ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute

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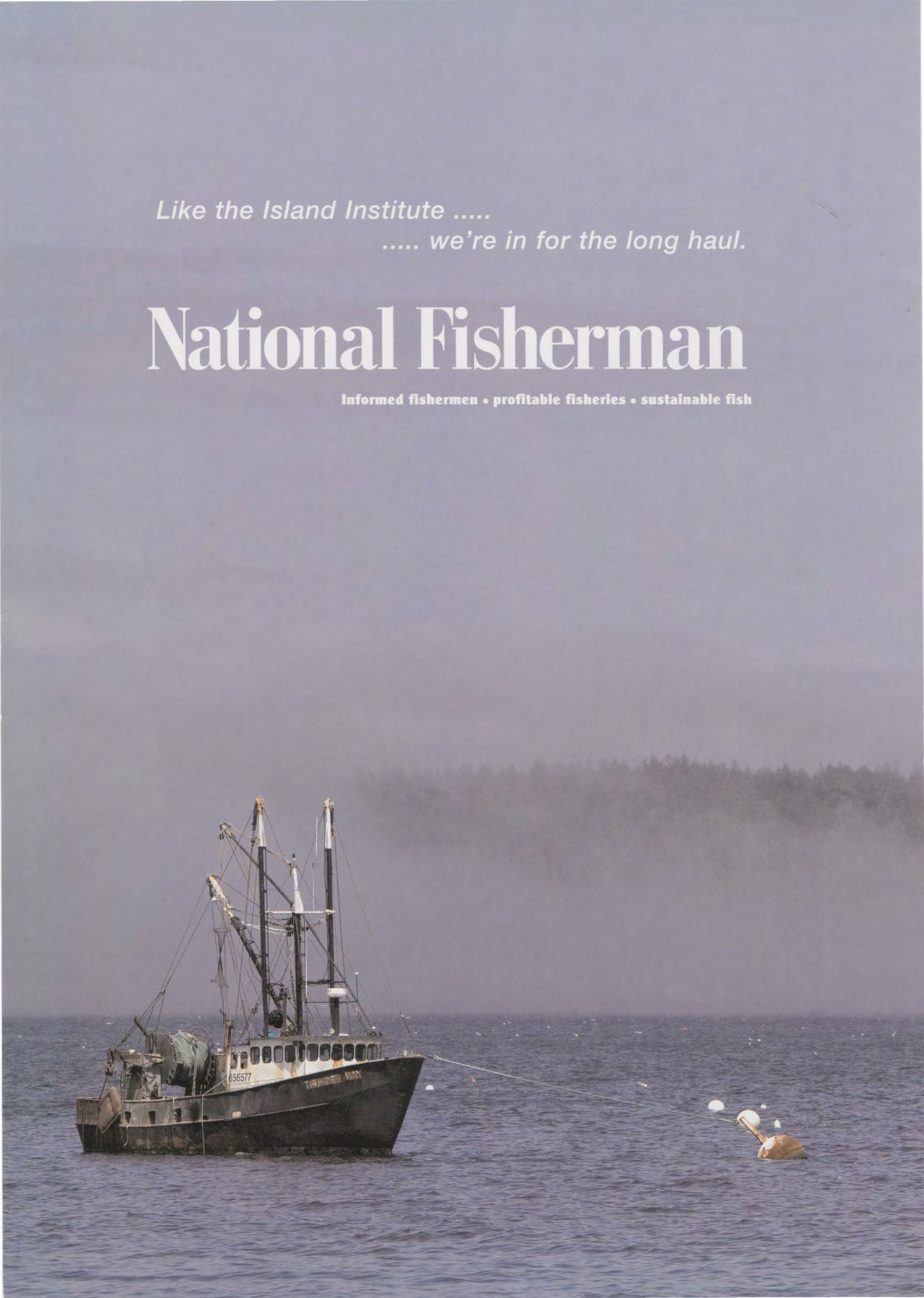

Peter Ralston

TO OUR READERS

Relationships are a central fact of our lives. Everything we do connects in some way to the larger world, and in return the actions of other people—not to mention events and changes over which we have no control—affect our lives in ways we can't imagine. We are connected to everyone and everything, closely or distantly, everywhere and all the time.

On islands the phenomenon is especially intense. It can be obvious, such as the interplay among individuals and groups and a particular place that occurs when island kids (and grown-ups) engage in certain sorts of play. It can be as subtle as the relationship between an artist and his work. It can be passionate, such as what happens in an island community when a leader sets out to save the place from oblivion. The connections can take years to develop, as they did over several decades when Vinalhaven residents blasted and carved their principal natural resource at the time—granite—into a useful building material that ended up all over the country. They can be as simple as a child learning how to use tools to build a boat, in the process absorbing lessons to last a lifetime. They can be as complex as the attitudes of a whole island community toward a curious past, overlain by the historic ties between that community and a faraway country. No force acts in isolation; sooner or later, everything affects everything else.

Island Journal has explored connections and relationships since its beginnings nearly 25 years ago. This year it does so again. And while the stories and the people in them are different, the linked world is still here.

The Editors

ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute
Volume Twenty-Three

Page 5

Page 10

Page 20

Page 40

Page 55

Page 64

Page 80

Page 82

Page 88

ISLAND INSTITUTE
Publishers of Island Journal *and* Working Waterfront

Sustaining the Islands and Working Waterfront Communities of the Gulf of Maine

ISLAND JOURNAL

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HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

This year, readers will find something that looks new: a "sponsored" page inside the front cover of Island Journal. Like a paid advertisement, such a page helps support the publication of this magazine. For long-time readers, the page will represent a return to the past, when we gave similar credit to firms that supplied our paper. As always, such support is greatly appreciated.

ANNOUNCING OUR NEW JOURNAL WEB GALLERY

Many wonderful images simply cannot be accommodated in our finite number of pages. So this year, we're adding something new: at www.islandinstitute.org you will find an online gallery of many additional images which, I trust, will enhance your appreciation of the stories printed here. We hope this new feature gives you the same great pleasure we derive from looking at the accomplishments of the many talented artists whose work appears in this year's issue of Island Journal.

Enjoy!

Peter Ralston, *Art Director*

Cover: "On the Bank," Peter Ralston

DEDICATION

Peter Ralston

I first met Hoddy Hildreth (right) nearly 25 years ago when his wife, Alison—or Wooly (left), as everyone knows her—introduced us on the Vinalhaven ferry. We talked about *Island Journal*, and Hoddy kindly told me how much he enjoyed reading it. At some point, he said he would love it if the next time I was in Portland, I would stop by and see him at his office.

When I did, he asked me what the Island Institute *really* wanted to accomplish—which is a subtly different question than asking about the mission of the Institute. I said that I thought islanders might someday organize themselves into an effective political force to protect their communities if they could overcome their natural and frequently reinforced sense of their differences. Hoddy had politics in his blood, but that had been effectively drained by a couple of terms in the legislature. Nevertheless, he said he would like to help, and he joined the Institute's board in 1989.

Two years later, his fellow board members elected him chairman, at the strong recommendation of the late Betty Noyce. He agreed to assume leadership of the board if she would become vice chair. What a pair they were until her death five years later!

This July, after 16 years, Hoddy is stepping down. He will remain active as chair emeritus. Very few people understand a central paradox of all nonprofit institutions: They are both uniquely influential and uniquely fragile. Their influence derives from the sincerity of their motives, while their fragility results from the push and pull of boardroom politics—often over finances, but frequently over conflicting priorities and personalities.

For the past 16 years, Hoddy has led the organization around many an uncharted hazard, sometimes in terrifying fog. The organization he has helped build into a major presence could not have achieved its successes without his admirable and infectious enthusiasm, his love of adventure, his deep sense of the delicate equilibrium inherent in all island life, and the knowledge, gained through his own business experience, that trustees are to set policy, not manage the enterprise. Under his leadership, the invaluable distinction between governance and management was never confused. Beyond all of his other gifts—humor, passion for islands, generosity—his brand of deeply trusted teamwork between trustees and staff (all too rare in nonprofits) is his most lasting contribution. With genuine appreciation and thanks, we dedicate this issue of *Island Journal* to Hoddy Hildreth.

Philip Conkling

Gary Comer

LIFE ON THE EDGE

In Memoriam: Gary Comer 1928–2006

PHILIP CONKLING

One of the basic lessons of oceanography is that isolated islands in the sea are not isolated islands in the ocean.

Oceanographic currents flow invisibly by the shores of all islands in the ocean and bring both unexpected gifts — an occasional abundance of lobster larvae, perhaps — as well as unexpected tragedy, as when currents redirected by El Niño lead to catastrophic nesting failures in seabird colonies.

My education about the oceanographic connections among islands in the Gulf of Maine was immensely expanded at the University of TURMOIL. I was invited along as a naturalist and journal keeper on TURMOIL, the exploration vessel of the late Gary Comer, on a series of voyages north along both coasts of Greenland, and across the Greenland Sea to Spitzbergen and then beyond the 80th parallel to within 600 miles of the North Pole.

Gary Comer was, among a great many other things, an accomplished and highly talented photographer. He had a keen eye for natural beauty and also knew he was a recording witness to the disappearance of an ecosystem. More of his exquisite imagery can be found in our online gallery, www.islandinstitute.org.

What I learned on those voyages — from the oceanographers and glaciologists aboard, as well as from direct personal observation — is that the currents of the entire North Atlantic Basin are intimately connected to those currents in the Gulf of Maine that make biological life go 'round off the shores of Maine islands. What happens when glaciers and ice caps melt in the Arctic is beginning to have (and will increasingly exert) powerful, direct, immeasurable, and highly destabilizing effects on the marine environment upon which Maine island communities depend. The voyages on TURMOIL were an unsettling and deeply disturbing recognition of how small and interconnected life's systems actually are.

Gary Comer, who died last year, loved island life. His voyages were often aimed at the most remote archipelagoes of the world where he enjoyed meeting unpolished, unreconstructed islanders. In addition to his legendary success at Lands' End, Gary Comer's legacy lives on in the research he funded, showing how abruptly the climate is changing in the Arctic and what that will mean to mere mortals in places like the coast of Maine.

Gary Comer was an early supporter of the Island Institute's Sustaining a Way of Life capital campaign, initiated to raise $20 million to fund current activities and to create a significant endowment for the future. Gary Comer passionately believed that the working, everyday life in Maine island communities can and should be sustained — and that this could happen only if we remain alert to the threats and opportunities that our changing times present.

As we contemplate the future of the island and working waterfront communities from a perspective close to the finish line of a successful campaign, we must be aware of how changing dynamics in the marine environment will impact our coast. We must remain attentive to how the changing economics of energy will influence the way fossil fuels will be used along the coast in the future, and how those costs will affect the viability of island life. How will working waterfronts adapt to rapidly escalating fuel prices, a very real threat that took its first serious bite out of lobstermen's income last year? Many have questioned whether the intensity of our fossil-fuel use makes political or practical sense. On islands such questions are always more acute because island life is, in a literal and fundamental sense, more stressed, more marginal — island life is always lived on the edge.

With abiding thanks to hundreds of our members who so generously contributed, this successful capital campaign provides us with the rare opportunity to step back, temporarily, from day-to-day pressures to ask what we should focus on in the future. We know that expanding the funding base for Island Fellow placements, our flagship program, is essential. We will continue to invest in our higher education scholarship and technology education programs for island students so they are not disadvantaged by their geography. We know that island communities and working waterfronts are becoming less and less affordable for "everyday" families.

Because we also know that the rising tide of waterfront real estate prices threatens the deeply interwoven fabric of Maine's working island and coastal communities — more immediately even than the rising sea level that erodes our shores — and that we must quickly develop new tools and strategies so the very nature of Maine's working coast will not slip ineluctably away. We made a good start a year and a half ago with the passage of a constitutional referendum to provide tax relief for fishing properties on the coast and islands, and a pilot $2 million bond to determine how much interest there is in permanently protecting working waterfront access.

Philip Conkling

Gary Comer

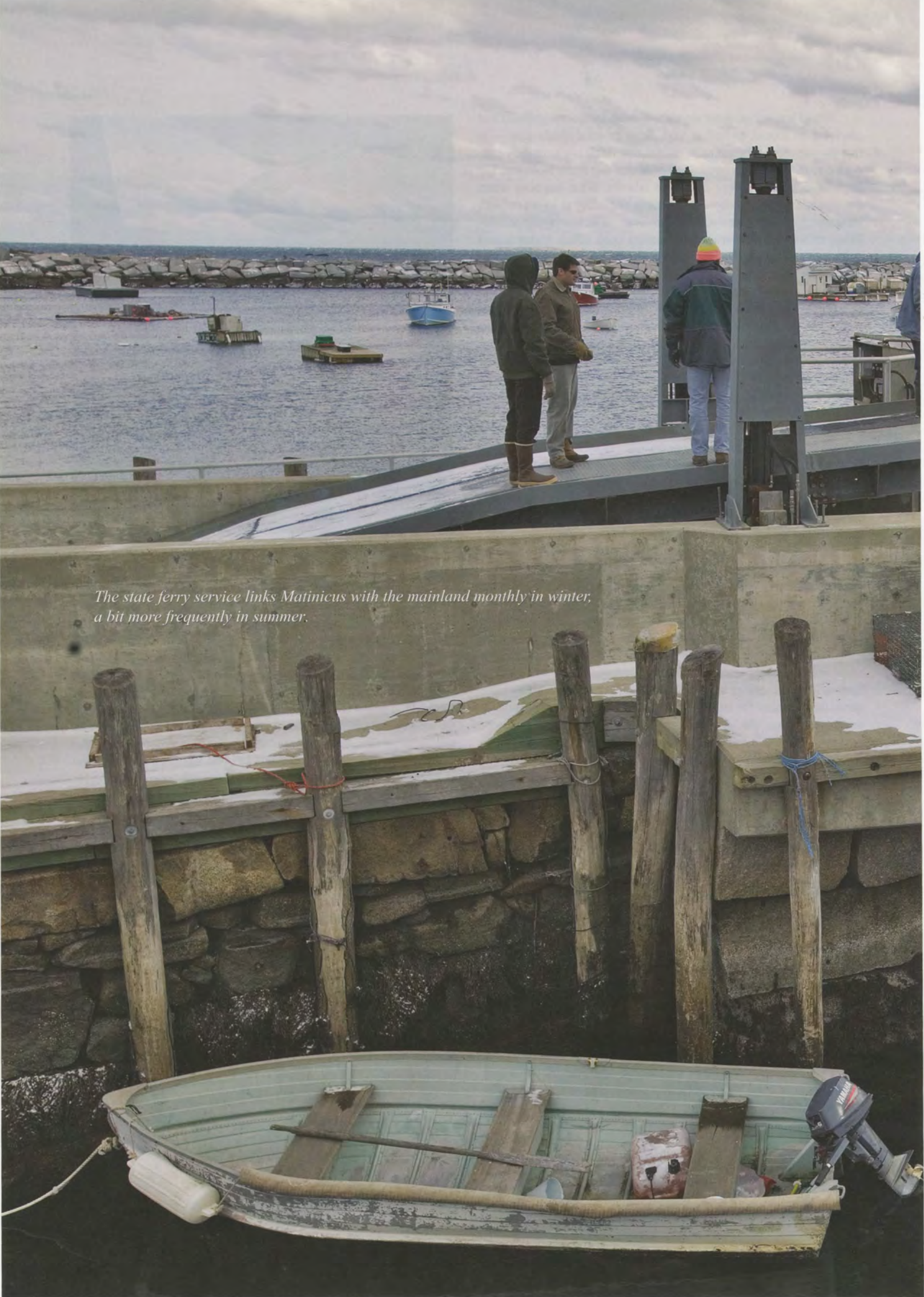
This year, in addition to the effort to get the working waterfront bond program re-funded, we have been working with the legislature to support a small, 1 percent transfer tax on properties selling for over $500,000 to provide funds for local affordable housing programs.

In addition, the Island Institute has devised an Affordable Coast Fund to provide grants to help jump-start innovative local affordable housing and working waterfront protection projects. A total of $235,000 in grants is available in 2007. Of this, $130,000 is earmarked for working waterfront projects to help Maine communities, families and fishermen acquire saltwater access to sustain their fishing and boatbuilding enterprises. Another $105,000 has been earmarked to assist with capital projects to maintain and upgrade existing affordable housing programs in island communities. (To learn more, please visit www.IslandInstitute.org/AffordableCoast.)

At the same time we need to look over the horizon and begin collecting information from "citizen scientists" of the marine environment, the fishermen who see and sense actual changes in their watery world, day to day and bay to bay. We need to begin modeling how sea level changes and storm-driven surges will reshape specific, not generalized, island and coastal geographies. We need to ask ourselves hard questions about how to minimize the impacts on the spectacular scenery of the Maine islands if and when these "off-the-grid" communities begin to examine the economics and feasibility of alternative energy systems.

We must continue to be explorers and connectors, in the spirit of Gary Comer's inspired understanding that changes, even those that seem far away, will come to affect us all back home. Ultimately, more than our literal backyards may be at stake; we are all living in one backyard now.

Philip Conkling is president of the Island Institute.



The state ferry service links Matinicus with the mainland monthly in winter, a bit more frequently in summer.

FRESH EYES

On remote Matinicus, a community comes together

STORY BY
STEVE CARTWRIGHT

Sixteen-year-old Matt Libby calls Matinicus a "real Maine island." After 12 summers he feels like he fits in, and he has roots: He's a direct descendant of Ebenezer Hall, first white settler on this outermost isle.

"I like the diversity of people out there. They try to play themselves as hard-core, but they're really nice," said Matt, who is from Freeport. On a hot day he heads for the harbor with other young people to jump off the docks. He doesn't get bored with island life. "It's just awesomely beautiful."

Matt's father, timber-frame builder John Libby, feels the same way. One summer Matt's mother, Kim, suggested the family spend a week on an island. That experience led to buying property, restoring a cottage and building a guest-house.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
PETER RALSTON

Last summer, John brought an excavator up to the island school and dug holes for poles to support structures at a community playground. Islanders didn't overlook his generosity, and it's that kind of spirit that leads to good relations between summer- and year-round people.

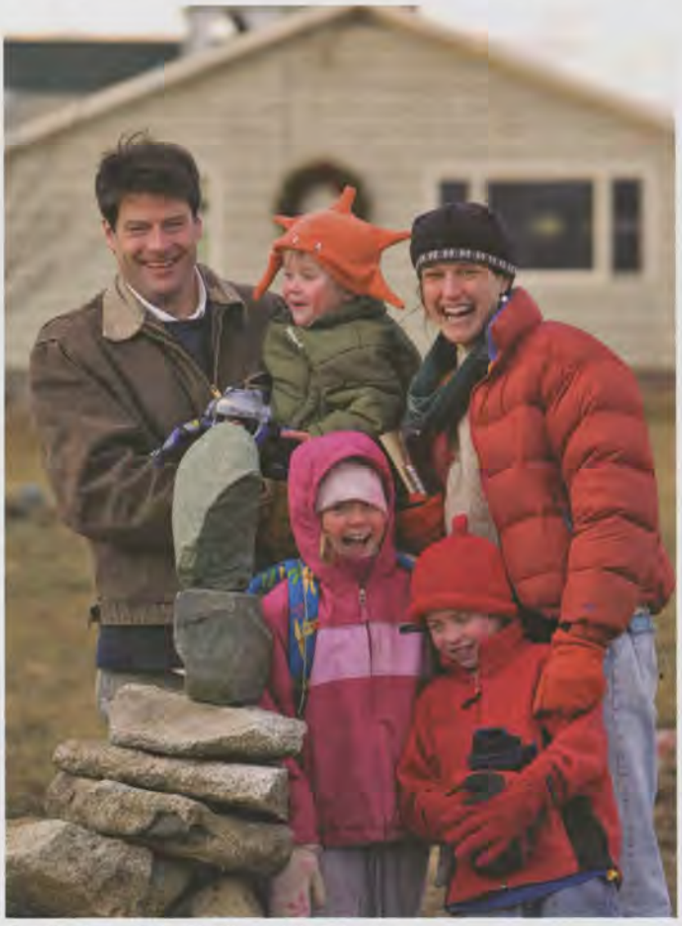
"It doesn't take long to know everybody on the island," said John, who is proud to know the 35 or 40 people who actually live on-island the entire year. John said he will never bring a television to Matinicus, and instead brings books. "I like that it's sort of the Wild West, removed from the mainland. I like that everybody needs somebody else out here to help you survive." One summer he put down his book and donned his Indian pump backpack so he could help fight a fire on a shingle roof. "A fire on the island could be nasty," said John.

"The island isn't set up for people who like to be entertained, and there are no streetlights except the lights at the harbor, and you can't see them in the fog," he said. "What I like, basically, is the very quietness of the place."

Matinicus native Natalie Ames, who married summer resident turned year-round fisherman John Griffin, said some strong community-building things are going on. Near the playground stands the one-room school, which a few years ago had zero enrollment but last fall started with ten students of different ages. As often happens, enrollment dropped 50 percent by December as families came and went. The remaining students carry on, studying newspapers and planning one of their own, the *Sea Breeze*. When they take a field trip, it's by boat.

Natalie said the arrival of new families on Matinicus bodes well for maintaining a sense of community, and the way islanders have pitched in to restore the lone church gives her hope that Matinicus will continue to be a good place to live. The Congregational church, she said, is open to everyone, religious or not. It's a community center, and once in a blue moon a wedding takes place there.

People have left Matinicus because of jobs, old age, divorce, or



Natalie Ames, John Griffin and their family

The island school

because they just couldn't hack the island's isolation. Yet others have chosen to settle down on the island, attracted by its natural assets and maybe also by the elusive promise of a simpler, slower pace. It doesn't come without a price. Not only can you be fogbound for a week, but winter can bring a sense of desperation. You are trapped on a craggy island. Even year-rounders leave for a while.

It isn't easy to live here, and property values have soared. Goods and services have always cost more on the island; everything must be flown or ferried from the mainland. To the visitor it's a romantic place, a place to walk the beach and fall in love. For Matinicus people, the romance is only part of it. There is reality. Hauling traps in icy winds, neighbors who don't get along, couples who don't get along. Fighting and drinking and depression. But those are the bad moments. There are parties and friendships and neighbors who will help you day or night because you'd do the same for them.

Trying out island life is Nat Hussey, who left his job as a lawyer with the Department of Corrections in Augusta, and his wife, Lisa Twombly. They moved to Matinicus in March 2006 to try it for a year, keeping their home in Hallowell in case things don't work out.

But so far, Nat said, so good.

"I needed to prove I wasn't stuck in one situation, so I got unstuck," he said, admitting he has been dreaming of moving to Matinicus since he and Lisa honeymooned there in 1992. They visited the island every year and Lisa has family ties to it. Now she runs a preschool for island kids, including the couple's two youngest, Ryan, 2, and Fiona, 4. Lydia, 12, attends the island school and misses her mainland friends and activities. As for Nat, "After having been in an office environment, it's infinitely more satisfying being a sternman for John Griffin. It's physically demanding and physically gratifying as well. Whether we can make it viable financially, we'll see."

Island life is sometimes precarious, he said, but he is inspired by the resilience of islanders. He believes community spirit grows through families and a commitment to living on the island year-round. "The pieces are here for that sort of thing. More kids revitalize the community; there's more of an impulse toward all of these things: church, school, playground." A musician, Nat has performed at the church in the summertime.

Matinicus, he said, "is about wanting to be closer to the weather. I struggle to find the words. It's about being closer to the ocean. It's a very primal draw."

Craig MacLeod may have come the furthest to settle on Matinicus, "which sort of reminded me of New Zealand." A former business owner and rugby coach, he moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in 2000, where he met his second wife, Loretta, a scientist at Yale, at a rugby game where one of her two sons was playing. A couple of years ago they spotted some Matinicus property for sale on the Internet.

Wanda Philbrook, the island postmaster, and Bill Hoadley

Lisa Twombley runs a preschool for island kids.

The island school board

The Centennial Building, erected in the late 1800s for island fishermen, sits on the harbor beside the old steamboat wharf, which is still used by the state ferry and fishermen. The old store and post office, with upstairs apartment, was part of the package.

Craig and Loretta bought the entire property for $140,000, half the asking price, knowing he needed to put a whole lot of work into it. He is also putting a lot of work into being part of the community. He took a job as sternman for Clayton Philbrook. "Clayton was the first person I met when I got off the ferry."

Craig said islanders see him at work on the neglected Centennial Building, which had been stuffed with old freezers, gas stoves, lobster traps, wooden buoys, a couple of cod carts and more. At first, they may have wondered why he was trying to fix the old place. "I'm doing the work myself. People respect that, I think. They might have been standoffish at first." He wants to build a ferry waiting room on the first floor where you could grab a cup of coffee "and maybe a beer on a good day." He plans to give some space to island historian Suzanne Rankin, and has already given her some 19th-century fishing ledgers that turned up in the building.

Artists Bo Bartlett and Betsy Eby split their time between 20-acre Wheaton Island, part of Matinicus Harbor, and another home on Vashon Island in Puget Sound. Bartlett had rented a cottage on Matinicus near South Sandy Beach. One of his three sons kayaked over to Wheaton with its dilapidated buildings, and said, "Dad, you have to get it."

Bo hasn't regretted the purchase and renovation, although Betsy once persuaded him not to sell Wheaton when he was going through hard times. "I don't feel like a tourist," Bo said. "Matinicus felt comfortable to me."

Last fall he was painting a portrait of fisherman Ronnie Ames that will be part of a solo show at Rockland's Farnsworth Art Museum this summer.

Clayton Philbrook at Matinicus's "gas station." In the background is the fuel barge from Rockland that serves the island.

"The good thing about Matinicus is, it's so hard to get to," he said. He has seen visitors who can't wait to leave. "You either get it or you don't." Sometimes he wonders if he should tell anyone about Matinicus.

"You see it with fresh eyes. You can see the light hitting it. It's so fresh and full of possibility."

Matinicus is ringed with rugosa roses, pure white and lush pink all summer long. The spruce stays blue-green year-round, and the granite ledges never budge. The island probably wasn't all that different when Penobscot Indians hunted it before Ebenezer Hall claimed it.

The Penobscot Tribe objected to Hall's land grab, and the fire he used to clear the island. It wiped out a source of food for the tribe. When a couple of Indians visited Matinicus, Ebenezer Hall killed both of them, set fire to their canoe and kept their guns.

That sort of outlaw mentality is part myth, part rebelliousness. Years ago, a local woman who was selling crabmeat rolls explained it this way: When the county sheriff assigned a deputy to Matinicus, he was "run off after he told people things like 'Don't drink and drive.' " Most island cars are unregistered, and Matinicus has never been mistaken for a "dry" town. One area on the west side is called Rumguzzle.

Sternmen, who assist local lobstermen, have been hard to find. They are often single guys and sometimes rowdy, sometimes unable to cope with the remoteness of Matinicus. That seems to be changing as people like Craig and Nat take sternman jobs. And Matinicus remains a place where you don't need to lock your door, the kids can roam and there is almost always time to shoot the breeze.

As for Ebenezer Hall, he didn't get away with his treachery. In 1753 the Tribe wrote to Massachusetts Bay Colony officials declaring that Hall "hurts us in our sealing and fowling. If you don't remove him in two months, we shall be obliged to do it ourselves. If you don't answer to this, we shan't write again." A Colonial order that Hall leave the island was ignored for years, and Penobscots reportedly scalped Hall and took his wife, Marah, captive on January 14, 1757. Marah reportedly had "charms which attracted every eye." Ransomed, she eventually married again and settled on the mainland.

The Hall children—Peter, Tabitha and Phebe—were likewise ransomed, and Phebe, at least, returned to Matinicus in 1763 with husband Alexander Young. Young is one of the oldest names still on the island, along with Ames and Philbrook, and descendants are plentiful.

One of them is Suzanne Rankin, who traces her family tree to Phebe Hall. She and her husband, Tom, bought one of the oldest homes on the island, a homestead that once belonged to Suzanne's ancestors. The retired couple has begun the arduous task of restoring the handsome farmhouse, which stands at the very center of the community.

The Rankins typify Matinicus residents who don't want their piece of paradise to resemble Monhegan Island with its summertime hotels and daily flock of tourists. "We don't want to have facilities for tourists, because then you lose your working waterfront," she said. "It's the most remote island on the Atlantic coast, and we want to keep it that way."

In fairness, Monhegan still has a working fishing fleet, and its craggy shores and protected woods are deserted during the colder months.

Matinicus is like that in August.

*The work of Matinicus and Wheaton Island artist Bo Bartlett (*Island Journal, *2005) will be featured in major exhibitions during the summer of 2007 at Rockland's Farnsworth Art Museum and at the Island Institute's Archipelago Fine Arts Gallery. See our online gallery at* **www.islandinstitute.org**

Paul Murray is in charge of the island's electrical generating plant.

Sometimes there's a summer volleyball game on Markey's Beach at the north end, and children create structures from driftwood on the wild crescent of South Sandy Beach, where a portion of the island is protected under conservation easement. A few residents say there are times when the beach is deserted, and you can swim nude. "Sometimes I tell my neighbor to watch out for the great white whale," joked one skinny-dipper.

Most Matinicus people are not about to go bare. But a dozen local ladies—Eva Murray and Suzanne Rankin among them—took it all off for a calendar that also revealed the island's beauty and some humor, such as using lobster buoys to cover breasts. No one seemed to mind the fund-raiser, which brought running water to Matinicus's mostly nondenominational church.

Longtime residents still miss the island's only store, in its early days a chandlery. Many remember Clayton Young, who ran the Offshore Store before its final days under Dick Moody. It closed in the early 1990s, and all that's left is the post office, still a gathering spot and a place to post notices. For the past 16 years Wanda Philbrook, Clayton Philbrook's wife, has been the friendly postmaster for Matinicus.

The 20 open-sea miles that separate the island from the mainland create a spiritual distance. Residents have their computers and satellite dishes. They do the same things people do "inshore." But when the relentless fog rolls in or the endless seas lash the shore, Matinicus is alone. Some people feel they belong in this kind of place.

The mail plane from Owls Head transports everything from groceries to relatives, and there are private ferry services and the occasional state ferry trip from Rockland. Penobscot Island Air, operated by Kevin Waters, is a lifeline for Matinicus residents, and they gave generously when Kevin took over an ailing business several years ago and needed help. The Island Institute also helped him find funding. The flight in or out takes a mere 20 minutes in good weather. If it's too foggy, fishermen and people like John Libby make the mail run by boat.

Among families that have moved to Matinicus and stayed on and on are the Murrays: Paul, Eva and children Eric and Emily. Few newcomers have adapted more successfully. Paul came from Cape Elizabeth in 1982. Eva arrived in 1987 to teach school. She is still certified to teach, and she is a baker, blacksmith, newspaper columnist, as well as clerk, tax collector and treasurer. Paul is an island handyman and in charge of the electric generating plant. Call Paul and he'll fix it. He works hard but said, "You choose to live on Matinicus. I don't consider this a hardship." With school ending after the eighth grade, Eric is at Gould Academy and Emily attends Phillips Exeter. "We're lucky. Both our kids are very healthy and very able," Paul said.

When Tom and Suzanne Rankin made it through their first winter on the island, Eva gave them a list: "You Know You're Really from Matinicus when . . ." Items include: "Crabmeat is legal tender for all debts public and private. You rush to the aid of people you can't stand, every time. You leave the door to your house unlocked, your boat unlocked, and the keys to your mainland vehicle in six different unsecured places, but you hide the battery from your pickup under your bed. You absolutely love it here, 51 percent of the time. That is enough to make you stay."

There is one bed-and-breakfast establishment on 750-acre Matinicus, the Tuckanuck Lodge, a modest house on Shag Hollow Road. Nantucket native Bill Hoadley keeps the place tidy and unpretentious, with good food and lodging at fair prices. Sometimes he makes dinner. Attentive to guests, he reserves time to walk his dog, read, garden and help maintain walking trails that delight visitors and islanders alike. Bill calls himself "the autocrat of the breakfast table," and he enjoys a political debate, a good story, a joke. This year he celebrates his 70th birthday and 20th year on Matinicus. What's best? "The solitude."

Steve Cartwright *covered private ferries and mailboats in the 2006* Island Journal.

More photos online at www.islandinstitute.org

RABBLE-ROUSERS

Islands Coalition organizes to make a difference

DAVID D. PLATT

Maine islanders have much in common. They share isolation and the high costs it imposes, on everything from health care to energy; their schools tend to be much smaller and more costly to operate than schools on the mainland; and affordable housing remains an issue. On a daily basis, the experiences of islanders are different from those of people who live in the rest of Maine—or for that matter, the rest of the United States.

Of course, no one's forcing anyone into an island life. Most adults living in year-round island communities are there because they want to be, sacrifices and all. And at the risk of characterizing islanders as a group (something mainlanders must avoid), it's fair to say they're a pretty independent lot, not given to collaborating with outsiders, or even residents of other islands.

So when islanders join a coalition to address problems common to islands all along the Maine coast, it's news.

"The strength of islanders, like fishermen, is their independence," observes Roger Berle, a longtime Cliff Island resident and landowner who became the first chairman of a new organization, the Islands Coalition, in 2004. Since then the coalition has taken on schools, affordable housing, secession, health care and taxation—each a complex topic in itself, each with different meanings on different islands. Along with his co-chair, Marge Stratton of Vinalhaven, and a staff person from the Island Institute, Berle has steered this fledgling coalition through crisis and calm, laying the groundwork for islanders to speak up as a group at the legislature, the Portland City Council, or any other forum appropriate to the matter at hand.

The coalition meets quarterly in Rockland, and almost from the start, in an effort to make meetings more than "gripe sessions" (Berle's phrase), it has invited experts to address members on a particular topic. In February 2007 the subject was island schools and what could happen to them if Gov. John Baldacci's statewide school consolidation plan, proposed in December 2006, went into effect. Panelists included a representative of the Maine Municipal Association, a school principal, a school superintendent, an expert on school governance and two legislators.

"We want as many legislators as possible to come," says Berle. "Some have been incredibly faithful. Without the legislators there, we'd have been whistling in the dark."

And avoiding that possibility is critical. Historically, mainland bodies (mindful of islanders' independent-minded reputation) have shown skepticism that the people purporting to represent islands indeed spoke for their residents.

"We needed each community [to come together and] speak with one voice," says Berle, who recalls spending considerable time at early coalition meetings designing a structure so all islands would have elected representatives. The idea was to create an organization that actually represented year-round islanders' views, in hopes it would be taken seriously by legislators, regulators and others. Berle thinks it worked: "Right away," he says, "it had a better, more substantial feel" than earlier attempts to organize.

Berle gives a lot of credit to Nate Michaud, the former Island Institute staff member who first undertook organizational chores for what would become the coalition in March 2004. Following Michaud was Dana Leath, a one-time Island Institute Fellow who helped set up meetings and establish ground rules for the group. An early controversy: Should Little Diamond Island, which has no year-round community but a highly organized group of seasonal residents, be included? "We had a harangue over that one," Berle recalls. In the end Little Diamond joined but didn't get a vote; today, both Little and Great Diamond are full members. Other islands in the coalition include Vinalhaven, North Haven, Great Cranberry, Islesford, Islesboro, Swan's, Isle au Haut, Chebeague, Long, Monhegan and Peaks. Most are self-governing; a handful are part of Portland. Long Island seceded from Portland a decade ago; Peaks is attempting to do the same thing this year. Chebeague seceded from Cumberland last year.

Like the ground rules for eligibility and electing members, it was important to define the coalition's relationship to the Island Institute. "We had a sense from a number of the islands," Berle says carefully, "[that] there wasn't a wholehearted embracing of the Institute. We wanted to be a separate entity." Still, the Institute continues to provide staff assistance, which is important to the functioning of the coalition as it proceeds to represent islanders on a variety of fronts.

