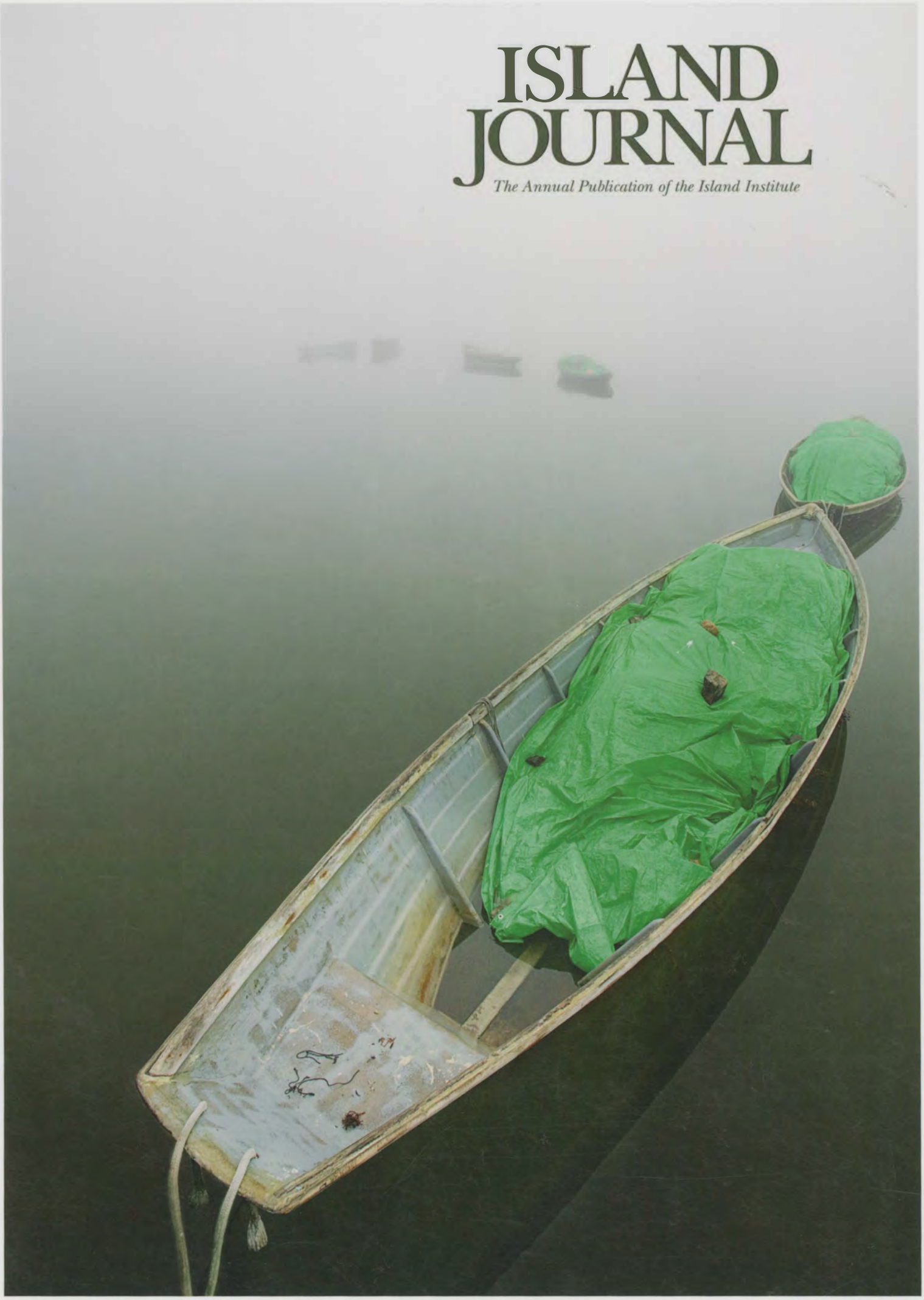
ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute



Jay Panetta

ISLAND INSTITUTE

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

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Peter Ralston

TO OUR READERS

TRENDS, TRADITIONS AND CONNECTIONS

Some people think Maine islands are museums inhabited by people living in old-fashioned ways, isolated survivors from a simpler time. This picture is outdated and inaccurate, of course: there's not an island in the Maine archipelago that's not affected every day by global forces. Energy is a good example: hundred-dollar crude oil means ruinously expensive diesel fuel, propane, heating oil and gasoline, and these costs flow through every aspect of island life as surely as they do on the mainland. High oil prices also drive up the price of electricity, forcing islanders to conserve and seek alternate means of generating it. Developments in transportation and communications, likewise, have brought about profound changes in island communities over the years, and will continue to do so.

As an annual publication, *Island Journal* provides an opportunity to examine some of the trends affecting islands and islanders, and this year we consider several: the growing interest in renewable forms of energy that might replace expensive imported electricity; the ability of the Internet, television, overnight shipping and other "new" things to transform parts of the seafood market; how fishermen and others engaged in traditional, resource-based industries are reaching new customers by telling their stories in different ways. Sadly, the trends aren't always positive: environmental changes seem to have brought about the disappearance of an entire species of migratory bird that once flocked in the millions to the Bay of Fundy. But hardship often spawns creativity, and on islands that might be best understood through an old story — the custom of moving and recycling buildings — that has grown out of economic necessity. This issue of *Island Journal*, our 24th since we began publishing in 1984, probes each of these trends in different ways.

Islands are never immune from what's taking place elsewhere in the world. And if the travels of the citizens of Chebeague, Maine's newest town, are any indication, some islanders can always be counted on to experience the larger world for themselves. What the travelers bring back, just like all those other outside forces and trends, can only enrich the lives of those who stayed home — in communities that aren't as isolated as they might seem.

— *The Editors*

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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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WEB GALLERY

As in past years, we have more wonderful images than space for them in a magazine's finite number of pages. Therefore we have posted them online at www.islandinstitute.org, in a gallery intended to enhance your appreciation of the stories we print here. At the end of stories for which there are additional images you'll find a reminder to look online for more.

FOND FAREWELL

After 18 years as the editor and guiding hand of the *Island Journal, The Working Waterfront*, and countless other Island Institute publications, David Platt is retiring at the end of June. He won't be beyond reach, though, and will report on his travels along the working waterfronts of the Atlantic coast and the Caribbean from the decks of KARMA. We wish him fair winds, following seas, and the good karma he deserves.

Cover: "Shroud," by Peter Ralston

DEDICATION

Courtesy of the McLane family

CHARLES BANCROFT McLANE, 1919–2008

Athlete, author, novelist, professor, researcher, sailor, philanthropist, soldier, perhaps even a spy — in 89 years, Charles McLane did it all. In Maine, he will be long remembered for his four-volume history of the islands between Boothbay and the Canadian border that he carefully researched and wrote with his wife and life partner, Carol Evarts McLane. But like the islands whose hidden histories he and Carol investigated and then revealed, his own life was a wonderful series of stories, the telling of which can make the central character — Charles McLane himself — seem larger than the amazing life he led.

In 1978, when he began researching island history, McLane had retired as a professor of government at Dartmouth College, specializing in Soviet affairs. Earlier, he had served as a cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow during which time, he'd say with a twinkle in his eye, that his job was to buy Russian books and send them back to Washington. Asked if he'd made many Russian friends at the time, he'd respond, "Oh yes — they were all KGB." Still, he remained discreet to the end: if he'd returned his KGB friends' favor as an American intelligence officer, he didn't say so explicitly.

The stories about Charles McLane could fill a book of their own. There's the one about him, as the captain of the Dartmouth ski team, volunteering in 1941 to serve in what would become the elite 10th Mountain Division, the ski-borne outfit that would distinguish itself in the Italian campaign in World War II. As Peter Shelton writes in his book about the 10th Mountain Division, McLane reported "in his green Dartmouth sweater with a white D on it. He told the duty officer that he was there to report for the ski troops. The duty officer replied, 'Corporal, as far as I can figure out, you *are* the ski troops.' "

Thirty-five years later, when Philip Conkling first met McLane as the two were researching Maine islands, they shared notes about their respective explorations — McLane amassing historical information, Conkling collecting baseline ecological data. "I benefited tremendously from his detailed research and observations, as I hope he did from mine," Conkling recalls. "He taught me how important an island's history is to understanding the assemblage of plants and animals that influence each island's distinctive ecology, a key principle behind the formation of the Island Institute."

After Carol McLane died in 1996, Charles created the Carol Evarts McLane Fund for Maine Island Education in her honor to help island students pursue their interests in either technical fields — a captain's or plumber's license that would help them support themselves on-island — or college scholarships for those who wanted to attain other education goals. Last year, at the Institute's suggestion, Charles agreed to add his name to the Carol Evarts and Charles B. McLane Fund for Maine Island Education. That fund, held at the Island Institute, has provided dozens of island students with boosts in their careers.

Four years ago, Charles revealed yet another life skill, that of a novelist. In 2004, the Island Institute published his novel, *Red Right Returning*, set on a pair of fictional islands facing each other across a narrow body of water during a lobster war. One likes to think that art reprises history in this gripping story — that the vivid characters in his last published work are in fact the imaginative distillations and recreations of a lifetime of skillful work, extending back to the ski slopes of New Hampshire, to war-torn Italy, to the Kremlin and Red Square during the Cold War, to decades of teaching at Dartmouth, and finally, to years as the Maine islands' preeminent historian. If anyone could tell the story behind the history, it was Charles McLane.

Peter Ralston

HOW DID WE GET HERE FROM ISLAND SHEEP?

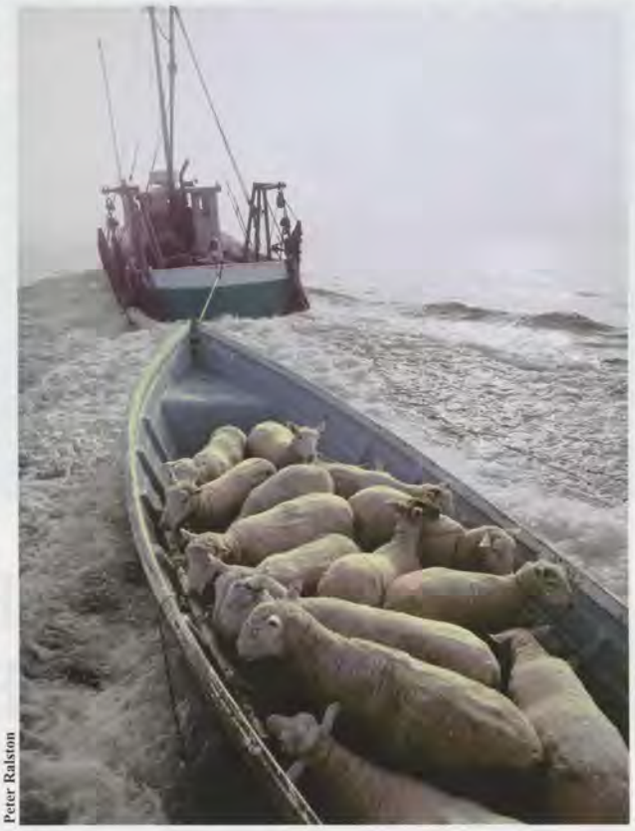
PHILIP CONKLING

Many people still remember Peter Ralston's iconic photograph of the sheep in the dory towed behind a small fishing vessel with a young girl watching from the stern as a gauzy fog blurs the line between air and light — wool and water. We used the image on the cover of the first *Island Journal*.

Twenty-four years later, we are still at it — helping to make the case that Maine's iconic island and working waterfront communities will disappear (literally, not metaphorically) without sustained, focused and collaborative efforts on the part of fishermen and summer people; conservationists and businessmen; local residents and state leaders, all working together to counter the forces that have all but eliminated traditional island culture along most of the American coastline.

Twenty-five years ago, we did not see ourselves as starry-eyed idealists trying to reverse history or economics, nor do we today. We have always thought of ourselves as squinty-eyed pragmatists. We do not choose to tilt at windmills; but we have chosen to help site wind turbines.

Twenty-five years ago, we recognized that distinct histories and geographies had set different island communities on different courses. An island with a history of farming is and will be different than one with a history of fishing. An island closer to offshore fishing grounds will have a different economy and outlook than another with deeper soils and milder temperatures closer to shore with better access to the mainland. Inherent differences have set each island on a different historical trajectory. As we stated in the 1981 edition of *Islands in Time*, "the uses of the past are indexed in the landscape." And, I might add, in the local culture and economy.



Peter Ralston

Twenty-five years ago, our approach to community and environmental issues was ecological. It remains so today: we recognize that all resources are intimately linked in intricate webs, and islanders cannot avoid their environmental interdependencies. To give but one example, life in Maine's 15 year-round island communities depends on 15 sole-source aquifers, which in turn provide precious but inherently limited supplies of fresh water. If not carefully managed, what happens in one part of the aquifer can have far-reaching effects across an entire island. As one islander put it once, "We are all conservationists; we just don't make a big deal about it."

Twenty-five years ago we believed, as we do today, that a rising tide can float all boats along Maine's busy and intricate working coastline, but when the tide starts to ebb, we must all shift to deeper water or work in our waders. We are, in other words, forever finding our way through the shoals in changing wind and weather and tidal conditions.

Twenty-five years ago, we set out to create a broader public space — this journal, then a community newspaper, then *The Working Waterfront*, along with dozens of scholarly and popular books and most recently an interactive website (www.islandinstitute.org) — each empowering a multitude of voices and visions to celebrate a shared island culture that we must not let slip away. Shared information is inherently powerful and the dream of high-speed connectivity that reduces the disadvantages of geographic isolation is beginning to transform island communities, not just in Maine, but across all oceans.

Twenty-five years ago, we began our first program to focus on island schools — eight of them one-room schools — which were, then as now, the centers of island community life. In them, the pressures of the present and the hopes of the future come together daily in real life and real lives. We helped to kindle interest in inter-island school events; we sponsored conferences that the most dedicated teachers and school board members began to attend. Almost ten years ago, we began assisting island schools by placing island fellows in classrooms to teach subjects in computer skills, the arts and physical education that overworked island teachers with limited budgets and high per-pupil costs didn't have time or funds to offer.

Twenty-five years ago, the state of island education was precarious. Frenchboro's one-room school was down to a single student when islanders seized on a bold strategy to build new houses and attract settlers to re-populate its school — and after heartbreaking setbacks but with dogged perseverance, the strategy worked. More recently Matinicus kept its school open even though there were no children enrolled until a new generation of young people could fill the gap. Two years ago, when its regional school board threatened to close down the island elementary school, Chebeague voted to become an independent town.

Islanders have continued to invest heavily in their schools. Several years ago, Vinalhaven completed a new K–12 school, with a performing arts center and a fabulous library. Significantly financed with private funds, the new school is now at the heart of the island community. North Haven broke ground last May on another new K–12 school in a community that has long been at the center of innovation in place-based education. On Islesboro, mainland students commute back and forth across West Penobscot Bay seeking to benefit from the island school's small class sizes, excellent teachers and demanding curriculum. And all island schools have produced graduates better prepared for the world that awaits them — on-island or off — due to an increasing recognition of their island-centered strengths.

In 1990, the Island Institute started a small college scholarship fund and awarded $2,000 to a half-dozen island students pursuing advanced training and degrees. Last year, we awarded $67,000 to 57 island students to help them reach their educational goals. Recognizing that in the past, the transition to a college environment was too often so difficult and painful that many island students didn't last past their first semester, we have launched a pilot mentoring program at the University of Maine. The program helps island students connect with their peers and contend with the pressure cooker of college life. Today island communities have a higher percentage of college graduates than the state or nationwide average.

Three years ago, the National Science Foundation recognized the quality of island education by awarding participating schools one of its most highly competitive grants to encourage middle and high school students to pursue information technology (IT) careers. The CREST (Community for Rural Education, Stewardship and Technology) program under the Institute's leadership uses the islands' strong tradition of place-based education as a launching pad for teaching computer

mapping (GIS), digital storytelling (iMovies) and website development skills that some of these talented students may one day bring back to their communities as IT professionals.

Fifteen years ago, we launched a newspaper, *Working Waterfront*, based on the belief that Maine's working waterfronts (on the mainland as well as islands) share a common interest in access to the coast and its resources. These waters of the Gulf of Maine are our highways, our food lockers, our means of keeping body and soul nourished. Today we distribute over 40,000 copies of the paper monthly and have launched *Working Waterfront* Online that serves an increasing number of other readers with fresh content and stories not in the newsprint edition.

Peter Ralston

In 2005, islanders made common cause with working waterfront advocates on the mainland and helped give shape to a vigorous new political action organization, the Working Waterfront Coalition. The coalition convinced voters to change the Maine constitution in order to lower the tax burden for working fishermen on rapidly gentrifying waterfronts. Seventy-two percent of the electorate thought that would be good public policy — even voters from Aroostook County could grasp the significance of the for-sale signs at the heads of wharves and old rights-of-way. That same coalition of islanders and working waterfront advocates passed a $2 million bond issue, just renewed with another $3 million last November to permanently protect access for commercial fishing, in part a result of an Institute publication, *The Last 20 Miles*. Based on information collected from 142 coastal and island towns, the publication documented 869 parcels of land that collectively comprise the last 20 miles of working waterfront access along the Maine coast and islands. Only 81 of these parcels have all-tide, deepwater frontage, offer fuel and parking space — characteristics that define the most valuable parcels on the coast. Sixty-nine of these parcels are privately owned, rendering them most vulnerable to conversion for seasonal and/or recreational purposes when a fishing family goes through a generational change or otherwise falls on hard times. Islanders have learned that friends on the mainland are an asset, especially in the legislature where counting votes when an ox is about to be gored is what counts.

During the past 25 years, the Island Institute has grown into a stable and responsible partner by listening carefully to the deep knowledge that lies within each of Maine's 15 year-round island communities. We have helped islanders make common cause with their neighbors on the mainland, many of whom reside in small communities at the tips of long peninsulas. We have helped islanders and working waterfront businesses connect with the larger worlds where political processes that affect our lives grind away. We have grown as a result of a shared passion for the simple, straightforward values that islanders and summer people, fishermen and conservationists, artists and businessmen experience in small and remote places. And with the leadership of a deeply committed board of trustees, we have built a sizeable endowment that speaks volumes about the permanence of our passion.

Success may beget success, but there are limits to everything. With the completion of the Institute's $20 million capital campaign, we initiated a new strategic planning initiative to sharpen our priorities. The initiative began with a dozen listening meetings with islanders who spoke of their community priorities. First, it was decided, we will focus on the most fragile island economies where an aging population and declining school enrollment have presented them with stark choices about their future. Second (and related to the first), we will focus on building an affordable housing coalition, similar to the Working Waterfront Coalition, in an attempt to convince legislators to support a major affordable housing initiative to mitigate the effects of a resort-like economy that threatens to push native Mainers out of many mountain, lake, coastal and island communities. We will also focus on helping island communities that want to develop alternative sources of energy, especially where escalating fossil-fuel based electric power undermines traditional community life. And finally, we will focus on how global climate changes may play out along the Maine coast and in the waters of the Gulf of Maine, harnessing science to the local knowledge in the lobster industry to identify trends that may help lobstermen adapt to changing conditions.

These are all pieces of the story of how we got here from island sheep and where we are headed in the future.

To which, there is a round-the-circle postscript. This past winter, several Island Institute staff were at a dinner meeting at Farmer's Restaurant in Tenants Harbor with a group of Port Clyde fishermen who have banded together as the Midcoast Fishermen's Association. We have been working with MFA to set up and help staff a new marketing co-op to sell cod, haddock and flounder they propose to catch in a more environmentally responsible manner by reducing the size of their bottom gear and restricting their fishing in environmentally sensitive habitats. The MFA is the first group of Maine fishermen to invest in a radical new strategy of catching fewer fish in hopes of earning more per pound. It was a good meeting and a good dinner. When we went to pay the bill with an Island Institute credit card, our waitress, a 30-something, blond-haired, slightly harried mother working at her family's restaurant with a young son tugging at her side, studied the card and said, "I was the girl on the back of the boat on the cover of your first *Island Journal*."

Philip Conkling is president of the Island Institute.

CATCHING THE ISLAND WIND

Turning breezes into megawatts looks simpler than it is

PHILIP CONKLING

Islands are pieces of land completely surrounded by water and wind; oceans are especially windy places dotted here and there with islands. Like a pair of self-reinforcing images, islanders and wind power enthusiasts look at one another as if in a mirror and wonder if the reflection offers a path into the future.

Among the Maine islands, the group that has spent the most time considering the question of harnessing local wind power is the Fox Islands Electric Co-op, which serves customers on Vinalhaven and North Haven. Close behind is the Swan's Island Electric Co-op, which serves customers on Swan's and Frenchboro. The reasons for these groups' investigations are simple: Electric power rates, already more than double the rates on the mainland, are likely to increase for these communities as oil and natural gas prices, on which their power depends, continue their seemingly inexorable upward trajectory.

Based on detailed wind speed studies conducted on their respective islands, the managements of both co-ops have concluded their islands do have a robust wind power resource. Now they must decide whether the environmental costs will outweigh the economic benefits, and whether either island co-op has access to the financial, technical and political capital that will be required to develop their wind resources.

SAMSÖ

On the other side of the North Atlantic, Samsö Island, 12 miles off the coast of Denmark, presents one picture of what Maine island communities could conceivably resemble — if Maine islanders chose to adopt a local variant of the independent wind power development path Samsö islanders have pursued for the last decade.

Denmark is, of course, not Maine. It is a collection of 407 islands and one peninsula that thrust their Scandinavian jawlines northward into the Baltic. Twenty percent of Denmark's power is derived from winds blowing off the Baltic, and Danish manufacturing companies now control 40 percent of the world market for wind generating equipment.

Ten years ago, in 1998, Samsö islanders responded to a national competition organized by the Danish government to spur alternative energy development in the country. The island won the competition with a visionary plan to become 100 percent energy independent within a decade by siting wind turbines in farmers' fields, while developing biofuels from wood chips and farm wastes to power their tractors, boats and ferries.

One of the leaders of this effort was a young, tenth-generation islander, Soren Hermansen, who had become part owner of a 55-kilowatt wind machine as a student and then gone off-island to get a degree in environmental studies at the University of Arhus. In 1987 Hermansen returned to Samsö, and a little over a decade later became the island wind project's first employee.

Soren Hermansen

According to Hermansen, the impetus for energy independence on Samsö was that islanders viewed their energy costs as a threat to the community's survival. The island economy, based on a mixture of fishing, farming and tourism, was reeling from rising oil prices — which are, of course, much higher in Europe than in the United States. Jobs were becoming scarce and islanders were moving away. Hermansen said the islanders were concerned the community would "turn more and more into being a leisure island, nature protected and conserved as a refuge for retired people and tourists in the summer season."

"People were skeptical in the beginning. But they saw we were involving them closely in the project and that they can save a lot of money by preserving the island's environment."

In 1999, Samsö islanders had pooled enough resources to purchase 11 one-megawatt wind turbines and erected them primarily on agricultural land around the island to serve the needs of the 4,300 island residents. "The purchase of the wind turbines was organized by my organization [the Energy Academy] and sold to different kinds of ownership structures," Hermansen said, "some to individual farmers who saw the potential and had the resources and the land to install them. Some were cooperatives with 450 shareholders, and finally, there is a board/steering committee and a secretariat to maintain accountancy and daily operations."

Four years later, with the project gaining momentum after its bold start and successful track record, the islanders added ten 2.3-megawatt turbines in the shallow waters off the island. They became net exporters of power.

Hermansen admitted, "People were skeptical in the beginning. But they saw we were involving them closely in the project and that they can save a lot of money by preserving the island's environment. So it was a win-win situation." He also admits that his intimate knowledge of the community helped. "It has an impact that I am local" since, he said, he can "translate the scientific language to the native tongue — like [answering] 'What is in it for me?' So a mix of native experience and imported expertise is very powerful." Hermansen, the islander, is quick to add, "What is unique is not the installation of the turbines. It is the fact that it is not a large multinational corporation behind the project, but a community of ordinary involved citizens."

VINALHAVEN

Vinalhaven residents may not be aware of Samsö's story, but many members of Maine's largest island community also see the potential of wind power development and have decided to take action. The island's interest in alternative energy development took a big detour when the electric co-op faced up to the deteriorating state of the submarine cable that delivered power from the mainland. The cable required replacement at a cost of $6.5 million.

When the community decided to rebuild its K–12 school five years ago, the school board investigated powering the new buildings with wind turbines. To their dismay, school leaders recognized that if they were able to defray any of their $65,000 in annual power costs, the remaining customers would simply be left with paying much higher rates.

This situation, where conservation incentives are inverted, results from the fact that the Fox Islands, like Swan's and Frenchboro, receive their power through underwater cables that are owned locally and not by Central Maine Power or Bangor Hydro. Every ratepayer's bill is thus a combination of the costs of purchasing power from a mainland supplier — at an initially expensive 10 to 12 cents per kilowatt-hour — to which is added a similar or higher amount to finance the cost of transmission and distribution, due primarily to the high fixed costs of financing their underwater cables.

Other isolated Maine communities and most other islands do not have to finance the costs of building transmission lines to the edges of their communities, nor from individual home to home — but in places not served by mainland power suppliers, that has been one of the economic challenges of island living. Islanders in communities connected by their own cables to the mainland have a choice of developing community-wide solutions or investing in individual "beggar thy neighbor" alternative energy solutions.

State Rep. Hannah Pingree, a Democrat whose constituents include islanders in all four of these island communities, recognized the similarities of their situations. Pingree had already sponsored successful legislation allowing the Fox Islands Electric Co-op, as one of approximately ten consumer-owned utilities in the state, to both distribute and generate electricity and to sell excess power into the grid. Nevertheless, Pingree and the members of both co-ops' boards were well aware of the uncertain reg-

Courtesy of Soren Hermansen

In 1999, Samsö islanders pooled their resources and purchased 11 turbines, which were erected primarily on agricultural land around the island.

ulatory environment in Maine and the conflicting interests that emerged during hearings over a wind power development proposal for scenic ridgelines in western Maine. She suggested the island electric co-ops might benefit from sharing their information and urged the Island Institute to facilitate that dialogue.

Three years ago, Dave Folz, manager of the Fox Islands Electric Co-op at the time, received permission to erect a tower on an uninhabited ridgeline on the western side of Vinalhaven above an abandoned quarry to collect wind speed data. The Co-op worked closely with a wind power engineer, Sally Wright, at the Rural Electric Research Laboratory at the University of Massachusetts, to monitor and interpret the data.

When the preliminary anemometer information looked promising, the local planning commission, led by Gigi Bass, decided Vinalhaven needed a wind power development ordinance to guide future wind development. After many public hearings, the commission came up with a 20-page ordinance that seeks "to promote the safe, effective and efficient use of wind power systems to reduce the energy produced from fossil fuels such as coal and oil." Among many other limitations, the ordinance restricts development to a maximum of five 300-foot towers and requires proponents to conduct noise, bird impact and other environmental studies. Vinalhaven's wind power ordinance passed overwhelmingly at town meeting in March 2007.

While the electric co-op's meteorological study was under way at the Swenson Quarry site and producing promising data, another pair of Vinalhaven islanders, surveyor Del Webster and retired businessman Bill Alcorn (who lives year-round on the island) negotiated an agreement to buy the 71-acre quarry property in order to make it available as a site for future wind power development. Alcorn said he was motivated by the concern that "the cost of power is the last nail in the coffin for the islands. Water, sewer, taxes have all increased and now the extraordinary energy costs are ultimately driving people off the island. Our motivation was to get power costs to islanders down."

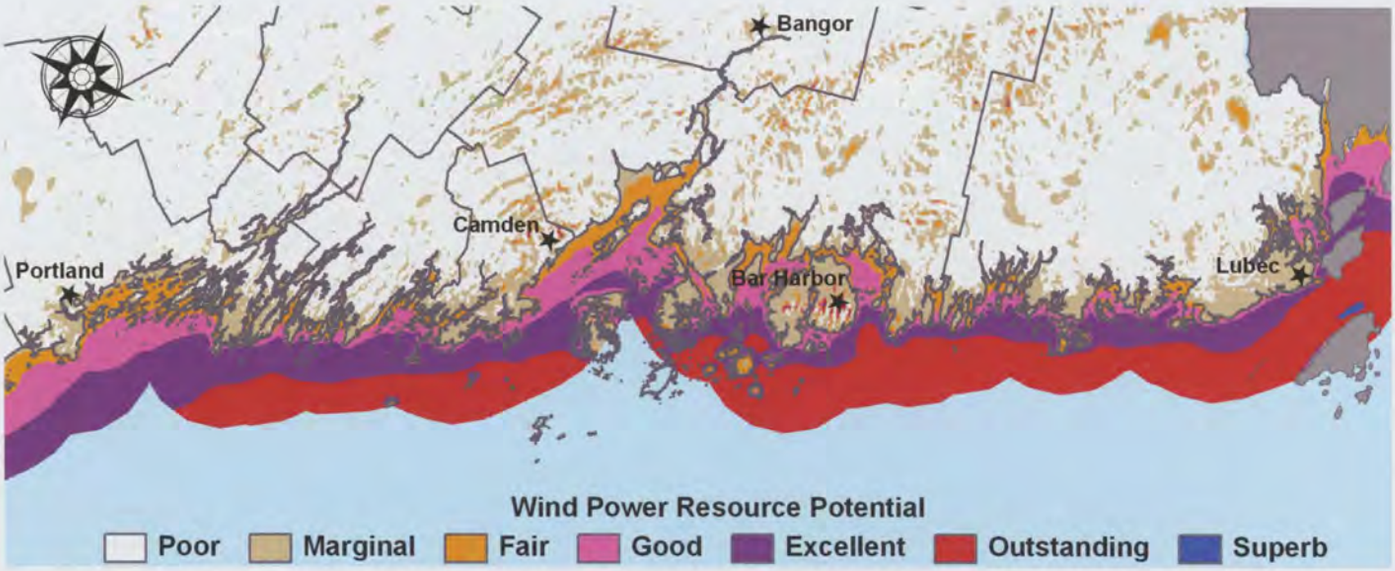
Alcorn's back-of-the-envelope calculations are that the Fox Islands buy on the order of $1.2 million dollars' worth of power from the mainland each year — almost enough to finance the cost of installing a 1.5-megawatt wind turbine.

Addison Ames, who sits on both the boards of the Fox Islands Electric Co-op and the Vinalhaven Land Trust, is something of a one-man public relations volunteer, gathering and gauging local political opinion on the subject of wind power. "Vinalhaven is at a crossroads," Ames said. "If the studies show that wind turbines do more harm than good, then we will not do it. But if the studies show the opposite, why not go forward? I pray [that] 'not in my backyard' and sight pollution will not rule at the end of the day. If nothing is done about the cost of power, Vinalhaven will become a very different community. This is not a judgment, just simple reality."

After word of the Fox Islands Electric Co-op's preliminary wind resource data began circulating through wind power development circles, the co-op received inquiries from potential developers. One of the key questions facing islanders is whether it makes more sense to let an "outside" developer take all the risks — and receive the potential rewards — for getting a project licensed and operating. Further, should the co-ops and their island constituents take the risks them-

Peter Ralston

Fox Islands Electric Co-op board members, at the site of the co-op's proposed wind power development.



The wind resource in Maine varies seasonally and is affected by factors such as elevation, vegetative cover and nearness to the shoreline. This map depicts the mean annual wind speed over Maine's coastal region at a height of 50 meters above effective ground level, where the intersection of ocean and upland conditions creates, on average, greater velocity than is the case in much of inland Maine.

Cartography: Shey Conover, Island Institute. Data Sources: TrueWind Solutions, LLC as part of a project jointly funded by the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund; the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative; Northeast Utilities System.

selves, in order to control the outcome? These are not decisions for the faint-hearted; either course presents both obvious and unknown perils.

Another strategy favored by some, including Bill Alcorn, is for a legislative fix whereby the state would require Central Maine Power (CMP) to absorb the Fox Islands into its grid and Bangor Hydro to do likewise in the case of Swan's Island. Hannah Pingree, among others, is skeptical about the legislature's appetite to support such a mandate, which would raise rates for all other ratepayers, not to mention the likely reactions of Maine's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Public Advocate. Pingree points out that northern Maine, served by a separate utility, also has high rates, and the PUC could argue that a Fox Islands buyout could set a precedent for requiring CMP (now owned by a Spanish conglomerate) to build a distribution line into northern Maine to lower rates there.

George Baker

Generating excess power in the winter and selling it to mainland suppliers could offset power purchases in summer.

SWAN'S ISLAND

Into the midst of this heady discussion of wind power's potential for Maine islands comes George Baker. Baker lives part-time on Frenchboro and is on the board of the Swan's Island Electric Co-op, but he is also a Harvard Business School professor who providentially has been on sabbatical during the 2007–08 academic year. Baker decided to use his time to build a financial model to analyze whether it is economically feasible for either island electric co-op to develop its existing wind power resource, based on a careful comparison of wind speed and power demand data. Baker's preliminary findings were arresting.

Baker first noted that for most turbine designs, wind generation rates vary with the cube of wind speed. Thus, relatively small differences in average wind speed result in very significant differences in the amount of power that turbines generate. Because Swan's Island is even further out to sea than Vinalhaven, Swan's appeared to have a more robust wind resource than Vinalhaven, while Vinalhaven, on the other hand, has a longer site-specific data set. Baker concluded that it made sense for the co-ops to work together and agreed to provide a rigorous economic analysis.

Baker plotted the electric power demand for the islands' electric co-ops to show a pattern of two periods of peak demand — one during the winter when darkness comes early, stays late and temperatures are coldest. The other peak is during the summer when there are a lot more ratepayers on the islands. But winter is also the period of the highest sustained winds for the islands, as anyone who rides their ferries knows. Of course the wind does not blow all the time — nor every hour or minute, even on a generally windy day. The islands will still need their cables. Baker suggested the co-ops might scale any potential wind power development to generate excess power in the winter to offset power purchases in the summer. If the electric power authorities on the mainland would agree to let the electric meter on the mainland "run backwards" when the wind was blowing, Baker's analysis showed, the effect on the power bills of year-round islanders could be significant in the long run.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

If one concedes that there is a developable wind resource on these islands, the very next questions likely to be asked are environmental. What are the effects of turbines on birds and other wildlife? What are the scenic and visual effects of erecting large wind towers with their slowly revolving blades? What kinds of sound impacts will occur? The co-ops have begun developing studies that will address such questions.

