

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Daily Life & History of West Bath, Maine

SPRING 2015 • PUBLISHED BY THE WEST BATH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

West Bath Historical Society Time-Line – Our History at a Glance

Before the official beginning of the West Bath Historical Society, in the year 2000 There was another beginning, in 1998. See story below.

We still have the minutes of the first 10 meetings of the fledgling organization, which can be found at the Patten Free Library in the West Bath archive section in the History Room. (Note: much of our history has been documented by Kerry Nelson, our crack archivist, and much of that information, complete with photos and other historical documents, now resides in the History Room – supported in part by WBHS – and more will be populating the files as Kerry prepares them for public consumption.)

The true beginning ... 2000

- First year as an official nonprofit organization. And a big one! We incorporated as a “domestic nonprofit” with the state of Maine, March 8, filed for tax-exempt status as a nonprofit, developed a slate of officers and Board of Trustees, and launched the society’s newsletter *The Middle Ground*, in April.
- Meeting House cemetery on Berry’s Mill is repaired, with work financed by anonymous donor from away whose wife’s ancestors lie in the cemetery which dates back to the late 1700’s.
- “Friends of the Littlefield School”,

led by Paolo Isnardi and Lydia Smith, undertake task of stabilizing the historic one-room schoolhouse, which is badly in need of repair. In ’99, they painted the structure, made minor fixes and, in 2000, propped it up in one corner with an I-beam, thanks to the WB Fire Dept.

- These “friends” applied for acceptance of the school on the National Register of Historic Places. Granted on July 5.
- Meetings of WBHS held monthly at Town hall.
- Harvest Dinner held Nov 11, in conjunction with the West Bath Grange, with food based on the



The school in disrepair, pre-1999.

Grange’s 1905 cookbook. It was a great success.

- Membership count: about 45.

2001

- By-laws being developed.
- Officers chosen: President, Robin Hansen; VP, Donna Waterman; Treasurer, Karen Worcester; Archivist, Kerry Nelson. Board of Trustees: Robin, Kerry, Nancy Hall, Edward “Bud” Thompson, and Donna.
- Oral History “how to do it” presentation by Mildred Jones, WBHS Oral History chair, March 8.

Continued on the next page

In the Beginning

West Bath is full of history, dating back to the earliest settlement of North America. But until a few dedicated residents decided to document that history, many memories, stories and old pictures were in old homes, attics and barns. There was a single seminal book by William C. Purington, called *A Look into West Bath’s Past*, but it was long out of print.

Enter Robin Hansen and a merry band of early history buffs, self-described as “a loose gathering of local history-interested persons”.

They began meeting in June of ’98. Anyone was welcome; membership was loose, to say the least. No plans, no dues, nor a president or secretary.

Barrie Freeman of Quaker Point took it upon himself to create “scratchy notes” of the first 10 meetings of the fledgling group. His whimsical minutes were published in a booklet in April, 1999. At that point, there was still nothing formal about the organization, and “no need for us to be anything other than what we are: locals interested in our history.”

At first, there wasn’t even a suggestion of a “society” formation. Rather, it began as a meeting called

by the “West Bath community head of the Bath Cultural Arts and Assessment Program, Robin Hanson.” The cultural bit apparently put folks off, but soon, Robin turned to the real agenda: “Would we like to have an historical society?”

As Barrie reports, “...that’s what most people figured we’d come for, so that motion was well received.” Robin then trotted out Ada Haggett, president of the Phippsburg Historical Society. She talked about buildings, property, museums, attorneys, constitutions, tax-free non-profit sta-

Continued on page 3

WBHS Time-Line

Continued

2002

- Town selectmen ask the WBHS to take over restoration and care of the Old West Bath Meeting House. In June, agreement is signed.
- Meanwhile, fate of LFS is still in question. Who will save it?

2003

- 3rd Annual Meeting held at New Meadows Inn in April. Speaker was Les Fossel, an old house restoration specialist.
- June meeting held at Meeting House, with Bob Graham, retired local architect working with Robin (gratis), showing initial restoration plans.

• Quilt Show, organized by Robin Hansen, held at Old West Bath Meeting House in Nov, with over 42 local quilt makers. A huge success that showed to the public the building's need for restoration!



