

The Arrowsic Arrow

News Around & About Arrowsic

Volume 37, Number 2
Summer 2023

Town Meeting

The Annual Town Meeting to receive the Town Report and vote on the Warrant was convened at 6:30 in the Fire Station with a standing room only crowd.



Town Meeting (photos by Karin Sadtler & Tom Spear)

Don Hudson was elected as Moderator and Barbara Boyce was reelected unanimously as Town Clerk.

Index	
Town Meeting	1-3
Selectboard	4
Town Clerk	4
Zoning Updates	5
Water Access	6
Climate Resistance	7-8
Climate Handbook	8
Future Water Levels	9
Featured Artist - Carla Weeks	10-12
Milly's Poems	12
Hawk and Squirrel	13-14
Rainbow over the Kennebec	14
Living Near Woods	15
Signs	15
Lighthouses of Arrowsic	16
Community News	17
Swap Barn	17
Identifying Bird	18-19
Crab Count	19

Mike McMahon and Jennifer Geiger were then nominated to the Selectboard to replace the retiring Will Neilson. Geiger was elected by a vote of 45-41. Steve Bonine and Rachel Strachan were unanimously returned as Treasurer and Tax Collector respectively.

First Selectman Walter Briggs noted that all are to be applauded for their willingness to serve the town, while he also noted that additional volunteers are needed for the Education and Planning Committees, while individual positions as firemen, election clerks, and an Animal Control Officer are also needed.

Budget Items

Budget items comprising \$378,063 were then dispatched quickly, many of them unanimously.

Several budget items increased due to rising costs. Salaries increased from \$62,847 this year to \$67,793 next, ambulance services rose from \$6,500 to \$10,000, road maintenance from \$101,500 to \$136,500, recycling from \$19,000 to \$23,000, and solid waste from \$38,000 to \$41,500.

Briggs also noted that services such as auditing, legal, and assessing are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain amidst sharply rising costs and increasing unwillingness of vendors to serve small towns like ours. As a result, auditing expenses increased from \$9,000 to \$15,000 due to the resignation of our previous auditors and the need to hire new ones, assessing expenses increased from \$2,000 to \$4,500, and insurance rose from \$10,000 to \$13,000.

In addition to increasing the funding for the Fire Department from \$12,000 to \$16,000, townspeople voted to add \$40,000 from surplus to the AFD

(cont) Capital Improvement Fund towards purchasing a new tanker in the next decade. New tankers currently cost more than \$500,000, and the fund's current balance is \$223,875.

From An Arrowsic Newsletter, October 1986

20% of those polled wanted to close the Arrowsic Fire Department and contract with a neighboring town, while 80% were for upgrading the department to be fire response and continue to use Bath as primary backup for house fires.

Upgrading would include fundraising to purchase a NEW 2-3-ton four-wheel drive truck, then a tank truck, and expand the station. Support equipment would be replaced or added to the current inventory using Fire Protection Funds generated from taxes. There were many suggestions to team up with Georgetown in buying equipment, and in firefighting efforts. There were over 200 offers of cash donations, auction items, or construction labor. Of the 47 people who were interested in joining the Volunteers, 18 stated a willingness to be regular firemen, and 29 opted for occasional backup.

A drop in computer costs led to a welcome decrease of administrative costs from \$30,300 to \$20,000, while there was a small increase in contributions to non-profit organizations that serve townspeople from \$6,250 to \$6,885.

Two days before the town meeting, townspeople had also voted to approve the \$41.7m RSU1 education budget, 37-1. Arrowsic provided the strongest support and had the highest turnout at 8.9% of the four towns.

Townspeople also voted to allow the selectboard to dispose of any real estate acquired for nonpayment of taxes. In response to questions, Briggs noted that a non-conforming lot on 127 is currently being considered for sale to an abutter.

New Fish Commission Established

Several non-budgetary articles followed. At the recommendation of the Conservation Committee, an Arrowsic Fish Commission was approved to monitor and manage the alewife and herring fishery in Sewall Pond. After years spent successfully reestablishing the fishery, the CC conducted its first harvest this year and wished to pass future

responsibility for it to a new dedicated commission, similar the Shellfish Conservation Commission.

Solid Waste Ordinance

The Recycling and Solid Waste Committee brought forth amendments to the town's Solid Waste Ordinance to encourage use and repair as well as recycling, and to request landlords inform tenants of their obligations to recycle.

Accessory Dwelling Units and Short-Term Rentals

The Planning Board proposed two sets of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance because of changes to state laws. The first set allows an owner to add a self-contained accessory dwelling unit (ADU) of no more than 850 sq. ft. on an existing lot of more than 2 acres, provided current setbacks, waste management rules, and potable water requirements are met. The amendments passed 41-24.



Jennifer Geiger on zoning amendments

The second set of amendments restricts short term rentals of less than 28 days and by owners who do not reside on their property for at least six months a year. The amendments passed 48-12.

Broadband Report

During a break in the meeting, Don Kornrumpf, Chair of the Arrowsic Broadband Authority reported that after considerable delays caused by difficulties getting approval of the USDA funding awarded earlier, the town was successful in gaining a \$1m grant with expedited approval and no payback required from the Maine Connectivity Authority. Combined with a donation of \$500,000 by a resident this means that construction will be fully funded without the town incurring any debt. Further, Consolidated Communications and Central Maine Power have now approved all but one of the poles required. A construction contract with Axiom is in the final stages of approval, and construction should begin soon.

(cont.) The new service will begin at \$49.99 a month, and the ABA will hold an information meeting with townspeople on July 13 at 6:30.

Water Access

Karen Robbins, a member of the Conservation Committee, then discussed a possible proposal to acquire a 1.8-acre lot on Indian Rest Road for water access to the Back River. Since the town earlier mandated that the Conservation Committee investigate such a possibility, \$91,360 in watercraft excise taxes have accrued in a segregated Water Access Fund towards such a purchase.

