

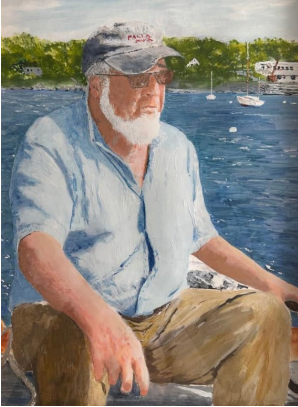


# The Weathervane

Spring

A Quarterly for and from West Gardiner

2024



## Knowing John Marsh by Gary Crocker

I was only aware of John because he was my representative at the State Legislature. Oh, I knew he was the former Chief Game Warden and that he was a legend in these parts and beyond. But we really didn't get to know each other until Roger Pomerleau enlisted our help in extolling the virtues of Pomerleau's Furniture and Appliance Store in Augusta. WCSH 6 television produced a series of commercials featuring John and me as quintessential lobstermen. (Google "Pomerleau commercials with John Marsh and Gary Crocker.")

John's creative side became immediately apparent. Because he was a legislator, the ads drew a great deal of attention. Newspaper articles appeared and John's fame skyrocketed. One time a toll taker on the turnpike literally stopped traffic so she could chat with that famous lobsterman.

We made roughly 25 ads and one of them won a national award for WCSH 6. But that fame didn't change John one smidgeon. No Siree bub! He was – and always will be – the Prince of

Bog Hill. Although John has gone on to his heavenly reward, he will continue to be a legend to those who knew and loved him.

John and Judy's game dinners will remain in my memory as long as I draw breath. Judy's biscuits were always the big hit no matter how much venison or how many trout were on the table. Did I mention her license plate says "Biscuit?"

John was generous to a fault. I once asked if I could grab some wood for my fire pit and he helped load slab wood from his sawmill. For weeks he kept asking if I needed more wood. After dragging 4 or 5 loads, I realized he wanted to get rid of all the slab wood and I was his cleanup crew. It was a win-win. Thank you, John!

And John was humble. I stopped for an early morning visit. He met me at the door and asked if I would help him find his teeth. He'd dropped them in the bathroom and couldn't find them. We climbed the stairs and I crawled around until I found them behind the flush. I handed them to John and he popped them in his mouth without an obligatory rinse. Humble indeed!

While there are countless John Marsh stories to be told, let me conclude with this. John's family called to say he was failing and, if I wanted to see him, I should come soon. I drove to Brunswick and was ushered into his room so I could spend a few minutes with him. While his eyes were closed, I knew he could hear me. I told him how much his friendship meant to me and that I was a better person for knowing him.

As I sat beside his bed holding his hand, I told him I loved him. He wasn't into that kind of thing...but I forced it on him because I did and still do!

Rest in peace, my friend, and know that yours was a life well-lived.

## Announcements



West Gardiner Town Meeting- Saturday, April 6th at 1:30. Voting will be held at the fire station 8 a.m.-12:00- Town Reports are available at the Town Office for pickup.

West Gardiner Senior Luncheons will be held on the 3rd Friday of the month starting in May-October.

Please contact Tammy Hickey to reserve your seat, 724-3648.

The Weathervane newsletters will no longer be mailed to residents. Postage rates and printing costs have increased dramatically. 400 copies will be printed and available at the Town Office for pickup. If you cannot get to the town office please call 724-3945 and request a copy be mailed to you. Options to view future issues will be available on the town's website [www.westgardinermaine.org](http://www.westgardinermaine.org) and the unofficial West Gardiner Maine Facebook page. Thank you.

The West Gardiner Volunteer Fire Dept. Assoc. will be holding its annual free pancake breakfast on Saturday, April 13th from 7:30-10:30. Residents and non residents are welcome to attend. Voluntary donations are appreciated. The menu will include pancakes, bacon, sausage, toast, coffee, juice, and milk.