"The Island Institute is a member of the coalition," explains an equally diplomatic Chris Wolff, the staff member currently charged with managing the relationship.

Schools rose to the top of the priority list at the start of 2007 because of the governor's announced plan to consolidate districts. Previously the coalition put considerable emphasis on affordable housing: Members helped organize a well-attended conference on the topic in 2005, and the coalition has since participated in a coast-wide group focusing on housing. Community housing trusts and a local-option real estate transfer tax are among the tools the coalition would like to see used to deal with the housing problem. This issue is unlikely to disappear from the coalition's agenda in the future.

Secession is another preoccupation. Last year the coalition took a position in favor of Chebeague's effort to break away from Cumberland. At a meeting in early 2007 it voted 6–1 (with one abstention) to support Peaks Island's attempt to leave Portland. Peaks's secession effort has been clouded by division on the island, and after the meeting it was unclear how far the coalition would be willing to push the matter.

A third major concern is island health care, including services for the elderly. Islesboro, Chebeague, Peaks and Vinalhaven, all coalition members, have exchanged information, Berle says, and hope that together, they can exert greater leverage when it comes to legislation, regulations or grant funding than they could as individual communities.

Taxation, solid waste, fire protection, insurance, protecting working waterfronts and restoring fisheries have all been on coalition agendas in the past and are likely to remain so in the coming years.

"The trick will be maintaining our momentum," Berle declares. "Having the same representatives [from year to year] gives us continuity and consistency. If every year we can be rabble-rousers on some significant issue, we will have succeeded."

***David D. Platt** is editor of* Island Journal.

THE SOUND OF YOUTH

Frenchboro fills its school and finds its future

PHILIP CONKLING

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

In the early 1980s when the population of the one-room schoolhouse on Frenchboro had dwindled to a single student, David Lunt knew the island was at a life-threatening crossroads. Without children, there is no school; without a school, there are no young families; and without young families, an aging population just peters out—like a Shaker village.

David Lunt's solution was visionary, if improbable: The town would seek to obtain a piece of land, build a handful of new houses on it, and convince young families to settle there. David lobbied the town (where he was the first selectman) and the school (where he was board chair) to approve the concept. He convinced the highly territorial lobstermen (in Lunt Harbor, where he owned the only lobster-buying and bait operation) to make room for a few more young fishermen with families. He convinced the Rockefeller family, which owned a thousand undeveloped acres on Frenchboro, to donate 50 acres to the new, nonprofit, Frenchboro Future Development Corporation (FFDC), and he recruited a few off-island organizations, including the Island Institute and the Maine Sea Coast Mission, to help out.

By 1987 the FFDC had acquired a $450,000 low-interest loan from the Maine State Housing Authority to build seven new houses. Two years later the community began looking for young families, which some of the older, less-delicate islanders colorfully referred to as "breeders."

After a promising start, events quickly overtook the islanders. The national media picked up on the modest advertising Frenchboro had initiated. A headline in the *National Star* tabloid read "Come Live with Us on Fantasy Island." Unimaginable opportunities awaited anyone who applied for the seven houses that were virtually free for the asking, the article implied. Over a thousand applications poured in, each dutifully read by the committee of islanders Lunt had assembled to screen them.

The FFDC had asked applicants to detail how they proposed to make a living and pay their mortgage on an island where there were no stores (not to mention movies or entertainment), where there were no ready-made jobs, and where a ferry connected them to the mainland only once a week.

Many imaginative and idealistic people thought they had the answer. A cowboy proposed to graze his herd of 50 Texas longhorns on Frenchboro's thousand undeveloped acres. A woman writer had signed a book contract and needed peace and quiet to work on her manuscript, tentatively titled *Women Who Murder*.

After sifting through the applications and conducting face-to-face interviews on Frenchboro during a midwinter visit, the islanders had by 1990 selected the initial group of six families to come live with them on Reality Island. And reality proved to be harsh: Within three years, five of the six original families had "removed." Two were fishermen from Massachusetts, one of whom had suffered through a divorce. The other owned a small boat whose engine had failed offshore on a bitter winter day. A nasty northwest wind blew him farther and farther out, and he "kind of lost his courage," said David. The women among the settlers were more isolated than their husbands, and many felt estranged from their new community.

David Lunt

By 1998, the school population had bottomed out again—down to a single student. Still, several of the new houses had been rented by young, still childless families who were deciding whether or not they wanted to make a long-term commitment to island living.

Slowly, however, nearly a decade after the first settlers had arrived, the waters around the island stopped receding. The island's schoolteachers were as instrumental as any in turning the tide. Becky Smart came to teach on Frenchboro in 1999 from Milo, her hometown, where she had returned fresh out of college with a teaching degree. She was impressed when the whole Frenchboro community turned out to meet her during her interview, after she had applied to teach the island's two students. She taught for two and a half years, during which she married Mike Lenfesty, who had originally come to the island to be a sternman for his sister's husband.

A few years earlier, a Methodist minister and his wife, Rob and Lorna Stuart, had sailed into Frenchboro and fallen in love with the island—an easy thing to do when you round up into Lunt Harbor on a summer's day and first see the picturesque anchorage framed by the church and school at its head. Something in the demeanor of the Stuarts apparently appealed to David Lunt, who offered to sell them a small piece of land he owned so they could build a house and retire to the island. In the spring of 2001, David asked Lorna Stuart to take over from Becky in the schoolhouse, where there were then three kids in school.

Rob Stuart credits his wife with helping to change the culture, first in the school and eventually on the entire island. "Lorna taught children always to look people in the eye and to introduce themselves and shake their hands," he says. Although islanders had always waved to each other when driving by, some had avoided simple eye contact in other contexts, especially with people they did not know well.

From that simple beginning, other changes began to happen. Becky remembers attending her first baby shower on the island: "People I did not even know came. They just wanted to hold the baby to see a new life on the island." Becky also remembers another turning point for her new family on Frenchboro. "Three years ago Mike lost his boat in a storm. It was smashed all to pieces on the rocks. It was a hard day. But the community all got together. Several people dragged the pieces up on the shore to burn. One of the fishermen, Lewis Bishop, gave Mike a job as a sternman to make it through."

Meanwhile, the school population slowly increased as the initial batch of settlers' children reached school age. In 2004, the school population edged up from three to five. The following year it doubled to ten and Lorna needed a helper. Lorna and the school board, where Becky was chairperson, recruited Rachel Bishop, the wife of lobsterman Lewis Bishop, to work half-time with Lorna. Rachel and Lewis's son, Lance, was the oldest student in the school, so Rachel was familiar with the school's limits as well as its opportunities.

"Things present themselves," said Alan Davis. The Davis family was among the original families who settled Frenchboro with the Lunts in the early 1800s. But Alan's father, Ben, a contemporary of David Lunt's in the early 1960s, left the island to pursue a career in the Boston area. "Mentally my father never left the island, even though he worked most of his life in a high-tech science career for Polaroid and bought a home in Massachusetts," recalls his son Alan. "He was always a Mainer; he always voted up here." Alan continues the story of his own return to Frenchboro with his wife and two little girls: "When my dad died and we got the house, I was working for a software startup, and I realized I could telecommute from here. I had health insurance and a job and it was an opportunity."

Alan Davis and his wife, Erica, and their two daughters, Lily and Hannah, had spent time every summer in the Davis house on the east side of the harbor. "When the girls would come up for the summer, there would be this big sigh of relief. They just knew they could go outside and get some sticks or something to play with. They could run around without shoes on. They could go down to the harbor by themselves and enjoy life like it was for kids 100 years ago. No play dates, no commitments and no schedules. So I watched that and wanted to get back here, the way my dad did."

When Rachel took over from Lorna, the Davises had been on the island during the school year. Erica Davis had taught third grade in Massachusetts for eight years. David Lunt asked Erica to work half-time with the upper grades. Things had just presented themselves. . . .

As the echo of the echo of the baby boom continued on Frenchboro, Becky, who has three children herself, decided to start a preschool program in 2003 to help young kids develop the kind of social skills that are very important in the small, multiage teaching environment of Frenchboro's one-room schoolhouse. Three of David Lunt's grandsons, Nate, Zach and Travis; a granddaughter, Kristy; and a niece, April, had settled down on the island. The tenth generation of Lunts all enrolled their kids in Becky's preschool program to help get them ready for school and, not coincidentally, get a break from the isolation of child-rearing that can overwhelm fishermen's wives.

The Frenchboro school holds an open house.

Now, amazingly, the Frenchboro School is bursting with 13 students—seven in the younger grades taught by Rachel, and six in the upper grades taught by Erica. If you visit, you are likely to have the memorable experience that Rachel Bishop has continued for the younger grades: Students line up to introduce themselves to you, trying as hard as they can to look you in the eye as they greet you. It is good to meet you, Austin, Myron, Amber, Elijah, Hannah, Saylor, Brody and Teressa. Across the room Erica is giving the older kids, Lance, Lily, Cody, Dylan and Jesse reading assignments before they head downstairs to the newly conditioned "science lab" (and gym and art room), stocked with an aquarium full of both common and mysterious forms of sea life that lobstermen in the harbor have helped provide, as well as other materials.

Erica is amazed by this group of students. "The kids don't get here late," she said. "Whenever I get here, there are kids waiting to go to school. Kids love to be here."

When we at the Island Institute organize lessons about other Maine island communities that we work with, we ask the students for their definition of an island. Before the Frenchboro students get around to the definition of "water all around," their first three excited answers are "beaches," "sea smoke" and "sea glass," which all speak to their grounding in a strong sense of place.

Ask the new young families—or some of the old-timers—on Frenchboro why and how Frenchboro's wildly improbable homesteading plan has worked, and a number of themes keep emerging. First, people truly credit David Lunt's "tremendous insight, tremendous vision," in Alan Davis's words. Rob Stuart, currently a town selectman and also an Internet businessman who locates rare books for customers, remarked that David Lunt "did not have a lot of experience in process, but was successful because he didn't spend time worrying about the naysayers."

Frenchboro also presented itself as a welcoming community at the outset. However, cautions Alan, "We are a welcoming community under [certain] conditions: we are not giving away homes in a lottery." As Becky says laughingly, "They wanted us and now they have us."

Equally important, the community was willing to make changes as problems became evident. "It really changed after they opened up the opportunity to fishermen," Alan says. Now that there are 15 fishermen in the harbor, there is an added benefit, Becky says: The older fishermen are "happy to have a few more to help hold their ground."

The community was also willing to address some of its hardest cultural problems, matters it had been obliged to face as it bottomed out. As Alan Davis describes it, "I remember a lot of the older fishermen. It was a pretty rough place. They came in from fishing, bought their bottles, and drank until they ran out of money, and then went fishing again. Sternmen can earn $30- to 40,000 in a season of fishing. That's a lot of money for a young kid, and some of them wanted to raise a lot of hell. It's been flushed out of Frenchboro. The church had a lot to do with it. There's no need for that kind of escapism."

Frenchboro clearly faces a lot of challenges as it moves into the future. Alan describes the community as something "like a helicopter, with 40 different pieces moving in different directions—but somehow it flies." Nevertheless, it's just as clear that Frenchboro does have a future, captured in a collective sound. "All the older people say they know it's 11 o'clock when the kids get out for lunch," says Becky, "because they can hear the kids laughing and screaming around outside. It's the sound of youth!"

Philip Conkling *is president of the Island Institute.*

More photos online at www.islandinstitute.org

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Prohibition and cod fishing may be over, but on Saint Pierre and Miquelon, ties to the motherland keep things going.

STORY BY NANCY GRIFFIN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Saint Pierre in the foreground; Miquelon in the distance.

Gravel-strewn former cod-drying spots known as "Les Graves" are a distinct feature of L'Isle aux Marins, the abandoned fishing settlement on an island adjacent to Saint Pierre.

In the wind-whipped North Atlantic, an hour by fast ferry from any kind of mainland, perched on nearly treeless rocks, sit the islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon—unique because they are the only French holdings in North America. The closest "mainland" is itself an island, although it is the 16th-largest in the world, the island of Newfoundland, far off the coast of Canada, part of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

When you're on Saint Pierre or Miquelon, far from anywhere else, you're in France. And there's no doubt the islands are French, from the flags flying, the signs in French, the gendarmes outfitted exactly like their counterparts in France, and the fact that only a tiny minority of islanders speak English. The mostly small cars that line the narrow, often cobblestone streets, are usually French—an assortment of Citroens, Renaults and Peugeots—tiny vans, tiny trucks, practical and energy-efficient.

The distinctly French-style Saint Pierre cemetery; L'Isle aux Marins in the background.

Inside any local restaurant, a visitor finds the colors, aromas and tastes of France, and often a selection of hundreds of wines. Except for the restaurants, businesses shut down in classic European style for two hours during lunchtime. The boutiques are filled with dishes, clothing, household items and furniture from France. Cars and goods are transported by container ships to Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they are transferred to a small container ship for their trip to the islands.

A distinctively French-style cemetery, sits on the slope of a high hill, overlooking the harbor. It contains hundreds of aboveground, stone-encased graves, many of which date back centuries. As befits a culture that is 99 percent Catholic, most are marked by crosses.

The small island of Saint Pierre is an unexpected sort of place. It's not rural—nearly all the 5,618 residents live in a small harbor-dependent city made up of brightly colored, closely packed, tidy houses that start at the shore and climb uphill. In recent years, a small number of new, much-larger homes have been built outside of town. Observers say these are mostly owned by a handful of importers and people with high government jobs.

The colorful hulls of the famous Saint Pierre dories are still in evidence around the harbor, even though they are no longer the fishing boats essential to survival that they once were. Like neighboring Newfoundland, fishing now consists mostly of small trawlers and longliners hunting snow crab, lobster and assorted other species that replaced the once-ubiquitous cod. The weather here is predictable for islands in the North Atlantic—frequently foggy, usually windy and cool. And that's in summer.

Summer is short, but residents make the most of it by holding frequent festivals. The annual Basque festival features a tournament of *Pelote basque*, a traditional type of handball, played against a huge red wall in downtown Saint Pierre, called the *Zazpiak Bat*. The Basque flag is frequently seen.

Island signs point to other French possessions worldwide.

Saint Pierre's harbor

Experts say the French spoken here bears closest resemblance to the French of Normandy. Not surprising, since the original fishermen who settled the island hailed from Brittany, Normandy and the Basque Country. The Basque people kept traces of their own language alive on the islands until the 1950s. Presumably, the settlers from Brittany brought only their second language, French, with them, or else lost their ancient Gaelic tongue when they arrived. Later, refugees from Acadia and a few Alsatians emigrated to the archipelago.

French is the dominant language today. Only a tiny percentage, perhaps as few as 100 people, speak English, but English-speaking visitors find enough bilingual tour guides, tourism department employees and restaurant owners to get the information necessary for a satisfying and informative visit. Conversely, the dominance of French means many students come to Saint Pierre to immerse themselves in the language.

"I will learn English," said Josette Dodeman, proprietress of the Bernard Dodeman B&B since 1992 and head of the tourist association, Le Phare. "It is necessary." She speaks a little English, but since the island is looking to tourism to boost the flagging economy, and many tourists are English-speaking Canadians, there's a push for more bilingualism. She's noticed a change in tourist nationality. "Before, tourists were mostly Newfoundlanders. Since 2001, there are more from Toronto, Montreal and other parts of Canada. They used to go to the U.S."

"Our mission is to promote Saint Pierre as a destination, but we will also act as agent for excursions, transportation, special guides for all kinds of tours," said Pascal Daireaux, sales director of the Comité Régional du Tourisme. "The market is getting stronger. More and more tour operators from Quebec are bringing groups. Five or six years ago, they brought three tours with 50 people each summer; now they bring 11 groups." More international cruise ships are also stopping by for a day.

Tour guide Vanina Merkle is originally from Newfoundland, but has lived on Saint Pierre for 20 years.

A Saint Pierre native, 35-year-old Daireaux wants to ensure the growth of tourism to stimulate the economy and keep islanders employed. "Our main goal for the next five years is to double the numbers, go to 27,000 tourists." He wants to be able to keep the friendly staff in the tourism office working, both for continuity and because they are well trained.

Like many remote places that are economically challenged, these islands export their young. Dodeman has four sisters and one brother. Her brother is in Saint Pierre, but three sisters live in France and one is in Martinique—a family distribution that's fairly common. Some of the exports are planned: All high school graduates are entitled to a free education at a French university. Many graduate, then find jobs in France and don't return. But some do.

Several island shrines commemorate Saint Pierre's "golden years" during U.S. Prohibition, when gangster Al Capone (wearing the hat) visited often and stayed at the Hotel Robert.

A young woman working in one of several charming boutiques said she went away to France for school, but returned home after one year. "There we had to lock everything up," she said. "Here we are safe and free." Another young woman stayed in France for seven years, but came home because she missed the islands. She plans to stay.

Tour guide Vanina Merkle's case is a little different. She was born and raised in Newfoundland, but her parents returned to visit her grandparents every year. Twenty years ago, she moved to Saint Pierre to care for her aging grandparents, and stayed on after they died.

"I think it's wonderful here, but I have to get away every winter. It's too small, too dark and too hard to get off," said Merkle. "I probably won't stay."

As the economy stands now, most employment derives from France. The island and its jobs are heavily subsidized to the tune of around $60 million in annual grants from France. France recently built a new airport on Saint Pierre, and a new hospital is in the works. Some positions are direct government jobs, working in the bureaucracy. France also supports the schools. The gendarmes actually come from France, assigned to stints of varying lengths.

Saint Pierre has a long and colorful past. Historians believe the Vikings found the archipelago first in the 11th century, but Portuguese explorer Alvarez Faguendes found it again on February 22, 1520. The Portuguese didn't keep the territories, and soon after Alvarez, the name "Saint Pierre" began appearing on maritime charts. French explorer Jacques Cartier came ashore in June of 1536 on his second trip to North America.

Settled by fishermen, and visited by fishermen from around the world for 400 years, the smallest of the populated islands reached its peak of economic prosperity not from fish, but from booze during Prohibition in the United States. In fact, another tiny island was the most prosperous fishing community, until Prohibition-related jobs on Saint Pierre drew the young a small distance across the water from Île aux Marins to earn more money for shorter hours and easier work. Museums sport pictures of a smiling Al Capone, one of the biggest customers, during a visit to the island.

Musée Heritage has 10 rooms filled with artifacts of Saint Pierre's past.

From 1920 to 1933, alcohol could not be sold in the U.S. Of course, Canada had the right to export its own alcohol, just not directly to the U.S., so it was shipped to Saint Pierre, where Capone and other "rumrunners" bought it and smuggled it into the U.S. At Prohibition's peak, 300,000 cases of alcohol were shipped each month from Saint Pierre. One island home was constructed entirely from rum boxes. All museums on the islands display artifacts from this era.

For a small place, the islands have more than their share of museums. One, in the Hotel Robert, is devoted entirely to Prohibition. Saint Pierre has a large, publicly funded museum, L'Arche Museé et Archives, which reproduces rooms from homes, and displays furni-

Street scene, Saint Pierre. L'Isle aux Marins is in the background.

ture, artifacts, papers, photographs, paintings and multimedia presentations to show the history and culture of the archipelago. A private museum, Museé Heritage, has 10 rooms filled with artifacts from Saint Pierre's past, each devoted to a different slice of island life. Many of them contain artifacts from the islands' Catholic past, including one set up exactly like a church, with a fully dressed altar and three presses for making communion host.

One room, devoted to fishing, has two Saint Pierre dories and a new mural being painted on a long wall by Jean-Jacques Oliviero, who moved to Saint Pierre from France 33 years ago and says, "I stay with pleasure." Oliviero teaches painting at the high school, Lyceé de Saint Pierre. In his mural, he depicts a Catholic religious procession and fills it with notables from all eras of the islands' history, including some contemporaries.

The end of Prohibition meant a return to a reliance on fishing, and support and repair services for the big fishing vessels from France and other countries, until the 1970s, when the 200-mile limit kept most foreign vessels away. With the later collapse of the cod stocks, mainstay of the fishery for hundreds of years, even the French fleet went home.

Today the big seafood-processing plant is idle and deteriorating. The fishing vessels are the small, local boats, and they spend a lot of time at the dock. Saint Pierre fishes under agreement with Canada now, after many years of disputes over territory. In 1992 a tribunal awarded an economic zone to Saint Pierre and Miquelon that was less than 25 percent of the area claimed by France, but decimated cod stocks meant relatively few fish for either country.

Fish farming may eventually help the economy. Scallop aquaculture is under development on Miquelon, employing many islanders. A cod grow-out program has begun on Saint Pierre, although neither is yet commercially viable.

Jean-Jacques Oliviero is painting a mural of island history.

"No one in Saint Pierre and Miquelon thought the fishery would ever be over," said Daireaux. When the cod moratorium was imposed in 1992, the islands got serious about tourism. "I was in the Magdalen Islands six years ago. Their fishery was over, but they were very advanced in tourism. They began investing in tourism around 1986 because the leaders believed the fishery wouldn't survive."

Residents seem equally divided between optimists and pessimists about Saint Pierre's future. Taxi driver and tour guide Bernard LeBars fears that "as jobs continue to depart, there will be an exodus." One old-timer said, "It's no good on Saint Pierre anymore. It's dying." But another disagreed: "The people of Saint Pierre have survived hard times before and the people now are no less intelligent than in the past. They will rise again, perhaps to higher levels than before."

Selections are distinctly Gallic at the boulangerie in Saint Pierre.

Although the "collectivity" is called Saint Pierre and Miquelon by France, those islands are only two among several in an archipelago that totals 186 square miles. Miquelon, from the Basque for "Michael," with a population of around 697, is geographically the largest of the islands. It's connected to Langlade, another island nearly as large, by a sand isthmus. The isthmus and a sandbar off Miquelon create Grand Barachois, a saltwater lagoon that is home to many seals, marine birds and other wildlife.

Some residents of Saint Pierre and Miquelon keep summer houses on Langlade's beach, which can be reached by driving the isthmus, but very few people live there year-round. People go to Langlade for camping and, surprisingly, windsurfing. Saint Pierre has the most protected harbor, and the ferry ride from Saint Pierre to Miquelon takes as long as the ferry from Fortune, Newfoundland, to Saint Pierre, because the two good harbors are on opposite sides of the island. The strait that divides Saint Pierre and Miquelon is treacherous, site of many shipwrecks and called by sailors "The Mouth of Hell."

Roger Etcheberry's family has lived on the archipelago since 1752, on his mother's side. On his father's side, his great-grandfather didn't arrive until 1873. He has lived between Miquelon and Saint Pierre for all of his 62 years. A naturalist by avocation for more than 30 years, since he retired from a career in communications eight years ago, Etcheberry says he will usually conduct tours of the fauna and flora of his island when asked.

"Last July, a professor of botany came from France and I showed him around 350 species of plants in 10 days," said Etcheberry. He's an organic gardener now, growing carrots, parsley, leeks, chicory, endive and various salad plants. "I haven't bought a potato in eight years."

Some relatively new ventures may help the economy on Miquelon. The island became a site for the business of animal quarantines in the 1960s, and a lot of people were employed. Cattle raisers brought in Charolais, big white cattle from France, for quarantine to avoid bringing hoof-and-mouth disease to North America. The market dropped off, and the big building constructed for the quarantine was

The Cathedral on L'Isle aux Marins evokes the island's maritime heritage.

An abandoned fish processing plant dominates the waterfront.

used as a warehouse, but a new quarantine is expected to begin this year. Farmers have introduced llamas and alpacas, and many sheep are being raised on Miquelon.

It's impressive that the habitants of these islands maintain their culture so far from their home country. Islanders anywhere might argue that the more remote the island, the easier it is to maintain a distinct culture, and they'd be right. But this archipelago is located so near one of the world's once foremost international fishing grounds, the Grand Banks, that for generations they played host to ships from around the world.

The names adorning hotels in Saint Pierre announce how connected this remote island historically has been to the larger world, at least through the fishermen of many countries. A Seamen's Hotel, now unused and falling into disrepair, displays signs representing several of the languages of sailors who once stayed there, including Japanese and Russian.

The Paris-Madrid Hotel on the shoreside boulevard is a good example of the island's internationalism. It was started by Madeleine "Madoo" Perez, 74, a native of Saint Pierre, and her now-deceased Spanish husband. They met when he came ashore from his Spanish fishing vessel. They married, he stayed. She still runs a clothing store on the street level of the hotel, but doesn't believe it will be open much longer. Her flat on the second floor of the hotel is a throwback to the old days of Saint Pierre, filled with heavy antique furniture, new when her grandfather brought it from France.

One old-timer recalls that despite the intense Frenchness of the place, there is an Irish influence in the population as well, contributed by the Irish descendants of Newfoundland. During Prohibition, at least 300 young women from Newfoundland went to Saint Pierre to work. Most of them married natives and stayed. Before and since, because Newfoundland is so close, Saint Pierre residents have often married natives of this nearest land mass.

The former airstrip on Saint Pierre is gradually being converted to other uses.

Almost everything driven, eaten, used or worn on the islands is French. The language is French. The currency is the Euro, as in France. There's a monument to Free France and a General Charles de Gaulle Square where the French flag is raised on Bastille Day. Many residents, if asked, will say they live in France. Others say they are French, but they identify more strongly with Canada, since it's so close.

Roger Etcheberry puts it succinctly: "Some people say they're 'in France.' Not me. I belong to France, I have French culture, but I'm in a French territory in North America. Which is not the same for me."

A native of Newfoundland, ***Nancy Griffin*** *returns there each summer from her home in Thomaston, Maine.*

More photos online at www.islandinstitute.org


ER OA
FRANKLIN HOU

The U.S. Custom House, New York City. Facing page*: granite for the Brooklyn Bridge's distinctive towers came from Vinalhaven.*

HEAVY FREIGHT

When Vinalhaven stone traveled the country

HARRY GRATWICK

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE
VINALHAVEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The names remind one of an Amtrak schedule: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington. When you add Chicago, St. Louis, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, you have all the cities in the original American and National baseball leagues. And these are just a few examples of where the granite went from Vinalhaven.

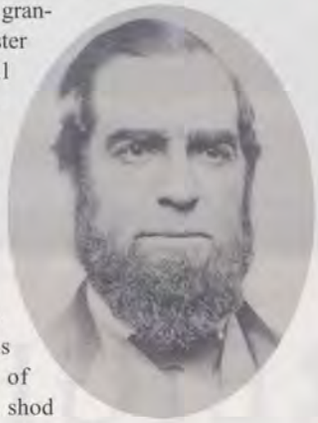
One hundred years ago, granite from the island's quarries was shipped to 23 states, mostly in the eastern half of the United States. Records in the Vinalhaven Historical Society indicate that stone went for banks, bridges and breakwaters, courthouses and custom houses, libraries and lighthouses, post offices and paving blocks. It went for assorted monuments, forts, train stations, and even a jail. In Maine alone granite went to dozens of different building sites, including 24,000 tons for the Rockland breakwater, eight miles across Penobscot bay.

In the early 19th century Vinalhaven was a quiet fishing and farming village of perhaps 1,000 souls. The first granite quarrying is reported to have occurred in 1826 when a man by the name of Tuck quarried a boatload of stone from Arey's Harbor to be used in the construction of a state prison in Charlestown, Massachusetts, now part of Boston. It is said that Mr. Tuck, a quarryman from New Hampshire, brought his own workmen with him, as well as "tools, provisions and a goodly supply of rum." The stone was shipped to Boston in the schooner PLYMOUTH ROCK.

The end of the Civil War in 1865 ushered in an era of massive federal, state and private building projects. The United States had expanded to the Pacific and national pride was demanding that the country build impressive buildings similar to those that wealthy Americans had seen in Europe. Granite from Maine was readily available because of the relative ease of shipping by water, and Vinalhaven's granite was prized for its quality. The gray and bluish-gray stone were the principal varieties and were found in both fine and course grain. "Vinalhaven Black," although rare, was particularly prized. A reporter wrote that Vinalhaven had "material enough in the beautiful granite which abounds to employ men for a century to come."

THE BODWELL COMPANY

The two men most responsible for the development of Vinalhaven's granite industry were Moses Webster (right) and Joseph Bodwell (opposite), the latter destined to be governor of Maine. Theirs was a rags-to-riches story. Webster came to Vinalhaven from New Hampshire and Bodwell arrived from Massachusetts in the early 1850s. At the start of their joint operations they had but a single team of oxen, which Bodwell drove, shod and cared for himself while Webster worked in the quarry and tended the books. In 1853 the firm of Bodwell and Webster was formed. Contracts were secured to supply stones for breakwaters, lighthouses and federal forts on the East Coast.

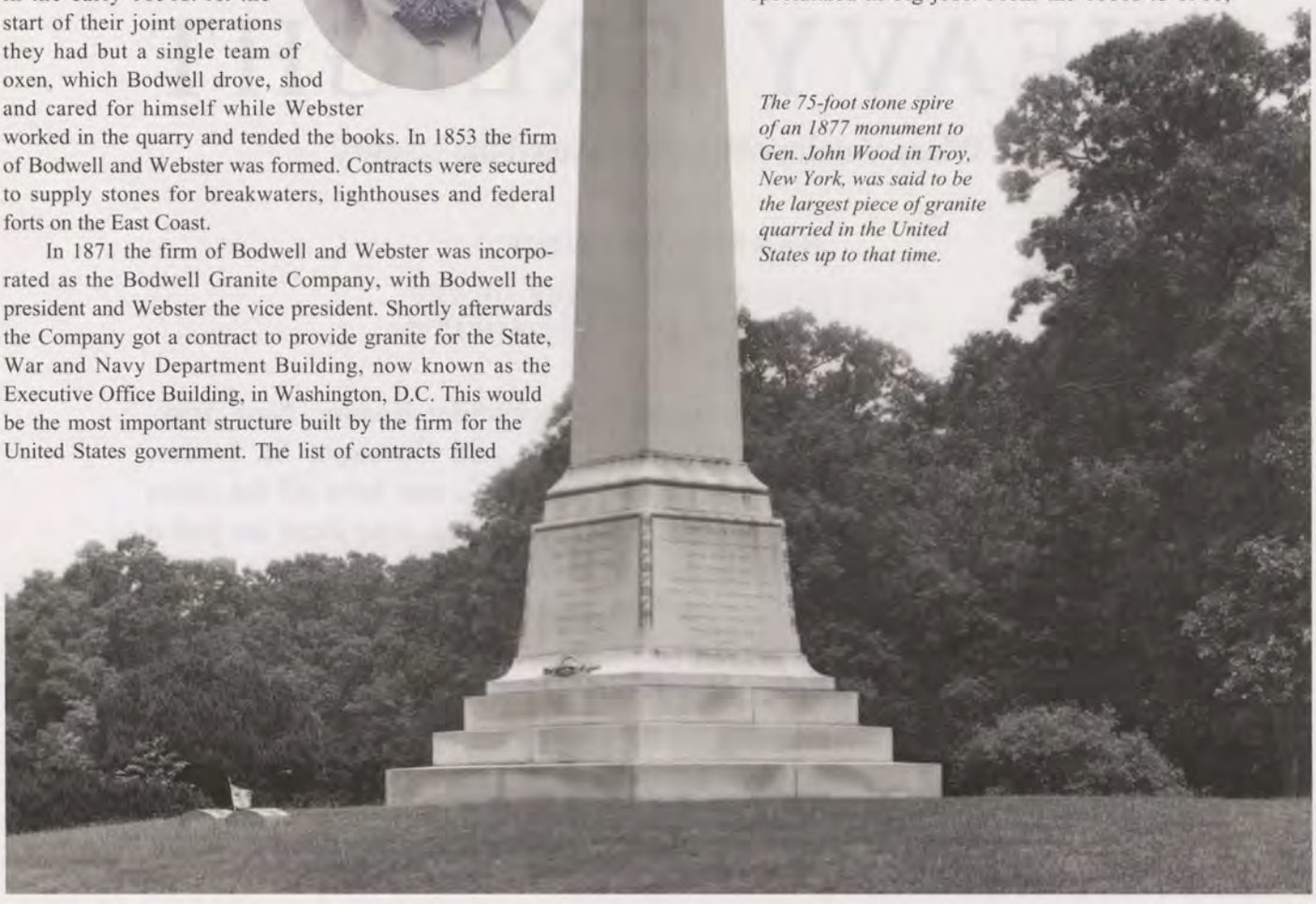


In 1871 the firm of Bodwell and Webster was incorporated as the Bodwell Granite Company, with Bodwell the president and Webster the vice president. Shortly afterwards the Company got a contract to provide granite for the State, War and Navy Department Building, now known as the Executive Office Building, in Washington, D.C. This would be the most important structure built by the firm for the United States government. The list of contracts filled by the Bodwell Company in the 19th century includes the Chicago Board of Trade, the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in Philadelphia, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Union Mutual Life Insurance Building in Boston and a small amount of stone for the Washington Monument, delivered in 1884.

The effects on Vinalhaven were significant as the island underwent "the greatest financial boom in its history," according to local historian Sidney Winslow. Wages were good and prospects for the future looked even better. Granite cutters poured in from the British Isles, especially from Scotland; the population on the island rose to almost 3,000 by 1880. By 1872 the Bodwell Co. had become the dominant economic force on the island, with over 600 men on the payroll. It should be pointed out that Bodwell was simply the largest of a number of granite businesses on the island. Other firms employing between 25 and 50 men included Booth Brothers, J. P. Armbrust, J. S. Black & Co., and the Roberts Harbor Company. And of course there was also a flourishing granite operation on nearby Hurricane Island.

But there were clouds on the horizon. While the granite industry was prospering, in the 1870s, men were earning a mere $1.50 for a brutal 10-hour day. In 1876, 300 men were laid off; this action encouraged Vinalhaven's granite workers to form a union. There were strikes by workers and lockouts by the owners, who proceeded to bring in scabs to keep the quarries open. Wages improved, but slowly; it wasn't until 1905 that skilled workers on the island were earning $3.40 for an 8-hour day. When Bodwell died in 1887, shortly after becoming governor of Maine, the eulogies rolled in. "His repute in the business world stood untarnished. He was a man of untiring industry and uncommon natural capacity. Vinalhaven will long revere his memory." Maine historian Roger Grindle asked, "One wonders to what degree the average working man held this view."

In spite of periodic labor strife, however, government and private contracts continued to pour in. The Bodwell Company specialized in big jobs. From the 1880s to 1910,



The 75-foot stone spire of an 1877 monument to Gen. John Wood in Troy, New York, was said to be the largest piece of granite quarried in the United States up to that time.

Bodwell quarries supplied stones for the elaborate U.S. Custom House facade in New York, as well as for post offices in Washington, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Kansas City. And this is only a partial list. Of particular note were the five beautiful eagles by Scottish master carvers that adorned the facade of the Buffalo Post Office. When asked how he did it, one of the carvers replied, "Oh, there's really nothing to it. The eagle was already in the stone and all I had to do was chisel it out."

There were two other transactions of interest. In 1872, Brooklyn, not yet a part of New York City, sold a steam fire engine to E. P. Walker (an official of the Bodwell Co.) in partial payment for granite furnished for the Brooklyn Bridge. And in 1877 the city of Troy, New York, ordered a monument in honor of General John Wool, a veteran of the Mexican and Civil Wars. The 75-foot, 650-ton stone was shaped and polished in the Bodwell Granite Co. finishing shed. It was said to be the largest piece of granite ever quarried in the United States up to that time.

