

THE MIDDLE GROUND

Daily Life & History of West Bath, Maine

SPRING 2014 • PUBLISHED BY THE WEST BATH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A History of Birch Point Cottages

On February 15, for the Patten Free Library History Series, Dr. Charles (Charlie) Burden gave a picture-packed talk on the “development” of Birch Point, where he summured as a kid. He gratefully thanked Frank

Sparks, Kerry Nelson and John Butts for their research help. And, for the old photos lent by many people with West Bath/Birch Point connections – he especially acknowledged Patsy

Norton, Dick Redlon, George Langbehn, Jane Parry, Sharon Haynes, Oliver Ellis, Lynne True, Sally Haggett, Mary Perry, Cary Drake, and Donna McCole.

Following is a selective captioned photo “teaser” of Charlie’s presentation (which will be repeated, with new material, at an event hosted by the West Bath Historical Society at the Old West Bath Meeting House in the fall – stay tuned for the date). ▲



Swimming at Jenny's Nubble



Bart Smith Cottage-Dock with three daredevils

WBHS Annual Meeting & Pot Luck Suppa' June 5!

On Thursday, June 5 at 6 pm, our popular annual meeting will be held at the Old West Bath Meeting House. The pot luck (as always, with delicious food contributions!) will begin the evening, followed by a quick business meeting – mostly to thank outgoing Board Member Cindy Fahay, and also to vote in two new Board candidates.

Then follows a special presentation by Carrie Kinne, Executive Director of the Kennebec Estuary Land Trust (KELT), which is celebrating 25 years of conservation efforts. She will talk about how KELT helps protect local land (including West Bath's Green Point Preserve off

Birch Point Road) and water resources in the Kennebec Estuary region, including counting alewives in the Nequasset River, providing trails and hunting areas and protecting farmland in the area.

Carrie graduated from U of Maine and has lived and worked in the state all her life. In 2008, she joined KELT. Her previous career focused on fundraising and she has spent the last thirty years working with a variety of non-profits across Maine. She grew up on the Kennebec River in Farmingdale and absolutely loves working in this amazing place – the Kennebec Estuary.

As always, this event is free and open to the public, as well as to WBHS members. Mark the date and invite your friends and neighbors, too! (Note: To help the environment, please try to bring your own plates and utensils.) ▲



Crooker Cottage

More Birch Point photos on page 2

A History of Birch Point Cottages

Continued from page 1



Eddie Drake's log cabin



Spear cottage



Frank Sparks Sr. building chimney



Oliver Ellis hand-built this small cottage



Archie Main - long time Birch Pointer



Logging at Birch Point, 1951



Model A at Birch Point

Rev. Mark Wilson to Leave Phippsburg Church

Mark Wilson, who has been pastor at the Phippsburg Congregational Church for over 15 years, announced in late April that he is leaving the area to serve a church in Waterville. Mark has led our annual West Bath Christmas service many times and has strong connections throughout our town. He will be sorely missed, but we welcome his new opportunity to help another church grow and thrive. There will be a farewell

gathering on May 25th from 10:30 to 1:00 in the Church's meeting house on Church Lane in Phippsburg, just off the Parker Head Rd. Please join his many friends and congregants to send your best wishes. ▲

