

## Another way to see the scenic coast

Once in awhile, I catch the express bus from Bangor or Portland to Logan International Airport in Boston. It's a fast, comfortable trip down the interstate and a huge convenience. But up until last Saturday, I had never ridden the coastal route bus down Route 1 to Portland. I'm here to tell you — this experience now ranks high on my list of small pleasures. I can't wait to do it again.

My armchair adventure began in Searsport, where the Concord Coach bus from Bangor picked me up at 7:45 a.m. at the Steamboat Market on Route 1, about 10 minutes from my house. My one-way ticket cost \$26. There were three passengers already on board, and three more of us climbed on in Searsport. I set my overnight bag on the empty seat beside me and settled in with a cup of coffee from the Steamboat.

The bus was warm and quiet, the big windows tinted, my reclining seat clean and comfortable. It would have been easy to fall asleep, but I was too interested in looking out at the scenery. The village of Searsport slid past, just waking up. People chatted on the sidewalk outside the bakery. A glimpse of blue ocean sparkled behind some houses. Someone's forsythia was in bright bloom against a pale green lawn. I sipped my coffee.

Fifteen minutes later, we picked up three more passengers at the Circle K market in Belfast. While the bus was stopped, I walked up to the front for a free set of earbuds in a plastic bag. Back in my seat, I plugged the earbuds into a wall jack and found a relaxing soundtrack of classical music for my journey.

The bus trundled on, over the Little River, through deserted Lincolnville Beach, past the over-the-top Norumbega Inn and down the main street of Camden, where a few early businesses were already doing a bustling trade. We stopped at Maritime Energy on the far side of town, where a couple more people climbed on. The bus still felt empty. No one was smoking, or arguing, or talking on their cell-phone. It was so peaceful.

Outside of Rockland, I texted my brother just to say I was passing through town. He happened to be at the ferry terminal, which also is the bus stop, so I climbed off for a quick hug. When we were back on the road, the bus driver made a few announcements, cracked a couple of jokes and then started a movie. I was much more interested in what was passing by my window.

We rolled past the cement plant in Thomaston and Moody's diner in Waldoboro, scooped off Route 1 into Damariscotta and out again through Newcastle. We crossed the low bridge over the Sheepscot River into Wiscasset, which bills itself as "the prettiest village in Maine," and the high bridge over the Kennebec into Bath, where the Navy's weird new Zumwalt destroyer was tied up at the shipyard. The bus pulled in briefly at little markets and gas stations all along the way to pick up and discharge passengers.

We stopped at the Amtrak station near Bowdoin College in Brunswick. And then, three easy hours after leaving Searsport, the bus arrived at the Portland Transportation Center. I hopped off with a thank you to the driver, walked through the station and found my husband, Douglas, waiting for me out front in his old Volvo wagon.

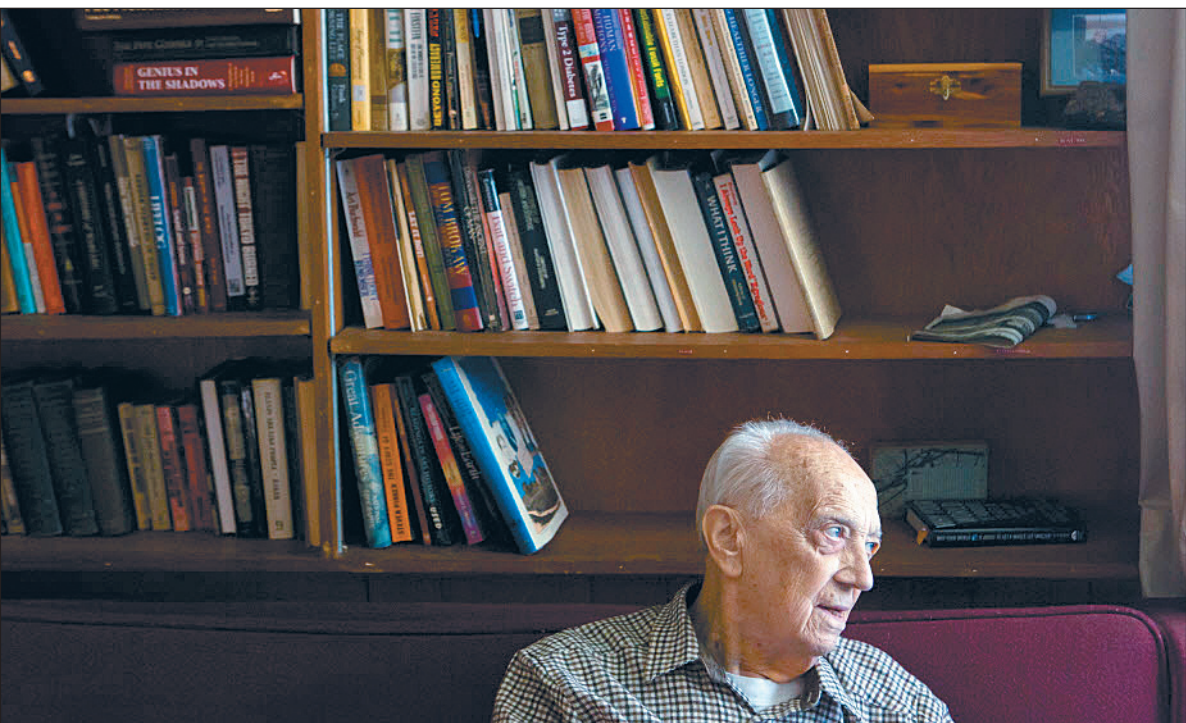
Meeting him in Portland for a family weekend was the real purpose of this sojourn. But now I know the coastal route bus ride is a sweet experience in its own right — a three-hour tour of familiar landmarks and scenic views, and an intimate glimpse into the historic communities along Maine's iconic coast.

