

The Brooksville Breeze



The Newsletter of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

Spring 2010

Brooksville Volunteer Fire Department: Our Local Heroes

JOAN MACCRACKEN

There was an atmosphere of spirit, enthusiasm, and comradeship at the Brooksville Volunteer Fire Department when I arrived at the fire station in Brooksville's Town House. Several men walked in and out of the room getting papers ready for their weekly meeting (Thursdays from 7 to 9:30). A few Brooksville residents were also there to obtain fire permits from Chief Matt Dow. That part of the job is simple, but Matt admitted that keeping in compliance with the state OSHA regulations is important and necessary to avoid the tough penalties and fines. Many hours of education and testing of the firemen are required to qualify for grants through Homeland Security to purchase up-to-date equipment.

Matt Dow, Brooksville's fire chief for the past year and a half, has been a volunteer fire fighter since he was eighteen. When he came on as chief, there were essentially three members of the department. The roster has been revitalized to an active group of twelve with seven reserve members. Both Bruce Austin, the assistant chief, and Matt had grandfathers who served on the original Brooksville Fire Department crew.

Many members of the department are from Brooksville, but others are from Penobscot or Sedgwick. Matt lives in Penobscot now but grew up in Brooksville and works here often.

The current fire fighters include active members Matt Dow, Bruce Austin, Dan Mitchell, Dick Doane, Khalif Williams, Dave Zimmerman, Dustin Francis, Tom Cooper (the youngest member), Dave Coomer, Ned Hildreth, Eric Ream, and Hugh Evans. Reserve members are Darrell Fowler, Basil Ladd, Kendall Wood, Andy Ladd, Hank Goodman, Dan McCall, and Matt Jones.

Matt summarized the various calls that the department has had over the past year: fire calls, trees across the road, AED (Automated External Defibrillator) calls, car accidents, and lift assists. He's excited to have increased from three to nine the number of air packs, a self-contained breathing apparatus that permits firefighters to go inside a burning house. The fire department now has a laptop computer and has high-speed access through the library up above the fire station. Many of the hours of required training can be done online.

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Influenza Epidemics, Then and Now

BEC POOLE

One of the memorable family stories in my life has been the tragic death of Great Aunt Fidelia. According to my mother, who was still in the womb at the time, young Fidelia came home to the Dow Farm on the Varnumville Road from her summer job at her grandfather's inn on Eggmoggin Reach. She took to bed in the late morning with fever and chills and was dead by the next morning. The pain and loss felt by her mother, my great grandmother Elizabeth (Babson) Dow, was lightened by the birth, a few months later, of my mother, Avis, who became a favored and beloved granddaughter. The loss of Fidelia has been felt by all of us who have heard this story.

This past winter of 2009 was marked by an undertone of fear as the H1N1 virus circled the globe. No one quite knew what devastation would be created by this outbreak. Thoughts of the 1918 influenza epidemic (also H1N1) were common. The reality was that the 2009 H1N1 swine flu affected 7% of the national population, resulting in around 4,000 deaths, with 540 of those being children. The 1918 influenza outbreak was a thousand times more lethal, affecting 20% of the population and killing one in four affected. Perhaps the most chilling aspect of the 1918 outbreak was that it killed the young and healthy at a higher rate than had ever before been experienced.

The worldwide outbreak of the



The inscription on this stone in the Carver Field Cemetery on Cape Rosier, which is reproduced at right, shows the heart-break that an epidemic (in this case, diphtheria) can bring to a family.

