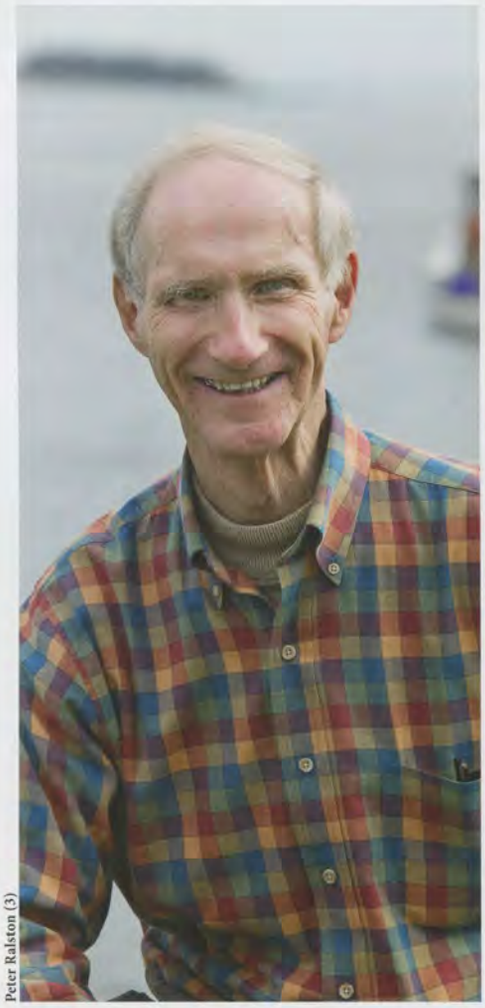
ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute



Peter Ralston (3)

Heroic Hearts

JOHN BIRD, a native of Rockland now living on Rackliff Island, St. George, first became involved with the Island Institute when he led the organization through a strategic planning process as a consultant between 1992 and 1993. He did such a great job that the trustees of the Institute asked him to join them on the board, where he has participated in or led each strategic planning initiative ever since. In addition to these roles on the board, John served as vice-chair for a great many years and then succeeded Horace Hildreth as chair of the board during the past three years. John Bird steps down as chair in September 2010 after 18 years of extraordinary service to the island and working-waterfront communities of Maine, and to an organization that is stronger and more focused as a result of his incisive and dedicated leadership.

PARKY SHAW has been an immutable force for improving civic life on Great Cranberry Island for his entire life, as his family was before him, and will continue to be into the future. For the past nine years during his terms as trustee of the Island Institute, Parky has led the organization to greatly expand its support for college scholarships for island students. Under Parky's visionary leadership, the Shaw Fund for Mariners' Children, founded by his family in the mid-19th century, has increased its scope and geography of support to include all the maritime communities of Maine. As Parky steps down, the example of his island life, tested by time and fate, forever recalls Tennyson's immortal words of one still strong in will,

Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts . . .

POLLY GUTH, a seasonal resident of Sutton Island, first joined the Island Institute as a $50 member in 1988 when the organization was hardly a blip on anyone's radar screen, and has served as a trustee for the past nine years. The "Sustaining a Way of Life" capital campaign, which the Island Institute ran between 2003 and 2007, was an overwhelming success due to her visionary leadership and the support of her beloved husband and partner, John. Now widely recognized as one of Maine's most deeply committed and generous philanthropists, Polly has set an example to thousands of others—not just in Maine, but across the country and around the world. They have all been inspired by the obvious joy she has found in giving back to the places, people and causes in which she so passionately believes. The entire coast and islands of Maine have benefited from her unflinching dedication to an island way of life.

TO OUR READERS

Peter Ralston

What makes an island unique? Among many qualities, the most basic is an island's physical boundary. Surrounded by water, an island community must adapt to the isolation that this geographic limitation creates. It affects every aspect of daily life: jobs, housing, education, transportation and energy costs.

In the *Island Journal*, we often write about the social impact of being encircled by water—about new islanders arriving or natives leaving; about the importance of ferries and planes; about the pioneering efforts of island schools; about maintaining libraries and historical societies; and about men and women who fish island waters. These are challenges islanders have faced and overcome for centuries.

But what if your island disappears?

In this issue we examine how islanders struggle with shifting physical boundaries, sometimes caused by man, sometimes by nature.

One story explores the cataclysmic fate that is a very real future for islands around the world. Climate change has raised ocean levels so drastically that many island nations will literally disappear under the seas if action is not taken to reverse this course. In this issue, the United Nations ambassador for the Seychelles talks about his islands' fight for survival. Closer to home, we capture the successful push by North Haven and Vinalhaven to reduce their carbon footprint by building three wind turbines, which generate all the electric power both islands need. Sometimes islands are deliberately destroyed. In the Netherlands, a centuries-long push to create land out of water meant that two islands became part of the mainland. We look at how the 4,600 residents coped with the loss of their islandness.

We also contemplate island communities on the barrier islands of North Carolina. These sand islands are always on the move, and residents have developed a unique culture in response to the impermanence of their borders.

As we've seen in our *Island Journal* stories over the years, islanders are acutely aware of threats to their communities and can often move quickly to solve problems. When it comes to an issue such as global climate change, world leaders would do well to follow island leadership, before it is too late.

—The Editors

ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute
Volume Twenty-Six

ISLAND INSTITUTE

Publishers of Island Journal
and Working Waterfront

Sustaining the island communities and working waterfronts of the Gulf of Maine

ISLAND JOURNAL

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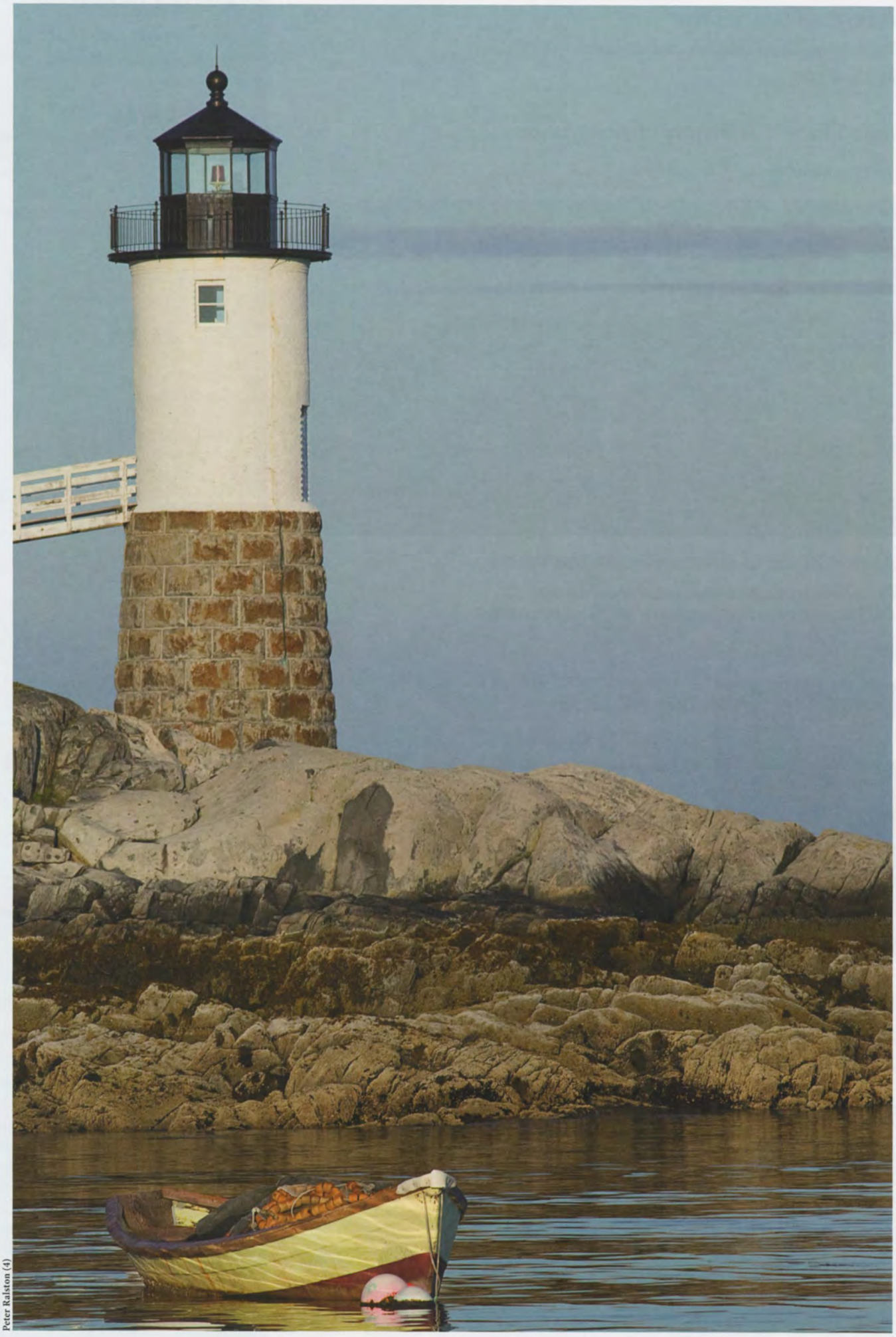
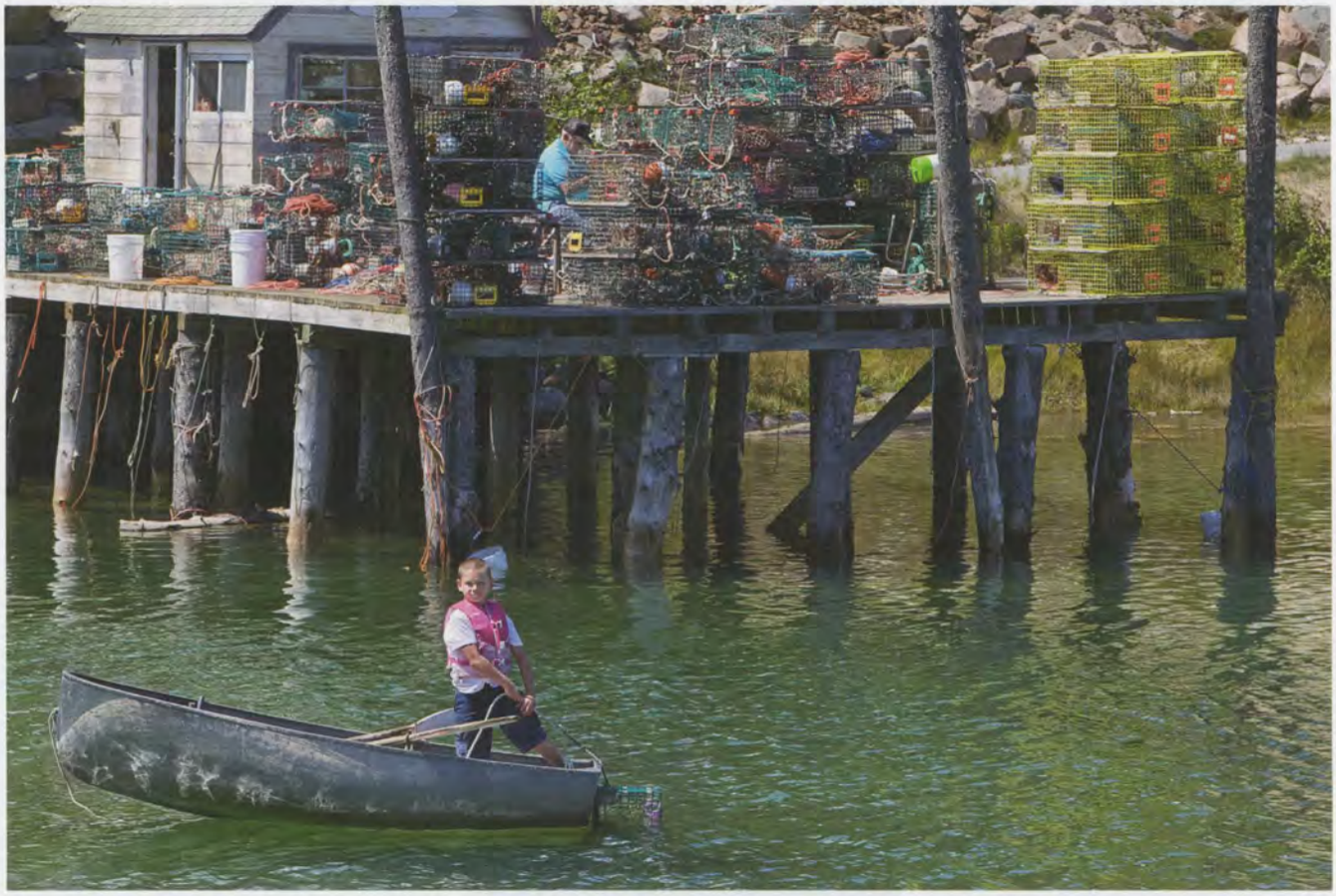


Peter Ralston (4)



"The Chart Is Not the Sea"

PHILIP CONKLING

Although we know, to quote Philip Booth's memorable phrase, "The chart is not the sea," all of us—either as individuals or as collective selves—are on some kind of voyage. It is useful to have an image of what our destination might look like, if for no other reason than to compare the new landscape with how we thought the world might look. So we regularly ask ourselves what the emerging island world might look like—or how we hope it will look in the next three years—and then use a chart, or map, to lay out the journey to a destination that is simultaneously hopeful and grounded in firm reality. The Island Institute thus undertakes a formal exercise of producing a new strategic plan every three years, against which we measure our progress or performance, and are measured by others.