Given that suitable waterfront property has been extremely hard to come by, the Commission wondered if townspeople were in favor of them continuing to pursue a current offer by the owners of the lot to sell to the town. Those present overwhelmingly supported a straw vote in support of further negotiations,



Don Kornrumpf on ABA

subject, ultimately, to a formal proposal and vote by a special town meeting.

from An Arrowsic Newsletter, October 1986

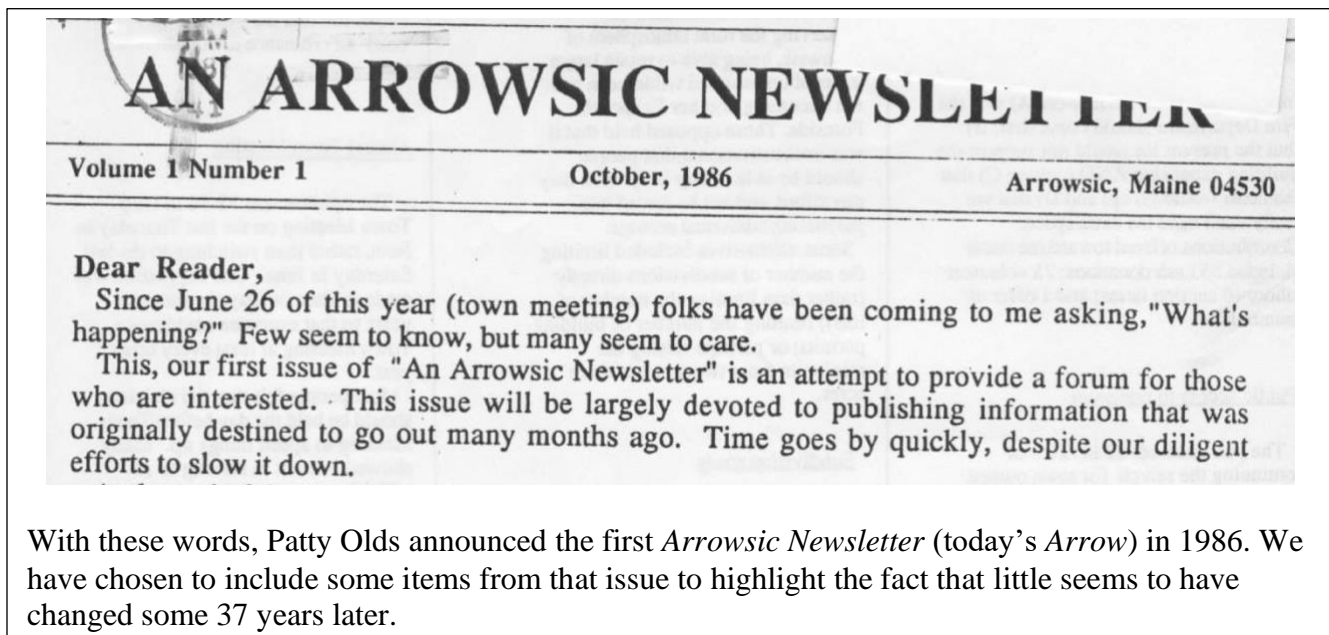
The poll showed 82 in favor of continuing the search for town owned water access, and 81 opposed. If the town were to acquire and develop such a site, most people only wanted to see a large ramp, parking area, and trash cans. 43 people would approve the town to purchase a site, 25 to purchase an easement; 18 for a licensed use grant; 13 to use Eminent Domain, and a couple of suggestions were to trade existing town properties for water access.

Finally, townspeople voted to approve dedicating a portion of Rte 127 to Private Merwin A. Delano, Jr., a local soldier who was killed in Vietnam. Pvt. Delano was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for heroism in battle.

This year's Town Report was dedicated to Sheila Spear, Arrowsic's first Town Administrator.

It was an unusually long, eventful, and successful town meeting, and a good time was had by all.

—Tom Spear



With these words, Patty Olds announced the first *Arrowsic Newsletter* (today's *Arrow*) in 1986. We have chosen to include some items from that issue to highlight the fact that little seems to have changed some 37 years later.

From the Selectboard

With another town meeting in the books, a few thoughts...

First, a huge "thank you" to all who showed up. Your participation is essential to governing the town, and we continued the Arrowsic tradition of civil discussion and debate. And props to Don Hudson for masterfully moderating.

Welcome to our newest Board member, Jennifer

Geiger. She's leaving her position as Planning Board Chair, where she steered the board through some tough decisions on Accessory Dwelling Units and Short-Term Rentals.

The search for waterfront access is concentrating on a property on the Back River. Pay attention to town proceedings and make your voice heard about this important issue.

—Walter Briggs, First Selectman

From the Town Clerk

This has been a gloomy June but there are a few benefits from all this rain. Our wells and water barrels are full. Books that have been waiting in stacks are being read. The grass is very green. And when the clouds finally give way, we won't complain about the heat.

The town office is open by appointment. Rachel (Tax Collector), Denise (Town Administrator), Steve (Treasurer) and I are eager to assist you with town business in a timely manner. Many questions can be answered by going to the town website at www.arrowsic.org. Our website can help you:

- register your car, boat, ATV, or trailer.
- locate forms for septic reimbursement and property abatements.
- read minutes of town and committee meetings.
- answer questions about voting.
- purchase a hunting, fishing, or clam license.
- register your dog.
- And so much more!

Before calling the office, check the town website to see if your question can be answered online or who best to contact for assistance.

Thank you to Paul Kalkstein for maintaining the website.

Election Results: RSU1 Budget Referendum

2023 Budget Referendum Preliminary Results - 06/13/2023			
	Yes	No	Blank
Arrowsic	37	1	0
Bath	121	25	0
Phippsburg	89	10	2
Woolwich	25	12	0
Total	272	48	2

8.2% of registered voters in Arrowsic cast a vote. Turnout was low for all towns that are part of the RSU1 school district.

