

## **North Haven and the Coronavirus**

As the United States and the entire world grapple with how to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, I thought I would put together a synopsis of the steps we have taken on the island — both as a Town government and as a community — to limit the effects of the virus. Our medical clinic and EMS crew are working together to test anyone our professionals believe may have the virus. Tests are done with a nasal swab and take 48 hours to process. The nurse practitioner and EMT must suit up in personal protective equipment (PPE) to administer the test and must dispose of the PPE after the test. The Clinic is asking people to postpone all routine care and to call ahead rather than visiting and potentially contaminating the building and staff. We are asking people to self-quarantine if there is a chance they may have come in contact with the virus. New U.S. CDC rules require people who have been on a cruise to quarantine themselves for 14 days, no matter where the ship went. If someone has the virus, Maine CDC will help determine who else might be infected and take appropriate action. People around town have decided on their own to cancel trips, to hunker down in their homes, and to ride this out. People who have returned to the island are placing themselves in quarantine for two weeks or more. Gordon and Marnelle at North Haven Grocery have created a system so that people can call in orders for groceries and the groceries will be set outside at the store or delivered to the person's doorstep without human-to-human contact. Waterman's Community Center is closed, Calderwood Hall is closed, and the North Haven Brewery is closed - though they held Pub Theology remotely using Zoom and it was a big success. Our NHCS Superintendent has closed school and she and the teachers quickly put together a remote learning program to keep our children engaged and learning. Contractors who regularly come to the island have scaled back their work or postponed it entirely. Penobscot Island Air is screening passengers, their crew, and support staff every day before letting them on the aircraft. Everyone appreciates these efforts.

Many of you may have read the order the Select Board issued restricting all non-essential travel. By some, it was viewed as a heavy-handed step, infringing on their individual rights. Since I worked with the Select Board to write and rewrite the order, I take full responsibility for any infringement. I can assure you that no one on the board meant to harm anyone. To the contrary, the board is working incredibly hard to take care of everyone on the island. Through the give and take of the democratic process, including a conversation with the Governor's attorney and helpful, thoughtful recommendations by the public, the board rescinded the order. Instead, the board has issued a resolution "strongly encouraging" people to refrain from traveling away from places where they are currently living — whether that is on the island or elsewhere. The resolution continues, "If you reside in places with better access to medical care than North Haven can provide, you should refrain from traveling to the island."

All of us are looking forward to a safe, fun-filled, and prosperous summer. By getting on top of the virus now and doing whatever we can as a community to keep it in check, we stand the best chance of having a normal summer. I'm looking forward to that - and I will gladly buy you a beer and admit I've overreacted if that turns out to be the case.

Please take care of yourself and help us take care of each other.

Rick Lattimer, Town Administrator