What follows is a description of where we are headed and how we arrived at the beginning of the journey.

Lobster landings, for better or worse, are the leading economic indicator for the coast of Maine, so we follow them closely. The financial crisis that began in 2007 has not spared Maine's island and working-waterfront communities from the kinds of painful business dislocations that have spread across the larger economy. The most visible effect of the financial crisis has been a precipitous and generally unrelenting decline in lobster prices—a luxury food, after all—which, during the past two years, has ripped almost $60 million out of the heart of Maine's small fishing communities. Lobstermen caught five million more pounds of lobster in 2009 than the year before, but the total value decreased by $23 million last year, which followed a $36 million decline in 2008.

The decline in the value of Maine lobsters—in combination with the continuing decline in cod and haddock landings, and the pending reduction in the allowable catch in the amount of herring that scientists believe can be sustainably harvested—all contribute to trouble in Ocean City. (Starts with "T" which rhymes with "P" and stands for "Poorer.") Cod and haddock landings were once a mainstay of small fishing villages all along the coast of Maine. Today, there are no active groundfish boats anywhere between Port Clyde and the Canadian border, at a time when federal fisheries policies will be (finally) subject to a total allowable catch (TAC).

Although a cap of the total fish harvest makes good conservation sense, it will mean that "catch shares" can now be sold or traded, adding risk to the already-perilous condition of the small-boat groundfish fleet in Maine. We have been deeply worried over the prospect that someday soon—when, not if, groundfish populations are rebuilt—the only boats left in the fleet will be those based in Massachusetts that are fishing for cod and haddock stocks, schooling off of Maine's island communities. As a result of this concern, the Island Institute has teamed up with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to create a Maine Coast "Permit Bank," purchasing the first groundfish permit that we will manage to ensure future access to the fishery, while increasing conservation incentives among Maine-based fishing vessels. Because Maine has also been successful in raising $3 million in public funds to buy and protect local permits, the Institute and TNC will be raising additional private funds to leverage public money, to guarantee that Maine's small fishing villages do not get cut out of the economic pie.

On top of these resource declines and the corresponding declines in income for island and working-waterfront residents, the cost of energy, especially on islands, is up to seven times the national average, making it acutely important for these communities to focus on reducing high energy costs, which amount to an even larger import to island communities than food. Islanders, building on the Fox Islands Wind Project (profiled later in these pages) are experimenting with a fuel substitution project. Thermal storage heaters were installed, controlled by the Internet, that store heat when the wind is blowing, using excess energy and thereby displacing expensive fuel oil and propane on Vinalhaven and North Haven.

As a result of these major trends, the Island Institute is re-casting part of our program focus to become more deeply involved in economic development projects in Maine's island and working-waterfront communities. During the past two and a half decades, we have learned a lot about investing in community development—how the "ecology" of schools, libraries, historical societies and arts and community centers create vibrant communities where people want to live, work and raise their children. It would be a gross overstatement to suggest that we know much about economic development, because we do not—but to quote another poet, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows." So we are planning to launch an innovation fund at the Island Institute with partners such as Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI) of Wiscasset to provide loans and investment capital to promising island enterprises, especially in the natural resource, alternate energy and energy-efficiency sectors.

Another major trend of which we are taking note focuses on the demographics of island communities. Maine's island communities are aging; alas, there's nothing any of us can do about that. Some of this "aging" is a result of people (many of whom were born there) who retire to Maine's island communities, significantly contributing to community life. Because of this shift in population, virtually all of the island schools face declining enrollments.

At the same time, island schools have never been stronger academically. Small class size, individualized teaching experience, hands-on learning opportunities and locally flavored curricula (called "place-based education" in educational jargon) all combine to produce not just wonderfully successful schools and students, but also educational opportunities for many potential students who are not thriving in bigger schools because they fall through the cracks. Since island schools—more than any other single institution in island communities—are the glue that holds communities together, it is important that we focus on strategies to keep school populations from becoming marginal. Thus, we will look to use the Institute's significant publications, information and communication platforms to help island schools develop marketing and branding strategies to increase enrollment.

As a corollary to the demographic imbalance in island communities, there is a generational shift that will play out

over the coming decade, meaning that island communities will increasingly need to depend on a new generation of leaders. One lesson the Island Institute learned early in our organizational development is that the apparent leaders in a community are sometimes different than the actual leaders. In order to succeed as an organization, we have always needed to figure out who the real leaders in a community might be. In some communities, leadership is obvious; if the name of the main harbor is the same name as the head selectman . . . well, you get the picture. But island leadership is generally more diffuse: School leaders are different than government leaders, who are different from lobstering leaders in the harbor.

It would be foolish to suggest that we know how to develop leaders—we don't—and even the Harvard Business School has a mixed track record when it comes to identifying good leaders. But we think we can recognize one when we see one, and then help to support them. At the same time, we also deeply value the wisdom that resides in the existing, experienced leadership of island communities.

One of the most obvious ways we can support island leaders is by providing more opportunities in our publications to cultivate "island voices." We have always been limited in space by the number of printed pages in *The Working Waterfront*, but our new electronic, Web-based e-weekly publication has virtually unlimited space—bandwidth—for new voices. This goal can be amplified significantly through the use of new media, such as Facebook and Twitter, which younger staff members and many islanders now access as a matter of course. An emphasis on new voices (and new eyes) implies that our editorial staff will increasingly become more like a program to support island community development than a service center for the Island Institute's other programs. The distinction is perhaps subtle, but the results should be obvious to our readers, writers and digital-media content providers.

Supporting new leaders is also an "internal" goal of the Island Institute. All indications are that the founder and co-founder of the Island Institute are not immortal. A new generation of highly trained and motivated leaders at the organization is emerging. They are a font of talent and entrepreneurial vigor. Before preparing the back pasture for the current leaders, the Island Institute board will be evaluating the appropriate balance going forward between the refreshing energy of a new leadership with the value of experience that the organization has developed over the past several decades.

All of these plans started with listening sessions on the islands, which Rob Snyder, Shey Conover and other staff held in eight island communities last fall. These sessions were augmented by input from the Maine Islands Coalition, the formally appointed representatives of each year-round island community, which fashions the islands' legislative strategy each year and monitors issues of interest across the archipelago. Further input came from an e-mail survey to 150 partners and partnering organizations.

We have done this before and will do it again, but we also did something new this year. We met with the heads of our key nonprofit organizational partners to get their input. In the past, we had shared each strategic plan with our partners after it had been formally adopted, but we thought it more valuable—more strategic, if you will—to ask our key partners to help us identify our core strengths and value-added resources, from their points of view. They were almost unanimous in their enthusiasm for further leveraging our superb communications platforms—*The Working Waterfront*, *Island Journal*, and, increasingly, our Web presence in *The Working Waterfront E-Weekly*—in combination with our strong partnerships at the local level, which have an admirable track record of helping us all make a difference in the cacophony of the corridors in places like Augusta and Washington. The mouse that roars!

In closing, we turn again to Philip Booth's admonition to all who venture out on the sea off the Maine coast:

Where North is West of North, not true, he pilots
best who feels the coast for standpipe, spire,
tower, or stack, who owns local knowledge of shoal
or ledge, whose salt nose smells the spruce shore.

Nimble helmsmen are alert to the potential for the incalculable, for the unexpected; for tide sets in fog that put us where we did not think we were; ready at a moment's notice to put the helm down quickly. If we have envisioned a course around the economic and demographic shoals that threaten the future of Maine's island and working-waterfront communities, to reach a more-secure destination, we can rely to some degree on new navigational techniques and technology, and on our friends in scores of ports, reporting on local conditions. But in the end, the navigators—including new, up-and-coming navigators who can be encouraged and trained to take their turn at the helm—are the best hope for weathering the stormy conditions ahead. So our chart, which is not the sea, is only a chart, "but where rocks wander, [we] steer down the channel that courage dredges . . ."

Onward into the fog.

For details of the Island Institute's strategic plan, go to www.islandinstitute.org/mission.

Swept Away

PHILIP CONKLING

On August 12, 2009, a tropical storm off the coast of Africa first attracted weather-watchers' notice, before it deepened into a tropical depression on August 15 and attained full-fledged hurricane force five days later, on August 17. Hurricane Bill, as the storm was then named, became the fifth-largest tropical hurricane on record, with a diameter of 460 miles as it churned across the Atlantic Ocean. Bill passed north of Bermuda on August 18 and spun its way toward the Gulf of Maine and Nova Scotia, pushing an enormous body of waves ahead of its track.

On Sunday morning, August 23, Braden Aldrich, who was working on Monhegan, driving a truck for the Monhegan House, watched the 16- to 18-foot waves from Hurricane Bill pound in on Burnt Head on Monhegan's back shore with two friends. Braden was out on one of Burnt Head's rocky shelves high over the water, and as his friends watched helplessly, an enormous wave approached and swept him away.

One of Braden's friends ran for help, while the other vainly waited to see if his friend would surface. Kole Lord, Monhegan's fire chief, saw a young woman running toward him, calling wildly for help for Braden, who had been swept overboard. Kole ran to the nearest house, burst in, and called 34-year-old Matt Weber, Monhegan's youngest lobsterman. Matt was on his porch reading the Sunday paper when he got Kole Lord's phone call.

Kole said, "Braden is overboard underneath Burnt Head and we need to get a boat out there." Matt jumped in his truck and "was flying down the road, dodging people everywhere," he recalled. "Lucas (Chioffi) was on his deck and I yelled, 'Get in! Braden's overboard!' By the time we got to the beach, Angela Iannicelli and Kole were there. We launched into a skiff and Kole dropped Angela and me in my boat. I told Lucas and Kole to bring a skiff in their boat in case we needed to get it in close to the cliffs. I started my boat and did something I have never done before—I just opened her up cold, full throttle. The oil pressure gauge was just pinned. I hope she holds together is all I thought." Lucas and Kole followed Matt in another boat.

When Matt came out of the harbor and looked at the seas off Burnt Head, he said, "I was shaking. To see those seas breaking, I thought, there's no way he's alive. No way he hasn't been sucked under or smashed on the rocks. I thought, I don't want to pick up a dead body."

By this time there was a crowd of people on Burnt Head, so Matt switched his radio to the Monhegan channel and shouted, "Where is he?" Chris Smith, another Monhegan lobsterman, was up on Burnt Head with a radio. Matt knew that Chris had fished the bottom there and understood what Chris meant when he said, "He's in the 15 bottom between Burnt Head and Gull Pond," describing where lobstermen set their traps along the 15-fathom contour on that part of the back shore.

