

# The Brooksville Breeze



The newsletter of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

Spring 2008

## Oakland House Seaside Resort

By Becky Poole

## Alive and Well in Brooksville

By Joan MacCracken

"Oh, I used to love going down to the Oakland House with my grandmother!", my mother (Avis Dow Poole) exclaimed. She reminded me that not only did she go there as a child, but she worked there as a teenager, and her mother (Inez Dow) worked there as well. This certainly explains my own fondness and love for this grand hotel on the spit of land between Eggemoggin Reach and Walker's Pond.

On a snowy, colorless day when I met with Jim and Sally Littlefield, it was not hard for me to imagine the very beginnings of this beautiful farm built by John and Hannah Billings, a rope maker from Lincoln, Massachusetts, who went north after losing his business on a shipment of damaged hemp. The Billings family had faced the dangerous prospect of settling on the east side of the Penobscot River where land was still available due to the greater risks for settlers from the hostilities of the native peoples who used this land as a prime portage area between the Eggemoggin Reach and Gray's Pond (Walker's Pond).

Their son, Isaac Billings, was the first generation born in this house just as it was finished in 1776. Through farming and the export of lumber and granite, the Billings Farm thrived in spite of the political upheavals of the times. By 1815, ice harvesting became profitable and perhaps contributed to the building of the pier in 1829. It was the pier that allowed Isaac's granddaughter Flavilla and her husband Emery Herrick, with a loan from brother-in-law Charles Babson, to establish Oakland House as an inn. Amazingly, with special permission from the Superintendent of the Boston-Bangor shipping line, passenger steam ships were able to stop at the Herrick Pier and summer guests or "rusticators" began arriving.

"Guests often came for the entire summer season. The old boardwalk ran from Herrick's landing up the hill to the Hotel. It was built for arriving guests and the huge trunks of an entire summer's worth of clothing. Guests traveling from Boston on the steamer sailed from Boston Harbor in the late afternoon bound for Rockland. The steward's clanging on a frying pan, or such, awakened the passengers at 5:30 am in time for



Flavilla Herrick, Avis Dow, Emery Herrick  
And Bonnie the Dog—circa late 1920's

transfer in Rockland to the local steamer which stopped at Herrick's mid-morning on its way to Blue Hill." (Herrick Littlefield, Oakland House, Centennial Celebration 1889-1989).

Early 20th century life on the coast included the influx of people from "away", creating a booming summer tourism industry that would replace the raw materials export industry. Brooksville alone would have over forty inns to meet this new opportunity for prosperity and growth. The family at Oakland House adapted each step of the way. Starting in 1930, Flavilla and Emery's daughter, Josephine Littlefield, took over the helm with her son, Elmir and his wife Katrina. The dining room service became more refined, more cottages were built, and Shore Oaks, a large ten room cottage, was

The good news is that Brooksville as a community, as a neighborhood is alive and well, and much caring and sharing takes place between neighbors, friends, and family. A long history of this neighborly outreach exists. Whether it's been a prolonged power outage from an ice storm, a lost dog, firewood needing stacking, or help in someone's kitchen, neighbors in Brooksville have stepped up over the years. The local churches and social groups have and continue to reach out to help their neighbors. (The June issue of *The Breeze* will present Brooksville's outstanding Meal-for-me Program, which touches so many lives here.)

More good news is that Brooksville also has a network that can pick up and assist when some of our neighbors may fall through the cracks of the existing organizations, those who don't know where to turn when they need a helping hand. This network, called Neighborcare, is alive and well in Brooksville and other peninsula towns, but may be unknown to many of our residents. *The Breeze* would like everyone in Brooksville to learn about it, so that its very existence can ultimately lead to its dissolution by successfully creating that neighbor-wide network where neighbors can help all neighbors in need. Most folks in Brooksville are willing to help if they are asked. And it

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## Mud Season in Brooksville

By Edson B. Blodgett and Joan MacCracken

When the “Bay Froze Over,” folks could drive from Brooksville to Belfast across the Penobscot Bay. But with warmer winters and still warming springs, Brooksville residents have had to face Mud Season with some fortitude. Wheeled traffic has had to use other routes, and it is interesting to note that other “routes” connecting our community have changed from the earlier days.