- WBHS granted official incorporation as a federal tax exempt 501-3C nonprofit by the IRS in Nov, 2003. A similar official status was granted by the State of Maine that year.
- Honored in the fall with an award of excellence from Sagadahoc Preservation for initial work on trying to preserve Meeting House.

2004

- Jan. 22: first meeting of the capital campaign committee to launch fund raising for Meeting House.
- March 11: time line for restoring LFS was developed, which would have culminated in complete restoration by 2007. Due to our Historic federal listing, we could not move the building off its foundation, which meant we had to lift the building in place – difficult to say the least!
- April 15, Annual Meeting. Presentation was a reading of selection of poems by Henry Wadsworth

Longfellow (in the person of Donald Lipfert).

- Sept: Fund Raising campaign has so far raised over \$24,000!
- By December, Meeting House is partially restored, with graded lawn, new stone paver pathway to the front doors and is now handicapped accessible, to greet the 85-plus participants at the 2004 Christmas Service.

2005

- Jan. 13 meeting: Capital Campaign has ended, not reaching \$100,000 goal, but gaining a respectable \$65,000 in four months. It was decided to go for some grants.
- April 14 Annual Meeting included presentation by Charlie Gabel & others on West Bath aviation history.

• Also, new slate of officers elected: (with thanks to Robin who stepped down as President after serving for 5 years) Avery Meyers, President; Irene Gardner, Sec'y/Treasurer, Recording Sec'y, Robin Hansen (also continued responsibility for Middle Ground); Current trustees (term ending 2006) – Paula Adam, Bill Bellows, Irene Garner,

Donna Merry; New trustees (1st term ending 2007) – Joan Drake, Mary Emrich, Judy Stallworth.

2006

- Feb: A talk on West Bath's feisty

OLD WEST BATH MEETING HOUSE RESTORATION

The Meeting House has always been a treasure in West Bath. Built in 1839, for many years a church, it's still



referred as such by many old timers. Deconsecrated by the Methodist Church in 1961, the building was turned over to the town for \$1, and was, sadly, mostly unused. By the late '90s, it was sagging significantly, and even had a bullet hole in one of its interior doors. Stepping up to the plate, local residents, led by Margaret and Richard Totten, took it upon themselves to prop it up, which surely saved this historic building from total collapse.

Soon after that the fledgling West Bath Historical Society was asked to save the building and began a restoration effort. In 2004, they raised almost \$65,000 from the community, which made serious repairs and refurbishment possible. By 2006, the Old West Bath Meeting House was back in "business". To celebrate, the WBHS held an open house in August of 2006, which proved to be the hottest day of the year! There was a grand turnout. And since then, the "church" has been open to the public for events, shows, wedding, and, continuing a long tradition, the gathering place for old fashioned candlelight Christmas services. ▲

first minister, Rev. Francis Winter, was a standing-room event, as part of the Patten Free Library's History Series. It was based on research by our Archivist, Kerry Nelson.

• Also in Feb, artist Evelyn Dunphy donates her watercolor of Meeting House to WBHS; original to hang in the building, reproductions (prints & greeting cards) to be sold for fund raising.



2007

• Feb: History talk at PFL on the bustling entertainment "industry" in West Bath, "A Place to Stay and a Bite to Eat in Old West Bath" pre-



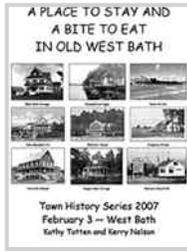
Continued on the next page

WBHS Time-Line

Continued

sented by Kathy Totten and created by Kerry Nelson.

- May: completed restoration of the Meeting House, stained glass windows fixed; electrified oil lamps installed, floor refinished, interior repaired and painted; small closets converted to restroom with composting toilet and a tiny room for serving coffee and refreshments.
- Aug: held a grand open house at the Old West Bath Meeting House for the community (on the hottest stickiest night of the year!) to celebrate restoration.
- Nov: hosted a smashing rug show (mostly hooked) at the Meeting House in the fall – record attendance, lots of local participation & lots of good press.
- Nov: had our first wedding at the newly restored Meeting House.
- Dec: the grand finale of our year – a Christmas service that was filled to the rafters, as many old timers and new folks, and a choral group – with Suzie Knowles on the organ – joined together in the soft glow of refurbished gas lights – sub-



tly electrified – to celebrate the season with song and scripture and an ecumenical message from West Bath’s Rev. Dick Emrich.