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

In 1899 the Bodwell Company secured its most famous contract: to provide eight enormous columns for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The project presented a number of problems, the least of which was getting the stones out of the ground. Initially columns were not even part of the original conception for the cathedral. However, in spite of the added expense of $25,000 for each column, the decision was made to proceed when architects persuaded the church trustees of how imposing the pillars would be. An exceptional vein of stone was found in the Wharff Quarry on the western side of the island, and work began in April of 1899. Once quarried, the stones were polished on a special lathe especially designed by Bodwell engineer E. R. Cheney. When the first three columns broke on the lathe, the decision was made to make the columns in two pieces. Their combined height of 55 feet would make them twice the height of the columns of the Parthenon and rival those of St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The columns were loaded, two at a time, aboard a specially designed barge, the BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, and towed to New York by the schooner CLARITA. They arrived in July 1903 at West 134th Street on the Hudson River. Transporting the two stones (weighing 130 tons) two miles from the dock to 112th Street and Morningside Heights was a formidable task. Because of the weight of the stones, a special truck with huge wooden wheels had to be designed, and paving blocks had to be removed from the street. It took nineteen days for the first columns to be laboriously moved down Amsterdam Avenue before they arrived at the cathedral grounds. A 10-ton tractor provided the power for a winch, which moved the truck 300 feet at a time. By the time the next two columns arrived, the engineers had speeded up the moving process, and subsequent trips took less time. The project was completed in January of 1904, when the final columns were shipped to New York. By the end of 1904 all eight columns were in place and ready for the cathedral to be built around them. Work proceeded slowly. The first services were finally held in the nave of the cathedral on December 6, 1941. The next day Pearl Harbor was attacked and the United States entered World War II, further delaying construction. Work continues on St. John the Divine as this is written.

THE TECHNOLOGY

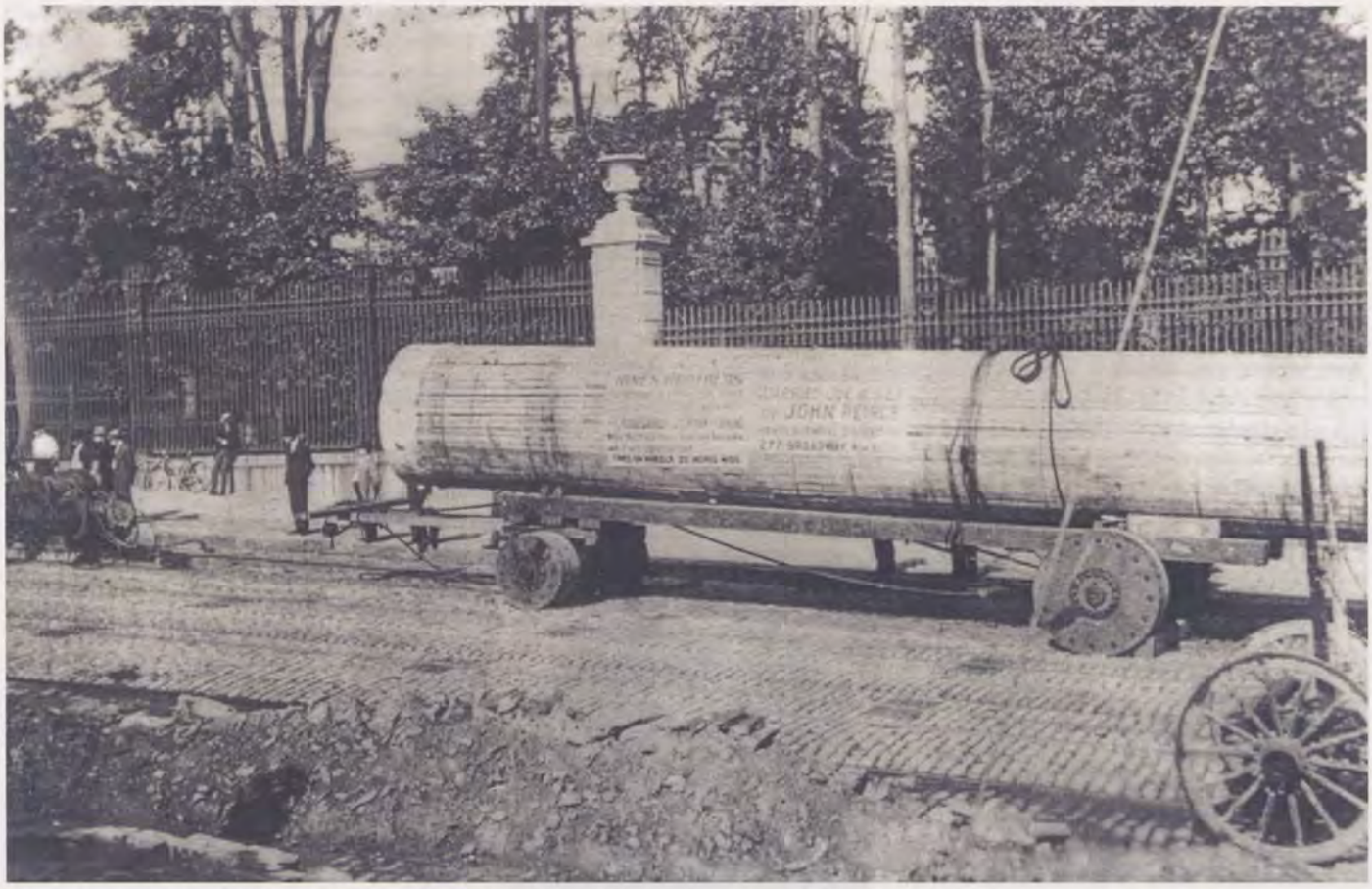
For centuries the quarrying of stone was done by hand with a hammer and chisel. Even though granite is a very hard rock, most stones will split cleanly when the proper breaking technique is used. Wedges and shims (also known as plugs and feathers) have been used for years and are still very effective for small jobs and for specialized carving. Hand-drilling, however, was tedious, and bits needed to be sharpened frequently. In the latter part of the 19th century, drilling equipment began to improve with the development of steam-driven drills. Then in the early 20th century, pneumatic drills, using compressed air, were developed, enabling quarrymen to work much faster. Compressed air used in conjunction with the pneumatic drill was not only more economical; it also reduced painful recoil. To quote a former quarryman, "After they got pneumatic tools, all you had to do was press the handle down and you could drill a hole in 30 seconds. Quite a difference." Not surprisingly, compressed-air hammer drills were soon in use in quarries everywhere. At the same time, mechanical drill sharpeners were developed to recondition bits. To quote from a U.S. Geological Survey report by Nelson Dale in 1907, "A modern quarry blacksmith shop is a marvel of speed and accuracy." Vinalhaven's newspaper proclaimed, "Last Friday 1,743 drills were sharpened for workmen in Sands Quarry with Fred Byard, Walter Hopkins and William Hopkins doing the sharpening."

Most quarries on Vinalhaven and elsewhere on the Maine coast were located near the shore so that as the stones were cut, they could be rolled or dragged to a nearby pier. Until railroad cars became available, teams of oxen and horses hauled stones, often in a special wagon equipped with a derrick or crane, called a "galamander." A rope tackle was attached to the derrick, which lifted large pieces of stone and suspended them between the 12-foot-in-diameter rear wheels. Well into the 20th century, there were as many as six galamanders working in the Sands Quarry on Vinalhaven during an average day. Four teams of horses drew the largest galamander, named Jumbo. Today a restored galamander sits on Vinalhaven's village green, symbol of an era when granite was king.

A word about dynamite, used to break up waste rock (grout) or to create large fractures. Explosives were also used for smaller jobs, although it took an expert not to create the tiny fractures that often didn't appear until a piece had been shaped and polished. A 1915 article in *Engineering News* stated that blasting had been "done away with except in the case of the hardest and toughest stone." Although fatalities were rare, blasting could cause some terrible accidents. Alexander Beaton, foreman of paving operations at Dushane Hill, was blown up, "mangled in a fearful manner" in 1883. What made the tragedy even more poignant was that a few years previously, his brother James had been crushed by the wheels of a steam engine at Sands Quarry. Then on November 24, 1899, Charles Ingerson, 45-year-old foreman of the Wharff Quarry, was killed when the time-delayed fuse he lit exploded prematurely. Mr. Ingerson, reported to be "an industrious, upright and honorable man who will be greatly missed," left a wife and three children.

There were also plenty of close calls. The house of Captain Samuel Burgess "situated near Pequot came near being a wreck last week when a large rock weighing nearly a ton flew the length of the house, barely touching the shingles. Mr. Burgess, frightened at its narrow escape, has had the building moved to safer quarters." And there is the story of Old Deborah, one of the oldest horses at Booth's Quarry, who fell into the water near the Sands wharf. Charles Moody made a "bold leap" into the water and held her head up until a boat was brought to help her get out of the water. Old Deborah was reported as "having only a few cuts on her legs" from her unexpected swim.

Vinalhaven historian Sidney Winslow provides some perspective when he reminds us in his book, *Fish Scales and Stone Chips*, that as a child in the early 20th century, he "paid little attention to the heavy



A reporter wrote in the 1860s that Vinalhaven had material enough "to employ men for a century to come."

blasts that were set off just a short distance from our dooryard [near Sands Quarry], even though the air was often filled with sticks and stones because of them." One cannot help but compare Winslow's attitude with the concerns expressed by island residents at the disruptions to daily life caused by dynamite blasting for the new sewer system on Vinalhaven a few years ago.

A quarryman's life was not all tedium. On Labor Day 1891, a well-publicized baseball game between the paving cutters and quarrymen and the granite cutters took place. The game was played on the Bodwell Co. recreational grounds on Lane's Island and was won by the granite cutters, 18–3. An article in a Vinalhaven newspaper, circa 1890, reported that "the contest between Allie Lane and Hans Packard for supremacy in stone cutting has ended. Lane came off the victor by seven seconds, having cut a double-header in three days, five hours, eleven minutes and six seconds. Packard made the same time in days, hours and minutes, but he was 13 seconds slower in completing the work." Finally, a "Boxing Competition" was held between Lewis Hopkins and Hanse Elwell to see who could make a sill box the fastest. Hopkins's time of three minutes, 13 seconds, beat Lewis by two seconds.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN IMPACT

If Joseph Bodwell and Moses Webster were to return today, they might be surprised to see Vinalhaven and the surrounding islands covered with trees. One hundred years ago, pictures of the islands show relatively few trees. Wood was cut down to provide fuel for boilers and compressors, as well as heat for private homes. In fact, coal had to be imported to supplement for the lack of wood. Today the scars in the earth left by the Bodwell Co. and other granite operations are less evident. Many quarries are filled with water, while others are covered with trees and shrubs. Perhaps the most obvious evidence of past quarrying operations are the loading piers (some in remarkably good condition) and the piles of granite rubble or grout on the shoreline, marking the presence of an old quarry.

Historian Roger Grindle, writing in *Tombstones and Paving Blocks*, reports that "one of the complaints of many Maine granite towns was the destruction done to the streets by teams of horses and oxen transporting heavy blocks of stone from the cutting sheds to the loading piers." While the streets could be repaired, the men's health was not so easily treated. The most frequent injuries suffered by workers were crushed hands and feet. Accidents also occurred from improperly used or faulty equipment. Period newspapers were filled with references to derricks and guy (guide) wires "giving way." There was also the more lethal "stonecutters' consumption" or "deadly dust," as it is called today, which came from working in enclosed areas during the winter months. Leigh Williams, a retired quarry worker, remembers "a lot of dust in stone cutting. We had our faces right down on the tools, and because of the compressed air, there were particles flying all around." Williams also commented on how it felt to use the tools. "It caused your fingers to get all paralyzed. Every time the day would get cold our fingers would all turn white, just like a dead man's. Mine did, but I've been out of it for so long that they've come back." Cutting stones frequently led to silicosis, a respiratory disease caused by the inhalation of silica dust. Proposals were made to suspend cutting operations in midwinter because of "the obnoxious dust." Unfortunately, Roger Grindle tells us, "various types of ventilating devices were tried, but none worked satisfactorily."

In 1919 the Bodwell Company store closed, selling all of its goods. The company had gone out of business, ending nearly 50 years as a leader of Vinalhaven's economy. Changes in architectural styles and new and lighter construction materials (structural steel and concrete) were appearing at the beginning of the 20th century. Builders were now using limestone, which was cheaper and easier to work with. Granite had its limitations as a building material. Because of its weight, it was impractical to use for buildings that were more than 5 or 6 stories high. Ironically, transporting granite by sea had become more expensive. Bad weather could delay shipping, and Vinalhaven's 10- to 12-foot tides limited when it was possible for vessels to sail.

In 1904 the Bodwell Company supplied eight enormous columns for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.

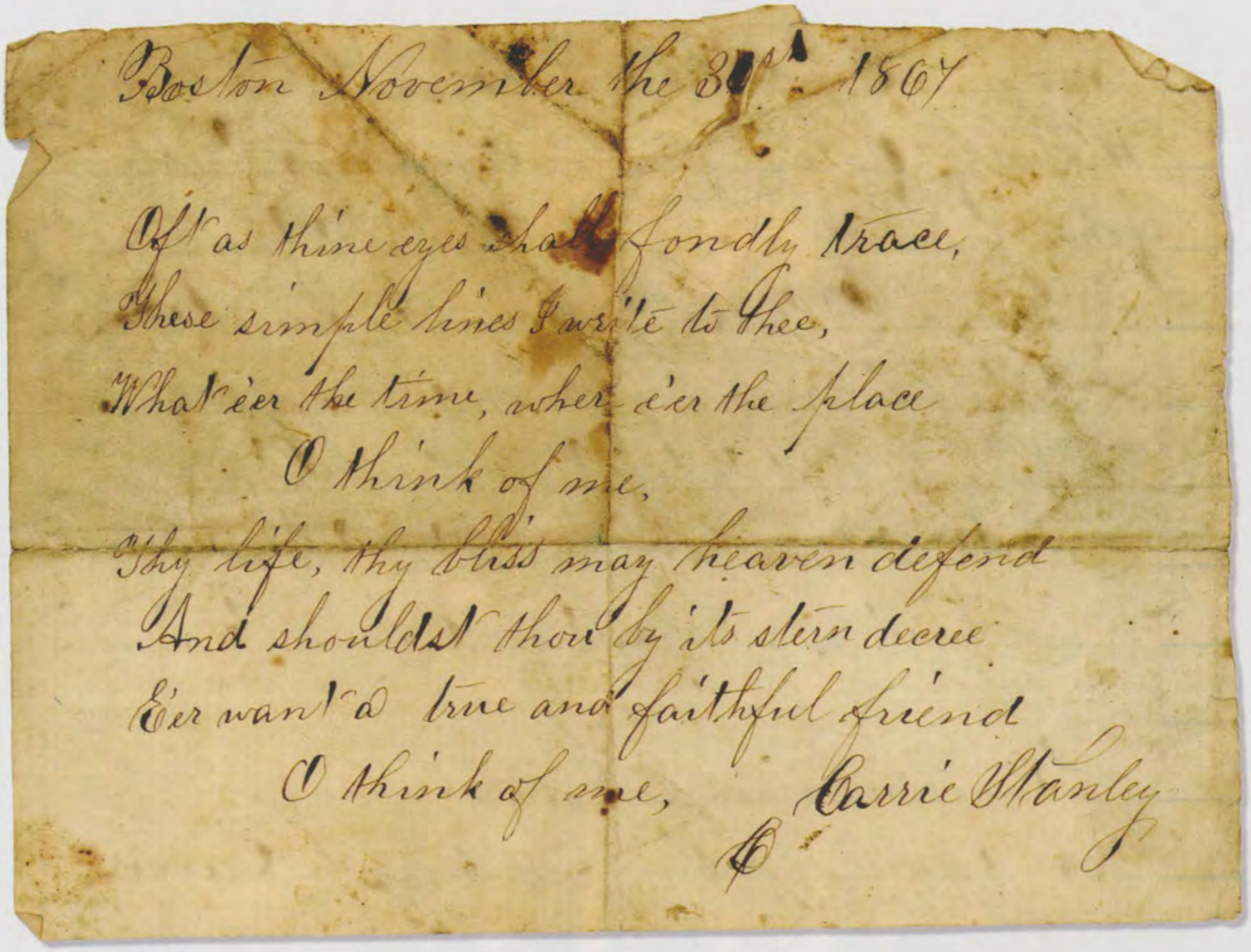
The cutting and shipping of paving blocks continued on Vinalhaven up to 1939. Originally granite companies had considered the quarrying of paving stones a secondary operation. Throughout the 1920s and '30s, however, a number of smaller quarrying operations led by "paving king" Joseph Leopold found markets in East Coast cities to provide stones for streets. Leopold alone is said to have shipped four million blocks a year, mostly to New York. In 1938, Joseph Leopold died, and the East Boston quarry closed down the next year. Since then there have been only occasional contracts. The most noteworthy of these was obtained by the Swensen Co. in 1969 to supply decorative stones for the Dupont Brandywine Building in Wilmington, Delaware, and the Michigan Telephone Building in Detroit in the early 1970s.

Former Vinalhaven resident Dr. G. Langtry Crockett provides us with a wistful epitaph for the end of the quarry era, when in 1913 he wrote:

Out from this quarry came the stone they dressed for temples great;
Those structures stand, the men are dead, for such is earthly fate.
Above their graves their humble shafts commemorate their name—
Those sterling workers, strong as Thor; those men of labor fame.

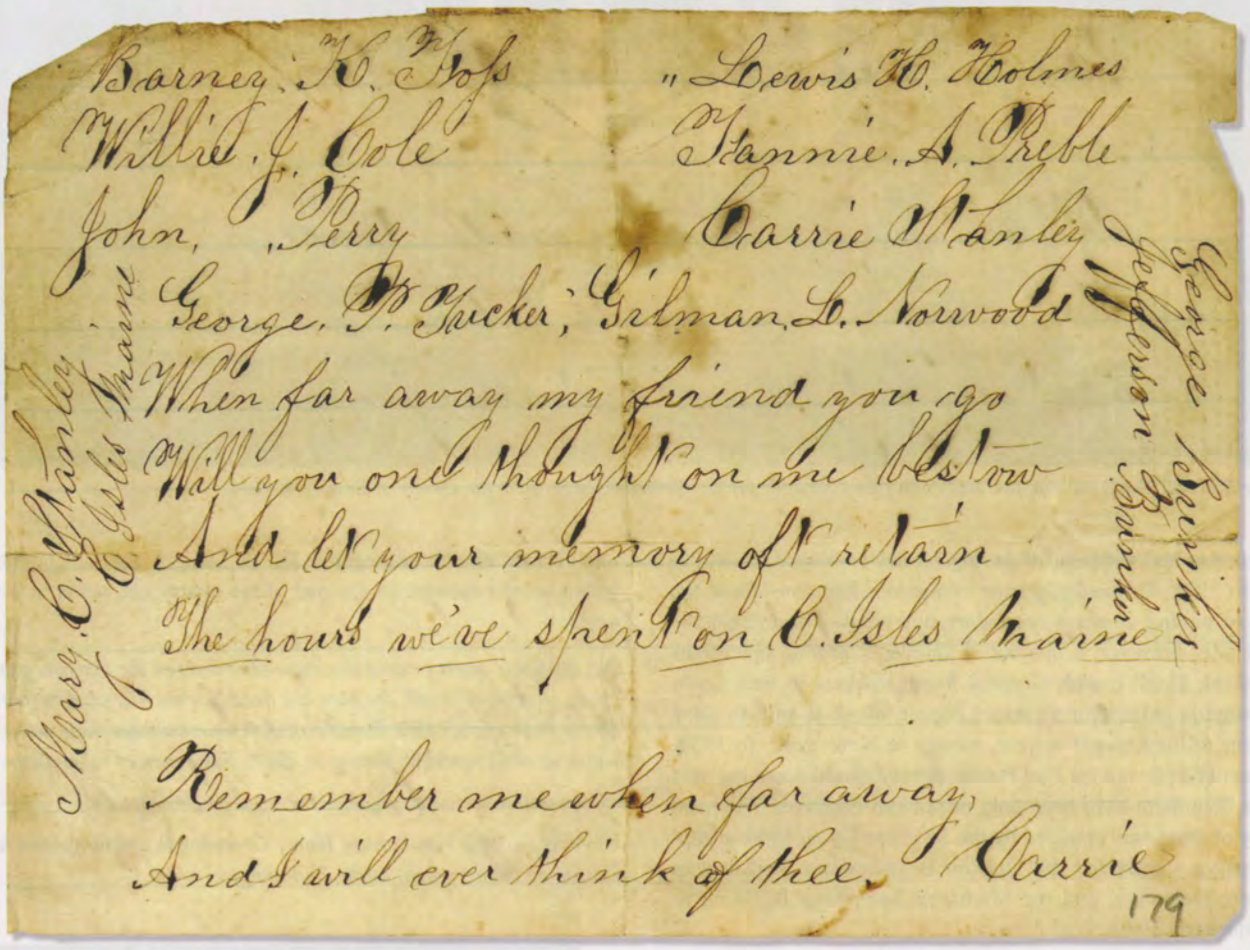
When he isn't on Vinalhaven, ***Harry Gratwick*** *is teaching, coaching, writing or in retirement in the Philadelphia area.*

More photos online at www.islandinstitute.org



Boston November the 30th 1867

Oft as thine eyes shall fondly trace,
These simple lines I write to thee,
What e'er the time, wher e'er the place
O think of me,
Thy life, thy bliss may heaven defend
And shouldst thou by its stern decree
E'er want a true and faithful friend
O think of me, Carrie Stanley
C



Barney K. Foss — Lewis H. Holmes
Willie J. Cole — Fannie A. Preble
John Perry — Carrie Stanley
George P. Tucker; Gilman L. Norwood
When far away my friend you go
Will you one thought on me bestow
And let your memory oft return
The hours we've spent on C. Isles Maine

Remember me when far away,
And I will ever think of thee. Carrie

Mary C. Stanley
C. Isles Maine

George Bunker
Jefferson Bunker

179

Two of Carrie's poems in her handwriting

A NATURAL HEROINE

Great Cranberry's Carrie Richardson defied the stereotypes of her day

CHERIE GALYEAN

"The good old days" is usually a vague and undefined time period, but on the coast of Maine, this term seems stamped across the age of the schooners. On the islands of today, challenged and struggling to maintain their identities and economic viability, the schooner days and their high times of adventurous sea captains, booming shipyards, and overflowing towns and schools seem distant and foreign. The wooden ships and the men who sailed them built Maine's rugged, seafaring reputation and popularized the succinct, self-sufficient downeast personality that still sustains tourism boards. These ships made the taciturn Maine captains some of the most traveled people of the era and brought romance and worldliness to the rockbound Maine coast. The Cranberry Isles, a small grouping of five islands southeast of Mount Desert Island, were home to many of these ships and their captains.

The schooner era began in the mid-1800s, spurred on by the thriving cod fishery and lumber industry. Two- and three-masted schooners were the vehicles of choice, bringing cargoes of dried fish, lumber, lime and granite to Boston and New York, picking up more cargo in these ports to carry to North Carolina, Georgia and other southern states. Many went as far as the Caribbean, picking up sugar in Cuba and rum in Puerto Rico to bring back north. A few sailed all the way to South America. For almost a hundred years, only slightly derailed by the blockades of the Civil War, Maine ships and Maine captains dominated the coast.

Carrie Stanley Richardson

Islands were perfectly situated to take advantage of this boom, and these were the most vibrant years in the history of Maine island life. An easy stop between the markets in Boston and the fisheries of downeast Maine and just south of Mount Desert Island and its myriad boatyards, the Cranberry Isles were particularly well suited for those who would make their living from the sea. The Coast Guard lifesaving station on Little Cranberry Island, set up to rescue sailors from the wrecks that the high volume of boat traffic caused, recorded 15,480 vessels passing in the nearby area in eight months of 1894, something that is difficult to imagine today, when the Cranberry Isles, and Great Cranberry Island in particular, struggle with a declining year-round population and a lack of industry. But during the 1890s, there were several hundred residents on Great Cranberry Island, and enough children to fill not just one, but two schools. The people who lived there were full of stories, adventures and a liveliness that seems a world away from today's quiet island, with few working boats in the harbor and an empty school.

In 2001, the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society decided that it was time to celebrate one of the most moving of these stories—the story of Carrie Richardson. Historical society president Wini Smart spent months digging through the society's collections, interviewing island residents, and writing a play about her, called *Carrie Richardson of Big Cranberry*, which was performed by local residents for the society's annual meeting that year. "There was a real mystique to her life that I liked," says Smart, when asked why she spent so much time on this effort. "She seemed like a natural heroine." Richardson seemed to take a hand in making herself known as well. "When I was writing the play, I wanted to know more about her in person," says Smart. "At that time, [a local resident] was looking through a Dumpster, and in a box under old rope [found some of Richardson's] letters and papers. It was like [Carrie herself had] arranged it."

Mary Caroline Stanley was born in November 1847, the oldest of ten children to be born to Enoch and Caroline Stanley of Great Cranberry. The island of Great Cranberry is shaped like a crescent, with the land hugging and almost encircling a large, shallow inlet known as The Pool. The farmhouse-style Stanley house looks over The Pool, and at that time had a large boathouse and extensive dock stretching out into the inlet. The Pool is protected, but shallow; low tide pulls out the water and turns it into mudflats.

Enoch was listed in the 1850 census as a captain and in the 1880 census as a fisherman, and he was both. Like most men of the day, he changed his profession according to economics and the season. He would fish for part of the year and travel south to New York and

Peter Richardson, Carrie's second son, playing in The Pool, circa 1893.

Boston, bringing his own dried fish as well as others' to sell. It could be an uneven living, at the mercy of the market. One archived letter to Enoch asks him to send fish and name his price, while another apologizes for selling his catch low because of oversupply. Nevertheless, Enoch was successful, with contacts up and down the coast. He held part shares in many schooners to spread out his investment.

This is the world of ships and fish that Mary Caroline, called "Carrie," was born into. Carrie attended one of two schoolhouses with the other 30 or so children on the island. It is likely that she spent much of her time on her father's boats, though there is no evidence that she or her mother ever went to sea. We don't know how Carrie did in school, but she must have been an exceptional student, since she left Great Cranberry to attend college in Boston.

The world of higher education was just beginning to consider women worth educating, so Carrie's move was quite bold at the time. It's unclear what college Carrie attended or what her studies entailed. Although she was an excellent writer with an interest in poetry, she clearly had not lost her love of the sea. Along with her other courses, Carrie studied celestial navigation. It is easy to imagine that she was the only woman in the class.

Carrie missed her life on the island, as shown in one of her short poems, written in 1864. The folds in the yellowed paper suggest that it was enclosed in a letter to those that she missed at home.

When far away my friend you go
Will you one thought on me bestow
And let your memory oft retain
The hours we've spent on C. Isles Maine.

Remember me when far away
And I will ever think of thee.

But she wouldn't be lonely for long. It is generally assumed that it was in Boston that Carrie met Meltiah Richardson.

Meltiah was from Goose Cove, a tiny spot near the current West Tremont area of Mount Desert Island. His childhood and early professional years are a mystery, but by 1853 he was living on Sutton Island, another of the Cranberry Isles, and right across the channel from Great Cranberry. It is unlikely that he and Carrie ever met at this time. He was 20 years older than she and lived on Sutton with his wife Sarah, a Spurling. Meltiah and Sarah had been married in 1853, when he was 25 and she was 18. By 1861, they had four children.

Meltiah was a captain on the rise. In 1856, he captained the MONTEZUMA, a 73-foot schooner out of Tremont. It was a troubled ship, passing through ownership and captains every few years, and Meltiah wouldn't stick around for long either. In 1858 he became part owner of his own ship, the 84-foot QUICKSTEP. As owner and master, Meltiah would travel up and down the coast of the Americas, bringing cargo from port to port, and stories maintain that he even crossed the Atlantic. A letter written by a contemporary after his death describes Meltiah as "a man of many sterling qualities and a reliable and competent man to command his vessel."

But while his professional life was growing, Meltiah's home life was foundering. Sarah hated the sea, and was not made to be a captain's wife. They were a fatal mismatch, and not even their children could keep them together. By 1862, Meltiah and Sarah were divorced and Meltiah moved to Falmouth, Maine, continuing his trade route to Boston and New York.

The origins of Carrie and Meltiah's romance remain obscure. It's unclear how they met, or what it was that drew them together, despite 20 years and a lifetime of experience separating them. The records show that they were married in 1870, when she was 22 and he 42, and that they moved back to Great Cranberry Island. He called her "Cass"; she called him "Mell."

While it wasn't common for a wife to travel with her husband at the time, it wasn't unheard of either. There are many examples of wives who accompanied their husbands on their trips—sometimes before children, sometimes after. Even so, this was at the height of the Victorian era, when the deck of the ship and its crew were considered unfit for a woman. Mingling with the crew was frowned upon. Most seafaring wives stayed down in the cabin, mending clothes, reading, writing journals, embroidering. Occasionally, the wives would perform basic paperwork duties on the ship, including updating accounts and keeping the log.

Carrie Richardson did all of this once she went to sea with her husband, along with exercising her love of writing poetry. (Although Carrie reportedly kept a logbook of these early journeys, sadly, it has never been found.) But Richardson didn't spend all of her time keeping the logs and writing poems. Because of her education, she was uniquely prepared to be a captain's wife, and Wini Smart's interviews of older island residents turned up story after story of Richardson's navigational skills. She was frequently called on to help Meltiah fix their course. Oral histories claim that the couple sailed to the Caribbean, to South America, and even around the horn of South America. An old receipt shows that they went at least as far as Cardenas, in Cuba, in 1871, when they brought 100 boxes of sugar back to New York. There are even stories of Carrie's prowess at the tiller. Meltiah had developed a taste for alcohol and was reportedly too drunk to captain his own ship upon occasion. Carrie would take over—something that must have taken an admirable strength of personality on a ship full of men. Meltiah's drinking would turn out to be a sign of trouble to come, but at this point, the Richardson star was still rising.

In 1873, Carrie and Meltiah were joined on board by another Richardson: their son Emery. The fast and more-dependable steamers were beginning to take over the short-haul coastal trade, and Meltiah needed a larger ship to make the longer runs that schooners still excelled in. In 1874, Meltiah sold the QUICKSTEP, and the CARRIE M. RICHARDSON was launched from Henry Newman's yard in Manset. At 283 tons and 114 feet in length, the little schooner was built during the last hurrah of the three-masters. Ships the size of the CARRIE M. RICHARDSON would soon be dwarfed by the four- and five-masted schooners to come.

The RICHARDSON became a home for the small family. Raised partly at sea, Emery was a true seaman's child. The Great Cranberry Island Historical Society has an old ship's logbook filled with Emery's childhood drawings and practice letters. The family seemed perpetually on the move, but not always together. In an 1876 letter to her father, Carrie debates whether she will join her husband at sea. "I have not heard from Mell since he left, but I think he ought to be in New York in a week more. I shall not go next trip unless he takes a load of coal on somewhere."

Carrie's broad education and interests were developing further. In addition to her reading and writing, she was learning to play the piano, and her musical inclinations were competing with her desire to accompany her husband. "I have hired Mary's melodeon for a month and Ed Truworthy is going to give me lessons, and then if he stays all winter I do not know but that I shall stay a part of the winter . . . and take all the lessons he will give me . . . So if I can learn, I shall let Mell whistle for a part of the winter." It is likely that Carrie did stay that winter and learn to play, because sometime in the next few years, Carrie returned from a trip to Boston with a box piano.

And so it went for ten years. Carrie and Emery would sail on some trips, stay home during others, and sometimes Emery would stay on Great Cranberry with his grandparents while Carrie and Mell sailed alone. Carrie, like all captains' wives, collected treasures from their ports, including a fine set of china. The 1880 census shows that the little family lived in the overflowing Stanley household while on the island, along with six of Carrie's siblings and Meltiah's youngest son, William, 21, from his marriage to Sarah. By all standards, the little Richardson family was doing fine.

In 1883, that would all change. Carrie and Meltiah had left on a voyage, leaving Emery—ten years old at that point, and enrolled in the Great Cranberry school—in the care of Carrie's parents. Carrie and Mell were in Boston when they received word that Emery had contracted a sudden fever and died. "You can imagine their attitude when they found out," says Wini Smart. Indeed, there is no record of their sorrow; nothing to explain what happened, or to express the guilt that Mell and Carrie must have felt for not being there for their son.

The records do show that the same year, most likely in grief, Meltiah sold the CARRIE M. RICHARDSON.

The next few years were hard. Meltiah began to deteriorate. He and Carrie left Great Cranberry. He bought shares in a grocery business, but a landlocked life was not for him. His drinking continued to be a problem and his health began to suffer. Both Meltiah and Carrie were shocked when in 1888, five years after Emery's death, 40-year-old Carrie discovered that she was pregnant again.

Charles Emery Richardson, called Peter, was born into a troubled marriage. Miserable in the grocery business and in ill health, 60-year-old Meltiah likely wasn't looking for another chance at fatherhood. The family moved back to Great Cranberry and back into the Stanley house, probably seeking a change and family support. Meltiah did some fishing on local boats, but he would never again command his own vessel. Meltiah developed recurring dizzy spells and seemed entrenched in misery.

On May 23, 1901, Carrie's younger brother Arno was leaving the Stanley residence early in the morning when he noticed the body of Meltiah Richardson floating in The Pool. Meltiah had a key in his pocket, which led the family to a locked trunk in the house. Inside the trunk was a signed document requesting that the treasurer of Portland Savings Bank turn everything in his accounts over to Carrie. There was no way to assume that this was a tragic accident. At the age of 73, Meltiah had committed suicide by leaping off the Stanley dock.

An account written by a contemporary gives a good sense of Meltiah's problems. "He had been miserable with the grippe for several weeks this spring, but got better and went out fishing . . . Six years ago while leaving the home of a neighbor he suddenly fell . . . Since then he had complained of dizziness and noise seemed to affect him very much. None remember that he made any direct allusion that he ever thought of taking his life, yet since his death many recalled expressions he made on different occasions, which form a chain of evidence that he may have contemplated such action for years."

Meltiah was buried in the Stanley cemetery next to Emery. The schooner years on the Maine coast were coming to an end by 1901. The popularity of the Cranberry Isles was growing among "rusticators," beginning the gradual shift from working island to summer island. The population of Great Cranberry Island had peaked and would continue to decline up to the present day. In many ways, Meltiah Richardson had lived the storybook history of the islands during their boom years, and he died with them.

For the next 19 years, Carrie entrenched herself in the business of Cranberry Island, buoyed by a strong religious faith. A handful of letters show her to be tough-minded, witty and extremely intelligent. She became clerk of the Union Meeting House and fought to get it reopened after it closed in the early 1900s. "The matters relating to the settlement of the Union Meeting House are about to arrive at a crisis, and in my opinion—even though I may be accounted foolish and a lunatic—I would advise you as a friend to all interested and concerned," she wrote to the new pastor, and one feels a certain sympathy for the man at the receiving end of such a letter. She battled to protect the Stanley cemetery where Meltiah and Emery lay when nearby land was sold.

Carrie lived out the rest of her years in the Stanley house. Her father, Enoch, passed away in 1903 and her mother in 1907. Carrie and her brother Lew—the oldest and the youngest of the Stanley children, 22 years apart in age—shared the house along with Lew's wife. Lew ran the boathouse and fished. Carrie collected books and hymns. She brought up Peter as best she could, though he proved to be a troubled soul. Carrie Richardson died in 1920 at 72 years of age.

Peter would live out his life on Great Cranberry. Remembered today as a happy drunk who walked around singing with a flask in his sport-coat pocket, Peter would never recover from the shadow of his father's pain. Nevertheless, he inherited his father's gifts as well as his trouble. "He was known for being able to bring a boat in out of any condition," says Smart. "He had salt water in his veins." Peter died in a nursing home in 1971, leaving no children behind.