When asked about Samsö's experience, Soren Hermansen said,

Approximate ridge-top location of Vinalhaven wind turbines, looking northeast across the Fox Islands Thorofare. Dotted line indicates the ridge where turbines would be located. (Peter Ralston)

Courtesy of Soren Hermansen

Samsö has also placed ten 2.3-megawatt turbines in the shallow waters off the island, something the two Maine island co-ops aren't contemplating.

"We did not find any significant changes of bird life on the island. We never find any dead birds around the turbines and the bird-watchers never report any serious events." Closer to home, ornithologist Richard Podolsky, from Rockport, is a national expert on wind turbine impacts on migratory birds, including in the ornithologically infamous Altamont Pass of California where 200 to 300 golden eagles die each year after impacts with the roughly 6,400 turbines spinning on ridgelines. Podolsky has developed a predictive computer model that analyzes bird mortality, and he has agreed to help the island co-ops study the potential impacts of wind turbines. As a general matter, Podolsky notes that newer wind turbines on single poles with long blades that turn more slowly generally reduce bird mortality.

The more bird-friendly new turbine designs, however, come with another trade-off. They are significantly larger and thus either more noticeable or more visually intrusive, depending on your point of view, than older models. Addison Ames reminds his enthusiastic island neighbors who want to reduce their power bills that any wind towers will likely be as tall as the Statue of Liberty with blades that could extend another 100 feet above the tower height — which might be 80 meters (240 feet) high.

If Vinalhaven's visual impacts become controversial, the Swan's Island Electric Co-op's visual impacts may prove even more fractious. Although the several sites that are being considered by the co-op all have some degree of landowner support, Swan's Island is also in the "view shed" of nearby Acadia National Park. No one knows how the National Park Service may view wind turbine development on Swan's Island, but the agency already holds a number of conservation easements on Swan's Island protecting scenic beauty, and was actively opposed to Maine Mountain Power's Redington Wind Farm development in western Maine as incompatible with wilderness experiences on the Appalachian Trail. When a neighbor of George Baker's on Frenchboro, a major environmental funder in the state, learned of the Swan's Island Co-op's prospective interest in wind development, he vowed he would be a vigorous opponent. Scenic beauty is Maine's most valuable economic asset, he believes, and must be protected above other values in order to protect the Maine economy.

Hannah Pingree

Wind power developments elsewhere in Maine have faced an uncertain regulatory environment.

According to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, impact studies on the effect of sound waves will be required before any island wind power development occurs. Rotating blades propagate sound waves, but generally dissipate quickly within 500 feet of a turbine. However, local topography and meteorological effects can amplify sounds, occasionally in very unpredictable ways — as some residents in the lee of the Mars Hill wind farm in northern Maine have discovered, to their dismay.

And finally, as in most things, there is the money. To install a new wind turbine on a mainland site costs something on the order of $1.5 million per tower, including all development costs. On islands, with their extra transportation, handling and road-building costs, that figure could rise to as much as $3 million per tower. George Baker believes that three or four 1.5-megawatt turbines on the Fox Islands, and a 1-megawatt generating capacity for the Swan's Island Electric Co-op, will be required to bring down energy costs for year-round islanders. If so, the Fox Islands Electric Co-op will likely need at least $10 million of capital, and Swan's Island will need at least $2 million. These are large figures for the small administrative structures of these co-ops to handle. The Fox Islands co-op is already heavily indebted due to the recent cost of its cable.

As Hannah Pingree put it, "Controlling the production of your own energy is something independent islanders understand. There is so much uncertainty in the energy picture; . . . the situation islanders face could be [quite] different 10 to 15 years from now. Community wind [power] has the potential to benefit all ratepayers, as opposed to buying your own that [would hurt] islanders who can't afford it."

Islands and wind power development may ultimately be on a common journey, but getting there won't be half the fun. Or, perhaps, any fun at all. Still, a lot of people may be along for the ride.

Philip Conkling *is president of the Island Institute.*

BEFORE FOSSIL FUEL, THERE WAS THE TIDE...

BEN NEAL

Rising oil prices have helped to revive interest in traditional on-island energy sources other than wind. A form of water power that had a surprisingly large impact on coastal Maine life in the past was tidal power, which was harnessed at hundreds of sites along the coast to grind flour, saw wood, polish granite, and even to run the bellows for the fires of blacksmith shops. Today, as oil becomes dearer and reserves may be running out, the tide still keeps up its twice-daily flow, quietly pushing billions of gallons in and out of rivers and creeks all along the coast, and Mainers are starting to turn some of their attention toward this possible power source.

The tide was the one power source in the preindustrial coastal world that could be counted on year-round, and it never ran dry. It is the only power source on earth derived from the moon, and once facilities are built with modern engineering, it can potentially run reliably without any additional energy input for decades. It produces no global warming–causing emissions at all. The natural ebb and flow of estuaries has been used for transportation for thousands of years, with lumber schooners, hay barges and granite scows all taking advantage of the predictable movement.

The technology of fixed tidal mills was first developed in Europe over a millennium ago, and was exported in an advanced form with the first settlers to the New World. Tide mills sprang up in New England right after the first settlement, and operated up until the age of steam. In the Old World there are still some scattered historical mills in operation today, including the Eling Tide Mill on the Bartley Water in the quiet tidelands of southern Britain, which has been grinding grain on the same site for over 900 years.

Maine's crenellated coastline, where large volumes of water pass through narrow openings, made for many good tidal power sites in the past, and many mills have come and gone. Most of them have left little trace, as they were often built on pilings out over the tidal zone, and the sea took them back once they were abandoned. One of the first in the state was a gristmill on Back Cove in Portland, which was displaced by infill during the construction of the railroad bed on what is now Marginal Way next to Interstate 295. This was replaced by a large mill on the Harpswell Basin, which was a three-story building standing on pilings out in the impoundment.

Islands had their share of mills as well, with the Torrey Mill on Deer Isle being one of the larger ones, with a shaft of over 30 inches in diameter. This large shaft turned a belt of heavy leather, which ran to a secondary shaft inside the building that operated the grinding stones on the second floor. This structure was dismantled in 1880, although stone footings remain visible on the site. Photos of this location show salt hay fields and an orchard opposite the dam, along with open fields, in an area that is completely wooded today. This mill has garnered some local interest, and Anne Douglass's sixth-grade class at the Deer Isle Elementary School recently made a scale model of this local structure as a class project.

On Westport Island, the Lower Heal Dam stretched for over 190 feet, with well-made stonework that remains in good shape today. The Roque Island mill, east of Jonesport, also had a long impoundment dam, but mere traces of this timber piling structure remain today. There were at least five sites on Vinalhaven and North Haven, including Pulpit Harbor and Carvers Harbor.

Peter Ralston

Phil Crossman at the site of the Vinalhaven demonstration project. Crossman and the Ocean Energy Institute are collaborating on a project to rebuild a granite tidal dam that once provided mechanical power for a granite polishing shed. The new dam would produce electricity.

The Carvers Harbor site had the largest impoundment, and ran the heavy machinery of the granite-polishing mill, finishing stones for the foundations, carvings, and facings of new buildings in growing cities all over the East Coast. In 1872 more then 600 men were employed by the Bodwell Granite Company on the island, quarrying and cutting granite for the State Department Building in Washington, the piers of New York's East Bridge, and for the Union Mutual Life Insurance Building in Boston. In 1877 Bodwell Granite was still going strong, cutting all the stone for the Rockland Custom House, and sending dressed and finished pieces inland to new government buildings in Cincinnati. Projects as far away as Pensacola and New Orleans were supplied with material from Bodwell Granite. In the final years more and more quarry power was derived from large, stationary steam engines, turning massive flywheels, but the polishing mill smoothed a lot of stone turned only by the tide before all operations ceased in 1887.

The tidal mill site, located right in the middle of town and visible from the bridge across from The Paper Store, was a 24-hour warren of industrial activity, with two shifts a day. A different crew worked each tide, shifting their workday start about an hour later each day as the tide went through its monthly cycle, following the immutable call of the moon. This meant working at some point each month through the dark of night, while the other crew enjoyed the midday shift. The three shafts of the impoundment ran belts connected to machinery in the polishing shed, where the rock dust would have filled the air and lungs of the workers, often first-generation immigrants. Belts transferred power to a sawmill and forge (both associated with the granite industry) at the site of the present-day Tidewater Motel.

Courtesy of the Deer Isle Historical Society

An old image of the former Torrey Grist Mill on Deer Isle, a 19th-century tidal project.

Courtesy of the Harpswell Historical Society

A tidal mill in South Harpswell.

These days we are less interested in directly driving machinery, but rather, we want electricity to be the primary output. Europe is still the leader in this field, with the world's largest tidal generation station on the Rance River in France. The bad news globally is that there are few regions in the world with enough tidal range to generate sufficient power to make the technology feasible and economic. Fortunately, Maine is one of them, but there are no operating stations yet in the U.S., and only one in Canada, located just to the east of Maine in the Bay of Fundy.

Shafts could soon turn again on Vinalhaven, as part of a demonstration energy project organized by Tidewater Motel owner Phil Crossman and the Ocean Energy Institute. This group, supported by a grant from the Maine Public Utilities Commission, will rebuild the granite dam that used to house the polishing shed. It plans to install experimental turbines for electrical power generation. Any power produced by this demonstration project will be donated back to the Vinalhaven school.

The amount of power possible from this installation depends on the generation machinery developed and could perhaps supply fully a quarter of the island's winter needs, or as much as two large wind turbines. Modern environmental and transit concerns, as well as the cost of development, suggest that the output will be somewhat less. The design of the machinery is undecided, and it is hoped that university engineering departments will contribute to a design contest aimed at creating highly efficient generators.

This mill will operate in a reduced capacity compared to its historic predecessor, as the old mill had a butterfly-door dam setup that held back the tide after the high, and impounded significant amounts of water. The new turbines will run for the most part just in the stream of the ebb.

Without a single turbine turning in Maine from tidal flow, there is currently a lack of practical cost and output information. The Maine Maritime Academy is currently developing a tidal testing facility in the Bagaduce River to address these concerns.

Vinalhaven is not the only site in the state that has attracted recent attention for electrical generation. Much larger sites are under development and investigation, and in fact, there is something of a "gold rush" for rights to these locations. The Maine Tidal Energy Company, incorporated in Wyoming and headquartered in Washington, D.C., has proposed to install 20- to 50-foot rotating propeller blades on the bottoms of the Penobscot, Kennebec and Piscataqua rivers, and other companies and the Passamaquoddy Tribe have proposed installations in the area around the Western Passage of Cobscook Bay.

This surge in tidal power proposals comes in the wake of feasibility studies in Maine conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute, as well as changes in federal energy policy. According to the governor's office, "because of incentives available through the Federal Energy Policy Act of 2005, and state renewable portfolio standards, filing on attractive tidal sites holds new promise for private developers." As a result, established and fledgling companies alike are scrambling to secure rights to potentially lucrative tidal power sites.

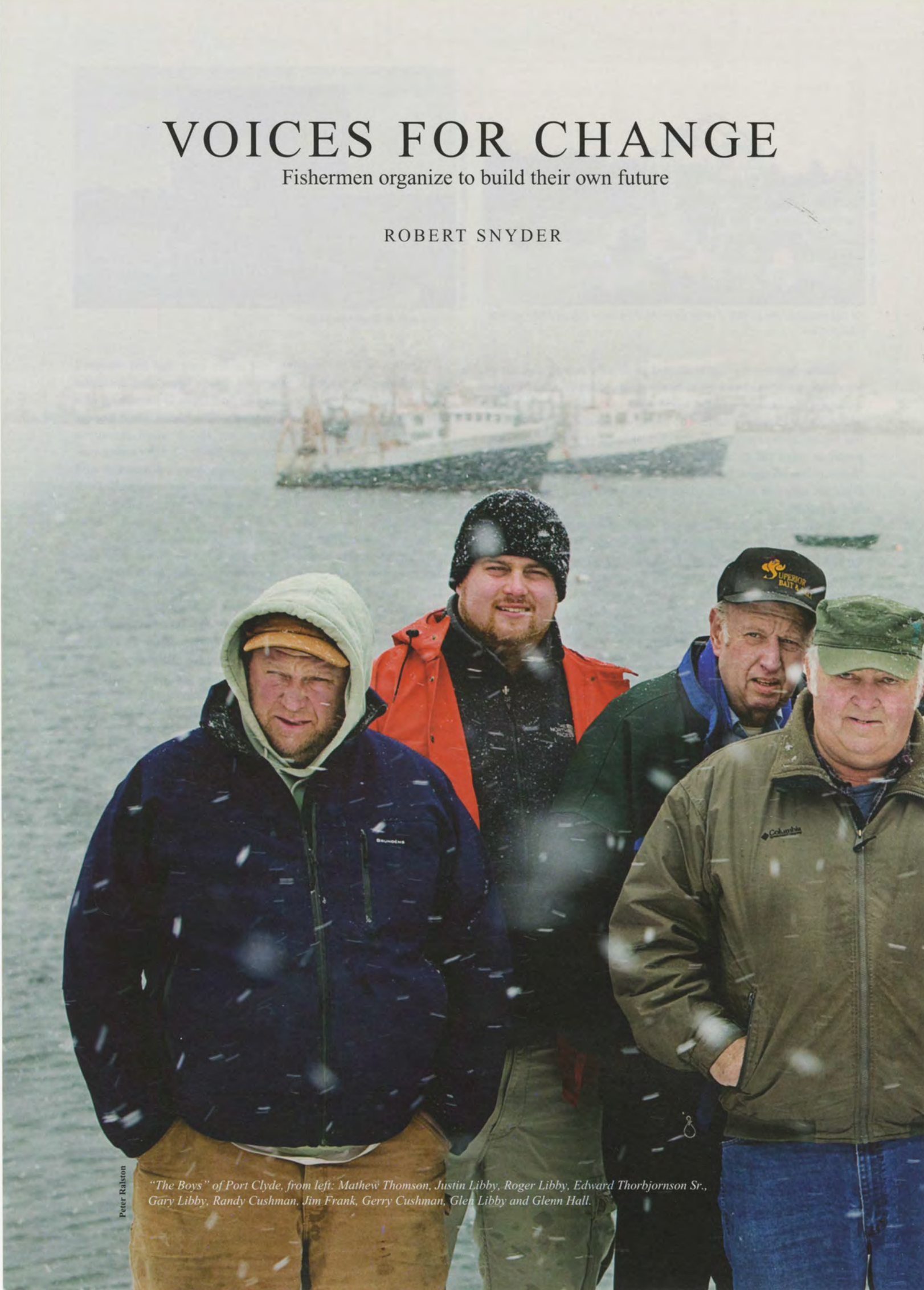
As electrical generation costs continue to rise, and as transmission bills from the mainland go up, local, clean electrical power generation may prove to be an integral part of the independence of island communities in the future. In these days of volatile energy prices, one thing is certain: The tide will rise and fall as it always has — and perhaps independent and thrifty New Englanders will once again be able to harness this free source of power.

A former marine resources director at the Island Institute, ***Ben Neal*** *is a graduate student at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego.*

VOICES FOR CHANGE

Fishermen organize to build their own future

ROBERT SNYDER



Peter Ralston

"The Boys" of Port Clyde, from left: Mathew Thomson, Justin Libby, Roger Libby, Edward Thorbjornson Sr., Gary Libby, Randy Cushman, Jim Frank, Gerry Cushman, Glen Libby and Glenn Hall.

Four-thirty a.m. on a calm, freezing cold January day is as good a time as any to start this story. On this day, Port Clyde's draggermen — "the boys," as they are known to each other — are heading out shrimping. But not all of them are going. Glen Libby, fisherman and executive director of the two-year-old Midcoast Fishermen's Association (MFA), Jim Frank, the MFA's newest member, and I hit the road to participate in a one-day special session of the New England Fishery Management Council. Within minutes, the bleary-eyed discussion turns to food and fisheries management.

Kim Libby

Almost anyone who has had the opportunity to sit with lifelong fishermen will have heard stories of how it used to be.

"You guys hungry?" I ask.

"Do you think they will have food at the meeting?" Jim asks sarcastically.

I laugh, and then Glen follows up with an anecdote. "They will have a few doughnuts for a couple hundred people; it will be just like fishin' — we'll have a ton of paperwork to fill out before we can have a piece of a doughnut, and the whole time the government will never be entirely sure how many doughnuts they had available to allocate to begin with!" Laughs all around.

The ability of these guys to laugh when their backs are against the wall is awe-inspiring if not a little disconcerting. Glen has said it to me many times: "Now Rob, don't forget that one of the key jobs of a fisherman is to be optimistic."

The optimism among groundfishermen in Port Clyde inspires confidence. They have a vision and enthusiasm that is palpable. The story I tell here highlights a shift in consciousness, away from a focus on the past to an optimism and vision for the future. This is an important cultural shift to understand if we as a society hope to see the oceans rebound, and the communities that depend on the resources sustained. The routes and relationships, the synchronicities along the way, tell much about how people organize when livelihoods are tied to a diminished natural resource; in this case, the fish of the eastern Gulf of Maine.

LOSS AND LONGING

Sitting down with "Terrible Roger" (he has the nickname because every time anyone asks how he's doing he responds "terrible") Libby and "Big Ed" Thorbjornson, I feel as if I am in the presence of giants. The sun is going down over Port Clyde, and their sons are out fishing. They sit with cocktails in hand waiting for the phone to ring so that they can go down to the sea, as they have done for decades, to get fresh fish from the boats. An introduction by Roger's eldest son, Glen, and an offering of spirits gets me a seat at the table for a lively evening.

These guys have seen it all, having lived by the tides long into their 60s and 70s. Big Ed's family hails from Sweden and he has fished his whole life, getting his start on one of Dick Jellison's redfish boats out of Rockland. Ed lost one of his sons, Gary Thorbjornson, at sea two years ago. Roger started in trucking — "worked for Hoffa," he says with a dry humor that keeps everyone but his family and close friends guessing. Then Roger bought a boat. Big Ed fires off, "He bought when every doctor and lawyer thought it would be good idea to buy a boat." Ed is referring to the time around 1976 when the U.S. government extended its ocean territory to 200 miles in an effort to push foreign fleets away from the fish and other natural resources. After the foreign fleets left the newly minted territory, the government created low-interest loan programs to encourage the development of a regional fishing fleet. Roger Libby and a host of others bought into the fishery. People who already had boats bought more. We all know the rest of the story: By the early 1980s many fish stocks were overfished and many fishermen began struggling.

Almost anyone who has had the opportunity to sit with lifelong fishermen will have heard stories of how it used to be . . . 300,000 pounds of redfish a day, at three cents a pound. The economics of the fishery — high volume, low quality, low price — combined with post–World War II technologies, put the incentives in place to catch the last fish.

The ability of these guys to laugh when their backs are against the wall is awe-inspiring if not a little disconcerting.

One statistic that clearly shakes Roger and Ed to the bone is that Port Clyde is now the second-largest groundfish landings port in Maine. "How could that be?" Roger asks, recalling the days when there were active groundfish fleets dotting the coast. Today only one groundfisherman remains active between Port Clyde and the Canadian border.

The sadness and regret with which these stories are told all over New England — the loss of community, the lack of control over economics, the degradation of the environment — pushed Dr. Kevin St. Martin, a geographer at Rutgers University, to think about how to provide fishermen with the opportunity to think about an alternative future.

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH

Around the year 2001, St. Martin began developing a research project that would allow fishermen to imagine a future filled with possibilities, rather than always longing for a distant and fraught past. He worked with Madeline Hall-Arbor at MIT Sea Grant to — as he puts it — "develop a set of maps that showed, for the first time, the areas of the sea most important to fishing communities. The maps prompted fishermen to begin asking questions about how they might imagine the ocean as their collective place, an extension of their community rather than a place of individual competition and, increasingly, corporate greed . . . the mapped community areas suggested a place for community management and a place for hope."

Around the same time, the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association was successfully bidding for a rights-based fishery where "the Hookers" were allocated a percentage of the stock. St. Martin began noticing the beginnings of a change of consciousness among some fishermen, "from hiding where they fished, to claiming the areas where they fish." The research project, through its maps and interviews, provided a forum where this idea could be expressed and linked to ideas of sharing and community that had long been silent along the waterfront.

In the winter of 2005–06 prices for Maine shrimp hit rock bottom at 25 cents per pound. In some cases, fishermen were unable to afford to go fishing. At that time Jen Levin was a project coordinator with Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. The stories she heard reinforced the feeling that, as she puts it, "fishermen had no control over their future." Levin spent a great deal of time down the St. George peninsula that winter, working as a researcher for St. Martin.

When Levin started interviewing, she heard many of the same stories of longing for the past, but in each of her interviews she heard traces of what St. Martin had suspected might still exist: hope. While answering questions and sketching out Port Clyde's fishing territory on large maps, fishermen would tell her, "This is what I think we should do, but I don't think anyone would agree with me."

"There was a lack of coordination and it was costing the boys," she told me. According to Levin, "In some ways it was clear that people weren't coordinating, like to buy ice and other supplies, and the costs to each fishing family were mounting." Examples of a united community were less obvious at first, but she noticed something one day. Even though Portland was paying five cents more per pound for shrimp, the Port Clyde fishermen refused to go direct to Portland, instead opting to keep their shoreside infrastructure intact. Jen spent a good amount of time with Gerry Cushman ("Port Clyde's unofficial mayor"), talking about the possibilities, and Cushman spoke at length with the rest of the fishermen.

The Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA), where Levin worked, had experience in turning such murmurings into full-blown organizations. "These guys were strong," says Craig Pendleton, former coordinating director of NAMA. What was different with the Port Clyde group, according to Pendleton, was that it was still holding out to be an active fishing fleet. Pendleton and Levin were committed to do all they could to help make something happen. According to Craig, "It was a perfect match — we brought the emphasis on fishermen adopting an environmental ethic, and the Port Clyde guys were open to including their community in a discussion about their future. Within a short period of time it became clear that the fish needed to come first."

Kelli Haines

Kim Libby.

Pendleton had confidence in the Port Clyde fishermen because "they had this attitude that they could do anything they put their minds to."

VISIONARIES AND FAMILIES

"Terrible Roger" Libby has two sons, Glen and Gary. Roger is proud of them both. He likes to talk about how Glen's adept technical skills have "saved the family a fortune in diesel mechanic bills" and of Gary's "steady commitment to fishing since he was 12." Glen acknowledges Levin's role in helping to start it all, but he also tells a story of his family's vision that started before she arrived.

Glen recalls riding back from Montville with Gary. "We were putting antifreeze in the campers, getting ready for winter, and we started talking fisheries management," Glen says. "I know how we can fix this fishery. Let's shut it down for five, six months in the winter time and open it up in the summer. . . . My brother says, 'Wouldn't it be great if we could get that . . . I think we can do it.'" They agreed to start working toward that goal. Their vision, according to Gary, was "to catch fish sustainably, create new markets, keep Port Clyde in the fishing business. Not so much for ourselves but for future fishermen."

"Gerry Cushman, Gary and I met and decided to get organized," recalls Glen Libby. "This was all leading up to Amendment 16 when George [Lapointe — commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources] kicked over the table and called for a change. We were having meetings in Augusta, so I rallied the troops in Port Clyde and said, 'Hey, boys, we're all sick of Days at Sea management [the federal resource allocation scheme restricting a boat's time fishing]; we're sick of no fish. We need to sit down and form an organization so that we can have a face politically."

According to Gary's wife, Kim, the business manager for the Port Clyde Draggermen's Co-op, "Prior to the MFA, guys would go to [New England Fishery Management] Council meetings but wouldn't talk, or they wouldn't go at all." She observed the need for an organized presence, having attended meetings with her father-in-law, Roger Libby, for years.

Glen Libby tells of how the MFA's name was picked and how its purpose was established. "We picked the name Midcoast Fishermen's Association because we wanted it to include people from around the area," he says. While the MFA is primarily made up of members from the St. George peninsula, there is a gill-netter from Monhegan involved, the Island Institute has joined, and there have been inquiries from Owls Head and Friendship. "By getting more people involved, we started to build a vision for a restored fishery," says Libby. And then he proposed turning nostalgia for the past into a vision for the future: "Now Rob, around 25 to 30 years ago there were plenty of fish up close to shore. Everything was healthy, there were tons of fish, late '70s, early '80s. We are constantly told that we will never see that again. To me that is like waving a red flag in front of a bull, you see…

Kim Libby

Gary Libby

"When you are organized, you are are more approchable to all the people who share your interests."

I would love to prove the skeptics wrong. There is a lot of empty ocean now, not many boats left. We need to rebuild stocks... we don't want to lose anybody else. We don't want fishing to leave Port Clyde."

THE FIRST MEETING

April, 2006: Cushman calls a meeting to discuss organizing. Fishermen and family members show up. Jen Levin makes her way up to Port Clyde to facilitate. When everyone is settled in she asks her first questions: "What do you have control over?" Dead silence. She recalls thinking, "Wow — these guys don't have an answer." She started asking, "Well, what about this, or that?" Slowly, over the course of the evening, experience is turned toward inspiration and the Midcoast Fishermen's Association was born.

From there things moved fast. President, vice president and other officers were elected in that first meeting. Mission, bylaws — check. It has been reported that at one meeting it took this group just over two hours to develop a complete groundfish multispecies management plan as an alternative to the current Days at Sea. The Port Clyde Area Management Plan was ultimately not adopted by the New England Fishery Management Council, but it informed the activities of a much larger group, The Area Management Coalition, consisting of fishermen, environmental activists, and sustainable community advocates that tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to achieve area-based groundfish management through the New England Fishery Management Council in 2007.

By July 4, 2006, the Midcoast Fishermen's Association had its first fund-raiser, a haddock bake at the grange hall, where 400 community members donated whatever they could afford to support their fishermen. A year later they repeated the successful event, and another one is planned for 2008.

"I know how to fix this fishery," Glen Libby told a friend. "Let's shut it down for five, six months in the winter time and open it up in the summer...to catch fish sustainably, create new markets, keep Port Clyde in the fishing business . . ."

New Institute fellow to work with Port Clyde fishermen

Laura Kramar is joining the Island Institute as a Senior Fellow and will be working on a special collaboration between the Island Institute and the Midcoast Fishermen's Association (MFA) in Port Clyde.

Kramar will serve as marketing cooperative coordinator with the Port Clyde Draggermen's Co-op, where she will assist the co-op's fishermen — the last remaining groundfishing fleet in midcoast or downeast Maine — in developing a strategy to promote Port Clyde groundfish as a high-quality product caught with traditional, less-intensive gear.

A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, Kramar brings an interest in local, sustainable food production as well as a strong environmental ethic to her new position. After studying at Appalachian State University, Kramar developed an interest in traditional family farming and began exploring marketing and business classes. After graduation she gained managerial experience with various businesses. She returned to school in 2004, matriculating at the University of Maine at Orono to study resource economics and policy. As a student she co-authored a background paper for the Maine Department of Agriculture's task force on local agriculture. She graduated in August 2007 with a master's degree in resource economics and policy and a focus in sustainable agriculture.

Laura Kramar

Peter Ralston

THE FUTURE

"When you are organized you are more approachable to all the people who share your interests," observed Jen Levin, anticipating what would come next. Since April 2006 MFA has inspired a long list of groups interested in partnering with them to turn its vision into action.

Advocacy remains critical. Glen Libby and I had the good fortune to travel to Sitka, Alaska, in late November 2007, where we received an education in successful community-based fisheries advocacy from Linda Behnken, the head of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association. She had many ideas about how to "get the boys more active," and told great stories of setting a typewriter up outside the legendary Pioneer Bar, where hundreds of historical Sitka fishing boat photos adorn the walls, to assist fishermen in typing up their opinions for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

With New England Fishery Management Council meetings hosted all over New England, and none closer than Portland, Libby and I thought we might set up camp at the Harpoon, a common Port Clyde fishermen's hangout. We sat at the Pioneer Bar each evening during our trip, drinking Alaskan Amber and talking about how to expand the number of New England council members who represent sustainable fishing and fishing communities.

Taking a page from the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association playbook, it became clear that quantitative research must be a part of any effort to encourage more sustainable fishing. MFA, the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI), and the Island Institute plan to run a series of gear-modification experiments over the coming years as part of an "Environmental Management System" approach promoted by Steve Eayrs, fish behavior and gear technology scientist at GMRI.

One MFA member, Randy Cushman, is known widely for his constant experimentation with gear. Everyone recognizes that he fishes some of the most selective groundfish trawl gear around. It was agreed that there is a need to better understand the positive effects of Cushman's work, particularly how it could help lower the bycatch rate of undersized and unintended species, or how gear could be lightened to minimize benthic habitat impacts.

Overall, the goal is to work toward sustainable fishing practices. To that end, the Island Institute is establishing a Sustainable Fisheries Fund to assist in these gear-modification research efforts.

Marketing and "branding" are increasingly seen as a critical component of the MFA agenda. "Big Ed" and "Terrible Roger" have told me emphatically, "Marketing and branding is the way out of this mess." Not only will this require improvements to the quality of fish landed, such as using saltwater ice and making shorter tows, but it will also require distinguishing MFA's fish in the marketplace by demonstrating a commitment to fishing under more sustainable, self-imposed gear regulations. The Island Institute has placed a Senior Island Fellow to assist the MFA in developing a business plan and a "Port Clyde Fish" brand based on these ideas.

Courtesy of Scott Yakovenko

"This is no carsick fish," declares Scott Yakovenko, owner of The Dip Net Restaurant in Port Clyde. "It's straight off the boat and everyone knows it." Really *fresh fish are the Port Clyde groundfishermen's stock in trade.*

Since April 2006 MFA has inspired a long list of groups interested in partnering with them to turn its vision into action.

FRESH FISH

Lunch with Scott Yakovenko, owner of The Dip Net restaurant located on the wharf in Port Clyde, provides a glimpse of how this marketing effort could work out. Yakovenko knows all these guys; he grew up with them "down the peninsula." According to him, it all starts on the phone. While out fishing, "the boys" will call in to the restaurant and let him know what they have. His staff lets the customers know which fish are right off the boats. Today Justin "Buzza" Libby, who has just landed "123" (Yakovenko names the halibut by its weight), calls into the restaurant. Yakovenko walks over to the wharf from his restaurant to meet the F/V CAPTAIN LEE. (He regularly meets the boats and looks over the catch, buying whatever he needs right on the spot .)

Next, Yakovenko and Libby haul the fish, on ice, over to the patio where diners from all over the country instantly stop eating. "Everyone gets out their cameras," says Yakovenko. "There were about 25 people on the patio that day and 20 of them started taking pictures." He gets really excited talking about the performance associated with being The Dip Net's chef and owner. "I swing the fish around and take it into my open kitchen and start cutting it immediately . . . This is no carsick fish; it's straight off the boat and everyone knows it. The next 25 orders are all for that fish; they see it and want to eat it!" Having been a customer who has brought every visiting family member down to The Dip Net, I can vouch for the effect on a visitor when one is able to point to the boats that catch the fish.

This coming year Yakovenko is working toward a "50-Mile Menu," pushing local foods even harder. Scott's support of the MFA gives the fishermen confidence that a market exists for their product, and as he says, "The community is here for them."

Evidence is mounting that this approach — where markets are found that match the fishermen's practices — can work. This past winter MFA and NAMA worked with Rockland's Universalist Church on the region's first community-supported fisheries (CSF) effort, where church members bought shares of shrimp that were delivered weekly to the church. Modeled on the widely heralded community-supported agriculture model, this effort has gained significant attention and seems poised to grow in coming years.

Two preconditions are generally agreed upon as necessary for people to "self-organize" as the MFA did: an abundant resource, and a system of governance that provides opportunities for people's voices to be heard. Makes perfect sense, but many would agree that this couldn't be further from the reality of the current New England fisheries management paradigm. The Port Clyde fishermen and their families have organized despite evidence that stocks of groundfish remain significantly depleted. They have organized in the face of a federal fisheries management process that has a history of not responding to their concerns.

Leadership exacts a terrible cost on fishermen who rise up to advocate for the fish and for fishing communities. According to Craig Pendleton, "The process eats fishermen alive."

This story began on the way to a New England Fishery Management Council meeting. By the end of the day, Glen Libby had lost a couple of thousand dollars because he did not go fishing. To make matters worse, it was a frustrating meeting where the three of us left feeling less confident in federal management than ever. But on that cold January day, because there is now a Midcoast Fishermen's Association, the rest of "the boys" could fish knowing that they have a voice for change representing them when it matters — a voice focused on their vision of a restored, community-based fishery in Port Clyde that will remain vibrant long into the future.

Rob Snyder *is vice president of programs at the Island Institute.*

More photos online at www.islandinstitute.org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What is Catch a Piece of Maine?
A unique opportunity to:
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• Monitor your catch online
• Ship your lobsters to whomever you choose, wherever you like, whenever you want
• Have your own lobsterman
• Support the working waterfront and marine education (10% of profits go to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute)
Thomas Lobster / Little Cranberry Island / Islesford / Maine / USA / Index
Meet the Lobstermen
Watch The DVD
Captain John Ready
Boat Name: Miss Susan
Thomas Lobster Company
Little Cranberry Island / Islesford / Maine / USA
Home Page
Catching Them
Shipping Them
Ordering Them
Contact David
Home page
Welcome aboard!
Welcome aboard David Thomas's lobster boat, Just a Pluggin'.
We are headed out of Islesford on Little Cranberry Island to haul lobster traps off the fog-shrouded coast of Maine.
David Thomas is Thomas Lobster Company. Lobster fisherman, packer, shipper, small businessman.
Husband and father of two daughters.
One-time Selectman and now chairman of the Affordable-Housing Trust.
David is a virtual one-man band...
David lives on Little Cranberry Island and belongs to the Cranberry Isles Fishermen's Coop located there.
David came to Islesford in 1973 as a teacher in the island's elementary school. The pull of island life an
the adventure of the sea kept him a member of
Catching the Lobsters
David fishes the waters of coastal Maine in the vicinity of Little Cranberry Island.
His 35 ft fiberglass boat, designed an
refined by a century of le
perfect tool to fish t
Equipped with the la
navigation and comm
the boat represents a
lobster fisherman.
Each trap sits on the bottom on the
200 feet below the surface, held there
A line runs from the trap to a buoy th
surface. The buoy is painted with the
combination of each lobster fisherman.
blue in David's case.
Each buoy is hooked (gaffed) and the line
around the hydraulic hauler and the trap
the surface.
David selects the lobsters for each order to meet the requirements of the customer.
The lobsters and other seafood is packed in a special box that was designed by the airlines for such use.