- We also had our first romantic proposal that winter, complete with flowers and a young man on his knee (who rented the Meeting House for the occasion!)
 - And special kudos to Robin Hansen, WBHS founding President and, until recently, Recording Secretary, and Middle Ground editor who has decided to resign this year & put her energies into new things. Thanks for all she has done to get us to this point.
 - Dec: began restoration of Littlefield School, in the midst of a giant ice storm and power outage!
- 2008**
- Feb: Town History talk at PFL – story of the Rose Family and their farm enterprise, given by Marty Rea, a Rose relative.
 - July 19: Successful fund raising “Church Yard Sale” held at the Old West Bath Meeting House at which we accomplished dual goals: making over \$4000 toward future maintenance, and also showcasing the stunning efforts of our renovation



project to many in the community.

- Nov. 19 : “Photographing the Birds of Maine” presentation by Mike Fahay at Meeting House.



whole exterior himself!, as well as business support from Home Depot, Downeast Lumber, Rogers Hardware and others. And special thanks to the late Bruce Burden, whose mother Evelyn Redlon, attended the school, who bequeathed a significant sum to our restoration efforts, which enable us to receive a federal grant as well.

2010

- Spring: Final details on LFS restoration coming together. New sign is put in place. “Littlefield School. 1853. Restored 2010.”



2011

- July 2: Open House for LFS (seen by the public for the first time since restoration) and Old West Bath Meeting House.

2012

- Spring: Received three major preservation awards for restoration of LFS: Maine Preservation, Maine Economic Development, and Sagadahoc Preservation.

2013

- July 11: Annual Meeting. Presentation by Evelyn Dunphy. A huge hit.
- For the grand finale of 2013,

In the Beginning

Continued from page 1

tus, insurance, storage of artifacts, fund raising and stuff like membership mailing lists, dues etc. The audience seemed a bit stunned as ...”this historical society ‘mess’ unfolded before us.” Then, to spin heads even more, Ada mentioned that refrigerator magnets with old photos were “best sellers” for fund raising. Folks, again according to Barrie, weren’t turned off to the idea of an historical society; rather “... it just needed to be clarified that we weren’t too sure about this selling of refrigerator magnets...!” They decided to have more subdued gatherings to focus on local

history. And that’s more or less how the next 9 meetings went.

In addition to Robin, who eventually volunteered to be president, some early “members” included the late Dr. Scott McClintock, Kerry Nelson, who continues her role as archival guru; and, among others, Barrie himself, Marilyn Bruce, Judy Wold, Donna Waterman, Fran Soverel, Barbara and Bud Thompson, Wilbert Small, Marion Perkins, and Dick and Margaret Totten.

Since those early days, The West Bath Historical Society has grown and prospered, and has even held a few fund raisers. But never once have we sold a refrigerator magnet!

– Avery Hunt Meyers

Continued on page 8

CHANNEL BUOYS



BIRTHS

Lillian Luella Hinds, born Oct 24, 2014 to **Keith Hinds & Diana Doyle**, West Bath.

Jase Owen Lyford, born Nov 15 to **Michael Lyford Sr. & Jami Oliver**, West Bath. Grandparents include **Paula & Mark Nelson** of West Bath.

Katelyn Mae Bennett, born Jan 26, 2015 to **Brian & Jamie (Gotlibson) Bennett** of Bath. Grandparents include **Carrie Hayes & Tom Bennett**, West Bath.

Stephen Gunnar Hatherley, born Feb 3 to **Alex & Melissa (Ambridge) Hatherley**, West Bath.

Briar Aurora Rose Watson, born March 1 to **Parker Watson & Autumn Sonia**, West Bath. Grandparents include **Nora & Herb Freeman** of West Bath.

Inara Quinn Lathan, born March 6 to **Timothy & Arlene (Whorff) Lathan**, West Bath. Grandparents include **William & Sandra Whorff**, West Bath.