Within the confines of Brooksville, there is a record of some dozen roads or segments of roads that have been abandoned as town responsibilities. One such road in West Brooksville has been referred to as the Tom Tapley Road. This was originally part of a road that carried commerce from the town landing at Smith’s Cove through to the Varnumville Road and on to North Brooksville. A large swampy area on the road discouraged many a traveler especially in the spring. At the town meeting of February 1918, voters elected to abandon this road between Tom Tapley’s home, now the Curtis home, and the old Bickford Place on Varnumville Road. More recently, snowmobilers have maintained some semblance of a trail. The Varnumville Road in the 1920’s and ‘30’s had about six or seven homes, while today at least thirty seven addresses are listed. The road is now “completely” paved, and still the potholes appear annually.

Traveling to Blue Hill presented significant problems. The Mines Road from Joe Gray’s corner in West Sedgwick to the present Tradewinds for many years was paved at each end, but the middle section beginning at the town line of Blue Hill just prior to the current Christmas Greens Shop remained gravel or mud until the Grindleville Road. This section became a real challenge in the winter and even more so in the spring. In “bad going” the hill essentially became a two-wheeled route and, for all intents and purposes, was a one-way traffic road. Granted, the number of vehicles per hour that passed through was not high, but if vehicles driving in the opposite direction met on this hill, a serious situation was faced. In ex-

treme weather, neither vehicle could get out of the one set of tracks. In less hazardous weather, the operator who might choose to attempt to turn out of the tracks probably was destined to get stuck on the shoulder or in the ditch, requiring towing. Usually the safest and sanest solution was for one vehicle to back to the top or back to the bottom of the hill. Not an easy chore, for sure!

The entire Mines Road was ultimately paved in the late 1950’s. The fresh layer of black top applied last summer helped to smooth some of the perennial frost heaves through the mines area. Few of the majority of today’s drivers could envision the trials and tribulations experienced on a trip to Blue Hill.



Hope on Varnumville Road!

Photo by Chris Raphael

### CPR Class a Success!!

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors sponsored a CPR class in January that was an unqualified success—sold out!

If you missed this opportunity and would like to participate, let us know. If there is enough interest, we’ll schedule another class. Thanks to all who came!

### Just Who Are We?

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors is a group of residents who have been meeting monthly at the Town Hall since the fall of 2006. The goal of this group is to strengthen and support local activities that encourage health, both physical and emotional. Ideas to achieve this goal have included promoting exercise by mapping trails and areas for outdoor walking, skiing, ice skating, and biking, and encouraging indoor sports such as ping pong, yoga, volleyball as well as the exercise classes and other communal activities. BFN wants to reach out to the youth and elderly of the town as well as new arrivals and long-time citizens of Brooksville. We plan to promote sustainable local agriculture and neighborhood gardens and to inform residents of healthy resources.

Over the past year BFN has created new avenues for increasing communication and connectedness through their newsletter, *The Brooksville Breeze*, named after the old high school yearbook. Summer, Fall, and Winter issues have arrived at the mailboxes of every Brooksville resident and the Spring issue comes out 1<sup>st</sup> week of March, ‘08. The feature articles have been on people and places in Brooksville, upcoming Brooksville activities, health tips of some kind, biographies of student graduates and bits of humor, poetry, and history. Town phone numbers and office hours are also listed. Submissions or ideas for articles are encouraged.

The group has also been working on a welcome packet for newcomers, and discussing plans for a town kiosk for announcements of events and a map of Brooksville for lost tourists. A local foods interest group is being formed to study ways to promote local foods, both for successful, cost-effective production as well as local marketing.

BFN is open to all. It provides a forum for ideas for the Brooksville community. Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8pm at the Town Office. For further information write BFN, PO Box 101, Brooksville, ME 04617, or call Joan MacCracken at 326-0916 or email joanmacc@aol.com. Add your email address if you would like to receive agendas and minutes of the meetings.

**Oakland House... (Cont. from page 1)**

purchased. Elmir died in his mid-fifties, leaving his young family to help Katrina "keep the inn." At first, his daughter Nancy and her husband tried their hands at it. Jim, then 14, chipped right in, and by the time Jim was 19, he was in charge.

As I talked to Jim and his wife Sally, it was striking to recognize the generational themes of adaptation, a strong work ethic, a sense of adventure, and sensitivity to opportunity and community. It is clear that Jim and Sally are meeting the 21st century with the same imagination and passion as the generations that preceded them. Shore Oaks was restored to its early 20th century elegance in 1995 with Sally's hard work and vision. Each room, in muted tones of greens and dark reds, furnished with understated expertise, offers comfort and a sense of belonging and respite. Chairs, rugs, lamps seem thoughtfully placed with the intent to provide peace and comfort in a rare and beautiful setting.