Election Workers Needed

To run an election, clerks, and counters from the major parties (D & R) are needed. This ensures transparency and the integrity of our election. Election clerks typically work 4-hour shifts. The pay is \$15 per hour. Election workers are an important part of the democratic process in our community. Please contact Barbara, barbara.boyce@arrowsic.org for more information.

Thank you to Clarke, Livy, Anita, Brandy, and Bets for manning the polls for this last election. Happy summer!

—Barbara Boyce, Town Clerk

Zoning Ordinance Updates

Arrowsic residents passed two updates to the Arrowsic Zoning Ordinances at the annual town meeting on June 15, 2023. The updates provide guidance for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and for Short Term Rentals.

Accessory Dwelling Units

“An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions”, generally referred to by its legislative tracking name of LD 2003, was signed into law by Governor Mills on April 27, 2022. The law is designed to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to housing production in Maine, while preserving local ability to create land use plans and protect sensitive environmental resources.

Section 6 of LD 2003 was applicable to the municipality of Arrowsic. This section essentially allows any lot with a single-family dwelling in an area where housing is permitted to have one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) as well, either within the existing home, attached to it, or in a new structure, effective July 1, 2023. The updated Arrowsic Zoning Ordinance provides updates to construction standards as allowed under this legislation, however not meeting the lot size requirement cannot prevent an ADU from being created/built as long as other dimensional requirements are met.

Subsequently, the state passed LD 1706 in early June 2023. This legislation extended the effective date of LD 2003 to July 1, 2024, and includes some clarifications about what towns may include in regulation of ADU construction. The current updated ordinance took effect on June 15, 2023 on passage at town meeting. The Arrowsic Planning Board will review the new legislation to see what, if any, further changes to the Zoning Ordinance will be needed to remain in compliance with the state law by July 1, 2024.

Short Term Rentals

Arrowsic does not have commercial zoning; all zoning in Arrowsic is residential. At the annual meeting, residents voted to add a proposed Commercial Use definition to the Arrowsic Zoning Ordinance which allows the town to define the circumstances in which the short-term rental of a dwelling will be considered to be a Commercial Use. This update to the Zoning Ordinance definitions reads as follows –

The rental of residential buildings and/or dwellings shall not be considered a commercial use, except that short-term rentals (rental of a dwelling unit for periods of less than 28 days) shall be considered a commercial use if:

- a) *More than one dwelling unit on a single parcel of land, or on two commonly held parcels, is used for any portion of a calendar year as a short-term rental (property held by corporations, trusts or estates with any degree of common ownership or common beneficiaries shall be considered “commonly held.”); or*
- b) *The owner of the short-term rental does not reside in the Town of Arrowsic for at least six months of each calendar year; or*
- c) *The short-term rental is not located on the same parcel or abutting the parcel on which the owner resides.*

Where a residence was rented on a short-term basis during the 12 months preceding the effective date of this definition, the rental shall be considered a nonconforming use.

As a non-conforming use, existing STR's are not affected. Long-term rentals and conforming short-term rentals (rentals of less than 28 days but where none of the three commercial use factors listed in the definition apply) are not affected by the updated ordinance language.

For additional information regarding the updated 2023 Arrowsic Zoning Ordinance, contact Arrowsic Code Enforcement Officer Chris Wilcoxson at Chris.Wilcoxson@Arrowsic.org

—Jennifer Geiger

Bringing Public Water Access to the Community of Arrowsic

On Thursday, June 15, at the annual town meeting, Arrowsic residents overwhelmingly voted, in a non-binding straw vote, in favor of the town pursuing public saltwater access through acquisition of a potential site on Indian Rest Road.

Since then, the Arrowsic Conservation Commission (ACC) and Water Access Planning Committee (WAPC) have continued to do their due diligence, gathering information on four main points:

- What should the site look like and offer to visitors? Things to consider include parking and possible amenities, such as picnic tables, benches, a place to store boats, signage, and/or sanitary facilities.
- How will the town fund the purchase of the property and its continued maintenance? Along with the existing water access fund, possible sources include grants, the sale of unused town property, and donations from town residents. We are working on a purchase and sales agreement to protect both the buyers

and the sellers and will research the desirability of obtaining a gap loan.

- What is the plan to manage the site and to ensuring it is used appropriately and respectfully?
- What are the potential impacts to abutters, and how can these be ameliorated?

These are all questions the ACC and WAPC hope to have answered before the end of summer so that it may present to the town a plan for moving forward. The owners of the property are eager to sell to the town, and we are equally eager to find a fiscally responsible and sensible approach to acquiring this wonderful little corner of Arrowsic for residents and visitors to enjoy for generations to come.

If you are interested in helping in this process, please contact Bob Ater at arrowsica@gmail.com. We also welcome your thoughts, suggestions, and questions.

—Arrowsic Conservation Commission



Photo: P. Friedman Maine Mountain Media

Looking North toward the Proposed Water Access and the Arrowsic-Georgetown Bridge (photo: P. Friedman)

A Storm to Remember – Now What? Arrowsic and Resilience

The December 23, 2022, storm cut the entire town of Arrowsic off from electricity, essential services and each other as power lines fell and roads flooded. Our small but mighty group of volunteer firefighters put in long hours directing traffic away from hazards and clearing roads.

Severe storms like this one are just one of the outcomes of climate change. Arrowsic now has volunteers working to identify ways we can reduce emissions in our town and how to become better prepared as a community for the future.

The State of Maine awarded monies to the town to pay for professional assistance in creating and publishing a Climate Action Plan and other educational materials.