Like Meltiah and Emery, Carrie and Peter are buried in the Stanley cemetery. On the backside of the island, the cemetery is at the top of a hill, overlooking where the Western Way between Cranberry and Manset opens to the ocean. Meltiah and Carrie undoubtedly sailed out this way hundreds of times, and on breezy summer days the corridor is still full of vessels of all shapes and sizes, catching the wind to head south. There is a monument erected for Carrie, Emery and Meltiah, undoubtedly put up by Peter. But Peter's grave lies a way off, next to that of his wife, Nellie.

The Stanley boathouse blew down during a storm in the 1960s, but the Stanley house is still standing. For years it was owned by artist Bob LaHotan, who slept in Carrie's small folding bed that she used to take on trips. When LaHotan passed away the house was turned into a retreat for visiting artists to come, take inspiration from the island, and create. The transition of the Stanley property from bustling, overcrowded home and boathouse to a quiet, contemplative artist's retreat could serve as a metaphor for all of Great Cranberry Island.

The Great Cranberry Historical Society, in addition to the play, has featured Carrie's story in its "Women and the Sea" exhibit. When asked why she has focused so much on this one islander, Smart answers, "Islanders of that time were more self-reliant than other people, and Carrie personified that. She had to be brave, and she was. She was extremely well rounded, and had female instincts at some points, male instincts at another. She was willing to take the challenge."

Cherie Galyean *is a program officer at the Maine Community Foundation and a former Island Institute Island Fellow.* *Special thanks to Wini Smart and Bruce Komusin of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society.*

Eric Hopkins

PAINTING A BLUE STREAK

Eric Hopkins's art is landscape as cosmology

EDGAR ALLEN BEEM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Every morning when he wakes up, whether on the island of North Haven or the Rockland mainland, artist Eric Hopkins performs a little personal ritual just to get himself located in the universe.

He begins by facing East, taking a deep, cleansing breath, and raising his arms to the sky. He proceeds to make the same gesture in the other three cardinal directions—South, West and North. Next he bows toward the molten core of the Earth and stretches up toward deepest space. He revolves 360 degrees with his arms outstretched and then places his right hand on his heart and his left on his head in the belief that his hands create a circuit between head and heart. He concludes this morning centering ritual by reciting a Penobscot Indian prayer:

Woli, wani, kachini, wesch.

"Thank you, Creator, for everything."

Sultry Blues #2, *2006, oil on linen, 24" x 36"*

If you didn't know Eric Hopkins, you might conclude from his unconventional matins that he is some kind of New Age space cadet, but, in fact, Eric Hopkins is a very practical Yankee, a native Mainer who just happens to appreciate the majesty and mystery of the phenomenal world. He expresses this appreciation both in person and in his art—a universe of paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and glass sculptures that take the natural world of Penobscot Bay as their apparent subjects and Creation as their subtext.

Physically, Eric resembles nothing quite so much as a gangly, bespectacled shore bird, a heron, perhaps, or a crane. His personality, however, is more that of a crow—alert, intelligent, curious, gregarious, attracted to shiny objects on land and sea and in the sky. A man possessed of restless energy, infectious enthusiasm, powerful ambitions and obvious artistic talents, he both talks and paints a blue streak.

"I'm a global kind of guy," Eric says as he putters about his mainland studio, hands-free headset on. "I'm a local boy, but I'm getting out in the galaxy, finding a place in the solar system and looking out at the galaxy."

When he finds the extension cord he's been looking for, he plugs it in, illuminating a glass globe that resembles a basketball-size Earth. He's a global kind of guy all right, an artist who uses the stuff of geology—powdered earth, water, sand, etc.—to evoke the islands, bays, mountains, skies, clouds and waves of a Maine coast spinning in space.

That space at the moment is a huge, white studio and gallery on Winter Street in Rockland, an industrial space of corrugated metal out behind the Atlantic Baking Company. After 25 years on his native North Haven, Eric came ashore in the summer of 2006 in search of more space in which to create, exhibit and store his art.

The studio half of 21 Winter Street, all white walls and gray cement floor, is filled with rolling palettes and easels, print files and work tables, brushes in coffee cans, a Fuji mountain bike, a deflated kayak, noisy space heaters, books whose titles suggest Hopkins's inspiration—*Earth From Above, Man on Earth, Orbit, Exploring Our Lonely Planet, The Earth*—and works of art in various stages of completion. Finished works are displayed next door in the gallery half of the building.

The world according to Eric Hopkins consists of squares and rectangles of blue skies and bluer waters, white clouds and whitecaps, long licks of land fringed at the shore in pale greens and browns, bristling in the uplands with dark blue-green forests, elegant whorls of blown-glass seashells, and an array of blown-glass globes, hemispheres and bowls like planets set on pedestals and shelves.

Eric Hopkins's art is landscape as cosmology, and his hand, eye and sensibility are everywhere evident in the way he simplifies and abstracts the wild forms and rhythms of nature into harmonious paintings and sculptures that make him one of the best-known and most popular artists in Maine.

Born in Bangor in 1951, Eric grew up on North Haven, where his father ran a summer party fishing boat and his mother still operates a seasonal gift shop, and attended middle school and high school (Class of '69) in Rockland where his late father taught English. The Hopkinses are island people. Eric's father, an older brother who drowned at age five, an uncle, a grandfather, and several family dogs are buried in the family plot overlooking Southern Harbor, the graves marked by a granite pyramid salvaged from the Fiddlers Monument off Crabtree Point.

Though he tires of the story about how he painted the first fish he ever caught as a boy, others do not, and, because it bears on how he became an artist, he retells it in a prepared talk when asked to speak about his early influences:

I painted for hours on end on the cold floor of my North Haven bedroom. I'd wipe my paintbrush on my T-shirt to clean the colors

Fish #1, *1979, watercolor, crayon, enhanced digital print, 24" x 29"*

Fish #1, *1979, watercolor, crayon, enhanced digital print, 24" x 29"*

Fish #2, *2006, watercolor, painted digital print, 24" x 29"*

Fish #2, *2006, watercolor, painted digital print, 24" x 29"*

from the brush, but mostly to see PURE COLOR in random patterns on my white shirt, much to my mother's dismay.

When I was younger I had painted directly on the first fish I ever caught to keep the colors and the fish alive, but I had to throw it away a few days later when my mother said, "It stinks."

So I painted fish again—this time on paper—and I sold it and kept on painting and selling and wondering, "What is Art?"

As a boy, Eric had seen Louise Nevelson's black box sculpture in the lobby of her family's Thorndike Hotel in Rockland, as well as the haunting paintings of Andrew Wyeth, Bernard Langlais's carpentered wooden animals, and George Curtis's organic metal sculpture at the Farnsworth Art Museum. When he graduated from high school, he went off in search of an answer to that question, "What is Art?"

The first stop on his wandering art-education journey was the University of Southern Maine, followed quickly by Haystack Mountain School of Crafts on Deer Isle, Montserrat School of Visual Art in Beverly, Massachusetts, Marlboro College in Vermont, and Rhode Island School of Design (BFA 1976). The art form that caught his fancy, both at Haystack and RISD, was glass, a fascination with molten glass that he traces to huge island bonfires where he and his North Haven buddies would melt thick Coke bottles and poke the plastic ooze with sticks.

At RISD, Eric studied with contemporary glass master Dale Chihuly, and then followed the master to Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle, Washington.

"Hot glass ignited my passion," says Eric. "Inspired by Dale Chihuly, I started drawing in space with molten glass, making fluid linear images like Pollock paintings or Picasso's flashlight drawings."

In the late 1970s, Eric established a growing reputation of his own as a glass artist, blowing luminous organic forms inspired by the spiral shells of whelks and other marine snails.

In 1981, when Eric returned to live on North Haven, he largely put his glass art career aside, concentrating instead on the paintings inspired by the molten glass drawings he called "pyrographics." The arced and tilted horizons derived from burnt lines created by flinging loops of molten glass across canvases became Eric Hopkins's signature, imparting a kind of wide-angle, fish-eye point of view to his paintings. When Eric began taking flying lessons, the aerial perspective of Penobscot Bay and its island archipelago allowed him to see the true arc of the horizon and set his paintings flying.

On North Haven, Eric settled in, got married, and, with wife Janice, raised three children—daughter Eva, 18, and sons Ian, 16, and Evan, 15. Working out of a small, primitive studio on Southern Harbor, Eric created the paintings he sold at his waterfront gallery next to the island ferry terminal. North Haven summer residents, visitors, and yachtsmen sailing through Fox Islands Thorofare provided a ready audience and market for his work.

"Because of North Haven," he says, "I have been able to navigate out into the world."

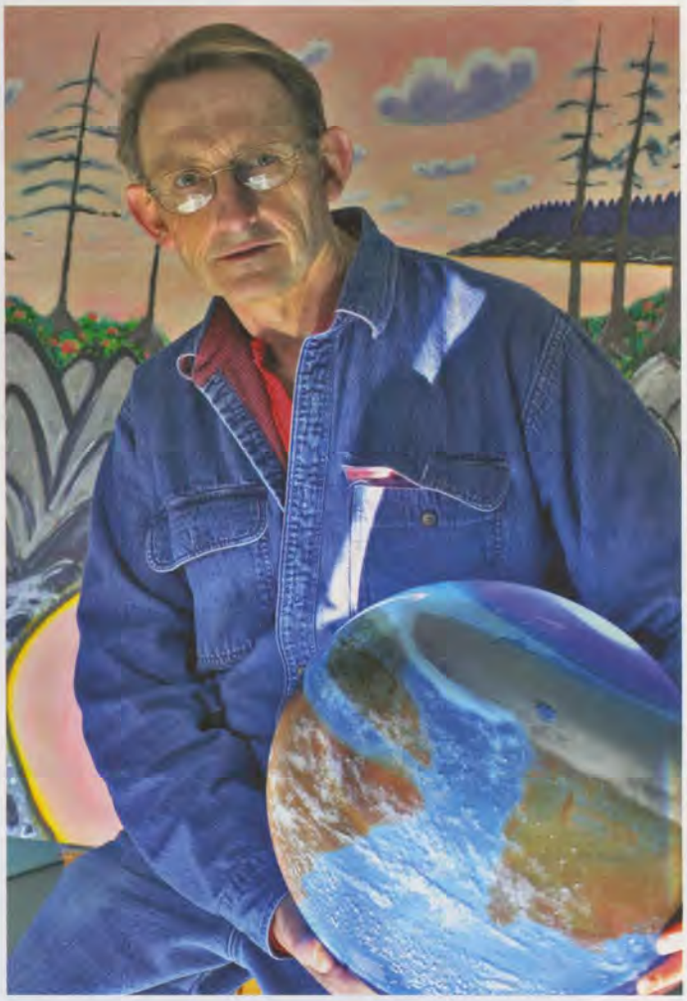
The only problem with the fact that the world lands on his North Haven doorstep each summer is the demands that places on his time.

"I didn't get a heck of a lot of work done, because I was busy with show-and-tell and a little bit of sell," Eric says—not complaining, mind you, just saying.

The process of coming ashore again probably started in the summer of 2003 when the Farnsworth Art Museum mounted a major Eric Hopkins retrospective entitled *Waypoints*. Reflecting on the glass sculpture he'd made in the 1970s and early 1980s whetted Eric's appetite to work in glass again. It was not until September of 2005, however, that he took the first of three trips to Seattle to work in the glass shop of an old RISD buddy.

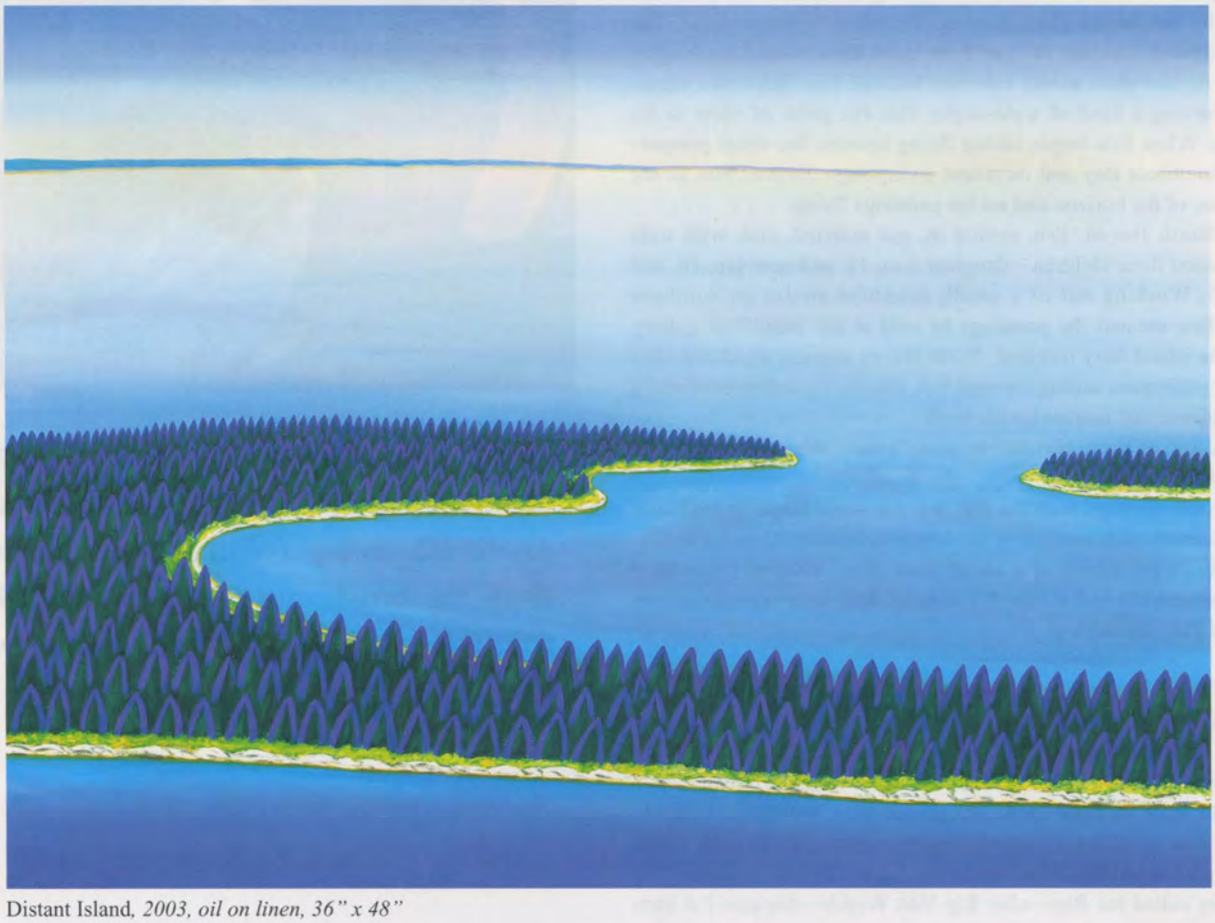
"They called me Rip—after Rip Van Winkle—because I'd been away from glass for 20 years."

Seattle is the glass art capital of the United States, and Eric found everything there he needed—assistants, supplies, glass furnaces—to



"I painted for hours on end on the cold floor of my North Haven bedroom. I'd wipe my paintbrush on my T-shirt to clean the colors from the brush, but mostly to see PURE COLOR in random patterns on my white shirt, much to my mother's dismay."

Two Beaches, Two Clouds, *1989, oil on masonite panel, 48" x 72"*



Distant Island, *2003, oil on linen, 36" x 48"*

Island, Cove and Deep Distance, *2006, watercolor, gouache & crayon, 22" x 30"*

Summer Clouds and Fields, *2006, watercolor, gouache & crayon, 22" x 30"*

Flying High—Dawn's Early Light #2, *2006, watercolor, gouache & crayon, 22" x 30"*

Flying High—Clouds Edge, *2006, watercolor, gouache & crayon, 22" x 30"*

blow a series of glass globes that were like paintings encased in glass. So enthralled was he with his new glass pieces that Eric thought seriously of moving to Seattle, but Janice and the kids wanted no part of such a move. Upon returning from his third trip to Seattle in March of 2006, however, Eric began looking around for studio space on the mainland.

Initially, he had hoped to build a new studio on North Haven, but a 40x40 building that might cost $250,000 on the mainland was going to cost him $750,000 to build on the island. The cost of transportation alone was estimated at $500 a day.

While looking around Rockland for a place to make and store his ever-expanding oeuvre, Eric spotted a FOR LEASE sign on the old Fireproof Garage on Winter Street. Built in the 1930s as a Cadillac dealership, the building had been a garage where islanders stored their mainland cars when Eric was growing up. More recently it had housed a woodworking shop and a pool hall.

In June of 2006, Eric moved into the 2,500-square-foot Rockland studio space. A month later, when the pool hall next door closed, he annexed the adjacent 2,500 square feet as gallery space. Suddenly, the island boy seemed to be everywhere around the mainland—racing back and forth from North Haven in his 22-foot Boston Whaler, flying out over the bay in a rented Cessna, pedaling his mountain bike along the waterfront at daybreak, doing errands in his big green Ford pickup, checking out a display of his paintings at the Camden National Bank, taking a lunch break at Atlantic Baking Company, hosting benefits in his gallery for the Down East Singers and for the Georges River Land Trust, and generally holding court in his Winter Street studio.

"Having Eric's presence in Rockland has lifted the community's spirits, as he has thrown himself into the life and rhythm of the city," says new Farnsworth Art Museum director Lora Urbanelli, who arrived in town just about the same time Eric did.

"Like many, I have a deep connection to Eric's expressed view of the natural world around him," says Urbanelli. "With his pure, clean color and graphical line, he creates an atmosphere that is joyful, spiritual, and more than a little playful. Sounds just like Eric!"

Urbanelli, who came to the Farnsworth from the RISD Museum, wasted no time in drafting Eric to collaborate with her and Rockport glass artist Richard Remsen on an exhibition of glasswork by artists connected with the Haystack School.

"Returning to glass—itself a medium that supports that clear, clean color and graphical line—seems a natural extension of his painting," says Urbanelli of Eric's new glass sculpture. "Blowing glass globes allows him to soar even higher in his viewpoint of the shoreline world."

The Farnsworth glass show is scheduled to open in October of 2007. The Island Institute plans a concurrent Eric Hopkins exhibition at Archipelago, its gallery. And as if Eric doesn't have enough mainland projects going on, he is also designing a series of belts for the Belted Cow Company in Yarmouth and working on a glass installation for the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay.

"I'm trying to get an essence of nature," says Eric of the aesthetic energy underlying all that he is and does. "I'm looking at the world with wide-open eyes—and it's a pretty amazing world!"

Viewers frequently insist that they know the exact locations of Eric's upbeat aerial views of the Maine islands, but he insists that with a few North Haven exceptions, all of his paintings are works of imagination.

"I should stamp 'Not for Navigational Purposes' on the back," he jokes.

Nonetheless, Eric Hopkins's imagination is firmly grounded in reality. To demonstrate this, Eric flips open his laptop and conducts a virtual whirlwind tour of some 14,000 digital photographs—islands, skies, clouds, ice, rocks, water—he has taken to record the natural dynamics, patterns and forms that inspire his art. The retina dances and the head spins as he scrolls through the images, some of which have been set to music, such as Bob Dylan's lyrical "Beyond the Horizon."

He stops the laptop presentation at a series of images of mast tops rippling in reflection in the still waters of Rockland Harbor just beside the Coast Guard station. The movement and music of these simple, distorted lines and their strange colors seem to captivate him—just as they did when he originally saw them.

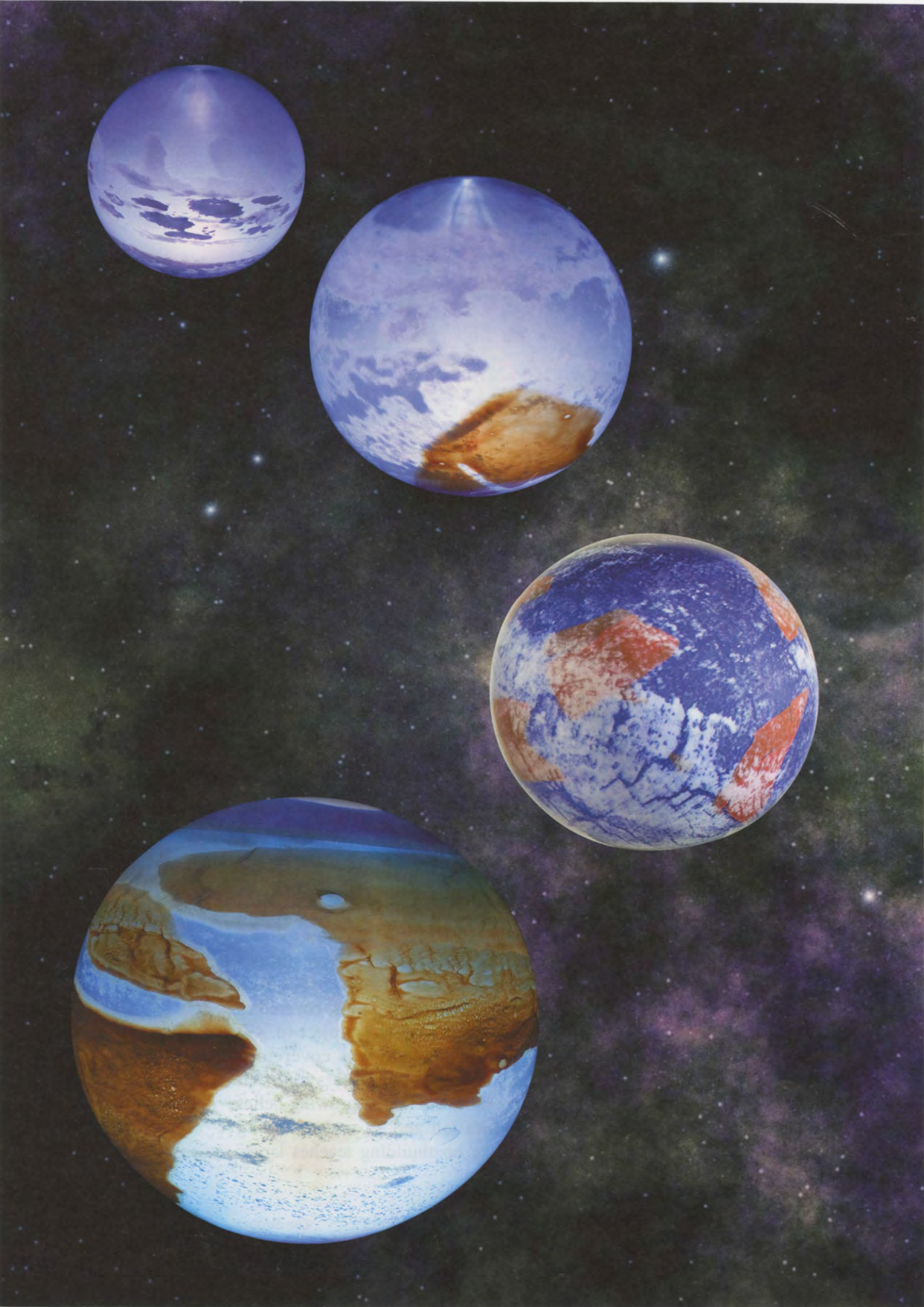
"That's why the half-hour boat trip to the island sometimes takes two hours," he says, mulling over the idea of orchestrating the mast reflections with a few Jimi Hendrix guitar licks.

Ultimately, what defines Eric Hopkins as a human being is his capacity for awe. And when he shows you what he sees, you can't help marveling as well. That's what makes him an artist.

Edgar Allen Beem *is author of* Maine Art Now. *He wrote about contemporary art in the 2003* Island Journal.

The *Island Journal* online gallery will feature more of Eric Hopkins's work at **www.islandinstitute.org**. In addition, the Institute's "real" Rockland gallery, Archipelago Fine Arts, will offer his latest glass and paintings for sale late in the summer of 2007. Check the Institute website for details and additional pictures.

Facing page: Hopkins's recent venture into glass art has produced, among other things, these hand-blown glass globes, 11 to 17 inches in diameter, resembling planets.



Peter Ralston (2)

Lucas Fleischer volunteers full-time in the Islesford program.

SHARP TOOLS, SMART KIDS

Stories can develop in serendipitous ways. Photographer Peter Ralston happened on the Ravenhills' Islesford project last summer. The result was the images on these pages, plus a small item in the Island Institute's newspaper, *Working Waterfront*. Vinalhaven's and North Haven's use of boatbuilding as a teaching tool stretches back a decade to the construction rowing gigs, covered in *Island Journal* in 2001. Stonington's project (p. 49) also goes back a long way, and was covered in *Working Waterfront* more than 10 years ago. All three programs, plus others, reflect a growing belief in "experiential" education and an understanding that learning skills like boatbuilding teaches larger lessons about life.

The Editors

In an Islesford barn, the lessons are about boats, craftsmanship and life

CYRUS MOULTON

"We couldn't even finish breakfast a little over a month ago," Amanda Ravenhill said as she cradled a mug of tea and looked out the sliding-glass door of her family's light-filled kitchen. "We would be eating and then start to notice little pairs of eyes peeking through the woods. Then the kids would gradually venture further out into the open by the barn. Usually by 8:30, they would all be sitting by the barn door, so we usually ended up just going and letting them in." But there was satisfaction rather than annoyance in her voice, sentiments reinforced by her brother, Brendan, who added, "It was pretty great"

And for two months this past summer on Islesford, this scene repeated itself each weekday morning as young students, as well as numerous community members, friends and family came down the path to the Ravenhills' barn to learn the craft of wooden boatbuilding. On July 3, Islesford Boatworks, a nonprofit boatbuilding school for children, opened with a focus on "building community, opportunity, and leadership . . . all while building a traditional wooden boat."

Founded by the Ravenhill siblings, Amanda, age 23, Brendan, age 27 and Geoffrey, age 29, Islesford Boatworks taught the skill of wooden boatbuilding to 43 children last summer and produced the first boat to be built on Islesford in many years. The siblings grew up spending summers on the island, but since their parents' careers as anthropologists took them to temporary homes in Côte d'Ivoire, Bolivia and Washington, D.C., the family views Islesford as their constant home.

The idea for Islesford Boatworks evolved this past spring. Brendan had been living on Islesford intermittently since graduating from college in 2001, fishing and building the barn that would become the program's workshop. In January 2005, he began working at "Rocking the Boat" in the South Bronx, a nonprofit after-school boatbuilding program that builds whitehall boats for environmental science programs, habitat restoration and environmental monitoring on the East and Bronx rivers of New York City.

"I loved the program, loved the idea of building boats, but felt that the concept of boatbuilding didn't really resonate with a population that wasn't familiar with boats. I thought, 'How amazing would it be to build boats with a population that uses boats every day?' " Brendan said.

In April 2006, the Ravenhills began soliciting ideas from community members about the idea of running a boatbuilding program. They visited the island school to determine whether the students would be interested in attending their program.

"It was amazing," said Brendan. "We asked them, 'What should we build the boat out of?' and we were expecting answers like, 'I don't know—wood?' " he said, jokingly scrunching up his face in imitation of a petulant teenager. "But instead we got answers like 'Cedar!', 'Oak!', and the kids started debating the merits of different types of wood."

You can see the children's enthusiasm reflected in the Ravenhills, as Brendan and Amanda continue to talk about the idea of boatbuilding and how they wanted to transform the construction of a wooden boat into a learning experience for the children and the community.

Brendan described the "magic" of wooden boats: "It's the highest form of craftsmanship," he said. "A meld of design, form and function. There are no right angles, but you have to make it absolutely watertight. Functional is beautiful."

There is a strong legacy for the Ravenhills in the value and teaching of craftsmanship. Each of the siblings has been familiar with woodworking all of their life. Their father, Philip Ravenhill, who died

Amanda and Brendan Ravenhill

in 1997, taught his children the beauty of fine woodworking through numerous "weekend projects," manifest in the delicate curving handrail of the house's staircase, the built-in seating around the fireplace and the sturdy sheds around the property. Over the years these projects became increasingly ambitious and required more space and storage for the tools that kept accumulating. So over the past few summers, and in between Brendan and Geoffrey's fishing schedules, the Ravenhills recruited an army of volunteers, friends, community members and relatives to build a barn. The siblings' own learning experience from woodworking came through the building of the barn that became their workshop.

Amanda describes finishing the barn as the "I can do it" moment: "It instilled confidence." It was all about individual efforts, but also about community energy and atmosphere.

Why not help that happen in other parts of the community?

So each weekday, students lined up outside the Ravenhills' barn to work on the boat. Older students met on Monday and Friday mornings, and younger students met on Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings.

The Ravenhills quickly found that "regular hours" were difficult to keep, as students would stop by at all times of day, bringing friends, family members and visitors. Curious tourists would stop by on a walk down to Sand Beach. As during the construction of the barn, everybody wanted to help.

The family had to adjust to several other issues. The program originally targeted kids 8 to 15 years old, but the majority of students were 9- and 10-year-olds, who could not use power tools. This meant that the staff had to do a huge amount of preparatory work. Due to vacation schedules, only eight or nine kids were able to take part in the entire nine-week program, and many were only able to participate for a week. Finally, while using rough-sawn, live-edged lumber saved a lot of money, it required a lot of time to sand and plane.

But the Ravenhills took it in stride. From the beginning of the program, they decided that they wanted to make sure that anybody who wanted to work on the boat could attend. They had an optional tuition, telling students to "pay what you can." Students who came for a week might not be able to see the whole process or, depending on when they attended, might not be able to see much that looked like a boat. Still, they left the barn with a familiarity of boat terminology and a knowledge of hand tools.

Amanda said the lack of power tools made it "a more positive work environment—less noise, more hands-on, the kids could feel the wood shaping underneath their hands."

Brendan admitted that he was initially hesitant about working with kids who were much younger than the students he had taught in the Bronx, noting "you need sharp tools to work with kids," but their enthusiasm won him over. "They seemed more into it," he said. "Kids were competing for tasks that I had had to assign to students in the Bronx. Sharpening tools became one of the most popular tasks."

The Ravenhills were impressed with the students' abilities. "It was like they had inherent woodworking skills," said Brendan. "Maybe they had just been watching people use hand tools their entire lives, but they seemed to be very comfortable with woodworking. They had ideas in their head about boats and woodworking, and just needed to have them be molded."

Amanda was impressed with the fact that the students had "no shame."

"They were unafraid to make mistakes. Even if they were holding the lathes wrong or were doing something awkwardly, there wasn't a sense of being embarrassed about it."

Because of the mostly alternating class schedule between the younger and older group, as well as the impact of friends, students and visitors helping with the boat in their free time, every day began, for both groups of students, with a discussion of "where the boat is at." This time became a very important part of the day, as students joined together and discussed the projects that needed to be accomplished that day, as well as the progress that had been made on the boat since the last class. For the students who were only participating in the program for a few weeks, the discussion also reinforced the process of boatbuilding and the steps involved in producing the boat.

The class then divided into different groups organized by tasks: one group sanding, another lathing, one group sharpening tools, and a lot of kids planing. "Planing took up a lot of time," said Amanda. The Ravenhill siblings all took turns leading the groups and guiding the students. Generally, the ratio of students to instructors reached three to one, and the Ravenhills tried to ensure that each student felt supported. Although she said that they "probably didn't even notice it," many of the female students gravitated toward Amanda when it came time to do some of the more physical tasks, and she noted that having such a large group of young girls taking a boatbuilding class with a female teacher "was pretty unique."

Each class ended with quiet time for reflection. Students were all given journals to provide them with a place to document and evaluate their progress on the boat, as well as reflect upon their own experiences during the class. The Ravenhills tried to be one on one with a couple of students each day during what eventually came to be called "quiet time with journals out," as the instructors encouraged any form of reflecting on the day; from lists of what was accomplished, to reflections on how students did or did not like a certain task, to artwork. "Students could draw, write, whatever," said Amanda.

And the barn is a pretty inspiring place when filled with the energy of children who have just spent hours working on a boat. It seems a little like an art gallery: high ceilings with bright, stainless-steel lamps, hand tools hanging against the wall, the graceful lines of a boat spotlighted and contrasting with the industrial circular and band saws. The scene reminds a visitor that boatbuilding is both a craft and an art. Brendan described a wooden boat as "the highest form of sculpture," a balance of elements: strength, durability, lightness . . . the wood has to be strong yet flexible and watertight; it acts together to make a watertight hull."

The barn also reminds a visitor that this is a community project undertaken by an organization: behind the band saw hangs a print by local artist, poet, author and illustrator Ashley Bryan, entitled Bobby Shafto Goes to Sea. Although it had been donated to Islesford Boatworks for its fund-raising auction, Amanda ended up buying it for the barn. She insisted that she "wasn't trying to bid up the price, but just really loved to picture, I swear!" Ashley later donated a set of limited-edition prints to the organization for their benefit.

For the Ravenhills, the community aspect of Islesford Boatworks mattered the most. The culmination of any boatbuilding process is the launching, an "experiential event" that provides closure while combining the functional and artistic as the boat's craftsmanship is appreciated for its seaworthiness as well as its beauty. "The finished product is ready, and the kids can take ownership of the project. It works, and it is beautiful," said Amanda.

On September 2, over a hundred people came to admire the 12-foot dory skiff designed by Harry Bryan, a staff member at WoodenBoat magazine. And what an experience: The boat was launched, luckily, just in time to repel a vicious pirate attack on the island led by postmistress Joy Sprague and her mother, Betty. The combination of the flat-bottomed sturdiness of a dory with the transom stern of a skiff, crafted of sustainably harvested Maine cedar on an oak frame, withstood the wild waves and outmaneuvered the "vicious cutthroats." Islesford-grown apple seats and Islesford-grown tamarack knees provided the island guardians with comfortable accommodations. The pirates retreated before the sight of such fearsome foes, and the sail was raised up the spruce mast, the boom swung, the sprit was extended, and the centerboard was lowered, to pursue the ruffians. But the wind began to drop, and it looked as if the pirates would get away to plunder the town again. Thankfully, spruce oars had been constructed, and, with a combination of wind and muscle, the pirates were overtaken and brought back to the island as prisoners.

When asked about the future of the boatbuilding program, the Ravenhills all agreed that it should, first and foremost, be self-sustaining. But, they also anticipate that the program will expand beyond the capacity of their barn and the production of one boat per summer.

"We want to create a community space to work. Ideally it would be waterfront, and we would have a space where people could haul out boats and work on them," Brendan said, "providing access to water for the community and a space for a working waterfront. We want to further engage the fishermen in the community, getting the kids in the program involved with working on lobster boats and engaging with people in other professions that use boats, and other generations."

For the coming year, the Ravenhills are focusing on smaller tasks: recruiting more students and perhaps having an older student become an apprentice; choosing an appropriate project for next summer; finishing the paperwork to establish nonprofit status; and identifying grants to help pay for the program. Most important, they hope to carry over the energy and enthusiasm of their students and continue the revitalization of a craft that once was central to life on Islesford.

Karen E. Oakes

FREYA, *shortly after her launching.*

On Vinalhaven, the idea was to take a six-month cruise

CYRUS MOULTON

Mark Jackson is the director of the Vocational Technology Program at Vinalhaven School, and most often can be found in the shop he and his students built in 2003. But during the 2006–07 school year, his classroom was somewhere between Vinalhaven and St. Augustine, Florida, and the shingled barn has been replaced by a 30-foot steel-hulled sloop that his students refurbished. The sloop is named FREYA.

After three years of dreaming, building, planning and persuading anxious parents and school board members, the culminating stage of the Vocational Technology Program, VIVA, or Vinalhaven Island Viking Adventure, began as FREYA departed Vinalhaven on September 24, 2006, for a six-month cruise down and up the East Coast.