THE BRAND

To sell Maine's most famous product, you need to fire up the buyer's imagination

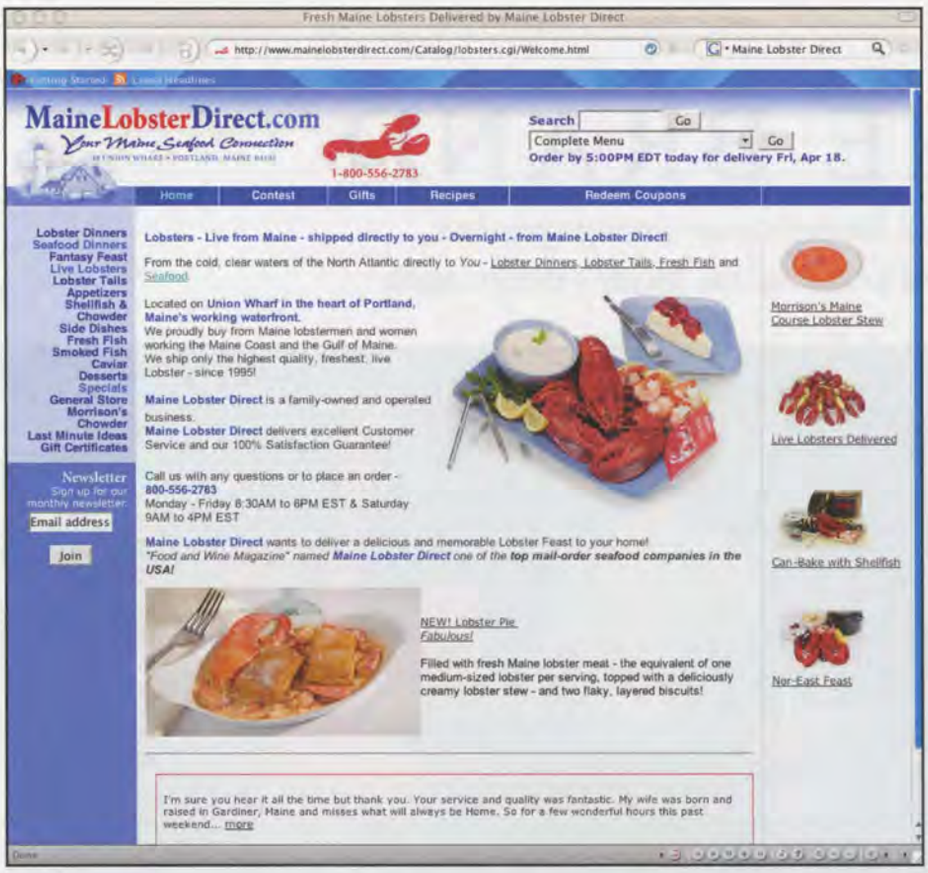
Brendan and John Ready are turning their unusual vision into a successful business on Hobson's Wharf in Portland.

DAVID D. PLATT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER AYRES

David Thomas

Type "lobsters" in your computer's search engine and you'll get over three million results. Start paging through them if you like, and in a short time a pattern becomes evident: Skip over the scientific papers, Wikipedia entries, literary references and other general information about crustaceans, and you'll find a lot of retail operations that will send you a lobster, live, overnight, just about anywhere. Thanks to the Internet, Federal Express and a few other modern developments, the lobster business has gone both digital and global.



Maine fishermen, once obliged to rely on middlemen to move their catch to distant markets, have joined this party in droves. Some operations are small and direct — Islesford fisherman David Thomas packs his own boxes (each with a copy of the Island Institute's newspaper, *Working Waterfront*, folded on top) at the island co-op, puts them aboard the mailboat for Northeast Harbor and arranges for a FedEx pickup at the other end of the short trip.

In Portland, Brendan and John Ready do something similar but on a larger scale. Their start-up business has devised an unusual model involving eight local fishermen, a website and a partnership arrangement with 400 individuals who would each lay claim to the 40 legal-size lobsters a Casco Bay trap can be expected to catch in a season, shipped anywhere, in return for an investment of $2,995. Big number? Sure, but do the math: If giving your friends or clients free live lobsters is something you need to do, and if retail lobster prices and air freight rates no longer intimidate you, then this scheme may make sense. By the end of 2007 the Readys could claim over 100 partnerships sold.

Both businesses, in fact, make a lot of sense because of the changing nature of the seafood market. Thanks to air freight and even Wal-Mart, consumers in Phoenix, Denver, Los Angeles, Paris or Tokyo can buy live lobsters any time of year and cook up a dinner at least reminiscent of what they might get in a Maine restaurant in the summer. The atmosphere may be compromised somewhat, but the taste — and the mess afterward — will be the same. It's a triumph of marketing, to say the least.

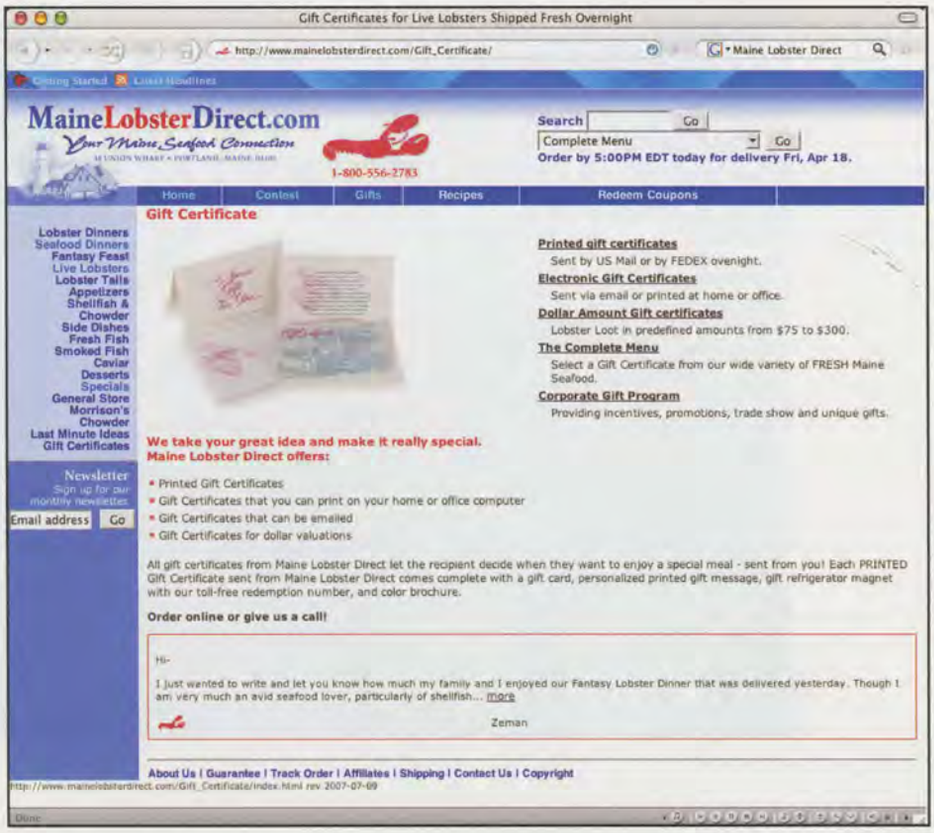
In a world where mass-marketed products — plywood, oil, paper, beef, salmon — are "commodities," a Maine lobster enjoys some advantages. A few squeamish Whole Foods shoppers may disagree, but a captive lobster isn't that different from a head of lettuce, a side of beef or a bushel of potatoes: It moves at predictable market prices through a commercial system designed to provide edible things to customers anywhere. It will continue to do so as long as the supply holds out and consumers are willing to pay the price. Shipping live lobsters requires a certain amount of special handling, to be sure, but now that air travel has conquered the big enemy — time — the rest is merely details.

The lobster's advantages derive from the place where it lives in the wild, and whatever mystique its marketers are able to attach to it. Like boots from L.L. Bean or fancy steaks from Kansas City, the lobster benefits from "branding," and in the lobster business, the brand to have is called "Maine." It's a fact that a significant number of the lobsters that reach restaurant tables in Boston, New York or other U.S. and foreign cities originate in Canada, Massachusetts or other waters, but you won't find "Canadian lobster" or "Massachusetts lobster" on those restaurants' menus. "Maine lobster" is the brand that sets this particular commodity apart from nearly all other seafood. And the brand also helps explain why individual fishermen who are so inclined can do so well direct-marketing their catch.

David Thomas came to Islesford in the 1970s to teach school. He began lobstering from the island in 1975, marketing his catch to Leeman Hamm, who owned the only lobster buying station on Isleford. But Islesford, in the Town of Cranberry Isles off Mount Desert, has a sizeable summer community, and before long this personable former teacher was getting off-season requests for lobsters from people who had visited in the summer. He recalls making one delivery to a brokerage firm in Philadelphia in the late 1970s. Then a restaurant in northeastern Ohio wanted lobsters, and he supplied them. Friends would call and he'd oblige, updating them on island happenings and answering their questions about where the lobsters had come from, how they were caught, even how to cook them.

By 1990 FedEx, UPS and others had revolutionized the shipping business to the point where it made sense, Thomas decided, to start sending live lobsters directly and regularly to customers around the U.S. A sign with a phone number on the island mailboat brought in some business, but most advertising was done through word of mouth.

A website, www.thomaslobster.com, went up in 1998. "Thomas Lobster Company . . . catches fresh lobsters from an island off the Maine coast and ships them by air throughout the United States," it tells the Internet searcher who might be in the market for a shore dinner. On the home page, the branding begins right away: "Welcome aboard David Thomas's lobster boat, JUST A PLUGGIN'. We are headed out of Islesford on Little Cranberry Island to haul lobster traps off the fog-shrouded coast of Maine. David Thomas *is* Thomas Lobster



Company. Lobster fisherman, packer, shipper, small businessman. Husband and father of two daughters. One-time selectman and former chairman of the affordable housing trust. David is a virtual one-man band . . ."

And on we go with information about David's teaching, the Islesford community, his shipping practices ("not in mega-ton lots, but in smaller quantities, in boxes a person can pick up and carry into the house"). Photos of David aboard his boat or at the Islesford co-op dock personalize things further. There's a page on how lobsters are caught, with information about Maine's double-gauge law that ensures the preservation of future broodstock; a page on shipping; ordering and contact information. Overall the tone is straightforward, informative and — in at least a small way — folksy.

"The idea is to tell a story," Thomas says, mentioning his experience as a teacher. "It's aimed at the consumer. Not many people know a lot about lobsters; nothing, sometimes, about cold, wet feet and frozen hands. The website is for the consumer who wants a little information. . . ."

He used to ship to restaurants, but now it's mostly individuals. "I prefer individual sales," he says. "I'm a lot more comfortable dealing with people directly, and there's less risk." There's also less hassle over the price: On more than one occasion a restaurant would pressure him for a lower price. "I'm not making anything now," he'd tell them. "Then they'd ask for a nickel cheaper," he says.

At one time customers could select what they wanted on a fully automated website, provide their credit card numbers and receive a box from Thomas Lobster without ever speaking personally with David. "It was that way for three or four years," he says now. "Then I got stuck with bad credit cards, and now I don't ship lobsters to anyone I don't talk to — I love to talk on the phone." Thomas has been shipping to some customers for as long as 15 years. It's not his whole business by a long shot — he still sells about 90 percent of what he catches to the local co-op — but it's a welcome addition to the family income.

Personal testimony: Two years ago I visited friends in Denver, Colorado — former Maine residents who entertained me royally. Back home, I called David to order some lobsters as a thank-you gift. He asked for my friends' phone number so he could confirm they'd be home when the package arrived. But the real reason for the call, I know now, was so David could chat up these faraway people, answer their questions and — in their case — bring them up-to-date on happenings here on the Maine coast. All parties have told me since how much they enjoyed the experience: "branding" at work.

At Ready Lobster Co. on Hobson's Wharf in Portland, the many-clawed commodity is the same as it is at Islesford. What's different is the intensity of this operation. In just three years Brendan and John Ready have built a wholesale seafood operation that claims $10 million in sales. In addition, they've devised a retail marketing scheme that's innovative, to put it mildly: Their goal is to sell the rights in Casco Bay traps to 400 "partners" who pay $2,995 for the legal-sized lobsters each trap catches in a nine-month season. By January 2008 the Readys had lined up over 100 of these investors, a third of them in Maine, and hoped to sell the rest over the winter. As an added inducement, new partners at the end of 2007 were offered a "credit" of 12 lobsters on their accounts, "for immediate use during the upcoming holiday season." The price of a partnership includes shipping anywhere in the continental United States.

"We're telling a story," John Ready says, echoing David Thomas's comments. "We're selling experience . . . We can't keep pecking away at the same customers; we've got to find new ones." The Readys believe those customers are outside of Maine, many of them outside the country. And like Thomas, they know that the Maine lobster story is a compelling one if it's told well.

Assisted by a public relations firm, the Readys began by naming, then personalizing their business. MEET THE LOBSTERMEN, declares a headline on the home page of "Catch a Piece of Maine," the retail arm of Ready Lobster Co. A click away are photos and biographies of the eight fishermen (all from Cape Elizabeth, like the Readys) who are participating in this partnership. Bobby Springer, captain of the MISTY DAWN II, "has been lobstering literally since he was a baby. He watched his father from his crib on his Dad's lobster boat. . . ."

Peter Ralston

Linda Bean

Even on TV, the story's the thing

In 2006 when Whole Foods opened its new Portland supermarket, store managers stirred up a hornet's nest when they announced they wouldn't stock live lobsters in tanks; instead they would sell frozen lobster products processed in Canada. The plan didn't sit well with Maine's lobster community, which promptly began criticizing the store for failing to understand the importance of the lobster business to Maine. After a while, Texas-based Whole Foods relented, adding live lobsters to its seafood mix but insisting — in hopes of placating animal rights activists and politically correct consumers squeamish about boiling lobsters alive — on electrocuting the animals with a new device called a "CrustaStun."

The incident transfixed the Portland media for weeks, and demonstrated once again that a lobster's story is as important as its character (hard or soft shell), price, taste or nutritional value. (It's well to recall that in Colonial times, lobsters were considered fit to feed only to servants, who occasionally complained.)

Virtually any electronic marketing effort for lobsters, therefore, must focus on the details. Port Clyde Lobster, for example, markets a stew on the QVC television shopping channel featuring poached lobster legs extracted — uncooked — by means of the "no boil" process at Shucks Maine Lobster in Richmond, Maine. "The surrounding Maine ingredients are all natural with no preservatives, including Oakhurst cream, Kate's Maine Butter, and sea salt," says Linda Bean of Port Clyde Lobster. "It's important to understand is that there's no canned milk or other distracting canned flavors, or any diluting extenders, which boosts this new Maine lobster product to the higher end of added value — suitable for fine gourmet dining and for caterers of weddings and other special celebration events."

The product has been available on QVC's television channel and its website since Dec. 5. "QVC has a very high quality requirement," says Bean. "We were able to meet their standards and are very pleased our product is there."

Like David Thomas and the Ready brothers, Bean (a member of the Freeport retailing family) markets her product on the Internet as well as the television shopping channel. A new Port Clyde Lobster

website (www.portclydelobster.com) went online in February and, Bean says, "will be updated frequently with information, stories and views into the world of our fishermen and their boats, the working relationships among the wharves and fishing families of Port Clyde and our midcoast peninsulas, and slices of life in our Maine fishing villages." Again, the story's the thing.

And as is so often the case with electronic marketing, the focus is global. "For me," Bean says, "it's time to pick a destination, and I have chosen China, the place that overwhelmingly sells so much to the USA. We need to balance that trade — get them buying American and from Port Clyde USA!"

— David D. Platt

"I've caught lobsters since I was a little boy," says Curt Brown of the ALEWIFE COVE, another participating boat, on his section of the website. "Some of my first memories [are of] helping my father and my cousins pull traps off the shore of Cape Elizabeth. By the time I was in high school I had my own little lobster boat, an 18-foot Poynter named CELIA (my Mom's middle name) and 100 traps. I was hooked."

On it goes, projecting an image as salty, fishy and "Maine" as anyone could imagine. The Readys make the partnering worth a fisherman's time by giving each of the eight lobstermen 50 new traps at the beginning of a season. Each fisherman is paid an extra 40 cents per pound for being part of the program. All have the use of the Readys' facility at the outer end of Hobson's Wharf in Portland, and of course they have the celebrity associated with having their photos and bios on the Internet.

In return, the fishermen provide detailed information on their catches to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, which also receives 10 percent of the firm's profits.

"We're trying to create a high-end image [of the business in general]," says John Ready.

Like David Thomas's phone calls, the personal touch is critical. Detailed reports of each individual trap's performance are available to partners on Friday afternoons. Partners know who "their" lobsterman is, and those interested can track him at work by logging in with a password. A DVD tells more, complete with sound effects. There's talk of webcams on the dock, the boats, and even underwater. Partners and anyone with an interest can receive a monthly e-mailed update.

And there's folklore too: "Our fishermen all work out of Cape Elizabeth, all on hard bottom," declares John Ready. "We catch the best lobsters." Fishermen working other regions may disagree, but that's not part of this story.

When the sophisticated surfer of Internet lobster offerings refines his or her search to "mail-order lobsters" or something even more specific, the number of results drops from three million to around 20,000. The offerings will include "jumbo New England lobsters" (you can order a six-pounder) presumably caught in Canada or offshore without regard to the preservation of large broodstock lobsters; various Maine outfits from Biddeford to Mount Desert advertising an array of different seafood packages; a brace of lobster tails from Amazon.com; the offerings of big operators such as Maine Lobster Direct in Portland and Atwood in Spruce Head; and a great many others. You'll also find foreign companies anxious to "brand" their wares, such as Scottish Gourmet Food in the UK, which will sell you a hamperful of goodies including a lobster, all carefully packaged to remind you of the Highlands.

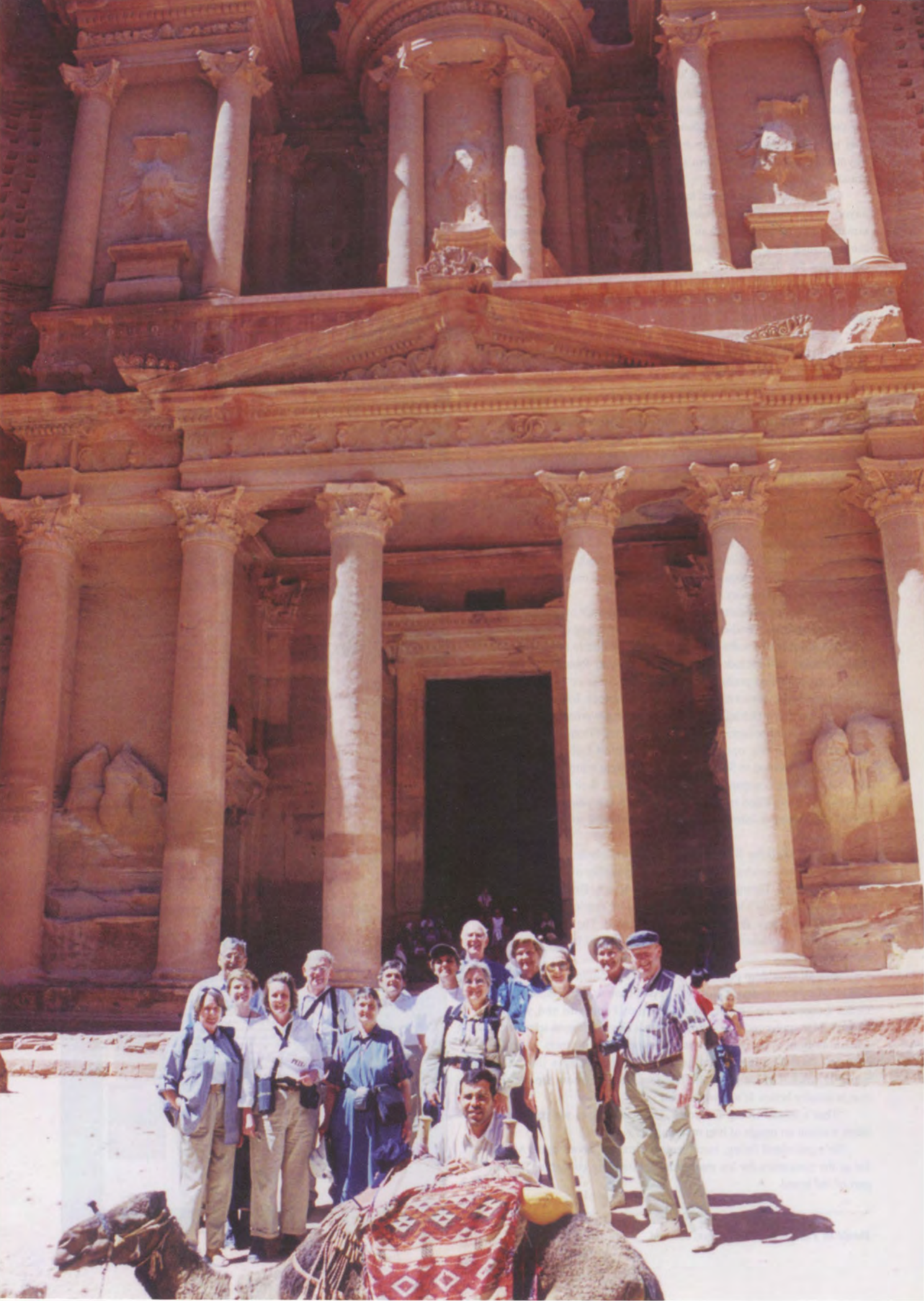
In 2005, *Working Waterfront* surveyed mail-order lobster dealers in Maine. Writer Sandra Dinsmore found ten outfits of varying size at that time. David Thomas was on her list; Ready Brothers' Catch a Piece of Maine hadn't been invented yet. Most employed websites to advertise their wares, but not all were automated. The "branding" of a uniquely Maine product via images, text and added information such as cooking instructions, however, was universal.

Still, all is seldom perfect in cyberspace, including the presumed habitat of cyber-lobsters. Click on "to purchase or for details of Mail Order Lobsters" on the Scottish Gourmet Food site and you get "Sorry; page under reconstruction." Or ask David Thomas to pose for a photo in front of his computer as he responds to customers' e-mailed requests. First he agrees; then he discovers the wireless link at his house is down. Off we go to the Islesford library, where the connection is usually better. It's down as well.

"That's island living for you," Thomas says as we pack up to leave without an image of him manning his website.

He's got island living, inconvenience and all, about right. And as far as the customers for his mail-order lobsters are concerned, it's all part of the brand.

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



ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PHARAOH

For some Chebeague residents, visiting the Middle East is only a beginning

Peter Ralston

Participants in past Middle Eastern tours at the Chebeague Historical Society.

CHERIE GALYEAN

It doesn't take Jill Malony long to start talking about the trip she took to Jordan. She didn't know she would be talking about it on the bus ride from the Chebeague Island parking lot to the Cousins Island dock — the Jordan trip was seven years ago, after all — but she vividly remembers every detail. There was the expedition to an olive farm where she took a mud bath. There were the cocktails with the American ambassador to Jordan, and the trip to see the city of Petra, chosen in 2007 as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World. She remembers the personable tour guide for her group ("He showed us pictures of his sons, but not his wife, of course"), the surprising snorkeling trip ("Who would have thought of snorkeling in Jordan? But it was wonderful"), and a conversation she had with the Iraqi man next to her on the flight back ("He wanted to know what I thought of Iraq; it was a very different kind of conversation"). Mostly she remembers how grateful she is that she took that trip with her sister, who died later that year. It was clearly the experience of a lifetime.

A Chebeague Island group visits Petra in Jordan, where carvers created an entire city in living rock.

The "Chebeague 20" poses at Egypt's pyramids, another destination.

But on Chebeague, Malony's wasn't a unique experience, because the Chebeague Historical Society has developed an unusual fund-raising strategy that builds membership and raises its profile on the island while supporting the society financially. Over the last nine years, more than 50 Chebeague residents have taken trips to the Middle East, to Jordan, Egypt, Greece and Turkey. Other islanders have made shorter excursions to Washington, D.C., and New York to explore Middle Eastern art and culture through special exhibits.

Spearheaded by island resident Suhail Bisharat, this fund-raising effort has built an understanding of — and personal connection to — a region of the world prone to bias and misunderstanding. Simultaneously, these trips have brought the flavor of the region home to Chebeague. Equally impressively, it does so while supporting the ongoing effort of the historical society to collect the history and culture of Chebeague.

It began like many island ventures: by utilizing an islander's individual expertise. In the summer of 1998, Bisharat, a Jordanian native and former director of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art, was invited to give a lecture on the 200th anniversary of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt at the Chebeague Historical Society. The lecture, which focused on the ways in which Napoleon opened up Egyptian art and culture to Europe, sparked considerable interest among islanders. Would it be possible, an island resident asked, to take a trip to Egypt to see this ancient and rich culture firsthand? Bisharat thought so. More than that, he spied an opportunity to help the historical society raise funds for its looming building renovation.

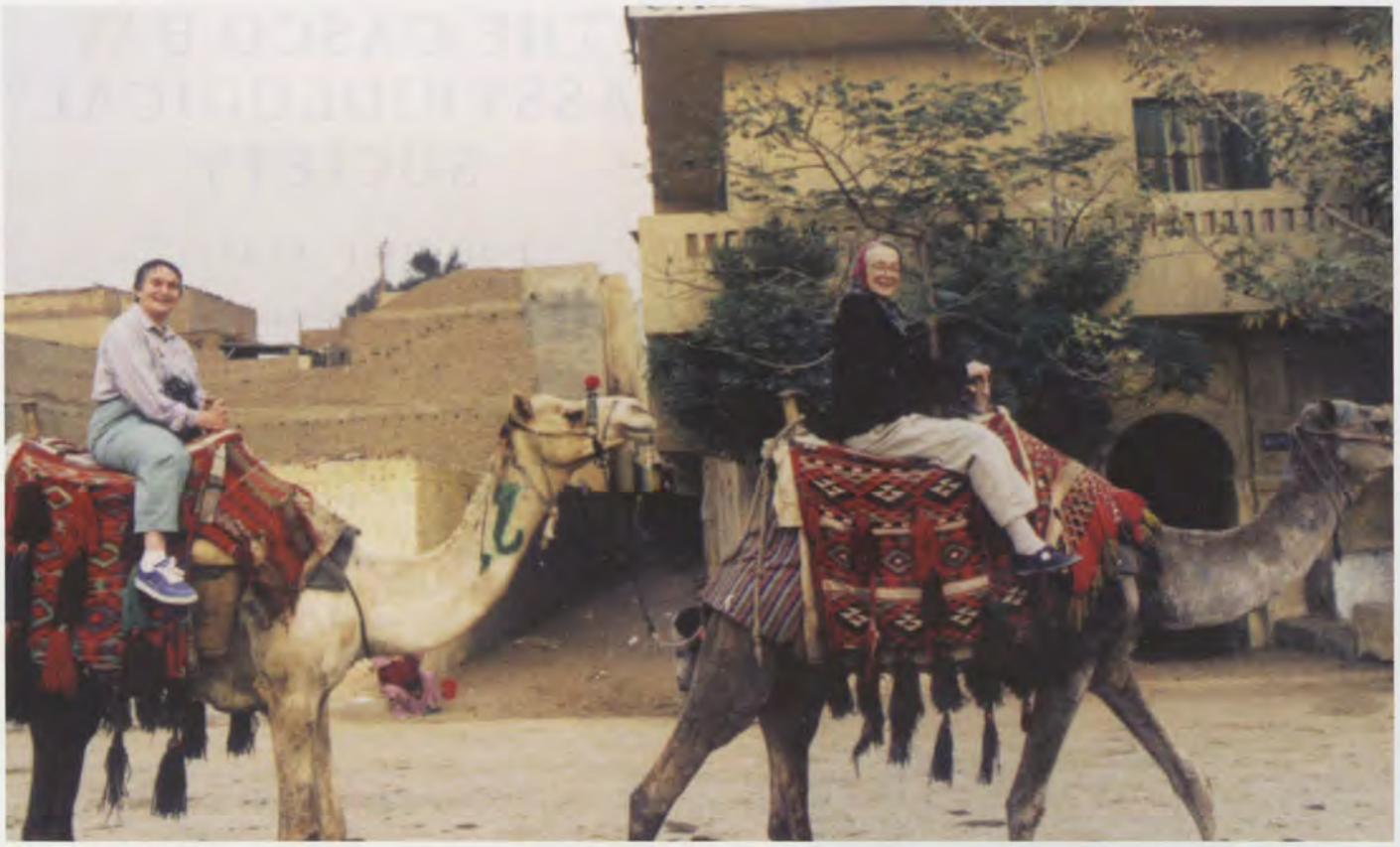
Suhail Bisharat

"It is incredibly important that people not just see the artifacts," he explains, "but that they [also] understand the culture that produces these things."

And so the Chebeague Island Historical Society Middle Eastern tours began. Bisharat, who had only led a trip like this once before for a non-island group, suddenly found himself serving as travel guide. "I wanted it to be an educational, well-rounded trip to enrich their lives and enrich the lives of others," he recalls. The cost of the Egypt trip included a $500 contribution that went directly to the historical society, but even with that, Bisharat took pains to keep the trip affordable so that it would be within the reach of as many islanders as possible. In March of 1999, the "Chebeague 20," as the group named themselves, and which included a retired university professor, a fisherman's wife and two teenagers, left for Egypt.

Among those on this first adventure east was Joan Robinson. The widow of a lobsterman, Robinson had never been able to travel as much as she wanted. When the Egypt trip came up, she jumped at the chance to go and soon found herself standing in front of the Great Pyramids, thinking, "How did this happen?' It was the last place I ever expected to be." She remembers that a group of islanders came to see them off and that many were concerned about the group's safety. "Most of my family thought that they would never see me again," she says with a laugh. "And that if I died over there it would serve me right." But Robinson didn't let these concerns, or a State Department travel advisory that was in place at the time, concern her. "You can get killed in New York City. I wasn't worried."

Neither was anyone else on the trip. Islanders make good travelers. It may be all those bag-laden shopping trips off-island or their ability to adapt rapidly when plans change, but all those on the trip agreed that the group was a major part of what made



Aboard camels in Egypt.

the trip so special. "They were comfortable with each other and comfortable with me," says Bisharat. "This diffused their anxiety and allowed them to be really open to the experience." Sheila Jordan, who was on the first trip with her husband, Phil, remembers it as traveling with a group of friends. "We were totally at ease with each other and knew that we could depend upon each other if there was any kind of a problem. We have a bond as islanders and the trip emphasized those bonds." The Chebeague 20 returned home energized and full of stories for the community, which had followed their trip through postings on the island website.

The $10,000 raised by the trip was a shot in the arm to the historical society's fund-raising efforts, and it became clear that another trip would be welcomed. Bisharat next turned his sights to his native Jordan, a country that he believes deserves more attention than it currently receives from tourists. Fourteen island residents went on that trip, including Joan Robinson and the Jordans again. And thus a tradition was born. Since these first two trips, groups have gone to Turkey and Greece, as well as joining shorter trips to Washington, D.C., and New York City. Every trip still benefits the historical society, though the donation amount is now up to the individual. Before going, individuals must also become members of the historical society. The trips have become so popular that non-islanders, usually with a Chebeague connection, have begun to request spots. In 2007, Bisharat organized two separate trips to Turkey that included sailing trips to lesser-known Greek islands.

Despite the trips' popularity, Bisharat maintains his stance that the trips should focus more on conceptual depth than whirlwind breadth. "It is incredibly important that people not just see the artifacts," he explains, "but that they [also] understand the culture that produces these things." To that end, he ensures that there is always a special treat somewhere along the way. "I want to provide surprises for people," Bisharat says. Groups have had private lectures, gone behind the scenes in museums, and visited Bisharat's olive farm. They received special permission to enter the library at St. Catherine's monastery in

In traditional dress.

Jordan, which is off-limits to all but the most serious researchers — and, apparently, tour groups from Chebeague Island. They visited Sinai and, while in Turkey, spent an evening at a dress rehearsal for an extremely rare choral performance of world spiritual music in the Hagia Sophia. There are personal meetings with friends and colleagues of Bisharat's who provide behind-the-scenes tours of museums, teas and dinners in their homes, and lively, informal conversation about the kinds of topics often avoided in polite company. In one favorite moment, the Jordan group met with a woman who collected traditional costumes, and who invited them to try the outfits on. "That was a special moment," laughed Leila Bisharat, Suhail's wife and frequent co-conspirator in trip planning. "Chebeague men don't usually play dress-up."

The impact on the trip attendees is significant. Phil and Sheila Jordan, who have developed a deep interest in Islamic culture and art because of the trips, explain: "When we talk with others about problems in the Middle East now, we are able to speak out of personal experience, not just from a global view."

David Platt

Barbara Porter with the Bowdoin Museum's Assyrian bas-reliefs.

THE CASCO BAY ASSYRIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

DAVID D. PLATT

The connections between Chebeague and the Middle East go back a very long way — 2,800 years if you think about it in a certain way — to a time when a king named Assurnasirpal II ruled what is part of modern-day Iraq. The ties aren't direct, to be sure, but they're strong between an island couple, Michael and Barbara Porter, and ancient Assyria, where the aforementioned king commissioned a stunning set of bas-reliefs for his palace.

The stone reliefs depicted the king in various heroic poses and were designed to impress his subjects. Like many an ancient marvel they disappeared under sand for millennia, only to be rediscovered by an amateur British archaeologist in 1845. Digging at the site ended after a few years, but Austen Henry Layard, the British discoverer, remained concerned for the safety of what he hadn't already shipped to museums back in Britain. Eventually he arranged with some American missionaries to ship further fragments, including several reliefs of the king and his exploits, to the United States. One of the missionaries, Henri Byron Haskell, Bowdoin College class of 1855, arranged to send a set to his alma mater in Brunswick, Maine, where they remain today.