Odin Dominick Pono, born Mar 16 to **Anthony & Tiffany (Russell) Pono**, West Bath. Grandparents include **Catherine & Samuel Russell, III**, of West Bath.

WEDDINGS

Carrie Leigh Hart wed **James Scott Nisbet** on Easter Sunday during a private ceremony on a sacred rock behind their West Bath home overlooking Winnegance Lake.



Carrie Leigh Hart wed James Scott Nisbet

Marianne Vold, a very dear friend and neighbor preformed the ceremony. The bride is daughter of **Bonnie Lee Hart** of West Bath and **Jack Hart** of Kokadjo. She is the owner and operator of **Tails to Trails Pet Sitting**. The groom is son of **Jennifer Nisbet** of Waldoboro and the late **Russell Nisbet**. He is welder at **BIW**. ▲

TOWN CRIER



Annual Town Meeting, June 17 at 6 pm at the West Bath school. Note that this year's warrant list is currently available on the website. When you click on the event on the calendar, the warrant is attached. The Town Report will be available a week before the meeting, so they should be in Town Hall around June 11. ▲



COOK'S KORNER

Spring has sprung; in fact summer is almost here. Time to think about rhubarb – Mother Nature's super tonic. To winter-weary

Mainers, this vigorous plant, with leaves like curly elephant ears and ruby red stalks, is especially appreciated because it's one of the first edibles to appear in the spring garden. Not only are these stalks tasty and versatile when cooked into pies and sauces, but they are also good for you. They contain lots of Vitamin C, calcium, and some fiber. For over 4500 years, rhubarb has been a medicinal and gustatory boon to man. (Even today, there is scientific research indicating that rhubarb helps lower cholesterol, has anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-

allergy properties, and may improve liver inflammation in hepatitis sufferers.) How's that for a cure-all? Here is a rhubarb crisp that will knock your socks off and keep you healthy (well, it does have sugar!) at the same time. Don't forget to cut off the leaves; they are wicked poisonous. Even deer don't like them!

Double Ginger Rhubarb Crisp (with some thanks and a bit of amendment, to *Williams-Sonoma's New Flavors for Dessert*)

- 2 lbs. rhubarb stalks, cut in 1/4 inch slices
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 small orange, zested and then juiced (lose the pits)
- 3-inch knob of fresh ginger, peeled & grated

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour (or 1 cup white to 1/2 cup whole wheat)
 - 3/4 cup brown sugar
 - 1/2 cup quick-cook oats
 - 1/2 tsp cinnamon
 - 1/4 tsp salt
 - 6 tablespoons melted butter (plus a bit more cold butter for dabbing on top of crisp mixture)
- Preheat oven to 375. In a 13 x 9 glass baking dish, mix rhubarb, white sugar, grated zest of orange, and then juice of the orange over the baking dish. In medium bowl, mix dry ingredients; stir in melted butter and sprinkle over rhubarb. Bake for 15 minutes. Then loosely cover the dish with foil and continue to bake until topping is brown and juices are bubbling around the edges, 15-20 more. Let crisp cool; serve with good quality vanilla ice cream. ▲

CROSSING THE BAR



Muriel Lucille Gosselin, 85, of the Plant Home, died June 6, 2014 at Maine Med. Among her survivors; her daughter, **Elaine Secskas**, & her companion, **Chris Van Doren** of West Bath.

Stephanie Ann Bower, 73, of Brunswick, passed away Nov 4. Among her survivors; a daughter, **Kim Glidden** & her husband **Gary** of West Bath, and their children, **Colbey** and **Hayley**.

Barbara T. Brown, 90, of Bath, died peacefully on Nov 18. Among her survivors; a daughter, **Cheryl Pooler** & her husband **Bruce** of West Bath, as well as 9 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Steven H. Warner, 65, of Bath, died Nov 24 at home, surrounded by his family. Among his survivors; two sisters, **Nila Drake** & husband, **Carey**, **Sharon Wagner** & husband **Richard**, from Orono, formerly of West Bath.