JOANNA DIED Nov. 12, 1863 Æ 15 yrs. 25 ds.	HIRAM DIED Dec. 1, 1863 Æ 11 yrs. 7 mos. & 7 days
MARGARET DIED Nov. 29, 1863 Æ 14 yrs. 5 mos.	ALBION DIED Dec. 7, 1863 Æ 9 yrs. 9 mos. & 7 days
ABBIE M. DIED Nov. 30, 1863 Æ 4 yrs. 9 mos.	ANDREW J. DIED Dec. 14, 1863 Æ 1 yr. 3 mos. & 20 days
ELIZA Æ 1 yr. 3 mos. Daughters of Daniel & Christina F. BLAKE	GEORGE L. Lost at sea Sons of Daniel & Christina F. BLAKE

FROM CEMETERIES OF BROOKSVILLE, MAINE, VOL. III

1918 Spanish flu (named for the early known cases in Spain) was the result of the “perfect storm” of World War I and the movement of troops around the world. The general symptoms were violent and new. They ranged from excruciating joint pain and extreme and sudden earaches that resulted in burst eardrums to epistaxis or violent bleeding from the nose, eyes and intestines. The most common symptom, especially among the young, was cyanosis, where patients turned dusky blue or black due to lack of oxygen. Death in many cases was violent and rapid. This alone was a very new and traumatic experience for families and communities.

The first reports in Maine were from Eastport and Portland, both port cities with international travel. Reporting was often difficult, and many times doctors would mistake these new symptoms for other known diseases. They simply could not understand the range and diversity of the symptoms. Yet, I sensed while researching this article that they maintained an understated calm response to this crisis, as if people were stunned by it all.

The federal Department of Sanitation published guidelines for schools and public health officials in September 1918 that recommended: “Eat simple food, avoid constipation, keep your

feet dry, and, if you become sick, fight the disease rationally.” Rural communities would simply cease movement. Church was conducted with the preacher preaching on the steps, while the congregation sat in their cars.

In the 1919 Brooksville Town Report, the Superintendent of Schools states: “While Brooksville has suffered no more than the great majority of towns from the effects of the prevailing epidemics, yet all of our schools have been considerably broken up in their work. Plans have had to be changed and re-changed, which is not productive of the best results.”

The same year, the Town Clerk reports that in 1918: “There were 18 births, 26 deaths. 37 dogs licensed.” This indicates about

seven more deaths than average over the preceding years for which I have data, and the epidemic was not yet half over.

How many deaths were there and what was it like in Brooksville during those eight intense months the flu was plaguing the nation? There is very little documentation about this period of time locally or nationally. It is a period of history that has not been recorded well. Perhaps it was a firestorm with little time to get it down on paper. I also like to think it might have been simply a hushed time. Better not to speak of it and tempt fate in that way in small rural Maine towns.

Now, this history comes to us only as second- and third-hand stories. Our understanding of an

earlier time can help us know better how to deal with modern-day crises in our community. We need these stories to create a picture of Brooksville during one of its most traumatic times. While we waited for the onset of the 2009 swine flu, we could try to imagine what our community must have gone through in the winter of 1918 and 1919. If you have any stories of that time in Brooksville, please e-mail or mail your stories to me to be preserved in the Brooksville Historical Society archive.

Rebecca Poole
455 Varnumville Rd.
Brooksville, ME 04617
ralphandbec@gmail.com



Faye Austin Cosentino

When Faye Austin Cosentino retired from a distinguished career in nursing in 1990, she moved back to her hometown and spent the next 18 years, until her death in November of 2008, working tirelessly to preserve Brooksville’s past. Faye was born in a farmhouse on the Varnumville Road and went to elementary school in North Brooksville and high school in South Brooksville. When she returned after working in Washington, D.C. and New York City, marrying and raising a daughter, she built a log cabin on Coastal Rd. next door to her mother, for whom Faye cared in her last days. That log cabin turned into a desktop-publishing house for nine books of historical interest to the town, including three fully indexed volumes documenting all of the town’s 49 cemeteries, with inscriptions, photos and GPS coordinates, and her final work, *Military Men and Women of Brooksville*. What a debt we owe to Faye for making Brooksville’s history accessible for the generations to come. Her publications are available from the Brooksville Historical Society, where she served as a board member and co-president.