"VIVA," wrote Jackson in a March 2006 *Working Waterfront* article, "[is] a word usedto shout enthusiastic approval. It means 'to live.'"

VIVA places up to four students at a time for a six-week period aboard FREYA as crew members. Students are responsible for the maintenance and operation of the boat; everything from cooking meals to navigating courses and piloting. The students are also responsible for maintaining their schoolwork. An interdisciplinary curriculum incorporates science, English, math and social sciences and enables students to continue class work while on board. At the same time they can make the most of their visits to unique natural and cultural sites, while documenting and sharing their experience with students back on Vinalhaven via the Internet.

The boat is outfitted with technology that transforms it into a veritable floating classroom. Audio equipment allows students to document their experience. Internet connectivity is provided via an air card and a cellular signal, and students maintain a ship's log on a laptop. The log is uploaded to the VIVA website.

Designed by Al Mason and built by Gilbert Klingle in the 1950s, the sloop is based on the "Intrepid" design that first appeared in a 1945 issue of *The Rudder* magazine, where it was described as "a fairly small boat that will be an able, comfortable ship, suitable for any normal cruising yet one which can make the big long cruise when the day really comes."

It took a while to get there, but the day has come for Jackson and his students.

Jackson began his tenure at the Vinalhaven School in 1998, and literally, he says, "built the program from the ground up." School administrators had wanted to emphasize marine trades because of the importance of the ocean to the island's culture, economy and identity. Lobstering is the basis of Vinalhaven's year-round economy.

By the end of Jackson's first year, although there were only two students enrolled, the program had already outgrown its space—twice. But a student presentation convinced the Region 8 board of directors that additional shop space was a worthwhile investment, and students spent the spring of 1999 constructing a 20-by-40-foot bow-roofed shed on a solid foundation.

The next year, the "feeder program" that Jackson had established to pique the interest of seventh- and eighth graders had such positive results that the program had to be rearranged to allow daily block scheduling, and class sizes were limited to a maximum of six. The program also built its first boat, a 32-foot Cornish pilot gig with six rowing stations, for the Vinalhaven Community Rowing Program.

This pilot gig introduced the community to the potential for broader positive impacts. The funding for the program was raised locally. Five members of an adult education class worked alongside the students, sometimes under the students' supervision. Grade-school classes, volunteers and curious onlookers pitched in. Most significantly, a second boat, Jackson believed, "would get more islanders out on the water."

The boatbuilding program eliminates the "age-old student lament of 'Why do I have to learn this stuff? I'll never use it,' " Jackson says. "It puts a real-life perspective on the project. And it makes use of some great boats."

And FREYA is the most recent great boat to come out of Vinalhaven. Jackson described the project's beginnings in *The Working Waterfront* in March 2006:

The project began during the 2002–03 school year when three students spent a semester brainstorming ideas for their ideal learning experience. They wanted to build a boat and sail around the world. During discussions of the many practical considerations surrounding such a feat, the idea morphed into rebuilding a small boat and attempting the modest cruise of the Eastern seaboard. Encouraged to make their ideas a reality, the students located a boat project that had stalled and convinced the project's originator that what he had begun could be completed in the Vinalhaven vocational education program.

Students began the long building process when the boat, in the form of a bare hull with plywood deck and mahogany cabin house, arrived at the Vinalhaven shop from Florida in January 2004. Students immediately went to work on repainting and patching the hull, removing the cabin house and deck in the process.

For the next two years, Jackson led students through a complete refurbishing of the boat, always keeping an eye on the guiding philosophy that he developed for the program: welding the importance of quality craftsmanship with responsibility, practicality and efficiency.

"Cruising a small boat—possible, yes; probable, maybe," writes Jackson.

With the right attitude, one can do most anything. It's the same with sailing a small cruising craft. One will most definitely have to be completely self-motivated, and able to leave what they own on land while they go on a voyage. Money is no real issue when constructing or buying a craft for voyage because a smaller craft is relatively inexpensive, as long as one sticks to the necessities and stays away from luxuries. A good positive attitude combined with hard work would be necessary to succeed in the venture. A reason someone might want to go cruising in a small craft would be to escape from the tribulations of land and do something they have always wanted to try.

Cruising is an art, and a challenge to see how little several people can live off of for extended periods of time. Each member of the crew has to pull his own weight, and should be skilled in areas such as cooking, carpentry, and medicine. Cruising can be done by anyone as long as they have the desire. Cruising is a way to get away from everyday life and simplify your standards of living.

It's important to always be aware of your surroundings and what needs to be done on board. The most important thing is to always be aware. Somebody might want to go sailing for adventure or to see the world. For somebody to have a successful trip, you need to be able to leave everything behind. Keep it simple and go.

Emphasizing the themes of "keeping it simple" inherent in cruising and the design of good boats, Jackson and his students made conscious decisions to adapt the 1945 plans to modern, more-efficient technology. In an effort to minimize their reliance on fossil fuel energy sources, they added a wind turbine, a photovoltaic panel and an alternator to produce electricity. The cabin contains a small woodstove for heat. LED, halogen and fluorescent lightbulbs replaced less-efficient incandescent lighting. The students improved the propulsion from the original design by including a fully battened mainsail. An AirHead Dry Toilet was installed, instead of a conventional holding tank.

But the advancements of modern technology did not replace traditional boatbuilding methods or craftsmanship. Students installed a full ceiling of cedar in the main cabin and oak in the forepeak. The interior furnishings—including bunks, navigation station, galley and engine box—were all designed by students, and constructed from student-produced mock-ups. Eight opening ports salvaged from a sister ship were installed in the main cabin to provide ventilation, and the interior is a combination of painted plywood and varnished wood.

Cyrus Moulton *is Fellows Program Coordinator at the Island Institute.*

Asa Thomson rowing skiff built by Stonington marine trades students

Stonington stresses teamwork, problem solving

SANDRA DINSMORE

Garrett Steele Jr., now 16, a fourth-generation Deer Isle fisherman, first went fishing at the age of three. His parents loaned him the money for his first boat, a 10-foot skiff, when he was seven. In a couple of years he had paid back the $700 loan and bought another flat-bottomed rowboat, two feet longer. He paid that one off and at age 12 moved up to a 19-footer with a 125-hp engine.

At 13, he bought an old 24-foot hull, which he rebuilt, adding the house by himself and installing a 120-hp diesel engine. By 16, he was up to his fifth boat, a Flye Point 32, the same size as his father's, with a 300-hp Caterpillar engine.Steele couldn't have managed the work on the 24-foot vessel—much less the house he plans to build and finish by the time he graduates from high school (he's already bought the land)—without the benefit of Deer Isle-Stonington High School's four-year Marine Trades and Applied Engineering Program.

Dennis Saindon, 55, and Thomas Duym, 50, run the team-taught program together, with Duym teaching Marine Trades. Together they teach the larger lessons of cooperation, accuracy, the need to be careful, translating a design to something real, and problem solving.

Duym, who tends to get students who will make their living off the water, teaches the Safety at Sea course, and has the kids in the water wearing survival suits. "We've tried to see what kinds of programs interest the kids," he said.

On a cold, gray day in January, this year's 14 students, 13 male and 1 female, crowded around an almost-completed 12-foot Asa Thomson rowing skiff, a boat that rides light as a leaf on the water. "We selected this particular boat because it's a boat that's capable of being built by students and challenging enough to introduce almost all of the wooden boat building techniques," Saindon said.

The skeleton of another Thomson lay nearby in the school's large workshop. Three or four workbenches, some serious-looking woodworking machinery, a cupboard filled with a marvelous array of planes and other woodworking tools, and a medium-sized model of a gazebo, to be made full-size and installed on the village green by the students, sat on a table in a corner. The workshop, 40 by 60 feet long, has ample space for the three teams required to build each boat.

Teamwork is one of the things Duym and Saindon stress, and they chose the Thomson design with that in mind. They divide the students into three teams, exposing each to all the stages of wooden boat construction. Each boat has three four-foot-long "stations" or areas: bow, center and stern. Each team is responsible for one station. And, lest there be any question, each completed boat is a beauty. There are no duds. If a student doesn't get a cut right, he re-cuts it until it is right.

"This year, our goal is to complete one boat and start lofting and constructing the molds on another boat," Saindon said. (*Lofting* is the process of taking measurements from plans and expanding them to full size—it's a way of eliminating measurement errors from the reduced drawing plans.) He teaches three basic rules: "Assume nothing. Trust no one. A faired line supercedes any given measured line."

Saindon defined a *faired line* as "a beautiful curve without bumps or hard bends." "I'd like to see more guys get into the business," said James Foley, carpenter shop foreman at Billings Diesel and Marine, in Stonington, and a member of Saindon's support team. Aside from Shawn Eaton, whom he hired on Saindon's recommendation and thinks highly of, the men on his crew are "all 50 and above—what's going to happen when my generation retires?"

Foley, who came out of a boatbuilding school in Lubec in the mid-seventies, has been at Billings since 1995. Eaton, he said, was the first person he'd hired who'd come out of Deer Isle-Stonington High School's boatbuilding program.

At the end of each semester, Saindon and Duym have the students do the equivalent of a final exam: They create a board illustrated with photographs and their written answers to such questions as, Why I selected this project, What I learned, What was successful, What was challenging, What I liked best.

Bryant Ciomei wrote in June 2006, "The whole class was successful. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to be working with experienced, hardworking classmates and three teachers who really loved what they were doing." The challenging aspect for him was that others had taken the course before and were more proficient than he; but, he wrote, "As things started moving, I made peace with the fact that I was not as skilled as many of them, and then things just got better."

Roger Grego, while noting that one of the most challenging aspects of his boatbuilding class was putting up with a classmate's loud mouth, thanked Duym and Saindon, writing, "Throughout the last four years you two have probably given me the most help and taught me the most useful skills out of all the teachers that I've had. So thank you again. I will never forget you."

Saindon and Duym, schoolteachers with modest salaries, have made a difference in their students' lives.

Sandra Dinsmore *wrote about Beals Island's boatbuilders and basketball players in the 1999* Island Journal.

Muriel Hendrix (3)

Lacey Eaton examines material about the crew of the COLUMBIA *at the Deer Isle Historical Society.*

BACKING INTO THE FUTURE

Through technology, kids gain an appreciation of community life

MURIEL L. HENDRIX

In December, students at Deer Isle-Stonington High School were searching through genealogy records in the extensive files of the Deer Isle Historical Society, writing down notes in the usual manner. However, the outcome of their work, thanks to a grant obtained by the Island Institute from the National Science Foundation, will be far from usual, involving up-to-date technologies and extensive training that island schools would not otherwise be able to afford.

CREST (Community for Rural Education Stewardship and Technology) encourages students to use technology as a tool in finding creative solutions to community challenges. It also seeks to promote students' awareness of and interest in technology-related careers they might pursue in Maine. At a weeklong CREST institute held at the Darling Marine Center last summer, students and teachers from Deer Isle and 10 other Maine schools began training in Web design, using GPS and GIS (global positioning and global information systems), operating a digital camcorder, and conducting ethnographic interviews.

Paul Stubing and Luke Sarndon at the Deer Isle Historical Society

Students worked with volunteers at the Deer Isle Historical Society to learn about the crew of the COLUMBIA.

CREST has already helped forge connections between these students and their communities. Volunteers at the Deer Isle and other historical societies have helped students with research; elderly residents of Vinalhaven have talked about the days when most of the island's shore was working waterfront; longtime residents have shared their knowledge about heirloom varieties of apples on Islesboro and productive clam flats on North Haven.

The Deer Isle students at the historical society were looking for information about the "Island Boys" from Deer Isle and Stonington who served as the entire crews for the DEFENDER and the COLUMBIA, winning yachts in the America's Cup Races of 1895 and 1899. Students plan to use this genealogical data and other historical information they find in the archives as a springboard for digital camcorder interviews with island residents who, when growing up in the area, heard stories about the crew.

Like students from other schools in the CREST program, students will edit their interviews with iMovie, which they were introduced to last summer, and then put the interviews and other completed work on the school's CREST website. Students also plan to present their material in some form at a community gathering.

By January, students on **North Haven** had recorded three interviews, using ethnographic skills taught at the summer institute by independent filmmaker Doug Campbell and Mike Kimball, assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Maine at Machias. Each interview investigated a different aspect of the island's once-thriving clam industry, now comprised of a few open flats and a small number of harvesters. Students plan to locate and reopen some of the flats that were formerly a lucrative source of income for island residents. As part of this project, teacher Louis Carrier says students hope to join the Department of Marine Resources' water-testing program that determines when flats need to be closed and when they are safe for reopening.

In one interview, Kate Quinn, a native islander whose father supported their family by clamming, explains how her mother prepared clams for the family and for sale to the public. Another records a cold, rainy day on the clam flats with Adam Campbell, Pulpit Harbor harbormaster, giving students lessons on how to locate clams and the equipment and technique for harvesting.

The third interview records Jen Litteral, marine programs officer for the Island Institute, as she explains the biology and physiology of clams. She also covers federal and state regulations for harvesting clams and gives details of the different pollutants and contaminants that clams can take in and the infections they can pass on to people.

Students in **Islesboro Central School**'s horticulture class had begun to compile a list of island residents they hoped to interview to learn about the cultivation and use of the many apple varieties they had found on the island. They began with people who brought in apples for pressing on a donated apple press. They hoped to locate additional volunteers by putting out a flyer and a notice in the local paper to explain their project and invite people to share their recollections.

On **Vinalhaven**, middle school students were also looking for volunteer participation by residents, in a quest to document changes that have occurred on the island and to determine if its historic way of life can be preserved. Teacher Rob Warren said that since students had not been able to find information on old maps about earlier marine use of property, they hoped to obtain it from island residents. In January, the teachers and 35 middle school students were working to expand their interviewing skills before proceeding. To stimulate interest in the project, they planned to attend various public meetings, explain their needs and ask people to volunteer for interviews.

Members of each island school CREST team and other students they have trained have begun to use their GPS/GIS skills to produce maps that will be useful to their communities.

Aided by Marine Technology and Trades teacher Tom Duym, students from **Deer Isle-Stonington** schools were putting together a complex series of map "layers," including water salinity, currents, temperature, pollution sources, benthic types, and the presence of sea grass for the coastline of lobster management Zone C. This information can help organizers of a hatchery located at the Stonington Lobster Co-op determine the most favorable locations to release their juvenile lobsters. "We will provide the base maps," Duym said, "and then students from science classes can go out and take readings for some of the information." Once the map layers are in place, they will be cross-referenced with fishermen's firsthand knowledge of the nooks and crannies of the Deer Isle / Stonington shoreline, adding yet another dimension.

Student Luke Sarndon, who is working on these maps, is also downloading information from the town and state that students will use for another CREST project: determining the number of coastal property transfers from year-round to seasonal residents. In an additional mapping adventure, teacher Anne Douglas and a group of sixth graders have researched the location of old tidal mills on the island. After writing down locations, they will visit sites, obtain GPS coordinates and return to their computers to transfer the waypoints to an area map.

On **Islesboro**, where kindergarten students are working with ninth-grade buddies to put together an **Island ABC** book, each team has been assigned a letter, and all are brainstorming to decide what place, activity, person or thing on the island their letter will represent. "Some letters are easy," said teacher Vicki Conover, "like Q could be

for the water taxi, QUICKSILVER, but others, like U or X, are stretching imaginations." In their travels around the island, students were taking fresh looks to come up with ideas for their group's letter, and they had already searched through historical maps and books to find names of obscure coves and points. By January, they had thought up ideas for almost every letter and had posted their lists around the school to give everyone else a chance to add suggestions, which would eventually be narrowed down to one or two for each letter. In addition to illustrating their book, students plan to use GPS coordinates to create a map that shows the location of the word or words for each letter.

Islesboro students working on the orchard project will also produce their own map, which will pinpoint the location of each apple tree or orchard they have found and label the variety of apple. They hope these maps can be layered over plans for development and help identify any unique varieties that may be endangered. "We can collect scion wood from the heirloom trees and graft them onto root stock," said John Pincence, who runs the horticulture program.

Like Deer Isle-Stonington students, **Vinalhaven Middle School** CREST participants are concerned about the loss of working waterfront property and the lack of affordable housing. They will use GPS and GIS to map transfers of year-round working waterfront property to non-marine use, combining their data with information already collected by the Vinalhaven Land Trust.

Vinalhaven High School students have taken a slightly different route in using new technology, relying on a digital tape recorder provided by the CREST program rather than a camcorder to interview fellow students who are participating in the voyage of the FREYA, the 30-foot steel sloop vocational students refurbished over the past three years (page 47). Before the FREYA left, students recorded hour-long interviews with the sailors who would be participating in the trip from Maine to St. Augustine, Florida, and when they returned, interviewed them again. Now, says teacher Jud Raven, students will use an editing program, Audacity, to reduce interviews into two-minute segments for broadcast on radio station WERU. They are using storyboards to help them make decisions about format.

In the future, students also would like to use their GIS skills to map the FREYA route and anchorages along the voyage, which they followed through journal entries posted on the FREYA website (http://vivasail.com) by fellow students Phil Hopkins, Niall Conlan and Chris Sawyer and teacher/captain Mark Jackson. Different students sailed on the voyage home, which began after February vacation.

By the end of this year, CREST participants are required to use their Web-page training to set up a CREST website, where they will share work completed on their respective schools' projects. Islesboro students, aided by Island Institute intern Ryan Albright, are also redesigning the Islesboro Central School's website.

At the Deer Isle Historical Society, volunteers Tinker Crouch, Connie Wiberg and Paul Stubing couldn't say enough about the pleasure of helping students with their CREST research. "They've been so wonderful," said Crouch, current president of the society. "We want to keep them all." Stubing added that when he served as president of the society, he tried several times to get school kids excited about the society's collections and their area's rich heritage. "This thrills us," he said. "We see that CREST is serving as a springboard, that some of the kids are becoming interested in more than just this particular project."

Joe Mills, who was looking for information on the "Island Boys" on that day in December, was one. "No," he said, looking up from an old newspaper clipping he was reading, "I haven't had any luck. I got sidetracked reading this."

A veteran journalist, ***Muriel L. Hendrix*** *is a regular contributor to* The Working Waterfront.

CREST

Other CREST projects on the Maine coast

Fort O'Brien School in Machiasport
Create a town park for residents. Gather input from residents on what they would like to have included in the park, such as hiking and biking trails and picnic and play areas. Study the impact of red tide clam flat closures on the town's economy, now and in the past.

Georges Valley High School
(serving Cushing, St. George and Thomaston)
Develop a project that will forge connections among the three school communities, such as mapping where different students live who have common interests and interviewing residents from each town to learn about activities and jobs available in their communities.

Greeley High School in Cumberland
Locate, map and conduct interviews to learn about the history of the extensive network of trails in Cumberland and North Yarmouth. Document the dramatic changes in the nature of the community.

Lubec Consolidated School
Create and map a trail from the school to Mowry Beach. Put together an interactive map of Lubec that shows up to 20 of the nicest places in Lubec to visit, such as lighthouses, bird-watching sites and hiking and biking trails. Conduct interviews concerning town history.

Searsport District High School
Help town officials develop a waterfront-management plan by creating GIS map layers that include environmental data like the location of shellfish and worm flats, vegetative communities bordering the water, and areas with water access. Use ethnographic skills to explore the questions "Why did people settle here?" and "How have community resources been used in the past 100 years?"

St. George School in Tenants Harbor
Plot the nature trail sixth graders have made and create a podcast / virtual tour of the trail. Use the CREST website to highlight the history of land use of the nature trail and outdoor learning center. Select another topic that focuses on the people, places, history and resources of the community. Map the location of old schoolhouses on the peninsula and town recycling sites.

Washington Academy in East Machias
Examine ways to increase ecotourism in the area. Create maps with hiking, biking and ATV/snowmobile trails, tennis courts, saltwater access points and other recreational resources. Identify and pinpoint sensitive areas that need to be protected, such as salmon habitat.

— Muriel L. Hendrix

Mark Godfrey

Morro Bay's fleet is largely idle.

WEST COAST

Fishermen team up with a nonprofit group

BEN NEAL

December, 2006: Morro Bay, California, is in many ways similar to the coastal and island towns of Maine, with fishing boats lining a warren of wooden piers, and tourists ambling along the waterfront, stepping lively to avoid dripping totes of ocean bounty as they are swung ashore off the boats. However, there is one ominous difference not obvious to the casual observer—namely that the groundfish boats in this town have mooring lines encrusted with seaweed growth, their paint is peeling, and their sterns are stripped of fishing gear. These boats no longer leave the pier to head offshore, as the entire trawl fleet in Morro Bay was bought out in the past year by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a nonprofit organization, and the return of these vessels to the sea is currently uncertain at best.

Some fishermen on the docks regard this as the end of their way of life, while others see it as the beginning of a new era that will allow for the recovery of depleted stocks. Without dispute, this purchase has brought to the fore essential questions of just who will direct the future of the working waterfronts of this town and many others along our coasts. This decision-making extends down to the smallest details: what boats will be tied to the docks, and even what type of fishing gear will be used for any future harvests.

(continued on p. 56)

Christopher Ayres (3)

Allen Wells aboard the HEIDI AND HEATHER

EAST COAST

A recipe for success

JENNIFER LITTERAL

Whether you clip a fish chowder recipe from the newspaper, find it on the Internet, or use one that has been handed down for generations; whether your fish chowder comes with pork, or has a clear, white or red broth as the common denominator—the key ingredient is fish.

In December 2006 the New England Fisheries Management Council accepted alternative approaches to groundfish management for New England waters. Among the alternatives to be considered was an innovative approach called Local Area Management. The fundamental goal of this approach is to improve depleted populations of groundfish (cod, haddock, flounder and other bottom-dwelling species) by giving fishermen more control over the council rules that govern their catch.

A new Area Management Coalition, made up of fishermen, scientists and conservation organizations, believes that this approach will lead to greater accountability, ecological sustainability, equitable management and an enduring fishing industry throughout New England.

(continued on p. 57)

Tom Hill

Morro Bay, California

Harbormaster Rick Algert recognizes that changes are coming for the town, or, indeed, that the changes have already arrived. "We are still not sure yet that we can trust TNC or ED [Environmental Defense] or any of the other environmental groups, but we are so far into the critical stage of fisheries collapse that we just don't have time to compare and complain anymore; we are in a desperate situation and need to partner up."

Groundfish here are not the same as in the Gulf of Maine. Our familiar Atlantic cod, haddock and pollock are replaced with petrale sole, ling cod and, of greatest importance, over 100 species of rockfish, all members of the *Sebastes* family, related to the redfish in the deeper waters of New England.

The gear, however, is familiar. Bottom trawls came to dominate the fishery in the last three decades, with the nets growing ever larger, and able to access more and more difficult terrain. Just as in New England, this fishery started with hooks, but moved to the more-efficient trawl gear in the late 1940s. As elsewhere, it is now thought that these increasingly heavy nets have contributed to the smoothing of the complex bottom habitat, the bycatch of young fish, and also just the flat-out overfishing of these slow-growing fish. Trawls brought California fishermen into the world market for frozen fillets, making it possible for them to efficiently transport large amounts of fish to the dock. However, both the quantity of the fish as well as the quality of the environment soon suffered declines. Landings of West Coast groundfish declined to the point where disaster was declared in 2000, opening the door to economic bailouts, as well as investigations into the causes of the collapse.

A damning 2002 report by the National Research Council pointed the finger at the long-term impacts of bottom-trawling fisheries across the United States, and the recovery guidelines listed in this report served as a blueprint for The Nature Conservancy's efforts in Morro Bay. The report called for a combination of permanently closing large areas to fishing, and the reduction of fishing pressure outside these areas.

The first of these goals—the establishment of closed areas—is right now in the hands of the state and federal officials, although The Nature Conservancy has developed strong suggestions for protected areas as a part of its initiative. The reduction of fishing efforts had until recently been similar to those in other parts of the country, following the top-down approach of utilizing the common, but often ineffective, tools of fish size limits, shorter seasons, changes in the size of the mesh of the nets, and limiting entry into the fishery. The byzantine nature of this tangle of regulations often left fishermen in an uncertain world, frequently scrambling to work around these restrictions in an effort to keep their boats active.

This ever-changing (and not very decisive or effective) system changed suddenly for Morro Bay when all six groundfish permits in the town were bought and retired by The Nature Conservancy in a single season. The organization originally mentioned the leasing back of permits to fishermen with the restriction that they not use trawl nets, and instead fish with more environmentally friendly gear, but to date this has not happened.

The Nature Conservancy is an active group in both California and Maine, which has heretofore primarily pursued its conservation goals through the purchase of land and the use of conservation easements. In some locations, such as Long Island, New York, TNC has also leased subtidal easements, protecting areas from aquaculture and coastal development. The purchase of both titular rights to natural resources (i.e., limited-access permits), as well as the actual means of production (boats and gear) in the marine realm is a new direction for the organization.

(continued on p. 58)

In earlier times, fish markets in Maine were supplied by hundreds of boats and fishermen. Today a meager handful of these fishermen survive. One is Allen "Sparky" Walls, whose home port is Bar Harbor on Mount Desert Island. While Bar Harbor may bring to mind traffic jams of tourist-packed cars, Mount Desert Island has always had a rich history of fishing along with tourism. In fact, fishing in that area was some of the most productive of the 19th century. "In the mid-1800s more codfish were caught in one year with handlines and tub trawls in the waters off Mount Desert Island than have been caught in the entire Gulf of Maine in any of the past 10 years," writes William Leavenworth of the University of New Hampshire.

Today, Allen Walls would have to steam a full day from Mount Desert Island to reach fishing grounds that are mere shadows of what they once were. With the price of fuel at an all-time high, this isn't logical, so he now fishes from Portland.

Like many kids that grew up in fishing families, Walls donned his first pair of fishing boots at age 12 to set out clamming, and soon after began lobstering from a skiff. He started groundfishing 25 years ago off Mount Desert Island, and has been fishing from the HEIDI AND HEATHER, a 60-foot steel boat named for his two daughters, for over 15 years. After hanging on by a shoestring, Walls finally made the difficult decision to sell off his groundfishing permit. Today he no longer has a boat payment. He retrofitted his boat for shrimping and scalloping and now fishes from Portland in order to be closer to his catch. "Lots of guys aren't out here anymore," Walls declares in a gravelly voice over the din of his boat engines. "I pushed the envelope hard for years. I am still out here, but not to the same caliber I used to be when I was groundfishing."

From the early 1900s to the 1950s, American and Canadian fishermen dominated the New England groundfishery. Then in the 1960s, factory trawler fleets from more than a dozen countries moved into the waters off New England and caught record levels of species, depleting one stock after another. Management efforts at that time were insufficient to control this intense fishing pressure, and in just 10 years, groundfish stocks declined by nearly 70 percent. The 1976 Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act was designed to address this heavy foreign fishing. The act promoted the development of a domestic fleet linked more directly to the management process, and created eight regional fishery councils to manage marine resources within that area.

Walls's story is a common one. Many fishermen agree that fisheries management has not provided the opportunity for stocks to rebound and have only managed to force more boats from the fishery. According to Walls, "Management isn't bringing back the fishery, and the limitations have only made this a slow death for the fishermen; only a few boats remain due to overregulation."

"We cannot accept the premise that the fishing fleet will eventually be consolidated into a 'few' large vessels in a 'few' large ports," adds Glen Libby, a fisherman from Port Clyde who is chairman of the Midcoast Fishermen's Association.

But after 30 years with the same management practices, it seems that fishermen are now willing to put their differences aside and take a united stance on the issue. "There is a mindset [held] by some fishermen that the burden of rebuilding the stocks is on their shoulders—that they are willing to make a sacrifice for a future generation," says Craig Pendleton, a Saco groundfisherman who is coordinating director of the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance.

These acts of sacrifice are gathering momentum up and down the coast, forging alliances that were unimaginable in the past. The Area Management Coalition includes representatives from the New England groundfish industry, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, Penobscot East Resource Center, Midcoast Fishermen's Association, Downeast Initiative, Island Institute, The Nature Conservancy, The Ocean Conservancy, Conservation Law Foundation, Maine Sea Grant and the Maine Sea Coast Mission. Conservation groups and fishermen, once unlikely allies, have found that their combined influence creates a powerful voice.

(continued on p. 59)

The oldest-known
FISH CHOWDER RECIPE
first appeared in The Boston Evening-Post
on September 23, 1751:

First lay some Onions to keep the Pork from burning
Because in Chouder there can be not turning;
Then lay some Pork in slices very thin,
Thus you in Chouder always must begin.
Next lay some Fish cut crossways very nice
Then season well with Pepper, Salt, and Spice;
Parsley, Sweet-Marjoram, Savory, and Thyme,
Then Biscuit next which must be soak'd some Time.
Thus your Foundation laid, you will be able
To raise a Chouder, high as Tower of Babel;
For by repeating o'er the Same again,
You may make a Chouder for a thousand men.
Last a Bottle of Claret, with Water eno' to smother 'em,
You'll have a Mess which some call Omnium gather 'em.

HEIDI AND HEATHER *now fishes from Portland.*

Mark Godfrey

TNC has reiterated that it wants to allow a fishery in Morro Bay, but remains firm that it does not want trawling.

There is much to be admired in TNC's approach, especially the way the organization integrates fishermen into the decision-making process in an effort to achieve consensus. However, TNC's dramatic entry into the world of fisheries management is also notable for the fact that its actions sidestepped the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the body actually in charge of developing management plans.

To interact with the fishing community, The Nature Conservancy has hired one of the community's own. David Crabbe, a 30-year California squid fisherman who recently lost his vessel, took a job with the group as a liaison, and states his primary goal as "moving toward deciding what to do with the fishing permits, and how to keep some fishing in Morro Bay." He recognizes that the old methods are washed away, and that the future will require new solutions. "The trawl fishery has been under siege for years," he said resignedly, "and will not be coming back. I think that the future lies in the old ways—hooks, traps, maybe small drags, and diversifying, harvesting a little of this, a little of that . . ." Crabbe concedes that The Nature Conservancy has not yet moved positively in a new direction, having only removed the trawl fishery thus far, but also notes that ironically, this may be stymied by federal regulations.

Under current law, fishing permits owned by a third (non-fishing) party can be leased out, but cannot be converted to other gear types. The language of the regulations restricts them to trawl gear, and other trawl-fishing interests on the West Coast want to keep them restricted to this gear type, as this will most likely mean that the purchased permits will not reenter the fishery. "We are going to put this to a vote at the [Pacific Fisheries Management] Council soon, but the outcome is uncertain," said Crabbe. Harbormaster Algert confirmed this, adding, "The Nature Conservancy holds all the cards, and they are interested in both fishing-capacity reduction and habitat protection, and so we need to make sure we meet both these goals." It is not certain that gear changes alone can bring about both reduced catches and habitat recovery, but it bodes well that this approach has succeeded in enhancing fisheries recovery to some extent in both New England and the North Sea.

Fishermen's responses have been mixed. One older commercial fisherman on the docks noted, "I'm not part of the buyout, but I can tell you—I have not seen those guys around much since it happened, or heard from TNC, who promised to release the permits, so I think we just might have seen the last of it." Gordon Fox, one of the fishermen who sold his permit, welcomed the change, saying, "This has given me the chance to try new, less-costly methods of fishing."

TNC has reiterated that it wants to allow a fishery in Morro Bay, but remains firm that it does not want trawling. Many fishermen agree, as long as they can have access, a reasonable season, and can develop a market for the product. "One difficulty will be developing a big-enough market, but we are between Los Angeles and San Francisco, and the market for high-quality, sustainably caught fish is encouraging" said Algert. "All we need is access, market, and some new gear, and these fishermen will catch fish." Trawl fishermen up the coast in Monterey, Moss Landing and Half Moon Bay have also expressed interest in the program, but dockside cynics say they just want to secure the buyout money before the inevitable death of the fishery.

Three things combine to make this arrangement in Morro Bay unique among fisheries management in the U.S.: It focuses on environmentally driven gear changes; it utilizes only private money; and it represents a true collaboration between the fishing community and nonprofit groups, with regulators left bringing up the rear. This collaboration could hold promise for the recovery of New England fishing communities, which have also languished in a tangled web of regulations, government subsidies and angry fishermen, with stocks still depleted. "All we want in our town is working waterfront, with vibrant and viable long-term fisheries landing right here in our port. We were not headed in that direction before, so [now] we have to try something else," says Algert. According to ex-fisherman Crabbe, "The big game plan is to convert the fishery to a truly sustainable mode, and I think that this plan can do this."

"However," harbormaster Algert answered wryly, "if he really thought that, he would have bought another boat by now . . ."

A former member of the Island Institute staff, ***Ben Neal*** *is a graduate student at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.*

"Fishermen have never been given the opportunity to be stewards," Craig Pendleton says.

The Nature Conservancy is one of the most influential of these allies. "The Conservancy believes strongly in the power of partnerships," commented Geoffrey Smith, marine program director at The Nature Conservancy in Maine. "We are committed to working closely with fishermen, scientists, and managers to improve marine conservation in the Gulf of Maine . . . We are excited to bring our experience developing innovative, market-based solutions to help build a better future for depleted groundfish populations in the Gulf of Maine and the fishing communities that depend on them."

The Conservancy is actively working with fishing groups all over the world. On the West Coast, it successfully partnered with fishermen to purchase fishing permits from willing sellers and build industry support to increase protection for important marine habitats. While the circumstances in New England are different, there are lessons to be learned from such efforts. "The greatest strength of the California program was that fishermen and conservation groups worked together to find a solution that worked well for both," said Smith. "We don't have any immediate plans for purchasing fishing permits here, but we are certainly open to discussing any strategy that can help better align fishermen's economic incentives with long-term conservation."

Fishery management is convoluted, and many fishermen have given up trying to understand or participate in the process. The New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC), one of the eight regional fishery councils created by Magnuson, developed nine fishery management plans for the Northeast.

According to Libby, fishermen need to be a key ingredient in order for the management process to succeed. "We can't look to government for direction; this direction must come from the fishermen." Cindy Smith, resource management coordinator for the Maine Department of Marine Resources, reported: "It is incredibly difficult to rebuild stocks given very imperfect ecological information, while still trying to maintain the industry and infrastructure. One of the missing ingredients in the fishery is the public's awareness of the importance of U.S. commercial fishing. The U.S. has the most conservation-based fishing laws in the world, and if it is shut down, then all fish for sale in this country will be from countries with less-sustainable principles."

While the council considers alternatives to current groundfish management, fishermen, scientists and conservation organizations are forging alliances. As Pendleton notes, "Passion, diversity and livelihood are key ingredients that have been stamped out of the fishery, while management has been trying to fit fishermen into simple boxes." He is also the co-chair of the Area Management Coalition, whose groundfish management alternative was one of three strategies recently selected by the NEFMC for further investigation.