Enter Barbara Porter, her husband, Michael, and Chebeague Island. Both Porters hold advanced academic degrees — hers in ancient history, his in comparative literature — and both decided in the 1980s to distance themselves from formal academic settings and move to Chebeague so Michael could set up shop as a boatbuilder. "Michael wanted to come back to Chebeague where he had a family

Participants in Chebeague trips to the Middle East celebrate during the island's Fourth of July parade.

After each trip, Bisharat works to improve the next one. "People send me notes with suggestions, or I hear comments," he says. "With each trip I learn a little more." Residents have even helped him come up with ideas. Joan Robinson suggested the addition of Greece to the itinerary. When one traveler expressed an interest in dairy farms, Bisharat was able to arrange a special side trip to a desert farm for her. And his audience is becoming more and more sophisticated. Phil and Sheila Jordan have taken it upon themselves to do some individual learning on their own by taking an Islamic Civilization course. Thus, these trips are not passive educational experiences, but instead consider and reflect the interests of those who go along.

THE ISLAND EFFECT

Islands, even more than other small communities, are often touched by the actions of a few. With nearly one-seventh of the island's population participating in these trips, the larger island community cannot help but be changed in some way. Like a ripple, the effect of the trips has spread. Islanders stay in touch with those abroad through e-mail and postings on the island website, keeping those who are far away updated on island activities and life. When the groups return, the historical society puts on a slide show of the trip that always attracts a crowd. The society has had floats in the island's annual Fourth of July parade that reflect the latest adventure, including one after the Egypt trip that included Bisharat dressed as Ramses II. Leila Bisharat has noticed Middle Eastern dishes showing up at island potlucks. Sheila Jordan finds herself having conversations about current Middle Eastern events while in the island store. And recently the school com-

connection," Barbara Porter says today. "We had begun to come as summer people, and we liked being here; we really didn't want to go home at the end of the summer." So when Michael broached the idea of settling permanently on Chebeague, Barbara recalls, "I said, 'What a wonderful idea.' And then in the next breath I said, 'Oh my god, there goes my career.' But Michael said, 'It's going to work out fine,' and it has."

Things worked out, as they often do, for more than one reason. Barbara discovered that the Chebeague Library had an excellent interlibrary loan program, through which she could obtain just about anything she needed to pursue her research. Getting her PhD took longer than it might have in Philadelphia, but she and Michael had started a family and needed time for that. Just as important, the change of locations brought Barbara within striking distance of Bowdoin College, where the Assyrian bas-reliefs had been installed in the entrance hall of the college museum. (When the sculptures arrived a century earlier they had been set up in the chapel, providing an interesting contrast between the symbols of a pagan king and the admittedly liberal Christianity of a New England college.)

The reliefs drew Barbara Porter like a magnet. "I knew they had them," she says. Off she went for a look, calling ahead to ask if the museum had "other stuff in the storeroom." In short order she was at work preparing a gallery talk about the reliefs and their meaning, retranslating the sculptures' inscriptions, training museum docents, writing a new brochure describing the sculptures, having them cleaned, and arranging for new photographs. She gave a major lecture on the bas-reliefs and their history, and she developed a college course that asked students to relate the sculptures to their modern and ancient settings, discerning the meaning of each.

Porter called her course "Palaces, Gods, and Kings," and asked students a deceptively simple question: What kind of building was the palace that had housed these sculptures — was it built for political purposes? For aesthetic effect? For a religious purpose? "I had the students look at buildings and what they do to you," she says. Discussion covered the Beaux Arts building that housed Bowdoin's museum as well as the college's fine arts building, a less formal modern design. The old museum "asks you to step away from the ordinary world, experience art and be transformed by it," she says. The modern building next door "invites you in, says the students count." She describes it as "a building of a mature democracy." As for the ancient palace depicted in the plans re-created by archaeologists, it was, like the old Bowdoin museum, "designed to impress." The course proved to be a draw at Bowdoin, and for a time Porter taught a duplicate version up the road at Bates College in Lewiston as well. "Michael was right," she says. "Things did work out."

But the connection the Porters forged between Chebeague and ancient Assyria doesn't end there. By the early 1990s Barbara had finished her doctoral dissertation (on the bas-reliefs), and her adviser suggested she have it published. In 1993 it came out as *Images, Power, Politics* under the imprint of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. Ten years later a second book, *Trees, Kings, and Politics*, was published by a Swiss firm. It was at that point that the Porters came up with the idea of the Casco Bay Assyriological Institute.

The Institute "holds occasional conferences on controversial topics in ancient Near Eastern history," Barbara says. The idea "was to hold tiny conferences without an audience — five of us would come here to talk about an issue that's tense and difficult to deal with." Attending scholars produce 50-page papers on their topics, circulate them in advance, and then have "a really collaborative experience — everybody's cooped up on a small island, after all — where people can go off in the woods and come back with issues settled."

Barbara and Michael are planning a voyage to Europe, aboard a new boat he has built, where she will pursue her studies and write from an office on board. In an increasingly virtual world, the physical location of the scholar may not matter as much as it once did, but as they know, the emotional ties to place — in their case, Chebeague — are more important than ever. As she says, "I am so lucky — I live the most wonderful, nutty life."

Suhail Bisharat as Ramses II, in the Fourth of July parade.

pleted an Egyptian studies unit, studying Arabic writing, culture, and art that was informed by pictures and stories of those who had traveled there.

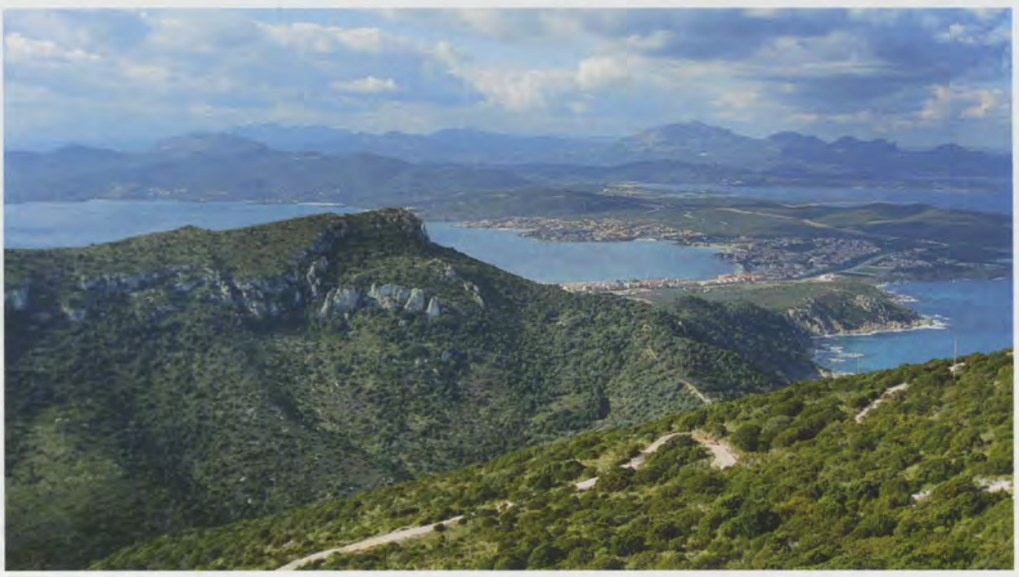
But ultimately, it is about the historical society. The trips have raised thousands of dollars in funding, as well as ensuring good publicity and building membership. More than the funding, however, Bisharat hopes that these trips highlight the connections between the nascent Chebeague museum and the grander sites that they explore. "I want to help them make connections and look behind the scenes," he says. By seeing artifacts within the framework of the culture that produces them, instead of being isolated as these things often are in American museums, it makes clear that the museum effort currently under way on Chebeague is the same thing that the Jordanians and Egyptians are doing, he says. It is an effort to preserve cultural heritage in whatever form it takes, not merely an effort to glorify objects.

Joan Robinson appreciates that philosophy. She has kept a scrapbook of every trip that she's taken. Stuffed with pictures, postcards and e-mails from home that the groups received during their time away, they are little time capsules of this phase of island life. She plans to eventually donate these books to the Chebeague Historical Society. "They aren't about Chebeague history," she explains, "but it's what we did. We didn't just sit home and knit."

A former Island Institute Fellow, ***Cherie Galyean*** *works at the Maine Community Foundation. Except where noted, all photographs courtesy of the Chebeague Historical Society.*

MAINE TO SARDINIA

The cultures are different, but the island experience is the same



SUSAN LITTLE OLCOTT

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

I watched them in the tank, waving their antennae wildly like the strange crustacean creatures they are, and wondered who would pay 100 euros to take one home and eat it for dinner. Why wouldn't they instead choose the Canadian lobster, which had meat-filled claws and cost a more reasonable 30 euros per kilogram? But then, how had these *astice canadese* gotten here in the first place, to the local *pescheria*, in the tiny port town of Palau, on the island of Sardinia, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea? And how could they possibly cost less, having traveled so far to arrive still alive, than the local *aragosta*, or spiny lobster, that was caught in traps right here off the coast?

Masks and horses are regular sights at Sardinian festivals.

Sardinians take great pride in their pastoral culture and have fought hard over the ages to preserve it.

Having spent many years studying these edible insects while serving as an Island Institute intern on Monhegan Island, then as a Fellow in Casco Bay, and again as a graduate student at the University of New Hampshire, I was naturally curious about the local lobster fishery in Sardinia, where I now live. My first clue as to the status of the fishery was the price. My second came while touring a small aquaculture facility designed to raise *aragoste* and reintroduce them to the wild; obviously, the population was far from thriving. It was soon apparent that I would not be eating the luxurious amount of lobster by which I had been spoiled while they were my research subjects back in New England.

I later learned that the low supply and subsequent high cost was not limited to just lobster, but extended to many of the local fish populations. When I first arrived here, I saw orata, a local fish, on the menu and thought I was getting a great deal at only 5 euros for a serving, only to find that the price was 5 euros per *etto*, or 100 grams of orata. After some quick calculations, figuring that an average fish might weigh about a pound and a half, which translates to about three-fourths of a kilo (750 grams), I realized that I would actually be paying somewhere around 40 euros ($60!) for a fresh fish dinner — not such a great deal after all!

My husband and I have lived in Sardinia now for a little over a year. He is stationed at the U.S. Navy base on the island of La Maddalena, just off the northern tip of Sardinia, and I teach biology to military personnel and their families. When we first found out we were moving here, I read all about the La Maddalena Archipelago and the beautiful, clear Mediterranean waters famous for boating, diving, and marine life. Comprised of a dozen or so islands and islets, La Maddalena is the largest and the only island in the archipelago to be permanently inhabited. Italy designated the archipelago a national park just over ten years ago, obviously recognizing that there was something worth preserving, but also because much of it was, unfortunately, already gone. Even the name of the island, Sardinia, reminds people that there were once many more fish, including large schools of sardines. According to the locals, since the establishment of the park and strict regulations on fishing, the fish populations have started to recover. These regulations may also partially explain the *aragosta*'s high price.

So where were all the old fishing boats and bait shacks lining the waterfront? Wouldn't there be evidence of a once-thriving fishing community on the coast? The fact is, though Sardinia is an island in the middle of the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, fishing is not a dominant aspect of the culture here. The majority of the boats responsible for fishing out these waters came from other parts of the Mediterranean. Rather than fishing boats, you find loads of pleasure boats — from simple daysailers to luxury yachts, complete with pools and helicopter landing pads. Additionally, the tour boats, dubbed "spaghetti boats" for the midday meal they serve while touring the archipelago's islands, line the docks with bright sandwich boards bearing colorful maps and photographs of lean, tanned snorkelers lounging on their decks. The terrazzas of the seaside restaurants are filled with people enjoying a drink or lingering over a meal; the shops on the main street are filled with postcards and beach toys; and every inch of sand on every beach is covered with sunbathers. There are outdoor concerts in the piazza and festivals in the streets every weekend, and the ferries to La Maddalena run until midnight each night, packed with people who have come to revel in this Mediterranean summer playground. This was the scene I witnessed upon arriving in Palau in August.

Then, sometime in late September, the ferries began their winter schedule, stopping regular service after 8 p.m., and the campgrounds slowly emptied out, save for a few hardy German tourists who pressed on into the fall. Many of the town's stores closed their doors for the season, including, sadly, all of the *gelaterie* that served generous scoops of hazelnut- and tiramisu-flavored gelato to the throngs of beachgoers. The ghosts of summer lingered on for a while in the form of beach litter, but eventually this, too, washed away with the coming of the fall winds. And then, the town went dark.

Not only were many of the stores closed for the season, but the ones that did remain open were now closed in the middle of the day, every day, and all day on Sundays, making the main street feel like a

There are outdoor concerts in the piazza and festivals in the streets every weekend.

ghost town. In the summer, Sardinians forgo the traditional *riposo*, where businesses close from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., in order to take advantage of the temporary influx of tourists. Now I had to adapt my shopping habits to match the restricted schedule. Fortunately, I had some experience in this regard from my time wintering over on Chebeague Island in Maine's Casco Bay. I remember the first time I tried to make pancakes, realized I was out of milk, that the one store in town was closed — and the ferry wasn't running until morning. After that, I learned to squirrel away supplies and make creative substitutions. So, dealing with the stores being closed during *riposo* and on Sundays and during the myriad Italian holidays was a piece of cake. Here, I also had to figure out things like which milk to buy — in a box or a bottle (and how can milk be in an unrefrigerated box, anyway?), or trying to translate which container of milk is skim versus whole, and even what animal it comes from. But even this was not insurmountable with a good dictionary and a little scientific research.

The starker change, now that summer was over, was the disappearance of all the people. This was particularly pronounced during *riposo*, but the lack of people at the port and in the piazzas was apparent at all times of day. When I did see someone walking down the street, they often didn't say hello. Instead, they looked away with a serious look enhanced by the dark complexion and heavy brow that typifies Sardinians. When I first came here, I had this idea that all Italians were garrulous and welcoming. I was surprised and, at first, disappointed, to find them more reserved, but I was familiar with the difficulties of getting to know islanders. On my first day of sea sampling on Chebeague, I met Steve Johnson at the Stone Pier in the wee hours of the morning, and after a brief discussion of how to best get set up to measure the lobsters coming aboard his boat, several hours passed with little conversation. I assumed that that was the way it would be; I was in for a long, lonesome winter. But, at the end of the day, I found myself drinking a Coke in his living room and chatting with him and his wife and sons. Later in the year, he appeared on my doorstep with a bucket of lobsters for me and my parents, who were visiting from Missouri. Getting to know islanders can take a bit of perseverance, but once you've made a friend, you've got one for life. I realize this every year at Christmas when I receive cards from people on the islands where I lived over five years ago. Or, when I have returned to Monhegan for Trap Day, the first day of the lobstering season, and found myself among old friends.

And so I persevered in trying to befriend a few Sardinians, and even though I spoke pretty shoddy Italian, it eventually paid off. The people whom I have gotten to know have gone out of their way to help me find my way in a strange culture. The local butcher, who used to look askance at me because I never knew what I wanted or how to properly ask for it, recently taught me how to make *Zuppa Gallurese*, a traditional Sardinian dish, according to his family's recipe. "This is the best for the broth," he said, handing me a meaty sheep bone and chunks of veal stew meat, "and you must use only this cheese. It is the most flavorful." Similarly, our landlord, who doesn't speak a lick of English and had a translator come to the signing of our lease, invited us over for Christmas last year. Surrounded by nearly 20 of his family members, we were served an incredible feast, and all we could say was *Grazie*, which we repeated many times. I was finally invited behind the closed doors of *riposo* into the lives of these private people, and, once in, was treated like family.

Sardinians place a high value on spending time with their families. When I first arrived here and explained to my landlord that my family was in Missouri, but I had lived in Maine, then California, and now here, he looked at me, puzzled, and asked, "Do you not like your family?" He could not understand why I would go so far away from my parents with no plans to return to my original home. The *riposo* period of the day is, essentially, designed so that people can take a break from work and go home to have lunch with their families — for

Cinghiale, *the wild boar, is an important quarry for island hunters.*

four hours. It makes me think of how many Americans eat lunch while sitting at their desks at work! Though my family is not here, I have come to appreciate good friends and the fact that an afternoon is well spent over a long cup of tea.

As I got to know a few locals, I began to learn about the history of Palau and northern Sardinia. The story goes that the Aga Khan first came to the Costa Smeralda (Emerald Coast) on the northern coast of Sardinia, in the 1960s, after hearing about it from a friend who had hidden his yacht in a secret cove there during World War II to avoid requisition by the navy. He was entranced by the beauty of this virtually unknown landscape, with its crystalline turquoise waters and a coast lined with whimsically wind-sculpted pink and gray granite rocks, and he immediately began making plans to build a grand hotel in order to attract other wealthy friends and travelers. Soon, big names like Ringo Starr, Jackie and Aristotle Onassis, Giorgio Armani and Princess Grace of Monaco were frequenting this new resort. As the Costa Smeralda was slowly discovered, resorts and vacation homes sprung up to accommodate the new tourists. This presented a welcome opportunity for islanders at a time of pronounced economic depression in Sardinia following World War II. Now, less than 50 years later, the Costa Smeralda is a thriving tourist destination where, at least in the summer, you can even find Canadian lobster.

So, if the tourism industry didn't develop until the 1960s, where does the island's history lie? Apparently, the threat of malaria, once prevalent in stagnant coastal marshes, and a long history of outside invaders, drove Sardinians inland. It was strange, after living on Chebeague and Monhegan islands, where the communities centered on the fishing industry, to discover an island whose culture was not based on the sea.

One weekend in late fall, curious to discover this inland culture and to see if there was life somewhere on the island during the winter months, we headed toward the interior. We drove through a rocky, scraggly landscape with wind-whipped olive and cork trees and dense, low-lying shrubs known as *macchia*. Amid the *macchia* are herds of sheep with clanging brass bells and isolated *stazzus*, stone shepherds' houses. You feel as if you are traveling through an ancient landscape. In fact, obsidian tools found in mountain caves show that the island has been inhabited for over 6,000 years. More common are the remains of Bronze Age settlements from around 1500 BC; these *nuraghi*, stone burial monuments and watchtowers, crop up on the hillsides among the *stazzus* — a visual link between past and present in a place where the lifestyle seems as antiquated as the architecture.

On the side of the road, we saw a group of parked cars, marking a hunting party for *cinghiale*, the wild boar. We spotted the *cacciatore* (hunters) up in the hills sporting black vests and squat hats, proudly carrying their rifles and shouting to their dogs. In one of the small towns where we stopped at a cafe, we overheard a group of these sturdy, dark men speaking in the local dialect known as Sardo while playing a game of cards at a table outside the bar. Sardo is different enough from Italian to be virtually unrecognizable to me. Often, it sounds like *lu-lu-shottu-puzzu*, and is spoken by people with surnames like Pisciottu and Doneddu. The music of this region shares these guttural sounds: The deep, throaty polyphonic singing of male *tenores* was invented to mimic the sounds of the *launedda*, a tonal, accordion-like instrument. To me, it sounds, appropriately, like a chorus of farm animals.

Sardinians have great pride in their pastoral culture and have fought hard over the ages to maintain it. D. H. Lawrence describes them in *The Sea and Sardinia* as "coarse, vigorous, determined, they will stick to their own . . . and let the big world find its own way." They are fiercely self-reliant and independent and have survived rule by Romans, Austrians, and Spaniards, to name a few. Legend has it that the shepherds descended from the hills of Palau and La Maddalena and successfully repelled Napoleon's forces, who mistakenly thought the island would be an easy acquisition. Now, Sardinians merely must repel the encroaching forces of modernization and a growing tourism industry.

One of the ways in which the inland culture is being preserved is through the opening of farms to the public. The concept of the *agriturismo*, a public farm, evolved after World War II as it became harder to make a living from the land. Some of these farms sell wine or cheese, while others serve meals and offer rooms for the night.

Wanting to experience an *agriturismo* for ourselves and, hopefully, to meet some of the people who still lived the Sardinian pastoral life, we drove into the mountains of the Gennargentu region. We arrived at the Agriturismo Didone just outside the town of Dorgali and were, at first, a bit concerned to find it closed. However, a moment later, the owners pulled down the driveway. "Katy," the woman said, shaking my hand and kissing me on both cheeks as is the custom, "and, my husband, Giovanni," who reached out to shake my husband's hand. Soon, we were sitting inside, around a cozy woodstove, enjoying cups of espresso and hot fried *seadas*, pastries filled with sweet sheep's milk cheese drizzled with wild honey, while watching the sunset over the mountains. That night, they served us, their only guests, a platter of ravioli filled with freshly made ricotta cheese. Plates of roast suckling

The author with a friend.

Festivals are integral to Sardinia's thriving tourism industry, which didn't develop until the 1960s but builds on the island's history and natural beauty.

pig followed, accompanied by unidentified lumpy-looking animal parts that Giovanni explained were from *la pancha* of the pig, as he pointed to his round belly. Having acquired a boldness in Maine for trying new things when given the opportunity, I tasted *la pancha* and, once I'd gotten over the odd texture, found it delicious.

The next morning, after asking how they had made the ricotta we had so enjoyed at dinner, Giovanni presented us with a bottle of sheep's milk, still warm, and a strange, clear substance from the sheep's stomach called *caglio*, which means "to curdle," and instructions on how to make the cheese ourselves when we got home. I had never thought about trying to make my own cheese or how to do it, but here, the idea of making things from scratch, straight from one's farm, or cooking with wild mushrooms and herbs collected in the woods, was the tradition. We were lucky enough, in this bright spot of warmth in the otherwise quiet landscape of November, to observe the pastoral life that is at the heart of Sardinian culture — and to be invited back.

I once needed the finite boundaries of an island's geography and community to feel comfortable in freely exploring my surroundings. But living in Sardinia has reinforced many of the lessons I learned while on Maine islands, such that I now realize they do not apply strictly to island living; rather, they are the skills necessary to uncover and participate in any culture, island or mainland, local or foreign. If you can't find the familiar ingredients to make the recipe you'd planned on, be flexible — use boxed milk. Try all things local, even pig's stomach; who knows, you might like it. And, most important, let people surprise you; the gruffest of characters might end up bringing you a bucket of lobsters or inviting you to a huge Italian feast. These are the lessons I have taken with me from Maine to the Mediterranean and beyond, recognizing that my island experiences have given me the confidence to explore further afield in the future.

A former Island Institute Fellow, ***Susan Little Olcott*** *has now returned to the United States with her husband.*

FLUKES, FLAMES AND BOILING BLUBBER

Students "rearticulate" skeletons, creating beautiful museum pieces

Courtesy North Haven Community School (3)

TERRY GOODHUE

A neighbor had said that there was some kind of big, dead, oceangoing animal washed ashore near where I lived on Seal Bay in Vinalhaven. It was May of 2004. Lucy McCarthy, field guide in hand, joined me and we walked in to look at it. First, an eagle, then a couple of ravens flew up. Then we noticed the smell.

There it lay, partly in the water. It was over nine feet long and its decaying skin had turned white. Sizing it up, counting the teeth and consulting our copy of Steven Katona's *Field Guide to Whales, Porpoises and Seals*, we concluded that it was a white-beaked dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*), an offshore, deepwater squid eater.

As a teacher at North Haven Community School with a passion for the natural world, I was already thinking, "Let's save the skeleton of this beast." I began making phone calls to see how to keep an anticipated school project legal.

The next day at high tide, Emmett Hodder, a ninth grader from North Haven, took us in to Seal Bay in his outboard, carefully picking his way through the shoal Mill River and under the Carrying Place bridge. Once there, we levered the oozing, slippery, awkward, 900-pound carcass into the cold water so that we could get a rope under and around it. The sun was bright on the glassy water surface as we headed back for North Haven, towing the carcass, steering clear of harbor seals that eyed us from ledges as they stayed close to new pups.

The National Marine Fisheries Service okayed our plan to use the bones of this dolphin pending a necropsy by Allied Whale at College of the Atlantic. When September came around, Ben Neal and Ruth Kermish-Allen of the Island Institute drove me and ten students to the Bar Harbor campus to pick up our bones. At this point, they were in a walk-in deep freeze in ten large plastic bags. Even straight from the freezer and through the plastic, the smell couldn't be ignored. Before leaving, we had an informative visit with Rosie Seton, who described to us some of the marine mammal research that was going on at Allied Whale. Then, Tobey Stevenson took us all on a tour of their whale museum, where we closely inspected some of their many rearticulated skeletons.

Back at our school, we rigged up boiling pots from some old honey barrels and a propane burner from a beeswax melter (items from previous adventures in natural science). Flukes and flames! Boiling blubber! We boiled, scraped and cleaned the bones of dark decaying meat, fat, tendons and cartilage. It took days — well, weeks and weeks. The special odor of rancid blubber permeated every corner of our school. Of course it was good for the classes studying *Moby-Dick*, but the poor French classes did suffer.

Now to create a beautiful museum piece. Consulting the reference photographs my students had taken during the cleaning process, we started to identify and position the now white-bleached bones. First, we bored a 3/8-inch hole in each of the 62 vertebrae. With the eyes and the touch of sculptors, we stood on our work table and bent and shaped the steel shaft that would lie hidden inside this dolphin's back-bone. What fun!

Students Ian Hopkins, Scott Baribeau and Conor Curtin had to devise methods to support the heavy cranium in position and to hang the flipper bones and all the ribs so that they formed a streamlined shape. The work was really quite hard. The ribs had to be done over a couple of times. We used steel pins and epoxy. We didn't want our support structure to show. It had to look natural, even lively. The hip bone connected to the thigh bone? Right? Not in any cetacean. They had lost their hind limbs 50 million years ago in the Eocene swamps. The evidence is in the pair of floating 3 inch vestigial pelvis bones.

During the hours and days in our workshop, now called Cetacean Station, we wondered endlessly about the lives of whales and their kin. What do they eat? Where do they live? How fast do they swim? What

about their babies? No ears? Do you mean they hear through their jaws? I think that the spirit of this inquiry has become permanent in the students who spent hours placing each tooth in its correct socket or pondering the eerily analogous bone structures of our own arms, wrists and hands with those of a dolphin's flipper.

Since the completion of the dolphin skeleton rearticulation, Ben Lovell, Jesse Davisson and Stephanie Brown have put together the bones of a harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), and Leta Hallowell and Rory Curtin as middle schoolers assembled delicate harp seal (*Phoca groenlandica*) bones. Staying thematic, North Haven fifth and sixth graders, directed by Ken Jones, put on a beautiful and poignant play about dolphins.

Last year a deceased long-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala melaena*) washed up on a boulder beach on the south side of Vinalhaven. This time, much-welcomed students from the Vinalhaven school walked down to help out. We had over a half ton of meat and other soft tissue to cut away. I didn't hear one word about the smell from these daughters and sons of island fishermen. Katlyn Willis, Randy Pitts, Andrew Guptil and Johnny McCarthy went at the task with meat hooks and knives with an enthusiasm that I had to temper. "Be careful of the thin zygomatic arch! Watch for the floating vestigial pelvis bones!" They made quick work of a strenuous job.

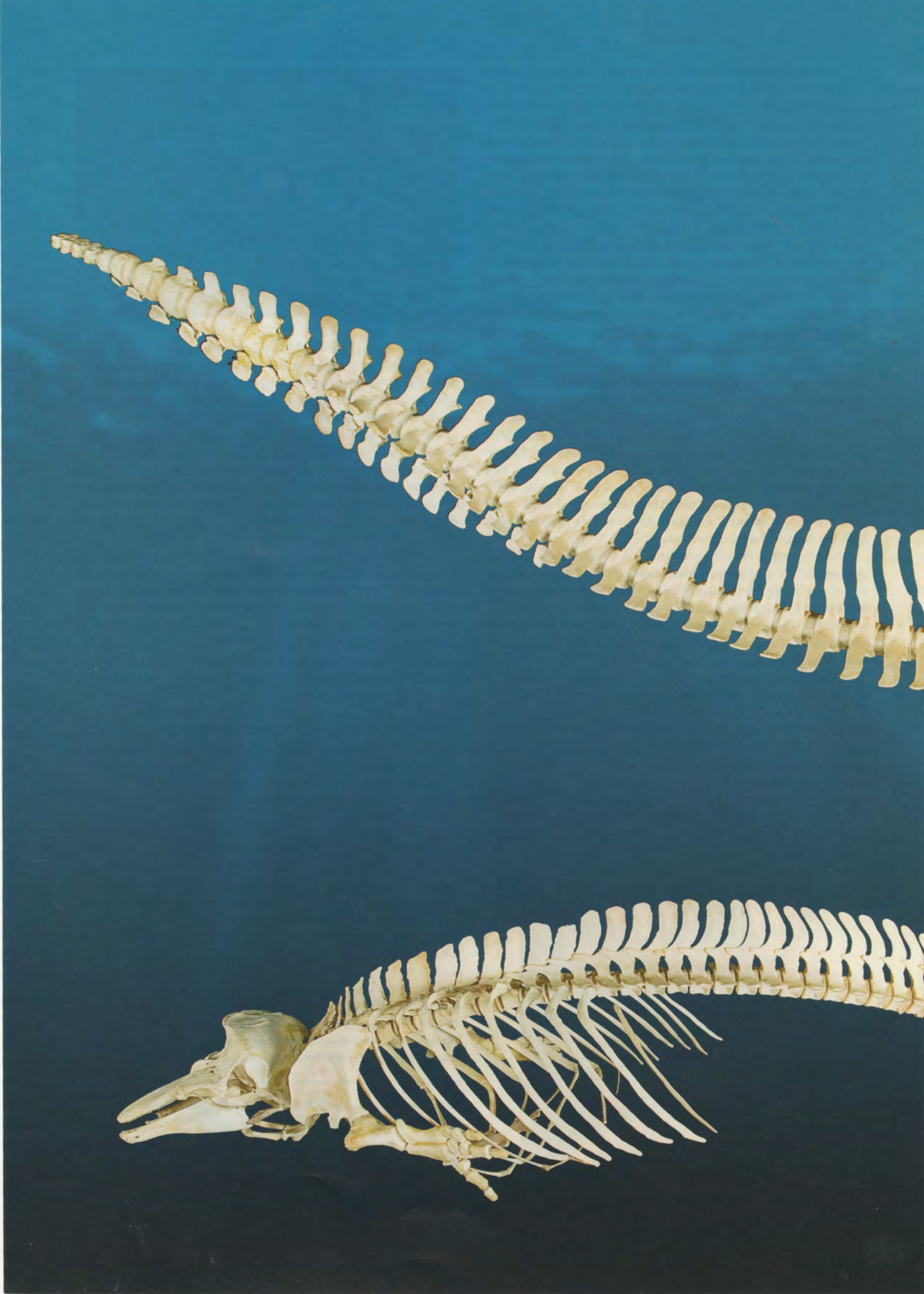
Well, there have been lessons in science and lessons in living. The latest whale carcass to land on the rocks of our shores was that of a 10-foot-long pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*). As we learned in the dissection of this uncommon deep-ocean resident, it was a female and she carried inside a 13-pound calf, a perfectly formed little whale about to be born.

It's always sad to see the life of one of these big, mysterious animals come to an end, and we are often left wondering why. In the case of this pygmy sperm whale, this particular mother-to-be, it was especially sad: the necropsy revealed that she died from having swallowed an ordinary green plastic trash bag tied with a square knot at the top. The indigestible plastic had gathered into a wad in her stomach, forming a barrier that prevented food from providing nutrition to the whale and her developing calf.

As we handle the bones of some of these great animals, we contemplate their lives. We begin to understand more about them. The student of cetology, supposedly dispassionate in his or her scientific studies, does feel for these big beings that long ago left terra firma. We are made more mindful that human carelessness could unintentionally set a trap for another animal out there.

Terry Goodhue *commutes from Vinalhaven to teach biology at the North Haven Community School.*

Overleaf: Three skeletons rearticulated by students at the North Haven Community School. At the top is a harp seal; the large animal in the center is a white-beaked dolphin; the lower one is a harbor porpoise. (Peter Ralston)



IN RESIDENCE

Coastal retreats offer inspiration to financially challenged artists

CARL LITTLE

When the photographer and watercolor painter George Daniell (1911–2002) visited Monhegan Island during his first trip to Maine in 1938 he left Ogunquit in search of relief from a bad case of hay fever — he rented "The Lobster Pot," a fisherman's shack, for seven dollars a month (washroom facilities were at the nearby Monhegan House). He photographed the island and turned out, in his words, "countless splashy, undisciplined watercolors that I exhibited on my floor every night."

Jo Weiss, director of the Washington Studio School, painting in the Heliker-LaHotan printmaking studio, July 2007. Photo: Greg Rec, courtesy Portland Press Herald

Robert Pollien, "Eagle Lake," 1992, oil on canvas, 12 x 13 inches from residency at Acadia National Park, 1992

Terry Hilt, "Blackhead: Storm at Sea," 2005, watercolor & acrylic, 16 by 22 inches. Carina House resident, 2005

Long gone are the cut-rate rents Daniell and other artists enjoyed back in the day. Yet thanks to the vision and generosity of a number of nonprofits, foundations, a government agency and many individuals including artists, opportunities to paint — and write and sculpt, photograph, film and dance — on Maine islands exist for those who can't afford the generally stiff rentals. In the past 20 years at least six residencies have been established on islands, from Westport, in the Midcoast, to Norton, way downeast. With distinct criteria and varying capacities, these programs offer experiences and opportunities for artists from Maine and from away — sometimes far away.

GREAT CRANBERRY

The newest Maine island residency can be found on Great Cranberry Island, at the former home of painters John Heliker (1909–2000) and Robert LaHotan (1927–2002). Lifelong partners, they created some of their finest work on the largest of the Cranberry Isles, a five-island archipelago off the southern end of Mount Desert Island. They also shared a vision that their island residence and studios should continue to be used by artists. Knowing that what they had been fortunate to have lay beyond the reach of many, they created the Heliker-LaHotan Foundation in 1993 to fulfill their legacy. (When LaHotan asked his neighbor Gary Allen to be on the board of the foundation, he told him, "Get the lights back on. I want people back in there.")

