

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Daily Life & History of West Bath, Maine

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★★★ SPECIAL LITTLEFIELD SCHOOL ISSUE ★★★

Help is on the Way for Our Littlefield School

The Littlefield School, after teetering on the edge of collapse and having almost been destroyed some years ago as a fire exercise by the town, has been granted new life. The federal government has actually come to the rescue.

The Town of West Bath – in coordination with the West Bath Historical Society – applied for, and has recently been awarded, a \$100,000 federal Community Block Development Grant to help finance the restoration of the school. The WBHS will be spearheading the project and we are in the process of nailing down the scope of work and exact costs. It is an ambitious project, which will entail moving the building off its existing (crumbling) foundation stones, creating a cellar



Littlefield School at its worst, 1999. Courtesy of Lydia Smith Parker

which will be weather proof, creating new beams and rafters (see Higmo story, page 4) to replace the existing rotting ones; rebuilding the chimney, installing new historically-correct wooden shake shingles, restoring the interior ... and the list goes on.

But we can't do this alone. We will need help from the community.

Many of the expenses we will incur – such as interior finishing and landscaping, for example – are NOT covered by the grant. And the more volunteer workers we can recruit (once the building is safe on a new foundation), the more we can accomplish.

We will be shepherding this important restoration effort, as we did with the Old West Bath Meeting House in '05, with the help and generous donations - mostly of time & building skills, (though of course money doesn't hurt!) from many people.

However, fixing the structure is not the only mission – critical though that is. We will also need a strong vision for how the Littlefield School should be used. Perhaps it can be a “living” schoolroom experience for Maine school children, or a small museum? It could also be headquarters for the WBHS, with historical exhibits. Such efforts will need vision and ideas (which we welcome from everyone) and also dedicated stewards and a clear curriculum to keep the school going as a public historical space.

There are many who believe that the rootlessness of our current generation stems in part from their complete lack of understanding of their past. We all must recognize the value of our own history, before we lose such precious reminders as the Littlefield School.

Can you help?

Please contact any Board member, or call or e-mail Avery Meyers (averyhunt@suscom-maine.net) #443-4449) or Pete Guild #443-6056 (wnguild@aol.com)

– The Board of WBHS



Littlefield Class Photo ca 1945: L. to R. Back row: Russell Fitch, Roland Barter, unknown, Jerry Losier, Luella Swain, unknown, Margaret Richardson, Joyce Mitchell. Front row: Bobby Belanger, Hubert Barter, Conrad St. Pierre, Albert Barter, Barbara Adams, Loretta Barter, Bonnie Belanger, Judy Losier. If you can identify the two unknown classmates, please call Kerry at 443-3300. Photo courtesy of Loretta Barter Homan.



Littlefield School from Rose family: Littlefield School, ca. 1909 Courtesy of Martha Rae

Memories from Bud Thompson & Wilbert Small

On a chilly day in early June, several members of the Littlefield School Restoration Committee met two former “students”, Bud Thompson and Wilbert Small, at the school to for a little look-see and to have them share with us recollections and impressions of their school days in West Bath. Neither of them had been inside the school for years, so it was a real trip down memory lane.

Dr. Charles Burden (whose mother Evelyn Redlon had attended the school as well at one time), Pete Guild, Avery Meyers and Janet



Chapin (who kindly carried her trusty tape recorder) conducted the walk-through on the somewhat precarious floorboards of the schoolhouse. But it was Bud and Wilbert who commanded the floor – raising story after story of what it had been like to attend that place as kids.

Charlie Burden, Wilbert Small, and Bud Thompson.

Photo by Avery Meyers

The main reason the group had wanted to do this exercise was to make sure that the restoration of the school, just getting underway, would be accurate. We wanted to get information from the horse’s mouth, as it were.

A couple of questions – such as where the old woodstove had been (and was the one still standing in the building the original stove?) and where the chimney was (in old pictures it shows up on the west wall or the north, depending on vintage) – were solved. And the “mystery” of a strange “beam” to nowhere, which appears to be hollow and hangs down from the ceiling about a foot, was also answered.

Memories from Faith Sherwood

In late June, Charlie Burden and Janet Chapin (again with her trusty tape recorder!) visited with former Littlefield School teacher, Faith Sherwood, at her home in Bath. They wanted to “pick her brain” about her experiences as a teacher in the little school. Here’s what she had to say:

“I had one of the most fun years teaching there at that school. If it hadn’t have been for the bad driving, I would loved to have come back.” That’s what Faith Sherwood, now 96 years of youth, said about The Littlefield School or as she referred to it the “Berry’s Mill School”, when she taught there back in 1942, over 65 years ago.

Faith and her husband moved to the Bath area in 1941 and rented on Pine Street in “the city” for a couple of years before they moved to their lovely home on High Street where she still lives today. She had been teaching in South Portland for several years before they moved to Bath, but since they had a young son at the time of the move, she decided she didn’t want to resume

teaching until he got “up in the grades”.

But as luck would have it, her neighbor across the street, Theo Hornsinger (at the time Theo McNeil), was also a teacher, and she introduced Faith to Dr. Ladd, the superintendent of schools, at a Saturday Night Social downtown. “Everybody went downtown on Saturday nights in those days.” It was October of 1942 and Dr. Ladd was explaining that he was in a real jam with the school down on Berry’s Mill. “I’ve had a time with one substitute after another. Come see me Monday morning.” he told Faith when he discovered that she had been a teacher. “Well, I thought about it,” she remembered. “Joe Purdue, our minister, didn’t think it was a good idea, and my family didn’t like it much either, but I went down to see Dr. Ladd on Monday morning and I took the job.”