WBHS Christmas Service Was a Big Success

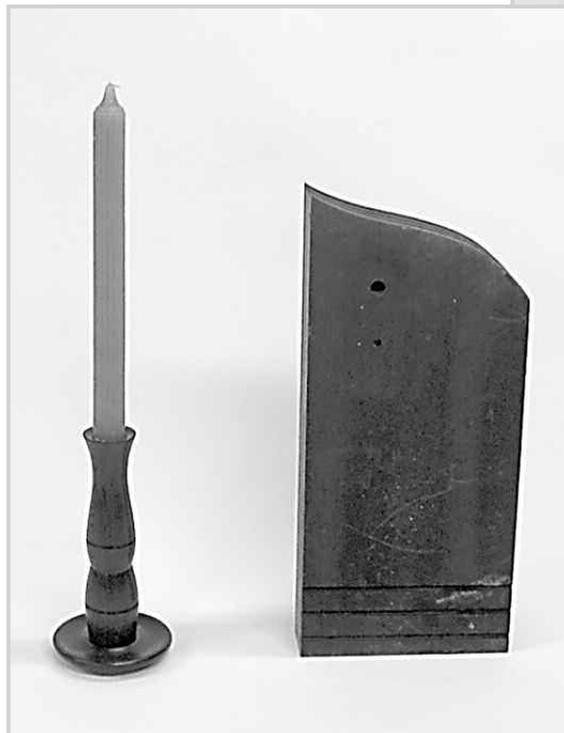
Our annual community Christmas service was held on December 17 at the Old West Bath Meeting House, which was decorated with swaths of holiday greens thanks to

Sally Graves and Joan Drake. This festive event drew more than 60 people of all ages. Rev. Mark Wilson presided over the crowd with his usual wit and thoughtful insights. Various bible passages were read by six community members, including Angus Tibbits, 3rd grader at the West Bath Elementary School, and Selectman Peter Oceretko. Carols were sung and the old pump organ, played by Steve Masters, provided vintage accompaniment. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a variety of home-baked holiday sweets (including world peace cookies: see page 7) and hot cider. A merry time was had by all. ▲

Our Old Pump Organ Lives Again in Recycled Form!

Remember the old pump organ found in the Littlefield School? It was, sadly beyond repair and our organ guru, Alan Myers, who has tuned our Old West Bath Meeting House organ over the last decade, hauled most of it away for parts. The bits that were left behind were salvaged by Pete Guild and given to local wood artist, Dean Batterman. Dean used chunks of mahogany corner braces to fashion candlesticks. (The photo below shows a piece of the original wood next to a "new" candlestick.)

He then went even farther into creative reuse: working on a vase fashioned from gnarled chunk of apple wood, Dean found it was so weathered and cracked that he added a couple of "stitches" of ebony (old organ keys), also saved from the old organ – to hold it together. (Pictured to the right, it certainly makes an interesting rustic piece. As a bonus, this unusual vase offers a bit of history. Who says you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear! ▲



Above: Apple wood vase "stitched" with ebony keys of the old pump organ.

Left: Candlestick made from a mahogany corner brace of the old organ.

CROSSING THE BAR



Mamie E. Fortin, 91, died Dec 22, 2013 at HillHouse in Bath. During her first marriage to **Leonard S. Smith**, she lived in West Bath. Among her survivors are her husband, **Regis Fortin** of Hillhouse; and her children: **Donna R. Smith**, **Dale S. Smith**, and **David C. Smith**, all formerly of West Bath.

Lewis F. Havener, 72, of Bath, passed away Jan 6 surrounded by his loving family. Among his survivors is a son, **Richard** & his

wife **Shannon Havener**, of West Bath.

Yvonne Mary Hurd, 91 of Brunswick, died Jan 13 at Sunnybrook Village. Among her survivors is a son, **Robert** & his wife **Nancy Hurd** of West Bath.

Phyllis Alley Snell, 91, of Brunswick, died Jan 20 at a local hospital. For many years, she taught at West Bath Elementary School. She grew up on Vinalhaven and received her education degree at

Farmington Normal School in 1942. During her teaching career she continued to further her education, receiving a B.A. from Farmington State Teachers College, and an M.S. from Gorham State College.

Harold D. "Timer" Mann, 72, of Brunswick, died Feb 27. Among his survivors is a granddaughter, **Lindsay Watts** of West Bath.