After Heliker died in 2000 and LaHotan two years later, the foundation's board of trustees, led by Patricia Bailey, a lifelong friend of the artists and a professor of painting and drawing at Western Carolina University, began making plans to launch the residency. In 2006, the first two artists arrived; in 2007, the program welcomed eight.

The two-at-a-time residencies run three and four weeks and are open to "artists of established ability" wherever they may live, with preference given to those individuals who may not otherwise have an opportunity to work in Maine. Resident artists are encouraged to open their studios to islanders near the end of their stay and/or present a public program about their work.

"Moonlit Island," a print produced by Siri Beckman during her residency at Great Spruce Head Island.

Among last summer's residents was Lilian Cooper, an artist from Amsterdam, who is currently involved in a 20-year project to draw the North Atlantic coastal rim. "I'm drawing all the edges," Cooper told *Portland Press Herald* arts reporter Bob Keyes during her visit in July; "It wouldn't be complete without Maine." She had read about the Great Cranberry Island residency in *Art in America* magazine, and leapt at the chance.

In addition to a spectacular view of the Pool, the island's only tidal estuary, the residence itself is a gem. Enoch B. Stanley, a ship's captain, built the main residence in the 19th century. Heliker and LaHotan fixed it up and converted outbuildings into studios. They hosted a number of celebrated artists, including composer Samuel Barber and photographer Walker Evans (among his most famous images is a portrait of the cast-iron parlor stove that still makes for a commanding presence in the dining room). The island itself was a hotbed of East Coast artists. In addition to Heliker and LaHotan, the likes of Gretna Campbell, William Kienbusch, Dorothy Eisner and Carl Nelson made the island their seasonal art base.

GREAT SPRUCE HEAD ISLAND

The Porter family home on Great Spruce Head in Penobscot Bay has an equally significant place in the history of American art. The island served as inspiration for the painter Fairfield Porter and his photographer brother Eliot Porter. The setting is remarkable: "that far-off island in Penobscot Bay," as poet James Schuyler referred to it, led to paintings by the former and photographs by the latter that are icons in their respective mediums.

Anina Porter Fuller, daughter of Fairfield's and Eliot's younger brother John, has been going to the island every summer since she was little. "When I arrived," she recalled recently, "Fairfield would come down and meet me at the dock and help carry my art supplies up." Wanting to share the island experience with other artists, Fuller struck upon the idea of hosting a one-week program. Inspired by a visit to the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts on Deer Isle in the summer of 1992, she invited a group of artist friends to come to the island for a week. The retreat was a success and the Great Spruce Head Island Art Week was born.

Fuller's vision was of a residency without instruction. "It's not a workshop," she notes, "not a typical trip. This [experience] is so grounded, even for people who don't come from Maine. They're away from it all, in a special space." Great Spruce Head Island Art Week isn't advertised; the program, Fuller explains, "self selects."

The residency is intense and almost nonstop, often beginning with explorations of the island and culminating with a sharing of work on the Friday night before the group departs. Painters and writers predominate, with an occasional photographer, musician and sculptor joining them. The decks on the main house double as studios. There is a nominal fee to cover food and transportation, but nearly half of the 12 slots are covered by scholarships. "Real artists don't have the money — I hate to say that, but a lot of them don't," Fuller remarks.

In recent years a number of Maine artists have attended, many of them learning about the program through word of mouth. Printmaker Siri Beckman, poets Linda Buckmaster and Elizabeth Garber, sculptors Squidge Davis and Sharon Townsend, jeweler Fred Woell, book artist Rebecca Goodale, and painters Tom Curry, Brita Holmquist and Lydia Cassatt are among past visitors. (Every summer Handworks Gallery in Blue Hill mounts an exhibition of work by the previous year's artists.)

The residency permits husband and wife to attend together if they are both artists. In 2002 two couples were on island: songwriter/composer Gordon Bok, who carved small relief sculptures, and his wife, harpist Carol Rohl; and artist MaJo Keleshian and her husband, poet Sylvester Pollet. Among a group of sixty haiku-esque poems that Pollet wrote during his stay is one that relates to Rohl:

takes one hell of an imagination
plus the right woman
to sail with a harp aboard

F. Scott Hess, "Fresnel's Boots," oil on canvas, 2003. Courtesy Hackett-Freedman Gallery, San Francisco

Tom Curry, "South Meadow, Great Spruce Head Island," pastel from Great Spruce Head Island residency

Carol Sloane, "Simultaneous Vision," Monhegan, 2003, oil stick on panel, 36 by 44 inches. Carina House resident, 2003

NORTON ISLAND

It takes a bit of pioneering spirit to apply for the Eastern Frontier Educational Foundation's Norton Island residency way downeast. Among the criteria for attending is, in founder Stephen Dunn's words, "an ability to live rustically and mostly alone for 18 days on an island in the northern Atlantic Ocean." Since its launching in 2000, the island program has accommodated 140 residents, "ten of whom," Dunn reports, "left early and 130 of whom are fanatic fans of the program."

Having purchased the 150-acre island on the south side of Moosabec Reach, Dunn felt it was too magnificent a site for private use only and should be shared. "I was unaware of the vast world of residencies, to be honest," he recounts. "I simply thought that this large, beautiful island in an out-of-the-way location would be a great place for artists, writers and musicians to congregate and work on their art."

The residency has a landing next to Busters' lobster dock in Jonesport. The boat ride across Moosabec Reach is less than a mile. Jonesport and Beals are visible from the northern shore; on the south side, which features large slabs of granite, there is open ocean speckled with islands.

Over three years Dunn built the "humble infrastructure" that makes the program possible. A workshop-barn offers an art studio and equipment for wood- and metalworking, along with two attached studios. Seven one-person cottages for writers and a small conservatory with a piano round out the accommodations. "There is, of course, no television," reads the website prospectus.

Dunn has kept the program simple and unpretentious. The name of the program, "Eastern Frontier," bespeaks its character: "When you step on this island, which is close to the easternmost part of the U.S.," he explains, "you have the feeling you have crossed over from civilization." The terrain, Dunn reports, "is granite, spruce, moss: what Acadia must have looked like before it became an attraction." One "handmade" trail leads around the island.

Dunn likes to point to the prizewinning authors who have been to the island, among them Kiran Desai, whose book *The Inheritance of Loss* won the Man Booker Prize in 2006. In a testimonial on the residency's website, Desai offers a poetic description of an island sanctuary: "this perfectly hatched island among a whole shoal of pine furry islands." She also reports editing "an entire manuscript of 450 pages" in a place "wild and devoid of that sanitary, academic, uptight atmosphere of so many of these centers."

The Paces' Gift to Maine

A continuum of creativity was in place when Stephen Pace arrived on Deer Isle more than a half century ago and it persists unabated today. John Marin, William and Marguerite Zorach, Karl Schrag, William and Emily Muir, Howard Fussiner, Alfred Chadbourne — these and many other artists make up a marvelous parade of individuals connected to a place made all the more special through the eyes and art of its beholders.

While not a residency in the sense of the other examples given here, the house in Stonington that painter Pace and his wife, Pam, summered in for 35 years will continue to serve as a place of art. As part of their bequest to Maine, the couple has gifted their home to the Maine College of Art, which will use it as a study center for students and faculty.

— Carl Little

Michael Branca, "View from Horn Hill," 2003, oil on canvas, 11 by 32 inches. Carina House resident, 2003

MACNAMARA FOUNDATION

Nevada-based advertising professional and educator Maureen MacNamara Barrett founded the Robert M. MacNamara Foundation in 1987 in honor of her father, an attorney and former FBI agent whose lifelong vocation was to help others recognize the importance of education. The year-round residency, with six-week sessions (the longest of the residencies described here) in winter, spring, summer and fall, was established in 2002 as a means for assisting artists to fulfill their creative vision.

The program is centered in a Pennsylvania barn that was relocated to Maine. The airy structure with studios is situated on three acres fronted by the Sheepscot River and backed by a tidal, saltwater marsh. A nearby family-owned compound of more than 250 acres provides additional accommodations and studio space for visiting artists. The only exceptions to uninterrupted work time are occasional forays to local restaurants, visits to museums or a local school, and boat trips to nearby islands.

Quilt artist Duncan Slade from nearby Edgecomb has been studio manager at the MacNamara residency for the past three years. The program seeks mid-career artists that need time to work on a project, he explains. On occasion the program will accept artists who have either been away from their work for a while or are making a shift. The program, says Slade, seeks a mix of disciplines in each session. One cohort might consist of two painters, a videographer, a writer, a composer and an installation artist.

Among the Maine island residency programs, the MacNamara is among the best equipped for a range of artistic pursuits. Facilities include ceramics/pottery studios with kilns, potter's wheel, etc.; a Mac digital media center featuring a variety of printers; and accommodations for artists involved in fiber arts, painting, photography, sculpture, woodworking and writing.

The artists are also free to roam: A recent resident, a printmaker from New York, spent nearly his whole time on the grounds of the nearby 68-acre Bonyun Preserve, which was opened to the public in 2006. "If people can afford to give themselves the luxury of six weeks and can see themselves in an environment where they're going to be with a group of people at mealtimes," Slade observes, "then a lot can happen."

Artists have arrived from six different continents to work at the MacNamara Foundation. "They come through word of mouth, past residents, and through the Alliance of Artists Communities, of which we are members," Slade explains. Among Maine-based artists who have attended are diorama artist John Kimball, fresco painter Barbara Sullivan, sculptor Phyllis Janto and multimedia artist Patricia Wheeler.

F. Scott Hess, a Los Angeles–based painter, has been a resident twice, in 2003 and 2007. "I've worked as an artist for thirty years, with plenty of studio time," he writes, "so I'm not just after the hours that the MacNamara Foundation affords its residents." Rather, Hess enjoys the "shake-up" of his surroundings, finding the Maine coast a "soul-refreshing switch" from Southern California.

Hess also enjoys the community aspect of the residency. "As a painter I've spent massive hours of my life alone, facing the walls of my studio," he explains. He finds it wonderful to be thrown in with six strangers, all of them engaged in the same profession, but from different backgrounds and countries, and working in other mediums. "You have a chance to exchange ideas, argue about theories and become friends," he says.

An unexpected fruit of Hess's 2003 residency is the painting *Fresnel's Boots*, inspired by a visit to Seguin Island. Having accomplished what he had planned to do at MacNamara in the first three weeks, he was looking for something new to develop. He recorded his boat trip to the island with a video camera, and soon settled on the lighthouse as his subject. Hess doesn't usually do landscapes, but the weather was superb, and the view spectacular: "a 360-degree panorama that sparkled and made you feel glad to be alive."

Joy, Gratitude

In this place, I turn and see a flower
or tall grasses waving, or a mussel shell
under the grass and full of dew,
and my heart's armor drops with
a sharp ringing clang, like a hammer
striking a golden anvil, and underneath,
just under the surface of all that weight
now gone, is a watery tremulous thing —
my self with no need of the armor,
all battles already fought and won,
my tiny bright banner unfurled
and waving bravely in the sun,
my sword laid down in the grass,
tears pooling with the dew in the shell,
joy, gratitude, blooming with the flower.

— Sarah Faragher

Sarah Faragher, a painter and writer who owns Sarah's Books in Bangor, attended the Great Spruce Head Island Art Week in 2005. "To an artist, the gift of time is one of the most precious there is," she says. On top of that freedom to create, she relished the opportunity to work where Fairfield and Eliot Porter once practiced their art — "being there is akin to living inside their work," she states.

ACADIA ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Set on another large Maine island connected to the mainland, the Artist-in-Residence (or A-I-R) program at Acadia National Park accepted its first artists in 1994. (The late painter and environmental activist Alan Gussow initiated the national artists-in-the-parks program.) A-I-R carries on a rich tradition of art on Mount Desert Island that stretches from Hudson River School artists Thomas Cole and Frederick Church in the mid-1800s to Richard Estes and Joellyn Duesberry today.

Last year 11 artists took part in the residency program, two in the spring and nine in the summer/fall season. The addition of residency housing at Schoodic Point has allowed the program to grow over the past several years. Generally, spring artists are housed on Mount Desert Island, and those that participate from August through November are housed at Schoodic.

Each visiting artist is expected to present one program for every week of his or her residency, with most residencies three weeks in duration. Spring artists tend to work with local school groups or offer public programs. Summer and fall artists may interact with the YMCA, local school groups, the public, or the park's residential education program, the Schoodic Education Adventure program.

Kate Petrie, who coordinates the program for the park, notes that they recently started to experiment with shorter and longer sessions. She also points out a special requirement: Each resident is asked to donate a representative piece of his or her work that relates to his or her Acadia stay to the park's collection. "That piece must be complete and ready to hang or be ready for display," Petrie states — or ready to be watched, played or read in the case of dance, music and writing residents. "We will entertain the idea of hosting an artist of any medium as long as we can accommodate their needs," she says.

MONHEGAN

The oldest and longest-running Maine island artist residency changed its name this year after the space that served as its home for 19 years was sold. Started in 1989, the Carina House residency — now the Monhegan Artists' Residency — was the shared dream of Peter and Raquel Boehmer and fabric artist Robert Semple, former owners of the modest structure on the island's main thoroughfare. Knowing the expense of renting on Monhegan, they sought to provide time and space for Maine-based artists to work on-island.

Monhegan has nurtured one of the most remarkable legacies in the history of American art, boasting a virtual Who's Who of artists, from George Bellows, Edward Hopper and Rockwell Kent to Reuben Tam, Elena Jahn and Jamie Wyeth. "The five-week residency is designed to give back to Maine artists a part of their heritage, which includes a tradition of creative experimentation and exploration," says Gail Scott, art historian and chair of the Monhegan Artists' Residency Corporation (MARC), which oversees the residency.

Painters, photographers, sculptors and mixed-media artists have benefited from the residencies. In many cases the experience has led to a profound transition in their work. Painter Sarah Knock of Freeport, who was a resident in 1989, was focusing on the figure when she arrived on Monhegan. By the time she left, she had shifted to landscape. "When I returned home, which was inland," she wrote on the occasion of the exhibition "Carina House: The First Decade" at the Farnsworth Art Museum in 1999, "I found myself longing to be on or near the water on a daily basis."

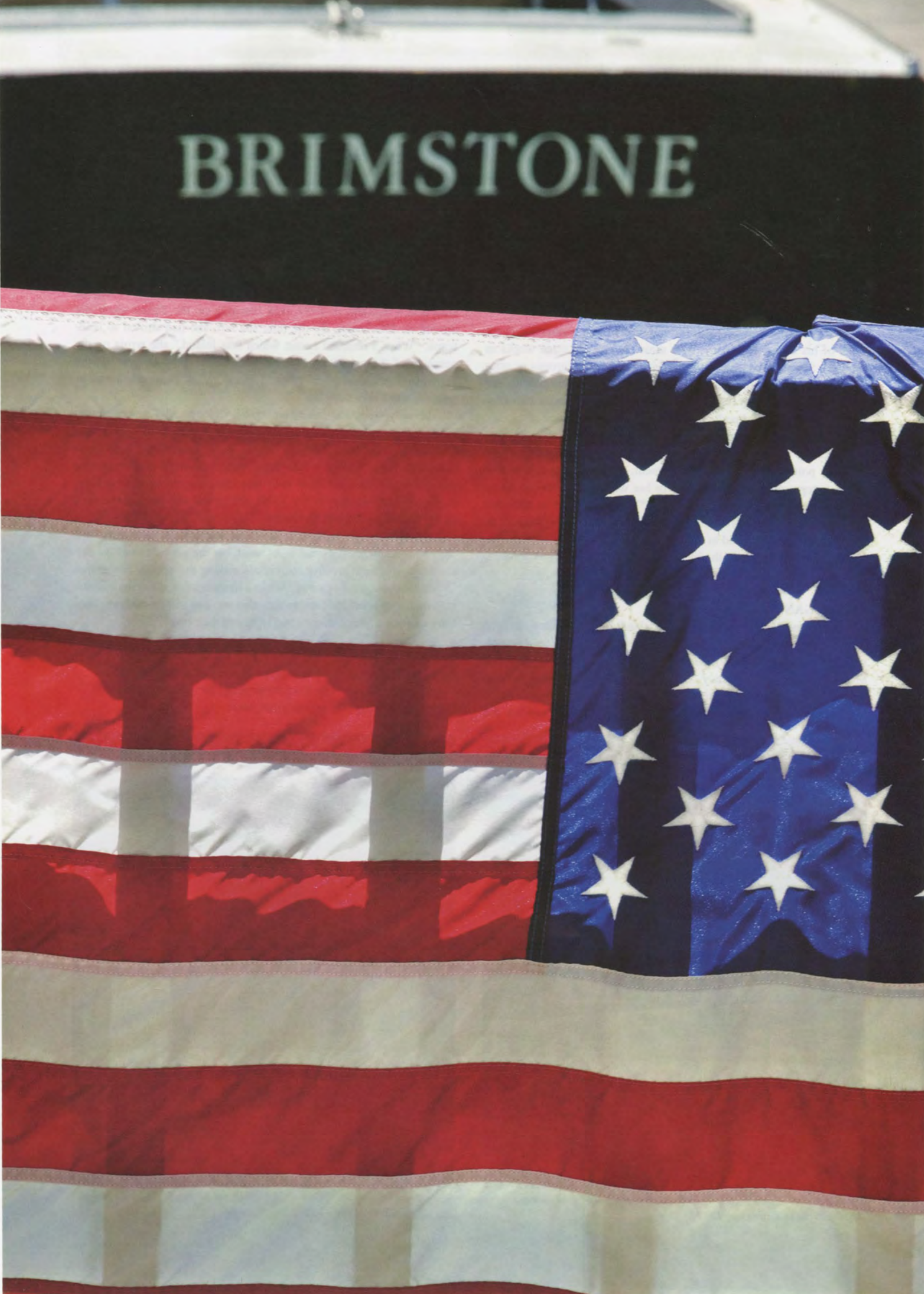
Loosely modeled on the MacDowell Colony and Vermont Studio Center programs, the five-week residency is viewed as an opportunity for artistic development. Open only to Maine residents, the program seeks applications from artists with limited financial resources who otherwise could not afford an extended stay on Monhegan. This summer's resident will stay at the Hitchcock House and have access to a studio in the Black Duck fish house.

It seems that every island in the Maine archipelago has, at one time or another, captured the heart of an artist, but the economics of the day are working against creative individuals making that special connection — aesthetic, physical, spiritual. While addressing this issue, the increasing number of artist residencies may also serve to inspire others to consider creating a Maine island artist legacy of their own.

Carl Little *serves on the board of the Monhegan Artists' Residency Corporation. He has been a volunteer judge for Acadia National Park's A-I-R program for nearly ten years.*

Tom Paquette, "Sand Beach," 1994, oil on canvas, 18 by 14 inches. Acadia Artist in Residence, 1994

Marguerite Robichaux, "Gull Rock," 2003, oil on paper, 51 by 46 inches. Carina House resident, 1990


BRIMSTONE

IN A NEW LIGHT

A photographer transforms himself and his art

Terri Ralston

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Peter Ralston's life is back on track. Well known to readers of *Island Journal*, Ralston's recent work, presented here and in an exhibition in Rockland during the summer of 2008, deserves special celebration because it reveals an artist more mature and more deeply attuned to life's vicissitudes.

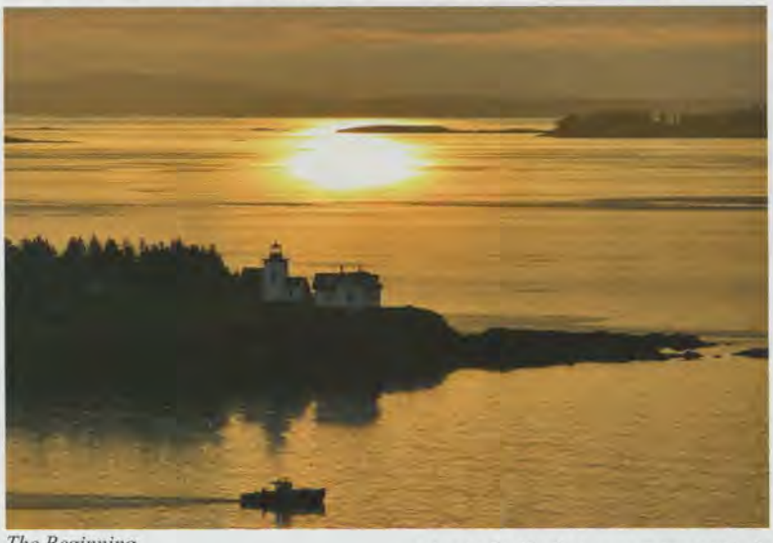
Ralston's own odyssey began when he first arrived in Maine in 1978 at the invitation of Betsy and Andrew Wyeth, childhood neighbors in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. As a young boy, Ralston reveled in the Wyeths' fantastic stories of Maine in words as well as on paper and canvas. Their magic created pictures of an exotic Maine in young Ralston's active imagination that were more than fulfilled upon his first explorations of the coast and islands at age 28. In Maine, Ralston immediately and irrevocably discovered his home and place in this world, as a man, as an artist.

Moonrise, Hardwood

Coal Wharf

But with perspective derived from years of travel as a photojournalist, the newly arrived Ralston was not oblivious to intense growing pressures on his adopted home. He had seen his birthplace overwhelmed by similar forces, and was particularly alarmed by clear threats to the Maine coast's working communities. In 1983 he and Philip Conkling co-founded the Island Institute as a means of addressing their shared concerns in this regard. The rest is institutional history.

Busy helping to build the new organization, Ralston abandoned his photojournalism career and took up ranging the coast, "going deep" in the manner of his Wyeth mentors, in search of that ineffable millisecond when subject, light and color come together as if by magic. For close to 19 years Ralston quietly accumulated thousands of images captured in moments of tranquillity on the one hand — or seizing the moment in great haste much as an artist scribbles a quick sketch on the other. While his photographs were published with little fanfare in numerous magazines and books, little thought was given to self-promotion. But in the summer of 1997, Ralston published *Sightings*, which earned him both critical acclaim and wide popularity and recognition as a significant photographer of Maine.



The Beginning

And then, in an instant, his life changed. In November 1997 Ralston suffered a severe cerebral hemorrhage coupled with a series of strokes. During brain surgery his heart stopped beating briefly. Shortly thereafter, a tumor was detected. After several surgeries Ralston was, at best, in rough shape with his left side partially paralyzed. But over time, infinite patience and determination on his part as well as support and encouragement from a host of friends have combined to put Ralston's life back in order. However, in his mind two gifts reign supreme.

The first was his marriage in 2001 to Terri Harper, bringing together a combined brood of five children. The second was two friends' gift in 2004 of a magnificent digital camera system. With that great "gift of faith" Ralston abruptly gave up using film and began mastering altogether-new tools for making art.

As the artist has grown ever more comfortable in the digital realm, one rule remains sacrosanct: no digital gimmickry. The thrill of happening upon and capturing that pure "decisive" moment unique from all others is the joy Ralston responds to. Not only does the stunning panoramic view of Penobscot Bay in "The Beginning" illustrate that point, but it also helps the viewer understand Ralston's strong attachment to the natural beauty that has kept him in the mid-coast area for nearly 30 years. A newborn day arrives calm and quiet, yet the long lyrical horizontal ripples on the metallic water coupled with a reflection of the sun that scalds the water itself anticipates the day's activities ahead. Islands, dark and somewhat forbidding, counter one another, one from the left, others from the right, while Mount Desert looms across the far horizon. We hear the distant thrum of a boat as a barely visible lobsterman sets out on his daily rounds. Man and nature are awake and at the ready — fisherman and photographer, both out for their own catch.

But Ralston does relish what the computer offers him in regards to expressing color and light. He revels in transforming the digital negative, taken directly from his camera, into glowing prints that speak directly to his original vision. As Ansel Adams put it, "If the negative is the score, the print is the performance." Just as painters freely apply color to canvas in their studios, Ralston conservatively manipulates colors, densities and especially light on his computer. "I can now paint with light," he explains. Indeed, subtle variations of color and light are signatures of Ralston's work. Soft light bathed in stillness and solitude coupled with carefully modulated bands of grays, pinks, browns and blues across the horizontal planes in "Hardwood Moon" and "Coal Wharf," and even the harder edges of "Brewster Point," speak of poetic repose.

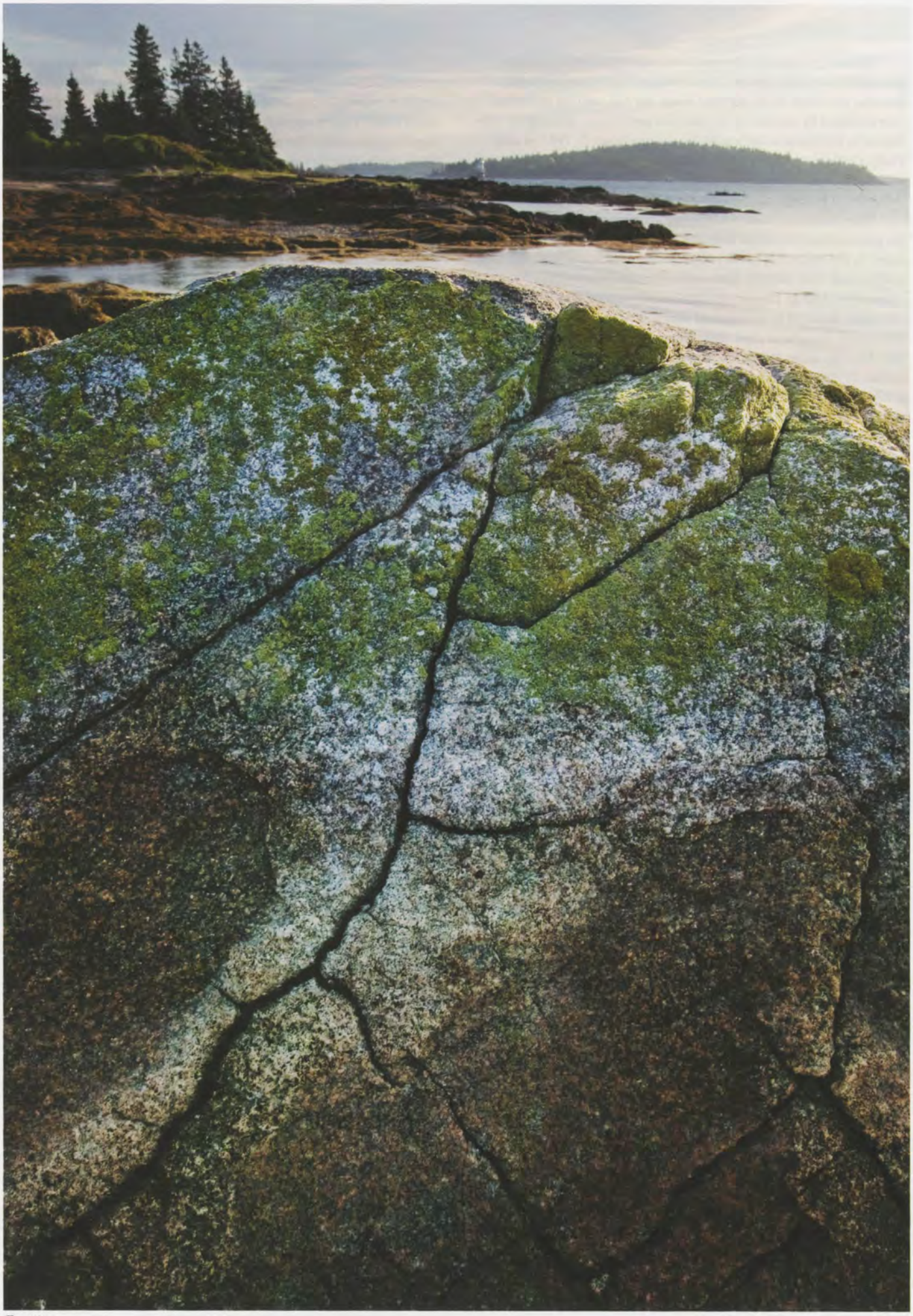
Ralston responds to various histories. Time passing fascinates him. He is mindful of the seamen of the past who have walked the weather-worn coal wharf, battered but still standing, and those who have worked the seas in seine dories. Ralston invites us to consider our own turbulent times of political and social unrest, especially following 9/11 in "Patriot" — in which the American flag is prominently juxtaposed beneath the name of the boat, BRIMSTONE." "South Tower" addresses the loss of the World Trade Center directly, through a stark image of a ledge outcropping pocked with holes and iron deposits recalling fire. But like all relevant art, images resonate on several levels. For this writer, "South Tower" also infers a spiritual dimension suggested by nature's fashioning over many centuries a cathedral-like tower that is as heaven-bent as Antonio Gaudi's renowned stone edifice in Barcelona, Spain. Ralston also pays homage to art history in "David's," where ropes of colorful paint have been flung from a fisherman's arm against an unsuspecting rock in the manner of Abstract Expressionist painters of the 1950s and '60s.

Isn't it inevitable that Peter Ralston, the miraculous survivor of concurrent near-fatal illnesses a decade ago, has emerged from these experiences with a deeper desire than ever to share in his photographs those aspects of the human condition he has come to value most? Is it too much to suggest that the bones and netting, line and seaweed in "Tangled" and "Requiem" link nature with man-made unions, both messy and intimate? And what is "The Source" if not, in part, a testimony of love, faith and an affirmation of life itself?

Peter Ralston is back in full force. The images on the following pages, and his continued leadership role at the Island Institute, are all the proof one needs.

— Bruce Brown

Bruce Brown *was curator at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport from 1987–2006 and is now an independent curator. His collection of contemporary American prints, assembled on a limited salary as a public school teacher, has been exhibited at the Portland Museum of Art and the Colby College Art Museum.*

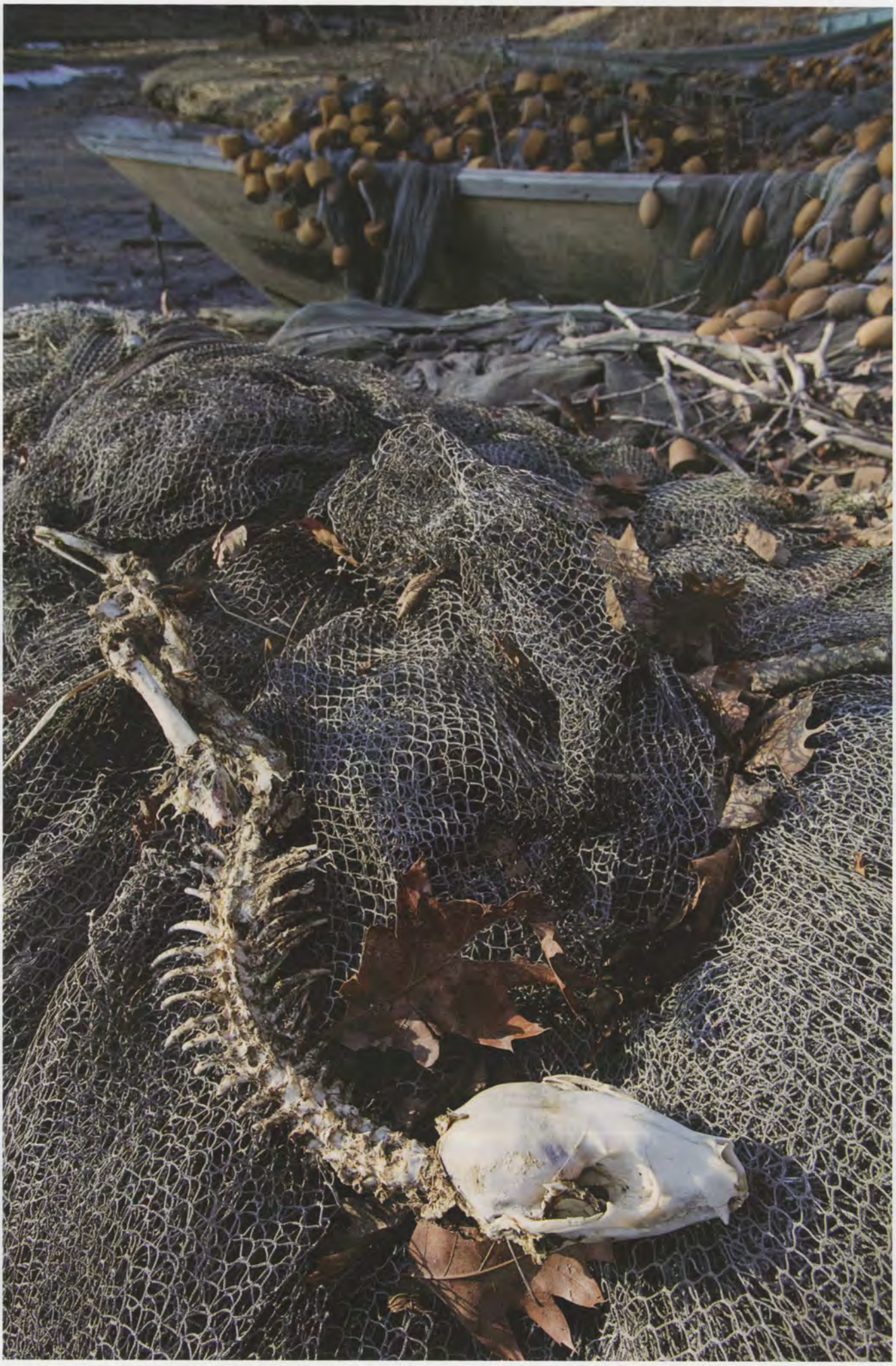


Erratic

Great Duck Dawn

The Ledge

Brewster Point



Requiem

South Tower

Tangled

The Source

David's

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*These images and other recent work by **Peter Ralston** will be exhibited at the Island Institute's Archipelago Gallery in Rockland from July 2 until the end of August, 2008. Additional images can be seen online at www.islandinstitute.org and on the artist's own site, www.pralston.com.*

Scotland's Inner Hebrides offer a glimpse of life on the brink of change.

EIGGACHS, GIGHACHS, DIURACHS AND SUNSHINE ISLANDERS

HERBERT PARSONS

Ah, Scotland. The word conjures up fanciful images of bagpipes, kilts, tartans, standing stones, the sound of the language. As a longtime resident of North Haven Island, Maine, my attention was grabbed by an *Island Journal* article, followed by one in *National Geographic*, describing the 1997 community buyout of the 7,500-acre Isle of Eigg (pronounced *Egg*) in Scotland's Inner Hebrides.