Blueberry Aerial Spraying: The Knowns and the Unknowns

ELIZABETH BESSETTE

On June 16, 2009 around 7 a.m. I was outside enjoying the “dawn chorus.” I heard a helicopter, which sounded close, so I walked out into my field to see where it was coming from. A helicopter flew over our field. I then smelled something funny. As I stared in shock, the helicopter proceeded to spray a blueberry field a little farther up the river from our property on Judy Point, off the Bagaduce Road in North Brooksville. I called my neighbor, Peter Suber, to ask if he had seen the helicopter. He said he has observed this spraying every June for the last five years, and one year they sprayed his house by mistake.

When I inquired at the town house, I found out that G.M. Allen, the large blueberry company on Ridge Road in Orland, Maine, owned the sprayed field. I also discovered that blueberry growers are not required to notify the town about when and where they will be spraying, making it very difficult for the town to know facts about aerial spraying in the town. Many blueberry companies subcontract out the aerial spraying, and information regarding who does the actual spraying and their track record for errors (overspraying, hitting the wrong field, a house, a pond or river) is currently not available to town residents.

The Maine Board of Pesticide Control (BPC) told me that G.M. Allen is required to disclose what

they spray, if you ask them, and to send you a manufacturer’s fact sheet. Also they are now required to notify anyone who lives within 1,320 feet of the field who has contacted the BPC specifically requesting notification. So I called G.M. Allen Company and asked them what they sprayed. On that particular field, they used Arrow, a water-soluble herbicide intended to kill grass. I requested the manufacturer’s fact sheet, but all they offered was the fact that anyone can easily look it up on the internet.

In case you don’t remember how wet it was last year, it proceeded to rain constantly for the next two plus weeks after they sprayed this water-soluble chemical. This blueberry field they sprayed is on a hill that slopes down into the Bagaduce River, and common sense tells me this washed right into the river.

G.M. Allen Company also told me that they spray Imidan every other July, since there is a bearing year and a non-bearing year in commercial blueberry fields. This means it will be sprayed in the particular field near my house in July 2010.

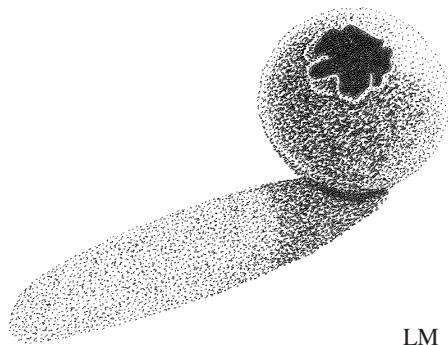
Imidan, also called Phosmet, is a registered neurotoxin, included in a list of these substances found on the internet. A neurotoxin is any substance that attacks the structures of the brain, and Imidan is on the World Health Organiza-

tion’s Acute Hazard List. With a little on-line research, I found that Imidan affects bee populations and is known to build up in river sediment. It also affects the growth, behavior, and mortality of amphibians, crustaceans, fish, insects, mollusks and zooplankton.

Nowadays the upper Bagaduce is home to bald eagles, loons, kingfishers, plovers, and the very rare pygmy alewives, which go up the river to spawn in Walker’s Pond. There are otters and seals, countless birds and fish nesting and spawning up here. Also the Bagaduce is one of only four estuary systems in Maine supporting a horseshoe-crab population. As these chemicals wash down from the land, what effect do they have on these creatures living in and near the water? And what effect might they have on humans who eat the oysters, clams, mussels, lobsters and fish coming out of the water? In fact, with aerial spraying, your livestock, your pets, your children, your grandchildren or yourself, if you happen to be driving, walking, camping, picnicking or living near a field, are potential victims of insecticide or herbicide aerial spraying.

Another disturbing fact is that these chemicals are not handled with the utmost care. One source told me that the EMTs are constantly being called in the summer by these blueberry companies

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because their migrant workers are not educated on the proper use or protection needed when working with or around these chemicals.