But Matt could not see anything or anyone in the water because the seas were so big and the troughs so deep. "You're going to have to walk me in," Matt radioed back. So that is what Chris Smith did; he told Matt, "Go to one o'clock and come in 300 yards; now come to 11:30; now he's at noon." Finally, when Matt was within 100 yards, he could see Braden just outside the line of foam. He was waving his arms—the first time anyone could tell he was still alive.

"I told Angela to get the gaff and the life ring, then swung around and backed down until he was alongside. We each grabbed one of his arms and heaved him up onto the gunwale. That's when I noticed he was buck-naked. I was so surprised, I dropped him, but Angela held on. He had a couple of bloody knees and bloody elbows and a lot of skin removed from his back. He'd probably swallowed a bucket of seawater. We got him in a survival suit and gave him bottle after bottle of Poland Spring water."

Later Braden told Matt what had happened. "The first wave got him wet, and the second wave just took him." When the wave took him, Braden Aldrich had the presence of mind to dive down and away from where he thought the rocks were, and he swam underwater as long as he could hold his breath. When he finally came up, his shoes had been sucked off and his shorts, and then he took everything else off so he would not be dragged under.

"The backwash probably saved him," said Matt. "That, and the fact he was 22 and in great shape. But to see those seas breaking, you'd never believe anyone could swim through them." Two of the oldest retired lobstermen on Monhegan, Sherm and Alfred Stanley, had never heard of anyone going off the backside of Monhegan and making it. He was "one in a million," they said.

"You owe me a case of rum," Matt told Braden, when they got back ashore. Then, Matt recalled, "The funny thing was, I was back on my porch reading the Sunday paper again inside of an hour."

Monhegan, August 23, 2009

When Islands Disappear

How did two Dutch islands cope with becoming part of the mainland?

THEO HOLTWIJK

Imagine Monhegan not an island anymore, but a place where tour buses just drive up and park. Imagine Rockland Harbor not open to the ocean—a place where ferries and fishing vessels are a thing of the past. Imagine an Islesboro where mansions do not overlook the ocean, but instead look out over acres of farmland and rows of modern windmills. Hard to imagine, isn't it? But that is exactly the scene my wife Susie Wren and I encountered in The Netherlands recently.

Landsat photo of the IJsselmeer and surroundings. The difference between the old land (predominantly green), and the new lands (gained from the sea, predominantly purple) is striking.


URK
SCHOKLAND
AMSTERDAM

Above: Map of The Netherlands, 1658. Below: Building the Afsluitdijk, which extends from Den Oever in Wieringen to the village of Zurich in Friesland. The dike is about 20 miles long, 300 feet wide and 25 feet above sea level.

Never-ending struggles of man versus sea have led to interventions in the "Low Countries" that are of a monumental scale. Central to this has been the closing off of a portion of the sea and the creation of several polders, "new lands" reclaimed from the sea/lake. This tradition dates back to the 17th century, and some 3,000 polders of varying sizes now exist in The Netherlands. Based on an 1891 plan, over 400,000 acres of new land, called Flevoland, have been created in The Netherlands in the last 100 years, along with the conversion of almost 500,000 acres of salt water into freshwater. The main purpose of this was flood protection and the creation of new agricultural land. Its scale is immense. To give you a perspective, 400,000 acres represents almost the size of Lincoln County, and the new Dutch freshwater lake is 16 times the size of Sebago Lake.

This new land represents a total blank slate from a land-use perspective. Imagine this place, which, over a 60-year period, now houses almost 400,000 people, more than the populations of Cumberland and Androscoggin counties combined. Difficult to envision, right? It has been, and still is, a huge planning and engineering challenge and opportunity. How do you construct entire cities, towns, and villages from scratch? What infrastructure do you build? How do you make it well-functioning, affordable, and stimulating?

A planner's dream, you might think—and in many ways, it is. It's a story worth telling, but rather than give you an account of the grid-like road patterns (very atypically Dutch), the modern architecture (new land calls for new architecture, right?), the clusters of four farmhouses (aimed at fostering neighborly cooperation), and those windmills (quite fitting in this new land), we found two places that made us pause and wonder. Two places that seemed to have escaped the planner's map.

The places are Schokland and Urk, two former islands that are just eight miles apart. Both once were land, then were part of the sea, then became islands, and now are part of the mainland again. And both are anomalies in this massive land reclamation project. The two places have similarities, but also differences. Where once more than 600 people lived on Schokland, only 8 do now. Where 4,000 people lived on Urk in the 1940s, 18,000 do so today.

Schokland, 1935

Schokland today

SCHOKLAND, AN ISLAND ON DRY LAND

A World Heritage archaeological site since 1995, Schokland measures just 3 by 0.3 miles. Until the early Middle Ages, Schokland, like Urk, was part of a large peat area that had been exposed to the encroaching sea for centuries. From around AD 800, this land suffered constant erosion. By the year 1200, Schokland had become a peninsula, and by around 1450, an island. Over several centuries the inhabitants of Schokland tried to defend themselves from the intruding sea by building small dikes, but to no avail. More and more land was lost, and Schokland eventually shrunk into a narrow strip of land. The situation eventually became untenable, and in 1859, King William III ordered the island evacuated. This meant that approximately 635 inhabitants had to move to the mainland. Afterwards most of the predominantly wooden houses were demolished.

Ironically, the island did not lose any more land after its evacuation, and was ultimately incorporated in the Northeast Polder, one of the large polders that the Dutch created, in 1942. And because it was abandoned, Schokland has literally been preserved as an island on dry land. The original, curvilinear outline of the former island can still clearly be seen from the air, outlined by trees and vegetation, intentionally planted so as not to lose this historic place, in stark contrast to the orderly subdivision of the agricultural land of the polder.

Many archaeological studies have been conducted in and around Schokland since the land around it fell dry, and its development history has been documented in great detail. We visited a fascinating museum, an original restored church, and several modest wooden buildings that were built in the style of the old dwellings to give the feel of the former neighborhood that once stood here. Traces of over 165 "dwelling mounds" have been found, where people made their homes in order to stay safe from the water. In addition, there have been many discoveries dating back to the Neolithic Age, some 10,000 years ago, such as the bones of a mammoth, which once roamed here. The struggle against the sea continued at this same location for several thousand years, making this place unique.

An eerie quiet is in the air as we look out over the open land. We imagine how hard life must have been on Schokland. The isolation, the struggle, and then having to give it all up. A sculpture titled *Geen weg terug* ("No Return") by artist Kiny Copinga has been placed on the museum grounds, commemorating the forced evacuation of some 150 years ago. It shows a tall woman about to go through the door of her house for the last time. Imagine her feelings. If she only knew what her island looks like now . . .

AGE-OLD ISOLATION GONE

Urk is the second former island we visited. Its written history is more than a thousand years old, and over the years the main livelihood of its population was, and still is, fishing. However, fish catches varied greatly from year to year, and islanders lived in isolation, eking out a meager existence with poor hygiene and health conditions. The dangers of the sea were very real; some 343 fishermen from Urk have died at sea since 1865. Just as with Schokland, storms reduced the size of Urk. At one point it was just 200 acres, and the several thousand residents were forced to live in close quarters.

These conditions helped form the character of Urk's population. It is a very devout, closed community, suspicious of the outside world, with its own seemingly impenetrable dialect. On Sundays, most people attend church twice and refrain from any work whatsoever. The childbirth rate is double that of the rest of the nation. While some of this character is still evident today, polder making changed life in Urk forever.

In 1939, Urk, over the significant protests of its population, ceased to be an island. As Urk was situated at the southwestern tip of the new Northeast Polder, it was able to retain its harbor. However, as the sea had been closed off, the water around it became freshwater, causing fish species to change over time. In many of the harbor communities affected by polder making, the fishing fleet was significantly reduced, or disappeared entirely. Not so in Urk, where fishermen adapted to the changed circumstances and relocated their fishing grounds further away to the North Sea. As trawlers got bigger it became impractical to sail back to Urk every weekend, so the fleet started to use other ports. The catch continued to make its way to Urk, albeit by road. The reason for that is Urk's efficient fish auction, which draws

Urk from the air, 2003

catches from vessels of various nationalities. Today the Urk fishing fleet numbers some 130 ships, with 900 crew.

The new polder, besides providing access to services that had been inaccessible before, also created space to expand the village. This meant that many Urkers, who had been forced to live elsewhere due to the lack of space on the island, could now return home. Its population has quadrupled in the last 60 years. But the polder also brought other influences from the outside world, including drugs, to Urk and its young population. This has caused upheaval in the community. Half the population is younger than 26, and one-third is younger than 14. How do they maintain a culture that has been so inwardly focused for so long? How can they best embrace the outside world?

We walk the narrow, curved streets that lead to the harbor, where small houses stand cheek by jowl. We eat the most delicious fresh fish in a local restaurant, aptly named The Bottom of the Sea. We gaze out over the water and think about the changes that Schokland and Urk have seen. As we carry their images back home, we wonder what Maine might be like if the same had happened here.

We also leave with some unanswered questions: Where did the people of Schokland go? What is the ecological impact of these enormous man-made interventions?

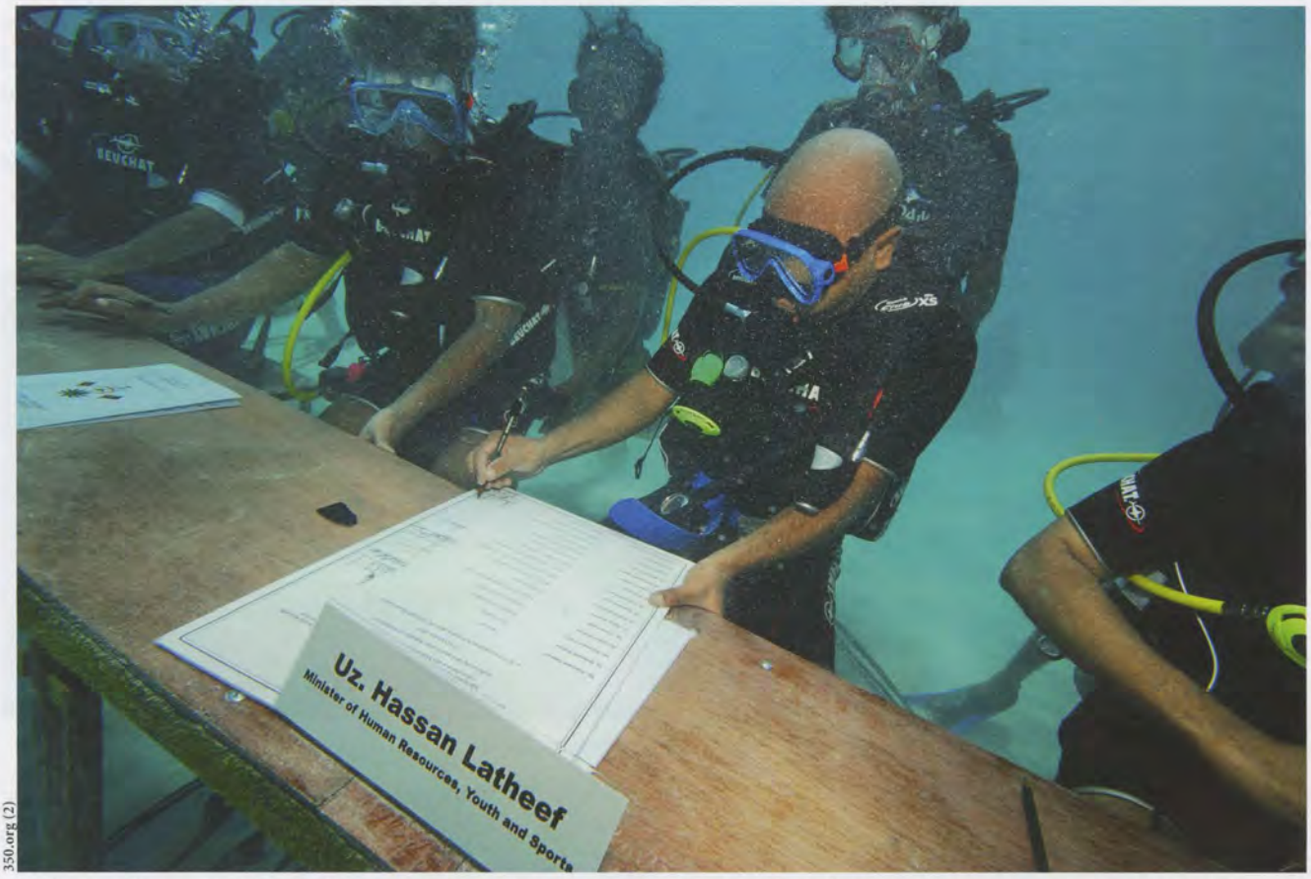
And, what happened to the fish?