Photo courtesy of shutterstock.com (5)

"Clearances" emptied the Hebrides of their populations in the 19th century.

I'll admit it. I'm attracted to underdogs, innately suspicious of overdogs. A reported 80 percent of Scotland rested in the hands of 900 families. Among Scotland's 90,000 islanders, Eigg's 56 tenant farmers/crofters — down from a high of 546 in 1841 — had raised £2.4 million (roughly $4.5 million at the time) to purchase the island from its absentee owner/laird (landlord) in what I later learned became a telling blow for land reform, toward ending a feudal system that has been described as "protecting people from the terrors of the 18th century while isolating them from the 20th." Hebridean island populations generally crested in the 1840s, when The Highland Clearances, begun a century earlier, began to affect the isles. Lairds, often English, forced croft-leasing farmers off their land to be replaced with sheep as the demand for wool became particularly profitable. This cultural genocide forced mass emigration to both the United States and Canada. One result still visible is broad, barren expanses of treeless grazing land devoid of houses or dotted with derelict ruins.

Throughout the long buyout process most Eiggachs remained unswayed by enormous public exposure in the media and cries of socialism, even communism, though not surprisingly there are still some who wish for the good ol' days, without the challenge of change. Meanwhile, by 1998 an independent Scottish Parliament of 129 members had been established in Edinburgh, distinct from the Parliament of the United Kingdom in London. By 2002 the island of Gigha [pronounced *Ghée-ya*] had followed Eigg's lead. And the story of change slowly emerged in all its complexity — as in these lyrics by Brian McNeill:

. . . Farewell to the heather in the glen
They cleared us off once and they'd do it all again
For they still prefer sheep to thinking men
Ah, but men who think like sheep are even better
There's nothing much to choose between the old laird
and the new
They still don't give a damn for the likes of me and you. . . .

So don't talk to me of Scotland the Brave
For if we don't fight soon there'll be nothing left to save
Or would you rather stand and watch them dig your grave
While you wait for the Tartan Messiah?
He'll lead us to the Promised Land with laughter in his eye
We'll all live on the oil and the whisky by and by.

Some reevaluation of my fanciful images was clearly in order. Since their respective buyouts and the consequent change in social climate, Eigg's population had swelled from 56 to 85, Gigha's from 90 to almost 160 when I visited in 2007. A typical Gighach was capable and cheerful Lorna Andrew, a third-generation islander who had moved off-island for almost 20 years, having left for high school at age 12, and then returning to head the Gigha Heritage Trust through which public ownership is administered. Her mother, Margaret, who moved to Gigha from the mainland 40 years ago, joked about being an "incomer," but added that it doesn't seem to be an issue, even though some Gighachs can trace their ancestry back to the 1700s. Later, on the Isle of Colonsay, incomer Courtney Deans, a waitress at the Colonsay Hotel who answered a magazine ad two years ago from Melbourne, Australia, said, "Great people here, readily accepting." Incomers/transplants find out early who treats them as a category and who as an individual. The reverse, of course, is also true.

On 3,400-acre Gigha tenants were able to raise over $8 million through grants and a major loan to purchase the island from its laird, Derek Holt. Well, most of it. He still owns land leased to two major salmon and halibut aquaculture farms and several rental houses. When he cleaned out his mansion, Achamore House, he left nothing but a single toilet brush. His continued presence as owner of island property sticks in the local craw.

The mansion's new owner is an American, Don Dennis, in his early 50s, a former wood products businessman who lived in England and bought the house to be near his children in Edinburgh, and as a base for his perfume business. His large house hosts an elegant bed-and-breakfast on the lower two floors, his private quarters on the third. Several of his exquisite hand-turned wooden vases help decorate the elegantly restrained interior, as do his photographs. Fifty acres of natural woodland and lovely landscaped gardens, featuring azaleas and rhododendrons and two raucous peacocks, fill the grounds. Besides offering employment, Dennis appears to fit in well with the community. His Gigha-born girlfriend had just moved into the man-

sion with her two children when I stopped by, asserting her presence by repainting several rooms.

Sale of the mansion financed much of the loan repayment. The community also bought three large, quiet, used wind generators and connected them to the mainland power grid. Known affectionately as The Dancing Ladies, they earn the community £100,000 a year while encouraging the development of renewable energy. Additional fund-raising on a more modest level has been through the handsome design of an island tartan that now appears on a variety of merchandise.

A tangible symbol of the islanders' independence is a 21-foot, eight-oared fiberglass rowing gig with wooden thwarts, seats, oars, trim and rudder, christened SAORSA (Freedom). Built and donated by a group in Ireland, she is used for a youth program, much like the gigs on Maine's North Haven and Vinalhaven.

If the Gigha islanders were half as laid-back as they claim, they'd never have achieved their independence. As it is, there are new businesses, upgraded petrol pumps and new equipment bought for the island quarry. Old housing, refurbished, and new housing, too, support residents and encourage incomers (former laird Holt had not allowed new construction). The housing program is not unlike that on the Maine island of Frenchboro in recent years. To qualify for new residence on Gigha one must be island-born, related to an island family, or offer an approved business plan. The second group of homes was dedicated by Britain's Princess Margaret in April, 2007. The island's optimism and confidence are palpable.

Change brings serious risks, of course. On my island in Penobscot Bay change was also under way, evidenced by new lobster boats, new businesses and a larger ferry. The greatest change, though, continued to come from an increase of year-round people "from away" — summer-person transplants, others through marriage and employment. The Scots refer to incomers, sassenachs, blow-ins, and white settlers (mainly Englishmen in recent years who've bought derelict properties cheaply and renovated them with the money they made selling their previous homes). Each of these labels means something slightly different.

Our 1997 annual town meeting focused primarily on elections to the school board. A large number of natives and others were upset by the school's increasingly less traditional, more experiential curriculum and, more broadly, with other changes in the community brought by transplants with perhaps more education and/or family wealth, and by natives who shared in bringing about those changes. With 212 total votes, compared with a quiet year's 70 to 80, the school's new direction was supported by a three-to-two majority. The resulting split severely strained friendships, even families. Walls of icy silence were built, some of which still exist.

Our small disagreements are routinely repaired on the surface by the next day (even if lodged forever in memory), and in times of emergency there's no shortage of coming together. But divisiveness born of differing attitudes, experience, family, money, educational background — those carry long-term weight, and cutting-you-dead remains the standard indication. One friend did admit that members of the minority had unwittingly furthered the transition by convincing themselves they were too busy to serve on many of those thankless volunteer committees or crews that help hold the island together. (At least 80 individuals, almost a quarter of the population, are members of the volunteer fire department or board of assessors, some on more than one.)

On both sides of the Atlantic, technology, from larger ferries to air travel, has enormously increased access to islands and thus the amount of influence from the mainland. In the "olden days" after World War II, the side-loading ferry to North Haven held one and a half vehicles, the "half" being small cars like my mother's Austin, which could be manhandled into a fore-and-aft spot next to the forward hatch. Now, the 127-foot ferries to North Haven, Vinalhaven and Swan's Island carry approximately 21 vehicles and 120 passengers as part of the State of Maine Department of Transportation fleet, large and stable enough to handle most Penobscot Bay weather.

In the Hebrides, the private Caledonia MacBrayne ferries are predominantly huge and heavily subsidized. Annually they carry some five million passengers and one million vehicles. Even a typical CalMac intermediate ship is 233 feet long, with 22 crew members and a 465-passenger capacity. For your traveling comfort she has a restaurant, lounge, TV area, pinball machines, and a small shop featuring tourist mementoes. Serving small Gigha, however, is the 87-foot steel MV LOCH RANZA. With exposed ramps at either end, a 12- to 14-car capacity, a 199-passenger limit with three crew, she is flat-bot-

Old housing, refurbished, and new housing, too, support residents and encourage incomers.

A conservation ethic, no gas-guzzling vehicles, frugality with heat and electricity and a willingness to try new energy sources characterize many of the Hebrides.

tomed and skegless, with a draft of 7.6 feet, and powered by two 330-horsepower Volvo diesels, tickets sold aboard. The three-mile, 18-minute passage costs approximately $53 round-trip for car and driver, the steep cost partly attributable to the deplorable rate of exchange between the dollar and the pound.

Regulations and practices are similar. CalMac ferry crews, like ours, work one week on, one week off, and must have a fixed minimum of off-duty time. This affects emergency trips.There, as here, if it were strictly up to the captains and crews, they'd always make those trips regardless of how little rest they might have had. Be assured, our early settlers were not wimps; if they had been they'd have accomplished very little. Welcome, then, to that time-honored regulatory concept, One Size Fits All, the scourge of small island communities forced to follow regulations designed for larger places. On both shores the ferries, being based off-island, remain a favorite scapegoat.

Zealous complaints can have a broad impact. Our own North Haven mail, flown in by Penobscot Air, has suffered more restrictive conditions since July 2007 and is now often brought, much delayed, by van on the ferry, because someone threatened to report a pilot to the Federal Aviation Administration for taking a perceived risk. Did that individual weigh that complaint against the possibility of cancelled island air service for mail and medical emergencies? Pilot/owner Kevin Waters of Penobscot Air had earlier gone to enormous lengths to reestablish service after the previous server abruptly cancelled all local flights.

Hebridean medical service can be unusual. The Isle of Eigg's Dr. R. H. Weldon covers the three neighboring Small Isles in her husband's RIB (rigid inflatable boat) with its twin, high-powered Honda outboards. The nearest ambulance is in Mallaig. Patients are transferred there by regular ferry, air ambulance, lifeboat, Coast Guard helicopter or private charter, with costs covered by the Scottish Ambulance Service if agreed to by the attending physician.

In Maine, television, together with increased mainland education and jobs, has also affected mind-sets and perspectives. So too, speech, localized to the point where one woman born on North Haven and in her 40s has some difficulty understanding certain islanders on neighboring Vinalhaven. Another, as a teenager, consciously trained herself to speak "summer-person dialect" as a desirable job skill.

Island postal service: On Gigha and the Isles of Eigg, Jura and Colonsay the post office shares space in the local market. But our rural mail carriers might be quite jealous of the official, bright-red Royal Mail mini transport van used on Colonsay, though less so of Gigha's rural delivery, an uncovered four-wheeler chugging down its six-mile road.

What island differences did this American notice there across the Atlantic? No truly fat people, virtually no smoking outdoors in public, no squirrels, raccoons, beer cans or tire skid marks on the neat and tidy roadsides. A greater conservation ethic, no gas-guzzling vehicles, frugality with heat and electricity. Hedgehogs, oystercatchers, long-horned highland cattle. Bland, often dark clothing, though there's absolutely nothing bland about the Scottish spirit. Whitewashed stucco and stone houses, comparable to our white New England clapboards. White or pink sand beaches with little variety of seashells and stones. Public piers, many fewer protected coves. Lots of sheep. Very few fishermen, who fish for lobster and velvet crab, most of which goes to Spain. Twenty-five small traps to a string, marked by an orange mooring ball, dogfish for bait. Some strings reportedly up to 50 and, like the Maine coast, disrupted by big draggers messing up the bottom. There seems no need for individual fishing territories, zones, an apprentice system or trap limits, though there are catch limits. Snowplows: Given that these islands lie some 700 miles further north than midcoast Maine, you might expect colder weather. But due to the Gulf Stream as it crosses the Atlantic, temperatures are milder with less snow and ice, seldom below freezing. So "snowplows" are in fact piles of sand stationed strategically on hillsides where you might lose traction. Shovels not provided. Colonsay's first telephone arrived in 1940, car 1947, electricity 1952.

What similarities? The look, size, and taste of the lobsters. Vehicle drivers who wave with one or two fingers. Walking passersby who greet one another with a self-contained openness that immediately made me feel quite at home. I tried, though, to keep in mind the cautionary comment of longtime Harvard professor Stanley Hoffman, a foremost authority on international relations: "The assumption that 'people everywhere are all alike' is something you have to get out of your system. In old age I am more and more convinced that people are intensely different from country to country. Not everyone is motivated by the same things."

Other similarities: No need to lock doors, though when a bridge to the mainland from the Isle of Skye was recently completed, it brought more cars, a rising crime rate, and, yes, locked doors. Ferries do make fine filters. Extensive conversations during work hours, frustrating to some summer employers but essential to maintaining the fabric of island life. Plastic trash on the beaches. Wellies (Wellington boots), their equivalent of our L.L. Bean boots (Beanies?), Yamaha outboards, gulls, mergansers, eider ducks, noisy pheasants, sandpipers, rabbits, midges/no-see-ums, horseflies/greenheads. Lily-white, homogeneous communities, straight-talking people. Catching mackerel from the pier, slightly greater rise and fall of tide. A growing gap nationwide between rich and poor. Bluebells, yellow primroses, rhododendrons, camellias, lilacs. Strong winter gales, November through February, though theirs can be twice as strong as ours — easily over 100 mph. Less knitting, wool having been given up for synthetic fibers. On North Haven it survives primarily, as on Skye, for a high-end market. Each Hebridean island has a detailed and informative website, and the Isle of Tiree's, designed by incomer Colin Woodcock, is certainly among the clearest, cleanest, most accessible and useful.

No job can be more time-consuming and underappreciated than running the island market. On Jura Steve Martin, owner/operator of Jura Stores for 18 years, offered lively conversation. "On an island everybody's hiding from something." He spoke forcefully about the long hours and difficulty of maintaining the shop, and was particularly frustrated by newer people who do much of their shopping off-island, despite the expensive ferry. Diurachs (Jura residents), he contends, want the quiet and beauty of the island but won't particularly support the economy. "They'll realize it when I'm gone" and the shop closes, said Steve. Nor do they serve on the committees that keep things running. So those committees, contends Steve, involve the same small group, who by default become "dictators."

Even on an island as remote as Jura, reached by two separate ferries, where banking is handled by a mobile unit visiting town every Wednesday, cooperative conservation is strong. The Jura Hotel & Restaurant used to dispose of 24 boxes of bottles a week. Now, thanks to recycling, it's down to five. But in other ways the spirit of independence remains defiant, feisty. Heed the advice of an old Gaelic proverb: "A man should find his horse on [the island of] Mull, his cow on [the island of] Islay, and his wife on Jura."

The relatively flat and treeless Isle of Tiree is an irregular 12 miles long and one of the sunniest spots in the British Isles, a sort of Scottish Riviera. It's known as "The Sunshine Isle," according to the island website. Its larger population of 800 or so — down from a peak of 4,500 in the 1830s — offers greater opportunity for problems and requires more organization than do the smaller islands. Police constable Danny Lapsley, inspired years earlier on the mainland by the idiocy of a posted school regulation that read DO NOT SET FIRES IN THE LOCKER ROOM, started two youth groups for different ages 15 years ago, and later a drop-in center for older teenagers. Danny contends that there was little drug activity on Tiree.

On much smaller Gigha, part-time special police constable Christine Haddow, delightfully cheeky and the mother of two young sons, in her other capacity as outreach worker focuses on senior citizens, where every fortnight the Gigha Lunch Club meets, and yes, rules.

One of Tiree's more influential islanders has been Iain "Hillcrest" MacKinnon (his middle name refers to his house to distinguish him from the other Iain MacKinnon on-island). Born to an island family but raised on a farm run by his father in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, he is a retired social worker, operates a bed-and-breakfast, is an elder of the church, and plays the bagpipes, helping with Tiree's Junior Pipe Band of about 13 members. Among many other topics we discussed the risks, in a tourist/second-home service economy, of islanders becoming second-class citizens, unable to remain their own independent bosses.

In a small community, innovation and tradition are delicately balanced. Often you can't raise so much as a pinkie without offending someone. According to Iain, Tiree's renewed community spirit materialized about seven or eight years ago, prior to which islanders' self-confidence was low, with many young people leaving. The renewal resulted in Tiree's Rural Centre for Agriculture, and, with its own wind turbine, the community hall An Talla, a spot where one can meet, eat and blather away, as at North Haven's Waterman Center. Many Scottish development projects to encourage island repopulation offer grant monies through the National Lottery, begun in 1994, where over £20 billion has now been raised and more than 250,000 grants given out across the arts, sport, heritage, charities, health, education and the environment.

Herb Parsons

Infrastructure improvements are critical to these islands' future.

Herb Parsons (2)

Reliable ferry service is as important to remote Scottish islands as it is to their Maine counterparts.

I attended a meeting of Tiree's Community Development Trust (TCDT). It had 212 members as of May 2007, more than 25 percent of the population, and a seemingly enterprising, knowledgeable spirit of careful development designed to make the most of available skills and opportunities. TCDT chair and island native Trish MacKinnon reported on a mainland meeting she'd attended: "Every area of Scotland seems to have the same problems," she said, but Tiree is unique because people made it that way for hundreds of years. The Trust's job, she added, is to work "so that it remains unique, but continues to move forward."

A recent county grant had given computers, with live instruction, to all 350 or so households on Tiree, in a move to help connect some of the more remote areas of the county. This is reminiscent of then Maine governor Angus King's 2003 initiative to equip seventh-grade students with laptop computers, a program that continues today.

Other topics covered in the Tiree meeting included harbor improvement, a marina to encourage cruising boats, and — familiar to all of Maine's year-round island communities — housing and rising property prices.

There remain class distinctions in Scotland, and Britain as a whole, that seem out of place to an American, but perhaps not very different than those found on North Haven until World War II and the subsequent GI Bill began to shrink such social gulfs. In a perceptive look at life on Colonsay in the 1960s, author John McPhee's *The Crofter and the Laird* describes an older friend's impulse to still remove his hat for his much younger laird, to wait to speak until spoken to, and to respond, "Good morning, Milord."

McPhee also quotes a range of opinions regarding that laird those 50 years ago:

"His father spoiled the people of this island. He didn't want industry. He wanted the island unspoiled. When people were out of work, he took them on at the estate and paid them for doing damn [little]."

"The laird has no time for islanders."

"People complained about the old laird, too.... They said he did what he pleased. Why shouldn't he do what he pleased? He was paying for it."

If only the fittest and strongest survived, the dinosaurs would still be in charge.

"We have lost our sense of independence."

"He's a feudal lord. Remember that. He has responsibilities."

The response from the laird in question included, "Colonsay has an ancient feudal society which basically wants to go on being feudal, provided they can find someone who wants to play at — and finance — being a feudal baron.... [They] have been cosseted. They are entitled to be a little sore when they are dragged screaming into the 20th century."

Collectively these Inner Hebrides seem at a point similar to North Haven and other Maine islands at least two or three generations ago, with an economy and way of life becoming ever more dependent on summer visitors.

Resistance to change continues, as it does on Maine's islands. Though tradition often represents a weeding out of failed solutions and reinforcement of common sense, it can be both blessing and curse, a strength and a weakness. In Darwin's "survival of the fittest," the fittest aren't necessarily the largest and strongest. If that were the case, the dinosaurs would still be in charge. No; the fittest are those most adaptable to change. But how to evaluate which changes are positive, which are not? Who knows what's best for whom? Almost every one of us on-island wants to be where we are. What's that unofficial motto of a small Virginia town — "We're here because we're not all there"?

During World War II the Royal Air Force built a base on Tiree. RAF airmen contributed to the community in many ways, helping on the farms and with construction, becoming friends, marrying, fathering children. Perhaps most important, they helped broaden minds and increase tolerance for outsiders. And when they left, their buildings, pier, and airport remained, as well as the freshwater supply that now serves most of the island, though it's full of calcium that gums up pipes and seizes valves.

Education: High schoolers on the smaller islands of Eigg, Gigha, Colonsay and Jura must go to the mainland. Some are cut off from their families for six straight weeks. At the Tiree Primary & High School, head teacher and administrator "Miss Myra" McArthur, who had family roots on Tiree before moving there to accept her post, stated that teaching 11 preschoolers, 42 primary and 53 high school students on-island costs ten times as much as at her previous school in Glasgow — no surprise to those of us on Maine's islands. Tiree costs are roughly $10,000 per student. The primary school uses an open classroom for economic rather than pedagogical reasons, and curriculum is set at the national level. As happens here, field trips are scheduled to encourage student familiarity with the mainland. But where North Haven enjoys the volunteer assistance of almost 100 individuals in the course of a year, Tiree has few. There is little interest and low attendance on Parent Nights, and scarcely any parent involvement. Still, many students continue their education after high school.

A particularly unique educational feature on Tiree is that students have a choice of instruction in English or Gaelic. The split is about 50/50, the level of performance similar. Up till the 1940s young students were often punished for speaking Gaelic at school. Gaelic speakers long saw themselves as second-class citizens.

While each of these Inner Hebrides is unique, collectively they seem at a point similar to North Haven and other Maine islands at least two or three generations ago, with an economy and way of life becoming ever more dependent on summer visitors. Will this bring a gradual loss of community effort and cooperation that doubtless was essential on most islands in more isolated times, when residents were less well off and more interdependent? What will be the long-term effects of newly established broadband/Internet communication? Self-government is complex and expensive, and the mainland world, of course, keeps imposing further requirements.

But most important are mutual respect and cooperation among those of us on each of our islands, whether year-round or seasonal. God, a Scottish friend pointed out, gave us two ears and one mouth. If He/She had meant it to be the other way around, He/She would have done it that way. In a world full of conflict we need the self-confidence to listen to one another and to share our differing strengths with understanding, tolerance and patience.

A year-round resident of North Haven since 1983, ***Herbert Parsons*** *was described in a 2006* Island Journal *profile as "an artist, competing distance runner and cross-country coach, singer-songwriter, newspaper editor, gallery and small business owner, yachtsman, teacher, television writer and actor." Except where indicated, photography courtesy of the author.*

GOOD AND LAWFUL DEEDS

CHRISTINA MARSDEN GILLIS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

"What with friends and family, I'm planning to use my house on the island this summer, so it won't be available for renting — this, unless it is sold. I've had a couple of offers for it, and am teetering."

As broadly hinted in her letter of February 1958, Maine writer Ruth Moore, whose work in poetry and in fiction chronicles the history of Gotts Island, did indeed "teeter." Only ten days later, she wrote Phyllis and Richard Strauss, my sister and brother-in-law, that she would accept their offer for her Gotts Island house and its 17 acres. "As you know, I love the place," she explained, "but it's too much house for one; actually, it needs a big family, lots of kids running through it, which it will have if you buy it; so I don't feel too regretful." And by mid-April, in a warm letter in which she invited the new buyers to stay with her and her partner Eleanor Mayo, she informed them: "You're hooked now. I've cashed your check. I'm now hunting geography books for a safe place to abscond to."

Ruth Moore may have been ambivalent about selling her family home on Gotts Island; in an important sense, selling the property was part of losing the island culture into which she was born. Yet the letters to the young Massachusetts family who were purchasing the house as summer property reveal only mild regret, and Moore appears satisfied with the bargain she has struck. It was a similar story years earlier, in 1936, when, on the eve of her departure for a job in Berkeley, California, she was clearly the moving force in negotiating, on behalf of numerous family members, the sale of the Enoch Moore property to the daughter of a well-off Philadelphia Quaker family. There, too, she seems eager to have the deal completed. In a letter to her mother published in Sanford Phippen's valuable collection, *High Clouds Soaring, Storms Driving Low: The Letters of Ruth Moore*, she wrote, "I hope to the Lord everything has gone through and that you folks have got your money . . . I'm writing Uncle Bert, telling him to get the thing through as quick as he can."

The woman of these letters sounds so real, almost cheerily attending to the business of transferring ownership of a property. The document, too, has a reality seemingly contained in time and in space. It does not tell us much of the historical surround, of the demise of Gotts Island's original, year-round population and the transformation of the island into a summer community. These events, no doubt typical of many other Maine islands and probed more deeply in Ruth Moore's prose fiction and poetry, do not appear directly here. Even her own departure from the island years earlier, seems, at the time she wrote to the Strausses, no longer a dominant issue. She and Eleanor Mayo had been settled in Bass Harbor (then called McKinley) for almost a decade by then.

But nothing is really contained, free of its context. A letter that was written to the Strauss family asserted a particular connection with them, its intended addressees, but it speaks a different message to me, an unintended reader who comes along 50 years later. Like time itself, the letter eludes stasis. The letters from Ruth Moore that my sister has recently given to me all ostensibly concern the purchase of the Philip Moore house in 1958; seven years later there would be other letters, these from my sister and brother-in-law to my husband and me: another transfer that renders to history the agreement negotiated in the earlier correspondence. All these letters reify transition, changes in and through time; reading them in the present connects us with the past, with negotiations long completed, with intentions that may or may not have been fulfilled.

Old property deeds, like the letters, are also markers of change. They codify histories of ownership, connect us with those earlier owners now departed and long gone. But because the past is so often what historian David Lowenthal has called a "foreign country," the truths that the old deeds so authoritatively enunciate appear illusory when read in a later context. The document has lost its original authority; the departed owner is the master or mistress of no property. History has an authority of another kind.

True to her calling as historian of Gotts Island, Ruth Moore knew this when she began a poem ("To Have But Not to Hold") calling our attention to the "first deed":

This is a copy of the first deed,
Written two hundred years ago

I have never seen the "first deed" through which Daniel Gott, in 1789, acquired the island that was later to be called Gotts Island, in what is now the state of Maine. And when Ruth wrote these lines in a poem published in the 1990 collection, titled *The Tired Apple Tree*, I don't know if she had actually seen that first early document. But I do know that she wants us to imagine it:

In the graceful and beautiful handwriting of that time.
It [the first deed] is heavy with the language of law
But it leaves no loopholes,
And it speaks for itself now,
As if a single bell-note, struck so long ago,
Had sounded through the centuries
Unchanged.

The deed is "heavy with the language of the law." It speaks "for itself," it "leaves no loopholes." But the document that at first appears so solid and unchanging, so verifiable ("This is a copy . . ."), soon turns otherwise: The deed can only speak as if its authority would sound "unchanged" through the centuries. Of course, as the poet/historian well knows, change will come. "Having," as the poem's title indicates, is not "holding." The first stanza of the poem, framing what is to come, suggests that the authority of the legal deed is in some sense no authority at all.

The so-called historical and geographical "facts" only reinforce the illusion of immutability: A committee empowered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has sold to Daniel Gott for 18 pounds what is now Great Gott and Little Gott islands. We know how many acres Daniel purchased and where exactly the property is located. But despite the language — "The said Commonwealth shall warrant and defend the said Premises to him, / His Heirs and Assigns forever, / Against the lawful claims of all persons whatever" — the point of the poem is that the Gotts and the Moores, as well as the other island families, would not hold the island forever. A longer view of the history of Gotts Island reveals the fragility of ownership, both for them and for those who would come after them.

Ruth must have been well aware when she wrote the letters to the Strausses in 1958 that in the larger context, the transferal of the property was yet another sign of Gotts Island's having become a summer habitat for people from away. Perhaps that's why it seems so important to her to turn the business at hand, the legalities of the sale, into an exploration of the history of the house. Over and over, Ruth moves into the past to reactivate the old owners, the ghosts who still lodge there, questioning the validity of any modern legal deed and the notion of ownership itself.

The chief vehicle of Ruth's exploration of past history is the original deed through which Daniel Gott transferred what became the Moore property to his son Nathaniel. Nathaniel's daughter Asenath would later marry the first Captain Philip Moore, thereby linking the Moore and Gott families. This is a deed that I also know. It is framed on the living room wall of our Gotts Island house, the spidery script becoming ever more faint. I can hardly decipher the writing now, but Daniel's signature is legible, as is the "mark" — the X — of his wife, Hannah. "Hannah, her mark" the writing below the faded X still reads. The date is 1812. Two years later Daniel and two of his other sons were drowned while fishing near Mount Desert Rock.

For Ruth Moore, this is the deed that counts. It has no legal value; its authoritative language, like that of Daniel Gott's "first deed," is irrelevant; but Daniel's signature and Hannah's faded mark, encoded within the old document, have a permanence that transcends their actual lives. In this sense, the original owners of the property belong to the house even if the property on which the house sits no longer, in a legal sense, belongs to them. Or perhaps, as I prefer to think, the house, in another sense, does belong to them: They are still presences here.

The 1812 deed that calls up these presences dominates Ruth Moore's correspondence with the Strausses in 1958, appearing in three separate letters. Ruth was planning to give this deed to the new buyers, and she seemingly wanted them to understand that because it recognizes, even pays homage to, the ghosts that still populate the island, its value exceeds that of the actual legal document at hand. The old deed, the letters suggest, is a good deed. As described in Ruth's letter of February 12, 1958, "Grandfather Gott," "Clarence Turner," "Jack Gott," as well as information regarding changes to the original house — all are here:

> *I have, somewhere, the original deed to [the house], where the original grandfather Gott deeded this particular portion of his estate to his son, so I think the title's clear . . . father bought it from Clarence Turner around 1900, and Clarence Turner from Andrew (Jack) Gott. The original house, I understand, (the part over the cellar) was rebuilt and added to because one of the old ladies got mad because her kitchen windows didn't look out over the water. I don't know which family this was; old Berl [Berlin Gott] could have told you — and it's partly legend, anyway.*

It seems hardly to matter what is legend and what is not. All is of equal value and significance. Two months later, with a light touch that ostensibly distances herself from the history, Ruth again alludes to the old deed, now connecting it with the long history of the Moore family: "I enclose 'Great-Grandfather's Deed.' I think perhaps he may have been my 'Great-grandfather's' Great-Grandfather, but am not sure. I've never dug around much in the ancestors, fearing I may come up with the one who was hanged for stealing a sheep."

It's as if she cannot let the old deed go. But since she is actually having to let go of it and what it stands for, she needs to stress its importance. "The land was, I believe, a part of Daniel Gott's original purchase, and I have the original deed to it, signed by him, in which he made this particular portion over to his son. You can have this deed, if you want it, along with yours; not that you need it, but it's nice to have."

Not that you need it, she says of the old deed. But of course they "need" it. And so, I think, does Ruth. The old deed has special value — not as an inert document, but as malleable material that endures, albeit with changed relevance, over time.

Ruth Moore was a dedicated amateur archaeologist; she was well aware that against time itself, including geological time, a document of ownership per se has no power.

This is the message of three poems — of which "To Have But Not to Hold" is the second — published in *The Tired Apple Tree* collection. Together, the poems take us from prehistory up through the modern period: from molten rock to real estate.

Within the long perspective, the land is always larger than any footprint, or boundary, that human settlement — or ownership — may place upon it. "The rocks of the earth are its history / [and] They tell what's known of who got here first, / They say how old is old," the first poem, titled simply "Rocks," begins. But, it is implied, we do not hear or attend to the language uttered by the rocks; we are essentially ignorant of the "secret ebb and flow / Or what roared over the earth's crust / Billions of years ago." Not understanding that far-distant history within which we ourselves play no role, we cannot imagine a world not defined as property.

"The Offshore Islands," the third poem in the sequence, brings us into human time and more specifically, to a thumbnail history of Gotts Island that recapitulates a story so often repeated on Maine's islands. This poem also begins with the land before settlement:

> *The offshore islands belong to themselves,*
> *They stand in their own sea.*
> *They do not inherit; they leave no heirs.*
> *They are no man's legacy.*

Like the rocks of the earlier poem that evoke "Blazing volcanoes, cooled and dead" that "[m]arked nowhere a boundary line," the offshore islands, left to themselves, "leave no heirs" and "are no man's legacy." Notions of ownership of property, deeds and written records will come only later. And with the arrival of this other history, the stages of development pass in dizzying succession. Following the Indians ("first summer people") came the permanent white settlers who "made fast [their] own boundary lines," and willed property to their sons. Then, with passing generations, this "pioneer" community "felt the mainland's pull" and "abandoned their homes to rot away." The stage is set for the final, and worst, period: the "era of real estate, / Of the hundred thousand dollar lots, / Of the condominiums, side by side, / Along the shoreline choicest spots." As for the future, it is as unclear to us as the far-distant archaeological past — "What follows the time of developers / No human voice can tell."

A calculus of ownership dulls the ear and blurs the vision. It creates an alienated past in which we cannot see or hear the "ghosts," who have become mere deed and boundary makers, transient actors at odds with the "silent" knowledge that the islands eternally hold. But those "ghosts," Ruth says, "have never gone away." Rather, they endure within the silence for those willing to recognize them. They inhabit spaces like the old 1812 deed, which by 1958 was no longer about property but had become, rather, a vessel containing the traces of the lives of people living in relation to place: "Hannah, her mark," Hannah's place.

Ruth's letters transform property into place. She is not so much selling a piece of bounded property to the Strausses as handing over to them a place. That's why, while attending to boundaries is requisite to the business of the sale, Ruth provides her own idiosyncratic mode of description. In a letter written in March 1958 regarding a 1947 survey, she writes:

> *I have never been thoroughly satisfied with it [the old survey], I must admit, as it has always seemed to me to be a little off. Whether this is due to magnetic variation through the years or to the way the old folks measured up-hill and down-dale with a pole, I don't know . . . . As I remember, in my childhood, the "large spruce" marked on the boundary between Hilda Kenway and me, used to have a pole tied to its top to show that it was Babbidge's (now Kenway's) corner bound . . . . I never felt, however, that the lines were enough off to make a fuss over. A few feet one way or the other, so what, except for a nice spot of cranberries which I always looted anyway.*

If Ruth Moore has to talk about boundaries, she is going to do it in her own way. A large spruce, a remembered note about some earlier agreement with Hilda Kenway and a patch of cranberries are more important than the exactness of the surveyor's rod. Similarly, the title search completed by Silsby and Silsby's law offices in Ellsworth has to be discussed, but is seemingly important to Ruth only because it provides another occasion to move back into the history of the individuals who inhabited the place:

> *They tell me there that forty years is generally considered far enough back for legal purposes in these parts, and as you will see they have carried the search back to 1901 . . . The land was, I believe, a part of Daniel Gott's original purchase, and I have the original deed to it, signed by him, in which he made this particular portion over to his son.*

Just as she tells the Strausses that she is leaving in the house the contents necessary for housekeeping — "probably most of that stuff ought to stay where it is anyway," she says — she implies that she is leaving them not inanimate objects but living material through which a real history can be grasped.