“We had 31 students that year with the beginning of the war and all. At least one student in every grade from first to 8th. Every student had a desk; the little ones in smaller desks in front; bigger kids and bigger desks in back.” Faith said there was a big, round,

ribbed, wood stove in the center of the room that gave out a lot of heat. The school also had kerosene lamps for light, but she hardly ever lit them. There were two privies attached to the back of the school – one for girls and one for boys. The students would get to school before Faith, and they would get the fire going. It took a good half-hour to get the room fairly warm.

How in the world did she teach that many kids, ages 5-15?? “I knew how to do it because I went to a one room school in S. Portland for all 8 grades. That’s how I knew. You combine them: older ones help the younger; they do beautifully.” Faith taught reading, and phonics. She confessed that in later years when she was teaching at Dike School, she still taught phonics even though it had gone “out of style”. She taught history and geography. “Pretty much given Geography today, though, it seems some of these kids don’t even know where Canada is.” Charlie and Janet agreed it was unfortunate that lessons in Geography seem to have gotten short shrift these days in current school curriculum. As if those subjects were not enough, Faith also taught science,

First the woodstove: both Wilbert and Bud agreed that it is the same stove that was there when they attended in the 30's. However, the north chimney was not there, and the existing stove stood generally in line with the inside entrance door on the south (field) side of the building. So somewhere along the line, the chimney that still stands on the north wall was no longer used. And that strange beam? The 4 x 4 wooden drop from the center of the ceiling was for gas lights that were used during the building's time as a lively men's club, in the late '40s and up through the '50s. It was not there when Wilbert and Bud attended the school. In fact, there were no lights in the school except portable kerosene/oil lamps. There was no electricity at the

school when it closed in 1947.

There is an old desk, somewhat falling apart, that still sits in the school. Bud says it was the one their teacher used. There is also an old 4-burner oil stove, now sitting in the entrance to the latrines, that both said was in the school during the 30's, but neither could recall just where.

Both Wilbert and Bud said that the masonite-type ceiling tiles which covered up the original plaster were in place when they attended. The big blackboards on the south side are original, and are slate, but the two smaller ones on the east and west sides, which look like blackboards, are interestingly, just painted wood, which Bud pointed out. He should know: his dad painted them every year!

There is still one self-standing partial school desk, missing its top that is now sitting in the entrance to the boy's (north side) privy. Wilbert says it is indeed original and was one of the two desk types. The second kind had a folding seat in front of the desk, a flip up top, and an ink well. The fellows said there might have been a total of 16 the two types of desks, which were graduated in size – smaller in the front and bigger in the back (for the older kids). This number matches the student count of 16 in the school's last year of operation.

[Editor's note: if anyone knows of the existence of any of these desks, the West Bath Historical Society would love to know where they might be!] ▲

"The students had science books," she remembered, but they never took their books home from school. She gave homework, but the books stayed in their desks. Spelling bees were her favorites and penmanship was also very important to her.

"One of the things I enjoyed the most was the parents down there at the Berry's Mill School. They were so friendly; they invited me over to their homes, and were so cooperative. Not like the city parents. The students liked having me come over for cookies."

She said she also enjoyed playing in the adjoining fields with the students: softball in spring, sledding in the winter time. "I would have loved to have come back the next year if it weren't for the driving and the bitter cold down there that year," she explained. "Sometimes it was 30 degrees below zero! Alice Small [mother of Wilbert], who was one the School Board members, really wanted me back



Former teacher Faith Sherwood. Photo by Janet Chapin.

but I just couldn't do it. They had an opening at Dike, for the 6th grade, and I liked 6th grade so I took that and taught [there] for another 12 years." She then continued on teaching at the Junior High (current middle school) for another 10 years after Dike school.

Faith told a few fun teachers stories as well. She giggled as she

thought about one school morning, after she had been teaching for a little bit, when she looked down at her feet and "had shoes on that weren't mates. That was quite a shock that day!" She said she had a few mischievous kids – one 8th

grader in particular she had to "put out" but that was really all. Turns out that young fellow ended up being a police chief in later years. She thought that was fun. She also told a story about the boy who always started the fire in the morning and who, many years later, came to visit her at her home in Bath. "He had gray hair and a beard. Goodness, he looked older than I did!" she chuckled.

Faith continues to lead a very active life today. She plays bridge on Monday, cribbage on Tuesday, and bocci on Wednesdays and Fridays at the Senior Center, and belongs to a book club too. She is also an active member of the Day's Ferry Congregational Church and was looking forward to a "real" Clam Bake on the day Charlie and Janet chatted with her. She's happy living in her home. She told us she had visited several of "those places: The Highlands, that one in Damariscotta, Oceanview, and Sunnybrook, but I didn't like any of them. I couldn't see myself sitting around in one of those places."

Good for you, Faith, we don't see you sitting around at all. ▲

“Please Help Me, I’m Falling!” Sign Brings Results!

Our sign in front of the Littlefield School has generated a lot of curiosity. It also encouraged two generous donations from two old West Bath families: an offer of all the Hemlock logs we will need for restoration of the school’s frame and custom-milling of that wood by a local sawmill.

Who are these big-hearted donors?

Gil Marco, who is now in Phippsburg but for many years lived out Foster’s Point way, has offered some of his giant hemlocks cut from his woodlot acreage off Campbell’s Pond Road. At the same time, **Allen Higgins** and his crew/partners of Higmo’s Logging & Lumber in East Brunswick, where the logs are now stored, have volunteered to mill the wood into beams.

Allen, his sister, **Marcia Lavigne**, and his partner, **Paula Hersom**, run a vintage logging operation on Old Bath Road. (*The Middle Ground* ran a long story on the historic mills of West Bath in the Jan/March 2006 issue, in which the Higgins family was featured.)