Theo Holtwijk is director of long-range planning for the Town of Falmouth and lives in Georgetown.

Are Islands Expendable?

Leaders from the Seychelles to Vinalhaven confront consequences of climate change

DAVID CONOVER



350.org (2)

Fisheries Minister of the Maldives signing the 350 declaration during the underwater cabinet meeting on October 17. This was one of the lead-up events to 5,200 creative demonstrations happening around the world as part of the 350.org International Day of Climate Action.

Unless you happened to be traveling along the south coast of Iceland on November 14, 1963, you probably have not seen an island (now known as Surtsey) instantly emerge from the sea before your very eyes.

Rarely, too, are they suddenly swallowed up. Here one minute. Gone the next. Unlike a cursor on a computer screen, they and all that happens on them do not flit across the landscape in response to every digital twitch. If you could float in the air 1,000 feet above Vinalhaven on the same spring day every year for two centuries, you'd look down and see very little change. Maybe a few new roads would be cut or a few big quarry cranes installed. Working wharves would disappear, summer homes appear. Trees would fall in the woods. You'd see three wind turbine generators bolted to the ledge. Abrupt movements only rarely happen on islands.

You'd certainly think otherwise if you were a citizen of one of the 38 island countries within the United Nations who call themselves the Alliance of Small Island States. This past December, I had the opportunity to attend the United Nations climate-change get-together in Copenhagen and listen to a passionate islander from afar.

His name is Ronny Jumeau, and he comes from the Seychelles, a group of 115 islands strung off the east coast of Africa. He was in Denmark as his country's ambassador to the United Nations. Jumeau told a tale of expendable islands, and his phrasing caught my attention.

JUMEAU: *Everything we do, everything we are, is connected to the ocean. Over the centuries, the oceans have been the friends of the Small Island States. We draw sustenance from them. The ocean is where we go to play. It is where we go to work. The ocean is where we go when our minds and souls are tired. We sit and watch the waves. With climate change, we are afraid of the ocean now. In the past we used to fear the ocean only when there were storms, or when people were lost at sea. Sometimes you would fear certain creatures in the sea, but if you were careful, you didn't even have to fear those creatures.*

Now we fear the ocean itself. Not because of the ocean. Because of man. What man is doing to the climate. He's turning the oceans against us, and we have nowhere to run. So the climate-change talks are critical for us . . . for our very survival. Not just a question of food. Not just of jobs. It is a question of who we are. Will we exist tomorrow?

"CLIMATE IS AT YOUR DOORSTEP"

Back on Vinalhaven, chain saws whined over the course of six days in June, 2009. Trees fell and were then slid into chippers, to eventually rest in a giant pile of steaming wood chips. Within a few more days, and after the heavy thumping of a 50-foot-long red rock-crushing machine, the same happened to the granite, except those chips were immediately spread out to extend the line of an emerging roadway.

Alongside this road on the seventh day, I had the chance to listen to Addison Ames, a board member of the Fox Islands Electric Cooperative. Ames explained the commotion—the need for North Haven and Vinalhaven to have a dependable energy supply—and noted, "We definitely had the need. The price of electricity was one of the things forcing us off the island."

Around the world about 10,000 years ago, in the last major shift of the climate, the seas rose 200 feet. How many islands were created? How many covered? How long did the coming and going of islands take? A few talented geographers with a lot of field time, a mastery of the literature, and a fancy new plug-in for Google Earth are probably qualified to look back and make a guess.

Islanders from Andaman Island, located off the coast of Burma, certainly felt the impact of rising seas. They stopped traveling to the mainland because the ferry rides of the day got three times longer. Stranded on-island with no mainland contact for several thousand years, they developed distinctive traits and social protocols. Almost 8,000 years after the ferry stopped, Marco Polo wrote of these islanders having ". . . heads, eyes, and teeth resembling those of the canine species. Their dispositions are cruel, and every person, not being of their own nation, whom they lay their hands upon, they kill and eat." Yikes!

Nearly 100,000 people from all over the world marched in the streets of Copenhagen during the climate-change talks in December 2009. Though I did see one satirical banner that read BANGLADESH, BUY RUBBER BOOTS, most marchers were more direct with their demands. Many banners had a big "350" emblazoned on them, signifying this number because it represents an acceptable level of atmospheric carbon dioxide (350 parts per million).

Copenhagen, 2009

Until 200 years ago, the average level of carbon dioxide for the last 10,000 years was lower than this, about 275 ppm. This was the level that cradled humanity—the level within which our civilizations were formed. This was the level that existed when people founded and located coastal cities like Shanghai, Miami, Rotterdam, and New York. In 2010, the average global level is 390 ppm and still rising.

Ronnie Jumeau and his neighbors are feeling the impact in the Seychelle Islands.

JUMEAU: *Island peoples tend to be most aware about climate change. Climate is in your face. Climate is at your doorstep. Our coastline is changing. You hear people say, "My beach is eroding. I inherited a piece of land next to the beach and over time I've lost part of it." People used to buy land next to the sea. Now, we're all heading for the mountains and letting the foreigners buy up the beaches.*

Rainfall patterns are changing. We have two seasons in the year. A flat calm season and a rough season, when the fishermen don't go to fish and the prices of fish go up. Because island life is simple, you easily notice changes. We notice that the rainy season is

getting shorter, but more intensive, which is resulting in more landslides in the hills. We notice that the drought seasons are getting longer and dryer. We notice things are stripping away the coral reefs that protect our beach. The surf pounds louder. The oceans are also becoming corrosive.

Only now are they finding that this has been happening for a long time. Fish populations decrease. This appears to have something to do with warmer seas.

Recently, we had an outbreak of a certain tree disease. We thought the vectors for this disease came from imported wood. Scientists from abroad said, "Let's take a look at this. What is happening?" They found out that the insects spreading the bug have always been in the Seychelles. So what triggered this? "Changes in temperature," they said. "The climate is changing, and that change is activating this. The insects have been there all these years, but dormant."

David Conover

Protesters in Copenhagen demand action

ON VINALHAVEN, A NEW BEGINNING

By November of 2009, schoolchildren from North Haven and Vinalhaven held their pinwheels high.

Overhead, nine blades on three turbines were trimmed to start catching the winds of Penobscot Bay. Electricity meters that once showed expense now began to show revenue. No profit yet; that will take years. But almost immediately, over on the mainland, generators had two fewer communities to power, with a corresponding drop in the need to buy and burn fuel oil. Less carbon dioxide went into an atmospheric greenhouse. Less carbon dioxide was absorbed by an increasingly acidic and corrosive ocean. Maybe Ronnie Jumeau's coral reefs in the Seychelles will last a little longer as a result.

Another positive impact might eventually be seen within the ocean closer to home. No, we are not going to be seriously threatened by sea level rise here in Maine. But scientists working out of a lab in the United Kingdom find that lobsters worldwide are 20 percent less likely to live past the fourth stage of their life cycle as a result of increased ocean acidification due to climate change. Adult lobsters appear to overbuild their shells when in seawater with high levels of carbon dioxide, finds another group from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. This "might divert from other important processes, such as reproduction or tissue building," says Dr. Justin B. Ries, the lead researcher in this study.

In November, some of the closest neighbors to the Vinalhaven wind project objected to the sound of the turbines in certain wind conditions. Island conversations ensued. The Fox Islands Electric Cooperative took sound measurements and did an experiment to turn down the turbines to see if that would help. Definitions of acceptable decibel levels were questioned and discussed. Objections persisted. Going forward, how will the community manage this question of minority dissent? What forces of internal problem-solving and leadership will be tapped? Can Vinalhaven do what the islanders in Copenhagen could not—find workable solutions toward a better world? We will see.

The community leadership of two islands on the coast of Maine does have a global dimension, building on the leadership exercised by other islands around the world: Samsö Island in Denmark and the Maldives off India. President Mohamed Nasheed of the Maldives was in Copenhagen and remarked, "We have relinquished our claim to high-carbon growth. After all, it is not carbon we want, but development. It is not coal we want, but electricity. It is not oil we want, but transport. Low-carbon technologies now exist to deliver all the goods and services we need. Let us make the goal of using them."

All of this is not lost on Addison Ames from Vinalhaven. "I hope that for those who come after us . . . that their road is much easier and faster than the one we've been on," said Ames. "I'd be a very happy man if that takes place, let me tell you. If global warming is one of the biggest concerns in the world today, the process that this country is under right this moment is too slow. We've got to move faster than this. That's part of the new hope that I see. It may happen. We have a chance. I hope this is the beginning."

Homegrown political talent like State Representative Hannah Pingree and her mother, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree, are working and speaking in support of this beginning. The "350.org" movement is slowly but surely spreading its message, state to state, country to country. An impressive 5,248 rallies were held in 181 countries on October 24, 2009. The day was proclaimed by CNN as the single largest coordinated international environmental action in the history of humanity. Around the world, in advance of the UN climate-change talks, the Small Island Nations did their best to make their experience and requests public knowledge. The presidential cabinet in the Maldives donned scuba gear and held a cabinet meeting underwater.

This is where their country is projected to be by the year 2050. They asked the developed nations, those that put the most carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, to take some responsibility for their actions. Once the talks began in Copenhagen, international island attention focused on a large convention complex called the Bella Center, located a few miles outside the city center. Midway through the talks, Ronny Jumeau was dispirited about the islanders'







Top: Fuvahmulah Thoondu Beach, an island of Maldives; Mongolian Glaciologists for 350; aerial artist Daniel Dancer works with Uden partners to choreograph 4,700 young people in this beautiful aerial art piece, Uden, Netherlands. Middle: hoisting the sails to 350. An oceanic plea for greenhouse gas reduction! Santa Cruz, USA; Koro Island, Fiji—Community members and leaders come together in order to send a message of survival of rising sea levels; Qaqortoq, Greenland. Bottom: Star Ferry of Hong Kong at Victoria Harbour; Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Boracay Island, Philippines.

Jumeau: *It is not lack of knowledge anymore. The Small Island agenda is at the forefront in Bella Center. Everybody knows us. Those who make decisions about how to support the Small Island States know us and what is happening to us. So they can't plead ignorance.*

It is just that . . . what is it that is stopping them from doing what is necessary and right? Are we expendable? Because we are small? Is it cheaper to relocate us than to save us? Does it boil down to money? It is not a decision that is being taken with any feeling. That is what we feel. If everybody knows, then why is it becoming tougher for us—our fight is becoming tougher?

We are battered and bruised, but not broken. No negotiating process can break us. But climate change will. That will break the small islands, eventually, if we are continuing down the path we are heading on right now.

The world's wealthier nations finally did agree to some form of seed financial support to help these islanders adapt to a changing climate. Jumeau went home with a slightly restored sense of international regard, in response to this sudden last-minute response. Whether the support will endure is another question altogether.

There are many illogical paradoxes within the nature of how islands and the seas around them change with each passing year. One morning this past September, I was piloting a small boat and passing Crabtree Point at the western entrance of the Fox Islands Thoroughfare when I observed a new navigational range. Ranges provide mariners with two spatial points that line up to indicate a course into a harbor of refuge. Oftentimes they are two marker posts. Sometimes each post contains a triangle painted on a plank sign, point up.

The range I saw in September charted more than the safe route home. In the foreground was Fiddler's Ledge Monument. (I've heard rumors it was built by the administration of President George Washington, and that it appeared as a line item in the federal budget of the day.) As a second marker in the range, in the distance, I could see the white support tower of the first wind turbine. These two markers, hundreds of years apart, were suddenly and momentarily perfectly aligned.