The Arrowsic Conservation Commission (ACC) coordinated this project and recruited 12 volunteers for an ad-hoc subcommittee, the Arrowsic Climate Resilience Committee (ACRC), to work on the following:

Climate Action Plan

The plan aims to identify ways we can reduce carbon emissions, assess our vulnerabilities and the impacts of climate change on Arrowsic, identify potential funding sources and develop a timeline for implementing the plan. Our goal is to bring the Action Plan to the town for a vote in June of 2024.

For the first draft, we are relying heavily on input from over 55 residents who attended the fall 2022 workshop on Climate Change (hosted by the ACC at the Fire Barn) and individual meetings with the

committee chairs and other volunteers in town. We are getting professional assistance from consultants at [Viewshed](#) in Yarmouth.

Resident's Handbook on Climate Actions

We are creating a handbook to share the ways each of us can help reduce emissions and create more resilience in our lives. The handbook is being

produced by a student intern from Bowdoin, Camille Beaulieu. Camille has a wealth of experience and is modeling the handbook after the successful Stewardship Guide, which is available to download [here](#).

Groundwater Modeling Study

We have the great fortune to partner with researchers at Oak Ridge National Laboratory to assess the vulnerability of Arrowsic's fractural bedrock aquifer to saltwater intrusion at no cost to the Town.

If you are subscribed to [town news](#) you may have received an email inviting you to share your well's GPS location. Only 30-40% of our town wells are currently mapped and additional data points will help improve the study.



Head of Spinney Mill Road, Dec. 2022 (photos by Dale Carleton)

How You Can Help

Learn more about the work of the ACRC by visiting its [website](#). There you will find both the minutes and videos of our meetings and starting in July, early drafts of the climate action plan.



Mill Island Causeway

Attend a meeting of the ACRC. Meetings are posted on the town [calendar](#). Share info on your well [here](#).

In July, the first draft of the Action Plan will be available, and your input will be requested. We will be sharing it widely and updating it based on feedback we receive.

Submit your favorite photos of Arrowsic at resilience@arrowsic.org for possible inclusion in the action plan.

Save the Date: On September 26, 2023, all residents are invited to attend a public meeting at the Fire Barn on the draft Climate Action Plan. Childcare will be provided if needed and youth are encouraged to come share their opinions and ideas.

—Mona Schlein & Jody Jones

Arrowsic Residents' Climate Handbook

The Arrowsic Climate Resilience Committee is in the process of drafting an *Arrowsic Climate Handbook* that will serve as an educational resource for the residents of Arrowsic. The *Handbook* will provide climate education, but more importantly, climate mitigation and adaptation actions related to life on our island. It is designed to be used in conjunction with Arrowsic's *Stewardship Guide* and upcoming *Climate Action Plan*. Best of all, it was informed by a community meeting last fall and shaped by your interests! A draft will be available for public comment later in the summer.

The *Handbook* will include a wide range of action items to consider day-to-day, as well as longer term investments, and steps for climate-related emergency preparedness. While we include information like best recycling and composting practices, the handbook also discusses reducing consumption and using what you already have by keeping it in good condition

before purchasing something new. To address the interest of residents excited to do more, the handbook will include a multitude of links to outside resources to further learning and identify additional climate actions. Our goal in this handbook is to provide a range of actions to fit a variety of needs, and we hope you will be inspired to take action where you can.

The author of the *Handbook* is Camille Beaulieu, our intern and a junior at Bowdoin College majoring in Environmental Studies and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. She grew up in Omaha, NE and currently lives in Tucson, AZ. Camille sings in the chamber choir as well as in an a capella group on campus. She also works for Bowdoin's Sustainability Office and was in Residential Life this past year. She is planning to study abroad in New Zealand next spring.

—Camille Beaulieu

Future Water Levels on Arrowsic

Our Earth is in trouble. You have been learning about it in your newspapers; on the internet; on CNN; and from reports of the abnormal loss of polar sea ice and melting glaciers. But it gets lost in the clutter of everyday life like taking the kids to school; making a living; or caring for aging parents. Yet the dangers of climate change are starting to take hold. Uncontrolled wildfires out west and Canada; tornado alleys becoming nation-wide; storms of the century every couple of years; water shortages; and the list goes on.

One of the most discussed climate change issues is rising sea levels. Government agencies assume an 8.8-foot rise in sea level by the end of this century. If you are curious how various sea levels would effect Maine's coast, just log on to [NOAA's Sea Level Rise Viewer](#). More information will be forthcoming from the 2021 Maine study authorized under Maine LD 1572: "A Resolve to Analyze the Impact of Sea Level Rise."

But I fear these well-meaning studies have a fatal flaw in their analytic models. It is often reported that Maine's coast is approximately 3,500 miles counting all the bays and estuaries. But the coastline is much longer when fractal mathematics is applied to include all the tiny inlets, coves, and outcroppings. These under-estimations coupled with the poorly understood effect of mega-storm surges has resulted in such disastrous miscalculations as Hurricane Katrina's sea level rise of over 25 feet.

To make things more complicated for Arrowsic is the island's topology. Rather than being a uniform mass from Preble Point to the Back River, Arrowsic is more like an archipelago, or a series of high ground islands connected by salt marshes and other low ground that will likely be flooded this century. This will require more than just installing bigger storm drain culverts and raising sections of Route 127 and a few secondary roads. Yet as important as our road

assets are to Arrowsic's future, a rising sea level may also seriously impact our most important natural resource, well water.

Arrowsic is not blessed with a uniform soil porous aquifer with accessible water tables found in other parts of the country. Arrowsic, like many other Maine coastal mainland communities and islands, has what is called a fractural bedrock aquifer. This means our wells draw from relatively small pockets

of fresh water in the bedrock and are recharged from surrounding fissures, fractures, cracks, and faults. The speed and quantity of water recharge is called the aquifer's water budget.

As freshwater is lighter than the saltwater in the three brackish rivers surrounding us, the freshwater sits on top of saltwater whose boundary is called the 'zone of dispersion.' This boundary can only fail and allow saltwater intrusion into our wells if the zone's hydrostatic pressure is reduced due to excessive water extraction from over pumping or lack of precipitation causing slow recharging.