Allen Higgins shows a potential Littlefield School beam to lead architect Frank Roberts – a “raw” hemlock log that will be milled at Higmo.

Photo by Avery Meyers

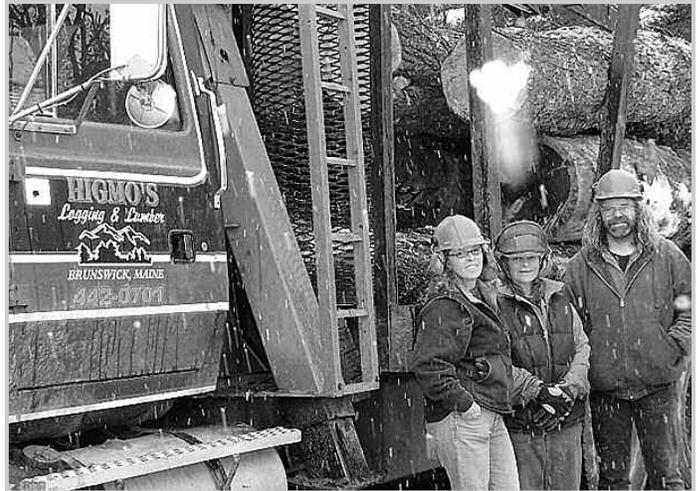
In a nutshell, Allen and Marcia grew up on a farm in West Bath. Their older brother, Dan, worked for a logging contractor, with help from Marcia, who wielded the chain saw. Allen was “just a little teeny kid” but he would often go with them in the logging truck. “I guess that’s where the whole logging and lumber bug came from.”

After high school he worked for the Whorff family. “I was always the fill-in guy. I could drive lowbeds, bulldozers or run a loader or plow snow in the winter But the whole time, I never got away from the wood thing. I was the one that knew how to file a chain saw or, if they had trees to cut on a job, I’d go out and cut them,” he told *Middle Ground* editor Robin Hansen.

His dad had operated a sawmill before Allen was born but it burned to the ground and was never rebuilt. But years later, in 2001, Allen and Marcia, who had been nurturing a dream to build their own milling operation, found an old sawmill in Gray. It hadn’t been run

for four years and there were raspberry bushes growing up eight feet tall around the machinery. “... It was eery. All the guys’ gloves are still there, and the tape measures still laying there, and the whole thing was like they’d just shut it off yesterday. Except for the cobwebs and the raspberries.”

They brought the machinery home on a flatbed and set it up just where their father’s mill had



The Higmo “family”; Paula Hersom, Marsh & Allen. Photo by Avery Meyers

been. Getting the mill up and running took a lot of hard work. The three roughed out the structure to build around the machinery, and then sawed 2-inch planks to build the floor around it, and eventually sawed timber and built up from there.

This big undertaking was started more as a hobby but the floor to Higmo’s mill was barely finished (no roof yet!) when people began stopping in to ask for lumber – to build a shed or an ice fishing shack or to match 7/8” boards in an old house. It wasn’t long before they realized they could make a living at milling, and Allen left Whorff’s.

Since then, there’s been no shortage of work. To understand Allen, Marcia and Paula’s quirky talents, you have only to read their business card, which reads in part “new & used logs and wood products – rough sawn & specialty lumber – lots cleared or selective cutting – ill machines diagnosed – rippin’ chain-sawin’ – psychiatric sessions – free advice” – and in capital letters; **“ALL WORK DONE WITH PAST TENSE TRUCKS, EQUIPMENT AND VALUES BY FARM KIDS”** At the end is the kicker: “the only thing we don’t cut is our hair!”

Now, are these the kind of folks you want to shape the beams for the restoration of the Littlefield School, or what? We think so. ▲

Littlefield School Time-Line

1853 – Land deeded to Town of West Bath (School District #3) by Benjamin & Ezra Brown for the sum of \$20

1853 – School built – first called Mill Cove School.

* * *

Note: The original District #3 school began in 1757, held in the house of Jonathan Mitchell on Berry's Mill Road (now the home of Wilbert & Laura Small). Then a school was built on South Mill Hill. Men taught in the winter when older boys were not needed on the farms; women taught younger kids in summer. Schoolmasters were paid \$30/month; schoolmistresses/\$2-3 a week! That school burned to ground in 1803; another was built across from the Meeting House (presumably active from '04 to 1853; we have no details)

* * *

1870-90 – Pump organ, wainscoting, flooring, mill work and door were installed, probably with lumber from one of Berry's mills down the road.

Circa 1900 – School name changed to "Littlefield" by popular usage, because of the fields that surrounded it.

1916 – Teacher wages, \$9 week

1917 – Request to look into a new heating and vent, preferably with coal burning stove.

1918 – Closed for several weeks due to Whooping Cough outbreak; new state law providing for the union of towns under professional supervision put West Bath with Brunswick; school committee met with state superintendent and succeeded in being put in with Bath.

1920 – Extensive repairs to the toilet as the sills had rotted and floors were entirely decayed so that it was

Mill Cove School / Littlefield School Teachers

Ephraim Patch *
Andrew Coombs - 1808 *
Samuel Winter - 1811 *
Jane Shaw - 1811 *

[Teachers unknown – between 1811 and 1905]

Elmer B. Williams - 1906
Lily S. Pray **
Florence A. Neiley (later Hague) **
Rachel M. Potter **
Lona Cunningham **
Sarah G. Black - 1916
Nellie M. Starret - 1916
Susie Durfee - 1918
Mabel Rogers - 1919
Ruth Staples - 1919
Mrs. Gardiner - 1920
Margaret Auban - 1926-27

Beatrice Nichols - 1928
Lillian Cutler - 1929
John F. Larrabee - 1930 to 1934
Clarice Whittier - 1935
Jean Danforth - 1936
Barbara Fisher (later Marriner) - 1937 to 1940
Elizabeth Pinkham - 1941
Catherine Campbell - 1942
Nellie White - 1943 substitute
Faith Sherwood - 1943
Jessie Anderson - 1944
Helen Durant - 1945 (for a few weeks)
Lydia Helms - 1945 to 1946

Also (possible 1930s – dates unsure)

Mabel Bonney
Marion Jaques Smith
Vivian George
Bertha Gibson

* Earlier Mill Cove area schools

** Between 1906 and 1916

unsafe for the children (much like today!).