Robert J. (Stoney) Stone, of Bath, died suddenly on Dec. 3, 2014. A 1962 graduate of Morse, he received a B.S. from U Maine, Orono, and an M.S. from U Mass at Amherst. He taught 7th grade science for 26 years in Wiscasset and had a life-long love of learning. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, **Frankie**; a brother, daughter and grandson, as well as many other relatives. He and his family enjoyed many summers at their “camp” at Quaker Point.

John A. Grill Sr., 85, of the Plant Home in Bath, died Dec 5. He was a founding partner of Bath Industrial Sales on New Meadows Road. Among his survivors; his daughter **Susan** & her husband, **John Deterling** of West Bath.

Marion M. Gilmore, 87, of Bath, died Dec 13, surrounded by her loving husband Richard and their

family. The Gilmores owned and operated Gilmore’s Seafood for many years, working side by side each day. Among her survivors is a daughter, **Eleanor (Ellie) Rommel** & her husband **Chuck** of West Bath.

Barbara Elizabeth Tasker Avery, 88, of West Bath, died Dec 30th. Born in Bradford, Maine in 1926, she was the daughter of Earl H. and Doris Tasker. She attended Bradford schools until 1941, when her parents moved to Bath. She graduated from Morse High in 1944 and first worked as a teller at Bath Trust Co. After the death of her first husband, she worked at M.W. Sewall for 12 years, and then at BIW as an admin secretary. She spent summers with her family at the Cottage at Meadowbrook in Phippsburg. She was predeceased by her husband, **John Belanger**, in 1967, and a brother, Arthur Tasker. She is survived by her 8 children, including **Barbara Jo Belanger**, and **John F. Belanger** & his wife **Karyn**, all of West Bath; 14 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild and several nieces and nephews.

Roger W. Doran, 77, of Brunswick, died Jan 6 at Parkview. He was born in Montclair, N.J. in 1937, a son of William and Virginia Doran. After high school, he served in the Air Force for two years before graduating from Nason College in Springvale, ME in 1962. He taught high school English in Auburn, and was also a disc jockey at WCME Radio. He previously worked at an educational systems company, and introduced audio/visual literary programs to schools in Maine. He later became a/v director at Bowdoin. He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Laurie; two sons, **Peter** & his wife Benita; **John** & his wife Tammy; the mother of his sons, **Ellen** (Low-Doran) **Sanborn** of West Bath; a grandson and his brother Paul. Roger

lived at Birch Point summers in the 60’s, and year-round from ’72-’86 with his first wife and sons.

Lorraine L. Johnson, 90, of West Bath, passed away Jan 9, 2015. She was born in Brunswick to Michel and Lea (Guertin) Racine in 1925, graduated from Brunswick High in 1943 and married Archie Johnson in 1946. She was predeceased by her husband in 2012 and son Marty in 2004. A member of the Bath Area Senior Center, she is survived by her sons, Michael and wife Shirley of Nobleboro, and Scott and wife Shelly of Topsham; 5 grandchildren, including **Craig Johnson** & his wife **Jodi** of West Bath; 5 great-grandchildren, including **Spencer** and **Aliza** of West Bath; daughter-in-law **Maria Morris** and husband **Rob** of West Bath, three sisters and several nieces and nephews.

Edward B. Parker, 88, died Jan 12 at his home in Brooklyn, NY. He spent his young years in Bath and graduated from Morse High. Among his survivors, several of whom live in the midcoast area, is his niece **Julie Greenlaw** of West Bath.

Carla Wallace, 70, of Phippsburg died Jan 31 at Maine Med. Among her survivors; a daughter **Marie Reid** and husband **Michael**, and her niece **Darlene Estabrook** and husband **Perry**, all of West Bath.

Edmund E. Benedikt, 84, of Bath died Feb 8 at Mid Coast Hospital. A naval architect, he spent most of his professional life working on design and maintenance of U.S. Naval ships. Born in Vienna, Austria, as a child he was part of the Kinder-transport rescue mission that saved 10,000 children from the Holocaust. After living in several foster homes in England, he came to America in 1943, and moved to Maine in 1989. He was very active in many governmental groups as well as the local, state and national Democratic Party. He was also a passionate environ-

Continued on the next page

Crossing the Bar

Continued

mental advocate, and was active in many Maine organizations, including the New Meadows Lake Association, with a particular historical interest in the Peterson Canal in West Bath. He is survived by his wife Ruth, 3 children and their spouses, a sister, and a granddaughter.