The quasi-business correspondence is really about the "stuff" of the house, and the "stuff" included in the old deed, those faded 150-year-old signatures that recall the past into the present. The boundary that matters is not the surveyor's iron pipe but a more vaguely defined patch of cranberries that has significance in the remembered life of the island. The cranberries and the spruce tree are the real. Ruth seems to be telling the Strausses in 1958, and telling me as well even now, that acquiring the Moore house and land means acquiring a past, both real and imagined. It's as if voices from another century, all the "inheritors," come with the property.

Ruth Moore's letters to the Strausses constitute in themselves a "good deed"; they are a gift that I, 50 years later, read as a form of instruction. No doubt, Ruth knew the challenge she faced in putting forth such a lesson. Fifteen years later, in a letter included in Sanford Phippen's collection, she wrote: "The last local people who went [to the island] for a Sunday outing were ordered off, since even shorelines now are mostly private." In 1989, less than a year before her death, she wrote movingly to my late neighbor, Betty Baldwin, herself a summer person whose friendship with the Moore family went back to the 1920s:

> *Of course I'd love to see you any time, but you mustn't ask me to go to the Island. I haven't been down there for years, and have no wish to go. It's no longer the magical place I knew and loved and grew up in and the changes made set too many ghosts walking. (January, 1989)*

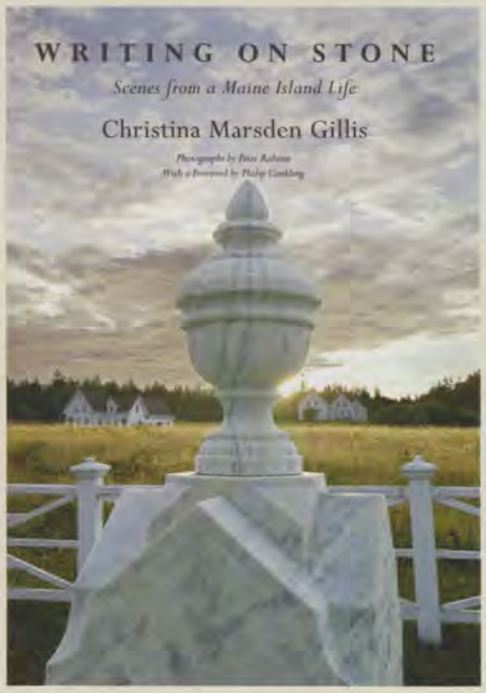
Once again, an island turned into measured property is no longer open to the "magic," to the "ghosts" she knows are there. In a similar vein a year earlier, in a letter to Betty Baldwin's brother, Ted Holmes, also a close friend from long-past summers on Gotts Island, Ruth remarked what she saw as the inhospitality of the summer people and then observed:

> *It almost seems as if the people down there [on the island] were afraid of something. I wouldn't know what. I know it seems haunted to me. Not without reason. The offshore islands are mysterious, anyway; I've been on some of them where there once were villages, even towns, where there's a definite atmosphere, almost in the air, that no one is welcome there — that the island belonged to itself and always did. (February 13, 1988)*

Then in her eighties, Ruth again looked to the islands that "speak with a voice that is all their own," are silent to modern generations, but still harbor "ghosts" of the past. Even as she clearly regretted the path she saw its history as having taken, the island still holds on to its special "atmosphere," the mystery of the place that is its essential meaning.

Though a modern deed of ownership has little to say about them, the presences are still there. As Ruth Moore's letters to the Strauss family in 1958 suggested, there is in some sense no real departure. Something always remains, whether in Daniel Gott's faint signature — and Hannah Gott's X — on the old 1812 deed, or in the mid-20th-century faded typescript that tells a story of its own. These documents are my inheritance also. The lessons are still there to be learned, the ghosts recognized, the silences heard, and the mystery woven into the fabric of our own lives.

A summer resident of Gotts Island, ***Christina M. Gillis*** *is author of "Writing on Stone."*



"I remember when we boarded with the Moores," Ted Holmes used to say, usually as preamble to a Gotts Island reminiscence. He was referring to the 1920s and the years when he, a summer visitor from New Jersey, first came to know the Moore family. "The room I stayed in was a front room, a small bedroom, and I could look out at the pool," another ex-boarder remarked.

It was always known, at least from about 1900, as the "Moore house"; but for me, it is almost as important that the house was a boardinghouse. Summer people all, the boarders knew the coherent year-round community that ultimately disintegrated. They were not *of* the community, but they lived, at least for short periods, *with* it. And since a number of the boarders ultimately purchased the island property left by the old residents, they became the new summer community: a community not of boarders but of vacation homeowners. Most of the Moores' boarders are gone themselves now, but their generation intersected with my own. They told and retold the old stories, in various and sundry versions, to the younger summer families. They were the mediators between us, the present summer people, and "them," the year-round islanders of the past.

The boarders in the Moore house belonged in something of the same way that we now belong. We have the worries and the responsibilities, as well as the joys and security, of ownership; but like the old boarders at the house, we come, we go, and then we come back again.

And all the while, albeit empty of people now in fall, winter, and spring, the house stays. Hundreds of miles away from us, it belongs to itself. But we know it is there. In the decades that we have owned the Gotts Island house we lived abroad three times, moved three times, and for sixteen years maintained a bicoastal marriage with homes in New Jersey and California. When asked about the latter arrangement — as we often were — the answer was always the same: "But we are always together at Gotts Island in the summer."

The island house is an anchor in our lives, a steady point that sustains us through all our moves, physical and emotional. It is property, and much more than property. Looking out to the cemetery and the sea beyond, firmly rooted in the village of which it is a part, the house situates us, just as it did its earlier occupants, in the life of the island. It is large, sprawling, capacious. It accommodates generations of us all. It is a fixed center, a site of memory and imagination. And at the same time, in witnessing the coming and going — and coming again — of boarders, it is an acknowledgment of the transience of life itself.

From *Writing on Stone: Scenes from a Maine Island Life*, by Christina Marsden Gillis. Co-published by University Press of New England and Island Institute, 2008.

FDR arrives in Rockland, following his secret meeting with the British prime minister and what was dubbed a "fishing trip" in 1941.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT "GOES FISHING"

HARRY GRATWICK

USS POTOMAC

On August 16, 1941, the presidential yacht POTOMAC emerged from the mists of Penobscot Bay and entered Rockland Harbor. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had been out of the country for two weeks. Why did he suddenly reappear in Rockland, Maine, of all places? Had he really been on a "fishing trip," as he had told the press? If so, what was the President doing cruising off the coast of Maine, while German submarines lurked nearby?

Historic Photos Courtesy of The Rockland Historical Society

Off to the station, Secret Service on the running boards.

By the summer of 1941 World War II had been raging for two years. Great Britain stood alone against the forces of fascist Germany, Italy and Japan. In June Hitler had invaded the Soviet Union. Although the United States remained neutral, Washington was already providing some Lend-Lease aid to the British, even though many Americans felt, "Nothing is worse than war." As British prime minister Winston Churchill stepped up his efforts to bring America into the war, President Roosevelt was faced with a dilemma: Anxious as he was to stop Hitler, he was also acutely conscious of the strong isolationist sentiment in the United States. Polls showed that 74 percent of the public wanted to stay out of the conflict.

After months of negotiations, the President finally agreed to a secret meeting with Churchill to be held in August of 1941, to "talk over the problem of the defeat of Germany." This was to be the famous "fishing trip."

Plans had to be made with both political and security concerns in mind. Early in August, Churchill slipped quietly out of London and headed north, eventually boarding the British battleship, HMS PRINCE OF WALES, in Scotland. Roosevelt told the world he was leaving Washington for a "nice quiet cruise, including some fishing." Due to the "lack of space" on the Coast Guard escort vessel CALYPSO, members of the press were not invited, a decision that irritated many members of the Fourth Estate.

Roosevelt took the train to New London, Connecticut, where he boarded the POTOMAC. Once out of sight of Martha's Vineyard, he transferred to the heavy cruiser USS AUGUSTA. To maintain the deception, the President's flag remained on the POTOMAC. Passing through the Cape Cod Canal, the POTOMAC's captain had several crew members dress in civilian clothes and sit on the afterdeck, pretending to be the President and his party. For the next few days the POTOMAC cruised the waters off of New England. Bulletins such as the following were fed to the press: "From USS POTOMAC, all members of party showing effects of sunning. Fishing luck good. . . ."

Meanwhile, the AUGUSTA, accompanied by several destroyers and the light cruiser TUSCALOOSA, steamed to Argentia Harbor in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland. The ships carrying both leaders were preceded by minesweepers and escorted by warships. They followed zigzag courses, for fear of being spotted by German submarines. The PRINCE OF WALES had to make multiple course changes and at one point lost her escorts due to bad weather. Churchill, however, found the voyage restful as he read novels, watched films and played backgammon.

On meeting up with the President during his trip, his son Elliott, who served as a temporary aide to his father, remembers saying, "You look wonderful, Pop — but how come all this? You on a fishing trip?" The President roared with laughter. "That's what the newspapers think," he said. "They think I'm fishing somewhere off the Bay of Fundy."

"Dad was as delighted as a kid, boasting of how he had thrown the newspapermen off the scent," Elliott recalled. "Then he told us what it was all about. 'I'm meeting Churchill here. He's due in tomorrow on the PRINCE OF WALES.'"

THE MEETING

Roosevelt arrived in Newfoundland on August 8; Churchill, a day later. Although they had corresponded frequently as wartime leaders, the two men had met only once before, in 1918. "At long last, Mr. President," Churchill is reported to have said. To which Roosevelt replied, "Glad to have you aboard, Mr. Churchill." Churchill then gave the President a letter from King George VI and made an official statement which, despite two attempts, a sound-film crew failed to record.

Each man had his own agenda. Churchill hoped that Roosevelt would agree to enter the war against Germany and Italy, whereas Roosevelt's objective was to secure a joint declaration of war aims, without committing the U.S. to war. For four days the two leaders and their staffs met frequently, discussing issues and exchanging information. On Sunday morning, church services were held on the PRINCE OF WALES. The sun broke through the leaden skies "almost as though by signal," wrote Elliott, as the assembled company sang "Onward Christian Soldiers," reducing Churchill to tears, and which Roosevelt later referred to as "a very remarkable religious service."

On August 12 the two leaders agreed on a joint declaration known to history as the Atlantic Charter. It was hoped that in addition to being a statement of Allied war aims, the document would also establish a vision for a post–World War II world, even though the United States had yet to enter the war. It was not, however, a treaty;

Following a news conference aboard the presidential yacht, FDR rode in an open car through Rockland to the accompaniment of whistles and cheers from thousands of spectators. Security was tight.

Roosevelt knew the U.S. Senate was not yet ready to approve such an agreement.

If the following principles are reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points from nearly three decades earlier, remember that Roosevelt had been assistant secretary of the U.S. Navy under Wilson for six years. Just as the Fourteen Points had provided a framework for ending the First World War, so did the Atlantic Charter provide the criteria for a peace settlement after World War II. A major difference was that Roosevelt had achieved a joint statement, not one issued unilaterally like the Fourteen Points. On August 14, as each leader was returning to his country, London and Washington simultaneously announced the following agreement:

1. *No territorial gains to be sought by the United States or the United Kingdom.*
2. *Territorial adjustments to be in accordance with wishes of the peoples concerned.*
3. *All peoples have a right to self-determination.*
4. *Trade barriers to be lowered.*
5. *Global economic cooperation and advancement of social welfare.*
6. *Freedom from want and fear.*
7. *Freedom of the seas.*
8. *Defeat of aggressor nations, postwar common disarmament.*

When Americans opened their morning papers on August 14, banner headlines informed them of the historic meeting, and of the fact that Roosevelt was expected to come ashore at Rockland, Maine. The result was a stampede by the press to catch the next train to Rockland. *The New York Times* ran its largest headline:

ROOSEVELT, CHURCHILL DRAFT 8 PEACE AIMS PLEDGING DECLARATION OF NAZI TYRANNY: JOINT STEPS BELIEVED CHARTED AT PARLEY . . . EN ROUTE TO ROCKLAND

The USS AUGUSTA left Argentia Harbor on August 12 and proceeded to Blue Hill Bay, Maine, for a rendezvous with the POTOMAC and the CALYPSO. On August 14 Roosevelt transferred to his yacht and steamed to Eggemoggin Reach, where the party actually did do some fishing. The biggest "catch," however, was 80 pounds of lobsters, which the President purchased from Deer Isle fisherman, Bert Bettis. Bettis then presented the President with an extra 25 pounds of "super lobsters" as a special present. In a thank-you note to Bettis, Roosevelt wrote, "Your courtesy has brought added enjoyment to a most pleasant cruise I am just completing."

The next morning, August 15, was spent relaxing before the presidential party got under way about noon. A special message from "Editor Robbins" of the *Deer Isle Messenger* alerted the *Rockland Courier-Gazette* that after spending the night off Conary Island, the POTOMAC and her escort had passed under the recently completed Deer Isle Bridge, "probably heading for Rockland." Eventually it was learned that after frequent stops for fishing, the President spent a quiet night in the familiar waters of Pulpit Harbor, North Haven, and that financier and summer resident, Thomas W. Lamont, had boarded the POTOMAC to pay his respects.

In fact, this was Roosevelt's third visit to North Haven. In 1933, while cruising, he anchored another yacht, the AMBERJACK II, in Cabot Cove (part of Pulpit Harbor) to collect the White House mail pouch, which had been sent on ahead. Postmaster Herman Crockett delivered the mail and also got the President to sign the Havens Inn register. (This register also contained the signature of Civil War hero and 18th president, Ulysses S. Grant, who had visited North Haven in 1873). FDR's second visit came in July of 1936 when he met his sons in Pulpit Harbor for a cruise. "I haven't the faintest idea where I'm going, except to work to east'ard," he told news hawks before casting off. "I'm just going to loaf and have a good time," he remarked, according to *Time* magazine.

Another Roosevelt connection with Penobscot Bay has come to light recently, when it was discovered that in 1925 he leased property and owned buildings on Vinalhaven for the purpose of impounding lobsters. The island's historical society has records showing that the land was on the east side of Greens Island, next to Vinalhaven. (The records also show the lease was for seven years, but that it was termi-

nated in 1928 for "non-payment of rent.") Historically the place was known as Delano Cove, which of course was Roosevelt's middle name. There is, however, no indication that he was in any way related to the Delanos of Vinalhaven.

CROSSING PENOBSCOT BAY

The POTOMAC and the CALYPSO remained anchored in Pulpit Harbor the following morning, waiting for the fog to lift, which it finally did early in the afternoon. Maine historian Paul G. Merriam grew up in Rockland and wrote in his book, *Home Front on Penobscot Bay*: "There was an air of anticipation. With advance notice thousands from the area and summer visitors planned to greet the President. Bunting hung from buildings and people made plans to take positions along the route or at the train station." As a child Merriam remembers his father saying, "'Let's go see the President.' I saw him, though I didn't know why he was there until much later."

The August 16 issue of the *Rockland Courier-Gazette* proclaimed, "The city was agog with excitement and rapidly filling up with summer visitors and local residents." The paper speculated that "Interest is intensified that the President may launch into further details of the history-making conference between the American and British dignitaries on board the HMS PRINCE OF WALES." As was the case several years previously when President Roosevelt paid his first visit to Rockland, the city was filled with Secret Service men, state police, and other officials. The paper went on to add that, "the busiest place in the city today will be the Western Union telegraph office where preparations are being made to handle many thousand words." Anticipating a "deluge," manager Bert Gardner put on an extra force of 14 operators.

Fifty years later, local residents could still recall the scene and find themselves in old news photographs.

Roosevelt chose Rockland as his port of debarkation for several reasons: It had one of the largest and most sheltered harbors on the North Atlantic coast. In 1941 there was a direct rail link to Washington. As already noted, Roosevelt was thoroughly familiar with coastal Maine, especially Penobscot Bay, having cruised the waters many times en route to his summer home further downeast on Campobello Island. An avid sailor, he was called by *Time* magazine, "[t]he best yachtsman the nation ever had for President."

FDR was not the first American president to visit Rockland, nor would he be the last. Over the years the town has had its share of presidential visitors. As previously mentioned, Ulysses S. Grant stopped in Rockland on a cruise around Penobscot Bay. Early in the 20th century FDR's cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, visited Rockland, and in 1910, William Howard Taft made a speech and visited the lime quarry near the present city dump. In the 1950s, Dwight Eisenhower visited Rockland shortly before his nomination as a presidential candidate, and later in the decade, Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy each visited the community on campaign swings.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE

The nation listened as NBC newsman Ben Grauer broadcast Roosevelt's return to the United States by describing Rockland as a "quaint fishing hamlet." The POTOMAC and the CALYPSO passed the Rockland breakwater about 3 p.m. and docked at Tillson's Wharf, site of the present-day Rockland Coast Guard Station. A large contingent of reporters and cameramen, representing the major newspapers and news services, waited, primed to question the President about his historic meeting with the British prime minister. Two dozen reporters were permitted on board the POTOMAC, where they found the President seated in the yacht's main cabin. Photographers, however, learned to their dismay that cameras would not be permitted on board.

A smiling Roosevelt remarked that it had been foggy crossing Penobscot Bay, and that if any submarines had fired torpedoes, they had not been sighted. He then made a brief statement about the trip, emphasizing the eight points he and Churchill had agreed upon. When asked if the United States was moving closer to war, the President disingenuously replied, "I should say no." Most of those present, however, realized that America had indeed moved a step closer to war. As Paul Merriam wrote, "The reason for the President's visit to Rockland impressed upon people from the area, as well as from around the world, that the country was increasingly casting its fate with those powers fighting tyranny abroad."

Following the news conference, FDR disembarked from the POTOMAC and was met by Rockland mayor Edward Veazie and other local dignitaries. He rode in an open car through town to the accompaniment of whistles and cheers from thousands of spectators. Security was tight. One bystander was grabbed by a Secret Service agent when he innocently reached in his pocket for a pack of cigarettes. People packed the route ten feet deep, as the motorcade proceeded from Tillson's Wharf to the Main Central Railroad station on Union Avenue. Roosevelt was assisted from his car to the train, where he stood on the rear platform acknowledging the cheers of the crowd. "With shouts still ringing in the ears of the Chief Executive, the Presidential train disappeared from view," the *Courier-Gazette* article concluded.

ROCKLAND REMEMBRANCES

John Knight was a teenager and remembers listening on a friend's portable radio to the description of FDR passing "Owls Point" and thinking the sound came from very close by. "We looked down to our right and there was the announcer, Ben Grauer, who was describing the atmosphere and the goings-on prior to the President coming off the Presidential yacht. After the President left for the train, a newsman with a tripod asked me if I knew of a shortcut to the railroad station. I told him I did and I carried the tripod for him. We went through the back streets and arrived at the station just in time to see the President going into his compartment on the train. . . ."

Betty Holmes Knight, John's wife-to-be, was standing with a bunch of her girlfriends on Union Street near the railroad station. "Everybody knew that the President was coming. Rockland was just another small town, but there he was. I remember it seemed as though we waited forever for him to appear. We spent the time singing songs led by a woman from Brooklyn. I had no idea that the President was handicapped and didn't learn until much later what he was dealing with."

One of Betty's friends in the picture was Georgia Stevens Tasho, Rockland high school class of '44. Georgia remembers being impressed that Roosevelt was stopping in the strongly Republican town of Rockland. "Back then I was a Republican, though I supported the New Deal. Even though he was a Democrat, it was really something to see a President so close. And yes, he was very handsome."

A wave of the presidential hat.

Looking back on the event 50 years later, Stephen May wrote in 1991:

> *I was ten at the time and remembered no other president. To me Roosevelt seemed a figure of gigantic proportions. Rockland was stirring with life early that morning as my father drove our Ford into town by way of Route 17. Even on short notice, buildings were awash in patriotic bunting, and crowds of hopeful Rocklanders and summer visitors alike waited for hours, hoping to catch a glimpse of the international leader. . . . When the President's entourage appeared on deck, we knew the long-awaited moment was finally at hand. Grasping a cane in his right hand, FDR planted himself firmly. Although he seemed the picture of vigorous good health we were surprised to see him make his way down the gangplank by grasping both railings, and swinging his weak legs, still encased in braces long after his bout with polio.*

Ted Sylvester recalls:

> *. . . as kids we were pretty much isolated from the war. . . . When President Roosevelt visited Rockland in 1941 on the eve of the war, the fact that Rockland was featured on the movie screen was big news. My recollection of the visit was a giant parade and hordes of people everywhere. I took up a position at the railroad station to try and get a glimpse of the President. As the train pulled away from the station, with the President standing on the platform, I ran up the tracks to get a better look. . . . There's an old newsreel of a kid dressed in knickers running up the track. No one believes it, but that's me.*

George Van Tassel, later a Rockland resident, was a member of the Canadian navy serving aboard a destroyer. His ship was pressed into service when a storm scattered the PRINCE OF WALES's escort vessels. Van Tassel remembers, "We had no idea what we were in for. The President had sent over a package of candy, cigarettes and oranges to each seaman on his ship." (In fact, gift boxes containing cigarettes, fresh fruit and cheese were distributed to the 1,950 British seamen on four ships.) On Sunday, Van Tassel was one of the fortunate sailors chosen to attend the memorable church service on the PRINCE OF WALES. Coming from a destroyer, he was awed by the battleship. "I will never forget her because she was so huge." By the end of the meeting, Van Tassel said, "We didn't know what had happened, but we knew it was something really big."

Jim Moore was a cub reporter for the *Portland Press Herald* who was fortunate to be at FDR's press conference on the POTOMAC. "The President sat relaxing in an easy chair, smoking a cigarette in his customary long-stemmed cigarette holder. To set the reporters at ease, Roosevelt told the old joke about Maine people: 'The thing about Maine people is that during the summer, they fish and make babies. During the winter they don't fish . . .'" Jim said that he didn't ask any questions. "If I could have thought of anything world-shaking, I would have asked him, but I couldn't think of a damn thing."

Moore received a Western Union cable from his anxious *Press Herald* editor: DO YOUR DARNEDESTON GOOD DESCRIPTIVE YARN WITH SNAPPY LEAD. WE HAVE FAITH IN YOU HERE. The editor later expressed his appreciation: YOU ARE DOING GRANDLY. . . . YOU HAVE DONE A SWELL JOB ON WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID. SO FAR AS I CAN SEE, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING THAT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS HAD IN ITS INTERVIEW.

As already noted, Roosevelt actually did do some fishing on the trip. When he first arrived at Argentia Bay and was waiting for Churchill, FDR and another son, Franklin, commandeered a whaleboat and did some bottom fishing for small cod and flounder. It was reported, on good authority, however, that the fish were wormy and their edibility questionable. "Have one sent to the Smithsonian," the President laughingly suggested. This was followed by several unsuccessful attempts in Eggemoggin Reach shortly before the presidential party arrived in Rockland. Regarding the larger question of who caught the bigger fish, Roosevelt or Churchill, historians agree that both men were skillful anglers.

***Harry Gratwick**, a summer resident of Vinalhaven, writes from there and from Philadelphia.*

MOVED

Where buildings are concerned, islanders really get their money's worth

CYRUS MOULTON

Islands have a long tradition of recycling — not just bottles and cans or #2 plastic, but in a more basic form: reusing or adapting whole buildings and existing materials. Over generations, structures, portions of structures, architectural details, timber frames, everything down to individual bricks — have migrated across islands, from one island to another and even another, from the mainland to islands — in what can seem like a slow dance of built things being adapted to new uses over time.

On North Haven, for example, at least 40 buildings have been moved, sometimes more than once. Houses, churches, various other structures and a wealth of building materials on Vinalhaven have been shifted around, the buildings disassembled and re-assembled as needs and circumstances changed. The same is true for the Cranberry Isles, Islesboro, Monhegan and islands in Casco Bay.

Nor is the phenomenon limited to islands or Maine. "The frequency of moving major domestic and agricultural buildings in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New England is staggering," writes Thomas Hubka in his book, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*, a well-regarded study of traditional connected houses in New England. "When the history of building movement in a particular New England town is accurately recorded . . . it appears as if the entire town was constantly being moved about."

Certainly, islands' geographic limits have contributed to the prevalence of architectural recycling. Anybody who has built or renovated an island building can attest to the accretion of costs, time and headaches that inevitably takes place when building materials and workers must be brought from off-island.

But in many cases, surrounding water has proved more benign, making building-moving cheaper by easing transportation while providing new sources of income for enterprising islanders. In fact, the economic benefits have outweighed the usual influences on buildings listed by historian Stewart Brand: technology, money and fashion.

Snow, ice and frozen ground have always made for ideal building-moving conditions.

Because of the cost of alternatives, the needs of local people and seasonal residents willing to pay for such projects, the relative ease of moving buildings across water, the skills of islanders and the many opportunities for adaptive uses, Maine islands have a particularly strong legacy of recycling buildings.

Recycling is once again in vogue. Corporations and institutions race to be the most "green"; governments at all levels discuss carbon caps, renewable resources and sustainable, natural resource–based policies. Indeed, many Americans seem as fixated upon reducing their "carbon footprint" as cutting back on their weight.

VALUABLE COMMODITIES

Universally viewed as valuable commodities, well-constructed buildings require proper materials and highly skilled workers. Prior to 1830, highly skilled carpenters were especially valued because they were responsible for nearly the entire building process; from selecting the trees for lumber to sheathing the house. Hand-carving each connective joint, carpenters constructed building frames in their private yards and sold them on speculation. Buyers would select a frame, which would be disassembled and moved to a prepared fieldstone foundation and reconstructed. To this extent at least, moving a building was a necessary component of any construction process.

According to James L. Garvin, author of *A Building History of Northern New England*, Northern New England seaports were especially successful locations for carpenters. An abundant lumber supply from interior Maine and New Hampshire provided raw materials, while regular shipping enabled frames to be distributed all over the world. Between 1771 and 1775, for example, carpenters in the port of Piscataqua — now Portsmouth, New Hampshire — exported 147 house frames to the West Indies. And skilled carpenters could even supplement their income with decorative carving for ships.

Combining the extreme value of a building with the ease of shipping, it is not surprising that the region established a strong tradition of moving buildings. And given the lack of raw materials or sufficient highly skilled workers on sparsely populated islands, it is understandable that the building-moving tradition on islands was particularly rich.

The Anderson house on Vinalhaven illustrates what was known as the "scribe rule" carpentry process prior to 1830 — so designated because carpenters would inscribe roman numerals to label the frames for reassembly. The house was built and sold in Ducktrap in 1823, and moved (whether as a disassembled frame or completed house is unknown, but either would be possible by water) to Matinicus. In 1878, the same house was moved from Matinicus to its present site on Vinalhaven.

Other buildings traveled shorter distances. The parsonage on Chebeague Island, probably dating from the late 18th century, was simply moved across the street.

But even after 19th-century technological advances such as the circular saw, machine-made metal nails and the carpenter's square changed building methods and eliminated the need for such skilled joinerwork, houses were still a valued commodity and the tradition of building-moving continued.

Vinalhaven received structures either moved wholly or in pieces from many of the nearby granite-quarrying islands including the Green's Island school, now on the shore of Sand Cove.

Margaret Philbrook recounted to Eleanor Richardson in *Hurricane Island: the Town that Disappeared* how her family was hired, following the closure of Hurricane's quarries, to dismantle many of the houses there for lumber.

"We were supposed to tear all those buildings down," Philbrook said. "Mr. White owned most of them. He'd sell a whole house, that's the way he'd do it, because we tore them down in such a way that the lumber was all saved. The windows even. Everything was saved. And then, we used to put the lumber and everything down to the wharf and someone who bought it would come with boats and get it. Then they'd either build it somewhere else or make whatever they wanted out of it."

The organ and the majority of the Hurricane Catholic Church's pews were moved to the church on North Haven. The bell and another pew wound up in summer houses on the island.

Fred Emrich's house on North Haven has a particularly rich history. Although most dates are unavailable, the house was originally on Eagle Island. It was split into two houses when it was moved to North Haven, and the half owned by the Emriches was moved farther back from the road in 2005.

On Vinalhaven, The Pleasant River Grange Hall, originally a Webster Quarry boardinghouse on the shores of the Pleasant River, was moved up the frozen river to the Watson H. Vinal homestead in the winter of 1907. Even without the benefit of water, the Vinalhaven jail moved down Main Street to become a taxi stand in the 1950s. The Merrithew photography studio moved across Main Street before being torn down to make way for the downtown parking lot.

An interesting demonstration of the value of an island structure is the Hopkins house on North Haven. Lydia Brown, who lectured on relocated buildings at the North Haven Historical Society, said, "The house was originally built in 1870 by Lewis Leadbetter, and it was located on Burnt Island. Lewis and his wife, Mary, lived in the farmhouse with their four children until 1885 when the family moved to the mainland. Soon after, George Leo Gillis of Prince Edward Island purchased Burnt Island, made the farmhouse his home, and worked as a fisherman. In 1907, Leo sold Burnt Island to a summer yachtsman named Philip Wrenn. Gillis then disassembled the farmhouse, transported it by wagonload to its present location, and reconstructed it in a very different design from the building's first. Reportedly, the sale of Burnt Island included the buildings, but when Philip Wrenn returned the following summer he discovered the farmhouse had disappeared."

THE APPEAL OF THE VERNACULAR

While never major agricultural centers, island family farms were common and many farmhouses follow the "big-house-little-house-back-house-barn" form. This is unsurprising: Hubka notes that the form was an attempt by farmers to establish "model farms" whose efficiency would counter the effects of an agrarian economy steadily abandoning New England for the better soils, more favorable climates and better transportation networks and markets in the Midwest and West.

Hubka found that the ells on 75 percent of the farms he studied were constructed from reused building materials, and more than half of the connected-farm complexes incorporated buildings that had been moved.

All islanders — not just farmers — faced rapidly changing economies. In two centuries, the Maine islands have witnessed the boom (and in some instances, the bust) of the granite-quarrying, groundfishing, lobstering and tourism industries, as well as the service providers affiliated with each.

For many islanders, in other words, economic pressures prompted much of the early moving and recycling of buildings. This impetus to move and recycle grew with the arrival of seasonal visitors, whose needs were different from year-round islanders, and who had the resources to pay for some substantial projects.

Built during the1920s on the Spurling property, the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society demonstrates the influence of the new economic opportunities provided by seasonal visitors. The building was originally known as the Mountain View Inn and was built to offer dinner accommodations for summer boarders who would rent an islander's spare room and take meals at various local homes. The Spurlings previously served breakfast and lunch on their front porch, but decided to expand their operation and take advantage of a view of the mountains of Mount Desert. The building had quarters for summer staff and a kitchen on the ground floor and a hand-operated dumbwaiter to bring food up to the second-floor dining room.

However, the Mountain View Inn operated for only a couple of decades before boarders began purchasing their own homes. The Depression and World War II further decreased the number of seasonal visitors.

In 1943, the Bracy family bought the property and used the building as a barn and shop. The maple flooring from the dining room was removed to finish the floors in the main house, the leftovers sold to finish the flooring in a house down the street.

Wesley Bracy and his son, Wesley Jr., called "Junior," converted the downstairs into a shop for building lobster traps, complete with a buoy-turning lathe and tools for splicing rope. The upstairs was used to store traps, furniture and, for a while, a pen of turkeys. The downstairs bathroom was the perfect size for the goat's stall. In the mid-1970s, after Wesley Sr. stopped fishing and Junior built his own house, the barn became a "playhouse" for the Bracy grandchildren: the perfect "grandmother's attic."

for Sale

BY

AUCTION

By authority from the First Universalist Society, its Building Committee will sell, at Public Auction, on the premises, the

Meeting House

of said Society (exclusive of Foundation, Bell, Organ and furnishings), on

Monday, May 17, 1875,

at 2 o'clock, P. M. The House to be removed within 10 days. Terms and conditions made known at the time and place of Sale.

By Order of Building Committee.

JOHN P. WISE, Treasurer.

C. R. MALLARD, Auctioneer.

Gazette Print.

Rockland's former First Universalist Church was sold by auction in 1875 and moved across the water to Vinalhaven, where it is now the home of the island historical society.

In 2003, The Great Cranberry Historical Society approached Eva Bracy Galyean, who had inherited the property, about converting the building to a museum. On Nov. 16, 2004, the building was moved a quarter-mile down the Main Road, a three-hour town event that employed a truck with special, adjustable hydraulics to level the building while climbing uphill.

With new windows, shingling and landscaping, the building barely resembles the old Mountain View Inn. But, it is once again catering to the needs of seasonal visitors: the historical society hopes to attract the day-trippers for a glimpse of the island's unique lifestyle.

Cherie Galyean, Eva's daughter, feels it is appropriate that her old "playhouse" continues to be an important part of the island: "It's always been an island building, not intended to be gorgeous or a showpiece, but a working piece of architecture," she says. "That's what it always was and will continue to be."

Her mother agrees: "I really like to see that the building is being used. It needed a lot of work, and it was too much for me to do. I kept trying to think of possibilities to do with it, but the work was too much for me to get involved with."

The former inn is an example of a "vernacular" building style that developed concurrently with the region, adapting with the regional evolution in values and needs. Stewart Brand defines the vernacular as "anything not designed by professional architects: The buildings evolve and increase in sophistication while retaining simplicity; they are finely attuned to local weather and local society; they are concerned with form, not style; and they have generic and general purpose space plans."

The Vinalhaven Historical Society's building, another much-recycled example, speaks to the adaptability of a vernacular building, incorporating activities during its long history ranging from the sacred to the profane.

In 2003, the Great Cranberry Historical Society moved the one-time Mountain View Inn a quarter-mile down the road, where it was renovated into a museum.

Originally built in 1838 on Union Street in Rockland, the First Universalist Church of Rockland was sold at auction in May, 1875, to William Henry Johnson, a citizen of Vinalhaven and the superintendent of Sunday Schools at the Vinalhaven Union Church. Following a disagreement with authorities at the Vinalhaven Union Church, Johnson had decided to establish his own congregation and raised local, private donations for the purpose.

The cause of the argument is unknown, and a contemporary Rockland newspaper account suggested a much more congenial motivation:

"The old Universalist meeting-house was sold by auction last Monday and was bought by a committee for the Young Man's Christian Association of Vinalhaven, for the sum of $300, theirs being the only bid . . . the Building Committee told the Committee from Vinalhaven that if they would start with an offer of $300, no member of the committee would bid against them . . . "

This is the only mention of a YMCA using the building, but it's certainly in keeping with the one-time church's long history of different uses. By 1878, the rivalry between Mr. Johnson's church and the preexisting Universalist Church had ended in favor of the latter. On Oct. 26, 1878, the Town of Vinalhaven bought the building for $1,300 to use as its Town Hall.