1922 – Plan to install chemical toilets to meet state guidelines; to be placed in the existing wood shed with two doors cut directly from schoolroom into wood shed, one for boys, one for girls, with a partition built between them. To make it work, the blackboards would have to be moved to another wall. At the same time, arrange the side lighting from windows from one side only to protect children's eyes.

1926 – Town warrant for vote to see what action the town will take "to retain the Littlefield School, providing there are seven or more pupils". If there were less than 7, the Superintending School Committee recommends it be closed.

1927 – Same warrant except "6 or more pupils"; plus request to raise \$250 to make over toilets if school not closed (irregular school because of much sickness).

1931 – School starts with 10 pupils, dwindles to 2 primary students. Mr. Larrabee taught them at nearby home in the morning.

1932 – Same, except with three pupils.

1933 – Attendance increase to 11; back to all-day school

1936 – Teacher pay: \$17 week

1937 – New reading system, plus new English & Geography texts, introduced

1938-'43 – Repair of chimney & roof; outside painted; inside redecorated; complete cleaning & painting of interior (when current light green & white color scheme was used), plus sanding, varnishing, and repairing of desks. Wood battens and homosote installed as "modern" ceiling; building was electrified (but no water!). At same time, Superintendent says, "Mere man cannot

. . . Continued on page 6

Littlefield School Time-Line

Continued from page 5

forecast what the future holds for education in West Bath. It is certain that the potential supply of teachers in Maine is practically exhausted.”

1944 – A high count of 26 students!

June, 1946 – Town warrant “to see if the town will vote to close the Lowell and Littlefield Schools and transport scholars to Bath.”

September, 1946 – Littlefield School closed, after running continuously for 93 years! Kids now had to walk or find a ride to Bath schools. There were about 80 kids attending school in West Bath, between Lowell and Littlefield schools. Tuition was \$75 per student to send them to Bath. (Lowell School also closed; today is a private house across from West Bath School.)

Dec. 4, 1946 (3 months after school closed) – Local Men’s Club was formed, and used the school until mid-1980s. (They had been paying the town \$2 for each meeting to cover the light bill, and when the tab went up to \$11, they said to heck with it and started meeting in each other’s homes.) The building also hosted 4-H Club and regional Democratic Party meetings during those years.

1950’s – Used for PTA meetings. The PTA prayer still legible on one of the school’s original blackboards was written then by Mrs. Harry (Laura) Larrabee – who now lives in Bath at the Plant Home.

1982 – An attempt to get the school on the National Register failed, because it wasn’t deemed to possess “exceptional qualities of historic importance or architectural merit.”

1992 – School totally abandoned.

1999 – Town residents voted to save school from demolition (after selectmen wanted to burn it down as a fire exercise); small local group was formed to make stop-gap repairs.

2002 – Littlefield School was officially recognized on the “Most Endangered Historic Properties” list by Maine Preservation. And has been listed as an official historic property on the (Federal) National Register.

2006 – Bruce Burden (whose mother, Evelyn Redlon, attended Littlefield School) wills a generous bequest to the WBHS. While there was no stipulation for use of the money, it is understood to be used primarily for restoration of the school.

WBHS also signs renovation agreement with the Town, to oversee Littlefield School restoration project.

Spring, 2008 – Town of West Bath & WBHS receive \$100,000 Federal Grant to save the school.

Restoration Steering Committee formed: Frank Roberts, Avery Meyers, Pete Guild, Dr. Charles Burden, Janet Chapin, Cindy Fahay, Karen Gallagher, Pamela Hile.

Yard Sale at Meeting House: Big Success

Our yard sale on Saturday July 19 was a good community event – and a big money maker, most of which will go toward our Littlefield School restoration project. The event was well publicized which helped draw the crowds (who showed up way before the official 9 am opening). Thanks to much early scrambling by at least 16 Board members, spouses and friends, we had almost everything on display and ready to sell by 8:45.

The 4 for \$1 tables were chock-a-block full of kitchen goodies and knick-knacks – and were a big crowd pleaser. We were blessed

with many donations which had been collected over the past year – from a brass bed to at least 75 pieces of art work to furniture, at least 3 Cuisinarts and many other appliances, sporting goods, an old (working) portable record player, and even a dozen heirloom daylily clumps, which sold like hot cakes. They were donated by master gardener and WBHS member Barbara Weinz.

Moving all that stuff to the Meeting House in the weeks before the sale, then organizing and pricing it all and selecting higher value items for our silent auction, was a major undertaking. It took hard work and lots of sweat equity. But thanks to good teamwork, we made it happen.



Bargain hunters at the 2008 yard sale. Photo by Avery Meyers.

Bottom line: we made over \$2000. That included \$40+ from the refreshment table, organized by Joan Drake, and several hundred dollars from the silent auction. Not bad for a six hour sale in the hot sun. ▲

Meet the Littlefield School Restoration Steering Committee

A special committee has been formed to oversee our school restoration project. Such a “steering committee” is a requirement of our federal CDBG grant, but we would have taken this step anyway, in order to coordinate all the many details of this effort, and to make the project happen, on time and on budget.