Mary F. Boucher, 72, of Woodlands Point, West Bath, died Feb 11 at Mid Coast Hospital with her family by her side. Born in Bath to Francis and Lucille McLaughlin, she graduated from Morse High in 1961. In 1960 she married the love her life, **Edward Boucher**. Throughout her career she worked at various local establishments including Montsweag Restaurant and Bath Bus Service. She was an active member of the Bath Cosmopolitan Club for many years. In addition to her husband, she is survived by 3 daughters, including **Elaine** & her husband **David Plummer** of West Bath; a son; 10 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter. She is also survived by her brother and his two children. She also leaves behind numerous extended family and friends.

George W. “Wes” Plummer, 95, of Bath, died Feb 15. Among his survivors is his daughter, **Glenda Lamarre** & her husband **Pete**, of West Bath.

Gerald W. Sanford, 55, of Brunswick, died Feb 20, 2015 at Maine General Medical Center in Augusta. Among his survivors is his step-mother, **Betty Sanford** of West Bath.

David E. Watts, 74, died unexpectedly on March 5 at his home in Seffner, FL. He was born in Bath, graduated from Morse High in 1959 and worked locally until he went into the US Navy in 1964. Among his survivors is a granddaughter, **Lindsay M. Watts** of West Bath.

Houghton Carr, Jr., of Exeter, NH, died March 17 after a hard fought battle with Parkinson’s. Born in

Boston in 1930, he was raised in Hingham Ma, where he began his lifelong passion with sailing at the age of 9. He attended Governor Dummer Academy and graduated from U New Hampshire with a degree in mechanical engineering. He served in Korea as a US Army artillery infantryman, and then spent 30 years with the Carrier Corp in Syracuse, NY. He and his first wife, **Mary**, now deceased, retired to West Bath in 1989. He maintained an active retirement, as a sailor and volunteer member of the Maine Maritime Museum, as well as the Portland Museum of Art. He married his surviving wife, Jennifer Ertner of Orr’s Island, 17 years ago, and they lived in Yarmouth. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his 4 children, Jennifer’s daughter, and their respective spouses, as well as his 5 grandsons.

Jerrold (Jerry) Courtney Stover, 74, of West Bath, passed away peacefully on March 18 at his home. Jerry was born in West Bath in 1940 to **Courtney** and **Ida Stover**. A member of the class of ’58 at Morse High, he graduated from U Maine in 1962, with a mechanical engineering degree. In high school, he helped his Dad operate one of the few remaining dairy farms in West Bath. After graduation, he worked for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford, where he met and married **Elaine Harris** in 1963. He then joined GE, where he spent his whole career in various capacities, garnering many engineering design awards, and worked in Mass. on military aircraft engine design, including the F-5 Freedom Fighter and the F-18 Hornet. In 1966, Jerry built a log cabin on an island in West Bath, where he and his family spent most summer weekends while living in Massachusetts. Upon retirement in 2001, Jerry and Elaine built a new home on the New Meadows River, where they have lived since.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his son Jason & wife Jennifer of Boxford, MA; his daughter Susanne Stover & husband, Eric Freeman of Hewlett Harbor, NY, and two grandchildren.

Myrna M. Gilliam, 87, of West Point, passed away March 18 at Parkview Adventist Medical Center. Among her many survivors are her son **Joe Gilliam** & his wife **Shannon** of West Bath.

Herbert X. Jackson, 74, of Hill Road in West Bath, died March 13 at Hospice House in Auburn, following a long illness. He was born in 1940 in Old Town, the son of Maurice and Anna (Guay) Jackson and was employed for 38 years at BIW as an electrician. He is survived by his wife, **Debbie Jackson**.

Helen Geraldine Plummer, 92, of Windham, passed away March 15 at Gosnell Memorial Hospice House in Scarborough. Among her survivors are a grandson, **David Plummer** & his wife **Elaine**; and a great-grandson **Dustin Plummer** & wife **Mary Charlotte**, all of West Bath.