Last summer I talked to many residents about this issue, including Basil Ladd, who used to grow blueberries commercially. He said it used to be the law that if you were a commercial grower, you had to spray to insure that no one ingested the worm that can sometimes be present in the blueberry. Interesting that we now know that those worms, while maybe disgusting, were not dangerous to us, but can we say the same about the chemicals used to control the worm?

I also learned that the town of Machias found that their public drinking water supply had been contaminated with Velpar, another neurotoxin, from blueberry field spraying. The BPC failed to notify the town of the contamination, even after a chemist evaluating Downeast public water supplies discovered it. It wasn't until an article appeared in the Bangor Daily News that the citizens of Machias found out.

I met with our selectmen to share what I had learned and voice my concerns about impact

of aerial spraying on human and wildlife health. It was an interesting session, and they were very concerned and open-minded. Someone mentioned that the blueberry companies used to announce on the radio when and where they would be doing aerial spraying. One selectman thought there was another company also spraying in Brooksville. Darrell Fowler said he knew one of the Allens and thought he could get the company to make a courtesy call to the town, informing them of when they were spraying. But is it enough?

When I was speaking with the BPC, they informed me that since it was such a wet summer, a fungicide had been approved for aerial spraying. I don't know if this aerial spraying of an approved fungicide happened in Brooksville or not, and neither does anyone else, unless they happened to be near a field when it was sprayed. After expressing this concern to the representative on the pesticide board, I was referred to a list on their website of 25 towns in Maine that have established ordinances regarding aerial spraying. (See www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides to get to the Maine Board of Pesticide Control website.)

Castine has a permit requirement for any spraying near the town's aquifer. Harpswell has prohibited insecticides and all aerial applications that may affect aquatic invertebrates, protecting their marine industries. Lebanon has banned all aerial applications of pesticides and herbicides.

Limestone has banned any aerial applications near their Trafton Lake. Owl's Head has banned aerial herbicide application. Many towns have simply created an ordinance requiring a permit for each aerial spraying in order to allow the town to determine if the spraying is a risk to humans or too close to a natural resource. I am sure these towns would be willing to share their ordinance language and strategy with our town so that we can learn from their efforts

Although the state recently passed a bill in which the distance from a sprayed field that triggers mandatory notification of neighboring residents was increased from the current 500 ft. to 1,320 ft., this change was fought tooth and nail by the blueberry companies and their lobbyists. Twenty-five towns have decided that they cannot afford to leave protection of their citizens and their environment to state legislators. They have chosen to act to protect themselves.

Right now anyone who is concerned with this issue can do two things. First, if you live within 1320 feet of a blueberry field that might be sprayed, you can call the Maine Board of Pesticide Control and request notification. There is a March 15 deadline for this year, but see what you can do. Second, you could speak to your selectmen urging them to further investigate the spraying of blueberry fields, perhaps call a special town meeting and, if prudent, develop an ordinance on aerial spraying in our town.



Activities

Brooksville Elementary School

Brooksville to Alaska breakfast, March 20, 7–10 am • Slush and Mud dinner and show: March 27, 5:00 • BES Drama Production: April 30 & May 1 • Brooksville to Alaska breakfast: May 1, 7–10 am • Brooksville to Alasak Softball Tournament: May 1 & 2 • PreK–8 Spring Concert: May 18, 6:30 pm • Roadside Clean-up: May (TBD) • Brooksville to Alaska breakfast: June 5, 7–10 am • Grade 8 Graduation: June 8, 7 pm • Info: 326-8500 • www.brooksvilleschool.org

Brooksville Free Public Library

Hours: see box to right • Pre-School Story Hour: Mondays at 10:30 am • Book Discussion Group: 2nd Mon., 10 am • Board of Trustees meets 2nd Wed., 4 pm • Friends of Library meets 2nd Thurs, 1:30 pm • Readers' Cafe discussion group, 3rd Sat., 10 am. • Friends of Library Annual meeting with guest speaker Jean Davison: June 22, 5 pm (tentative date) • Info: 326-4560 or www.brooksvillelibrary.org