**Veteran Spotlight– Greg Ponte**

by Debra Couture

Greg Ponte is a 1976 graduate from Maine Maritime Academy with a Bachelor's degree in Nautical Science.

He pursued a career as a Deck Officer in the US Merchant Marine for 23 years. During his seagoing career as a Deck Officer with the International Organization of Master, Mates and Pilots, he worked aboard the following types of ships: super tankers, chemical tankers, fuel oil tankers, bulk carriers, break bulk cargo, containers, and LASH ships.

The shortest ship he served on was the Bath built container ship "Resolute" at 610' and the longest was the super tanker "Sanko Crest" a 1067' very large super tanker built at Kiel, Germany. This was the only foreign owned and foreign crewed ship he worked on. During Greg's seagoing career he attained the United States Coast Guard license of Master of Steam and Motor Vessels of any Gross Tons upon Oceans.

Greg traveled to over 40 countries across the globe. Some of these voyages took him to Piraeus, Greece; Kharg Island; Iran; Yokohama, Japan; Cape Town, South Africa; Tientsin, China; Haifa, Israel; Buenos Aires, Argentina and many more!

Some of Greg's favorite foreign ports of call were Piraeus, Greece; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Mombasa, Kenya; Durban, South Africa; Shanghai, China; Naples, Italy; Rotterdam, Netherlands; Terceira, Azores; Le Harve, France; Istanbul, Turkey; Casablanca, Morocco; and the British colony of Hong Kong.

The most memorable moments at sea during those 23 years were sailing into ports that have features that rise from the ocean upon approach. These included: Table Top Mountain, Cape Town, South Africa; the well-lit statue of Jesus on the hills of Rio de Janeiro; the Rock of Gibraltar upon entering the Mediterranean Sea; Mount Vesuvius at Naples, Italy; Diamond Head at Honolulu, HI; and Mount Fuji, at Tokyo, Japan.

After 23 years of pursuing a global sea going career Greg retired in 1999 to enjoy fly fishing on Cobbossee Stream and to teach fly fishing with other Kennebec Valley Trout Unlimited volunteers. He teaches many youths and adults throughout Maine at grammar and high schools, colleges, sportsman shows and the Togus VA Hospital.

Greg would not hesitate to relive this career choice and for those who wish to travel globally and be paid well you may want to consider the Merchant Marine. Greg, thank you for your service.

**In the Spirit of Growing and Learning– by Katy Gould**

Spring is here and it's a busy time at HTS! We hosted our 2nd trimester conferences at the end of March which means that we are well into the third and final trimester of the school year. In addition to working hard toward end-of-year learning goals for individual students, we welcome many special celebrations during the spring months.

Chewonki visited all of our grade levels, teaching students about animals, ecology and adaptations. These visits are funded through the generous support of our school PTA. We hosted our 2nd annual Spring Egg Hunt for students, sponsored by the West Gardiner Fire Department. And our spring music concerts are coming right up, all scheduled to take place in our school gymnasium! Students look forward to all of these opportunities at school along with some upcoming field trips outside of our school building.



Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week is coming up May 6-10, and is a perfect time to thank the dedicated people supporting our students every day at school. We will encourage students to show kindness to their teachers that week - as is encouraged all through the year. The annual Peter Pan Fair is scheduled for Saturday, June 1st and our PTA is busy planning for this special event. There will be food and fun for all ages! We hope you will plan to join us for the fun in support of our wonderful school community. As always, you can find the latest in news and events happening at school by visiting our website or school Facebook page.

**Yurnoc Lodge By Emily Grover**

Did you know that West Gardiner used to be a vacation and honeymoon destination? Yurnoc Lodge and Cabins was located at Crams Point on Lake Cobbosseecontee and in 1942 it was known as "The Camp That Has Everything For A Happy Vacation."

Yurnoc offered swimming floats, row boats, Grummon canoes, outboard motors and speed-boat rides. Vacationers also had free equipment for archery, quoits, croquet, golf, badminton, basket/volley/softball, shuffle board, ping pong, a kids' play gym and sun cabanas. In the evening, campers could dance, enjoy the well-stocked library, play pool or other games and gather around the outdoor fireplace.