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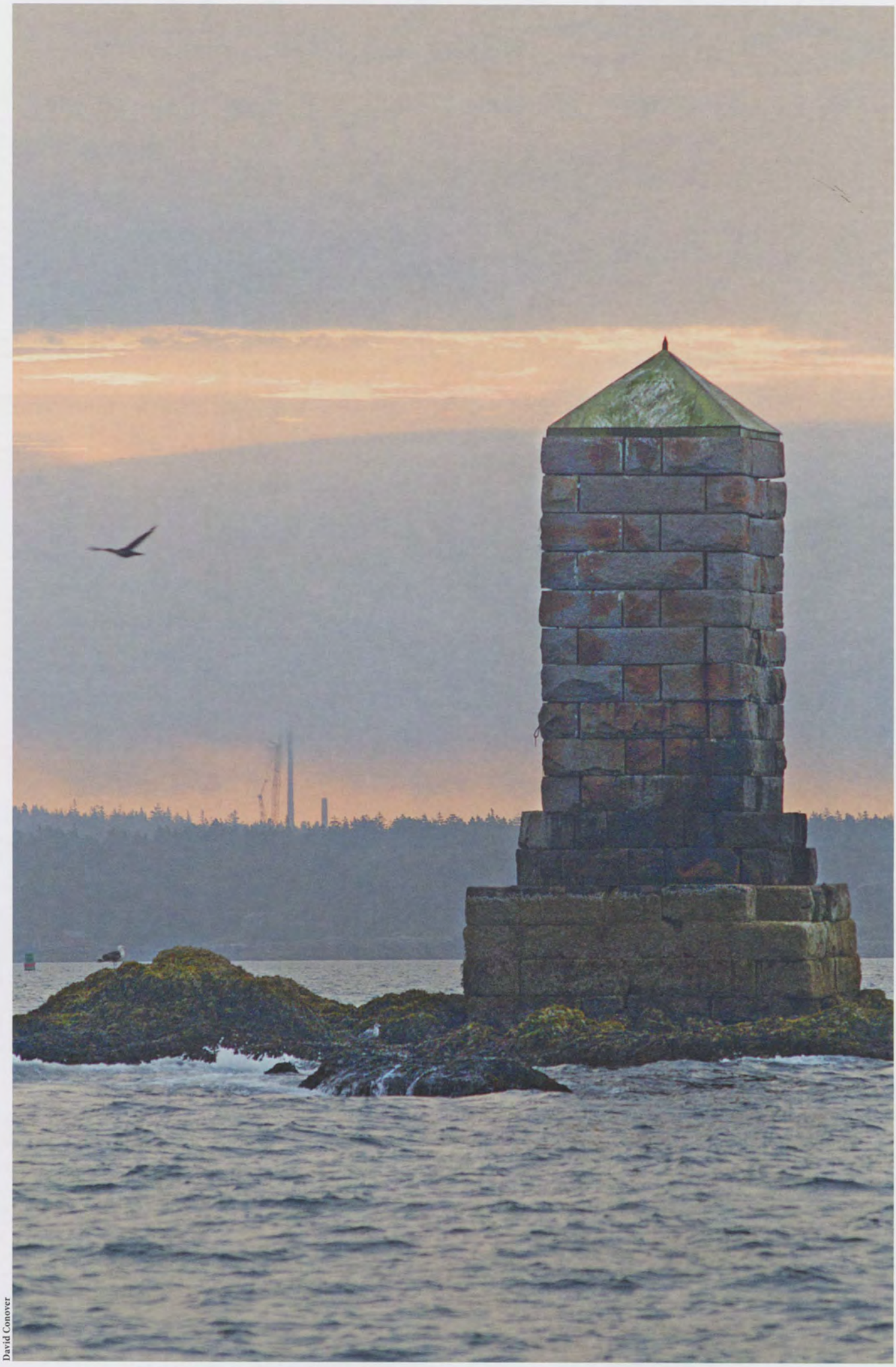
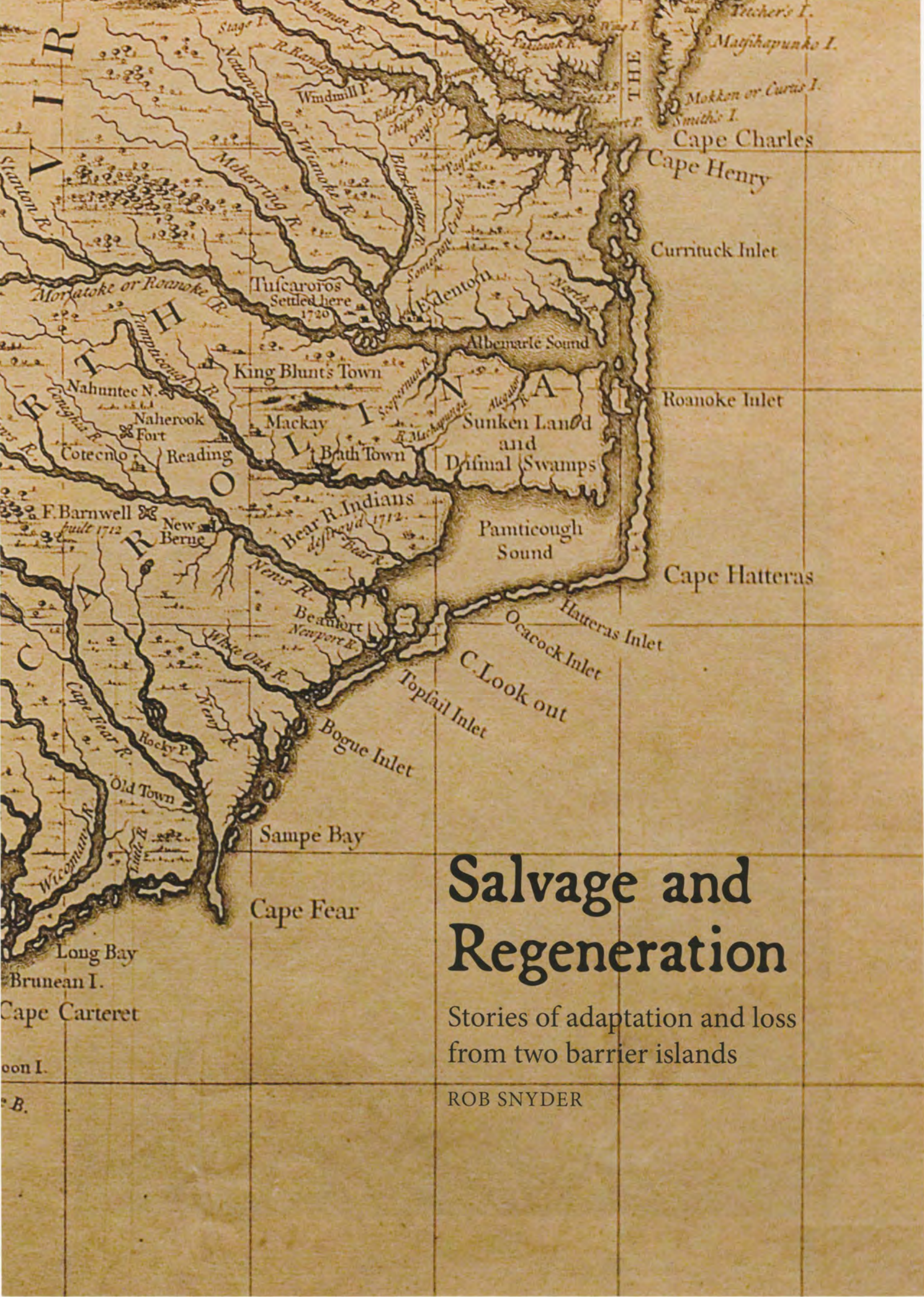
For more information, please visit: www.islandinstitute.org/climatechange and www.islandinstitute.org/vinalhaven.



David Conover



Salvage and Regeneration

Stories of adaptation and loss from two barrier islands

ROB SNYDER

Rob Snyder (2)

Ghost town: The last residents left Portsmouth Village in 1971.

I am going to start in the middle of two extremes, exploring what holds one island community together while another becomes a shadow of the past.

David Thomas, a fisherman from Little Cranberry Island, Maine, and I are heading to Portsmouth Island, one of North Carolina's Outer Banks, skimming across the top of the water at 15 knots in a flat-bottom boat.

We bear northwest out of "the creek" on Ocracoke Island with Rudy Austin at the helm. He is assured and relaxed, much as his father Junius would have been in the 1950s and '60s, when he ran people across to the Portsmouth hunting and fishing club. It is a quick crossing, 20 minutes or so.

Through the crisp winter air we pass duck-hunting blinds, family-managed pound nets, and, on Casey Island, just off of Portsmouth, we pass a camp for fishermen who are "hiding from the wife," as Rudy puts it, laughing as if speaking from experience. We cross Ocracoke Inlet, with Pamlico Sound to starboard. Beneath us the shoal waters shift with the tides, while on the horizon a place frozen in time comes into view.

Earlier in the day David and I had anticipated what it would be like to experience an island whose community had changed dramatically—from a year-round island population to a place preserved because it "hearkens back to a simpler time." It made us uncomfortable, yet we were both eager to experience the place—David, as someone who has spent much of his life working to keep his island community vibrant, and myself, a "professional outsider" dedicated to supporting island communities—the perfect pair for this dystopian tour.

From the water Portsmouth appears archetypal, with its church steeple rising up above the red cedars, and 20 or so early-20th-century homes standing against the wind and tide. This barrier island was incorporated in 1753, and was sustained by an economy based on fishing and lightering work. Tall ships would unload to shallow draft vessels, allowing the movement of goods ashore to the Carolinas.

Chester Lynn accompanies David and me when we step ashore on Portsmouth. Chester is an Ocracoker, a descendant of Portsmouth residents and historian of the island. He is a steward of the community's history, celebrating the continuity of this place over time. Lynn's personality matches the large shadow that he casts while making his way slowly across the island with the assistance of a cane.

I am struck by the National Park Service's welcome: Historic Portsmouth Village—Northern Core Banks, Cape Lookout National Seashore. It really exists—a place that celebrates what year-round island living used to be like. A neatly manicured path leads us toward a high spot, a few feet above sea level on the Sound side of the island, where the small white post office faces out on an island cemetery and Main Street beyond.

The Civil War took its toll on the island, explains Lynn as we walk. Portsmouth's population had peaked at 800 residents, including 100 or so slaves, prior to the arrival of northern troops. The war drove the population down to around 300 by the 1870s.

A revival of the community seemed in hand with the construction of a U.S. Life-Saving Station in 1894. However, the closure of the station in the 1930s was a major blow to the community. Its brief reopening around World War II only slowed the community's eventual demise.

The population had fallen to little more than a dozen residents by the 1950s. The school closed in the mid-1950s, and the post office followed suit in 1959. By 1970 only three residents remained on the island, and they left in 1971. By this time most of the houses in the community had become seasonal hunting lodges or summer homes that people leased from the government in exchange for upkeep.

Portsmouth Island became a part of the Cape Lookout National Seashore in 1976. By the 1980s historic preservation of a range of island structures began. Today the post office is filled with interpretive exhibits of the island's history. The work of Lynn and others with the Friends of Portsmouth Island informs the educational panels hung around the building.

Standing on the steps of the post office, one cannot help but notice a post just off to the left noting the high-water marks from various storms. Hurricane Isabel is the highest of those recorded. It came ashore in 2003 and its mark stands about four feet above this high point on the island. A thought crosses my mind of being in the storm and looking out a second-story window from one of the perfectly preserved homes, wondering if the house will stay on its foundation, and if the water will ever recede.

Across from the post office a sign invites me to the schoolhouse, an acknowledgment of both the importance of schools to year-round island communities, and an appeal to our fascination with one-room schoolhouses. Maps of the United States, Europe, and the world hang on the walls; perhaps they are artifacts of 1940s geography lessons. The maps remind me of how different the world looked just 70 years ago. The woodstove in the middle of the room is a reminder of the work that would have been necessary to sustain daily life—importing logs, hauling them from wharf to school, and chopping them to feed the fire.