Like many Mainers, I wish we had a more robust public transportation system. But the truth is, between Concord Coach and Greyhound, you can cover a lot of territory here by bus. Now that I've travelled the scenic coastal route to Portland, I'm thinking it might be time to plan a trip to Houlton and points north.

Read more of Meg Haskell at [livingitforward.bangordailynews.com](http://livingitforward.bangordailynews.com).



MEG HASKELL



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Richard Hill, a professor emeritus in mechanical engineering at the University of Maine, talks about his accomplishments and his legacy in Orono recently. Hill, 97, is widely known as an expert on energy issues.

## Expertise and enthusiasm

### Hill, 97, has driven Maine's energy dialogue for decades

BY MEG HASKELL  
BDN STAFF

Professor Richard Hill, the gravelly baritone voice of energy alternatives for two generations of Mainers, is an old man now. These days, the University of Maine engineering professor emeritus, energy consultant to industry and government, clean-wood technology innovator and longtime radio commentator is mostly dunned up at home in Orono, under hospice care, with a diagnosis of metastatic prostate cancer.

But there's no dimming of the bright mind that's driven the dialogue about energy at the State House, in the research lab, on the radio waves and around the family woodstove for 70 years. Hill is as sharp as ever, still following issues of energy policy in the mainstream media and scientific progress in research journals.

And he's still contributing to the energy conversation, too; in a recent letter to the Ellsworth American, Hill railed against the removal of hydroelectric dams on the lower reaches of the Penobscot River, reiterated his longstanding and controversial support for nuclear power and decried the development of wind-driven power generation for its drop-in-the-bucket inadequacy.

"At age 97, I am free to say it," he wrote in an unusually acerbic style. "Maine people are stupid when it comes to electric energy options."

Hill's outspoken opinions have won him admirers and critics throughout his career, including during his popular gig as a regular morning commentator on Maine Public Radio in the 1980s.

But it is his deep, data-driven expertise and his zealous spirit of inquiry that have kept him in the public eye, according to

longtime friend and colleague Tom Gocze.

Gocze, 63, is the proprietor of American SolarTechnics in Searsport, a former columnist for the Bangor Daily News and the longtime host of the energy and technology call-in show "Hot and Cold" on radio station WVOM in Bangor. The three-hour weekly program began in 1989; until last September, Gocze's co-host and frequent guest was Hill.

"He's made energy technology easier for everyone to understand," Gocze said of his friend and mentor. "And he's the kind of fun uncle you'd like to have who would always encourage you to try all kinds of goofy experiments."

### Building expertise in energy

Hill was born and raised in Schenectady, New York. His mother, a former schoolteacher, was a stay-at-home mom. His father, a professional engineer, built a career at Westinghouse, pioneering new refrigeration technologies.

"Whenever mother was away, Dad would take me into the shop," Hill said, where his earliest interest in physics and engineering was piqued and nurtured.

Hill graduated in 1941 from Syracuse University in New York with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

"I never earned another degree," he said.

Before the outbreak of World War II, Hill learned to fly small planes in a civilian program, anticipating a day when he might be called into military service.

"I still have my pilot's license," he said with pride, although he has not flown in many years.

After graduating from Syracuse, Hill took a job at General Electric, designing gas turbine

superchargers that could boost small aircraft above the range of enemy fire. When the U.S. entered the war after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he said, "the government decided I was more valuable as an engineer than as a pilot."