Eleanor R. Swanson, 82, of West Bath and formerly Brunswick, passed away March 18. She was born and raised in West Bridgewater, MA and graduated from Colby College. She married her childhood sweetheart, **Ronald Swanson**, and raised five children. She was very active in the Brunswick community and was the first woman on the Marine Resource Committee, when the group passed the first Coastal Protection Zone in Maine, which received national recognition for this ground breaking effort. She also worked on the Brunswick Town Council and was active in many local environmental and recycling efforts.

Kazimierz (Ski) John Szczepanski, 93 of The Highlands and formerly of Bath, passed away peacefully on March 21. Among his survivors is a son, **John E. Szczepanski** and his wife **Kara** of West Bath.

Craig F. Johnson, 45, of Bath passed away on March 22 at his residence. He is survived, among others, by his parents, **Frank** and **Rachel Johnson** of West Bath.

Continued on the next page

Crossing the Bar

Continued

Venise Lewis, 92, of Brunswick, died peacefully on March 25 at her home surrounded by family. Among her survivors are two daughters in West Bath: **Mary Jane Lemont** and **Nancy Bennoch**, as well as 11 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

M. Wesley McPhee, 80, of West Bath died March 28 at Maine Med. He was born in Bath in 1928, one of twin sons of Matthew and Catherine Cramond McPhee. He graduated from Morse High in 1947. In '46, he earned his pilot's license and was a member of the Maine Civil Air Patrol and served in the Maine Army National Guard. In 1959, he married **Joyce Wentworth**. He worked at BIW and then with the Supervisor of Shipbuilding for the U.S. Navy in Bath, retiring in 1985.

Thomas Buckley, of Sabino Road, died at his home on April 16, after a brief illness, following a courageous battle with cancer, surrounded by his family and close Zen friends. His name in his Zen religion was Joka Zenshin.

Tim, as he was called by family and friends, was a man of many parts, including anthropologist, essayist, expert sailor, Zen priest and often a poet. In 1965, he moved to California to study with a Japanese Zen master, and was active in founding the San Francisco Zen Center and its monastic center. In 1971, he began studying with his second teacher, Harry Kellett Roberts, who was raised in the medicine traditions of the Yurok Indians of northwestern California. He continued this practice until Mr. Robert's death in 1981, and was his spiritual heir.

Raised in upstate New York, Tim was educated at St. George's School, Harvard College and the U of Chicago, where he received his Ph.D. in anthropology. He was broadly published and well known for his work in Yurok Indian

Wesley had been a special officer for 11 years with the Bath Police and in 1985, became Deputy Sheriff with the Sagadahoc County Sheriff Dept., and later served as Court Security and Corrections Officer. He also worked for Volunteers of America during their alternative sentencing programs. He was an active Scout Leader, a member of the Bath United Methodist Church and the Maine Sheriff Ass'n; the West Bath Community Policing Program; a past member of the Bath City Council; a member of the NRA, and a champion member of the Bath Rifle and Pistol Club. In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, two grandsons, a niece and two nephews.

Richard A. (Dick) Homan, 79, of Bath, died April 18 at his home, surrounded by his family. After graduating from Morse High in 1953, he entered an apprentice program at

ethnography and ethnohistory. He taught anthropology and American studies at U Mass Boston from 1980 until his retirement in 2001, when he and his wife, **Jorunn**, who has been a professor at Bowdoin until her retirement last year, moved to West Bath. In his new home town, Tim also managed to find time to get involved in community affairs, including a stint on the Town's Recycling committee, and, he was also a board member of the West Bath Historical Society, where he gave a riveting talk on the history of our local shaman, Sabino, at the Old West Bath Meeting House in 2008.

A Buddhist from the age of 18, Tim was ordained as a Soto Zen priest in 2011; founded Great River Zendo in West Bath.

He is survived by his wife of 36 years, **Joruun Jacobsen Buckley**; his son Jesse, two grandchildren, other family members, his adoptive brother Tracy McCallum and by many close friends and students. ▲

BIW, but was soon drafted for military service and, instead, joined the U.S. Coast Guard. Upon discharge, he returned to BIW and retired after a 41 year career. In 1960, he married **Loretta Barter** of West Bath. He is survived by his wife, and among his other survivors is his daughter, **Gwen Palicte** & her husband **Mike**, and their two children, **Kaley** and **Samuel**, all of West Bath.

