

February 4 – Meeting begins at 7PM at the John F. Hill Grange Hall, State Road. Paul Johnson will talk with us about his very interesting work as superintendent of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Eliot.

As we bid our friend a fond farewell -



The Eliot United Methodist Church was standing room only on December 29th, as we said goodbye and celebrated the life and gifts of our dear friend Jeannette Paul.



Following the successful separation vote in July 1819, the Maine state constitutional convention met in Portland in October 1819. The proposed state constitution had strong protections for religious freedom, allowed black voting rights, and had no property requirement to vote, yet it also denied paupers, women, and Native Americans the franchise. The state constitution was overwhelmingly approved by a popular vote in January 1820. Although federal law granted Native American voting rights in 1924, Maine state law did not allow it until 1953.

“Brainstorming the Bicentennial!” public programs have been hosted in Maine from Portland to Madawaska. These begin with brief presentations about the statehood process, and then open to audience discussion and local planning about how best to commemorate the state bicentennial in 2019-2021. ***Will we be hosting one in Eliot??***



Born in Eliot on January 5, 1923 she was a daughter of Advil and Elsie (Wood) Spinney and attended local schools. In 1941 she married Francis D. Paul built a home on Pleasant Street where they raised their five children - Sharon, Joan, Harry, Debby and Pam. Her roots were part of the history of Eliot - as a member of the Spinney family as well as her husband's Paul family, two of Eliot's first settlers.

What can we say about such a wonderful life lived and how privileged we were to be a part of it? We see her smile and the twinkle in her eye especially when talking about the children whom she welcomed to the #8 Schoolhouse each year.

Jeannette was always ready to help in whatever way she could to further the goals of the Historical Society. She worked with Eleanor Zamarchi in the production of the



book "The Schools of Eliot", a subject that was dear to her heart as she was deeply committed to the education of our town's children. She served for many years on the board of the *Friends of the #8 Schoolhouse* as it planned the initial fundraisers and developed the plans for the schoolhouse restoration and subsequent use.





During the town's Bicentennial she and Judith Hilt shared the stage as Grand Marshals for the town's parade and Jan gave public talks about the history of her Spinney and Paul families, a history we both shared and often talked about. She joined the late Paul Rousseau, past



president of EHS, aboard the Thomas Leighton, narrating the sites for those on board. She also wrote a poem for the occasion which was adopted by our Bicentennial Committee as the official poem. Many are those of us who were the recipients of her poetry, which are

treasured gifts.

An active member the town she loved, she served her community as the church school teacher and historian, a Girl Scout leader and on the Eliot Children's Leadership Council and Substance Abuse Prevention Council. Her door was always open. She was an example and mentor to many. We will all miss her dearly.



News and Notes

At our annual **December** meeting **Show and Tell** several members shared with us some interesting items and information. **Bernie Bruneau** brought in some pieces from his collection of old toasters. **Nancy Cultrera**, whose grandfather



was a salesman for the National Biscuit Company told us what a treat it was when he visited to be able to have a treat from his sample tin. **Pam Ashley** brought back memories with a program from one of Eliot's Minstrel Shows (1937) and picture of the cast at the Grange Hall. **Bob Fisher** showed us a wooden pipe he picked up in Turkey when he was in the Navy. The "hat" comes off the bowl!



Jan Cerabona escorted by "Santa" shared with us her tradition of having her children and then her grandchildren taking their pictures with a Santa that she had bought. Included were the pictures, over the years, of her children and grandchildren.

Julie brought with her a document from the Historical Society Collection – a logbook from the *USS Kearsage*, most noted for its defeat of the *Alabama* during the Civil War.



At our first meeting of the New Year, **Len Bogh**, who taught at the one-room school house on Chebeague Island in Maine, shared his experiences and provided insight into the life of the island and the challenges of teaching children of grades K to 6 in the same classroom. Chebeague Island is located 10 miles northeast of Portland in Casco Bay in the Gulf of Maine. It was originally used as a fishing ground by Abenaki Native Americans and today is a town in Cumberland County. The permanent residents of the island number 320 which in the summer swells to 3000.

In Maine's history the islands were some of the first places to be settled providing a living fishing and relative security from attacks by the Native peoples. Even into the 1800's the islands of Maine had thriving communities and many islands would have several schools depending on the population. The population on the islands gradually diminished and today there are only 15 year-round island communities in Maine, each with their own school.