Armed with the turbine technology, he travelled from one aircraft factory to the next, modifying B-29 bombers and other aircraft with the power to "lift them so high the Japanese couldn't reach them." It was a technology, he said, that helped the Allies win the war.

At the end of World War II, Hill decided to change career paths.

"I realized when I got to GE that my knowledge of thermodynamics was very poor," he said. He had studied on his own to become an expert, but "I was angry at Syracuse for not having prepared me better, and I felt that we had to do better in academe. So I decided to teach it."

Despite his lack of a graduate degree, Hill sent letters of interest to all the land-grant universities in New England.

"None of them even answered my letter, because I had no credentials," he said — none, that is, except UMaine, where the post-war engineering faculty was acutely short-staffed.

Hill interviewed and was hired as an assistant professor of mechanical engineering.

Hill and his wife, Elizabeth, who met at GE, moved to Orono in 1946, just in time for their first child to be born a native Mainer. In 1949, they moved into a contemporary ranch home on College Avenue that Hill designed and built, and where, widowed now for nearly 20 years, he still lives. His five adult children are in close contact.

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## Dealing with the scars left by rituals

Funerals tend to take on a life of their own. There are the expected initial arrangements to transport the body of the deceased to the funeral home or whatever other institution is supposed to handle it.

Then comes the notification of relatives and friends about the death, the meeting with the funeral home about the particulars of burial vessel and service, the flowers, and the arrangements for a reception after the service.

Finally, the more difficult family details of choosing clothes for the deceased; photos for the gallery; memorabilia specific to the person who died; writing the obituary and deciding on its accompanying photo; travel and lodging arrangements for close family and friends; food; and so much more.

You have to be on your toes to not miss the important details, family and friend connections, and particulars of the service. Theoretically.

I say that because when my husband, Jim, died of pancreatic cancer in 2010, the whole thing just kind of happened, as far as my memory is concerned. I had wonderful friends and family who lifted me up and carried me through those few awful days of death and funeral and burial and reception.

A longtime dear friend left her life temporarily to stay with me and guide me through those first days.

I have brief memories of particulars, but a greater sense of blur. The time in my life when I needed to be my sharpest to handle such important details, I was a mess, robotically going through the motions of breathing and walking and trying to focus, and pretending to have a handle on what was going on around me.

I was clueless. Heck, I still am about many of the details. But one memory that is crystal clear to me is opening my newspaper and seeing Jim's obituary glaring back at me. It was devastating in a way I never could have imagined.

Somehow seeing the obituary in black and white made Jim's death real to me in a way it hadn't been up to that point.

My career — and Jim's for that matter — has been in newspapers. As a journalism pup, I took dictation of obituaries from funeral homes over the telephone when I first started my newspaper career. The purpose and function of an obituary is not a foreign concept to me.

But seeing Jim's published obituary — even though I basically wrote it, submitted it, proofread it and expected it — changed me.

I have read obituaries in the  
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JULIE HARRIS

## What's impact of landline deregulation?

BY MEG HASKELL  
BDN STAFF

Recently approved changes in the regulation of landline phone service provided by FairPoint Communications have worried some Mainers who depend on the company for affordable, no-frills service. But even the most persistent opponents to the changes say consumers, including thousands of low-income older Mainers in urban and rural areas, are unlikely to notice much of a difference.

And, one history buff says, while change can be difficult, this isn't the first time telephone customers have had to deal with disruptions linked to new technology.

"I would call this a very conservative deregulation," Amy Gallant, advocacy director at AARP Maine, said. The pro-seniors organization has for several years vigorously opposed FairPoint's repeated proposals to weaken or eliminate its status as the state's designated "provider of last resort." But the most recent proposal, submitted to Maine lawmakers in 2015, was effectively amended "to allow a path forward for some deregulation while address-



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ing some of our strongest concerns," she said. AARP did not support the final legislation, which was enacted in April, but the organization didn't officially oppose it.

In broad strokes, the changes allow FairPoint to stop providing low-cost, basic service to new accounts in 22 Maine communities where competitively priced alternatives exist. Deregulation will begin in seven communities — Bangor, Portland, Auburn, Biddeford, Lewiston, Sanford and South Portland — in August 2016. The others will be phased in over the next 18 months with monitoring by the Maine Office of the Public Advocate for utility ratepayers.

The law prohibits the impairment, reduction or discontinuation of existing services and holds FairPoint accountable for complying with specific consumer protection standards, including the quality of transmission and the timeliness of repairs and new installations.

With each new group of communities, FairPoint must comply with all provisions or risk losing the changes. "If things go off the rails in the first seven communities, further deregulation could be on hold indefinitely," Gallant said.

Public Advocate Tim Schneider said his office  
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An early 1900s magneto phone at The Telephone Museum in Ellsworth.