help, at least it can be a quick job! Your help was greatly appreciated! We also want to remind you that REFUNDABLE bottles or cans put in your recycling bins are NOT picked up for the school. If you would like to donate your REFUNDABLE bottles and cans, please put them in the bins at the school or CIA Hall.

The Community Garden was a great success this summer! It is so nice to see all the different plants growing. We want to thank everyone who took the time to tend to the watering and/or weeding.

The Cliff Island School has a limited budget, so we would like to encourage anyone who uses the photocopier or Fax to please replace any paper that you use. It would also be less disruptive if use of the equipment could be limited to after school hours. Finestkind also provides these services if that time of day is not convenient.

We are looking forward to apple picking, pumpkin carving, Trick or Treating and more. Hope you all have a great Fall.

Karen Griffin

REMINDER: The Portland City ordinance mandates that large-item trash may not be put out until Monday of the week of removal.
 Meet Some Folks from Casco Bay Lines

SETH CHUTE: Seth began his career with Casco Bay Lines in 1998 as a deck hand. In 1999 he became a full-time employee working mostly Down the Bay. This summer we found him mostly on the Peaks run. He grew up in Massachusetts (Boston, Foxboro) and moved to the Gray New Gloucester area at age 7. He grew up around boats on the Royal River. Seth can be found mountain biking or backpacking when he isn’t on the ocean, and in the winter Seth is a ski coach at Sunday River teaching PERFECT TURN free style to 7-14 year olds. Seth loves the season changes, the work challenges, and the wonderful people he meets on the Bay trips. Seth remembers fondly when the Right whales were seen in the inner harbor… on his birthday.

NATE MILLS: 23-year-old captain from South Portland, Nate became a deck hand right out of high school in 1997. He went to school in Farmington and is now studying liberal studies at SMTC. Nate earned his captain’s license last April and can be seen frequently on the Down the Bay run. He loves the ocean, the people he meets and finds everyone at Casco Bay Lines to be pretty great. In his spare time he plays golf and skis.

BROOKE DeFORTE: This is Brooke’s fourth summer as a deck hand. She graduated from Gorham High School and is a student at the University of Maine in Orono studying to be a graduate counselor in education. She grew up around boats and when a friend, who had worked at the Bay Lines, told her about the job she decided to go for it. She is a sprinter in track and looks forward to heading back to school.

HANNAH BASS: Hannah has worked for the Bay Lines for 6 years, 3 of them full time. Hannah grew up near Yarmouth and graduated from Yarmouth High School and then went to Bowdin College. She always wanted to be a deck hand and when she was a sophomore in college she knew she wanted to learn a new skill. She wanted it to be something that was outdoors and having grown up around boats, being a sea captain seemed perfect. Hannah was applying to law school at the time of this interview. When not on the Peaks or Down the Bay run you can find her surfing or skiing.

PATRICK NIXON: 24-year-old Patrick Nixon from South Portland spent summers as a kid going to Peaks Island, Jewels and other Casco Bay islands. At New England College he studied outdoor education, kinesiology and environmental studies. He can be found wind surfing and surfing in his free time. Patrick sees the advantage of an office with a 360 degree view of beautiful Casco Bay.

Thank you to everyone at Casco Bay Lines for another safe year of beautiful journeys to our magical island.

ALL use of the Hall MUST be scheduled
And if your usage will extend for more than one day, each of the days (and time of day) it will be used must be scheduled and approved. This helps us keep tabs on the condition of the Hall as well as avoid double bookings. Thanks.

Please call Ruth Mistark for scheduling.
— Tax Committee Report —

With all the press about Chebeague's woes with its recent tax re-evaluation, concern for the future of Cliff was discussed at the August CIA meeting, and it was decided to form an ad-hoc committee dealing with the issue. Many other islands are seeing their tax bills escalating, which will eventually force people to leave and promote summer-only communities. It would be devastating for Cliff to head down this path, losing all that we cherish so deeply about this unique and wonderful corner of the world.

The City of Portland is doing a re-assessment to be completed by 2004, and we are likely to see a significant increase in our tax bills. Now is the time to become informed! Our group has been in communication with members of Chebeague's "Save Our Island" Committee and other like communities. They have told us they wished they had learned then what they now know. The Island Institute has also been concerned about the preservation of year-round island communities. It has established a listserve so that we can be in communication. If you wish to participate in this, please contact Nathan Michaud at the Institute--his email address is nmichaud@islandinstitute.org. They are also sponsoring a weekend workshop in October beginning the evening of Fri., Oct. 25th, through Sat., the 26th, in Rockland, to help inform us of the issues and possible impact we might have.

Our committee is looking at other states to determine what other creative solutions have been tried. We need to become knowledgeable about the process and about the players. Many assessment decisions are subjective, erroneous, and inconsistent. There are also constitutional issues at the state level, proposed referendums, etc., that we need to understand. Money is tight and there are no simple answers to this complex problem. We can't simply complain when the tax bills arrive in the mail.