Sally has worked on restoring and creating gardens to include flowers, indigenous medicinal plants and a vegetable garden to bring more local produce into the dining room menu. Currently, there are 15 cottages, two are winterized and available for year-round use. The dining room offers an exquisite menu and is open to the public with reservations during the summer.

The new generation of guests come for a week or two, they may be second or third generation guests, they may or may not have children, and they come from all over the world. I was delighted to learn that guests also come to the Oakland House to get married. Wedding packages

are available, where many aspects of a wedding are managed by the Oakland House staff.

Lastly, the Littlefields at the Oakland House, like those that preceded them, have expressed their love of place through public service and participation in our public institutions. Jim has served for many years as an elected official and in doing so, offers leadership in Brooksville's economic future. Of the many inns in Brooksville, Oakland House is one of the two remaining. "For every dollar spent by the guests on lodging, twelve dollars will be spent in the larger community on all kinds of things," Jim informed me.

So, like my mother, perhaps we all light up with gratitude and warmth for having such gracious neighbors as the Littlefields at the Oakland House. If you would like to know more about this Brooksville family, read Herrick Littlefield's wonderful family history in the Centennial Celebration at the Brooksville Historical Society.

For more information call 1-207-359-8521 or visit their website at [www.oaklandhouse.com](http://www.oaklandhouse.com).

What is the difference between ignorance and indifference?

*I don't know and I don't care!*

What is the difference between ignorance, apathy and ambivalence?

*I don't know and I don't care one way or the other.*

**Health Tip...**

Heart Disease currently affects over 45,000 women in Maine. It kills more women nationally than all cancers combined, including breast cancer. We need to educate ourselves about this expanding disease—its risks and symptoms. Did you know that in women the signs may be different than the chest pain, shortness of breath and pain radiating down the arm that men usually have? Women often experience jaw pain, indigestion, overwhelming anxiety or extreme exhaustion, or neck and shoulder pain. These symptoms can be misdiagnosed or ignored. If you experience any of these symptoms, be sure to seek medical attention. It could save your life or that of your loved one

*If a man is in the forest talking to himself and there's no woman around, is he still wrong?*

**Help still needed!!!**

Thanks to those of you who have contributed! We could still use additional help to offset the cost of publishing this newsletter. Your help would be greatly appreciated!!!

Send whatever you can to:  
Brooksville Friends & Neighbors  
P.O. Box 101  
Brooksville, ME 04617-0101

Make checks payable to:  
Brooksville Friends & Neighbors  
**Thanks!**

MRS. Birdhead

by gail Page

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# Activities

For more information, call the number listed in each entry.

### Brooksville Elementary School

Sat. March 8<sup>th</sup> Variety Show: "Slush and Mud." Dinner 5-6pm  
Variety Show 6-8:30pm.  
Pay at door. Contact Jen Chase 326-8751  
Fri. March 21<sup>st</sup>; Discovery Week Open House: 6-8pm  
Please check the Web or the School Newsletter for times and dates.  
<http://www.brooksvilleschool.org>

### Brooksville Free Public Library

Open Monday & Weds. 9am – 5pm,  
Thurs. 6-8pm, Sat 9am–noon  
Pre-school Story Hour Mondays 10:30am  
For more information call: 326-4560  
Friends of the Library call: 326-8520

### Brooksville Historical Society

Monthly meeting the 2nd Wed. at 6:30pm  
at the Town House- all welcome! For  
more info: 326-0899

### Keepers Baptist Church Preservation Group

For information on events & meetings  
call 326-8864

### Brooksville Friends and Neighbors

Monthly meeting -1st Wed every month,  
6:30 pm at the Town House  
For more info call 326-0916

Wed, April 16, 7pm, Town House—How  
to Grow an Organic Garden—Talk by  
Brooksville Master Gardener Dan Huis-  
jen.

### Holbrook Island Sanctuary

Safe walking trails. Please call: 326-4012  
for more information.

### Get Strong, Get Healthy

Monday, Wednesday and Fridays 7:30 am  
at the Brooksville Community Center.  
For more info: 326-9466

### Cape Rosier Ping Pong

Sundays at 2-4pm. For more info: 326-  
4279

### Meals-4-Me

Thursday's-Lunch for all ages. Please be  
sure to call Dot Bakeman for reservations

and more information-326-4912. Reserva-  
tions need to be made before 8:00 on  
Wednesday morning.