As in the beginning and so too today island people are rugged individualists who work hard. They maintain a comradery and support each other. About half the people make a living on the island, mostly fishing, and the others commute to work on the mainland.



When Len was teaching, the schoolhouse on Chebeague Island had 26 children with 2 classes for children K to 6. Each class has 2 teachers - one an assistant. The children in higher grades attend school in Yarmouth. Len, as all teachers on Chebeague did, commuted from the mainland every day.

People are very informal, calling

each other by first names except when addressing the teachers and with so few children you find that all are friends and participate together in all the activities. Everyone knows everyone on the island and because of this safe environment they are very permissive regarding the children and give them great liberty. The island for them "is like one gigantic playground". The children are well versed in the history of their island and their families, and the work their families have done, going back hundreds of years.

Schools are treated as an extension of the community. They take great pride in their schools and value their teachers. The residents don't receive as much money from the state as to the larger school districts and so they take on the needs of the school, donating their time and money to help out and provide what is needed.

Because of the various ages of the children in the class Len had to adapt his lesson plans based on the age and abilities of each child. For those subjects that he could he would start with an overall theme and give assignments for projects based on the abilities of the individual students. Planning could be complicated and the children were good at helping each other to grasp the material that he presents. There was also an assistant in his class who would help monitor individual children and provide extra help.



In general island communities have trouble finding teachers. The idea of having to get up early to take a ferry out to the island and then return to the mainland late in the evening doesn't appeal to very one but he found it a very enjoyable commute and his teaching experience there very rewarding and highly recommends it.

New Map of Regional Nature Preserves



Come Spring 2019, local residents and visitors will be able to easily locate lesser-known trails and natural treasures in the region thanks to a new map highlighting more than 30 nature preserves. The Mount Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative and its Gateway to Maine Outside partners will work together to distribute the new map, with generous funding from the L.L. Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program and the Maine Community Foundation's Fund for Maine Land Conservation. The paper map (along with a digital version) will be free of charge and will clearly denote information about trail accessibility to bikes and pets, as well as restroom availability. It will also highlight the four preserves in the region that offer universal access to people using wheelchairs, strollers, or other mobility assistance. - Great Works Regional Land Trust newsletter.



Recently seen on
Spinney Creek!



January 24 - *George to John - Six Generations: Digging in Archives and the Ground*. 7:30 pm, Berwick Academy Arts Center. John Demos will present a talk on researching a line of the Gray family of South Berwick. George Gray born in Scotland, fought the English in the battle of Dunbar in 1640. George, a Scottish prisoner was sold into indentured servitude and sent to Maine. Learn about the discovery of the 17th century Scottish homestead location and a 19th century sawmill site. *Old Berwick Historical Society* program. Lectures are FREE with donations gratefully accepted.



My Everest Odyssey
by Russell Staples

Published by Beech River Books, Center Ossipee, NH

The remarkable story of one of the earliest trekkers to the base camp of Mount Everest

Russell Staples a graduate of the University of New Hampshire, and native of Tamworth, NH, joined the Peace Corps in 1966. In 1967, with \$200 in his pocket the twenty-two-year-old headed for Nepal, traveling from a small village in South India, in November, with no maps and little more than a borrowed backpack and youthful enthusiasm, to the base of the tallest mountain in the world. The nearly 400 miles from Kathmandu to Basecamp, took forty days and included travel by foot, planes, trains, busses, and rickshaws.

Unlike Everest adventures of today, Staples' 1967 hike was unsupported – the robust Everest tourism industry hadn't yet arrived in Nepal. There were no planes, no hospitals, and certainly no rescues. Instead, he relied on the generosity and kindness of rural Nepali farmers and his own grit and determination. His journey took him by ancient Buddhist monasteries, through neatly terraced fields and pristine Himalayan wilderness as he walked in the footsteps of Sir Edmund Hillary and the 1963 American expedition.

Staples' memoir is based on the journal he kept during his trek and includes incredible, never-before-published photos of an Everest and a Nepal that exist now only in the pages of history books. If you would like a signed copy of his book you can contact Russ at rcstaples@roadrunner.com. Visit his Facebook page at MyEverestOdyssey