

# After 30 years, town manager decides to retire

BY STEPHEN BETTS  
BDN STAFF

ST. GEORGE — John Falla, whose roots run deep in this community at the tip of a 15-mile-long peninsula off Route 1, has announced he plans to retire as town manager.

His father, Richard, had been a selectman, planning board member and school board representative in the 1950s and 1960s. His mother, Phyllis, had been a teacher.

Falla followed in those footsteps and for the past 30 years has been the top administrator of St. George, a coastal community with a year-round population of 3,000, which swells to as much as 7,000 in the summer.

But he said the time has come for him to step down. He said he plans to leave the post when his current contract ex-

pires June 30 of next year.

The average term of municipal managers can generally be counted on one hand, but Falla has been an exception.

“You have to separate the position from the individual,” Falla said about being criticized for something, adding he knows it is aimed at the position rather than him.

“There is a thickening of the skin,” said Falla, a St. George native who acknowledges he was born out of town at the former Knox Hospital in Rockland.

Thirty years ago, Falla ran his own accounting and financial consulting business in the St. George village of Tenants Harbor. He had served for a year and a half as a member of the board of selectmen beginning in 1983 but opted not to seek re-election so he could

devote more time to his young family and business.

In 1986, Walter Young retired from the town manager post and Falla was hired initially as interim manager. A year later, he was appointed to the position without the interim designation.

Falla said it is time to retire.

His wife, Lorraine, retired as a second-grade teacher at the Cushing School three years ago. Falla said he will be 63 next year and he wants to travel and spend more time with his four grandchildren, who range in ages from 2 to 6 years old.

He and his wife downsized last year to a smaller home with 40 acres. His son and his family are building a home on one side and his daughter and family plan to build on the other.

Falla said he has enjoyed

his time as manager. He said that it can sometimes be a “24-7” job. Falla attends many evening meetings and has gone to fire scenes in the middle of the night. During a major storm a few years ago, Falla went out with the public works crew to inspect the damage from the rainfall.

“You do what has to be done,” Falla said.

On Monday, the selectmen voted unanimously to contract with the Maine Municipal Association to assist in the search for Falla’s replacement.

Falla said he believes the town will attract good applicants because of its reputation as a stable community.

The board will meet again Sept. 12 with David Barrett of the MMA. According to the minutes of Monday’s board of selectmen meeting, Barrett said there



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John Falla, who has been town manager in St. George for 30 years, has announced he will be retiring next June.

might be 20 to 25 applicants.

Barrett said there are not that many people who want town manager jobs. In addition, he said, working in local government is not considered pleasurable. On the plus side,

he said, if an applicant is looking for a town in which to relocate, he or she would see that St. George has a 30-year incumbent and therefore does not have a history of changing town managers frequently.

# Cruise ship makes Rockland its home port

BY STEPHEN BETTS  
BDN STAFF

ROCKLAND — The city for many years has had cruise ships make regular stops in this mainland Penobscot Bay port, but starting Friday it will have one vessel calling Rockland its homeport.

The Grande Caribe will depart from Rockland on Friday for a 12-day cruise that will end in Saint John, New Brunswick, on Aug. 9. The 83-passenger vessel will then follow a reverse itinerary that will be completed in Rockland on Aug. 22.

The 183-foot-long Grande Caribe is docked at the Journey’s End Marina adjacent to the Coast Guard base.

The trip starting Friday will be the inaugural embarkation of the Blount Small Ship Adventure Line’s U.S. flagged ship. This will be the ship’s one trip out of Rockland this season, with one trip also ending in the city.

“We have great respect for the Blount family. Their ties to Maine run long and deep,” Amy Powers, direc-

tor of CruiseMaineUSA, said in an email statement.

The company has had its vessels cruise the coast of Maine for 45 years. Blount also has built most of its passenger and car ferries at Maine shipyards and in its Rhode Island shipyard, according to Powers.

“Watching the family step outside the box and diversifying the Grande Caribe’s itinerary to include Rockland as a starting point is inspiring and refreshing. This is also a testament to the workhorse capability of Rockland’s waterfront and the local attractions as it relates to the cruising,” she said in the news release.

Tom Peaco, the executive director of the Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce, said having Grande Caribe start a cruise in Rockland was exciting.

“Witnessing the renaissance of Rockland as a passenger ship starting point reinforces our work as a multi-disciplined vacation destination,” Peaco said. “Our desire is to wholly ac-



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The cruise ship Grande Caribe is docked at Journey’s End Marina in Rockland.

commodate the needs of all of our visitors — whether they are arriving by land or sea. We look forward to working with Blount Small Ship Adventure Line and

Journey’s End Marina to ensure that this is a successful partnership.”

Peaco said being the starting point for the cruise or the ending point means that

visitors may come a few days early to explore the local communities. He said he hoped this would be a trend of cruise ships making Rockland its homeport.

## Lurvey Spring Rd. in Acadia to close

BAR HARBOR — The National Park Service will close all of Lurvey Spring Road in Acadia National Park to public access from 6:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Thursday, Aug. 1-4, for roadside tree and limb removal.

Lurvey Spring Road runs between Echo Lake Beach Road and Long Pond Road in Southwest Harbor. Lurvey Spring Road is too narrow to safely allow traffic and pedestrians to pass while the work is in progress, according to the Park Service news release.

During the closure, all vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians will be prohibited from entering the road. Anyone who enters the closed area without authorization will be subject to citation or arrest. For information, visit nps.gov/acad or call 288-3338.

Additional tree and limb removal is planned for later this year along Seal Cove Road, Western Mountain Road and Heath Brook Road in Acadia National Park, but no other road closures are anticipated, according to the news release.

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