### Good Life Center

Saturdays from March 15<sup>th</sup>—April 5<sup>th</sup>:  
9am-1pm. Learn to Grow Your Food.  
Each session is on a different topic. For  
topics and scholarship information call  
Bob St. Peter, The Good Life Center at  
326-8211.

### Neighborcare

Neighbors helping neighbors. Volunteers  
provide free health related services; re-  
pite, transportation, errands, etc. Call  
Jeanie Gaudette for assistance or to vol-  
unteer at 326-4735.

### Yoga

Fridays at the Town House-8:30am-  
10:00am. \$13 for one session or \$44 for  
4 sessions. For more info call 326-3236.

### Belly Dancing

Interested? Call Christy McLaughlin at  
326-8836.

### Meditation

Contemplative Prayer- Reversing Falls -  
Weds. 9am. For more info call: 326-8564  
Buddhist Meditation -Reversing Falls  
Church-Thursday's-5:30-6:30 pm  
For more info call 326-4047

### Brooksville United Methodist Church

Sunday Service 9 am  
with Rev. Gary Vencill- 326-7850

### West Brooksville United Congrega- tional Church

Community Breakfast-Sat. May 3<sup>rd</sup> 7:30-  
9am. Come see your neighbors and enjoy  
breakfast at the West Brooksville Congre-  
gational Church.  
Sunday Service & Sunday School- 10am  
with Rev. Allen Myers.  
For more info: 326-8283 or 348-5693.  
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**To list your event call: 326-0916  
or send us a note  
Brooksville Friends & Neighbors  
P.O.Box 101  
Brooksville, Maine 04617**

### Kiosk Site Located!

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors is de-  
lighted to have located a site for an infor-  
mation kiosk for the Town of Brooks-  
ville! Thanks to Horace and Sylvia  
Wardwell of Sedgwick, we can now begin  
to plan and design the kiosk and welcom-  
ing space, which will provide help and  
information for residents and visitors  
alike.

This will be an exciting project. If you  
would like to be a part of this effort, call  
BFN at 326-0916.

<b>Town Office Hours</b> .....326-4518
Monday ..... 9am-2pm
Wednesday ..... 9am-2pm
Thursday ..... 6pm-8pm
Selectmen John Gray
Richard Bakeman
Clifford (Kip) Leach
Town Clerk Amber Bakeman
Treasurer Frieda Peasley
Tax Collector Joanne Van der Eb
Burn Permits (at Fire Station)
Thursday ..... 7pm-8pm
Harbormaster Sarah Cox 326-9622
.....Hours.....
<b>Library</b> ..... 326-4560
Monday ..... 9am-5pm
Wednesday ..... 9am-5pm
Thursday ..... 6-8pm
Saturday ..... 9am-12pm
<b>Post Office (Window)</b>
Monday-Friday
..... 8:30am-12:15pm
..... 2-4:15pm
Saturday ..... 8:30-10:30am
<b>Post Office (Lobby)</b>
Monday-Friday
..... 7am-4:45pm
Saturday ..... 7-11am
<b>Buck's Harbor Market</b> ..326-8683
Monday-Friday
..... 7am-6pm
Saturday-Sunday
..... 8am-6pm

## Neighborcare... (Cont. from page 1)

is Neighborcare that just might do the asking for others.

The Neighborcare seed was planted in Blue Hill but is now thriving in thirteen towns on the Blue Hill peninsula. Its founders wanted to limit the bureaucracy and paperwork that many organizations drown in. The existence of the Good Samaritan law for the protection of volunteering neighbors helped in this regard. The initiators wanted also to ensure strict privacy and confidentiality in their outreach program. Initially, they were afraid of being overwhelmed with requests, so publicity was kept to a minimum. Now, after twelve years, the number of neighborly volunteers has increased and the requests for help are manageable. The network continues to spread.

The stated purpose of Neighborcare is "to serve lonely, ill, incapacitated, or dying neighbors in their efforts to live their lives to their fullest capacity, and/or to find the resources that support this purpose." At this time, according to Jeanne Gaudette, Brooksville's Neighborcare coordinator, the network is not overwhelmed with requests and can certainly accept more calls for help. When a person calls Neighborcare, several questions might be asked. Where do you live in Brooksville? Do you have any relatives or friends who could help you and would you like us to ask them? Are you a member of a local church? What do you think you need? Is your need immediate? How soon will you need assistance? Do you expect this need to be ongoing or for a limited time? Do you need volunteer help or would you prefer to pay for it? If you prefer to pay for the service, would you like us to recommend some folks who could provide that service?