To minimize excessive extraction the town has set minimum lot sizes in various sections to reduce the number of wellheads. The good news is our average precipitation rate of 46.6 inches per year is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Rising sea levels will add saltwater hydrostatic pressure against our aquifer and therefore our future primary defense against intrusion is control of our well extraction rates.

These critical issues are currently being reviewed in our developing Arrowsic's Climate Action Plan and upcoming workshops at the end of summer. Your participation and input will be important for our island's future.

—Jack Carr



Route 127 in Flood (photo: Doug Kohring)

Featured Artist: Carla Weeks



Window in Hansa Yellow



Window in Sap Green

Artist's Statement

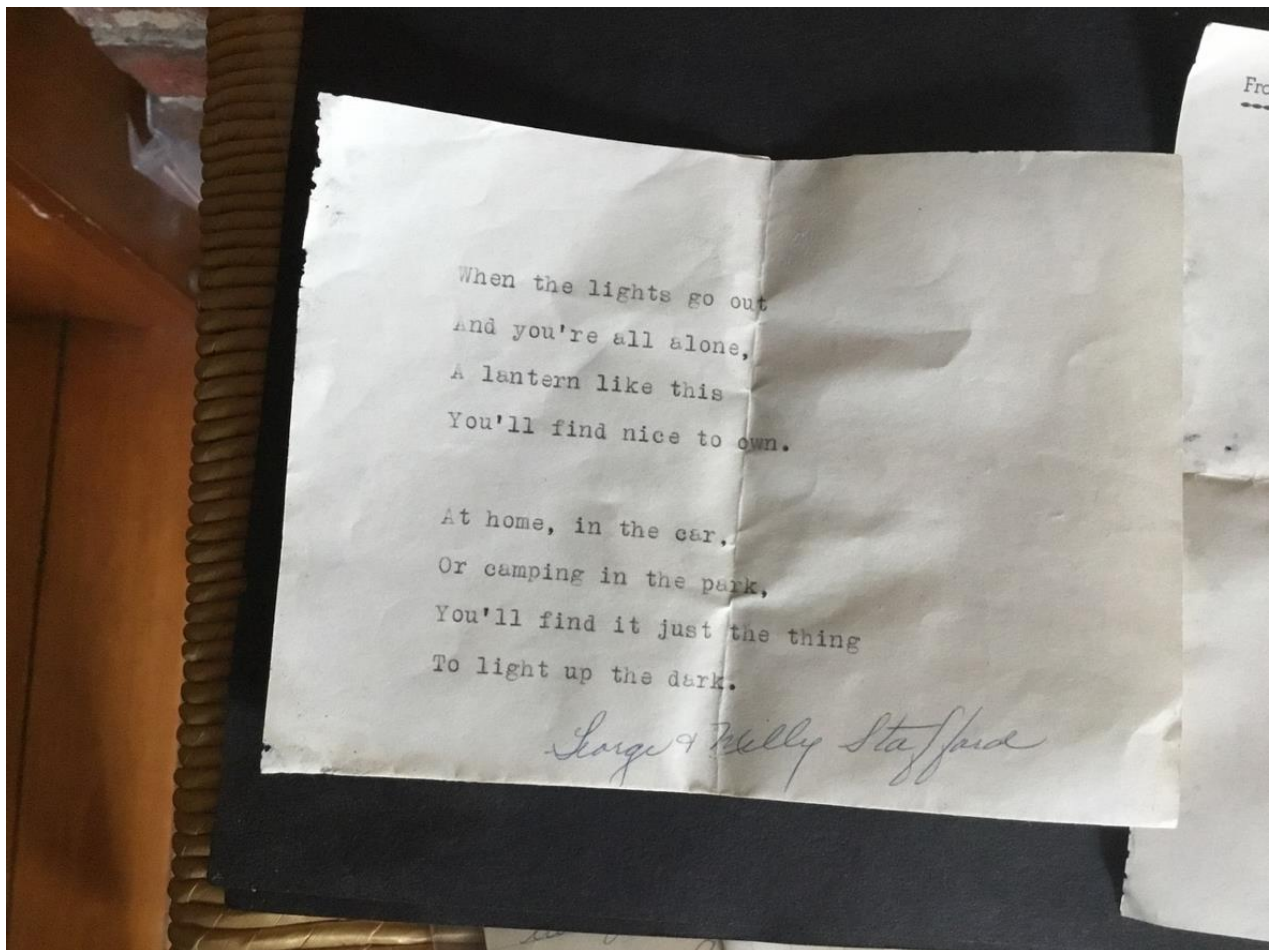
Carla Weeks is a painter and muralist based in Midcoast Maine. Informed by her personal interactions with both the natural landscape and built environment, she utilizes abstraction to navigate through the physical and emotional experience of place. Employing a distinct shape vocabulary to formally explore color relationships, her paintings articulate the shifting nuances of sensory memory.

In her recent oil paintings, Weeks reflects on the relationship between architecture and nature from her