Dominick J. Barbaro, 86, of Bath, died Feb 28 at Mid Coast Hospital. Among his survivors are two of his four grandchildren: **Christopher Elbridge Cunningham** & his wife **Sara**, and **David Dominick Cunningham**, of West Bath. ▲



COOK'S KORNER

It's springtime in Maine and everyone screams for ice cream. Our own West Bath ice cream shop on Witch Spring

Hill has just opened, and it's high time we thought about that delectable warm weather sweet treat..... And to go with any flavor of ice cream, here's a cookie recipe from WBHS-nominated Board Member, Amy Wesson. They are called "World Peace Cookies" - the theory being that anyone who tastes one of these chocolate delicacies will no longer have any thoughts but those

of peace and love in the world. Amy served these cookies at our Christmas Service at the Old West Bath Meeting House in December - a peaceful evening indeed.

Amy's World Peace Cookies

Makes about 36 cookies

- 1-1/4 cup (175 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup (30 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 9 ounces (150 grams) butter, softened to room temperature
- 2/3 cups (120 grams) packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3/4+ cup (150 grams+) mix of good quality chocolate chopped in

1/3" pieces and mini chocolate chips (dark and/or milk chocolate)

(+ 1 Tablespoon coarsely ground sea salt to sprinkle on each cookie after baking)

In a mixing bowl: whip the butter until creamy with electric beater; add sugars, salt and vanilla. Beat 2 more minutes. Add dry ingredients (cover bowl with towel to protect yourself from flying flour!) and mix about 30 seconds just until dough is crumbly. Stir in the chocolate pieces by hand.

Divide dough in half, shape into 2 logs 1-1/2" in diameter, wrap tightly in cellophane wrap. Refrigerate for 3+ hours (or freeze up to 2 months - no need to defrost before baking).

Slice cookies into 1/2" thick rounds, space 1" apart on ungreased air bake cookie sheet or parchment-lined pan.

Bake in preheated 325F degree oven for 12 minutes (14 minutes if frozen dough),

Remove from oven, sprinkle a few grains of coarsely ground sea salt (yup!) on each cookie. Let them cool before removing from pan. ▲



Kids' birthday party at Birch Point, 1939

Meet Our New Board Candidates

Leah Zartarian moved to Maine in March of 2010 with her husband, Gary, who had relocated to practice gastroenterology at Mid Coast Hospital. After first renting in Harpswell, they moved to Birch Point the following August. For twenty years they had lived on Cape Cod, where Leah was a primary care family practice physician. Once in Maine, Leah retired from medical practice and has pursued a variety of volunteer opportunities, among them: the Bath Area Family YMCA (where she recently joined the Board of Directors, and is 2014 Annual Campaign chair), Grace Episcopal Church, the Bath Garden Club, and SEARCH (formerly GBEON). She is also interested in health care advocacy. Leah and Gary have two sons in their twenties who live in New York City and Arlington, VA, respectively.



Leah Zartarian



Amy Wesson

Amy Wesson and her husband Fred moved to West Bath during a snowstorm in February 2013. Amy has worked as an independent school administrator and served as an officer for cultural organizations in South America, Europe and Asia.

While the Wessons have lived abroad for twenty-some years, their three sons attended summer camp and colleges in Maine. Amy and Fred love calling Maine home.

WBHS Current Board & Committee Members

Each Board member is asked to serve, if possible, for three 2-years terms. *** Please note that both President Avery Meyers, and Sect'y/Treasurer Pete Guild are serving *pro tem*, and both positions urgently need to be replaced. We encourage new folks to join the Board!

Avery Hunt Meyers, President *pro tem*: 1 year. 3rd (final) Term ended, June '12
121 Shoal Cove, West Bath 04530
tel. 443.4449 cell. 751.9559
email: averyhunt@comcast.net

W.N. (Pete) Guild, Treasurer/ Sect'y, *pro tem* – 1 year (3rd and final term ended June '13)
P.O. Box 167, Bath, 04530 (36 Guild Point, West Bath)
tel. 443.6056; cell: 713.817.8499;
email: wnguild@aol.com

Bob Bittner – 2nd Term, ends June '14
72 Austin Road, West Bath 04530
tel. 442.0647; email:
jibguy@aol.com