Brooksville Historical Society

meets every second Wed. of the month at 7 pm at the Town House. All are welcome • Info: 326-8008 • denishb@myfairpoint.net

Majabigwaduce Chapter DAR

2nd Monday of each month, 6:30–8 pm, Brooksville Town House • All women 18 yrs and older welcome • Info: Joe-Anne Corwin, 326-0533 or Liz Hotchkiss, 326-8570 • www.dar.org

Neighborcare

Neighbors helping neighbors. Volunteers provide free health-related services, respite, transportation, errands, etc. Call Jeannie Gaudette for assistance or to volunteer at 326-4735

Get Strong, Get Healthy

Come join us for exercise at the Community Center • Mon., Wed. & Fri., 7:30–8:45 am, \$5 per class (first one free) • Leader: Sylvia Wilder • Info: 326-4801

West Brooksville

Congregational Church, UCC

Jolly Helpers luncheon, all are welcome: Wed., March 17, noon • Free community breakfast; come meet your friends & neighbors: Sat., May 8, 7:30–9 am • Worship: Sundays, 10 am • Rev. Allen Myers • Info: 326-8283

Brooksville United

Methodist Church

Buck's Harbor Sanctuary: Sundays, 10 am • Rev. David Vandiver • Info: 326-8564 • david@mainelywired.net

Reversing Falls Sanctuary

Lenten Series: Transitions As Soul Work: Sundays, March 14, 21, & 28, 4 pm • 818 Bagaduce Rd., North Brooksville

Brooksville Friends and Neighbors

1st Wed. of every month, 6:30–8 pm, Town House • Info: 326-0916

Meditation

Tibetan Buddhist: Thurs., 6–7 pm. Call for location • Info: Philip & Lydia Osgood, 326-4047

Open Mic

2nd Sundays of month until June, 6 pm, Reversing Falls Sanctuary • Potluck • Info: Tim or Lake, 326-9266

Brooksville Yoga

Unique combination of yoga and Yamuna Ball Rolling • Wed, 4:30–6 pm, Beginners • Wed., 9–11 am, Continuing • Instructor: Alison Chase • Info: 326-4205

Brooksville Community Center

Call for information about events or rentals • Betsy Jones, 326-8296

To List Your Event

Call or e-mail information two weeks before Sept. 1, Dec.1, March 1 & June 1:

Joan MacCracken, 326-0916
e-mail: joanmacc@aol.com

Town Office 326-4518

Monday 9 am–2 pm
Wednesday 9 am–2 pm
Thursday 6 pm–8 pm

Selectman John Gray
Richard Bakeman
Darrell Fowler

Town Clerk Amber Bakeman
Treasurer Freida Peasley
Tax Collector Yvonne Redman

Burn Permits at Fire Station
Thursdays from 7–8 pm

Harbormaster Sarah Cox
326-9622

Library 326-4560

Monday 9 am–5 pm
Wednesday 9 am–5 pm
Thursday 6 pm–8 pm
Saturday 9 am–12 noon

Post Office Window

Mon.–Fri. 9:00 am–12 noon
1 pm–4 pm
Saturday 8:30–10:30 am

Post Office Lobby

Mon.–Fri. 7:30 am–4:00 pm
Saturday 7:30 am–10:30 am

Buck's Harbor Market 326-8683

Mon.–Fri. 7 am–6 pm
Sat. & Sun. 8 am–6 pm

Update on Town-Wide Weatherization Project

With the help of a partnership (including the *Brooksville Breeze*) brought together by an informal energy interest group, the Town of Brooksville has been awarded \$40,512 to initiate a town-wide home weatherization project. The concept behind the project is to use thermal photographs that show heat loss from houses to encourage weatherization activities by those who might benefit.