Several people on the committee are West Bath Historical Society Board members, while others have a special interest in this important historical restoration.

We wanted to list them here, with e-mail contacts. We are looking for any photographs or memories that people have of the school, and also volunteer help (and we will need lots of “sweat equity” once the building is secure on a new foundation and re-assembled with new beams and joists and roof) for the inside work on the school such as painting and landscaping, which are not covered by the grant. So brush up your recollections, your family albums or your skills and give us a holler!

Frank Roberts of Phippsburg is our chairman. Frank, a professional architect, has been passionate about saving the school since it was almost burned down nine years ago as a town fire exercise! He can be reached at frobarch@aol.com



Littlefield teacher's desk.

Photo by Kerry Nelson.

Pam Hile, our West Bath Town Administrator, is the town's official representative on the committee. The grant was awarded to the town, with oversight on the project given to the West Bath Historical Society. Pam is a whiz at negotiating the tricky waters of federal paperwork and grant rules. Her e-mail is townadministrator@westbath.org

Avery Meyers is WBHS President and worked closely with Pam to apply for the grant for the restoration project. Avery lives in West Bath, on Shoal Cove, with her husband, Don. She can be reached at averyhunt@suscom-maine.net

Dr. Charles Burden is a local historical buff who, among his many passions, was instrumental in creating the Maine Maritime Museum. Charlie (seabird@charlieburden.com) now lives in a house filled with nautical antiques in Dresden, but he grew up summers on Birch Point, and was a beloved pediatrician in Bath for many years. His mother, Evelyn Redlon, went to the Littlefield School, and his brother, the late Bruce Burden, made a generous bequest in his will to the WBHS with the intention to help save the School.



Littlefield woodstove.

Photo by Kerry Nelson

Wm. N. “Pete” Guild is WBHS Treasurer/Secretary. A naval architect, he is an all-round skilled builder and organizer. He will also help by “following the money” on this complicated project, tracking results and, most important, paying the bills! Pete's e-mail is wnguild@aol.com

Janet Chapin is a new WBHS Director this year, along with her husband, Fred. Janet has tons of experience at house restoration and is in the midst of a “rehab” of their home on Berry's Mill Road right now. They moved to West Bath over a year ago. Her e-mail is janetchapin@earthlink.net

Karen Gallagher, is a summer resident of West Bath, on Brigham's Cove, and a WBHS member with an interest in our restoration efforts. The “Please Help Me I'm Falling” sign in front of the school was the inspiration for her involvement in the committee. She can be reached at ksgi@aol.com

There are also two **Adjunct Committee members**, who are involved because of their professional school expertise.

Cindy Fahay is another new WBHS Director and Vice President. She and her husband, Mike, moved to their old renovated farmhouse in Sabino in 2006. Cindy was a grammar school teacher for many years, as well as a publisher/writer. Her e-mail is cindyfahay@yahoo.com

Susan Levey is also a WBHS Director, serving her second term. She lives on Painted Point Road in Phippsburg with her husband, Dan. Susan was Director of Pupil Personnel Services in an outstanding school district in the New York area for many years before retiring and moving to Maine. Her email is susanlevey@suscom-maine.net. ▲

CHANNEL BUOYS



Births

Breanna Mae Eaves, born Dec. 26, 2007, to **Shenel (Kavanaugh) & Joel Michael Eaves** of West Bath. **Ella Elizabeth Adkins**, born Jan. 8, to William Howard & Mickey Danelle Adkins, Bath. Grandparents include **Howard Swain** of West Bath.

Nataleigh Jean Cantrell, born Jan. 23, to **Christian Andrew Cantrell & Samantha Renee Coffin**, West Bath. Grandparents include **Scott Cantrell** of West Bath.

Isabelle Riley Small, born Jan. 24, to **Jonathan Edwin & Melissa Lynn Small**, of West Bath.

Cheyenne Mackenzie Withers, born Feb. 15 to Brandon & Ashley Greene, of Wiscasset. Grandparents include **Jack & Lorna Withers**, West Bath.

Dylan M. Gordon, born Feb 23, to Jason and Amber Burnette Gordon, Kittery. Grandparents include **Ken & Laurie Burnette**, West Bath.

Dylan Shawn Dittrich, born March 31, to Shawn Dittrich & Jillian Callan, of Georgetown. Grandparents include **Jean & Craig Dittrich** of West Bath.

Abigail Patrica Mayo, born April 7, to Carol Cook Coffin & Chadd S. Mayo of Brunswick. Grandparents include **Scott Mayo**, West Bath.

Irelyn Elise Lathan, born April 10, to **Arlene Mercidese (Whorff) & Timothy Paul Lathan**, of West Bath.

Kody Wayne Devero Havey, born April 15, to Wayne & Honey Lou Devero Havey of Freeport. Grandparents include **Wayne Havey**, West Bath.

Kobe Fae Sherwood, born April 21 to **Daniel & Kourtney Jordan Sherwood** of West Bath.

Edward Jeffrey Delano, born May 19, to **Jeffrey & Abigail True Delano**, West Bath. Grandparents include **Clint & Diane Delano**, West Bath.

Twins: Reese Braylin & Kendall Jean Pellegrini, born May 23, to Ryan Pellegrini & Lindsey Darling of Phippsburg. Grandparents include **Sue Murray, Susan & Lee Allison**, of West Bath.

Garrett Nicholas Beau Craney, born June 9, to **Maureen & Nathan Carney** of West Bath.

West Bath

Student Notes

Kathleen Kienstra and **Olivia Deterling** were among the top 10 Morse High School graduates in the Class of 2008.

Stonehill College is the post-secondary destination for **Kathleen**, where she plans to study to become a pediatrician. She volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters and Mid Coast Hospital while in high school, took home the Smith College Book Award and was named a Kvac senior scholar. She is the daughter of **Timothy & Sandra Kienstra** of West Bath.