Please educate yourselves and pass anything along to our committee. While we worry about deer, barges, recycling, etc., nothing has the potential to change our island quite like this issue can. Hopefully, you will all try to gain insights into this issue in order to affect reasonable and informed change to this process. We shall have our work cut out for us!

Kris Saunders, Chair Ad Hoc Tax Committee
Members:
Anne Fullerton
Leo Carter
James Griffin
Pam Anderson
Bill Luneburg
Libra Cusack

— ACE Post-Summer Report —

What a SUMMER!

2002 was a bit different for ACE consumers, but community feedback seemed to indicate that it was successful and appreciated.

It was, of course, our 25th Anniversary Year. And it has been a long and fun journey since our first pre-organizational meeting in Mary and Tony Brackett’s dining room in 1977!

Sooooo, we decided to celebrate that journey!

And, we did just that! On Sunday, September 1st, we held a Birthday Party on the site of our newest acquisition at Griffin's Cove. Alice Carter and Chester Pettengill provided the tuneful background entertainment while we heard about the organization’s history, honored former and present Trustees (and presaged future ones...), viewed a photo collage of past ACE events, and ate cake! The picture of a whole bunch of Island children hovering over the wedges of the three cakes (one with an “A” on it, one with a “C,” and one with an “E”) presented a nice slice of what the future of ACE might look like! We could have stood having a fourth cake, also with a C on it, for two reasons: first, because there wasn’t enough of the delicious cake to serve the very large gathering; and second, because some have suggested that the “C” could just as well stand, acronymi-
That was not all we did this year. The fireworks on Saturday, July 20th, registered pretty high on the “Oooh and Aaah Scale” as the artistic explosions arced over the Ferry Wharf from their launch site only a hundred yards off shore. This display meshed well with the “50’s Party” happening at the CIA Hall. We’ll see what inspirational enhancements can grow for the 30th celebration in 2007!

Old favorite entertainers, Schooner Fare, drew easily the biggest crowd in ACE history (not including the Olympics, of course!) with their latest Concert on the Wharf on August 5th. A remarkable treat it was, punctuated as it was with their closing number, “I See the Light.” At this point, we could all turn our eyes to the southwest and connect with the beams of Portland Headlight as they reflected on the minstrels touting the landmark’s history and significance to “Portland Town.” And to us! For most of the whispered discussions revolved around just which of Schooner Fare’s offerings was actually each listener’s favorite!

We also spent delightful evenings listening to rockin’ Red Lite Revue and folkie Patrick Fitzsimmons.

During the days, ACE Summer Program Director, Jessica Suraci, crafted plans for everyone willing to turn up at her Kiosk in the “square.” Jess utilized a strategy centered on “less is more,” as she organized her activities into the following categories: Weekly, Off-Island Field Trips, Local Knowledge, Outreach Programs, Community-Oriented, Environmental, Arts and Crafts, and Teen Activities. “Exit-polling” indicated that her approach and her program were successful. But, in her summarizing report she reflected that she might well have repeated more of previous summers’ successful adventures. Her recommendations for next season are thoughtful and provocative. We are all grateful for her contributions to our Island community this summer! (The Board voted unanimously in August to continue on with a 2003 Summer Program; it may well, however, look more like the 2001 edition, with a larger community focus.)

A “neat” reminder of this past summer is the ACE 25th Anniversary Tee-Shirt! They are in stock right now in six sizes and will make great birthday and holiday presents. They are Collectors’ Items! Please contact Roger at 766-2827 for details and delivery. We are fortunate to have on the backs of these garments, the artistry of Yonna Pontoppidan, materializing as a sketch of Griffins’ Cove.

Griffins’ Cove’s popularity as a community resource sunk in ever deeper this season—with the hot and dry weather. We are all working to make this land, as well as the Ballfield, friendly for both islanders and their pets.

We expect that by Summer 2003, we will have a memorial sculpture at the Field honoring the late Jim Colt, ACE Coach Emeritus. The designer of this artwork will be Eric Anderson, the newest member of the ACE Board of Trustees. He takes up the seat filled so inspirationally for two terms, by Joan Benoit Samuelson.

Now, on to enjoying the other three beautiful seasons of the year here on Cliff Island, which separate us from a 2003 ACE Summer of Athletics, Conservation, Community, and Education.

All Best to All of Us!

Dale and Roger
— Cliff Island Volunteer —
Fire & Rescue Company Report

The activity level for this summer was low—only just over a dozen medical calls for the year so far. It was well over twenty by this time last year. There seems to be some concern about using the 911 emergency phone number, and what is going to happen when it is used. Does it mean that the siren is going to blast? Is my emergency important enough for 911? What assistance is going to arrive when it is used? All relevant questions and there are probably many more questions people ask themselves when faced with an emergency situation that requires assistance from outside their home. The simple rule for 911 is if medical or emergency assistance is need from outside the home, use 911!