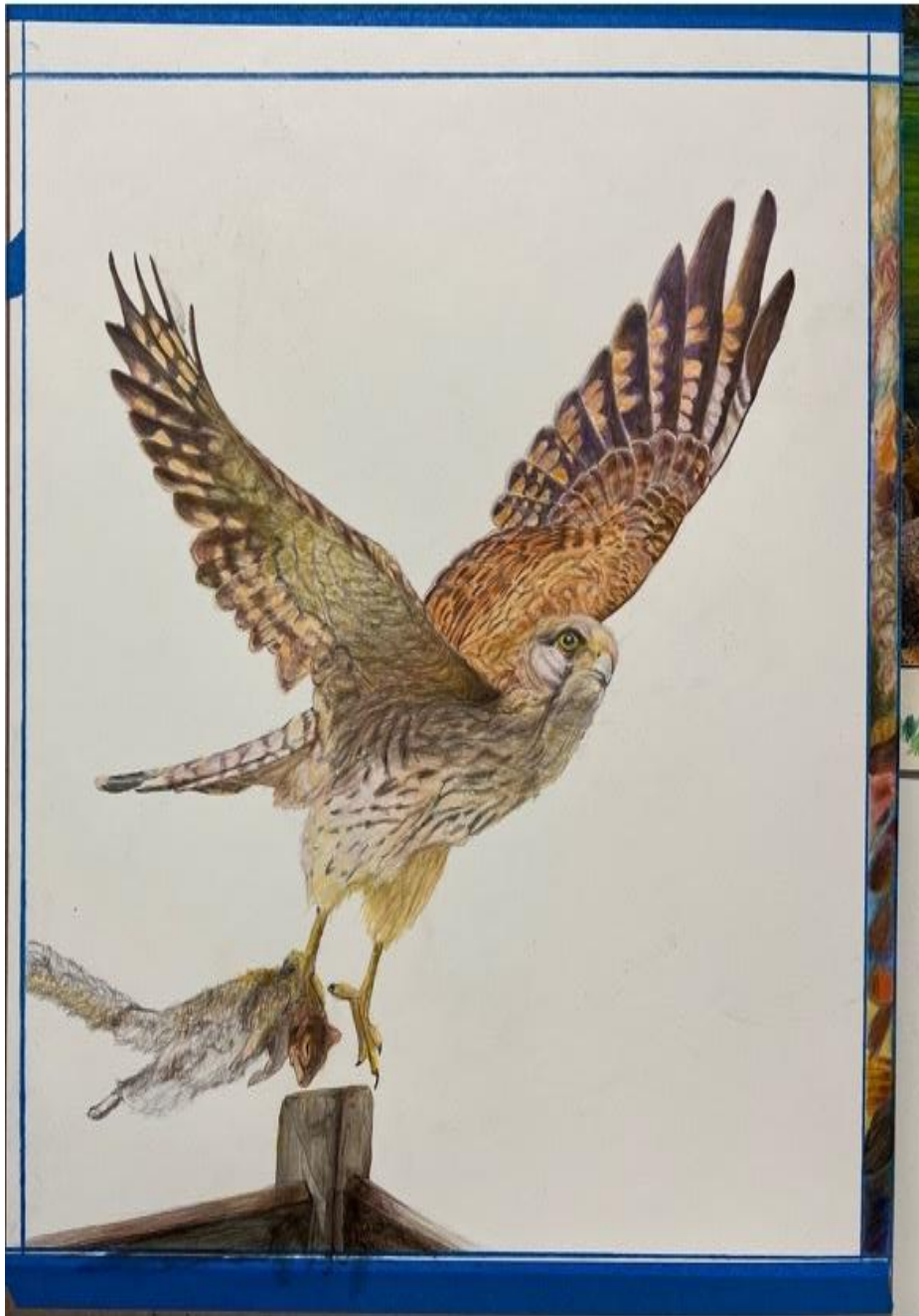
home in Arrowsic. The gridded structure and linework of each piece reveal abstract depictions of trees and plant-like forms, as if viewed through panes of glass. The palettes reference the infinite variations of color that can be observed in the forest, from the interplay of light in the tree canopy to the mosses and lichens on the forest floor. Weeks views these paintings as meditative windows, encouraging consideration of our place within the natural world.

Fifty Years Ago

Milly Stafford was known for including small poems with her gifts. This was for a wedding gift, courtesy of Joyce Oliver of Georgetown.



Hawk and Squirrel
Art by Karen Robbins and Poem by Sharif Elmusa



The hawk's claws clasp a squirrel
on top of the backyard fence,
its brown-dotted feathers gleam in the sun,
dark eyes penetrating, mobile.
The squirrel beneath, a grey tail
hanging in the air, silent,
as if silence could save.

We cringe more than marvel—
when did the world become disenchanted?
Instinct incites us to banish the hawk;
but, my wife reminds us,
Do we want a dead squirrel in the yard?
Don't we have chicken breasts in the freezer?
Let's not play judge,
let nature take its course.
What would the hawk make of its game,
if it had a human tongue?

Would it, as in ancient epics, praise
the squirrel as worthy foe
subdued by strength, yes,
but more by cunning?
Or would it sneer at the soft fur
and the absence of wings?
Hoot at the horizontal posture
and the feeding on nuts?

The hawk is now expectant hunger,
finalizing the mechanics of the ritual.
It digs its hooks, irrevocably,
in the flesh of the squirrel,
recites the checklist,
scans the flight route,
then flaps the commanding wings—
power and beauty hauling prey,
a screeching shadow before chastened eyes.

—An earlier version of the poem appeared in
The Indian Quarterly, July-September 2016

Rainbow Over the Kennebec



—photo by Paul Kalkstein

Living Near the Woods – Tips for Wildfire Protection

Earlier this year some members of Arrowsic’s Volunteer Fire Department participated in a class on Basic Wildfire Training. Training is part of the fun of being on the AFD as well as an important preparation for emergencies that we would all rather avoid.

Wildfires are not as prevalent in the northeast as in other parts of the country, but Maine is the most heavily forested state and has thousands of homes built within the [Wildland Urban Interface](#) (WUI).

Why is this relevant? The WUI is where homes and forests meet, and that presents challenges for firefighters. Arrowsic, although not urban, has a WUI.

Most Maine fire departments rely on local volunteer firefighters. During the afternoon, when most wildfires occur, many of our firefighters are at their jobs out of town. This means that their response time is much slower than that of full-time firefighters. That extra time increases the risk at your home.

How can you reduce wildfire risk? If you are planning to light an open fire, first check the day’s conditions. If it is too dry or windy – delay. If conditions look good, obtain a burn permit.