Olivia will spend her first semester abroad, traveling to Australia before beginning classes at Northeastern University, and plans to study electrical engineering. She is the seventh-ranked graduating senior and accumulated honors for her engineering focus, as well as math, art and foreign language. She played field hockey, basketball and lacrosse and took part in student government. She worked for The Design Connection and the dental offices of Dr. Vachon during high school. Her parents are **John & Susan Deterling** of West Bath.

Several local graduates from both the University of Maine System and Southern Maine Community College, who attended a number of their classes at the Midcoast Center



Photo by Avery Meyers

Pictured, after our WBHS Annual Meeting & Pot Luck on June 3, is Tammy Knight (center), our grant coordinator from the Maine State Economic Development Commission. She is flanked by (l-r) Frank Roberts, lead architect on our Restoration Committee, Janet & Fred Chapin, Cindy Fahay, Avery Meyers and Pete Guild. Cindy, Janet & Fred are all new Board members voted in at the meeting. Cindy was also named vice president.

Tammy gave an excellent briefing on our Federal CDBG grant to the audience. The food was good, too!

for Higher Education in Bath, were honored at a celebration held at the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath on May 2. Among those were **Janise Lucas**, of Southern Maine Community College and **Brandi Smith**, U-Maine at Augusta.

Hugh Goodfellow earned high honors at the New England School of Communications in Bangor for the spring 2008 semester.

Weddings

The wedding of Alison J. Hewitt and Gregory A Hinkle took place on April 19, 2008 in Kennebunk. The bride is the daughter of **John and Sheila Hewitt** of West Bath. The couple lives in Kailua, Hawaii where she is a lieutenant in the Navy serving as a flight officer. The groom is also lieutenant in the Navy currently serving as a flight officer in Iraq.

TOWN CRIER



From our new Town Clerk, Rob Morris: "I began my job on June 16, and it's an absolute pleasure to be here. I replaced Sue Look who has taken a job with the state's Division of Elections at the Secretary of State's Office. I look forward to serving as your Clerk, Registrar of Voters and other assorted responsibility hats.

Here's a bit about my background. I graduated from Morse High in '74 and had a 20-year career in the Coast Guard, until '95. I worked as a dispatcher supervisor at the Bath Police Department for 5 years, and was then hired to plan and open the Sagadahoc County Communications (9-1-1) Center in Bath where I served as Director until '05. I've been working at Morning Glory Natural Foods in Brunswick for the last three years. I am happy to return to public service now at the West Bath Town Office!

Coming up, of course, the **November 4, 2008 Presidential Election.** Are you registered to



Community Service Day. Wielding some of their cleaning weapons are the three students, flanked by WBHS Board members Cindy Fahay, Vice President (far left), and Janet Chapin (2nd from right). Not pictured was another Board member, Kathy Totten, who brought the food a bit later! This is the third year kids have volunteered their efforts on our behalf and we applaud this important community outreach.

Photo by Kathy Totten

Meeting House Clean-Up!

On May 15, three strapping Morse High freshman boys, accompanied by one of their teachers, showed up to help rake the grounds of the Old West Bath Meeting House. They also did a thorough clean-up of the floors and window sills inside. The free (and energetic) labor was part of the annual Morse High School's

vote? If you have moved to or within West Bath recently, do we have your correct address? To register or for any other questions, please call me at Town Hall (443-4342).

For those who want to vote by **Absentee Ballot**, applications are now available. You may request in writing, via mail or fax (443-3256) or by phone to Town Hall. You can also request a ballot in person at the

Town Office and an application will not be needed for which the application will be used. The ballots themselves will not be available until late September.

Please note: any **unpaid** 2007 property taxes will go to liens on August 15th. 2006 Tax liens, if left unpaid, will go to foreclosure on Jan. 26, 2009. ▲



COOK'S KORNER

The kids at the Littlefield School had no electricity and no water. Warmth in winter came from the big pot bellied stove just inside the front door. Stoking that stove was the responsibility of one or another of the boys (who had to come in a half hour early to get the fire going). Wilbert Small remembers when he was the appointed fire guy. He also remembers, with delight, that the students' mothers would take turns once a week or so in the coldest months to contribute a hot lunch. While we don't have an exact recipe to work from, one of those lunches would surely have been Wilbert's mother's American

Chop Suey. We have borrowed one from West Bath native Emily McMann's cookbook, *From Emily's Kitchen*, ©1999, which captures the general flavor of this favorite local casserole.

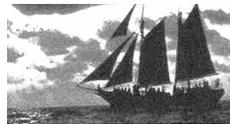
American Chop Suey

- 1 lb. elbow macaroni, cooked so it's still chewy
- 2 lbs. hamburger
- 1 onion, one green pepper and 3 stalks of celery, finely chopped
- 1 3 oz. can chopped mushrooms
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 big can spaghetti sauce or 3 cups of homemade
- Salt and black pepper to taste

When macaroni is cooked, drain in a colander and run cold water over it to stop the cooking process. In large fry pan, sauté vegetables with salt & pepper until almost tender. Add hamburger and cook thoroughly. Do not let the vegetables burn. Drain off fat. Add can of soup and the garlic powder. Next add the spaghetti sauce and heat all ingredients. Stir in macaroni. Pour the chop suey into a well greased 2 quart casserole. Bake in 300° oven for 45 minutes. This is wonderful made a day or two in advance and popped into the oven when you are ready to eat.