Raisa Bittner – 2nd Term, ends June '14
72 Austin Road, West Bath 04530
tel. 442.0647; cell. 617.688.3004;
email: jibgirl740@aol.com

Ivon Boyer – 2nd Term, ends June '14
141 Fred Brigham Road,
Phippsburg 04562
Tel. 389.1109; email:
ivonboyer@comcast.net

Beth Brewer – 1st Term, ends June '14
62 Shoal Cove, West Bath 04530
Tel. 443.8955; cell.
207.504.7734; email:
mbeebrew@mail.com

Sally Graves – 1st term, ends June '13
P.O. Box 235, Phippsburg 04562
(22 Austin Road, West Bath
04530)
Tel. 443.4918; email:
stgraves921@gmail.com

Cindy Fahay – 3rd & final term, ends June '14
241 Sabino Road, West Bath,
04530
Tel. 443.1253; cell. 848.466.6476;
email: cindyfahay@yahoo.com

Non-Board Members – Committee heads
Kerry Nelson, Archivist
129 Sabino Road, West Bath
04530 tel. 443.5118
email: sabinosam77@yahoo.com

Betty Fitzjarrald, Committee chair,
Littlefield School
342 Houghton Pond Road, West
Bath
tel. 442.9780; email:
bfitz831@gmail.com ▲

CHANNEL BUOYS



BIRTHS

Marilyn Jean Curtis, born Nov 19, 2013 to **Donald & Catherine (Blanchard) Curtis**, West Bath.

Scarlett Elizabeth Lemont, born Nov 19, 2013 to Jason Andrew & Jamie Lemont of Topsham. Her grandparents include **James & Frances Lemont** of West Bath.

August Harry Winslow, born Jan 20 to **Andrew Tryk Winslow & Erin Lee Summers** of West Bath.

Hunter John Hinds, born Feb 23 to **Eric Mathew Hinds & Meggan Rebecca Wright** of West Bath.

ENGAGEMENT

Jamie Plimpton Hyde & Lincoln Beck Erhard announced their

engagement in February. Jamie is the daughter of **Nathaniel Hyde, M.D.** of West Bath and Nicola Plimpton of Cutchogue, NY. She attended West Bath School and is a graduate of North Yarmouth Academy and Simmons College in Boston. Lincoln is the son of Katherine Beck of Harpswell and Lincoln & Kerrin Erhard of Boothbay. He too graduated from North Yarmouth Academy, and Roanoke College in Salem, VA. The couple, who reside in Boston, declared their intentions on Sunday River with their parents and siblings gathered to celebrate.

WEST BATH STUDENT NOTES

Zachery Groat was named to the Honor's List at Thomas College for the fall 2013 semester.

Meagan K. Hennessey was named to the Dean's List at Colby College for outstanding academic achievement during the fall 2013 semester.

Danica D. Dever was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2013 semester at Central Maine Community College.

Melanie Quill graduated from Rochester (NY) Institute of Technology, it was announced on Jan 13, 2014.

The Patten Free Library honored the six winners of its First Annual Teen Writing Contest in January. Among them was **Laurel Swanson**, of West Bath who attends Bath Middle School.

ATHLETIC KUDOS

Skaters from the Nor'Easters Open Adult Synchronized Skating Team earned a silver medal at the 30th annual Colonial Classic held in early January in Lowell, MA. The team is made up of 12 women ranging in age from 25 to 61. Among them was **Nina Sylvia** of West Bath. ▲

TOWN CRIER



Budget (Special) Town Meeting – Tuesday, May 20, 2014 at 7:00 pm West Bath School. This meeting will be continued on Wednesday, May 21st at 6:00 pm if necessary. At this Town Meeting we will conduct what we have traditionally done with adopting our annual budget and conducting other legislative business as needed.

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife registrations and licenses. Have you registered your boats, ATVs and trailers? Need a new fishing license or resident recreational shellfish license? Have you renewed your mooring permits? West Bath resi-

dents may renew their Boat registrations on line directly with Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Find them on-line or click on the link on the Home page of the town's web site at www.westbath.org. Have a great and safe recreational season!