Anyone seeking to burn **brush piles, wood debris** or **agricultural burns**, should use this [link](#) to print a burn permit, automatically notifying the fire chief. This helps first responders in the event of a call.

How do wildfires spread to homes? Many houses catch fire from **airborne embers**. Wind can carry these hot embers up to half a mile. They land in

nooks and crannies that retain fine combustible materials such as needles, leaves, and bark mulch. Once these fine particles ignite, they spread to other parts of the structure. **To reduce this risk, keep needles and leaves off roofs and away from decks and foundations.**

There are also other measures you can take to help protect your home against wildfires.

Maine’s Forest Rangers recommend an average of 30 feet of “defensible space” between any structures and forested areas. This area doesn’t have to be devoid of all trees and shrubs, but you can manage it to minimize risk. One method is to make pockets of shrubs and vegetation separated by naturally wet grass and gravel paths that function as firebreaks.

Other ideas include:

- Reducing the amount of vegetation, especially near the foundation of your home
- Replacing softwood trees with less volatile hardwoods
- Removing most of the trees and shrubs within 30 feet of structures where regulations allow
- Replacing asphalt shingle with a metal roof when the time comes

If your homesite is in the shoreland zone within 250 feet of the water, removal of live vegetation will require a permit from the Code Enforcement Officer.

—From the Arrowsic Fire Department

New Signs on Route 1

We have been puzzled by the new exit and ramp signs on Route One between Brunswick and Bath. I wrote to the MDOT for an explanation and received a swift response from Paul Merrill: "We added those lettered designations in May at the request of local emergency services to help them more easily identify a caller's location. They're not exit numbers – but ramp numbers. They're ordered alphabetically for drivers heading east: A and B are at Main Street, C to F are at Route 1 and 196, G to K are at Cooks Corner, L to P are at New Meadows, Q to S are at Congress Ave." Frankly, I'm still puzzled, but maybe this helps.

—Paul Kalkstein

Lighthouses of Arrowsic: Photos by Evan D'Souza



Of Maine's roughly 80 lighthouses, four lie within the town of Arrowsic. Squirrel Point Light, ranked by *Down East* as Arrowsic's most scenic lighthouse, sits at the end of a winding trail off Bald Head Road. Possessing a distinctive, red-windowed lantern room, this 25 foot light perches on a rocky hill rising from the banks of the Kennebec.

On the North side of the island, the remaining three lighthouses stand within a half mile radius of each other. Doubling Point Light protrudes 23 feet from the Kennebec and is accessible by a bridge running over a grassy marsh.



Just a few hundred yards downstream, the Doubling Point Range Lights can be found nestled in a grassy inlet and connected by a wooden catwalk. These two lighthouses are nearly identical in construction, with brown shingled roofs and green doors.

Built in 1898 to make navigating the Kennebec an easier endeavor, all four Arrowsic's lighthouses are still active and continue to be visited by hundreds of sightseers each year.

Community News

Leslie A. Cobb, 75 of Spinney Mill Road, died on March 8th at Gosnell House in Scarborough. Leslie moved from Washington, D.C. to Arrowsic when she was 3, briefly moved away after marrying John Cobb, and returned for good in 2008. Leslie enjoyed history, genealogy, reading, drawing, making jewelry, and refinishing furniture. Predeceased by her parents and brother, she is survived by three nieces, including Anita Brown of Arrowsic, and several great nieces and nephews. There will be no services.

Henry Petroski, 81, Spinney Mill Road, died of cancer on June 14th in Durham, N.C. Petroski was the Aleksander S. Vesic Distinguished Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Professor of History at Duke University. He wrote 18 books on

design and failure of large buildings, bridges, and spacecraft in such books as *To Engineer is Human* (1985) and *To Forgive Design* (2012), as well as the history of such quotidian items as *The Pencil* (1989), *The Toothpick* (2007), and *The House with Sixteen Handmade Doors* (2014) about his house on Arrowsic. He received his PhD from the University of Illinois and worked at the University of Texas and the Argonne National Laboratory before moving to Duke in 1980, where he stayed for 40 years. He is survived by his wife, Catherine; daughter, Karen; son, Stephen; brother, William; sister, Marianne; and two grandsons. His [obituary](#) and an [article](#) about his house can be viewed in the *New York Times*. A memorial will be held later.

Carla Weeks and **Brian Christopher** married on June 2nd.

Arrowsic Opens a Swap Barn!



Arrowsic now has its own version of the 'Georgetown Mall.' Every second and fourth Saturday, the Little Fire Barn behind Town Hall will be open from 11-1 for residents to bring items or

browse for fun and useful stuff.

So far, we have seen an amazing variety and some incredibly nice items being donated. Everything is free for the taking. If you make a great find and wish to drop a donation into the jar for the Arrowsic Scholarship Fund, it is gratefully accepted, but completely voluntary.

The Swap Barn has been a long time in the making but thanks to input from residents and the dedication

of John Hinds and Wiebke Theodore, a great option has been found at virtually no cost to the Town.



Swapping is all about reuse and, in that spirit, we are using an existing, underutilized building. John Hinds has built shelves from excess local lumber donated by the Jorgensens. We also have an 'Open' flag made of old sail cloth and a bulletin board made of used wine corks. Thanks to everyone who made this a reality!

Come check it out! You never know what you may find. With enough interest and volunteers, we can extend the hours. Anyone interested in helping should contact Nadine de Vries at ARSWC@arrowsic.org.

—Nadine de Vries

It's All about the Birds (and everything else, too)!

Years ago, I wrote an article for a boating magazine describing the many years my wife Mona and I had spent learning how to sail on the Kennebec. The editor liked it and published it with the title “And then there’s the hard way.” That pretty much sums up my approach to everything. If you want to really learn something, never let your guard down and don’t take any shortcuts—as tempting as they may be. Make sense? To me it always has.

