

Mussel Ridge News

*A Free Publication of the Mussel Ridge Historical Society
Owls Head, Maine
Fall 2013 ~ Issue 20*



A MILESTONE

With this issue, the Mussel Ridge Historical Society wraps up our fifth year publishing the NEWS, an accomplishment we never would have achieved without the overwhelming support from the community. To the folks who candidly shared their life with us through anecdotes, story ideas, recipes, photos, research topics, and answers to our countless questions, we say, “Keep those calls and E-mails coming”. A huge “Thank you!” goes to each and every reader who quietly overlooked our typos and misinformed reporting.

Likewise the advertisers, (thirty-five in total), have been a loyal financial lifeline. The morning after this newsletter was conceived at our meeting, with no more than a vague idea, I approached a local contractor about buying an ad in our project. He said he’d think about it and get back to me. I watched him drive away knowing I’d blown my first attempt as an advertising exec. Well, he drove around the village square, paused for a moment at the pond, and circled right back to where I was standing in front of the Post Office. His arm extended out the window with fifteen dollars in cash. That first ad has become a permanent fixture in every issue we’ve printed. The members of Mussel Ridge Historical Society consider it a privilege to be allied with the businesses that grace our pages and we encourage our readers to support the local economy by contacting these entrepreneurs when in need of their services.

Our little project has expanded from that original four page issue distributed through the Post Office, Town Office, and other places around Owl’s Head to its current eight pages that go out to the entire world over the Internet in early February, May, August and November. Future issues may bring a few changes but there will always be an open invitation to our readers to submit items for the NEWS. This is your history. That thought in mind, it seems only fitting that this milestone issue should be dedicated to the very people who made it possible—



Square dancing in the shade of an ancient Silver Maple tree, probably our oldest living resident

Fall Craft Fair

November 23rd from 9-2



The Mussel Ridge Historical Society is very pleased to announce our Fall Craft Fair this year will be at the Owl’s Head Transportation Museum, (off Rt. 73). The doors open 9 a.m. on Saturday, November 23rd with many new crafters in attendance. Patrons will be able to purchase a hot lunch at the M.R.H.S. baked food booth. Mark your calendar. Hope to see you there.

Free admission and handicap parking. Anyone who’d like to donate baked goods or volunteer to help with Friday morning set up and / or Saturday afternoon knock down should call 594-2438.

GRANDMOTHER'S SPONGE CAKE

Marty Shaw sends this recipe from her grandmother's file, (circa 1890's?). Marty says her grandmother loved to cook and recalls this was a regular dessert when the family gathered there, which was often in the summer. Note the ingredients are weighed rather than measured in cups and teaspoonfuls.

Weigh: 1 lb. eggs 1 lb. sugar ½ lb. flour
Grease pan (high sided or angel cake).

You'll also need: Juice of 1 lemon and zest
Preheat oven to 400 degrees

Separate eggs; beat whites, drop yolks one at a time into whites. Add sugar a little at a time—then lemon juice and zest. Add flour a little at a time, while beating as you go along with a wire whisk type beater. Bake 1 hour.

SMARTY PANTS

As the janitor at the Owl' Head Community Building, **Peter Wallace** soon wearied of running up and down stairs to fetch his supplies. So, a carpenter's tool belt was adapted for toting his vacuum accessories and cleaning supplies around the building. Most janitors have a wad of keys jingling from their belt. Peter had Windex. & squeegee. He's now employed as a manager at Dragon Cement.

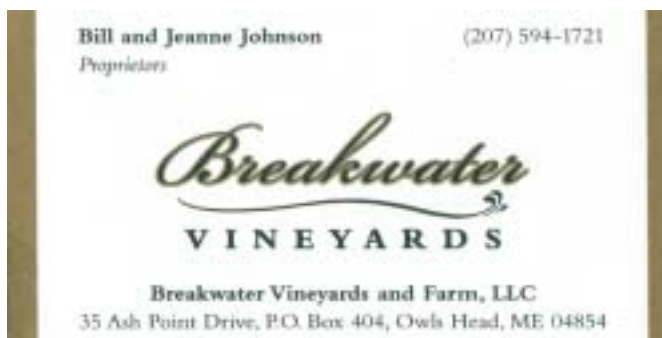
Carolyn Meserve Philbrook claims she never needed to hurry in the morning to catch the school bus. If it went by her house, she knew it had to turn around at the end of the road and come by again a few minutes later. And, she wouldn't have to cross the road to board it.