When an emergency call is received at the 911 center, the operator will route your call to either the Fire/Medical dispatcher or to the police dispatcher depending on the nature of the call. The Fire/Medical dispatcher receives a great deal of information automatically with the 911 system, including the name and location of the caller. The dispatcher will then activate the new paging system, sending a message to the Island Fire/Rescue workers, and at the same time will dispatch the appropriate personnel from Portland. The dispatchers are instructed not to immediately sound the siren, but to wait for an island rescue worker to acknowledge the page. When the island team member informs dispatch that assistance is forthcoming, they will then use radio contact for future communications between the Island members, dispatch, and rescue personnel from Portland Fire/EMS. At that time there would be no need to activate the siren, and the policy at dispatch is not to activate it. If, however, the dispatcher does not receive information that an island rescue team member is responding, they are then instructed to activate the siren.

When rescue team members arrive at the scene, they will assess the situation and inform Portland dispatch of the situation and what, if any, assistance needs to continue. The Island rescue team can and has returned the rescue boat when it is determined that Portland Fire/EMS assistance is not needed. But if treatment from Paramedics or transportation to the hospital is needed then that help is already on its way.

There have been many changes and improvements made to the Portland communication center and to all the islands, and there will no doubt be many more as we are always looking for ways to improve the system. Throughout all the changes and enhancements, the first step has to begin with you—by utilizing the 911 system.

In closing I would like to thank each of the Cliff Island Fire & Rescue Company personnel. They may be volunteers, but they are professional. Please join me in thanking them all: James Griffin, Karen Griffin, Dale Dyer, Charlie Green, Charlie Merritt, Dave Meikle, Steve Little, Ben Bernard, Bob Howard, and Mac McKone.

Always, Dave Crowley
ABOUT THOSE TICKS....

A friendly reminder to summer visitors and those who rent homes here:
Please de-tick your pets before arriving on the island to keep the island free of the kind of ticks that spread Lyme Disease. Thank You!!!!
— Using 911 —
Been There, Done That

I certainly don’t mean to sound blithe about our wonderful 911 system here on the island—I just wanted to catch your eye with the headline.

As I was dotting the “i’s” and crossing the “t’s” to finish up this Seagull edition, I realized that the layout ended on a left page. No good. It’s gotta end with a right page. So I decided to write a little something about my experience using 911 this past summer, which complements Dave Crowley’s fire department report.

Like you, I always wondered how (if) I would use the 911 system out here. What constitutes an emergency (besides the obvious things like breaking a bone or being in the throes of a heart attack)?

Well, here’s my story. I had a sore throat for a couple of days. No biggy, I thought. Could have been from post-nasal drip due to allergies. On the evening of the third day, my throat hurt much more. I decided to call my primary the next day to make an appointment.

I awoke at midnight, that night, with my throat afire. I could barely swallow, due to inflammation and pain. Good grief. What should I do? My alternatives were: 1) wait till morning and take the 6:10 boat into town and then kill time before walking into my doc’s office at 9:00 and ask to be seen; or 2) call 911 and get medical attention asap. (On the mainland, I would have option 3) getting into my car and driving to an emergency room, myself.)

I lied in bed debating my options. Was my throat condition serious enough to “bother” Dave, Bob, Karen, Jamie, Charlie, etc., at that time of night? Good grief.

Well, let’s just say that the pain and fear made my decision. Jeff called 911 and things went like clockwork. There were no blaring sirens on the island— I just had wonderful, professional people at my door to help me within minutes. Dave took my vital signs immediately and gave me oxygen because my throat was so engorged, that I found it hard to breathe.

By the way, I was not a very gracious patient. I truly wanted everyone who came to the scene to know that I was very grateful, but I was in so much pain, that I couldn’t relay that sentiment very well. (Thanks, you guys!!!!)

I was then taken by the island ambulance to the wharf to wait for the Fire Boat. It arrived just minutes after we parked. I was treated with care and professionalism by the men on the boat. They realized that I was not in immediate danger of my life, and treated me accordingly (I just wanted to be left alone during the ride in, and they recognized that).

An ambulance awaited me when we docked. Again, I was treated with care and respect as we rode to Maine Med.

Things were hopping at Maine Med when I arrived. A busy night. Though I was considered low on the triage list, they made me comfortable on a spare bed and I thank them for that nicety—I was not only still in pain but was very sleepy also.

I was seen within a couple of hours after arriving, and was given antibiotics for potential strep throat to start me off, with a prescription to be filled for the remaining days.

I called a cab to take me to the Bay Lines and made the 5:00 a.m. ferry out to Cliff. I arrived on Cliff as my husband was leaving the island for work. We kissed good morning (not on the mouth!) while passing and I went home to bed. (Taylor never awoke during the early morning ordeal at the house, so when he finally arose at 8 a.m. I told him of my off-island adventure.)

In hindsight, a “wonderful” experience. I couldn’t have asked for better care. And, by the way, my insurance covered everything except my usual deductible. A pleasant ending!

Libra Cusack