Rates ranged from \$10/day to \$60/week per person. People could stay in the Maine Lodge (\$7/day to \$45/week per person) and meals and all sports equipment were free. Guests came by train to Augusta, were transported to local Catholic and Protestant churches and then driven to the resort.

As a popular getaway, Yornuc was a place to relax and play, "meant for those who enjoy the outdoors where Nature is at its best!"

Would you have liked to vacation at Yornuc Lodge and Cabins? I hope many of you older folks did so when you were kids!

## Two New Fire Trucks in Service for West Gardiner by Debra Couture

Congratulations to the Residents of West Gardiner. Two new fire trucks have been put into service in less than a year! The COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act funding enabled the West Gardiner Selectboard to approve the purchase of a new Engine 4 in 2022. In the same year, a Federal Emergency Management Grant (FEMA) written by the Town's Emergency Management Director, Deb Couture, was approved to replace Engine 1. A recent picture of both new

trucks. They will be outside and available to view during the elections and the Town Meeting on April 6, 2024.



## WGVFD Dedicates New Apparatus to Life Members by Debra Couture

The second of the two new fire trucks was put into service and dedicated on February 29, 2024. Engine 1 was dedicated to life members of the West Gardiner Volunteer Fire Department (WGVFD). Many of the department's life members were present. WGVFD Life Members who are active firefighters are Tim Small, Tom McLaughlin, Don Langley, Scott Taylor, Rick Dupont and Vicki Dill. Retired members include Herb Moreshead, George Marcotte, Richard Mank and Tom Abbott. Life members who are deceased are Bob White and Rodney Markham. Fire Chief Mike Gross commented "what better way to honor these selfless individuals than to dedicate this beautiful apparatus to them." The Town Report was also dedicated to the life members. There is a picture of the dedication on the inside cover of the Town Report.

## Comprehensive Planning Committee Update by Susan Emmet

The Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) has completed/will complete its work on the full document by April 15, 2024 and submit it to the State. We expect to hear by fall whether it will be approved with no further editing.

### Subcommittees Completed:

- A. Population/Demographics/Economy
- B. Water Resources/Natural Resources and Agricultural and Forest Resources
- C. Existing Land Use/Future Land Use
- D. Housing /Transportation
- E. Recreation/Public Facilities and Services

### Subcommittees Completed by April 15, 2024

- F. Historical and Archaeological Resources by April 1, 2024
- G. Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan—Updating based on latest Town Report and Audit. Completion date: April 15, 2024.

## West Gardiner Garden Club by Debra Couture

The Garden Club took a break for the winter months. Meetings resumed on March 5th. The meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6pm at the Auxiliary Hall. Please notice the Memorial Garden in front of the new historical building. It was dedicated to Margaret Peacock last fall. The Garden club will be holding its annual plant sale on June 1st. In the parking lot in front of the Auxiliary Hall starting at 9:00 am until all the plants are sold. The Hall has been reserved for 4:00 pm May 31st for setup and drop off of labeled donated plants (donations are welcomed!) Proceeds from the sale help to fund scholarships for West Gardiner-Gardiner Area High School graduating seniors. We are always looking for new embers, please join us for our next meeting April 3, 2024.



## West Gardiner Historical Society by Debra Couture

It was a very good year for the West Gardiner Historical Society. Bob Bower bid and was awarded the contract to begin construction of the new building. The building is now a "dry building" with outside walls, windows, and doors. Parts of the inside are framed up. The office walls are still waiting to be completed. The loft is also framed up.

The building will be open on Saturday, April 6th from 9:00 am to noon so residents can take a look at the building. You are advised not to go into the loft, as it is not completely safe yet. The historical society recently took a field trip to the Kennebec Historical Society in Augusta to learn more about how we will be able to catalog donations when we begin to accept them. Our meetings are normally held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 pm in the Auxiliary Hall, please join us. If there are changes to the schedule, we will post it on the website and the West Gardiner Bulletin Facebook page. Thank you all for your support.