Stewart H. Day, Jr., 91, of Bath, died peacefully on April 20, surrounded by his family. A decorated war hero, who joined the US Army Air Force and became a tail gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress, he flew 19 missions over German-occupied territory and was credited for shooting down four enemy planes. On his last mission, his plane was shot down and crash landed off the coast of France. He was wounded, captured by the Germans and spent 19 months as a POW at Stalag 17 in Austria. After the war, he returned to BIW, and married **Teresa Gallant** in 1950. After raising two sons, Gary and Joseph, the Days made their home at Quaker Point in West Bath, and eventually moved back to Bath. Day was predeceased by his younger brother **Philip Day**, of West Bath. He is survived by his wife of 64 years; his son **Gary** & wife **Susan**, of West Bath; his son, Joseph and wife Brenda and their children, Alyssa and Matthew, of Brunswick. He also leaves behind two sisters and many other relatives and friends.

Steven W. Boucher, 60, of Waterville died on April 22, 2015. Survivors include his son **John Boucher** & wife **Gail** of West Bath; son Steven P. and his fiancée Stephanie of Bath; and granddaughters **Leanna**, **Chelsey** and Courtney of West Bath. ▲

Sad News ... at press time, we learned that our beloved selectman and a Phippsburg volunteer fireman, **David Bourget**, died suddenly on the way to a fire in late May. There will be a full remembrance of Dave in the next issue of **The Middle Ground**. ▲

WBHS Time-Line

Continued from page 3

sponsored candlelight Christmas Service, donating half the evening's offering to the Bath Area Food Bank; the rest toward maintenance of the Meeting House and Littlefield School.

2014

- Feb 11: Participated again in the Town History Series at Patten Free Library, with a presentation on Birch Point by Dr. Charles Burden.

- Funded new shelving in the PFL History Room, to house West Bath archives for public access, thanks to the efforts of Kerry Nelson.

- June 5: annual meeting and pot luck supper at Meeting House: voted in two new Board Members: Amy Wesson and Leah Zartarian.

2015

Our 15th Year! History in the making ▲

Save the Date! July 4th WBHS Open House

We will hold an Open House during the Bath Heritage Days festivities, with the Littlefield School and the Old West Bath Meeting House open to the public from 10-2 pm on Saturday, July 4.

Docents will be at each building, including a live teacher reenactment at the schoolhouse. The event is free and refreshments will be served.

To volunteer for docent duty, or to contribute some baked goodies, please contact Leah Zartarian at 443.5907, email: zartar.glzartar@verizon.net. Do plan to come and bring along your friends and family. ▲

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Volume 16, No. 1 • Spring 2015

Published by the
West Bath Historical Society
PO Box 394, Bath, Maine 04530

Board of Trustees & Editors:

Amy Wesson, President
Pete Guild, Treasurer/Secretary
Bob Bittner, Raisa Bittner,
Beth Brewer, Ivon Boyer, Sally Graves,
Amy Wesson, Leah Zartarian
Kerry Nelson, Archivist; Fran Soverel,
Middle Ground contributor; Betty
Fitzjarrald, Littlefield School Advisor

Contributors: Barrie Freeman, Sally Graves, Brandi Lohr, Kerry Nelson, Fran Soverel. **Editor,** Avery Meyers,
Designer: Tim Nason

Distribution: Carol & Bill Hochgesang

We publish researched historical materials, local news and events that may be of later historical interest. We do not print gossip, paid advertising or political opinion.

To provide news items, historical photos or documents, or FMI, contact
Avery (443.4449)
or Kerry (443.5118)



The Littlefield School was in dire need of restoration. The lonely view of the old school window says it all. And the sign in front of the school in the summer of 2008 to help raise awareness of the school's state couldn't be clearer. Today all is restored, thanks to the efforts of the WBHS and many community members.

THE MIDDLE GROUND

West Bath Historical Society

PO Box 394

Bath, Maine 04530