After this initial phone interview, a home visit either by the coordinator or a potential volunteer occurs. Sometimes, at that visit, other helpful services might be identified. The seeker of assistance always has the ability to control the aid given. And a neighbor who is called to assist always has the ability to say "no" to the request of them. This could be due to the time commitment, skills ability, or other personal issues. Neighborcare seeks the joyous helper. Getting the proper fit for each

situation is what Neighborcare strives for. Many times there will be several volunteers helping out for one neighbor. These volunteer encounters usually become a win/win situation for all involved.

Many different types of services have been provided over the years. Rides to doctor's appointments or radiation therapy, snow shoveling for a recently disabled resident, wood stacking for an elderly citizen, respite care for an overwhelmed spouse or parent, temporary animal care while the owner is hospitalized, wheelchair ramps built plus other simple carpentry service, help with "paperwork", or maybe just a pleasant visit for companionship. Whenever an extra hand is needed, Neighborcare would like to be able to assist. Often Neighborcare "enhances the already present neighbor-helping-neighbor efforts" and can help coordinate these services without duplication. At times Neighborcare works along with Hospice personnel. "At the heart of our work is an extended-family ideal that is boundless as well as the intention that no one need suffer or die alone. We know that as we serve, we also are served beyond measure."

A recipient of Neighborcare's help for the past nine years said, "I have gained three daughters through Neighborcare." Another receiver smiled as she called her Neighborcare friends, "her little angels." And from the other side of the coin, the volunteers are as joyous and thankful.

"What starts out as simply a good thing to do, progresses into a real friendship. For those of us whose parents live distances away, it's a way to balance things out. I appreciate the people out there who are doing the same thing with my parents. It enriches my life to be with people of another generation." Still another added, "Neighborcare gives me a chance to connect with someone I did not know before and widens my circle of acquaintances. I love the opportunity to do an act of kindness for someone in my community. A chance to say, 'Yes!'"

Many of us would like to be able to do more for others in Brooksville and our surrounding area. Consider volunteering with Neighborcare. Why not put your name on the network list so that we can continue to expand the already present caring web in our community. And, if this is a time when you feel you might need some assistance, don't hesitate to ask your neighbor or dial 326-4735 for Neighborcare. It's all just one way of following the Golden Rule.

## Earth Tips...

We pay more for bottled water per ounce than for gasoline. 24% of bottled water is tap water put through energy intensive reverse osmosis filtration and bottled by Coke and Pepsi. 50 billion bottles were used last year, 38 billion went into landfills despite the fact that they are recyclable. Consider your energy impact. Con-

sider using tap water whenever possible. Use stainless steel, aluminum, or glass bottles, which you can reuse. If you must buy bottled water, recycle the bottle. Just this little bit can make a difference!

Source: Conservation Presentation by Linda M. Hewitt, October 2007



Do you know where this sign is?

# The Brooksville Breeze

The newsletter of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

Published Quarterly—Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors (BFN)  
P.O. Box 101  
Brooksville, ME 04617-0101  
Phone: 207-326-0916

Newsletter by:

Joan MacCracken, Becky Poole,  
Judy Tredwell, Peter Beaven,  
Jean Webster, Katherine Clifford



## Please complete the enclosed survey on local foods!

We would really like to have your opinions. We have an active group that is trying very hard to bring producers and consumers together and they need your help.

PRSR T SRT  
U.S. Postage  
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Brooksville, ME  
Permit #6

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## Tell Us Who You Are...

Fill out this form and mail it to us at the address given. We want to know what you are interested in. Would you like to help with the newsletter? Do you belong to a group that would like us to help promote its activities? Brooksville Friends and Neighbors is a new and growing organization. We need you! We need ideas and we need to know how we can best serve the community.

**The Breeze, P.O. Box 101, Brooksville, ME 04617**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summer Resident?** To receive *The Breeze* by email in the off-season, send us your email address (and a donation?).

Comments and Suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Attention Brooksville Voters!

Due to M.S. 20-A Section 1486, voters are asked to return to the polls March 10, 2008 to validate the school budget adopted at the annual Town Meeting. Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk's office.