When **Pete Coffey** was in college his Mom sent him a note regarding a bit of personal business she'd taken care of for him. Pete thought it would be funny to edit, (with red ink) and return the note to her. Do you suppose he was unfamiliar with the phrase, "When Mama's not happy, nobody's happy"? Claire says she got over it before he came home. Or did Pete simply wait until "the coast was clear"?

Wayne Lindsey was learning to ride his bicycle around the village when he realized he was headed toward Main Street hill and hadn't yet learned how to use the brakes. At five years old, he wasn't too experienced in making life changing decisions, but he knew he didn't want to face the options at the foot of the hill: a sharp left turn into the vehicles parked along the waterfront or strait ahead onto the rocky landing. Then at the last possible moment before starting his descent down the hill he saw an escape route. Al Borgerson had just completed a temporary ramp over the newly poured cement steps into his store and the front door was wide open. Yup, Wayne actually rode his bike up the ramp and into the store. He likely would have slammed into the mail boxes at the back of the store had he not been waylaid by Al.

Elmer Small, the town's former longtime Fire Chief was being grilled at town meeting as to why he needed more fire hose when we'd already bought several lengths in previous years. Displaying the same cool headed control often seen in emergency situations, he looked straight at the inquisitor and retorted, "Somebody's gonna feel pretty silly when we roll up to their house on a brush fire and our hose is fifty feet too short!" The funds were approved without further discussion.

Kay Ross Dodge was about ten years old when she and her cousins, Peter and John Ross, and friend Tom Leadbetter thought it would be great fun to hide in the bushes at Evergreen Cemetery and spy on a group of mourners having a burial ceremony. Imagine the kids surprise when the military honor guard began firing a salute in their direction.



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“SLEEP TIGHT AND DON’T LET THE FRY CAKES BITE”

We have in previous issues of the NEWS discussed certain words or phrases that have become outdated. Here are a couple that were recently brought to our attention by our readers.

“Sleep tight!”- before our beds were inflated with air or filled with water, we had coil spring mattresses. And before then, if a person didn’t want to sleep on wooden slats, he looped ropes from side to side and from end to end. A stack of quilts or a thin mattress stuffed with straw was thrown on top of the ropes for a little extra comfort. These ropes, being made of hemp or other natural fiber, tended to stretch and sag with use, which required they be tightened and re-tied to the bed rails, giving the owner a good nights sleep.

“Fry cakes”- for centuries the Dutch fried dough as a special treat and they were called “fry cakes”. Trouble was, the middle never got completely fried, thus causing indigestion or constipation. In 1847 a Maine boy asked his mother why the fry cakes were so gooey in the middle. Her explanation led to his experimenting with a fork which produced a fry cake with a hole in the middle so the treat could be completely cooked. In that instant the donut was born. Many oldsters, (my Gramma included), continued to call them “fry cakes”

HURRICANE SEASON

This little axiom from Power & Motor Yacht magazine was published just one month prior to hurricane Sandy making landfall. “July- it’s nigh; August- almost; September- remember; October- it’s over”

WE’D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

If you enjoy our newsletter and would like to receive it via e-mail, we can do that. If you have an idea for an article we’d love to research it for you. Pictures or memorabilia you’d like us to see? We’ll gladly accept them on loan or have the articles photographed. We also have a need for volunteers to help with the care of three historic buildings. Perhaps you’d like to advertise your business in the NEWS. Our ads are \$15.00 per quarterly issue or \$60.00 for a year.

Contact Tom Christie 207-594-2438 OR Kay Dodge- 207-596-6879
or Carolyn Philbrook at ballyhacme@gmail.com

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OUR TOWNFOLKS



Lester grew up in Owl's Head village, attended Timber Hill School & served in U.S. Coast Guard during WWII



Reminiscing at the one room school reunion May, 2011, (left to right) Claire, Phelps, Sally, Mike, Carolyn & Andy



Ron with Kelly & MacKenzie at our Fall Craft Fair (2010)



Don't know who's driving. Thanks for a job well done



It takes a lot of elbow grease to crank out ice cream at the community picnic, but Sam seems to have it.



Ruth grew up where the airport is now. Didn't like going to Ash Point school so she walked the two miles to Timber Hill School.



Barbara's Hair Salon is a full service shop where a smile comes as naturally as the morning sun.



Joe was raised in Owl's Head village; now lobsters off Matinicus Is. Shown here with son, Jared, (also a lobsterman) in a fourth of July parade