[Editor's note: The mothers would have wrapped it in towels to bring it to the school – and probably heated it slightly again on the little gas stove that sat in the schoolhouse for at least the last couple years of its tenure as a school.] ▲

CROSSING THE BAR



Barbara L. (Gilliam) Dutton, 56, of West Bath, died Dec. 28, 2007, after a struggle with cancer. She was born March 24, 1951. She was a member of the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 21 in Bath. Her interests were gardening, baking, sewing, boating, fishing and dancing. She enjoyed doing stained glass work, good times and most of all, being a grandmother. Surviving are her husband, **Mike Dutton**, two daughters, three grandsons and a stepdaughter.

Victoria Leighton, 52, of Brunswick, died January 6 at a hospice in Auburn. Survivors include her mother, **Debbie Leighton** of West Bath.

Jean A. Lourin, 90, of Freeport, formerly of Euclid, Ohio, died Tuesday, Jan. 8, at the Hawthorne House in Freeport. Among her survivors is a granddaughter, **Donna Leclerc** of West Bath.

Hugh R. Goodfellow, 49, died Friday, Jan. 18 at the home of his brother in Bath after a long struggle with ALS. Among his survivors are two sons, and their mother, **Hugh, Benjamin**, and **Marcia Goodfellow** of West Bath.

Frank E. Darling, 70, of Brunswick, died Tuesday, Jan 29 at a Brunswick hospital. Survivors include his half-brother, **Clarence Alfred Brawn**, of West Bath.

Neil T. Ross, 60, passed away peacefully at his home in Kennebunkport in January. Among his survivors is his sister, **Karen Card**, of West Bath.

David J. Biette, 48, of Topsham, died Monday, Feb. 4, at his residence. Among his survivors is a sister, **Elaine Flanagan** and her husband, **Barlett**, of West Bath.

Florence M. Forbes, 96, died Saturday, Feb 9 in Presque Isle. Among her survivors are many grandchildren including **Jennifer Forbes** of West Bath.

Dorothy E. Russell, 64 of Westport Island, died Thursday, Feb 14 at her residence. Survivors include a son, **Samuel C. Russell III** and his wife, **Cathy**, of West Bath.

Betty A. Koehling, 70, of Wiscasset, died Monday, Feb 25 at her home. Among her survivors are her brother, **Edward McLeod**, and his wife, **Susan**, of West Bath.

Ruth G. Robinson, 88, of Bath, died Thursday, March 20 at the Freeport Nursing Home. Among her survivors are three daughters, including **Joan I. McCole** and her husband, **Joseph F., III**, of West Bath.

Verona E.P. Lewis, 80, of Dresden, died at her home on Thursday, March 27. Among her surviving relatives is her daughter, **Deborah Lewis McAllister**, and her husband, **Jeffrey**, of West Bath.

Richard A. Galleher, 89, of West Bath, died Monday March 31, at the home of his daughter, **Dr. Gay Gallaher**, with whom he lived. He was born in Findlay, Ohio in 1918, and graduated from Ohio Wesleyan. He earned an MA in physical ed from the University of Wisconsin and served as a physical training instructor in WWII. He was a high school history teacher and coached athletics in Ohio public schools. In addition to his daughter, he is survived by a son, Gary, a daughter-in-law, Laura; and two grandchildren.

L. Marie Snowdon, 66, of Berry's Mill Road, West Bath, died Wednesday, April 9 at her residence. She was born in Bath March 2, 1942, a daughter of Joseph and Maud Evelyn (Morse) Henrikson. She graduated from Morse High and on July 11, 1959 married Frederick L. Snowdon. She was a dedicated wife, mother and homemaker and enjoyed her flower gardens and entertaining friends and family at her home. She was active in the Wiscasset Church of the Nazarene and often volunteered in local community events. She was predeceased by her husband, a brother and one sister. Her survivors include her daughters, **Traci Nygaard** and her husband **Ronald**, and **Marcia Goodfellow**, of West Bath, as well as a son, a brother, two sisters and 11 grandchildren.

Gloria T. Mason, 80, of West Bath, formerly of Augusta, died unexpectedly Saturday, April 12, at a Brunswick hospital. She was born in Lewiston in 1927, the daughter of Victor and Laura Testa. She was employed by the Maine Dept. of Labor for over 39 years. She was a constant influence in the lives of those she touched, and helped raise three of her nephews; she was especially close to her 3-year old granddaughter, Katherine, and often cared for her. Survivors include her husband, **Conrad Mason**.

THE MIDDLE GROUND

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West Bath Historical Society

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We publish researched historical materials, local news and events that may be of later historical interest.

We do not print gossip, ads or political opinion.

To provide news items, historical photos or documents, or FMI, contact Avery (443.4449) or Kerry (443.3300).

Celestine T. “Tiny” Marquis, 94, of Bath, died Monday, May 5 at Winship Green. Among her many survivors are her daughter, **L. Marcia Nelson**; and seven grandchildren, including **Mark Nelson** and his wife **Paula**, and **Suzanne Robshow**, and her husband, **Norman**, all of West Bath.

Elizabeth J. Eastman, 79, of Sanford Crossing Road in West Bath, died Saturday, May 10, in Woodbridge, Va. She was born in Rutland, Vt. in 1928, a daughter of Dr. Edward and Dorothy Jenney. She attended Bradford Jr. College in Mass., the Whitney School of Art in Conn., and graduated from the Modern School of Design in Boston. She was employed in New York City for several years at an advertising agency. In 1955, she married Richard Eastman; in '57, they moved to West Bath. She was active in the UCC Church in Bath, where she participated in the bell choir. She was also a member of the Midcoast Jazz Society, secretary of the West Bath Republican Party, and volunteered at the Patten Free Library and other local institutions and organizations. She was predeceased by her husband, and is survived by her brother, three daughters and seven grandchildren.