Typically, weatherization work costing two or three thousand dollars will save the owner \$500 per year (at current fuel prices), so that the weatherization work pays for itself in four to 6 years

(an annual rate of return on investment of 18 to 25%). The savings continue, so the result is similar to an extra \$500 per year of tax-free income. As the price of fuel rises, the amount of savings rises.

The weatherization itself provides work for local contractors and tradespeople, yielding yet another benefit for the town.

In addition to paying for the thermal photographs, the funded project provides for five weatherization jobs and ten full energy audits for selected participants.

Look for gatherings of interested people to work on getting this project off the ground and join

in...or contact Ralph Chapman for a copy of the project proposal and to be put on the mail list: rchapman.cea@gmail.com.

In case you were wondering how this winter's snowfall compares with other years, here's some data from my back deck on Cape Rosier:

'09-'10	51 inches (so far)
'08-'09	81 inches
'07-'08	108 inches
'06-'07	52 inches
'05-'06	40 inches
'04-'05	79 inches
'03-'04	64 inches
'02-'03	66 inches
'01-'02	60 inches
'00-'01	118 inches

Capt. Lee Smith

Fire Department

Matt emphasized that the cost of equipment has increased dramatically, and since Brooksville's fire trucks are aging, he is hoping to get a grant to help with financing a new truck at some point. On Matt's wish list is a volunteer dispatcher to assist with emergency calls. Presently, 911 emergency calls are answered at the Sheriff's office and then relayed to Peninsula Ambulance and to the pagers of the Brooksville fire fighters. Having a volunteer at the station to handle the communications when further help is needed would be an advantage. Currently, the sheriff's office fields those calls for additional assistance. The de-

partment is also hoping to raise funds to build a new fire station in North Brooksville behind the current very old station, which will be used for storage

The department is planning several fundraisers this year, including a raffle for lobster (20 lbs.) or wood (one cord) with three drawings over the summer. Tickets are \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00 and are already available from any fire fighter and in Brooksville at Buck's Harbor Market, Buck's Harbor Marine and the Town Office; in Sedgwick at C&G Growers, Tashafer's and Eggmoggin Country Store; in Penobscot at Bayview Take Out and Northern

Bay Market; and in Blue Hill at Peddler's Wagon. In August, a dance at the fire station with at least two live bands will liven up the end of the summer. The department will also be starting a bottle collection project.

Brooksville is lucky to have a group of citizens who devote many volunteer hours to the department and are dedicated to helping their neighbors with fires and other emergencies. Be sure to thank them next time you see them in the neighborhood. And I am sure Matt would add: Be sure to have your house number clearly visible from the road.



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The Brooksville Breeze

The Newsletter of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors

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Brooksville Friends & Neighbors (BFN)

P.O. Box 101

Brooksville, ME 04617-0101

Phone: 326-0916



Newsletter By:

Joan MacCracken,
Sheila Moir, Peter Beaven,
Judy Tredwell, Jean Webster,
Katherine Clifford, Gail Page,
Leslie Moore

Check it out!

www.brookvillemaine.org

The Brooksville Breeze originated as a newsletter to increase community communication, thus supporting the mission of Brooksville Friends & Neighbors (BFN) to strengthen and encourage local activities that promote health, both physical and emotional. *The Breeze* welcomes your comments, suggestions and donations to offset costs of printing and mailing. It is published four times a year.

Tell us who *you* are:

Brooksville Friends & Neighbors, P.O. Box 101, Brooksville, ME 04617

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Summer Resident? Don't Live in Brooksville? To receive *The Breeze* by e-mail, send us your e-mail and a donation. No e-mail? If snail mail required, we'd appreciate a donation.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for articles _____

**United States[®]
Census
2010**

Please remember to fill out and return your census form. Census data can have an effect on many things, including legislative districting, federal and state funding, and transportation and infrastructure planning.

Let's make sure that all of Brooksville counts!