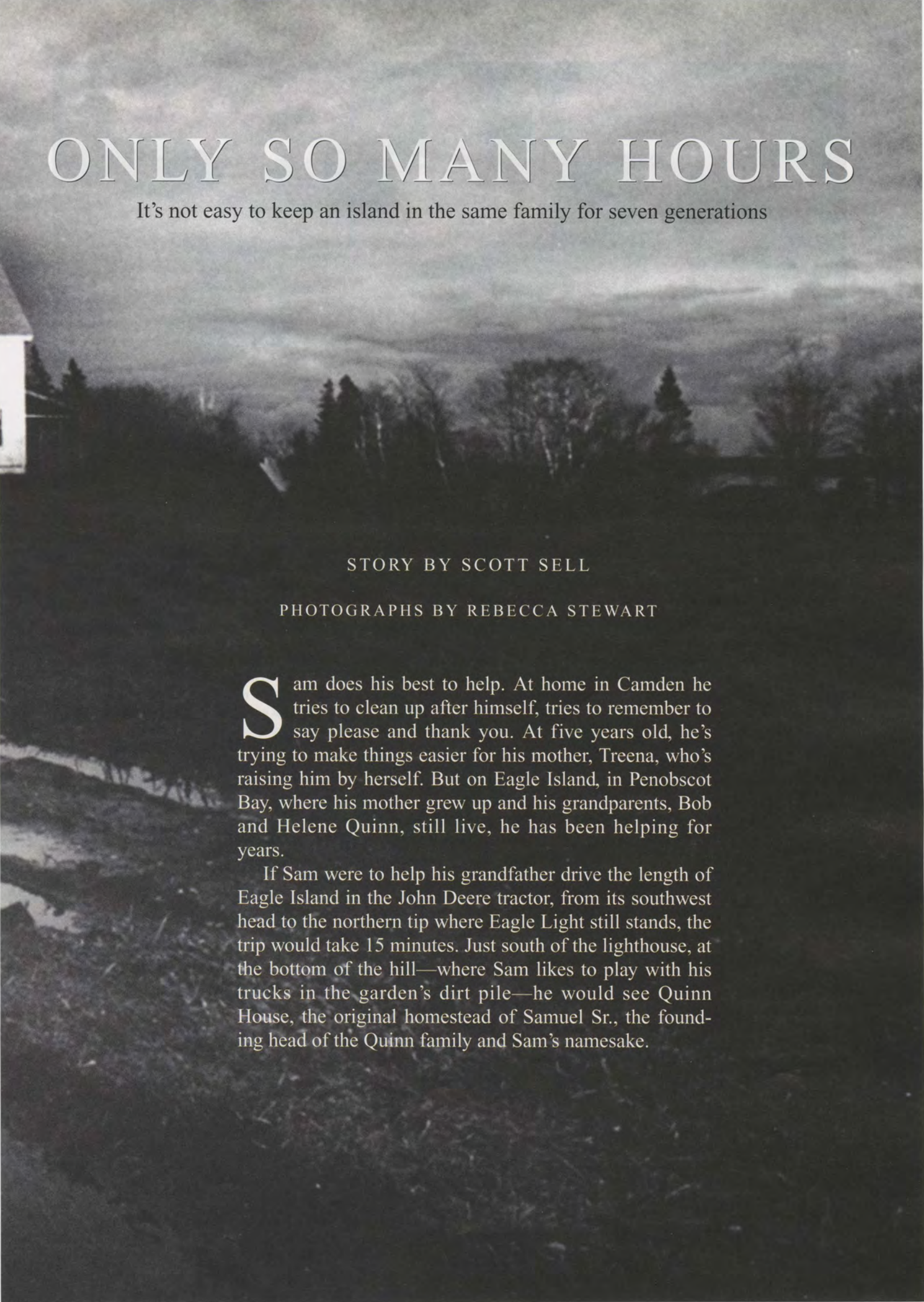
"Fishermen have never been given the opportunity to be stewards," Pendleton says. "If they didn't catch enough, they were in fear of being eliminated from their fishery. They had no incentives to do things better and make it a more sustainable industry." Area management is designed to create incentives that lead to optimum sustainable harvests of fish and a fair distribution of the resource to fishing communities.

While it is still unclear what direction NEFMC will take to ensure a diverse, sustainable multispecies fishery, there are many voices ready to provide the missing ingredients in groundfish management: Start with a heaping portion of passionate fishermen; add a smattering of stewardship, a smidgen of ecology, a dash of partnerships, and a pinch of economic incentives; stir in diversity, blending until you achieve the perfect balance of public perception. Once this proper foundation has been laid, the flavor of innovative solutions will develop, and everyone can savor the results.

Jen Litteral *is marine resources program officer at the Island Institute.*

ONLY SO MANY HOURS

It's not easy to keep an island in the same family for seven generations



STORY BY SCOTT SELL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY REBECCA STEWART

Sam does his best to help. At home in Camden he tries to clean up after himself, tries to remember to say please and thank you. At five years old, he's trying to make things easier for his mother, Treena, who's raising him by herself. But on Eagle Island, in Penobscot Bay, where his mother grew up and his grandparents, Bob and Helene Quinn, still live, he has been helping for years.

If Sam were to help his grandfather drive the length of Eagle Island in the John Deere tractor, from its southwest head to the northern tip where Eagle Light still stands, the trip would take 15 minutes. Just south of the lighthouse, at the bottom of the hill—where Sam likes to play with his trucks in the garden's dirt pile—he would see Quinn House, the original homestead of Samuel Sr., the founding head of the Quinn family and Sam's namesake.

"I think next year, I'm going to start getting younger," says Bob Quinn.

Movements around Quinn House are slow in the early hours. Bob sits next to the kitchen stove and listens to the maritime weather forecast over the VHF radio. Helene makes several trips outside to the hand-dug well, carrying drinking water inside for tea, one metal pail at a time, while Jaaron Shaw, Bob's sternman, sits on a corner stool, waiting to leave for the morning lobster trap haul. As the sun inches skyward, eventually showing itself above Deer Isle due east, dark reds and oranges bleed through the wall of pine and birch trees that fence Eagle Island off from the sea.

"Seems to me that we can take in the float at Bear after fishing, as long as we can catch the tide," Bob says, thumbing through his daily journal, seeing what needs to be done for the week. Jaaron nods, his eyes closed.

"I'll pack you guys an extra snack," Helene says, moving Sam's miniature John Deere tractor and hay baler—left behind from his last visit—off the table to make room for a Tupperware bin full of Helene's homemade doughnuts.

Bob's journal, or the "Bible" as it's often called, is where every chore and reminder and the day's weather is noted carefully in pencil. In the fall, the list of tasks is particularly daunting, as winterizing the island must happen before the weather turns unpredictable and violent.

Every October and November, Bob closes up the dozen summer cottages on Eagle, boarding windows and draining pipes. Since he's also the paid caretaker of five other small islands situated between North Haven and Deer Isle—Bear, Beach, Oak and Scragg—he's responsible for doing the same for the homes there, as well as hauling in the docking-floats from their tiny harbors. After the first snowfall, he'll burn the mountain of brush that has been collected from summer projects. Meanwhile, he and Helene have to start insulating Quinn House and stacking firewood in the cellar for their winter alone.

Major projects that are slated for this coming spring are also recorded in the journal: repairing the roof on the boathouse, painting the dormers on Quinn House and fixing the barn before it collapses. In 1815, Samuel Sr. nailed on the clapboards that still hang on the barn—weathered but functional. In the next couple of years, when Bob finishes work on the barn, he figures his clapboards should stay on there for another century or two.

At this point, Bob wants to hang on to the island for another five years, making it to the 200-year mark the Quinn family has owned and lived on Eagle Island. But with growing older—Bob is 67, Helene is 61—and a lack of help throughout the winter, it's become increasingly difficult to meet the daily quota of chores. And now, with Bob's latest head cold, some things just have to be put off.

"It's one of those double-edged swords," Bob says, buttoning up his jacket and pulling on his cap, the corduroy covered in engine grease and sea salt. "There are only so many hours in the day. Either there's more to do, or I can do less."

It's the first morning in almost a week without heavy fog rolling through the bay; there's not another fishing boat in sight. The Quinn trap-buoys, black and orange, are everywhere, in perfectly straight lines. After Thanksgiving, Bob is going to add another job to his journal: pulling his traps for the season.

Bob and Jaaron take up a trap, flinging crabs and non-legal lobsters back into the water, then taking out seven keepers, the biggest single haul yet today. The whole process—pulling and cleaning the trap, refilling it with fresh bait, and closing it up—takes the two men roughly 20 seconds.

"Looks like we have the only restaurant in town," Bob says, handing a keeper to Jaaron who bands its claws and tosses it into a barrel full of salt water. Bob rights his boat, the TM II, and throws the trap back where the sea floor is deep.

"I don't really feel it yet, physically, this aging," Bob says, sniffing and dabbing his runny nose with the back of his hand. "But sometimes, pulling my rowboat up at low tide by myself, that's hard. I've been thinking about it," he says, "and I think next year, I'm gonna start getting younger."

"I had a couple of years' real struggling to know what my place was going to be," says Helene, who left a job as a school secretary in 1991 to move permanently to Eagle Island.

Steam from the hot water bucket—used to clean the trap rope—encases Bob like a ghostly jacket. He uses the gaff to hook another buoy, and then feeds the rope into the hydraulic motor. The last trap in their string of five appears on the surface of the water and Jaaron helps Bob pull it up to the side of the boat.

Hauling is a quiet process for them. Bob leaves Jaaron to his duties—packing herring and pogies in net bait bags, tying them inside the traps when they come up. After spending four years as Bob's sternman and another three as a summer farmhand, Jaaron says he always knows where Bob's hands are going to go and how he'll distribute his weight.

"Time to change occupations," Bob says, glancing at his watch and throwing the trap back. He points the TM II west, toward Bear Island, and then slips out of his orange waders. Eating handfuls of raisins and peanuts from a Ziploc bag, he consults his fishing log, a waterproof notebook where he records lobsters kept and traps hauled.

"We only hauled half of 'em," he says, frowning.

Wiping her hands on her apron, covered in layers of flour and coconut oil, Helene reads the morning mail that just came off the KATHERINE, the island's mailboat. The first thing she opens is a package from an elderly lady in Castine, a longtime guest on Eagle, who enclosed a recipe for corned beef Jell-O mold and a bag of catnip for Basil and Toggle, Sam's island kittens. Sam says that he picked out a black cat and an orange cat because those are the colors of his Grampy's trap buoys.

The next letter, from a couple who married on Eagle in the beginning of September, thanks the Quinns for a "magical time." When there's a wedding on the island, it's a weeklong production. Bob coordinates the boats to bring guests over from the mainland, while Helene and Treena decorate the dining room and begin cooking days ahead of time.

The last piece of mail is a postcard from Greg Hoke, the Quinns' first "summer son," who is in Barcelona, Spain, attending a geology conference as part of his PhD.

"We started having kids come out to work during the summer," Helene says, folding an envelope of junk mail in half and then quarters. "And I didn't even decide that. They started asking me to come."

It doesn't take all that long for the Quinns' hired teenage help to become adopted family. Helene says it's difficult to say which way the adoption goes—it's often the kids who end up adopting the Quinns. Given a room in Quinn House, three daily meals and a summer wage, they gladly take on any number of jobs that Bob and Helene can't, or don't, want to deal with anymore—doing loads of laundry, splitting wood or washing dishes. And sometimes, as in Jaaron's case, a single summer of work can turn into nearly a decade.

Nothing hums on Eagle in the afternoon. There's no machinery running, nothing that makes a noise except dishes that clink, chair legs that scrape the floor, or birds that fly low over the island. Taking small steps between the countertop, the cupboards and the stove, Helene files the day's mail with the bills they need to send, then stirs homemade applesauce for lunch. Her cooking is a way to keep her family alive and working, but is also a means of income—one that has evolved since their first years on the island.

At the time of the Quinns' permanent move from their home in Stonington to Eagle Island in 1991, Helene had just left her longtime job as a secretary at Deer Isle-Stonington High School, a place where she was in the thick of constant activity.

"Making the transition [from] being so involved in the community, I had a couple of years of real struggling to know what my place was going to be," Helene says, setting out water glasses and filling them to the brim. "I felt like I didn't really know, other than being support to Bob, what I was going to be, or do, or anything."

"My grandfather was a lighthouse keeper," Bob remarks. "They lived in pretty confined quarters, didn't move around much, stayed right in one place. So I really don't feel much need to go anywhere."

The Eagle Island Bakery, run out of Helene's kitchen, came from that need to be involved. She turned it into her own business, making molasses doughnuts, lemon-poppy-seed muffins and her famous anadama bread. The bakery became so popular, she eventually started putting baked goods on the mailboat and sending them off to the other Penobscot Bay islands. At its peak, Helene was getting up at two or three in the morning so the bread could be done for the eight o'clock boat. Then, like a lot of things, it just got to be too much—she had to back off so she didn't burn herself out.

But the introduction of the bakery sparked a change in the way the island operated from then on. During the summers, Bob and Helene began renting out cottages and running Quinn House as an inn. The hospitality business, long since vanished after the years of the Depression and the death of Bob's grandmother, was revived due to Bob's dedication to work on the island and Helene's push to surround herself with people. Now, after decades of the island remaining desolate, there is an active summer community as there was when the early Quinns boarded guests at Quinn House.

Helene realizes now that she created exactly what satisfied her at the high school: kids, community, and a central position in the social bustle. With people visiting from all different walks of life, she says, living on Eagle affords her a cosmopolitan lifestyle without ever having to leave.

If Sam walked south from the farmhouse, past the mounds of raked hay and the solar panels that power his grandparents' home, he'd hit the main road, the muddy path that runs the length of the island. Then midway down the road, past the small cottage where he lives with his mother during the summer, Sam would get to the cemetery where nearly every member of the early Quinn family is buried.

Across the road from the cemetery is the Howard Barn, which is on Sam's grandmother's family's old property. Along with the Quinns, the Howards were the other primary landowners in the early years on Eagle. When Sam's grandparents got married in 1966 the Quinn and Howard properties came together.

The running joke between Sam's Grammy and Grampy is that they were born married, becoming "mixed up" with each other while spending summers on Eagle when they were teenagers. Helene remembers wanting to spend more time with Bob, but it was difficult to keep him in one place. He walked so fast that Helene would have to stick her hand in the back pocket of his jeans just to catch up.

The mower, dating back to when the four family farms on Eagle were still operable, sits next to the Howard Barn, rust coming off in great flakes. Sam climbs on its seat and pulls down the lever that raises the blades. He likes playing a game called "Get to work!" where he is the foreman to a crew of farmhands.

"That's enough work for now, boys," Sam yells out to the grassy plot in front of the barn, the bright red lobes of his ears sticking out from his orange hunter's hat. "Go have yourselves a lunch break. Take a rest."

A certain amount of work has to be done every day, so he has to be tough on his men, but he considers himself a good boss. Taking watch over the land while his men sleep, he leans a musket-shaped stick on his shoulder, protecting everyone from the grizzly bears that live in the swath of spruce and juniper behind the cemetery.

His boot heels clicking against the floorboards, Bob lumbers across the summer dining room of Quinn House—a converted boat shop—and settles himself in at the head of the table, smelling of hay and mildew and sweat. His lunch plate is covered with dinner leftovers: broiled cod and shrimp, potatoes and a pile of hot applesauce. He takes a few moments to admire the spread, then lowers his head to eat. Working quickly, and like most of his tasks, silently, his brow furrows in concentration. Within minutes, the food is gone; he mops up the remains with a slice of bread while Helene eats slowly, taking time to taste what she has cooked.

Taking small sips from his mug, Bob lets the tea bag steep before fishing it out, squeezing it damp, and using it to clean breadcrumbs off the table. Leaning back, he examines his hands, takes a buck knife from his belt and shaves off crescents of fingernails. He uses its point to dig out dirt from his cuticles.

"It might not be my cooking that everyone loves," Helene says, taking Bob's empty plate and stacking it beneath hers, making a

mountain of forks and knives on top of them. "It might be that we live on an island and with the island air, everyone's appetite is huge. They could be eating anything and it'd probably taste good. I *would* like to be a better pie maker, though."

Bob sticks a toothpick in his mouth and runs it along his partial plate and gums. "For the record," he says, stroking the side of his beard, rolling the white and gray between his fingers, "I'd like to say that I find no faults with your pie."

Helene pats him on the knee; his face becomes taut with a smile and all the wrinkles and deep creases converge, as if pulled upwards by string.

Sam's first word was *articulated*. As in articulated trucks, used for heavy construction. His aspiration now is the same as it was three years ago: He wants to be a flatbed truck driver, delivering loads all over the country.

"But I have a lot of jobs now," Sam says, fingering a hole in his new pants. "I have to fix boat engines and pave roads out West and plow snow and salt the roads and a guy in Camden just called me and asked me to start working at the dump. And I'm gonna be a vet soon, too."

Sam is still too young to operate machinery and tools or the TM II. It will be a while before his grandparents let him run things by himself, but he's already learning. He gets up with his Grampy and Jaaron at five o'clock when they leave for fishing, he knows some of the knots to tie up the boats when they dock, and he sees his Grammy and Grampy getting tired from the long summer days. He knows that people living on Eagle Island have always worked—and that there is always more work to be done.

When he was just beginning to talk, Sam shared his penchant for work with Bob.

"You know," he said, walking up the hill to the house with his grandfather, "it was a long time ago that I built this house."

Bob looked at his two-year-old grandson closely and nodded as Sam's eyes passed over the white farmhouse, taking in how the wood fit snug together, how the white paint was peeling.

"We were building the foundation and we took the fieldstones and sort of stacked them this way," Sam said, making an angled design with his hands, lacing his fingers together.

"I know," Bob said. "I know you did."

Driving to Burnt Cove Market in Stonington, Bob grips the steering wheel of his pickup tightly, keeping his eyes fixed between the road and the speedometer. Helene has given him a shopping list, 15 items long, keeps it in the breast pocket of his flannel shirt. His journal sits next to him on the bench seat. Bob doesn't like to leave Eagle much, gets anxious if he's gone for more than a day or two.

"I think maybe there's something in my genes that makes me not want to move a lot," he says, checking his mirrors every 15 seconds. "My grandfather was a lighthouse keeper. They lived in pretty confined quarters, didn't move around much, stayed right in one place. So I really don't feel much need to go anywhere."

During the summer, the Quinns usually send their kids ashore to do the grocery shopping. But now, as late autumn cools the air and the sun sits lower in the sky, Bob and Helene pick up food for themselves, cans of vegetables and bags of potatoes to accompany the fish or meatloaf Helene cooks for them.

"If anything ever happened to her," Bob says, taking one hand off the wheel and coughing into it, his teeth whistling, "it'd be the end of me, too, 'cause I'll starve to death after two or three days."

A truck with out-of-state plates barrels past the pickup on the left and cuts in front. Bob narrows his eyes, looking ahead. "See?" he says quietly, pointing through the windshield. "Things like that, I don't like so much."

"At some point," Helene says, walking out to the chicken coop with a mixing bowl full of apple peels and crab shells, "we have to slow down because we can't continue to be overextended like this."

She dumps the bowl over the fence and the chickens rush to the pile, squawking and pecking. Arching her back, Helene rubs at the nape of her neck, just beneath her wool hat. Her doctor in Ellsworth says that the pain may be stress-related.

Helene would like nothing better than to close up the island each winter and spend the time traveling, visit her sisters who are scattered across the country. She'd like to reduce the mail contract with the post office in Sunset to just a summer contract, so that they're not obligated to stay on Eagle for the winter.

"It doesn't benefit anybody for us to get so far overdone that we can't do what we need to or take care of ourselves," she says, looking out over the water, to the cellular towers—blinking red lights—circling the bay. "And no one can do it for us. We have to be the ones to set boundaries and change and take time back for ourselves. We both know that it's gotten to that point."

It's the middle of October and there are still a few cottages that need to be closed up tight before the end of the month. Bob hasn't yet started to move the firewood into the cellar and there's still mowing to be done. But the job on the books for this afternoon is to haul the ISHMAEL out of the water for the season. Several more sailboats will have to be hauled over the next few weeks as more islanders ask Bob for his help, but the ISHMAEL needs to come out today.

Rusted chains and rope stretch across the shore, hooked from the back of the John Deere to the front of a wooden boat cradle, which is weighed down by tubs of wet sand. The tide continues to rise and swallow the cradle while Bob waits for Jaaron to finish unloading three barrels of bait from the ROYAL, here to make its weekly delivery and pick up Bob's hauled lobsters.

Jaaron has taken the rowboat out to the trap float for the exchange—a stone's throw from the wharf—but Bob needs the rowboat to position the ISHMAEL in its cradle and needs Jaaron to run the tractor. It's now high tide, and the right time to pull out the boat will be lost in a matter of minutes.

Bob hooks his thumbs through the belt loops of his Wranglers and paces the wharf, the timbers groaning. Squinting, he watches the sun start to sink behind the Camden Hills to the west.

"All right, Jaaron," he calls out, cupping his hands around his mouth, "we need to get moving."

Jaaron rows back and Bob marches into the water, the waves lapping against his boots and jeans. He steps into the boat, his knees creaking, as Jaaron tries to start the tractor. He turns the key several times but the engine sputters to a stop. Coming back on land and crawling under the tractor's hood, Bob touches the connections with leathery fingers, tries to start it again and walks away, throwing his hands in the air when it stops coughing altogether.

Disappearing into the boathouse, Bob comes out with a new battery and replaces the dead one, his hands moving deftly. Daylight is being lost by the second, the sky turning to a cold, dark blue. The tractor purrs noisily once again. Climbing into the ISHMAEL, Bob uses the outboard motor to back it up and secure it on the cradle once again.

Jaaron gets back onto the tractor and turns the headlights on, casting a glow across the line of trees that tower over the shore road on both sides. The tractor jolts forward and the cradled boat comes sliding up on the log rollers, half a foot at a time. The ISHMAEL finally settles in the middle of the beach and Jaaron cuts the engine.

"Okay," Bob says, mopping his face with the sleeve of his shirt, "she won't float there."

On the west side of Eagle Island, Sam walks the Orchard Beach, the heels of his sneakers blinking red and yellow lights. Making an X in the sand with a stick, he starts shoveling with a trowel, digging a foot down in the sand before tiring and becoming frustrated.

"The treasure has to be around here somewhere!" he says, sticking a toe into the hole and kicking it, small grunts escaping from inside him. Consulting a scrap of paper with scribbles on it, he does calcula-

tions on his hands, goose bumps traveling up and down his arms. Along his forehead, his blond hair turns dark with sweat.

"This is a treasure map and *this*," he shouts, making an arc with his hand, presenting the forest and the shore and the bay, "is Treasure Island!"

Plodding away from his hole, Sam spots a green piece of sea glass, resting among the rocks, and picks it up. He brushes off its coat of sand, and closing one eye, holds it up to the waning sun to look through it.

"Ha!" he says, smiling, dropping it into his pocket with the rest of his glass collection. When Sam smiles, secret lines form in the corners of his mouth, like ripples in water.

Heading out to the barn after morning toast and tea, Helene gathers jagged laths and rolls of plastic sheeting, and piles them into a wheelbarrow. Today is going to be spent banking, sealing the foundation to make the house warmer. This is something that has been done hundreds of times before, every winter. There are thousands of rusted staples and nail holes in the clapboards of Quinn House.

The pain in her hands from kneading dough keeps Helene from using the staple gun, so she lets Treena tack the plastic to the worn clapboards. As her daughter moves along the length of the house, Helene collects chunks of brick to weigh down the sections of long plastic that bulge and deflate with a stiff breeze. Up until a few years ago, the Quinns always cut boughs off spruce trees, wove them together and piled them alongside the house, so when the snow came, it sifted in and sealed up, making it airtight around the foundation. Now, they use hay from the field and the garden.

"The thing to keep in mind is that you *cannot* make a plan," Helene says, pulling her turtleneck up to her chin. "If you can't be flexible, you can't be here because everything depends on the winds and the tides and other weather considerations and how do you know what it's gonna be? You don't."

Averting her eyes from the sun's glare, she pitches damp hay from the garden into the wheelbarrow. Hens cluck wildly as the pitchfork gets too close to their coop. Rolling the wheelbarrow back to the house, she spots some cracks in the foundation and pushes an extra fork full of hay against the stone. Dirt and grass stains cover the knees of her jeans.

Sam and his cousin, Nick, come out of the house bundled in down jackets, looking for work. "We want to hammer things," Sam says, running his hand along the planks of the porch, splintering and badly in need of fresh paint.

Helene gives them hammers with electrical tape wrapped around the handles and a coffee can full of nails. Their hammers move with purpose, pounding nails frantically into the laths, three in each.

"Smash!" Sam yells, his eyes beady and stern. "Get in there, you nail!"

By ten o'clock, the cold is gone and Helene takes off her gloves. Her cheeks glow pink and she sighs out small puffs of air. Her gold hoop earrings and wedding band glint as the sun slowly rises above the house.

Waking to the wind wailing and pushing against the eastern side of Quinn House, Bob and Helene head quickly into the kitchen. The clock says four, but the moon still hangs stubborn and high on the other side of the bay. Bob doesn't stop to listen for small-craft advisories over the radio: he knows the wind has shifted and that the TM II— moored on the eastern side of the island—has to be moved to the western side before the gales take her away. "I'll call you on the radio when I get aboard," he tells Helene, pulling on his gloves. He always calls to let her know he made it okay.

Helene watches from the living room window as Bob starts up the tractor and drives it south, down the main road toward the wood landing beach. Starting her day, she waits for Bob's call. She feeds the kittens, lugs wood inside for the fire and has a cup of tea. A half an hour goes by. No call.

"Maybe he can't get aboard," Helene says, opening the circular range of the stove to add another chunk of wood. "He'll probably be coming back any minute."

Another twenty minutes pass. The wind picks up and gusts shake the few shingles on the barn that hang from half-sprung nails. Helene decides to call Bob on the radio.

"No answer," she says, tossing both hands up in front of her. She walks from one end of the house to the other, watching the way the trees move. Helene's pace quickens as she makes her way out to the entryway between the summer and winter parts—where the cold seeps through the cracks in the clapboards. Hands shaking, she sits on the bench and starts lacing up her boots.

Just then, the door bursts open. For a moment, Bob stands in its frame before closing it firmly. His eyes are lidded and tearing from the wind.

"Radio's out," he says, hanging his coat up on the hook.

Helene's shoulders sag as she slumps against the wall. "All right," she says, shaking off her boots, "how about some tea?"

Gradually, the throngs of summer islanders and guests dwindle, and now, at the end of November, they've disappeared completely—moved back to their year-round homes in southern Maine or Philadelphia or Sweden. Bob and Helene have moved too, down south, to their "condo in Florida." They've spent the past month slowly packing up their lives to move into the winter part of Quinn House, where there are two woodstoves and the heat is contained in the kitchen and dining room.

The winter move changes the island, changes Bob and Helene. They get a chance to decompress after the hectic summer and working to winterize—they read and talk, even watch movies. During the summer months, television is the furthest thing from their minds. But when the snow starts falling and the sky grows dark earlier every day, they wind up falling asleep in their chairs in front of the TV, or challenging each other in a heated game of cribbage.

Visitors in the dead of winter are rare—Sam and Treena are their only constant company. But this year will be different—Sam just started kindergarten. Now, he'll come out to Eagle only during the summers and on long weekends. But if he's anything like his grandfather, when he becomes a teenager, he'll have his boat packed up for Eagle Island the day he graduates from high school.

As Bob and Helene get older it's going to take someone like Sam to help them keep the island alive. Someone with eagerness and patience; someone with a deep commitment to preserving the land and the traditions of the Quinn family.

"Sam's the seventh generation," Bob says sleepily in his recliner, his fist propping up his head, "but I can't plan for Sam. He may move to New Orleans and be a ballerina dancer."

Bob says he has to start taking better care of himself. He doesn't understand why he can't remember to eat between meals, put a granola bar in his coat pocket. Especially after his cold, he says he really needs to try to keep his strength up so he's able to last from lunch until dinner.

At supper, Sam sits next to Bob, his legs dangling a foot from the floor. Moving pieces of food around with his fork, the tines ringing against the plate, Sam whines because the pork loin is crispy on the outside, covered in rosemary and pepper—he doesn't want anything besides the pale meat.

"It's all burnt," he says, his face tightening. "And there's fat."

"Here, honey," Helene says, leaning over with a knife to trim the skin off. When she's done, there's hardly any pork at all and Sam's sobbing starts again. He excuses himself and, except for Sam's soft whimpers from the other room, the dining room is quiet.

Reading aloud to his grandson is part of Bob's routine.

During tea and gingerbread, Sam returns to the table, holding a *Northern Tool & Equipment* catalog open to the pages filled with die-cast metal dump trucks and backhoes, equipment for playing with in the sand and mud.

"I'm gonna do better, Gramp," he says, wiping beads of tears from his eyes.

"Well, I'm gonna try to do better, too," Bob says, hoisting Sam up onto his lap and taking the catalog from his hands. "You know, there was a time, four years and forty pounds ago, when this was easier."

Sam looks up at him, his mouth slack, large dark gaps between his teeth. He stares as if it's the first time he's ever seen his grandfather.

"I guess the idea," Bob says, blowing his nose into his handkerchief, "is that I'm gonna read this to you and we're both gonna do better."

Helene stands by the stove and wipes at her nose with a tissue she keeps in her apron pocket. She's caught Bob's cold and is starting to feel it in her throat and behind her eyes. Bob comes in from fixing the Chrysler that's been gathering dust in the barn for decades; cold air rushes through the open door. He looks at Helene expectantly, as if waiting for some news, but she only looks back and smiles.

He paces the kitchen floor, unsure of what to do now that the winds have prevented him from fishing this morning. The easterlies around this time are especially fierce; they make every sailboat mast whistle and the thin spruce shake.

He checks the clock above the VHF radio, checks his watch, and checks the clock again. It's just after nine.

"Well," Bob says, breathing heavily through his nose, "this is about the time Jaaron and I have our picnic on the boat."

"We have muffins," Helene says. "Pear muffins. Do you want a muffin? Or a piece of apple cake?"

He pushes his cap up off his brow and scratches at his hairline, sweaty and gray. "I'm not much of a muffin person," he says. "I'm thinking about more of a peanut butter sandwich."

She laughs. This is what she packs him for his morning snack every day. "Okay then. Do you want me to make it for you?"

"Nope. I can get it."

Slicing thick pieces of Helene's bread, Bob spreads an inch of peanut butter on one side, but as he makes his way into the pantry for the jelly, Helene gets in his way, moving toward the sink with a kettle full of boiling water. As if flustered by each other, they step away in separate directions. Then they move again, close to one another this time, the tips of their boots touching.

Backed up against the sink, Bob lets Helene pass and she pours the kettle into a soapy basin full of dirty dishes. Returning to the stove, she throws her tissue into the fire and watches Bob shovel piles of strawberry jelly on his sandwich in huge spoonfuls. He sits and chews, hunched over his plate.

As Bob slides his chair back, Helene sidesteps out of his way, to begin their dance all over again. But instead, Bob stands solidly in front of her, inches away from her face, and puts both hands on her cheeks.

"I get a cold and then you get one," he says softly. "It's not fair."

"That's 'cause I worry about you so much," she says, grabbing a fresh Kleenex and holding it to her nose. "You get colds so quickly."

Bob walks to the door, smiles at Helene, then steps out into the cold.

A graduate of the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Portland, ***Scott Sell*** *is an Island Institute Fellow on Frenchboro.* ***Rebecca Stewart*** *shot the photographs while she was at Salt as well. She now lives in Washington, D.C.*

The Eagle Island Camera Project

During the summer of 2005, summer resident Bill Ginn distributed 50 box cameras to Eagle Islanders during the first week of August, asking them to make a photo record of their time on the island. "Together," Ginn says, "these images capture a collective 'view' of Eagle . . . these are a select few (280!) that I think capture the esssence of Eagle as it is today." To view the results of the Eagle Island Camera Project, visit **www.islandinstitute.org**

A MAN OF IDEAS

"Little by little, I would work on things"

DAVID TYLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Donny MacVane walks on the snow-covered wharf in front of his Long Island home. He built it himself, over a span of 40 years, mostly out of pieces salvaged from the U.S. Navy dock constructed on the island in World War II.

The wharf is U-shaped, with his 35-foot fiberglass lobster boat, CAROL (named after his wife), hauled up at the head of the "U." Wire lobster traps, and a few wooden ones, are stacked five high on either side of the boat. Next to CAROL are four fish houses: one for Donny, 79; one for his wife, Carol, 76; and one each for his two sons, Stan, 56, and Tom, 55, who also lobster from this wharf. Stan's son, Lee, 23, also uses the pier.

The wharf is filled with useful items, and other lobstermen often stop by to get parts for their own boats. He jokes with them about the state of the wharf. "I say to people, 'You can look around, but don't disturb anything; I've got it all cleaned up.' They say, 'Oh no, we'll be careful.' But you see what it looks like."

Donny MacVane

The MacVane wharf is all business.

Leaning against one fish house are about 10 ends for the old, half-round wooden lobster traps. Donny speaks about an improvement he made in the design of this sort of trap in the mid-1950s. The bow-shaped piece at each end had a single piece of wood, forming the base. This part was bought ready-made, and the bottom piece stuck out on either side about two or three inches beyond the bow. In Donny's experience, trap rope would catch on these ends. Donny bought parts and built the trap so the base piece was flush with the ends of the bows. "It makes a bigger trap for the same space," Donny says. "And you haven't got those ends to get caught." He also asked the Anderson Trap Mill to make the laths about a half-inch narrower. Most lobstermen at the time liked wider laths because they thought they were getting more for their money, "but it just made for a heavier trap," Donny says. "So I made mine light."

Over a lifetime of lobstering, Donny has had more than a few of these ideas. He has a wry, sometimes self-deprecating, sense of humor. So when you ask how he thinks up these innovations, he says, "It's a little bit like a monkey—I kind of just follow my nose. It isn't like all of a sudden I was inspired—I'm not that smart. Little by little, I would work on things, through trial and error, mostly."

Virtually all Maine lobstermen use wire traps, but Donny and his sons still use some wooden ones. Donny's switch to wire only began in 2000. Of the 666 traps he fishes, about 100 are wooden. His sons each use about 300 wooden traps. When asked why he likes them, he says, "I don't know. I just do. They do fish a little better."

Figuring out ways to catch creatures from the sea engaged Donny from an early age. His father, Henry MacVane, was a trawler fisherman. When Donny was five years old, he took a piece of trawl net from his father, baited it, and set it at the low-water mark in front of his house. He caught sculpin in the net. "Then I can remember dragging a trap way down to low water, and baiting it with the sculpin I'd caught."

At seven years old, Donny and his brother, Tom, rowed a punt and set single traps in front of the house. Their mother made them wear life preservers. This story brought back the time when his and

Family photo, c. 1959

Carol's two sons were five and six years old and also set single traps out front. "The next season, of course, they wanted to spread their wings. We were going to let them go out around the end of this point here, where we couldn't see them, over to the other cove. So they had to sing all the way. I can hear them now, singing. They weren't much for singers, but we could hear them; that way we kept track of them."

Donny was born in 1927 in his home, located on the shore just northeast of Long Cove. He sleeps in the room where he was born. His father picked up the doctor from Peaks Island in his boat, but Donny figures that the midwife, Nettie Doughty, had probably delivered him by the time the doctor arrived. "That's the way it worked in those days."

During World War II, Donny worked as a general helper for the U.S. Navy, which built a huge fuel depot for the North Atlantic Fleet on Long Island.

Donny and his sternman, Branden Geistert

He also became his father's sternman, in 1943, as Henry had switched from trawling to lobstering. Just as the war ended, he served as a firemen / water tender for ships transporting coal from Virginia to New England. Donny then went to the Maine Maritime Academy, graduating in 1949.

With the war over, and ships decommissioned, work as a merchant mariner was hard to find. Then in the summer of 1950, his older brother, Richie, was fixing a flagpole for an island restaurant when the pole collapsed. Richie fell and broke one ankle and two vertebrae in his back. At that same time, Donny received a call to crew on an Arctic research vessel. "But I couldn't—here's my brother with a broken back and I got to tend his traps," he says. Donny had also met Carol, and they were married in 1950.