**From the Front Porch****Taken by Storm - by Mike Wing**

December 19th was blustery, wind topping 70mph gusts. Rain was sideways across the porch. After a few days, we surveyed the damage in the woods and were shocked by the condition of the pines down the road. The woods were a matchstick mess with no difficulty counting 60 or 70 victims of wind and rain.

The Eastern White Pine, our State tree, can grow 80 to 110 feet tall in 25 to 40 years. In Morrill stands the granddaddy, 125 feet up there and 19 feet around. Hope it survived the storm. The ones lost near us were 60 feet and up without a branch for 40 feet, prime future saw logs. Funny thing, they were mostly uprooted with only a few snapped.

Since their mantles are so high and thick, the branches provide sails to rock the tree and loosen their grip. The root system are shallow in the saturated forest floor, a recipe for a blowdown. The woodlots became messes of gnarly stumps still connected to horizontal timber.

With obvious difficulty and not a small amount of effort and hazard, woodsmen started chainsaws, harvesters, and skidders to clear and trailer the still valuable pine to mills. The brush was chipped or hauled. The stumps stayed as a testimony to the irony of Nature that gives its trees 50 years of

beautiful life and then violently ends it.

West Gardiner is home to a pine forest that shelters and provides for wildlife and the environment in general, and the growth will recover and continue well beyond our lives. This is somehow reassuring.

**Get ready for the 2024 Maine Wine Trail! by Christy Hemenway**

With upwards of two dozen Maine wineries, cideries, and meaderies, the Maine Wine Trail has something for everyone. The Trail showcases the creativity of Maine's skilled craft beverage makers, who invite you to visit their tasting rooms and sample their wares. The tasting rooms open as the season warms, and many have lovely outdoor spaces for you to relax and enjoy your new favorite beverage.

This year we will have not only the printed paper Passport and map, as we have had in the past, but we are adding something new! This year, there will be an App for that! And it is very cool. So check us out at [www.mainewinetrail.com](http://www.mainewinetrail.com). The new trail officially launches on May 1st but it's always smart to call ahead to confirm hours.

See you on the Trail! Cheers!

**MAINE WINE TRAIL****WGVFD RESCUE BOAT****by Debra Couture**

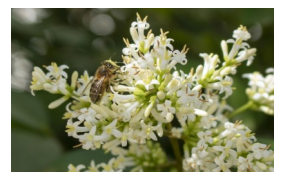
Thank you to the many people who have contributed to the West Gardiner Volunteer Fire Department (WGVFD) Rescue Boat fund raising campaign. The campaign is still underway, but enough has been raised to order the boat. Clark Marine of Manchester supports fire departments throughout the area. They have given the WGVFD a generous \$4000 discount off the price of the rescue boat. Anyone wishing to donate to this great cause may do so by contacting Fire Chief Mike Gross via email at [wqfdfire1@gmail.com](mailto:wqfdfire1@gmail.com), or by calling 207-346-4039. Donations are also accepted at the town office during normal business hours or can be mailed to the West Gardiner Fire Department- Rescue Boat Fund, 318 Spears Corner Rd, West Gardiner, ME 04345. For tax deductible donations, checks should be made out to the Town of West Gardiner.

**The Great Race**

The Great Race is an annual event that captivates enthusiasts of classic cars and vintage automobiles. This year the 9-day, 2,300 mile race commences in Kentucky in mid-June with vintage automobiles dating back as far as 1916. Teams and cars from Canada, Japan, England, Australia, and every corner of the United States will converge in Owensboro, Kentucky. As participants embark on their journey, drivers will navigate through 19 cities, diverse terrains and charming towns, each leg of the race offering its own set of challenges and scenic vistas. Finally, after a thrilling cross-country adventure, the finish line awaits in Gardiner, Maine, on June 30, where crowds eagerly anticipate the arrival of these automotive marvels. The event not only celebrates the enduring allure of vintage automobiles but also fosters a sense of camaraderie among participants and spectators alike, making it a cherished tradition for car enthusiasts everywhere. The 2024 winners will receive \$50,000 of the \$150,000 total purse.