The first of many annual town meetings was held there on March 3, 1879. Unfortunately, the building had to be cleared when the weight of 500 people caused the floor to settle five inches. Repaired for its new secular role, the building commenced a long history of sheltering various activities for the townspeople of Vinalhaven.

It was leased to C. A. Shields between 1890 and 1896 and used as a dance hall and a roller-skating rink. In 1898, the building was let to the Ariston Club, an athletic organization established for the young people of Vinalhaven.

The burning of the Granite Hall in 1894 left traveling theatrical troupes without a suitable location to perform, so the Town Hall was converted to a theater/dance hall for the Smith Vinalhaven Band concerts and visiting performers, including a horse that counted with his hoof and a goat that ate tin cans and cigarettes. Writing circa 1957 in the local newspaper, *The Wind*, Patricia Crossman recollected: "Capacity crowds jammed the hall to see touring troupes. For years party-goers suffered discomfort of hard wooden benches to watch names now legend in theatrical history bring 'Ten Nights in a Barroom' alive . . . "

Other events held at the building between 1906 and 1963 included pony shows, Saturday night dances and basketball games, and a dancing school met there as well.

However, in 1934, one activity was explicitly forbidden: " . . . said Hall shall not be let to any person for Communistic purposes."

In 1966 the building was purchased by the Vinalhaven Historical Society, which gutted the interior and filled it with artifacts of Vinalhaven's past.

Like Hubka's New England farmhouses, the Great Cranberry and Vinalhaven historical societies' halls are examples of structures that have successfully adapted to multiple uses and yet still retained the appeal and character of, in Cherie Galyean's phrase, "an island building."

Vernacular buildings are part of a regional identity. Subsequently, with an increasing number of seasonal visitors wishing to participate in this identity, vernacular buildings became especially valued. They exemplified an informality and simplicity that corresponded with a desirable image of Maine. John Calvin Stevens, one of the most famous (and vernacular-influenced) architects of Maine summer cottages, wrote in 1889:

"At a time when other sections of our country are developing an evidently demoralizing luxury, there is exhibited here throughout Maine a primitive simplicity and wholesome vigor of life which may serve as an object-lesson to the student of social problems . . . Maine is eagerly sought as a recreating-ground [for those] whose nerves need soothing. One feels here no impending menace of some popular paroxysm; but feels rather the calm spirit of a contented people environed by the unperverted things of nature."

The seasonal focus was on the outdoors and informality, not on the need to create snug, heat-efficient homes. Even the newly constructed mansions of Bar Harbor cost little when compared with seasonal homes constructed in other resort areas such as Newport, the Berkshires or Florida, and the homes adapted features of the vernacular: multipurpose, open living areas, not the specially compartmentalized features of a Victorian home; a connection with the outdoors characterized by porches and expansive windows; and a conglomeration of architectural elements unified by naturally (or unnaturally) weathered materials that suggested a long history.

Describing Cushing's Island in Casco Bay, Frederick Law Olmstead noted in his report on the island's development and improvement: "the Island is not a good place for a neighborhood of smart and fine suburban residences such as many prefer to spend their summers in . . . Villas and cottages of the class in question would appear out of place, tawdry, and vulgar, upon it."

And as existing homes became rare, seasonal residents converted other vernacular structures to seasonal homes: boathouses on Islesford; fishhouses on Monhegan; old schoolhouses on Great Cranberry; military barracks on Great Diamond Island, barns and — other vernacular structures throughout the islands — into residences, frequently moving them to new properties.

CHANGING VIEWS

While the features of a vernacular building appealed to many seasonal "rusticators" and catalyzed the most common example of recycling buildings — the conversion of buildings to seasonal residences — seasonal attitudes frequently changed when their were other "views" to consider. Although picturesque, vernacular buildings were frequently superseded by the natural landscape and moving houses was, and continues to be, a frequent response to the desire to improve the view of Stevens's "unperverted things of nature."

With the majority of island real-estate value in the land rather than the physical structures, and the importance of the natural environment to seasonal residents, improving the view is a common justification for tearing down or moving structures.

Polly Storey's house on Great Cranberry Island was moved across the street by her grandfather-in-law, the island's first summer resident, Moorfield Storey, who wanted it out of the hilltop field where he built his home. Ironically, the Polly Storey house now has one of the best views across the bay to Mt. Desert Island, while the trees have grown up around Moorfield Storey's house and block any view from there.

Also on Great Cranberry, island neighbors purchased the Liebow house and — together with the Cranberry Isles Realty Trust — moved it in 2000. The house was relocated to town-owned land to become affordable housing, in the process improving the view from the house of the neighbors who had purchased it.

The disproportionate value of land compared with structures and high demand for seasonal structures on the islands have contributed to a severe lack of island affordable housing. However, property owners and affordable-housing organizations have collaborated to address this problem in a way that continues the tradition of moving island buildings — contributing houses that would otherwise be demolished to affordable-housing organizations and moving them to new sites.

TODAY AND TOMORROW

The "House Moves" program on Martha's Vineyard is the best example of this collaboration between affordable-housing advocates and landowners and has provided a model for Maine's affordable-housing organizations. The nonprofit Island Housing Trust (IHT) arranges for houses slated for recycling to be appraised and, based on this appraisal, the owner receives a tax deduction, which he or she donates to the group in cash and uses to pay for moving the house and site-preparation work. The property owner saves on the substantial demolition costs, and the community receives affordable housing.

"It's such a terrific program, declares John Abrams, IHT board member and president of the South Mountain Company, a construction company that strives to use recycled and environmentally sound materials in its building. So far, the program has resulted in a dozen houses moved and converted into affordable housing.

Property owners interested in this sort of project, but whose houses are too remote to be moved, can participate in a used building material exchange: a place where salvaged lumber, materials and appliances from remodeled or demolished buildings can be stored, displayed and bought and sold.

High land values and the lack of readily available building materials and labor have also combined to encourage the rise of prefabricated housing. Since the days of the popular Sears, Roebuck and Company kit houses in the 1920s, which included architectural drawings, building specifications, pre-cut lumber and building material as well as any other items from their catalog — paint, wallpaper, furniture, etc. — ordering a building for delivery has been a practical and affordable option for many islanders.

Recently the increased quality and availability of modular homes has led to a new generation of prefabricated buildings to the islands. Islesboro Affordable Property (IAP) has purchased three modular homes since 2003, finding that the price, energy efficiency, the ease of "construction" and the high-quality (such buildings must be able to withstand barging and being handled by cranes, after all) make modular houses ideal for their needs.

"They put it all together in one day: it was just mind-blowing how they did that whole thing!" said Joanne Whitehead, IAP Director. "They look like regular homes and it comes complete with heating and plumbing systems all set up, prepainted, electrical and lighting all in, cupboards all done. The distributor even brought the finishers to do the sheetrock and spackle the joints."

Attracted by the ease of construction and not desiring to pay significant costs to import workers and materials, many island residents have also purchased modular buildings rather than custom-built homes. The tradition of moving buildings continues. And, at least for modular homes, transportation and delivery across water might be more economical once again: Because they must travel by highway, the modular sections can be no wider than 14 feet.

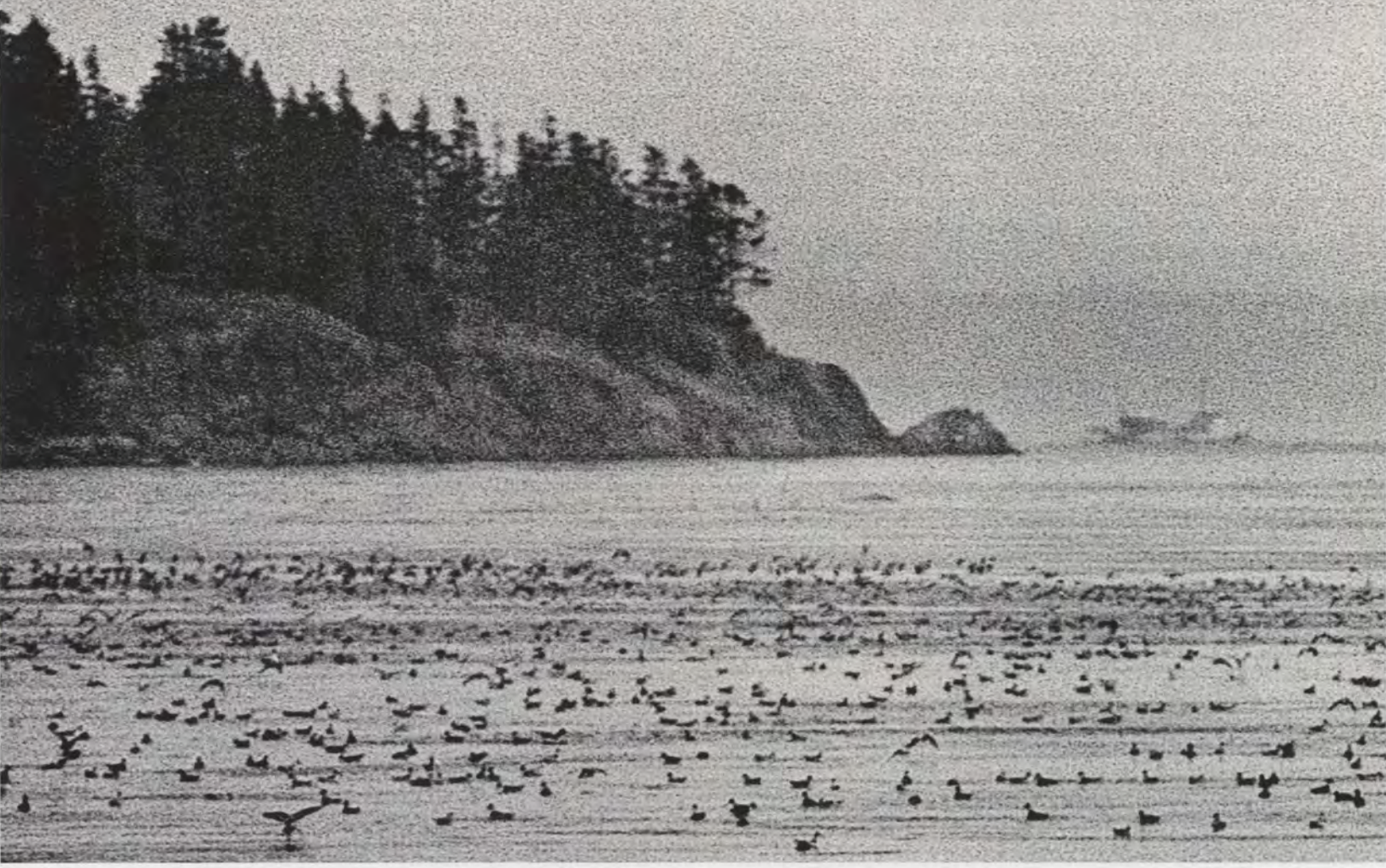
Far from a brief historical phenomenon or an antiquated, obsolete practice, recycling buildings continues to evolve alongside changing sensibilities toward the economy, the environment and history. Old buildings, or even new buildings that incorporate old materials, seem to represent a permanence and historical connection that are often elusive. Perhaps this desire to connect with the past will cause more island buildings to be recycled, as society recognizes not just the tangible values of recycled buildings, but also the spiritual values that older buildings provide. With the traditional life of their communities increasingly at risk, island buildings remind us of the past. As Steward Brand writes, "Old buildings embody history. They are worlds; in old buildings we glimpse the world of previous generations."

Still, we must be careful to avoid viewing island buildings nostalgically. They are not frozen in time; they are renovated, they host the most secular and most spiritual activities, and often, they move.

Cyrus Moulton *is knowledge management project coordinator at the Island Institute*

THE MISSING REDNECKS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

A whole species can't disappear — can it?



"For centuries and perhaps far longer, the rich tidal waters of Passamaquoddy and Cobscook bays in eastern Maine, near Eastport and Lubec, were prime fall migration stopover habitat for red-necked phalaropes."

Christopher Ayres

BOB MOORE

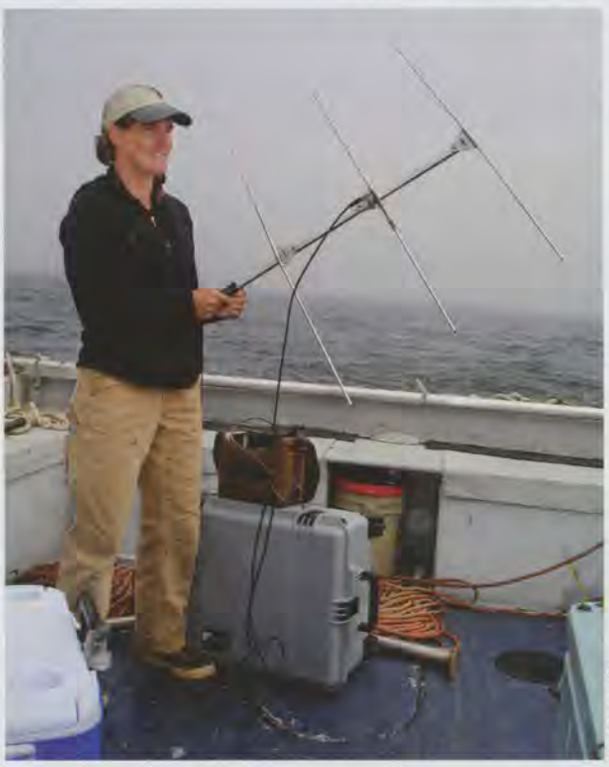
Robin Hunnewell holds her telemetry wand steady as she braces against the pitching of the boat in the Fundy swell. High in the observation box atop the pilothouse, the lurch is magnified into stomach-twisting arcs. At this moment nobody on board notices the discomfort, because Hunnewell's wand — resembling an antiquated TV antenna — is receiving a radio signal matching the exact frequency of a tiny transmitter that she glued to the back of a red-necked phalarope two weeks earlier. Finding the bird again in the vastness of Fundy's ocean and tide would be like retrieving a fleck of sea foam in a hurricane. It would also help unravel some of the mystery surrounding this species, which has all but disappeared.

Why so much anticipation over one bird? Beyond her outward zeal for scientific inquiry, what energizes Hunnewell, a doctoral candidate at the University of New Brunswick, is the possibility that something bigger is going on, and applying every ounce of her effort and ingenuity to tracking phalaropes just may get to the bottom of it.

"When a migratory stopover becomes suddenly no longer suitable, it's usually taken as a big alarm bell," says Hunnewell. "People began to worry that something was wrong. Why wasn't the bay suitable anymore?"

For centuries and perhaps far longer, the rich tidal waters of Passamaquoddy and Cobscook bays in eastern Maine, near Eastport and Lubec, were prime fall migration stopover habitat for red-necked phalaropes. Records from as early as the time of John J. Audubon tell of large numbers of phalaropes in the bays downeast. In the late 1800s, naturalist George A. Boardman, one of the pioneer field naturalists of the United States, observed thousands upon thousands in the area.

More recent counts indicate two million phalaropes — all red-necks — would move through in the fall each year to feed in the plankton-rich waters. Perhaps a quarter of the entire world population was right there inside a circle 10 miles in diameter where, twice a day, ocean currents flood and ebb through the inshore bays with tides averaging 25 feet. Their major food source, the tiny *Calanus finmarchicus* copepod, was here in abundance, brought to the surface by the current upwellings and the turbulence of the tides.



Bob Moore (2)

Then in the mid-1980s, for reasons nobody can pinpoint, the phalaropes began to disappear. Charles Duncan, director of the Shorebird Recovery Project at the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, lived in downeast Maine at the time, and actually witnessed the decline firsthand.

Duncan had taken a position at the University of Maine at Machias teaching chemistry and environmental studies. During his spare time in the summers, he would accompany a friend who is a whale watch captain on cruises into the Bay of Fundy. An avid birder, Duncan had the habit in those years of recording daily how many birds of each species he observed — a habit that would later prove valuable in corroborating the red-neck's decline.

Duncan observed that between 1984 and 1989, the number of red-necked phalaropes in Passamaquoddy and Cobscook bays went down an order of magnitude or more each year. He saw about 20,000 red-necks in 1984; there were 2,000 the next year, and 200 the next. "By 1990, the species was gone from here. Today you could go out and not see any," says Duncan.

Shorebirds are the marathon athletes of the natural world. Their migrations span entire continents, and in some cases, the entire hemisphere. Red knots, another shorebird species, breed on the arctic tundra and migrate 10,000 miles to the southern tip of Chile each fall. Even for shorebirds, phalaropes have extraordinary life histories. They breed throughout the Arctic, but little is known about where they go after breeding season. They are pelagic, spending nine months of the year offshore — more seabird than shorebird in habit.

Salt glands enable phalaropes to stay hydrated for these prolonged stints at sea. Unlike most shorebirds, red-necked phalaropes don't wade or probe for food at the water's edge. Instead, they feed by "spinning" — swimming in rapid circles with their lobed feet to stir up food and create a vortex, then picking out the food from the center of the gyre. Though they swim for food, buoyancy from air trapped in their breast feathers limits their ability to submerge.

In their rare, polyandrous mating system, some females will breed with two or more males, establishing a nest with each. It is the female phalarope that has the brighter, more conspicuous plumage. Male phalaropes mate with only one female, and also take on the lion's share of parenting tasks, such as incubating eggs and rearing their young. Polyandry occurs in less than 1 percent of all bird species, but is more common to shorebirds.

"It is not your typical shorebird in any way," says Duncan. "And I think it's fair to say that our degree of ignorance about its migration is as great as [our lack of knowledge about] any bird on the planet. We simply don't know where these birds go."

Even narrowing down the search — which ocean to look in? — has proven vexing. A large population of red-necked phalaropes winters in the Pacific off Ecuador and Peru, and high numbers are seen in the Galapagos Islands. Some think red-necked phalaropes from Fundy go to the Pacific. How do they get there? The obvious place would be the Isthmus of Panama, or the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico. "But the bird is simply never found there, and is literally unknown in many countries of Central America. It's never driven down by storms, a sick individual is never found. So that to me almost eliminates the Pacific theory. We don't know where they go," says Duncan.

Over the millennia, shorebirds have adapted to the seasonal abundance of food at specific sites, and time their migratory stopovers to arrive at these sites when the banquet table is set. In Delaware Bay, millions of shorebirds arrive each spring to feast on protein-rich eggs deposited on beaches by spawning horseshoe crabs. In Minas Basin, Nova Scotia, hundreds of thousands of Semipalmated Sandpipers stop over on their fall migration to fatten up for the next leg of their migration. For the red-necked phalaropes, Passamaquoddy Bay offered the same bounty. What changed? Where did they go, and why?

"We don't know where, but we know why," says Stephen Brown, director of shorebird science at Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. "The food they came for, the copepod *Calanus finmarchicus*, isn't there in the numbers they used to be."

For sheer abundance and diversity, sea life in the Gulf of Maine in August rivals Marine World. Nowhere is that more evident than off Brier Island, the terminus of the needlelike peninsula of Digby Neck, which juts into the Bay of Fundy from the west side of Nova Scotia. The Neck doesn't end; rather, the peninsula sputters to its conclusion with Long Island and finally Brier Island. From Brier Island's western headlands, with Fundy's broad currents and shifting haze within arm's reach, Brier fully evokes the feeling of life at sea. Porpoises and whales, shearwaters, fulmars and phalaropes process across streaks on the sea surface made by converging currents of cold and warm water, or upwellings of nutrient-rich bottom water lifted to the surface by tidal currents sweeping over ledges and shoals. Currents don't flow here. They roar.

Two miles off Brier Island, Fundy's tides rush in and out with ample room along the broad bay's 600-foot depth. One mile offshore,

the Scotia shelf rises to a depth of 100 feet. Occasional ledges studding the shelf churn the current and everything in it into a roiling cauldron of upwellings and gyres. Names fishermen give to these places hint at the currents' twisting power: Frenchman's Elbow, Northwest Rip.

This is the place where, by far, the greatest number of red-necked phalaropes has been seen in recent years, though not in their former numbers. Their favored *Calanus* copepods, which by day settle to depths far below the surface, are swept to the surface by the current.

Red-necked phalaropes used to stay in the Passamaquoddy region for a few weeks, fattening up on these abundant plankton. Here at Brier, big flocks will blow in, only to leave within a few days. Surely they're not fattening up like they used to when the larder was full. How do they make their migrations without fully charging their fat reserves for the trip? Perhaps more challenging: Is the foundation of Fundy's food chain experiencing some greater problematic symptom that the phalarope's disappearance has helped to reveal to biologists and oceanographers?

"It's analogous to the situation in Delaware Bay, with the decline of horseshoe crabs and the corresponding decline in red knots and ruddy turnstones," says Marshall Howe, research manager at the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland. "The experts are convinced that there's a population decline of these shorebirds, and that the reduced availability of [horseshoe crab] eggs is the reason. It's very hard to prove that, but the evidence swings in that direction for shorebirds, since [those eggs have] been a predictable food source there for hundreds of thousands of years."

Shorebirds in the upper Bay of Fundy are also on the decline.

To get all of the questions and the few known facts about phalaropes on the table, Howe, Manomet's Stephen Brown, and the Canadian Wildlife Service convened the world's phalarope experts and anyone else interested in solving the mystery of their disappearance. This isn't exactly a huge crowd, but they brought together a wide range of expertise, hoping to analyze the ecological health of the Passamaquoddy Bay area, including the decline in the phalaropes' preferred food source.

Charles Duncan, who sent the original red flag up the flagpole, says, "The goal was to bring together people who don't normally talk to each other — remote-sensing experts, whale and seabird scientists, oceanography and marine scientists, and fishermen."

The big Aha! moment the group hoped for didn't happen. What did emerge was a clearer understanding about what kind of new information is needed concerning zooplankton in the water, currents, and temperatures. In addition, the group decided to design and conduct a survey that would reveal whether the phalaropes had simply dispersed, or whether the population had actually fallen. It also generated serious interest on the part of the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in terms of funding the needed fieldwork.

The funding helps keep Robin Hunnewell out on the water from Grand Manan to Brier Island in the summertime, doing boat-based counting surveys and even catching phalaropes on the water. Combining clever ingenuity with dogged persistence, Hunnewell and her team accomplished the first-ever successful on-the-water phalarope capture, at night, using spotlights and a hula hoop–like contraption with a net dome. With skill and practice, a well-aimed throw traps the birds under the dome.

"No one had ever attempted to catch red-necked phalaropes at sea [before], so we had to figure out a way," explains Hunnewell matter-of-factly. Once captured, the next challenge was to securely attach a nine-gram radio transmitter the size of a pinky fingernail to the bird. By clipping a few feathers on the bird's back, Hunnewell is able to glue the transmitter on. The attachment only lasts six weeks before the feathers grow out again and the transmitter drops away.

"In a six-week period, you can monitor the movement of the bird within the Bay of Fundy," says Hunnewell. "Very little is understood about their movement at sea, period. They breed in the Arctic and spend nine months of the year at sea, so we know little about their life ecology and how they find food."

Back on the research boat, the beeps alternate between loud and soft as Hunnewell sweeps her antenna back and forth to pinpoint the direction of the signal. "Once you've put a radio transmitter on a bird, your troubles have only just begun," says Hunnewell. "You still need to find the bird, and the range of the radio transmitter is at best only a couple miles on water."

Which explains Hunnewell's excitement at this moment, as the signature *beep!* matching her tagged bird comes in astern. As the boat makes a slow turn, an acoustic Doppler current profiler measures the speed and direction of tidal currents at three different depths. Linking GPS with sophisticated sonar, the device tracks the vessel's movements over the bottom while logging data on the currents; it's yet another tool to inform scientists about the habitat used by red-necked phalaropes and other marine life in the Bay of Fundy.

Only when the boat has completed a puzzling full 360-degree circle does the unlikely truth become clear: The acoustic current profiler's ping exactly matches the signature frequency of the transmitter on Hunnewell's phalarope. With it shut off, her wand falls silent, leaving only the slap of waves against the hull to fill the void. The disappointment is palpable.

Is the Bay of Fundy still critical to the phalaropes' survival? If these arctic breeding birds aren't flying through there anymore, scientist Stephen Brown wants to know where they are going, and how they get there. "It's like a huge puzzle with no borders," says Brown.

One of the concerns is that they didn't go anywhere, but that they died — a significant loss for the world's red-necked phalarope population. That seems not to be the case, however. In the early 1990s, a Nova Scotia fisherman, who by good fortune was also a bird-watcher, recounted an experience that took place over two days in the spring of 1993 — well after the birds were gone from the Passamaquoddy region — in which he watched red-necked Phalaropes fly by his fishing boat in uncountable numbers, moving north from dawn to dusk.

"That is the best we had to go on at the time to say that this species is not totally collapsed," says Duncan.

For her part, Robin Hunnewell is hatching plans to be out on the water again this summer, and devising new techniques that will help unravel the mystery of the missing phalaropes.

Bob Moore, *a regular contributor to Island Institute publications, edits the newsletter for the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences.*

ISLAND INSTITUTE

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

2007–2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Sustaining A Way of Life:
The Campaign for Maine Islands and Working Waterfronts

The Institute's five-year capital campaign has raised more than $20 million to date, thanks to the generosity shown by our members, by private and corporate foundations and by our many special donors. The funds will strengthen our organizational capacity; help maintain access to working waterfronts; provide college scholarships to island students and permanently endow geographically specific Island Fellows placements. But we are not finished! To find out how to help complete the Fellows endowments for the Cranberry Isles, Deer Isle/Stonington, Vinalhaven, Islesboro, North Haven and Frenchboro, please contact Nancy McLeod Carter at 207-594-9209 x. 133 or by e-mail to ncarter@islandinstitute.org.

Voters Say "Yes" to $3 Million Bond Fund to Protect Working Waterfronts

Through efforts led by the Island Institute and its collaborative partners, Maine voters decisively approved a $3 million allocation last fall to expand the state's $2 million Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program, helping communities and commercial fishermen secure working waterfront access. So far, the initial bond fund has resulted in:

- Preservation of more than seven acres of waterfront property with a fair market value of $4 million;
- Leverage of over $1.9 million in additional funds;
- Support for the efforts of more than 200 fishing families and almost 200 boats;
- Protection of $8.5 million in income that is directly dependent on working waterfronts.

Island Fellows — *An Extra Set of Hands*

In 2007 and 2008, the Island Fellows Program — our most visible and highly valued resource for enhancing the vitality of year-round community life — has placed bright, talented college graduates in 14 year-round island as well as coastal communities to breathe new life into local projects. In their host communities from the Downeast region to Casco Bay, our 11 2007–2008 Fellows — including four second-year "veterans" from 2006–2007 and a new Senior Fellow in Port Clyde — are working on a wide array of critical efforts in classrooms, town offices, libraries, health-care centers, affordable-housing nonprofits, electrical co-ops and fisheries-management groups. To learn more about present and past Fellows, please visit *An Extra Set of Hands*, available on our website, www.islandinstitute.org.

The Affordable Coast Fund

Because of one family's exceptional generosity and long-range vision for the Maine coast, the Island Institute launched the Affordable Coast™ Fund in 2007. This grant program addresses two critical issues facing Maine's year-round island communities: diminishing saltwater access for commercial marine industries and the lack of affordable housing. In 2007, the ACF provided almost $200,000 in grants to help Maine communities, families and fishermen acquire the property, technical assistance and professional development they need to address these issues. To find out more about the Affordable Coast Fund, please visit http.acf.islandinstitute.org.

Island Teachers Conference

Last fall, the Island Institute hosted nearly 100 teachers, administrators and educational experts at the 2007 Island Teachers Conference in Belfast. Representing schools from every island, teachers, administrators and school staff once again enjoyed this unique biennial opportunity to network, discuss common challenges and learn about new resources, strategies and tools. Participants attended a variety of workshops and seminars and also arranged regional gatherings to follow up on ideas raised at the event.

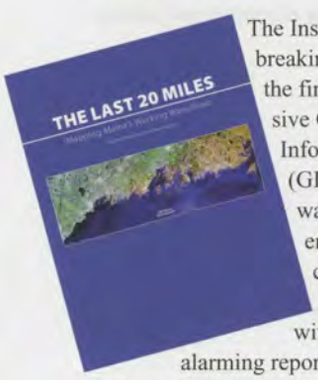
Island Indicators

For those who wonder how Maine's 15 year-round island communities fare in comparison to each other, to the rest of Maine and to the nation, the *Island Indicators* report provides some solid answers. Sarah Curran, the 2005–2007 Island Fellow on Peaks, and Jeremy Gabrielson, another former Fellow, sought out and analyzed the most up-to-date demographic, economic and social data available and provided, in early 2007, a succinct "snapshot" containing key findings for the future of life in these special places. The entire report is available in the "Publications" section of our website, www.islandinstitute.org, and a new edition will be available in late 2008.

Island Scholarships

Since 1990, the Institute has made college, preparatory-school and professional-development scholarships to residents of Maine's 15 year-round islands a top priority. We grew the scholarship fund from $1,600 that first year to almost $67,000 in 2007. Earlier this year, we piloted a mentoring program for island students to help ease the transition from an island community to a college campus. To learn more about our inspirational island scholars, the annual Island Scholars Luncheon (launched in June 2007 thanks to an anonymous family foundation) and the history of the Maine Island Higher Education Scholarship program, please read our Island Scholars report at www.islandinstitute.org.

The Last 20 Miles: Mapping Maine's Working Waterfronts



The Institute's groundbreaking effort to create the first-ever comprehensive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map of working waterfronts along the entire Maine coast culminated in the spring of 2007 with a detailed and alarming report. The study's key finding: Only about 20 miles of accessible "working waterfront" remains along Maine's 5,300-mile coastline. Much of this is privately owned, and therefore extremely vulnerable to non-fishing-related development. Publication of *The Last 20 Miles* triggered a substantial amount of media attention and its results are now an invaluable tool for island and coastal communities as they plan for their futures. If you would like to view the report, please go to "Publications" at www.islandinstitute.org.

Archipelago and Archipelago Fine Arts

In 2007, the Institute expanded Archipelago, its retail store located at 386 Main Street in Rockland, to incorporate the newly remodeled lobby of the building as a venue for art by some of Maine's most recognized artists. With the addition of Archipelago Fine Arts, widely known artists such as James William "Bo" Bartlett, Eric Hopkins, Loretta Krupinski and others have a new venue at the Institute. Archipelago continues to offer the best of Maine's art, craft, design and publications from over 70 sources, and online at www.thearchipelago.net.

(Continued on pg. 96)

2007–2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Great Cranberry Revitalization Project

Launched in 2007, the Great Cranberry Revitalization Project (GCRP), is designed to help create a more affordable community that will attract and retain young families. Alyson Mayo, a former Island Fellow, has returned to lead this project, and is focusing on the three issues — affordable housing, high-speed Internet service and ferry transportation — identified by the Great Cranberry Revitalization Committee as ways to attract new year-round residents. Joining Mayo early this year was a new Island Fellow, Amanda Ravenhill, who is helping the community address land-use policies, renewable-energy options and local food production to create a sustainable "green" community.

Sustainable Fisheries Management

Our partnership with the Midcoast Fishermen's Association (MFA), a nonprofit group consisting of 15 conservation-minded Port Clyde groundfishermen, has advanced with the placement of a Senior Island Fellow in the community. Laura Kramar is assisting the MFA and the Port Clyde Draggermen's Cooperative develop a sound marketing and business plan centering on "Port Clyde Fish" as a brand that represents high-quality fish caught by sustainable methods. To date, this project has attracted interest and funding from around the country, and we will initiate research in the summer of 2008 to determine the project's next steps.

Information-Technology Education

One focus of the Institute's strategic plan is to provide information technology education to island students and educators. Now in its third year, the Community for Rural Education, Stewardship and Technology (CREST) program, funded by a $1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation, has successfully engaged 99 students and teachers from 11 island and coastal communities in hands-on IT skill-building activities that relate to critical community projects. Last fall, the NSF announced that it will fund a two-year extension of CREST beginning in July 2008. The 11 current island and coastal school teams will expand with the addition of a Downeast cluster of five CREST schools teamed with our new collegiate partner, the College of the Atlantic. To learn more about CREST, please visit http://crest.islandinstitute.org.

Achieving a Vision Through Strategic Planning

In December 2006, the Island Institute's Board of Trustees ratified an ambitious three-year strategic plan that set the organization on a course to meet new challenges and opportunities. With five over-arching goals and many objectives to reach, the plan has been translated into a real-time working document that provides a blueprint aligning our events, programs and activities with the course we have charted. You can view the plan on our website in the "Who We Are" section.

Institute Receives Prestigious National Award

Philip Conkling, U.S. Sen. Olympia Snowe

In February 2008, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) presented Island Institute with an excellence award as the 2008 Non-Governmental Organization of the Year. This award honors a nongovernmental entity that has made significant contributions supporting coastal or marine resource programs. The 2008 award recognized the Institute's "many years of building unique partnerships between fishermen, community leaders, and state, commercial, financial and nonprofit entities to respond to coastal development and growth pressures, and changing economic and ecological conditions."

ISLAND INSTITUTE

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Peter Ralston

MAINE LANDSCAPE

A porch rail peels outside the window
where my husband sits painting a watercolor.
He's taken out our table and covered it
with his orange and yellow beach towel,
so I won't see paint when we eat together.

Two butterflies hover over the larkspur
he is putting into the foreground of his picture.
I watch them suck, each its own blossom,
and then dance in the air together.
"Look, they're mating," I say out the window.
"How do you know?" He answers.

A single pine, with awkward limbs, stares back at me.
I look past its loneliness to yellow grass
(Hopper grass, my husband says) and then
to the sea. I'd swim to that island,
the one just beyond the sailboat, if I could.

But the wonder of this moment is
I don't want to do anything
or to have anyone do anything for me —
paint a porch rail, catch a butterfly, cut grass.
I just want to sit by the window and watch

The shadows my husband's arms make
on the orange and yellow towel
or look up at the cloud that floats like a white roof
or a soft steeple over the island,
beyond the sailboat.

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