A path connects the school to the beautifully preserved lifesaving station at the east end of the island, providing an opportunity to stroll past homes preserved nearly as they were when the last residents left. But this place has no heartbeat. Unlike a year-round island, this place has no pulse. It feels eerily dead. Today Portsmouth lives on in increasingly distant memories; it is now celebrated only for its role in history, when descendants gather for biennial homecoming events.

I am struck by what we lose when island communities die. They did not build walls to hold back the sea, yet a community thrived here for nearly 200 years. I want to know what Portsmouth islanders knew about how to live with the environment. A way of life certainly resided in the embodied knowledge of Portsmouth's residents, a type of knowledge gained through repeating the mundane activities of everyday life, day in and day out, passed down through the generations. All of this is now lost.

The continuity of place in Portsmouth is now broken, frozen in time and place for visitors to interpret through the eyes of the National Seashore.

As we skim across the water back toward Ocracoke, Rudy reflects without prompting, "When they start recording how I talk, the stories I tell . . . I wonder if it isn't already too late." Perhaps he is thinking about the work he has done to help preserve Ocracoke's fishing heritage. Although Rudy runs tours to Portsmouth, he and his sons are fishermen, and they are working hard "to keep [Ocracoke's] fishermen off of the endangered species list."

PRESERVING A YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITY

Back on Ocracoke later the same day, we head to the Working Watermen's Exhibit, a 1930s fish house that has likely been floated from place to place around the creek over the past half-century before finding itself home to a celebration of the island's fishing heritage, past and present. It is not a large place; in fact, you can take it all in upon entering. David and I walk into a room full of 20 or so community members and a whole lot of homemade desserts.

Back in the far right corner a woodstove has been fired up to take the chill out of the air, and Gene Ballance offers us cups of piping hot cider from the top of the stove. Gene is a mild-mannered Ocracoker and noted math whiz who runs the Working Watermen's Exhibit and represents the island as a Hyde County commissioner. He is also responsible for one of the more-striking exhibits adorning a full corner in the room: a series of maps outlining a 100-year-old snapshot of Pamlico Sound Oyster Harvesting.

On our way through the room we meet the school principal, a real estate broker, new year-round residents, representatives from multigenerational families, and fishermen

both young and old. They are here to discuss the future of their island at the invitation of the Ocracoke Foundation and Alton Ballance.

The Ocracoke Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2006 in a partnership with the 30 or so full- and part-time fishermen on the island. The fishermen's goal, which the Foundation successfully supported, was to save the last fish house on the island. Because of this partnership Ocracoke's Working Watermen now have a storefront, a working wharf, and a co-op structure that will enable them to access the water in perpetuity.

Alton and his brother Kenny represent about the sixth generation of Ballances on the island (Gene is their cousin). Alton is not an elected official—at least, not anymore. He was North Carolina's youngest county commissioner when he was first elected to office, but that was over 25 years ago now. I found that whenever I would ask who was working hard to ensure a vibrant future for the Ocracoke community, today's elected leaders would whisper and point to Alton behind his back. A back filled with arrows—the true sign of a leader.

Alton Ballance

The issues of the evening are fisheries politics and year-round housing. Sea turtle regulations threaten to shut down the summer gill-net fishery, precisely the fishery that feeds local, wild-caught fish to the one million or so summer visitors to the island. Adding to the discussion, David shares the challenges we face in Maine dealing with the northern right whale. There is a common bond in this discussion, and while there are no easy answers, the Foundation is keen to understand how they might organize to support the local fishermen in these debates.

The school is thriving with 132 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, but a number of teachers are retiring. They came to the island back when homes were affordable for the island's workforce. Island homes currently average in the mid-six-figure range. Teachers coming to the island today can't afford to buy. David and I are asked about what types of housing efforts are under way on Maine's islands, and how we structure housing programs that are not tied to national affordability standards. The Foundation is exploring how they can work with realtors and others to solve a problem that extends to other workforce needs, such as park service personnel, ferry operators, and the like.

These issues resonate with David and me, as Maine's year-round island communities struggle with similar issues. The meeting at the Working Watermen's Exhibit speaks to how healthy communities grapple with emerging threats to their survival. Later that evening, over a beer in Alton's kitchen, he ties Maine and North Carolina's islands together, noting, "The ocean doesn't divide our islands—it connects them."

Familial connections and commitments to place run deep on Ocracoke. They are brought to life through a range of stories that place today's challenges in context. In order to access these stories we have to move back in time, but only just a day.

WHEN YOUR SHED FILLS UP, BUILD ANOTHER

The day before my trip to Portsmouth Island, Alton shows me around his family home. "My dad built this shed," he says while pulling open the worn white door to a faded green shed behind his house. Upon entering it is clear from the smile on his face that he is still amused at what he finds inside. He shows me an old clam rake, handle missing—just the rusted-out fingers ready to dig again if there were only time to fix the rake. But there isn't, because Alton is looking for something specific. He grabs an old duck decoy, handcrafted by a friend his father's age. I look around and notice stacks of spare pieces of wood running through the rafters, pieces of rope strung from nails. There is so much stuff that it's hard to move around, but he wants us inside, to take it all in.

"When my dad filled up this shed," Alton says, "he did what everyone on the island does—he built another one." He gestures to a second, less-dilapidated shed farther back on the property. We enter the second shed, equally packed with stuff. This time he finds what he is looking for: an old gill net still coated in lime, a relic of his dad's fishing days. He cuts off a piece to carry with him. Then he holds up a black bag and asks us to guess what it is; after a few misguided guesses, I vocalize what I hope it isn't—a body bag.

A great storyteller, Alton recalls how his mom woke him one morning because his dad was fishing gill nets in Pamlico Sound and a man had passed away at a local hotel. At this point David knowingly adds for my benefit, "Someone on an island has to be responsible for getting dead bodies off an island." Alton continues: "My dad was away, so it was my responsibility. I had a friend sleeping over, so I woke him up and told him I needed help moving something." We laugh. It turns out that they found themselves attempting to lug a huge man's body down the stairs of a hotel while one officer comforted the man's girlfriend and another called to notify his wife. When they got to the next island over, Hatteras, all the undertaker wanted to know was how Alton's father had gotten his hands on such a nice body bag.

Beyond the humor of the story we learn something about living on islands, of holding on to things in case they are needed again; a story of living with scarcity. When one shed fills, you build another. In fact, Alton had just built a third shed on his property because the two his father had built were full.

He tells how one of his neighbors, Fowler O'Neal, had a record four sheds, one built right onto the back of the next. One day Fowler wanted to get a pedal bike for his grandson and he knew right where to find one; unfortunately, it was buried deep, a couple of sheds back from the entrance. The answer: Cut a hole through the roof of the shed above the bike and extract it. A different time, a plumbing part that could not be found anywhere on the island was right where another islander had left it—in the trunk of a car buried in the backyard. They dug it out and then reburied the car.

Lena Donlon

Alton Ballance sits in a 70-year-old swing on the front porch of his home. Ballance grew up in this century-old house and still lives in the home. His mother was also born in the house in 1918 and lived all of her 77 years there.

SCARCITY AND SALVAGE

Stories of scarcity and salvage are interwoven with the ways that ships quite literally became a part of the fabric of the island community. Shipwrecks are today the stuff of legends on Ocracoke. The beams of a home that came from tall ships, pounds of nails, furniture—all that a shipwreck offered up would be salvaged by the islanders.

As we walk from the church to the school, Alton notes that the cross in the church came from a shipwreck decades earlier. "They always told us that pallbearers would drop a casket if someone yelled 'Shipwreck!' in the church," he says with a smile.

A photo of the three-masted schooner NOMIS underscores this salvage ethic. The schooner ran ashore at Hatteras Inlet on August 16, 1935. Resting on the beach, the hull of the NOMIS is visibly shattered in three places. At midship the gunwale and hull are dismantled, presumably for easier access to the payload. A wreck commissioner would have overseen the salvage, watching over dozens of Ocracokers that arrived to gather what they could. In the picture men are moving from ship to shore hauling wood via a makeshift dock built on-site for the occasion. The wood from the wreck is now a part of island homes, and it is said that some members of the community used a portion of the wood to build crude benches for the outdoor congregation of the island's then newly organized Assembly of God Church.

Everywhere we go, we hear stories of salvage. At a bed-and-breakfast undergoing some renovations, we learn that the newly built island in the center of the kitchen has a story: The legs were from a shipwreck, and the sides from the wooden floor in the decommissioned Coast Guard Station. The solid oak front door on another house comes from the same station. Before the age of recycling, salvage was de rigueur.

Stories of salvage and renewal on the island are wedded with respect for natural processes. Sitting in Alton's dining room he teaches something more, this time about life and death, and living with nature on the island. His mother was born in the front room, and she died in his arms in the dining room where we sit. This was important to her, and to Alton—that the cycle of life would be completed in this place.

I ask about storms. How do people get off the island? He laughs, having certainly been asked this question many times before. "Most people don't leave in storms; they stay. There is nowhere else you would want to be. You never know when you will be able to come back if you leave." This surprised me coming from someone whose job it was as county commissioner to ensure the orderly evacuation of the island during hurricanes.

He recalls a storm where "it almost came to pulling plugs." I thought I had misunderstood what he said. Alton explained that older houses on Ocracoke were built as far as possible from the open ocean. On Ocracoke the historic housing is on the Sound side of the island, around the creek. Houses were built on top of large tree stumps, and load-bearing timbers often came from shipwrecks. The storms would come as they always had, so they designed ways to keep houses from floating away.

Pulling plugs is a very literal turn of phrase. Older houses on Ocracoke have large holes in the corners of their floors with cork plugs in them. When storms come through, Alton decides if it will be necessary to pull these plugs. The Ballances and others who have inhabited the islands for generations realize that the way to stay on the island is to let the water in and through the house. Open the front and back door, open any trapdoors, pull the plugs, and let it through.

This knowledge runs in the face of the common perception of hurricanes hitting the Carolina coast. We are fascinated with media images of four-story summer homes barely holding ground as they are inundated by wave after wave. Yet Ocracokers, rather than fighting storms, live with them. They don't leave; they just move to the second floor of the house and let the storm pass through. How else could

Time for a National Working Waterfront Coalition

Standing on the Bluffton Oyster Company wharf in South Carolina feels a world away from Maine. The live oaks up on the hillside behind the oyster company's processing plant shine a lush green against a clear winter sky. But the issues of retaining access to the water in the face of expanding coastal development surround us on the banks of the May River and bring me back to Maine.

The Oyster Company is owned and operated by the Toomer family, Larry and Tina. Larry's phone rings constantly while we talk—if you want to buy oysters or shells for your landscaping needs, Larry has them. One of Larry's daughters works behind the counter selling locally caught seafood—redfish, shrimp, mid-tide oysters, to name a few—while another daughter shows up to care for a newborn baby in the family.

Bluffton Oyster Company is the last oyster processing facility in South Carolina. It is still here because of a unique agreement between a local land trust and the family. The land trust owns the property occupied by the company, along with an abutting property that contains a public park. This creative approach to preserving working waterfront access, where land trusts hold development rights on commercial wharfs, was begun here in Maine nearly seven years ago down along York Harbor. The company has a long-term lease to the property as long as it stays in use as a commercial fishing facility.

North Carolina invested nearly $2 million in preserving working-waterfront access. The influence of recreational fishing interests have meant that their definition of working waterfront is broader than it is here in Maine, mandating public accessibility rather than restricting funds to support commercial fishing activities as we have.

In Maine we've invested $5 million to preserve commercial fishing access in the state. With voter support we may have $2 million more to invest after November 2010. Nineteen wharves owned by municipalities, families and cooperatives of fishermen are protected for future commercial fishing access as a result of Maine's Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program. These wharves support: 950 jobs; more than 16 million pounds of seafood landed annually; more than $40 million in income; and more than $80 million in additional economic contribution to the local economy.

Where do we go from here? The idea of bonding to save working-waterfront access has worked here in Maine and in North Carolina. Partnerships

Alton Ballance

with local land trusts are also working, as shown above. However, the need for preserving commercial wharves here and in other coastal states far outstrips our individual state's capacities to bond to solve the problem.