West Bath is now On-Line with RAPID RENEWAL. West Bath vehicle owners can now renew most vehicle registrations from their personal computers while communicating and paying via a secure and encrypted connection. You can log on to <https://www1.maine.gov/online/bmv/rapid-renewal/> begin your registration.

Sabino Boat Landing Parking Permits are required for parking at the Landing and area where designated by signs. The one-year \$5 permits are available at the Town Office –

FMI call us at 443.4342 or see the Ordinance on the town's web site.

Please Note: The lien process for unpaid taxes from 2013 begins in June.

The Town of West Bath has the following **Committee/Board vacancies.** Please consider participating in local government by contributing your experience. Please contact the Town Office at 443.4342 for more information.

- Administrative Review Task Force
- Budget Advisory Committee
- Board of Appeals

Meeting Notifications – Residents who would like an e-mail notification of any Town or Committee work session or other public meeting may submit their email address to the Town Clerk at townclerk@westbath.org, or call us at 443.4342.

– Rob Morris, Town Clerk

Winter Madness at Shoal Cove!

There is an annual New Year's tradition among the folks who live around Shoal Cove and some of their intrepid West Bath friends: a quick dip into Winnegance Bay at high noon on January 1st. You have to see it to believe it, but here are the pictures to prove it. This year's swim was more difficult than most. The cove was ringed in ice and it was, as most of you may remember, a wicked cold day! Nonetheless, over a dozen brave souls stripped to their bathing suits and made the plunge. The ice had to be broken up before anyone could get into the water [pictured left]. But in (and out quickly!) they went. ▲



Above: Clearing ice from the beach at Shoal Cove on January 1st, 2014



Left: Wow it's cold!

The Mystery of the West Bath Rock

There used to be a traveler's "rest stop" going north, just off Route One in West Bath. It was built in 1965 and officially opened on October 1st of that year. Drivers could pull off the road into a tranquil area to have a picnic, walk their dogs, and pick up local tourist information. Not anymore. The facility has been closed for a few years due to budget constraints, and it is presumably defunct. The Visitors' Information Bureau is now housed inside the restored train station in Bath.

However, one little oddity still remains: The West Bath rock. It is just a good sized boulder, probably weighing more than half a ton, with a brass plate attached, which reads, simply, "West Bath Incorporated February 14, 1844".



We can't seem to locate any records as to when this rock was placed at the rest stop, who made the plaque, or why it was put there, despite the best efforts of our intrepid archivist, Kerry Nelson. If any Middle Ground reader has information about the rock, please contact us at 443.4449, or stop in to Town Hall.

The West Bath rock and plaque

The West Bath Historical Society wants to move the rock this spring, possibly to the Town Hall lawn, or some other historical spot, depending on its origin. We look forward to hearing from anybody with recollections of the rock. Let's clear up this mystery. Thanks. ▲



WBHS Board member **Cindy Fahay** took full advantage of this winter's abundant snow to enjoy a special kind of skiing with her trusty dog, Roxie. She tells us what's going on

"Here we are two days after Christmas skijoring on a local golf course, with Roxie sporting her new Skijoring harness that Santa brought her."

In case you're wondering, skijoring is a cross country sport. The skier provides power with skis and poles, and the dog adds additional power by running and pulling. There are no reins or other signaling devices. The dog must be motivated by its own desire to run, stay on the trail and respond to the owner's voice for direction.

Skijoring used to be included in the early Winter Olympics, only with horses, not dogs! Clearly, Roxie has taken to this tough sport with enthusiasm. ▲

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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, paid advertising or political opinion.

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All the local kids used Charlie Burden's booming marine business (1953) as their "club house" for hell-raising, playing cards, diving off the wharf and, maybe, once in a while actually helping out. Pictured here, Birch Point teenagers Alden Green and Pete Guild are proof that horsing around was preferable to working. It's lucky no one had a match!