Scott A. Johnson, 37, of Brunswick died Tuesday, May 13 at his home. Survivors include his parents-in-law **Phillip** and **Terry Freeman**; and a brother-in-law, **Wayne Hamilton Jr.** and his wife **Julie**; a grandmother-in-law, **Virginia Ambrose**, all of West Bath.

Donna Lee Mitchell, 55, died Thursday May 29 at home in Bath. She was born in Brunswick in 1953, the daughter of Madeline and Ernest Morse. She graduated from Brunswick High School and attended Husson College. In 1973, she married the love of her life, Gerald E. Mitchell, Sr, and for 35 years handled operations and bookkeeping for Mitchell Construction, the family business, while



Donna Mitchell

raising two children. She enjoyed summers at the family cottage in Sabino and attended the weekly potlucks at Sabino Hall where she was known as an excellent cook. Surviving are her husband; her two children, including her son, **Gerald E. Mitchell Jr.** and his wife **Jennifer** and their son, **David Parker Mitchell**; her daughter **Angel** and her husband **Mike Jamison**, their daughter **Aurora**, and her brother **Pat Grove** and his wife **Sybil Staples**, of West Bath.

Betty Hawkins Copeland, 64, died June 3, 2008 in St. Paul, Minn. Survivors include her brother **David Hawkins** and his wife **Nancy**, of West Bath.

Alan B. Dube, 63, of Bowdoin, died Friday, June 6 at a Brunswick hospital. Survivors include a brother, **Donald Dube** and his wife **Donna**, of West Bath.

Arthur Moore, Sr. died June 27, 2008 at Winship Green Nursing Center. He was born in 1919 in Georgetown. Among his survivors is a son **Jeffery Moore** of West Bath.

Osborne R. Soverel, age 92, of Brunswick died June 27, 2008 at his home. After graduating from Colgate College, he worked in sales at IBM before and after serving his country. He was a cryptographer during WWII. Survivors include his wife, Mary, of Brunswick; a son, James and his wife, Susan, of Acton; a daughter, **Frances Soverel** and her husband, **Henry “Scott” McClintock**, of West Bath; and six grandchildren.

raising two children. She enjoyed summers at the family cottage in Sabino and attended the weekly potlucks at Sabino Hall where she was known as an excellent

Donald R. Sylvester passed away on Thursday, March 13, 2008 at the age of 79. “Donnie” was born in Bath in 1929 and



Donald Sylvester

graduated from Morse High School in 1948. He started visiting the Sabino area of West Bath as a boy and built a year-round residence there in 1991.

For more than 40 years he worked as a butcher for First National and Hannaford stores. He was a member of the Elks Club, Polar Star Lodge and Sabino Improvement Association. He enjoyed music and dancing as well as boating and gardening. He loved practical jokes and getting funny toys from his grandchildren. He was an avid dog lover and would be comforted to know that the ashes of his last dog, Susie, are buried with him.

Donnie’s first experiences in Sabino began at age 15, when he would ride his bike down from town to visit friends at their cottages. His family soon rented a place on the shore for many summers and eventually bought land where his mother, Thelma, liked to picnic. That later became the area where he chose to build his final home. He will be missed by his mother, **Thelma**; his wife, **Jacqueline**; daughters **Jocelyn** and **Nicolet** and their families, as well as his many friends.

[Editor’s note: This June, the Sabino Improvement Association donated \$35 in Donald Sylvester’s honor to the West Bath Historical Society, for which we thank them.]

PAST TENSE

Bath Independent, June 20, 1935
(As written)

Graduation Exercises at Littlefield School

*Program Carried Out at West Bath
Methodist Church Wednesday
Evening*

The graduation and closing exercises of the Littlefield School were conducted in the West Bath Methodist Episcopal Church Wednesday evening of last week and were largely attended by parents and friends.

The graduates from the eighth grade were Eula Coombs, Henrietta French, Margaret Sprague, Franklin Sprague. Eva Kingsbury acted as school marshal. The program was well carried out and reflected great

credit on the teacher, Miss Clarice Whittier, and the children.

There was an exhibition of papers in the various subjects taught in the school. The girls of the graduating class were presented with beautiful bouquets from the Perkins' Greenhouses. Ice cream was on sale after the exercises. The program:

Entrance march.

Lord's Prayer.

A Welcome ... Carol Coombs

Song: America ... All

Flag Salute ... School

How Our Flag Was Made ...

Franklin Sprague

Our Flag - Wilbert Small, Robert Coombs, Rose Sprague, George Sprague, Evelyn Hunt

Little Patriots – Edward Thompson, Nancy Coombs

America the Beautiful ... School

School Prophecy – Written by Eula Coombs and Margaret Sprague

The Little Red Hen – A play based on a story read by the second grade pupils – Red Hen, Frances Sprague; Cat, Evelyn Perkins; Duck, Perry Thompson; Pig, Graydon Smith

Song – “This Little Pig Went to Market” with guitar accompaniment – Graydon Smith

Acrostic ... Lower grades

“Little Dutch Mill” – Henrietta French and Eva Kingsbury

When School Closes ... Rose Sprague

“Good Ship Lollypop” ... Evelyn Perkins

Valedictory: “Our Training” ... Henrietta French

Presentation of Diplomas ... Mrs. Alice Small

Class Ode ... Henrietta French

Closing Address ... Eva Kingsbury

Remarks ... Supt. Clinton D. Wilson

THE MIDDLE GROUND

West Bath Historical Society

PO Box 394

Bath, Maine 04530



Donna Waterman, a skilled calligrapher and active West Bath Historical Society member, donated her talents to lettering the eye-popping “Please Help Me I’m Falling” sign, designed to catch the attention of those who drive down Berry’s Mill Road and illustrate the plight of the Littlefield School.

Photo by Avery Meyers