It is time for a national working-waterfront coalition.

In Maine, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-1st District) and Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) proposed national legislation that would significantly enhance working-waterfront protection in those states that have taken the initial steps to create programs for securing access. Each bill would create a program to fund efforts nationwide to save working waterfront. Pingree's bill proposes $25 million in the program's first year, $50 million in its second year, and $75 million in the third and fourth years.

But this type of legislation can only do so much. Maine and North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Oregon, and others stand ready to benefit from these programs based on a track record of success.

Our level of investment here in Maine, our leadership in Washington, and our track record of developing innovative solutions to preserving access, demand that leadership for a Working Waterfront Coalition starts here in Maine.

— Rob Snyder

To stay up-to-date on this issue, please visit www.islandinstitute.org/workingwaterfrontaccess.

Rob Snyder

you survive for so long in a place where the natural environment is constantly shifting?

The knowledge lost with the passing of Portsmouth Island was still being lived on Ocracoke. I found this knowledge startling for what it said about living with a highly dynamic environment rather than against it.

ISLANDS ON THE MOVE

Alton stops his truck so that we can walk on the beach shortly after our arrival on Ocracoke. He leans down and picks up a smooth gray oyster shell. He encourages David and me to do the same, and then tells another story, one that I later found in the introduction to his book, *Ocracokers*. We look at our shells as he recounts how the barrier islands of the Outer Banks are on the move. They have been moving landward since the beginning of time.

A geologist, Alton hypothesizes that while moving landward, the sand dunes have run into stationary pieces of land and gotten "hung up." The historic fishing and trade villages on Hatteras and Ocracoke occupy such pieces of land. In other words, the beaches of the National Seashore on Ocracoke may some day break off and become separate islands, leaving the creek and the surrounding community as a much smaller land mass.

Alton pauses after giving some geological perspective to this place. He then points out that the mid-tide oyster shells delivered to the beach on the falling tide do not grow in the open ocean. Instead, the oysters that grew these shells lived in Pamlico Sound, some 3,000 years ago or more. These shells have been buried under Ocracoke all this time, only to reemerge and be washed ashore as the dunes move landward.

To hold the soft worn shell of an oyster from the beaches of Ocracoke is to hold a tacit reminder, juxtaposed against the fate of Portsmouth, of the strengths of this place—of the hard work that goes into retaining a sense of continuity while engaging with change, and perhaps most of all, how important it is for those who live on to share their island culture and history.

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

More information on the Carolina working waterfront can be found at www.ocracokewatermen.org.

NOSTALGIA *by the* SEA

Peter Ralston

As fishing villages disappear, they are romanticized as symbols of a better, bygone era

JOHN GILLIS

Villages are nostalgia's epicenters: They seem to stop time and make the past accessible in ways that big cities and sprawling suburbs cannot. Their isolation and small scale offer the illusion of home, a refuge in an otherwise heartless world. The peasant village has long offered an idealized notion of the way life should be, but in recent years, coasts have eclipsed interiors as prime destinations for nostalgia tourism. All around the Atlantic rim—Scotland, New Jersey, Brittany, Nova Scotia, the English Channel, and Maine—so-called heritage trails snake their way along the coasts, depositing us at one quaint village after another.

Courtesy of Edward Coffin

Port Clyde, circa 1900

Nostalgia—derived from the Greek word for homecoming, *nostos*—was first noted in the 17th century as a serious medical condition among Swiss mercenary soldiers, so overwhelmed by homesickness as to be unfit for duty. Its transformation from physical illness to psychological condition, more associated with longing for the past rather than a specific place, came only in the 19th century. Today, nostalgia is a pervasive feature of modern societies, a foundation of the antiques and tourism industries, a motivating force in everything from historic preservation to family reunions. We can't seem to get enough of the past—or rather, of an idealized version of the past that bears little resemblance to historical reality. If no longer treated as a serious malady, nostalgia does have serious consequences for those places and people toward which it is directed.

Modern nostalgia works in strange ways. People are often most nostalgic about places and pasts they have never known personally. Nostalgia is a free-floating form of yearning that has attached itself to different objects in different periods, but is now applied to so many pasts and places that one observer predicts an "eco-nostalgic crisis" which will require that we ration our scarce historical heritage. Because it is so much easier to be nostalgic about places and times that we have not actually experienced, remote times and places have come to bear the burden of our longing for the "good old days."

Through the rosy filter of nostalgia, fishing villages present themselves as timeless places which somehow have escaped the multiple ills of the modern age. Their inhabitants appear to embody the virtues we associate with all that was good about the past. They seem more rooted and traditional, more in tune with their natural surroundings, more ecologically sound. It comes as a surprise, then, to discover that the fishing village is of relatively recent origin, the product of the same historical forces that brought us the factory and the city. As a specialized occupation, fishing is also the product of the modern age, beset with all the problems we associate with modern agriculture and industry.

In Europe fishing began as a freshwater occupation conducted by peasants, and it was not until the continent had fished out its inland resources that it turned in the late Middle Ages to the sea. Even then fishing remained a seasonal occupation of farmers, who left their plows only when migrating fish came close inshore. Alerted by "lookers," they rushed to shore and camped there while the fish were running. But instead of settling or building permanent villages on the coast, they returned to their farms, leaving only their boats and gear in protected places.

When Europeans began to extend their fishing to the far reaches of the North Atlantic in the 15th and 16th centuries, they followed the same migratory practices, camping on the coasts and islands of the New World during the summer months, returning home when winter set in. For hundreds of years, the typical Atlantic fisherman had, as the Swedes like to say, "one boot in the boat and the other on the land." And the same was true of the native fishers Europeans encountered on the coasts of North America. Neither group settled on the seaside itself. Until the 18th century, coastal villages were rare on both sides of the Atlantic, for the shore was associated with danger and death. When fisher-farmers did build, they chose sites well back from the sea, preferring temporary, transportable dwellings.

Fishing villages began to appear on European coasts only in the 16th century, and more out of necessity than by

Peter Ralston (3)

Port Clyde, 2005

choice. Poor peasants pushed off the land by greedy landlords turned to fishing and began to congregate on the shore for the first time. Working people were not so much drawn to the sea as driven to it as their last resort. In Scotland, so-called "fish-touns" were created by grasping landlords who, in the late 18th century, forced their tenants to go to sea to earn cash to pay their rents. Everywhere, fishing villages were the product of the shift from subsistence to commercialized fishing, for without inland or overseas markets for their catch, these communities could not have existed.

The same was true in New England, where the Pilgrims and Puritans, finding that they could not wrest a living from the land, turned in desperation to the sea. They had come with a dream of founding inland farming communities but ended up sponsoring fishing villages in order to feed themselves and produce a commodity—cod—to trade on the international market. As Samuel Eliot Morison put it so memorably: "God performed no miracle on New England soil. He gave the sea. Stark necessity made seamen of would-be planters . . . Massachusetts went to sea, then, not out of choice, but of necessity."

All around the North Atlantic, fishing remained until the mid-19th century the seasonal occupation of small farmers. The term *maritime* still referred to lands bordering the sea, not the sea itself, and those engaged in fishing were more sea-*fearing* than seafaring. They were not a "breed apart" but rather indistinguishable from the rest of the coastal populations, jacks-of-all-trades who moved back and forth across the tide line over a lifetime—men who went to sea in their youth, returning to farm and raise families in their later years, and women who tended the farms while the men were away, assisting with the catch when they returned. Highly vulnerable to trade fluctuations, coastal communities were very unstable, their populations dependent on mobility for survival. It was said of Mainers that "in the old days, a good part of the best men knew a hundred ports and something of the way people lived in them." Early fishing villages defy the image we have of them. By no means traditional, they were far more cosmopolitan and innovative than many of their inland neighbors.

Initially, inlanders had a very negative image of coasts and coastal people. In the 17th and 18th centuries, inlanders imagined them as ugly and repellent. Fisher-farmers were frequently portrayed as being as savage as the sea itself, thanks in part to the smugglers and wreckers among them. But by the early 19th century, a more positive, if romanticized, image of the maritime population had begun to emerge. Artists and writers became enamored of peoples they imagined to be untainted by industrial civilization. Just as geologists had turned to eroded sea cliffs for the fossilized evidence of deep time, intellectuals influenced by Rousseau scoured the coasts for examples of natural, original mankind. By the end of the 19th century, coastal people had become, in the words of John Stilgoe, "specimens and characters, something they remain—in the popular imagination at least—to this day."

Like the peasants, fishers came to be known as "folk," an honorable, if stereotyped, designation that associated them with a fictitious genealogy of great antiquity. Writers and artists portrayed them as preserving all the virtues that had been lost in the process of urbanization and industrialization. In England, the country village became an icon of true Englishness, while in Scotland it was the fish-toun that came to represent authentic Scottishness. In the Cana-

Criehaven

dian Maritimes and New England, "old salts" became symbols of national virtue. It seemed to the inlanders, who knew coastal people only from their summer visits, that they were more rooted, of purer, better stock. Although the fishing population constituted a smaller proportion of the Cape Breton population than either miners or farmers, they came to stand for all that was worth admiring and preserving in Canada.

The decline of fishing made the fishing village even more attractive. It was in the wake of the collapse of the whaling industry that the port of Nantucket became a major tourist attraction. Its rotting wharves and deserted housing were transformed into a real estate bonanza once local entrepreneurs learned to market history as a scarce commodity. Unsightly reminders of the island's fishery were hidden behind the quaint facades of refurbished colonial houses. Places with active working waterfronts, like Gloucester, had little attraction for the first wave of touristic time-travelers seeking vestiges of the past, but its near neighbor, Rockport, where fishing was in eclipse, was one of the first villages to become an artists' colony, a simulacrum of a fishing port. Its Hodgkins Wharf was painted so often that it became better known as Motif #2.

The absence of fishing made the fishing village even more attractive.

At first, newcomers who coveted working waterfronts as scenic spots were resisted by local people. Fisherfolk objected to the takeover of the beaches where they landed their boats and dried their nets, but, eventually dispossessed, they were forced to move to ports better suited to industrial-scale fisheries. Once they were no longer a real presence, they became objects of intense nostalgia, symbols of a better, bygone era. People once described as "queer folk," lawless and menacing, became in the 20th century models of virtues thought to be endangered in big industrial cities. By the 1930s, Maine people previously thought to be as wild as the coasts they inhabited were being portrayed by Bernard DeVoto as the "People of Granite," Yankees of unshakable character, models for a troubled nation in the depths of the Depression. In Nova Scotia, artist Marsden Hartley found a similar "bedrock in a shifting world," an apparently timeless culture that could withstand the furies of modernity.

By the mid-20th century certain isolated coastal villages had become, like islands, idealized places where time stood still. In the 1940s, Nova Scotia's Peggy's Cove was brought to the attention of Canadians by the writings of J. F. B. Livesay, who found there "a little pulsing human cosmos in an uneasy sea." By then artist-writer William deGarthe had also found his way to Peggy's Cove, calling it "the most beautiful place on earth." Both Livesay and deGarthe were immigrants, newcomers to the coast, whose nostalgia knew no bounds. DeGarthe, who became the impresario of the village's fame and fortune until his death in 1983, painted and wrote Peggy's Cove into existence, providing it with an indelible image and an unforgettable mythology. Despite the fact that it was a place of fisher-farmers, he portrayed it as entirely maritime in nature. The name of the cove derived from St. Margaret's Bay, but deGarthe's endorsement of the undocumented story of a shipwrecked woman named Peggy, who married one of her rescuers and then lent her name to the place, ensured its romantic associations. Locals were convinced that he "made it up," but they did not object once the story became a boon to tourism.

Livesay's original representation of the place as an "island of calm, a friendly haven from the confusion of the world" was itself the product of a moment when Nova Scotia was barely surviving the Great Depression and rapidly losing population. The worst of times generated a vision of

the best of times. Today, although the cod fishery is closed and few boats leave the harbor, the image of a pristine fishing village is still carefully cultivated by preservation regulations that guarantee Peggy's Cove will not change visually, even if the fishery should vanish entirely. Now Peggy's Cove has a new impresario, Ivan Foster, whose books, dolls and other "Peggy Products" tell an even more sentimentalized story of a child named Peggy who washed up onshore and was adopted by local fisherfolk.