So, when it came to bird identification, the approach was clear. You gather and study the best sources, and hopefully, you will be prepared, and when presented with a particular species, you will say “That’s the so and so.” If not, you will still be prepared to rely on what you have learned in your studies to find the answer.

However, with “there’s an app for everything,” seemingly being the answer to everything these days, you are very likely to hear from a well-meaning friend, “Huh? Just download that app, and you will know in seconds.” I have always resisted this choice. It all comes down to why we are doing what we are doing. Do we want a lasting experience, or a genie to pop up to tell us the answer, lickety-split?

I have always prided myself in knowing the year-round and seasonal birds that inhabited the areas in which I lived. However, in the last half dozen or so years, I have struggled to identify two particular birds. The first was about six years ago. Around our house and along our road, I kept hearing an unfamiliar bird I had never encountered in more than 30 years in Arrowsic.

The call was shrill and primeval, and the bird was always high in the tree canopy, mostly invisible. At least two years passed with regular encounters, but still nothing more than its call. I listened through all the many bird recordings, and not a clue. During that time, I did notice that I was hearing the same bird in different parts of the island.

Finally, early one morning, I heard it high up in the clarity of a leafless tree, and there it was: a woodpecker with bright red crown and neck and striking barred black-and-white back. I dashed home to look at a guidebook—an old edition of the

Peterson guide first (1947). Indeed, a red-bellied woodpecker with a range that covered almost the entirety of the southern US, but not Maine.

I then looked at the newer Peterson guide (1980), and several other guidebooks, and found that its range had moved significantly north, but still only to southern New England. This bird was clearly a newcomer to our region, and seems to be well-established now, with a much greater population than a few years ago. Warming temperatures due to climate change? Perhaps.

With this mystery solved, and great satisfaction, I became even more determined to hold the course in my methods.

The second challenge happened more recently, when we started hearing, intermittently, the regular song of another unknown bird around our house during the day. Its song was the most intense, high-pitched, beautiful vibrato, continuing over long periods of time, but the bird never stayed in the same place, and all that could be seen was its flitting from tree to tree high up in the canopy. Hours and days were spent standing in wait in the woods with binoculars—to no avail.

A Conservation Commission colleague, while encouraging me to try an app, firmly stated, “But Paul, you may never actually see the bird.” However, with a little detective work, I got it. Around the times I heard singing, I focused on the ground, looking for birds I hadn’t seen before, and then identifying them and listening to recordings again. Well, that paid off big-time.

As I was walking into our house, I noticed two tiny, very dark brown, fluffballs quietly flitting around in the lilac bush against the house—observing me, I thought. I studied them carefully for about 30 seconds before they took off, etching them indelibly into my brain, to get back to them asap. Well, somehow a busy schedule made me forget all about them until Mona reminded me over dinner several days later. In 10 seconds, and after two years or more of hearing it, the ID was quick and simple: I already suspected it was a wren, and it was, *ta-dah*, a winter wren!

(cont.) And then, my favorite reading and reward for finally identifying it—Arthur Cleveland Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds* (20+ volumes) fully confirmed why I had so much trouble:

...we cannot place the singer, the music seems to come from everywhere, but we stand amazed and thrilled.

Although this wren may approach us fearlessly of its own free will, it is another matter for us to find it in its sylvan retreats. Its glorious song may lure us to catch a glimpse of the singer, but as we push our way through the forest tangle, the voice seems to retreat before us: it leads us on, now here now there, but it always seems to come from somewhere else, and we are lucky if we catch a fleeting glimpse of the little brown bird.

There are two pages just on "voice," and other astounding and wonderful writing about this amazing bird, 11 full pages in total.

I think the two birds I saw must have been juveniles; still, I wondered why I was seeing them on the ground, while also hearing another wren singing very closely nearby, high up in the tree canopy, at the same time:

Apparently, the male takes no part in building the nest, in incubating the eggs, or in feeding the young while they are in the nest, though he encourages his mate by singing his most glorious songs in the immediate vicinity. . . He, apparently, assists in the care of the young after they leave the nest and while the family keeps together for some time.

Well, I'm likely the last to have figured this out, but that's how I do it. A single bird by the book is worth a thousand with the app! To me, anyway. (Enjoy and learn, no matter how it's done.)

—Paul Schlein

Green Crab Count 2023

A few days ago, the members of Arrowsic Shellfish Conservation Committee (ASCC), friends, and neighbors conducted another one-day survey in the rivers that surround our island, setting baited traps in twelve locations at low tide. The traps were retrieved six hours later.

We caught a total of 1027 crabs. They were measured, color-graded, and sexed. The largest catch with 377 crabs was lifted at Fisher Eddy. The trap contained 283 females and 94 males. This was also the highest number of crabs ever retrieved from the Fisher Eddy location. The data collection can be found on [Arrowsic's website](#).

It appears that the green crabs are here to stay but the numbers continue to be of anecdotal value because of many inconsistent parameters: time of the summer, trap locations, moon phases, and sometimes lost equipment. So far, our excel sheets serve to describe observations of Arrowsic's interactions with Green Crabs in the past 9 years. There is a rumor that next year may be the last, and it would be the 10th time.

This year, we plan to meet for additional activities throughout the summer. If you don't want to miss the fun, contact clams@arrowsic.org.

—Karin Sadtler

The Arrowsic Arrow is Arrowsic's independent newsletter, produced through the efforts of volunteers. The newsletter is published three times a year in March, July, and November. The Arrow is primarily distributed via e-mail to all those on the Town of Arrowsic email list or on paper to those who are unable to access them online. The town covers any costs for paper and postage. All articles and notices are welcome. Notices should be limited to 100 words. The Arrowsic Arrow Editorial Group: Sharif Elmusa, Karin Sadtler, and Tom Spear. Contact: Tom Spear, tspear@wisc.edu, 386-1475. Past issues of the Arrow can be found at www.arrowsic.org.