So Donny took over Richie's 350 traps, with his father going along as sternman. It was an unfortunate summer. Rope had been scarce during the war, and they had bought it when they could. Rope bought from one dealer, used for Richie's traps, had a small problem. "It was quite strong, but when you tied knots in it, they tended to untie." They lost 200 of their traps that season. Richie was able to fish the next season, and Donny worked another two years as a fireman and heavy equipment mechanic for the navy, lobstering summers.

In the summer of 1953, Donny went lobstering on his own for the first time. He was 25, aggressive and a little green. About this time, he and his father bought a 32-foot boat from the widow of a lobsterman from New Harbor. Donny drove the boat back to Long Island, alone. "I was scared. It got dark." He cut through past Eagle Island and ran into an unexpected obstacle. "Next thing I knew—I can still remember it—I could see the lights on Great Chebeague Island up in front of me. So I headed for them, and all of a sudden"—here, Donny makes a crashing noise—"she stood right up on an

In the 1950s, four of the Stewart boys went sterning with Donny. Donny and Wayne Stewart remember those days at Camelot, Donny and Carol's Long Island home.

"Little by little,
I would work on things,
through trial and error,
mostly."

— Donny MacVane

Donny checks his lobstering record book with his wife, Carol, and son, Tom.

island! It was so dark, you couldn't see anything. I guess I was lucky, because I got right off." He didn't even know which island he had hit.

In those early years when Donny first started out, he didn't feel as if he had much competition. "Nobody seemed to go at it real hard," he says. "Fishermen in those days—they weren't ne'er-do-wells; they only did as much as they needed. Then there were some young guys like me who came along." He started out with 500 traps, set in eight- to ten-trap strings. "The stories around the island were that I had 1,200 and 1,500 [traps] because I was catching so many lobsters. It wasn't that—I was hauling them. I was hauling 500 traps a day—the lobsters were getting more and more and my gang kept getting bigger."

Sometimes he took a second sternman along, to plug lobsters. His main competitors on the island—a neighbor, his father-in-law and a brother—would move offshore in August, "leaving me all alone in here. Oh God, you couldn't believe the lobsters. I figure they must be doing better out there or they wouldn't have gone." He remembers one August in the 1950s when he caught 20,000 pounds of lobsters. He has a red accountant's book in which he kept daily records of how many traps he hauled and the number of lobsters caught in each area from 1957 through 1977.

But Donny was bucking a traditional system. His aggressiveness even bothered his own family. In the early 1960s, he set traps on the south side of Long Island, close to shore. Island tradition held that north-side lobstermen, where the MacVanes are, did not fish close to shore on the south side, and vice versa. "My older brother saw my traps over there and he growled at me and said, 'You're just as bad as German Joe—you want it all,' " Donny says. "Well, I got mad, and brought them back." The north-south custom ended when the oldest lobsterman on the south side retired. Ironically, Donny says the first three lobstermen he saw taking advantage of the newly opened fishing grounds were from Portland, not Long Island.

Lobstering territory can be a contentious subject. "On the island, it's still pretty darn good," Donny says. "We help each other." Over the decades, the boundaries changed. "We have people from Portland that fish right off the shore of Long Island. This is something new." Traditionally, lobstermen either tie a knot on a buoy or cut the traps of the offending lobstermen, both anonymous gestures. Donny brought his own unique style to the way he dealt with other lobstermen crowding him. Donny used to buy small bottles of Pepsi, ten cases at a time, and other lobstermen knew it. When someone was across Donny's traps, "instead of cutting them, I'd put a Pepsi in their trap. That way, they knew if they'd crossed me. It just spread a little goodwill around; instead of cutting their rope, I'd give them a Pepsi." Donny also deducted the Pepsi as a business expense. "A few years later, the tax people audited me and said, 'What's this Pepsi column?' I told them what I was doing, and they said, 'We don't know if you can take it out.' "

The 1950s and '60s were a wonderful time to lobster, says Donny. He increased his number of traps to 622. He calculated the number of traps he set each year on his ability to haul all of them, at least once in the summer, in one day. Then he heard that the island schoolteacher, who fished only in the summer, had over 600 traps. "That made me mad," Donny says, laughing. "So I put more off—I got up as high as 1,300." As his sons grew up, they lobstered out of punts. In the 1960s, Donny's father, Henry, gave his boat to his grandsons, and they rebuilt an old powerboat for him. Henry lobstered right up until he died, in 1971, at the age of 86.

It was Henry who gave Donny the idea for another innovation. In the mid-1960s, Henry was painting the bottom of his boat with thinned Tropicop paint. He finished up his leftover paint by using it to paint some traps. The next year, Henry said, "Boy, those traps are clean and those laths are going to last." So Donny sprayed all his wooden traps with Tropicop, which helped preserve them. Donny

Aboard the CAROL

called Pettit Paint Co. and talked about this idea, and they came up with a mixture to spray on traps as a preservative. He met with the owner's son and "suggested it didn't make sense to come up with a new product," when all you had to do was thin an existing paint. "Oh no, they wanted the product."

Donny was one of the first lobstermen in Casco Bay to own a fiberglass boat. In 1967, he purchased a 40-foot Webber's Cove fiberglass hull. He needed a bigger boat because he wanted to fish for shrimp in the winter. With just the bare hull, Donny was able to build the rest of the boat. "I'd never done anything like that before—it was kind of crude."

Henry used to knit all the heads for Donny's traps. (Heads are the funnel-shaped nets that allow a lobster to enter a trap.) After his father died, Donny did not want to do that job again. He began experimenting, making trap heads from machine-made netting. "To my knowledge, [those were] the first machine-made nets that were ever in traps," Donny says. He also put a funnel hoop on the inside head. He spent an entire day at a giant lobster tank on the mainland, watching how lobsters went into his new trap, to make sure it worked. He gave a lobsterman in Corea his new trap. "And they all kind of laughed at it. They said the sea urchins will eat that up in no time." He returned a year later and the lobsterman using it said, "Boy, that little trap fishes good." His older brother, Richie, also was one of the first to build bait rafts that sit right in the water, keeping the bait fresher.

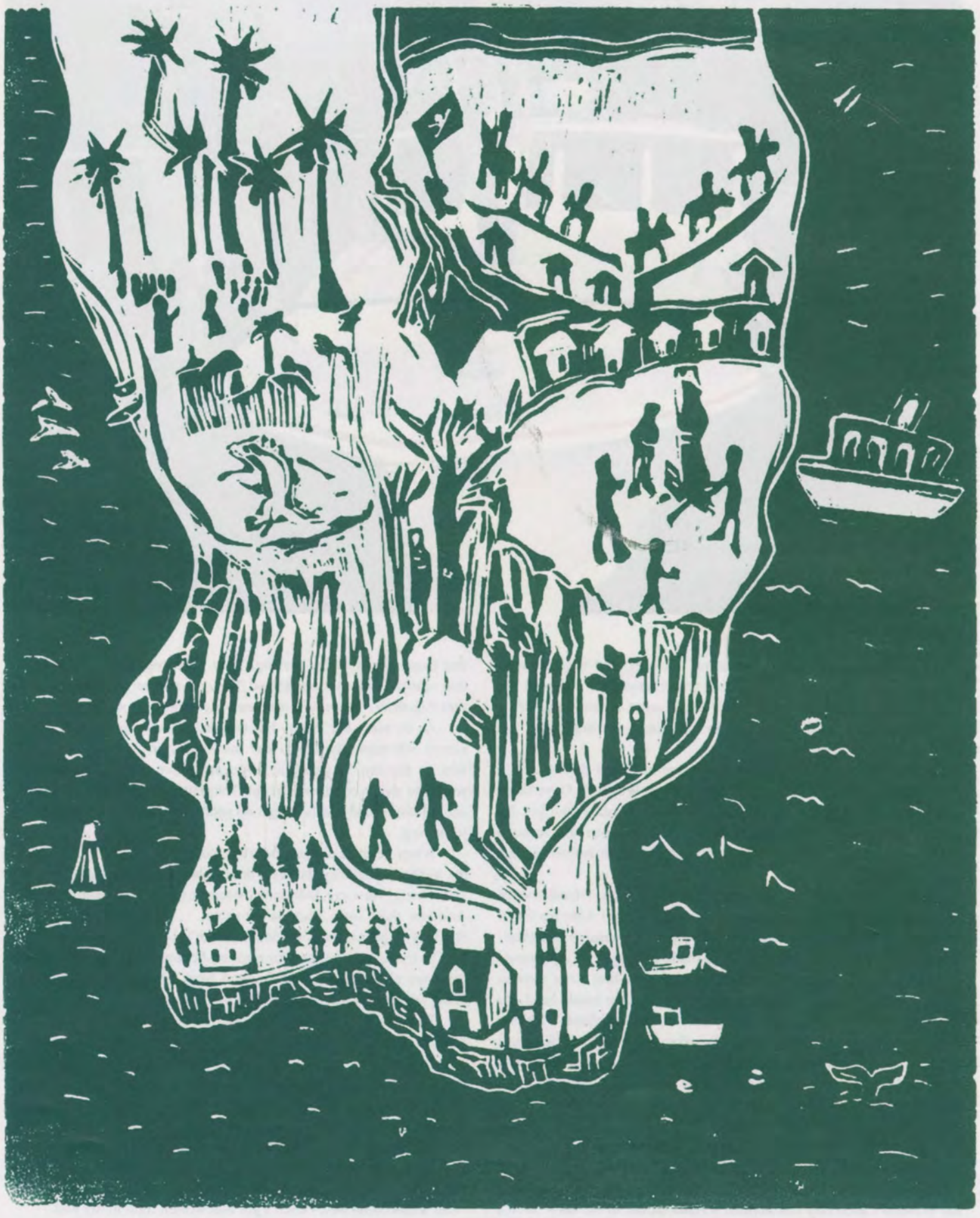
From 1963 to 1980, when their children were in school, Donny and Carol moved to South Portland for the winters. Donny helped start the Western Casco Bay Lobstermen's Association. In the early 1970s, the association tagged lobsters, tracked their movements for several years, and entered the data into a computer. "At the time, the biologists, the smart people, were saying there are two definite populations of lobsters: there's inshore and offshore," Donny says. "We proved that those lobsters were moving. They were migrating." His association sent the data to the state and "they never even acknowledged we sent it to them." State scientists are better listeners today, he says.

As he nears 80, Donny has cut back a little. In 2005, he fished almost 800 traps (the Casco Bay maximum); in 2006 he cut back to 666. In the last 20 years, he and Carol have traveled all over the world, to every continent except Antarctica. He's rewriting a novel about Long Island that he began 40 years ago. He has no plans to stop lobstering.

When he talks about lobstering today, you sense that, for all of the modern efficiency, he feels there is something missing. "When I was young, we were fishermen, because there was room to move. And now there isn't. There is not room . . . When you set traps, you don't try to get on good bottom. You can't, because it's too crowded. You're trying now to get your traps on bottom without getting across someone else. Fishing has changed from being fishermen, to just being farmers, harvesters, whatever you want to call it."

Through it all, Donny has kept his sense of humor. When he dies, he wants an unusual memorial built: He wants to be part of a "catch-down," an underwater obstacle that grabs traps. "This fella that used to work for me is supposed to take some of my ashes, put them in a big box with stainless-steel shafts sticking out through it. Make it real, real heavy, and put a lot of rocks and cement in this great big huge box, so it's going to weigh an awful lot." The friend is then supposed to drop it in Casco Bay and not reveal where it is. "And every time anybody gets caught down, they're going to say, 'That's that damn MacVane!' I got that written right in my will."

David Tyler *co-publishes the* Island Times *newspaper on Peaks Island and covers Casco Bay for* Working Waterfront.



ISLAND PLAY

Games, like species and languages, evolve more efficiently on islands

DAVID T. SOBEL
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LINDSAY PINCHBECK

We're sitting at long tables in the old Coast Guard Station on Whitehead Island in Penobscot Bay. Between mouthfuls of Rice Krispies or Cheerios, little dribbles of milk running down their chins as they chew and talk simultaneously, Rippy, Marco, Kevin, and USA (a sandy-haired kid named after his logo'ed T-shirt) are recounting great moments in yesterday's game, the Whitehead Game.

"We tried coming in from different directions a million times. From there, there, over there," Kevin complains. He uses his hand, his elbow, his chin to gesture out the windows toward the starting points for all those attacks. "The last time, I would have made it, but my pants fell down so I tripped and went down right by the picnic tables."

Rippy commandeers an abandoned cereal bowl to represent the circle of rope that surrounds the goal. "I was the decoy. I came in, circled around, everyone ran after me. Marco just stayed quiet in the ferns, and when they all followed me, he ran straight in and scored. Burns was hiding behind that old car chassis, but it all happened so fast that he couldn't get in fast enough to stop Marco."

"Yeah, remember we were sneaking up on Vince to catch him, but then he sees us and says, 'Don't bother, I can't move.' He was stuck so deep in the bog mud that he couldn't get his leg out. Took both of us to pull him out," says USA, proud of his generosity in helping someone on the *other* team.

A wave of recognition tingles through me and I'm back 15 years ago, with a different group of similarly aged Afro-Caribbean boys deep in a mahogany, gumbo limbo, tamarind forest on the side of Cabesair, a pointy island peak. We're hunting iguana on Carriacou, north of Grenada. "He slam to de groun' an' he puff up, all mad. Dose prickers on his back stickin' up." As Dane describes the iguana, he puffs up his cheeks, rounds his back and rolls back his pupils so all we can see are the whites of his eyes.

"I mash him, but he run away in a flash," Hollie adds.

Separated by thousands of miles and hundreds of thousands of dollars of family income in completely different ecosystems, these boys are rapturously telling stories about their island adventures. There's some really old vein of human experience being tapped into on both islands: the primacy of the hunt, male bonding. And yet, there's a cultural uniqueness. The Whitehead Game is played nowhere else in the world. The weapons used for iguana hunting in this village on Carriacou are unique, the product of local ingenuity and recycled trash. I'm like Darwin realizing that each island in the Galapagos has its own distinctive finch; each island has its own distinctive games.

ISLAND BIOGEOGRAPHY

Darwin's observations in the Galapagos Islands during his four-year journey aboard the BEAGLE had a significant impact on his ideas regarding natural selection and speciation. Back in England, Darwin eventually speculated that individuals of one species of finch had arrived from the South American continent, many millennia ago, and as the population developed, they spread from one island to the next. Once on an island, natural selection drove the morphology of the original species in unique directions. On islands where seeds were the predominant food source, finches that had fatter beaks reproduced while finches with narrower, less-successful beaks didn't survive to have offspring. Unique species emerged on different islands.

Linguists speculate that languages evolve in a similar fashion. Different dialects, elements of the lexicon, rhythmic patterns gradually develop so that eventually two related, but distinct languages emerge. We see this in regional dialects in the United States in tiny ways—the way speakers in the Northeast say "soda" and people in the Midwest say "pop." And these shared cultural elements tend to bind populations together. When northern New Englanders hear "wicked" as in, "We had a wicked awesome blueberry crop this year," they know they're among friends.

My contention is that play and recreation follows the same principles of speciation, especially on islands, but also in culturally and geographically isolated communities. It's especially true where adults and children play together over longish periods of time. In the normal workaday world, these conditions usually don't exist. But on vacation, at summer camp or on summer family islands, adults are freed from work responsibilities and can settle back into play consciousness. And children have the freedom to be children and aren't tethered to programmed sports and are often outside the range of electronic recreation.

I got my first sense of this almost 30 years ago when visiting a friend on the family island of Naushon, one of the Elizabeth Islands at the seaward end of Buzzards Bay in Massachusetts. The islands, stretching from Woods Hole to Cuttyhunk, have been privately owned for 160 years. (No trespassing please!) The eastern end of the island is settled with about 35 houses and a working farm. The western end, about six miles long and a mile wide, is a lavish network of old carriage paths and foot trails winding through old-growth beech/holly forest, copses of locust and oak, open meadows, and shrubby thickets down to hidden ponds and secluded crescent beaches. It's a magical landscape. For decades, it harbored a substantial population of sheep that roamed the island freely most of the year as "woolies" until they were all corralled for shearing.

Over dinner one soft July evening, our host, Dinny, regaled us with stories of the good old days, growing up as a child on the island during the summers. Nowadays, family vacations have shrunk to a couple of weeks in between soccer or tennis or computer camp. Thirty or 40 years ago, Mom and the kids, with Dad coming on weekends, used to spend all summer on the island. Dinny described a game called High Seas, and a variation called Merchants and Pirates, which involved traveling between an eastern stone wall and a western wall across miles of sheepy wilderness. It's still played each August.

The idea is to convey some precious item on horseback from east to west or west to east. Each team has a home base near the boundary wall. They plan to reconnoiter somewhere in the middle, at prearranged hideouts, to exchange goods. However, they have to avoid the pirates, a third team that commandeers the center of the island, ever watchful for unsuspecting voyagers. Everyone plays, though the number is usually capped at around 30 because that's as many horses as are usually available. Moms and uncles, daughters, aunts and nieces, young and old are all involved, though the high-stress roles are often reserved for the teenagers.

The whole game happens on horseback and involves stealth, breakneck speeds, navigational wizardry and a well-memorized mental map of the welter of trails, paths, shortcuts and uncrossable marshes between here and there. I have never heard of a game anything like it. What could explain its emergence here and nowhere else?

Family history, in part. The Forbes family earned some of its early wealth from the China trade, which emerged after China was opened to the western world, and especially American trade, in 1867. Ships traveled from east to west, or from west to east, and one of the major problems was piracy. This China trade wealth, and later investments in railroads and communications, funded the purchase of the Elizabeth Islands, and access to the houses was mostly limited to extended family members. The lore and language of the ship captains' families perhaps provided the metaphoric archetype for the structure of the game.

But there was more. Committed to the idea of preserving the pastoral lifestyle, the family leadership had agreed to no motorized vehicles on the island other than for farm work. Thus, horseback riding and horse-drawn carriages became the primary modes of transportation that shaped the nature of the paths and roadways. And a large-enough group of families, making for about 200 people on the island at one time, provided a critical mass of children and adults willing to participate in a game that required lots of participants over a large sprawl of hinterlands.

The combination of family lore, the braided network of paths providing innumerable route options and the prevalence of a large group of horseback riders were the unique set of ecological factors that led to the spontaneous generation of a unique species of game. Of course, there was something about the island-ness of the situation that supported the evolution as well. The boundaries were preset and concrete. There was little likelihood of strangers wandering in, getting in the way or wondering what you were up to. You could get lost for an hour or more, but never seriously. Play requires specifically designed arenas. Tennis has its court, Monopoly its avenues, bowling its alleys, drama its stage. The island of Naushon was the perfect gameboard, not too small, not too large, for a re-creation of trade on the high seas.

If Naushon had its own game, I wondered, were there other islands, or island-like isolated communities, with their own endemic species?

MAILBOAT SKITS

Since then I've been on a quest, albeit a quiet one. Like the Amazonian botanist searching the treetops for new beetles, bromeliads and amphibians whose toes never touch solid ground, I've poked around on islands trying to unearth unique games. On Carriacou, as part of Mardi Gras, there's an unusual form of combative Shakespeare. Decked out in spectacularly wild costumes, island men toss lines from *Antony and Cleopatra* back and forth at each other until one contestant's memory fails. It's an elimination match, with a new section of the play being used for each round.

My favorite novel of all time, John Fowles's *The Magus*, is set on a Greek isle.The main character is roped into a theatrical game created purely for his own ethical edification. He can't tell what's real, what's staged, and he can't pull himself away from playing. The story is based on his current relationship dilemmas and shaped by the role he improvises. The ending isn't predetermined; the path emerges as the story unfolds.

About eight years ago my family and I found ourselves on Three Mile Island, an Appalachian Mountain Club camp in New Hampshire's Lake Winnipesaukee. We'd been planning on going to a little island off the coast of Nova Scotia when a medical problem intervened. Casting about for an alternative, my friend Jack, former head of the New Hampshire Lakes Association, suggested Three Mile, named not for its length but because it was three miles from Center Harbor. (There are also islands named One Mile, Five Mile, Six Mile—with some 365 islands in the lake, it's hard to come up with an endless supply of interesting names.)

I'd always avoided Lake Winnipesaukee. Too many cigarette boats and all those chockablock houses crowding the shore. But while it's noisy on weekends, during the week it's really quite placid. Three Mile is an extended-family kind of place, where families and their kids have been coming for years, and kids grow up and bring their families. Most people come for a week. All 90 guests eat together at the main lodge and stay in about 45 tiny cabins scattered around the edge of the island. Each two-person sleeping cabin is a world unto itself. There's a porch, a tiny private dock, a soft forest of pines and hemlocks, only kerosene lighting. Reading on my porch in the afternoon breeze, I really feel away. On the other hand, there's also the main dock. Complete with recreation hall, boathouse, canoe and kayak racks, water slide, diving board and float, this is where the action is during most of the sunlit hours. And this is the seedbed for local creativity.

Local traditions abound. Art in the Outhouse, the mile-long swim circuit of the island, Water Carnivals (diving for coins, canoe tugs-of-war, mixed kid and adult freestyle relays, King Neptune presiding). But the *pièce de résistance*, the endemic species of island play that makes Three Mile unique, is the Mailboat Skit.

See it from the eyes of a visitor on a leisurely cruise around the lake as the U.S. Postal Service mailboat delivers letters and care packages to summer camps and island outposts. You sit on the upper deck and listen to the stock tourist patter of the captain. The boat pulls into landings on tidy islands with lake homes and cottages to die for. Docks connected by complex walkways thread out into the lake. You drool over boathouses with more square footage and higher assessments than

your whole house. It all looks so cozy, upscale and woodsy, yet tasteful. After a number of stops, the captain announces you're pulling into the AMC's Three Mile Island Camp. Over the thrum of the engine, there seems to be a louder, harsher rhythm. A metallic, tribal throb assaults your ears as the boat pulls up to the dock. A throng of natives dances in a circle clothed in leopard skin, clown suits, ragtag yard-sale cast-offs.

"Meat to eat! Meat to eat!" they all seem to be chanting. They're gathered around what looks to be a stake, with firewood arranged at the bottom in preparation for a conflagration.

From the woods emerge a small horde of natives dragging a struggling victim. She is tall, wears a coconut-shell brassiere and meager skirt, is incongruously bearded, and is valiantly resisting her fate. Or is it his fate? She/he is tied to the stake and the natives dance convulsively around, urging the flames to leap up. The chanting becomes cacophonous, indecipherable, but then the sacrificial virgin loosens her shackles, fends off her attackers and dives into the lake. The natives all plunge in behind her and don't resurface. Until they show up dripping five minutes later to buy the Frozen Taco ice cream bars that the mailboat sells to amplify its meager sale of stamps.

On a different day, as the boat approaches Three Mile, the captain announces that he's not sure what people do on Three Mile, but they seem to do a lot of hanging around. As the boat pulls in, there's a strange scene on the boathouse facing the water. In a frozen tableau, four children are attached to the wall, as if they're sunbathing on the dock, towels draped over them, but they're hung like pictures. JUST HANGING AROUND, says an explanatory banner. The young children look relaxed and comfy, unaware of the onlookers. You gradually realize that they're held in place by beach towels that have been stapled to the wall. They're like those little envelopes that you used to put your stamps in for your stamp collection. The envelopes are glued to the photo album page and you slip the stamp inside. The kids don't say anything; it's just a visual vignette.

From year to year, some mailboat skits achieve the status of revered tradition and get done over and over. Other skits are born fresh out of the minds of lighthearted adults and children with just enough time on their hands to play together. Some skits involve getting a shill onto the boat down in Weir's Beach, the origin point for the cruise. All the boat travelers are shocked when one of their own is targeted for some unanticipated indiscretion. But it's all in good humor and over in about five minutes.

Kids who never do theater, adults who would never dress in drag, affiliations of children and other people's parents who don't really know each other get swept up in the fun. And in the dark of winter, far from the lap of lake water on the summer shores, it's these skits that often get talked about over corn chowder at dinner. They help to bond families together and bond children to the special world of the summer island. It's my son's favorite week of the year because of the seamless web of family, play and natural world that gets woven together out on the island.

THE WHITEHEAD GAME

Which brings us back to where we started. But first a bit of context. Pine Island Camp is one of Maine's respected, long-standing summer camps for boys, located on an island in the Belgrade Lakes. It was founded in the early 1900s in the heyday of conservation, the emergence of camping and the founding of the Boy Scouts. One of the early directors of the camp, Dr. Eugene Swan, exhorted the virtues of the simple, vigorous, outdoor life:

"Young man, get out into the open. The world demands staying qualities. Do not, oh, do not, spend your vacation time in a hotel, or Pullman car. . . . The great cry of 'Back to Nature' that is spreading abroad over our land is full of deep significance, and the heeding of Nature's ever-calling voice, and an adaptation of our lives to her laws, is going to become a salvation of the American race."

Dr. Swan conceived of summer camp as an outpost of "Boyville." He said, "Boys live in dreams, and they should always be respected, for out of the dreams of youth have come the world's best gifts." In this spirit, he ran a camp filled with mystery, surprise, complex games, adventure and the unexpected.

As a result of Dr. Swan's original vision and the pristine seclusion of the camp on an island, a rich gumbo of unique natural and cultural traditions emerged. A whole mythology of kings, sacred animals, fantastic places flourished. Campers were roused in the middle of the night to participate in sacred rites. The War Game, a game that takes place over miles of Maine countryside over a number of days, became the crowning experience of the summer season. The camp, as an outpost of Boyville, respects the imagination, wildness and exploratory desires of boys and channels these into character-building and nature-bonding experiences. Out of this matrix, The Whitehead Game grew.

Whitehead Island became an outpost of Pine Island Camp in the late 1950s. Pine Island had always had a tradition of expeditions to the mountains and to the sea, so director Eugene Swan Jr. bought part of Whitehead to use as an outpost for campers on the coast. Today, groups of about 12 boys arrive each week during the month of July with their counselors, to explore tide pools, fish, greet each day plunging into the frigid brine, and play unique games such as Noople, Tucker, Ultimate HAGS and the Whitehead Game. "Hands down, the Whitehead Game is the boys' favorite," says Anne Stires, the island camp director.

Clearly, Capture the Flag is the rootstock of the Whitehead Game. But there are enough differences to justify it being considered a unique species. As in Capture the Flag, there are two territories, and once you're on the other team's territory, you can be captured. One of the compelling things about the Whitehead Game is that almost the whole of the 90-acre island is in bounds. As one of the boys said, "It's so large-scale—you can go anywhere on the island and it goes on for so long. It's better than Capture the Flag because it's not such a big drag to get caught and then have to go to jail. You just have to go back. So there's a punishment, but not a super big one."

Unlike Capture the Flag, captives from the other team are not put in jail (always a sore point when I've played Capture the Flag, and getting free from jail was often the source of endless arguments). Instead, you've just got to give up your rings (I will explain) and then go back to your side. By eliminating jail, the game becomes more appealing and therefore more likely to survive—natural selection at work.

Scoring, as you've figured out, is also different. In Capture the Flag the idea is to go into enemy territory, grab their flag, and then make it back to your territory with the flag. Hurrah! Game's over. But in the Whitehead Game you score points, and the game lasts a looooong time, say three hours. Each team defends a goal that includes a circle of rope about 15 feet in diameter and a center pole with hooks. The object is for an attacker to get any part of his body into the circle without being tagged. Then any rings he is carrying get hung on the pole and the points accrue to the attacking team. The precious rings are the little plastic circles left behind when you crack open a half gallon of Oakhurst ("the natural goodness of Maine") milk, a stalwart of the mid-coast dairy industry—another example of how local flora and fauna make games unique. Different products, quarts and gallons of milk, orange juice, cream, all come with different-colored caps and therefore different-colored rings, providing a panoply of scoring opportunities—green is 1 point, red is 5 points, yellow is 10 points, on up to the big enchilada: orange is 50 points.

So here I am, embedded, to use modern military journalism parlance, with one of the teams in the Whitehead Game. I'm panting, sweating profusely, crouched down in wet sphagnum, clamped up next to a gnarly spruce, trying not to give away my teammates' location. In true ethnographic spirit, I'm trying to experience the game from the native perspective, and I'm wondering if I have the aerobic stamina to keep up with 13-year-old boys, or at least just keep from gasping too loudly.

Lobster boats growl by not far away, buoys gong and the foghorn bellows in the distance, and underneath all that, we listen for the subtle

sounds of twig *snap* and swamp *sploosh*. But all I can hear is mosquito whine, whining like a really big group of tired four-year-olds, and the delicate sound of my skin being punctured followed by the slurp of blood. There are gazillions of mosquitoes, no exaggeration, and yet the boys seem to barely notice them. They are immersed in the hunt.

We're up and running again, through alder thickets, log walking through bogs, slimy lichen skids on rocks, path, no path, then out of the woods onto the cobbly shore, rock-hopping heedlessly. No scenery; all details. We stop to look at a dead baby seal.

Tommy exclaims, "Hey, I've never been here at high tide before. This'd be a good swim spot, just down the shore from the lobster-eating place. You should probably hang back through here."

"Are we on their side?" I query.

"Big-time."

Screams in the distance merge with wave slap and the calls of whitethroats and goldfinches. The boys decide that Rippy will scout ahead while Tommy and Marco wait for a report. As Rippy stalks up the trail, they slip into walkie-talkie lingo.

"Don't go far. Be ready to come back. Over."

After 15 seconds, "Do you have a visual?"

"Negative on visual."

When he returns, they decide to split up with Tommy heading around behind the barracks to attract attention, while Marco and Rippy head up onto the ferny ridge above the outhouse. I sneak around to get a view of the enemy's goal where the defenders desultorily fend off mosquitoes and prowl for invaders. Tommy appears from out near the old car chassis and immediately draws a couple of followers. Then, out of nowhere, Rippy zips in, pulling away the last defender as Marco makes a beeline for the goal, plunging in like sliding into second. Score! They both jump up in glee, yell, "Beautiful attack!" and then, much to my (and I think their) surprise, throw their arms around each other in a celebratory hug. It's a moment of pure joy.

The next day I talk to the boys about why they like the game. I try to get past the "fun" response and dig into the deeper learning. Rippy comments, "Through the Whitehead Game, you get to know the island better. You learn all the little paths, how the swamps are connected. You have to listen and not do everything yourself. And you have to know when to stop arguing—to just accept that you've lost. You learn good sportsmanship."

And with surprising insight, Tommy suggests, "I don't want to be stereotypical or anything, but lots of kids at this camp are really rich and will grow up to live in big houses with not much nature around and they'll pretty much do things by the book. So it's great to run around in the woods, follow paths, not follow roads, and find your own path to the destination. It's a really good lesson."

Anne, the camp director, concurs about the deeper value. "I've been coming here for 20 years since when my father was camp director, and Whitehead's crashing waves, salt spray and beach roses are never far from my heart. I love this place, and I think playing this game helps these boys to develop the same lifelong love of the Maine coast."

At the end of their stay, the boys write in their journals. "The Whitehead Game was awesome," one writes. "It was scoreless after hours of sneaking and running in the woods, but it didn't matter." And, my favorite: "Disney World is a flea compared to this place."

JUST FUN AND GAMES?

Well, that was fun, you might be thinking, but what's the point? There are a lot of points.

First, I think that the preservation of island games should be considered a part of the bigger picture of preserving island culture. Just as we want to preserve oral history, local landmarks, endangered habitats, it's valuable to preserve the unique play traditions that adults and children shape together. I anticipate that the Whitehead Game has legs. In other words, it's a good-enough game to be exported and used in other recreational settings where it will help to build healthy bodies in twelve ways, just the way new drugs from Amazonian flora can help to cure cancer.

On another level I think these kinds of games create a love of place—starting with a love for the island where they emerged and then becoming a broader love for natural places. A number of researchers have studied environmentalists to try to determine if there are any similarities in their childhood experiences that contributed to their having strong ecological values and pursuing an environmental career. When Louise Chawla of Kentucky State University reviewed these studies, she found a striking pattern. Most environmentalists attributed their commitment to "many hours spent outdoors in a keenly remembered wild or semi-wild place in childhood or adolescence, and an adult who taught respect for nature." Lots of time rambling in neighborhood woods and fields and a parent or teacher who cared about nature were frequently cited as causal forces in the development of their own environmental ethics.

Mailboat skits aside, don't these island-play examples fit these guidelines? The island is the perfect "keenly remembered wild or semi-wild place" with clear boundaries that make exploring safe. And the presence of adults who teach respect for nature is present because in all of these examples, adults and children are co-creating these experiences. Adults provide the rules and parameters, adults often participate, and adults are there to help extract the deeper moral and ethical lessons.

Finally, island play binds families and communities together. Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam found that villages with strong choral societies and soccer clubs had the greatest social capital. In these communities, there was a strong network of volunteerism, a disposition to help your neighbors, a greater willingness to serve on boards and committees, and, as a result, a healthier, more vibrant community. In other words, playing and making music together helped to bind the community together.

In her essay "Lost Worlds: The Challenge of the Islands," Rachel Carson said,

Islands present a conservation problem that is absolutely unique, a fact that is not generally realized. This uniqueness stems from the nature of the island species, and from the delicately balanced relationships between island animals and plants and their environment. . . . On these remote bits of earth, Nature has excelled in the creation of strange and wonderful forms.

As we work to preserve island ecosystems and cultures, let's remember that the "strange and wonderful forms" of play are part of the glue that holds islands together.

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A BIG BOYS CAMP SCRAPBOOK

TINA COHEN

Every August, there's Big Boys Camp. A group of men, invited by technology guru and Ethernet inventor Bob Metcalfe, gather for a week on a small island in Penobscot Bay. Smart and creative, they're successful inventors, investors, artists and entrepreneurs.

The projects exemplify the value of creative and collaborative problem solving on a small scale. Big Boys Camp prioritizes—for one week a year—the idea that playfulness and conviviality are attitudes that count for something.

You might think the point of this low-key gathering of highly placed, high-energy men would be to simply relax. But every year, a new project is designed and executed to improve the camp, presenting an opportunity for Big Boys campers to return to their roots: playing, experimenting, tinkering. It's all about hands-on, not high-tech.

Peter Ralston (7)

Island activities like games and projects offer the opportunity to feel effective. The creative play, cooperation, and competition support a way to feel "agency;" knowing they are capable of addressing real challenges, in real life.

Muscles get a workout too. The rowing team practices daily in preparation for the annual race against a boat from a neighboring island. This is the week's one activity where winning counts.

Camaraderie and community are all-important. The group shares meals on a tarped deck, barely big enough for a big-enough table. BlackBerries and cell phones go dormant much of the time. A copy of each day's New York Times finds its way there, most coveted for its crossword puzzle, a communal undertaking.

Michelle ("Mickey") and Adam Campbell

SALTY AND SWEET

For the Campbells of North Haven, oyster farming is a passion

SALLY NOBLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Ready for market

It's still dark in the warm July early morning when Adam Campbell softy slips out the door. At this early hour, all five of Campbell's boisterous children are quietly sleeping in their North Haven home, an unpretentious, prefabricated Cape sitting on 22 acres that the family of his wife, Michelle, has owned since the late 1880s. Cradling a jumbo plastic container of his favorite jolt of coffee (Green Mountain Breakfast Blend, with half-and-half and a big shot of honey), Campbell heads for a quiet moment alone with the oysters growing in his salt pond. There, he methodically scrubs off the marine growth that gums up the screens covering this summer's oyster crop.

Adam at work, with daughter Abby

At 41, Adam Campbell's primary source of income comes from hauling lobsters out of Penobscot Bay. And working 10- to 12-hour days with a 300-horsepower John Deere diesel engine revving and the radio blasting, he's slowly, irrevocably losing his hearing. "Cleaning my oyster screens at early dawn is one of the most peaceful things I do," says Campbell.