A big congratulations to Christy Hemenway, the owner and founder of Run Amok Meadery, who has been elected the new president of the Maine Winery Guild. All are welcome to join Run Amok Meadery this Memorial Day, Saturday May 25th, 2-6pm for the **Down East Dead's** performance located at 1043 High Street in West Gardiner.



***The West Gardiner Rod & Gun Clubs  
Annual Food Drive for  
West Gardiner families in need***

**The West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club will once again be accepting donations of non-perishable food items on the following Saturdays in April; (13, 20, 27). Items can be drop-off between the hours of 9am and 12pm at the club located at 297 Collins Mills Rd, West Gardiner.**



**Feeding the  
Community**

**Monetary donations can be made at either the West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club or at the West Gardiner Town Hall located at 318 Spears Corner Rd. Town Office hours are Mon-Wed & Fri 8am – 1pm and Thursday evenings from 11am – 7pm.**



# ROD AND GUN CLUB



## \$500 Scholarship

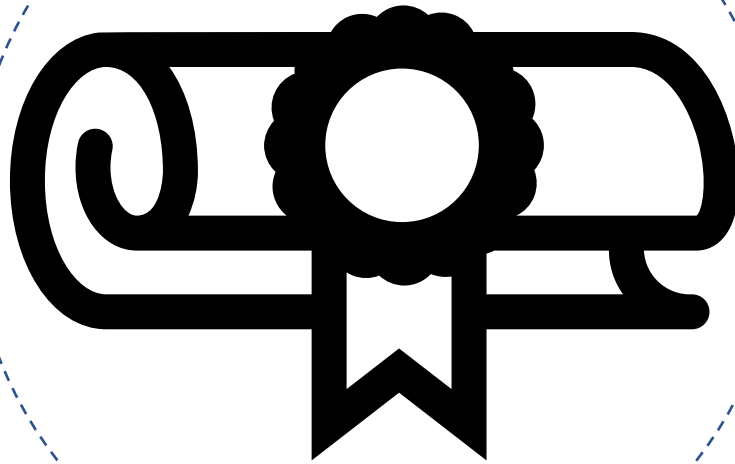
**For applications see:**

[www.wgrg.org](http://www.wgrg.org)

or

West Gardiner Rod and  
Gun Club on Facebook

**Winners will be  
announced  
May 12, 2024**



## Requirements

1. First scholarship is for an immediate family member or grandchild affiliated with a member of the West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club
2. Second will be for a graduating student from West Gardiner Public School
3. Available for both 4-year college degrees and trades

**The selected student's will receive \$500  
payable at the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester**

If you have any questions, please contact **Vicki  
Dill at (207)-215-7012**

# April 30

# 2024

Deadline

# West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club Scholarship Application

## Applicant Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First M.I.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address Apartment/Unit #*

\_\_\_\_\_ *City State ZIP Code*

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

High School: \_\_\_\_\_ College Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree Pursuing: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliated Rod and Gun Club Member (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

## Essay Requirement

Applicants must complete a one-page essay explaining why they feel they deserve this scholarship, and how it would benefit them in their college career. Please attach your essay with this completed application and mail to the following address:

West Gardiner Rod and Gun Club Care of  
51 Townhouse Road  
West Gardiner, ME 04345

Proof of transcripts from the first semester will be required to obtain \$500 payable at the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. The money will go directly to the student's college account for financial needs. The winner is required to show up to a meeting potluck dinner for a photo and official recognition from the Rod and Gun Club.

**MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN APRIL 30, 2024**

For any questions, please contact Vicki Dill at 207-215-7012.



## Preston Hesketh of West Gardiner Places 1st in 2024 Patriot's Pen Contest by Debra Couture

The Bagley-Gardiner-Foster, Post #9, Veterans of Foreign Wars recently presented awards to the 2024 Patriot's Pen winners. Over 100 Gardiner Regional Middle School students wrote essays on the topic "How are you inspired by America?" for this year's contest. Preston Hesketh, of West Gardiner placed 1st in the contest. Additionally, Preston won the District 8– Kennebec County award and placed 5th in the State of Maine this year. Congratulations, Preston!

## Cobbosseecontee Lake Association: Working to Protect Cobbossee! By John Stanek

Cobbosseecontee Lake Association (CLA), formerly Cobbosseecontee Yacht Club, is organizing another busy season caring for the lake! Our mission is to serve as proactive stewards of the lake committed to protecting and improving all aspects of water quality, lake beauty, wildlife and enjoyment of the lake for current and future generations. Anyone who loves Cobbossee is invited to join: property owners, renters, and day visitors. We welcome those who have family ties going back generations and those who have just discovered the beauty of Cobbossee.

As you may know, Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) has become a serious threat to the lake. In the summer of 2022 EWM was found in three locations, while last summer it was found in over 15 spots on the lake plus it escaped over the dam and traveled down Cobbossee Stream. If left unchecked, EWM can cause serious damage to the lake's eco-system, hinder our ability to use the lake for recreation, impact our property values, and spread throughout the state.

Our best defense against EWM is:

1. having our boats and gear inspected every time they come in and go out of the lake
2. surveying the lake to find EWM so we can remove or treat it
3. observing the buoys and markers on the lake directing us to stay out of areas in which EWM has been found so we don't spread it.

If each of us does our part, it will make a huge difference!

CLA can't protect the lake alone and we partner with Friends of the Cobbossee Watershed, Cobbossee Watershed District, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and others to bring scientific know-how and technical skills to the lake.

CLA funds Courtesy Boat Inspections at Cobbossee's two public boat launches. Inspecting boats prior to putting in and when taking out prevents invasive plants from coming into Cobbossee and our invasive plants from spreading to other Maine lakes. (EWM "hitchhikes" on the bottom of boats and trailers and spreads between lakes.)

CLA also funds our partners to survey the lake to find EWM (and our own volunteers are trained to help, too!) When EWM is found, our partners either safely remove it or, in some situations, treat it with an herbicide that targets EWM, yet is benign to native vegetation. You may recall seeing the "Surface Use Restriction" buoys and signs near the outlet bridge last summer. These signs instruct boaters and swimmers to stay out of the area so we wouldn't spread the EWM before the treatment has time to be effective.

In addition to working together to protect the lake, CLA members enjoy a robust social experience. We sponsor neighborhood gatherings throughout the summer to encourage membership and educate users of the lake. Our members host casual "Boat-In" potluck parties around the lake from June through September. Camp Cobbossee will host our Annual Meeting on June 8. The White Duck will be host a CLA party on July 13, other events are in the works! Check out the events page on CLA's website: <https://www.lakecobb.org/2024-events>

[www.lakecobb.org/2024-events](https://www.lakecobb.org/2024-events)

Lake Cobbosseecontee is a huge asset to the local area including West Gardiner. We think of it as the backyard we all share. This year, CLA will continue to encourage it's safe and courteous use as well as work diligently to protect it. Join us? Annual membership is just \$25 per family. Visit <https://www.lakecobb.org/become-a-member> or email [lakecobb1@gmail.com](mailto:lakecobb1@gmail.com) to learn more.



WEST GARDINER NEWSLETTER

*The Weathervane*

*A Quarterly For and From Our Town*

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*The Weathervane welcomes story ideas from our readers.*

Call 441-9752 or write [coleneoneill1@gmail.com](mailto:coleneoneill1@gmail.com)