After seven years of trial and error, unexpected mishap and unanticipated government regulation, Campbell has finally become an experienced oyster farmer. "In seven years I've only had two good crops, but if you use good seed, have a good site and live with a good work ethic, oyster farming can pay off in the long run. It's definitely not a get-rich scheme, though—you've got to love it to do it."

Like many lobstermen, Campbell was looking for an additional source of income when he thought of growing oysters in his pond. The idea went from pipe dream to serious planning about 12 years ago, he recalls—the year marine biologist Sam Chapman came to North Haven. The town hired Chapman, who is from Waldoboro, to investigate why the local smelts were dying out. And when Chapman visited the Campbell property, he offered his encouragement and expert opinion that oysters would thrive in his salt pond. "It all has to do with the water, and every cove in Maine produces oysters with uniquely different tastes," explains Campbell. "My pond produces a high-salt-content oyster that really has a fresh kind of zing to it. And the taste changes with the weather—a heavy rainfall will cause the pond's salinity to drop, so my oysters get sweeter, but in summer when there's a drought, my oysters are very, very salty."

Start-up, however, was haphazard at best. In 1999, when Campbell first got into the oyster business, he learned the importance of being diligent. His first investment, $200 worth of tiny oyster seeds each no bigger than a grain of salt, grew to decent-sized oysters, but the minute Campbell took his foot off the worry throttle, the raccoons made an appearance.

"I found the bag ripped open on the shore, and there were little bloody prints trailing away from this mess," remembers Campbell. "So I put two and two together and figured out the coons had tried to open them and cut their paws or little tongues."

Only half of that first crop was salvaged. Rolling with life's punches, the family enjoyed a few raw oysters, then fried a couple and gave the rest away to friends and family.

But Campbell is not easily discouraged. A native of Croton-on-Hudson, New York, he always dreamt of boats, so in 1985, at the age of 20, he packed up his '67 Volvo, drove to Maine and volunteered in the Rockport Apprenticeshop. "They taught me a lesson," he says. "I wasn't meant to build boats—I was meant to sail them."

Campbell met Michelle Beverage at a Christmas party in Rockland in 1987—"the year the stock market crashed and you couldn't buy a job around here." So he went into lobstering, married Michelle and moved to North Haven, where their family grew to include Amilia, 16, Abigail, 13, Zebadiah, 10, Kaleb, 7, and Bryn, almost 2. Following the raccoon incident, Adam made a decision to stay in the business, but ramp up his investment along with his diligence. The next spring he purchased 300,000 seeds for $3,500 from Muscongus Bay Agriculture. When he proudly drove his first substantial crop down to Portland's Browne Trading Company, he was laughed out of the place for failing the basic oyster lesson: gritty, sandy, crunchy oysters don't sell. So for several years he sent his oysters down to Spinney Creek Shellfish in Eliot, Maine, where his crop was "depurated" of impurities in water sterilized by ultraviolet light.

Mickey and Adam at home, with Kaleb, Zeb, Amilia, Abby and Bryn.

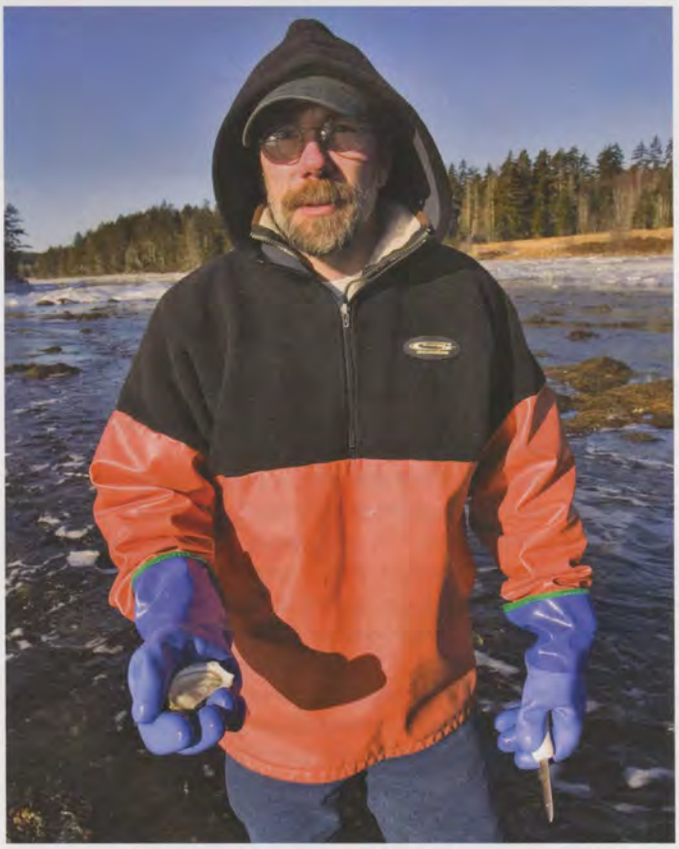
Another cold reality tested Campbell's unflappable optimism. He discovered that his neighbors' failing septic systems were polluting his oyster farm, located on Heidi's Pond, the 20-acre salt pond officially named for Hiram Beverage that Campbell shares amicably with surrounding neighbors. "Although everyone was really good about fixing the problem," says Campbell, the time lag caused by busy contractors meant the cleanup project took seven years. "It takes up to two years of good water samples before a site can be certified by the Maine Department of Marine Resources as an open area for harvesting shellfish," he explains. Campbell's salt pond was finally certified for producing shellfish in December 2006. The state Department of Marine Resources will continue to test the water.

Then another development changed Campbell's business model. No longer could he legally sell his oysters directly to local restaurants and businesses. Maine, the last state in the nation to allow free-market shellfish commerce, last September made it illegal for the independent oyster farmer to sell his shellfish without complying with the federal government's seafood Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Program (HAACP). Now Campbell tags his bags of three- to three-and-a-half-inch oysters with their harvest location, the date and time harvested, and the license number he's held since 1999, and J.P. Shellfish of Eliot, Maine, picks them up by refrigerated truck.

Long gone are those days when Michelle hung their oysters in crates in Southern Harbor, cleaning batches of 300 to sell to island restaurants. But the family still welcomes tourists who wander down Middle Road and stop by for an informal tour—they still sell a baker's dozen of oysters for $10 out of their refrigerator as delectable souvenirs. "People come in and out of our house all summer to pick up oysters, and very often they also want a tour," says Michelle.

Sometimes, for island fun, the Campbell kids invite their friends over to put on masks and snorkels to pick up a few oysters. "I give them 10 cents apiece," laughs Campbell. "About 10 oysters is a big catch for the 5-year-olds, and the 10-year-olds manage to find about 20 to 30, but the 15-year-olds won't come 'cause they're too old to be fooling around in the mud."

The fast-lane world of high-end food exists far away from the island life of the Campbell children, likely to be blissfully unaware that demand is hot these days for cool, slippery Maine oysters. The



Adam Campbell thinks he's finally got his oyster business fine-tuned.

It takes teamwork to load the morning harvest.

market has increased dramatically over the past several years, according to Sebastian Belle, executive director of the Maine Aquaculture Association. Recent studies commissioned by the state tallied 486 acres of shellfish leases in 2003, while in 2005, the number increased to 654 leases. "While that number does include some clams and mussels," notes Belle, "most of the increase has been in Maine oysters.

"We are the preeminent oyster in the marketplace because of our quality," he continues. "Maine oysters are grown in cold weather, slowly, increasing the level of glycogen [an oyster's natural reaction to the cold], making them particularly sweet."

Meanwhile, newcomer Adam Campbell thinks he's finally got his oyster business fine-tuned. In April or May he places seeds in the three upwellers and 108 silos that gently pump water through fine-mesh screens so the oysters can feed on algae. In July these oysters, now an inch and a half to two inches in size, are transferred to 3-foot-by-20-inch black mesh bags, held close to the water's surface by Styrofoam floats. Campbell diligently flips the mesh bags every day or so, so the sun's heat kills unwanted marine growth on his oysters. At the end of every summer, opening these bags, Campbell broadcasts them across the bottom of his salt pond. "Think of spreading grass seed," says Campbell. "You want to throw them up and out and evenly."

Two summers later Campbell retrieves his crop, often putting on scuba gear to reach those oysters resting at the very bottom of his pond. To sell in Massachusetts and New York, oysters must be three to three and a half inches wide. Anything short of that gets tossed back to fatten up for another year.

It's the rare connoisseur who genuinely finds fascinating the rugged work entailed in making a favorite delicacy look lovely on a plate. "I must constantly chip away at the outer edges of my oyster shells to improve their shape," explains Campbell, now truly an expert. "Chefs and oyster bars want deep cups and shells thick enough that they don't break on shucking."

Adam Campbell knew from the beginning that he needed to make a four- to five-year commitment before getting any real return on his investment. What he didn't know, however, was that oyster farming would become a personal passion—something he plans to keep doing long after he's weary of hauling heavy lobster traps to the sound of a loud diesel engine.

Adam with Abby and Amilia

"It's important to me that we hold on to our heritage and never sell our land," says Campbell. "Of my five children, I'm hoping that at least one will want to live on this property."

***Sally Noble's** previous story for* Island Journal *was "Flying on Goodwill" (2005).*

More photos online at www.islandinstitute.org

The boat that would become MANDALAY

OLD DUCKER

A boat can be a window to paradise

JIM ROCKEFELLER

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Our little family moved to Maine in 1958 and laid claim to an old farmhouse on a high hill with a line of sugar maples leading downward toward Penobscot Bay—that inland sea of myriad islands and lobster boats. For dwellers of coastal Maine, lobster boats are as synonymous with living here as woodpiles in the fall or blackflies come spring. Their jaunty shapes adorn postcards at our neighborhood pharmacy and the oil-skinned drivers of these symbols of independence, toil and grit are part and parcel of the local lore.

Once settled on our hill overlooking the bay, some months passed while tired sills were put to right and loose boards nailed secure again. But inevitably, thoughts wafted to the bay with increasing intensity. Thus the following spring when the freshets from the fast-disappearing snow rushed to meet the sea, I followed in their wake. There at water's edge where boats gathered, I poked, prodded and stabbed a treasure trove of keels and frames and planks from Friendship to Bar Harbor. Few things in life hold so much promise, so stir the male emotions, as keel thumping at blackfly time. It is a romance wild and compelling, undeniable as the hair salon, the shopping mall or a new pair of shoes for the far fairer sex.

The author prepares his decoys.

Shoving off

This romancing of the keel truly blossomed one breezy morn in Matinicus Harbor. A brisk southwest wind was artfully nudging winter to take early retirement, causing the white flaring bow of the object of my instantaneous affection to rise and fall with the moderate chop in a motion that bespoke seakindliness and strength. Her sheer line joined deck and house and transom into such singleness of purpose that this young lover pulled ever more lustily at the oars as we rowed toward her. Here was a boat Ulysses would have chosen for a quest.

I stood in her pilothouse caressing the well-worn wheel. Those drafty rooms on our distant hill, the bad plumbing, the leaking windowsills, the enduring loved ones, all vanished as I gripped the bronze spokes, rolling them from side to side as if cradling a child.

The present owner of this paragon was Clyde Young, six-foot-six and lean, whose family tree lay firmly rooted in this island with a picaresque past. "Where's the compass?" I inquired.

He pointed to a box nailed to the bulkhead. I opened up the lid. The compass was one of those old-fashioned box types, 10 inches across. Pushing down on one side of the bowl to see if the gimbals were free, I saw three small cylinders under the bowl. I well knew the shape. Gingerly plucking out one I proffered it to Clyde. He carefully rolled the dynamite cap in his fingers as if making a cigarette, then stuck it in his shirt pocket, reached down, and retrieved the other two.

"Been having a little trouble down here lately," he said laconically. "Boys will be boys."

I made small conversation, not wanting to seem overeager. "Don't dump on the first call," is the standard expression for a shrewd Maine Trader, a trait absent from my repertoire. Buy high and sell low seems to be my fate. In retrospect I must have resembled an innocent codfish eager to take the jigged bait. He followed my gaze to the windshield where the glass was slightly grazed with streaks. I raised

Decoy setting from a dory

my eyebrows, conveying I missed nothing. "Dogfish," he said with a slight movement of the lips. "Dogfish thick down here. When it's rough the bow flings them out of the water and they slap the windshield. Skin is like sandpaper."

I asked why he wanted to sell. A softening came to his face. "Time to move ashore," he said. "Do you want her or not?"

Thirty years have passed since the deal that day, struck over three dynamite caps, and Clyde telling what a good boat she had been to him and the previous owner, Harold Bunker, who had her built. Now it was my turn, and I lived with her over 25 years until the kids grew up and left home. She proved a thread of continuity through thick and thin that became more precious with each passing year. She was my window to an inland sea called Penobscot Bay, since my deepwater days had been traded for a wife and children and a windy hill. Sometimes when I meet a friend not often seen, he or she will ask, "Do you still have that old lobster boat? I still remember the day . . ."

The model for her hull was carved from a block of pine by Clyde's boatbuilding brother, Merrill. She was built at Camden Shipbuilding in 1948 by that master shipwright, Malcolm Brewer, who put together those exquisite coasting schooners designed by Murray Peterson. She was planked with fir left over from the minesweepers built there during the war, and her power was a Chrysler Crown of 100 horsepower, the standard engine of the day. Harold Bunker, her first owner, said she cost $6,200 new, most expensive lobster boat ever built in the state, and that they had lobster sandwiches and lots to drink at the launching. "She was a good boat," he repeated several times. "No, never put her aground, but did have one amusing experience. We called her ALBERT AND VANCE after my boys."

He went on to tell how one day he had been hauling down back of The Wooden Ball. His son Albert was coming up from Malcolm's Ledge in his own boat, throttle in the corner. Father Harold watched him closing fast astern, but thought nothing of it, conjecturing he intended to come alongside for a gam. Next thing he knew Albert drove the bow of his boat right through Harold's transom up into the cockpit.

"Damn fool of a boy was sitting on the washboard eating his lunch. Never even saw me. Kind of comical, it was," Harold chuckled. "Albert put his boat hard astern. Scared of what he'd done, I guess. Backed off and headed for home full throttle. I had to go full tilt, myself, to keep from sinking, headed after him. Funny thing was, he broke down halfway home and I had to tow him in. Cost me $80 for a new stern."

Gunning from the outer ledges in fair weather

Harold's wife added, "Poor Albert . . . He took an awful ribbing going off like that, scared as he was, leaving his father to sink. You know, when he got married, he and his wife came out to The Island in that boat with everything they owned in the world. Yes, she was a good old boat to all of us."

I drove the good old boat home to Camden, painted her transom red, and called her MANDALAY after an earlier love—that old Friendship Sloop taken on a junket to the South Seas some years before. Boats serve as flypaper for the mind—people, incidents, pieces of our life stick to them.

Take those trips to our little house on Vinalhaven—past The Fiddler, past the ledges to Dogfish, through the beautiful passage of Leadbetter's Narrows into Hurricane Sound. There have been so many of those little voyages over the years, in calms and gales and fogs and crystal days, that they are one big blur, along with the cargoes of children, cats, dogs, wives, the innumerable supplies from fertilizer and boards to the spare burnoose. Seasickness and in health—a marriage of voyages in 80-minute sequences.

Curious, the tiny incident that stands out from all those thousand trips. The day was a Sunday, very calm. A light nor'wester had been canceled out by the afternoon sea breeze until a seagull's wake was a major event. The dogs, the cats, the children, the wonderful wife, some friends, they all were there in the cockpit making each their own communication noises with the old Chrysler Crown barking up through the dry exhaust, with the Camden Hills dead ahead. On the stern, per custom, perched the 18-foot Chamberlain Gunning Dory, and in the middle seat a figure sat bolt upright facing aft toward our wake, detached as the one small white cloud marking Blue Hill. "Uncle Lew," one child addressed the solitary back of one of Maine's great writers of the outdoors. "What you doing back there?"

The tousled gray head turned slowly as if reluctant to miss a single nuance of the tumbling wake. Kind eyes thoughtfully regarded the intruder, then the mustache above the grizzled chin twitched ever so slightly.

"Ola, I'm getting ready for Monday." With that Uncle Lew turned astern again.

Gunning the outer ledges each fall into early January was another series of voyages that would require a sea chest of paper to document. Someone asked me once what made one get up before the dawn, with ice on the puddles outside and a keening wind, just to encase oneself in clothes of many layers, haul all that sundry gear aboard the "Old Ducker" in the dark before dawn, steam out to the offshore ledges for two hours, set out tollers in that frigid water, row one's ass off for four or five hours chasing crippled birds, slip on slippery rocks and weed, risk one's neck on a tidal ledge, and then repeat the process in reverse, all for a few fishy-tasting ducks.

"It extends the yachting season," I would say facetiously, to shunt away the conversation, for there are few souls with whom you feel comfortable sharing your personal religion. To me those days from dark to dark with the quiet harbor before the dawn, the sea and the wind and the frozen weed on the barnacled rocks, the unspeakable beauty of the eider duck, and the boat, were the essence of living on coastal Maine. The Old Ducker, linking them all together, was a church of my own choosing. The physical exertion, the sights and sounds and smells, the moments of terror, the reverence to the god of weather, the multifaceted path from safe harbor out and home again, were a spiritual experience akin to the aborigine walking his Dream Line in the Outback, or the Bushman trekking his beloved Kalahari.

My comrades on these adventures were many and varied. On this particular day there was Edward, proprietor of The Tug and Grunt Yard Boatyard, and Merv, a blacksmith from a town out back of the Camden Hills. Edward was a land surveyor of some repute. When asked by a North Haven lady of impeccable pedigree how she would recognize him when he stepped off the ferry to document her bounds, he replied without a falter, "Dear woman, naturally I shall wear my leotard and hold a lily in my mouth."

I picked up Merv before sparrow fart, as the expression goes. Merv had a face chipped from stone and his hands resembled monkey wrenches mated to a ball-peen hammer. Approaching Edward's, where the boat was moored, I remarked, "Last time here there were three geese feeding on the front lawn. Seemed a silly place to be what with Edward inside with his double barrel."

Merv fondled his 10-gauge blunderbuss and growled, "No understanding the reasoning of a goose."

We set off from Edward's mooring that December morn and had progressed only 500 yards down the Mussel Ridge Channel when off to port we noticed this thing swimming. From the distance it looked like a stubby tree with branches at one end. I put over the wheel, and on drawing closer saw it was a 10-point buck swimming for the shore a hundred yards away.

"Jesus Christ!" says Merv. "Going to be a corkin' day." He snatched at his waist and came up with a knife that would have frightened a Turk run amok. "Come up alongside," he barked. "I'll reach over and slit his throat. You grab the horns!"

"Merv!" says Edward. "I live here. Deer season's long past. You'll have every eye on this coast out on stalks, ringing up the warden."

An expletive cannonballed from Merv and he waved the knife about with a ferocity that would have slit a dozen throats, including ours. "Season be damned! Anything fool enough to swim out here this time of year better off having its throat cut."

We progressed on down the channel toward Two Bush Light in silence, mooring in that bight on the southern end of Monroe Island, and rowed around the point to set out the tollers. Merv shot the first bird with that monstrous 10-gauge that required blacksmith arms to lift. Only then did his equanimity return. Those were the halcyon days for a sea duck hunter. There were rafts of birds by the thousands so when the boat roused the eiders at one end, the other end of the black-and-white carpet was as yet undisturbed.

We shot the tide down, hardly noticing the breeze had gone from north to southwest as the day progressed. An hour and a half before dusk we picked up gear and birds and rowed back around the point. To our consternation the Old Ducker had swung around with the change of wind and fetched up on the one rock in that little bight. There was nothing to do but wait for the tide to come again and lift her off.

By now the boat was heeled over at an uncomfortable angle, so we took several birds ashore, the alcohol stove, and a bottle of Jack Daniel's, determined to make the best of an awkward situation. We offered Merv a drink with his fried duck breast to ward off the cold. He squinted at the label and shook his head. "That whiskey is much too expensive for me to drink."

Later, huddling in the dark in the little cabin as the tide slowly righted MANDALAY, we saw Merv reach for the Jack Daniel's. Edward caught him up sharp. "Merv, I thought that whiskey was too expensive for you."

"Ed," came back the immediate retort, "too dark to read the label."

Eventually we floated off and steamed for home about eleven that night. Halfway there we were intercepted by the Coast Guard cutter, sent out by the frantic wives. We had no radio aboard. Merv snarled, "Women! Just a mite late for supper and they ship out the National Guard. Thank God I'm single."

Like Harold Bunker and Clyde Young, I never really ran MANDALAY ashore, just grounded her out down there at Monroe Island. But my son did over on Vinalhaven one evening with a friend, running full tilt for town to snare a pizza. When pumped out the Old Ducker was towed around to the local boatyard at Carver's Harbor for repairs. I called up a week later to see how things were going.

"Drained the water out of the engine," Kevin said. "Seems to run OK. But had to take the stem out of her. It was cracked right down the middle. Your boy must have hit that ledge full clip. Must be hard on you. She's a good old boat."

"Was hard," I said. "Save that cracked stem for me. I'm going to hang it over my boy's bed as a reminder of what he did."

There was a pause at the other end of the phone. "Hang it over his bed! If it was my boy I'd shove it up his ass!"

The salt water didn't do the old engine much good. A year later she packed it in off the Fiddler with night coming on in a breeze of wind. Luckily, the North Haven ferry came along and gave us a tow. Then, decision time: Should I buy a new engine or rebuild the old one, now almost 40 years old? A new, more-powerful engine would cut down on the 80-minute commute. And after all, even iron gets tired after 40 years of service and a dunking. On the other hand, the years of pleasure coming and going were not to be overlooked. What difference would it make if we got to where we were going 10 or 15 minutes earlier? And as the good old boat had been a thread of continuity in my life, and had served me well, so had the old Chrysler Crown been a matron of good service. Thinking back through the countless voyages with family and friends was what tipped the scales. The boat, the engine and myself: We were no longer young. We had been through a lot and knew each other with an intimacy that would make any wife jealous. A new engine would speak with a different voice—an alien in our midst.

So it was the old Crown went to Banks Brothers in Belfast to be given an immortality of sorts. Once again she barked up through the dry exhaust with that same throaty roar as on that initial launching back in '48. Little else changed. We put in a radio in deference to the grandchildren, but I never used it. When we switched from 6 volts to 12, out went the old fathometer, never to be replaced. The windshield wiper, in turn, lost the battle of the voltage and was cast from view, never to be missed, until my in-laws presented me with another, which was installed so as not to hurt their feelings. A radar reflector added to the improvements, given by a kindly soul who worried about us crossing in pea-soup fogs with the increased traffic up and down the bay. Time and course, allowing for wind and tide, never failed to see us reach Hurricane Sound or Curtis Island at the entrance to Camden.

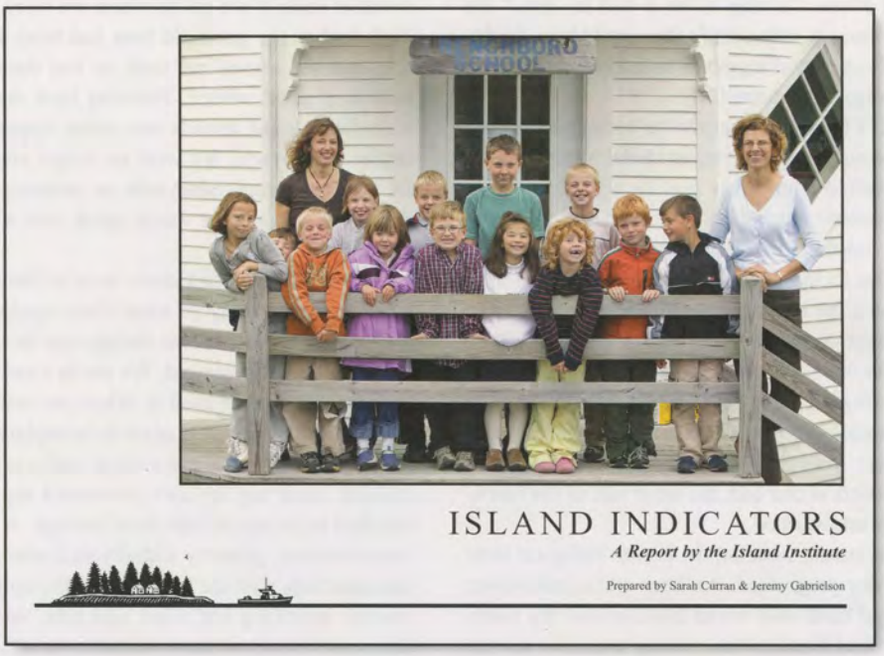
Now it is 2007, almost 50 years since I first saw her in Matinicus Harbor—almost 60 years since she was built. The Old Ducker is still very much alive, almost as good as new, sitting in a slip at the end of Tillson's wharf in Rockland. She belongs to the O'Hara family of Journey's End Marina, who so often shared passage with us when our kids were young on those countless trips to Vinalhaven. She has new frames, a diesel engine and modern navigation gear. But under the modern trappings she is still the same Good Old Boat, carrying yet another generation.

Coastal Maine with its enchanted islands, special people, protected waters and boats for pleasure or livelihood, forms a connection that becomes as much a part of us as the lifeblood that moves us along our daily path. Good Old Boats are an integral ingredient of this paradise.

Jim Rockefeller *'s previous articles in* Island Journal *include "A Writer of Songs and Nonsense" (1994) and "The Bear Who Came to Dinner" (2005).*

"RELEVANT, MEANINGFUL, RELIABLE, ACCESSIBLE"

Institute assembles a set of island indicators



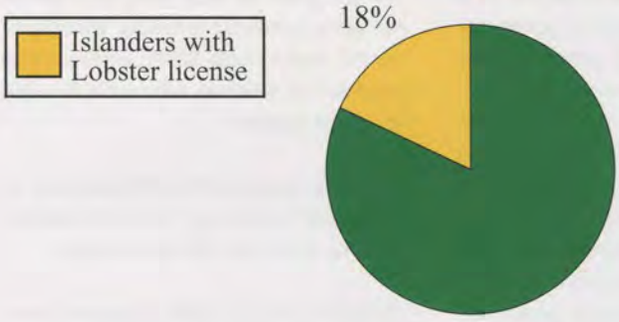
An indicator is a gauge that says something about a community's condition, much as a thermometer tells us the temperature outside. The indicators described in the *Island Indicators Report*, assembled in 2006 by the Island Institute for Maine's 15 year-round island communities, convey a glimpse of island realities; they provide a snapshot, if you will, of what the islands look like today. Over time the data will change; thus, the Island Indicators Report will serve as a baseline against which to measure future change.

Some of the information was remarkably difficult to come by. Often, data were not available for all year-round islands. State statistics, for example, are often collected at the municipal level, which excludes Cliff, Peaks, Great Diamond and Chebeague islands, as they are (or were formerly) part of larger mainland municipalities. Census data, while often the best demographic information available, have limitations as well, because findings are based on a sample. For small communities, this can result in distortions. In addition, census data were not available at all for Great Diamond Island, for example.

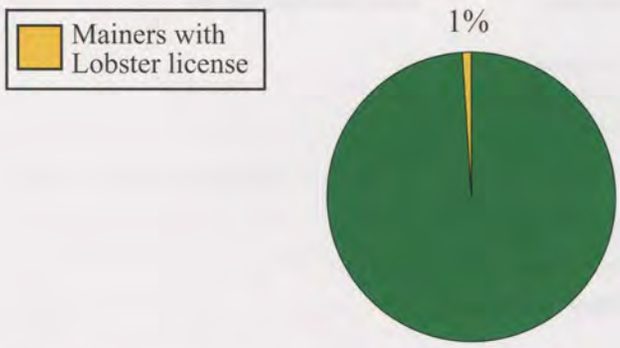
Despite these limitations, the available facts were assembled and sorted; what was most useful was selected using several criteria: it must be relevant, meaningful, reliable, and accessible. Several themes began to emerge and these key conclusions were formed:

- **Economics:** The heavy reliance of island economies on lobster fishing and tourism threatens their ability to weather downturns in either sector.
- **Income:** In contrast to popular perception, the median household income of most island communities falls below the state average.
- **Demographics:** While island populations are growing, the residents' median age is older than the state average, reflecting an influx of more retirees and fewer young people.
- **Education:** Island schools are highly valued and critically important to their communities' ability to attract and retain young families.
- **Affordability:** The rapid rise in residential property values and taxes is placing enormous pressure on year-round islanders to move off-island.

Percentage of Islanders with Lobster License



Percentage of Mainers with Lobster License



Source: U.S. Census 2000 and Maine Department of Marine Resources.

ISLAND FACTS

- Maine's year-round island communities have seen a slight net increase in population over the past 30 years.
- With more than 1,200 residents, Vinalhaven is the most populated of Maine's year-round island communities. The least populated is Frenchboro, with just 38 residents according to the most recent census.
- According to community estimates, all of the islands experience at least a doubling of population in the summer; most have three to five times as many people during the summer as they have in winter.
- More than 23 miles from its ferry port in Rockland, Matinicus is the least accessible island. It also has the least amount of ferry service, with just one ferry a month in the winter.
- The median age on each of Maine's year-round island communities is higher than that of the state.
- While Maine's overall level of postsecondary attainment (22.9 percent) is lower than the national average (24.4 percent), Maine's island communities (31.6 percent) exceed the national average by more than 7 percent.
- On average, more than half of the islands' annual taxable sales occur in the third quarter (between July and September).
- On both Matinicus and Frenchboro, more than half of the population holds a lobstering license.
- On Cliff, Matinicus, Islesboro, Great Cranberry and Islesford, lobster licenses accounted for more than 90 percent of all fishing licenses in at least one of the years between 2001 and 2005.
- An islander earning the median income cannot afford the median house on any of Maine's year-round islands.
- On a scale of 1 to 10, the insurance industry gives six of Maine's 15 year-round island communities a Fire Protection Code (PC) Rating of 10, the lowest rating possible, which directly increases premium costs and makes acquiring homeowner's insurance more difficult (if possible at all). Portions or all of six other islands are rated a 9.

ISLAND INSTITUTE

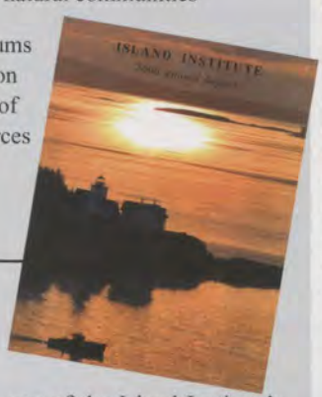
Sustaining the Islands and Working Waterfront Communities of the Gulf of Maine

OUR MISSION

The Island Institute is a nonprofit organization that serves as a voice for the balanced future of the islands and waters of the Gulf of Maine.

We are guided by an island ethic that recognizes the strength and fragility of Maine's island communities and the finite nature of the Gulf of Maine ecosystems. Along the Maine coast the Island Institute seeks to:

- Support the islands' year-round communities
- Conserve Maine's island and marine biodiversity
- Develop model solutions for the coast's cultural and natural communities
- Provide forums for discussion of wise use of finite resources



JOIN US!

Each and every one of the Island Institute's nearly 5,000 members helps us make a difference in Maine's island communities, and we are deeply grateful for their support. To join the Institute, visit our Web site at www.IslandInstitute.org, or call the Membership Department, toll-free, at (800) 339-9209, ext. 113.

We also rely on generous members who regularly make an additional gift to support our work. To learn how you can support the Island Institute through unrestricted gifts, donations of stock or other appreciated assets, or planned giving options, please contact the Development office, toll-free, at (800) 339-9209, ext. 139

www.islandinstitute.org

***Carly Knight** (above), Chebeague Island Historical Society Fellow 2005–2007, helped with a major exhibit about the island's Hamilton clan and became an EMT to help with emergency response. **Sarah Curran** (below), Peaks Island Fellow 2005–2007, worked with the Peaks Island Land Preserve, developed a stewardship program with the Peaks Island School and co-authored the Island Institute's Island Indicators study.*

For nearly 24 years, the Island Institute has engaged in a wide range of programs that touch island citizens and community institutions up and down the coast of Maine. In close collaboration with islanders, the Institute works to strengthen schools and other community institutions, undertake research and stewardship projects to understand and conserve marine resources, and convene diverse island and coastal communities around common issues. Among our recent notable efforts are:

- Creating the first comprehensive map of working waterfronts along the entire Maine coast using GIS technology.
- Supporting more than 70 island artists through our store, Archipelago, and gallery, Archipelago Fine Arts.
- Launching a new $235,000/year Affordable Coast™ Fund. The fund will provide grants to help island and coastal residents purchase working waterfront access, and to help island communities purchase or maintain affordable housing for island families.
- Providing more than $60,000 each year in higher and continuing education scholarships for year-round island residents.
- Publishing one of Maine's largest newspapers. The Working Waterfront focuses exclusively on island and coastal issues, and is published 11 times a year.

For more information, visit us online at www.IslandInstitute.org

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Include the Island Institute in your will or trust. Your gift will support community development, Island Fellows, scholarships, marine conservation, public advocacy, research, education, publications and many other Island Institute programs—assuring the continued vitality of Maine's year-round island and working waterfront communities.

To learn more about the benefits of planned giving, please contact Phil Walz at the membership and development office by calling 1-800-339-9209.

Boat Donation Program

TRITONA III *was a 2006 gift to the Institute's Boat Donation Program.*

The Island Institute seeks donated vessels that can be converted into funds supporting our work. With years of successful experience, our program provides:

- The satisfaction of knowing that your gift will go directly towards sustaining Maine's island and coastal communities;
- Immediate and complete elimination of the many stresses and expenses of ownership;
- Elimination of the difficulties of dealing with potential buyers;
- A favorable impact on your tax return.

For more information on how you can support the Island Institute's mission by donating a vessel, please contact:

Andy Horner, CPYB
Maine Islands Yacht Sales
P.O. Box 71
Northeast Harbor, Maine 04662
(207) 266-5439
a.horner@earthlink.net

Please Note: *At this time the Island Institute is generally not considering boat donations with appraised values of less than $40,000.*

Peter Ralston

ISLAND INSTITUTE

Sustaining the Islands and Working Waterfront Communities of the Gulf of Maine

We deeply appreciate the faith and encouragement of all our members including the following businesses:

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Archipelago Fine Arts

The Island Institute is proud to announce Archipelago Fine Arts, a new gallery devoted to painting, sculpture, photography and other fine art created by Maine's island and coastal artists. Located at 386 Main Street in Rockland, the gallery embodies the Institute's mission, showcasing the work of artists who live in Maine's year-round island and coastal communities, and who draw their artistic inspiration from Maine's coast.

www.thearchipelago.net

Walnut bench with mortice and tenon | Christine Dentremont | Swans Island

Carved wood puffins | John Kordak | Monhegan Island

Archipelago

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Peter Ralston

QUESTIONS FOR THE SOLITARY

Islands feed an appetite for the absolute. They are removed from the human world, from its business and noise. Whatever the reality, a kind of silence seems to hang about them. It is not silence, because the sea beats on the shores and the birds scream and flutter above you. But it is a virtual silence, an absence of communication which reduces the islander to a naked condition in front of the universe. He is not padded by the conversation of others. Do you want the padding or do you feel shut in and de-natured by it? Do you love the nakedness, or do you shiver in the wind? Do you feel deprived by your island condition or somehow enabled and enriched by it?

Those are the questions for the solitary, now or at any time. Nothing is as envelopingly total as aloneness in a place like this but the silence, paradoxically enough, is far from empty.

Adam Nicolson

From Sea Room: An Island Life in the Hebrides, *by Adam Nicolson*
(North Point Press, 2001) Reprinted with permission

ISBN 978-0-942719-38-3
51895
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