Many Maine coastal places have been renamed in order to enhance their touristic appeal. Bass Harbor, renamed McKinley after the president in the early 20th century, got its old name back in 1966. Cold Arse Isle became known as Ragged Island, while a ledge off Great Cranberry Island, once called Bunker's Whore, is now simply Bunker's Ledge. Herring Gut became Port Clyde. Even places that had never been working waterfronts got makeovers, transforming them into what John Cheever called in *Wapshot Chronicle* "a second coast and port of gift and antique shops, restaurants, tearooms, and bars where people drink their gin by candlelight, surrounded by ploughs, fish nets, barnacle lights and other relics of an arduous and orderly way of life of which they knew nothing."

Beals Island

Cheever's second coast is nostalgia's coast, the product of strangers' imaginations, sustained by inlanders' needs and desires, often ignoring coastal peoples' reality. In Scotland, the Fishing Heritage Trail directs tourists mainly to places where fishing no longer exists because it is generally assumed by tourism experts that "the maritime landscape is attractive only in the past or at a distance." In Gloucester, where the fishery is dying, visitors follow a red line around the harbor to spots where it used to thrive.

Where fishing survives, the clash between newcomers and residents continues. When developers wanted to introduce cobbled streets in the little Scottish port of Pittenweem, the remaining fishermen objected on the grounds that these were slippery and made their work dangerous.

But perhaps the greatest danger is nostalgia itself. While positive stereotypes replaced negative ones in the 20th century, village inhabitants were left feeling, as one Newfoundlander put it, like they were living "on a reservation"—more like museum exhibits than real people. As tourism replaced fishing as the single largest source of income and employment, many coastal people reluctantly adopted the identity assigned to them. They became resigned to ordinances that privileged the scenic over the functional, dictating the colors they could paint their houses and the amount of gear they could store in their side yards. As marinas continue to take over working waterfronts, many Maine fishermen have become commuters. No longer able to afford waterfront property, they have themselves become strangers, subject to the same sense of loss that outsiders feel.

But the sense of loss expressed by locals should not be confused with the nostalgia of outsiders. Fisherfolk are far less likely to idealize the past, to want to freeze it in place. For them the past is a living presence, something to build on, or, as the members of the Heritage Society in Buckie, Scotland, put it: "We're still here. Let us tell you how we lived." Newcomers arrive seeking a refuge from what they know to be the deficits of progress. They cast a jaundiced eye on the future, something that the underemployed people of Buckie cannot afford to do. Heritage is not for them a luxury, but a necessity. Their motto—"Our future lies in our past"—expresses their determination not to let their village become a maritime theme park. "We're not particularly interested in tourism," they say. "We're interested in preserving the community."

At Port Clyde, a postcard-perfect village on Maine's St. George peninsula, and a place associated with three generations of the Wyeth family, the community seemed on its way to losing its entire groundfishing fleet. Realizing that they could be "the last fishermen in Port Clyde," groundfishermen there responded in the spirit of the people of Buckie. The Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative founded Port Clyde Fresh Catch, a community-supported fishery modeled on community-supported farming. With the support of the Wyeths and the Island Institute, the Cooperative has opened a way to the future based on past practices of selling direct to local customers.

Nostalgia comes in different varieties. It can be a paralyzing malaise that, like the homesickness of the Swiss mercenaries, can make us dysfunctional. In its milder forms, it can be inspiring, even utopian, providing us with visions of better times and idyllic places on which to model the future. Unfortunately, the less-desirable forms of nostalgia are most prevalent among those who wield the greatest economic and political power. What is satisfying to them is often detrimental to others. It is therefore important that we recognize nostalgia for what it is: a set of feelings with consequences that we need to be aware of, confront, and negotiate rather than passively accept.

John Gillis is a summer resident of Great Gott Island, who winters in Berkeley, California. His next book is an environmental history of coasts that will be published as Back to the Sea: Coasts in Human History, *in 2012.*

To keep up-to-date on the efforts surrounding fisheries along the coast of Maine, please visit www.islandinstitute.org/fisheries.

David Conover

Wind project site on Vinalhaven, July 2009

Fox Islands Wind

PHILIP CONKLING

George Baker, who left a tenured position at the Harvard Business School after 22 years to lead the Fox Islands Electric Co-op project's goal of energy independence and price stability, is fond of quoting a maxim every business school student learns on day one: "There are no $20 bills on the ground, because if there were, someone would have already picked them up." But Baker, a seasonal resident of Frenchboro, and volunteer treasurer of the Swan's Island Electric Co-op, thought the vigorous wind resource might just be a $20 bill waiting to be picked up on some Maine islands.

Peter Ralston

Wind project leaders: Addison Ames, Bill Alcorn, Chip Farrington, Del Webster, Barb Hamilton and Gigi Baas

The question was, how hard might it be to pick up?

Peter Ralston (2)

Wind project site, November 2009

After two and a half years of work, Baker knows that bending down to pick up that money for Vinalhaven and North Haven was anything but easy. But today, Fox Islanders are putting that $20—and more—in their pockets each month as a result of the success of the Fox Islands wind-energy project.

Ratepayers of the two islands voted in July 2008 (by a margin of 382–5) to go ahead with the project. Three 1.5 MW turbines were erected by Cianbro Corporation on a hilltop quarry location that two visionary islanders from Vinalhaven, Del Webster and Bill Alcorn, had acquired for that purpose.

"We have never worked in a community as supportive as this," said Chad Allen, the on-site project supervisor for Cianbro.

Breaking ground at the wind project site.

Cianbro

The tugboat DOROTHY L *transports the first turbine blades in August 2009.*

Peter Ralston (2)

Allen's favorite story of the incredible logistics he coordinated—moving the enormous turbine parts from different parts of the country and the world to the wind-farm site—involved one turbine base section's detour on its last mile. The tower section, 25 feet in diameter, was loaded on a 130-foot-long specialized trailer with an articulated radio-controlled set of rear wheels that enabled the rig to navigate the twisting roads of Vinalhaven at between two and three miles per hour, while all traffic was stopped in both directions.

At the last curve in the North Haven Road, the rear wheels of the trailer hit a soft spot in the road shoulder and slid precariously into a ditch. Nothing was damaged, but Allen knew that it would take at least several hours to get a piece of equipment in place to gingerly lift the trailer out of its hole. He was deeply upset about the inconvenience the mishap would cause to all the islanders backed up on either side of the only north-south road between the two ends of the island.

You can imagine his astonishment when he noticed that islanders on either end of the immovable traffic jam began walking toward each other and trading cars in order to keep heading toward their individual destinations. Islanders from the north end who were driving to the ferry on the south end traded vehicles with islanders waiting to get their groceries—melting ice cream and all—into their refrigerators at the other

A tower component is delivered to the site.

Cianbro (2)

Cianbro workers position the first component of turbine 2.

end of Vinalhaven, with Cianbro's men hauling everything from groceries to building supplies between vehicles on either side of the legendary traffic jam. Allen, a master logistician, had never seen anything like it.

Now that the turbines have been up and running for approximately half a year, there are still issues to be worked out. A handful of year-round neighbors have complained about the disruption from

David Conover

Peter Ralston

Cianbro (2)

Building the turbines (clockwise from left): Cianbro workers position the nacelle on the top of turbine 1; a turbine hub is hoisted; cranes lift blades; George Baker watches.

Peter Ralston

Morgan Kirkham for Compass Light

Peter Ralston (2)

Students from Vinalhaven School show off pinwheels at the wind project ribbon-cutting ceremony in November 2009. Below: View of wind turbines from Old Harbor.

the noise of the turbines. A handful of other year-round neighbors as close (or closer) to the turbines report not being bothered at all by the noise. So what to do?

After several meetings with the neighbors, the Fox Islands Electric Co-op board designed an experiment to test whether turning down the turbines at night for a month would make any difference to the neighbors most upset by the noise. The results are being analyzed and will be distributed to all ratepayers—the real owners of the project—and discussed this summer when a broad representation of the community is on-island. In the meantime, islanders are still putting $20 bills in their pockets every month.

Philip Conkling is president of the Island Institute.

To keep up-to-date on the Fox Islands Wind Project, please visit www.foxislandswind.com.

Build It

Canada invests in its harbors, large and small

DAVID D. PLATT

Peter Ralston (5)

The contrast is stark. Sail into a large harbor or a tiny "outport" in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Labrador or Newfoundland—anywhere in coastal Canada, for that matter—and you're likely to encounter sturdy wharves, well-constructed breakwaters, onshore facilities for fishermen and visitors, paved parking lots, a public landing, sources of freshwater, and a harbormaster in an office.

Visit a comparable harbor in New England or elsewhere on the U.S. East Coast and you'll feel a little more on your own: Public space for visitors, if there's any at all, is likely to be more modest. And "modest" doesn't cover some of the problems one is likely to encounter on the U.S. side of the border, such as poorly maintained facilities or none at all. Occasionally in a Maine port you'll find a state-funded boat-launching ramp or fish pier, but more often the spots fishermen use are private, or owned by a dealer or a cooperative, or exist thanks to local efforts, a town, or even the local land trust. State legislation in recent years has extended some tax benefits and encouraged co-ops and others to purchase waterfront access, including piers, but these efforts are small compared to what happens in Canada.

What's this all about? National policy, pure and simple.

In Canada the federal government, through its Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), maintains facilities for the benefit of fishermen and others who use them. In fact, the government owns the harbors, leasing facilities to local "authorities" that maintain them. For 22 years the government has accomplished this task through a program called "Small Craft Harbours" (SCH). It's as decentralized as anything gets in top-down Canada, with responsibility for regions and individual harbors vested in regional offices and the local harbor authorities. As long as they're in line with national policy, decisions get made locally. And budgets, particularly as economic stimulus programs were put in place to fight the recession of 2008–09, have been ample. SCH provides funding "for some minor works and all major repairs as budget permits," states one description of the program.

Across Canada over 1,100 harbors come under SCH, 986 of them designated as "fishing" and 171 as "recreational."

Small Craft Harbours' website (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/sch-ppb/aboutsch-aproposppb-eng.htm) is clear about how Ottawa views the program's role. "These harbours [Canada spells the word the way the British do] are often the only federal presence in small coastal communities . . . they provide the most direct and visible link between the communities and the Canadian government. For these reasons and many more, the SCH program delivers important benefits to the Canadian population." Over the period covered by the current budget, the Canadian federal government is spending $200 million for 260 Small Craft Harbours projects.

Fortune, Newfoundland, is as good an example as any. Situated on the province's southwest coast facing the Cabot Strait, Fortune is a fishing port (these days boats go out largely for snow crabs, although there's an experimental cod fishery on a small scale) that's also the Canadian end of the ferry run that serves the French islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. It rates a breakwater (fairly new, well maintained), substantial wharves for fishing boats and the ferry, heavy floats for visitors, a large, fenced storage area for hauled-out boats and a building housing a harbormaster's office, space for fish packing, toilets and showers for fishermen and visitors. There's a recently installed water line for fire protection and to supply freshwater for boats. The harbor was dredged in 2007.

Onshore, one can see the remnants of "stages" and other structures that once rimmed this small harbor; today the massive concrete government wharf stands between these one-time private landings and the open sea.

While most of this new infrastructure had been in place for several years when I visited Fortune in the summer of 2009, construction work was ongoing. A crew was erecting a chain-link security fence around the boat storage area, and there was evidence of recent work on the floats—all this in a community that registered 1,458 souls in 2006 (down from a high of 2,406 ten years earlier), near the "toe" of the Burin Peninsula, in a corner of Newfoundland that could only be described as remote.

All of Fortune's improvements before 2009 were made possible through the Small Craft Harbours program, according to town clerk Norma Stacey, who declared the program

"most definitely successful." Funds flowed from the federal program through the nonprofit Harbour Authority of Fortune, set up for the purpose in 1988.

Not all recent investment in Fortune's waterfront—or other facilities in the town—has come through the SCH program, or is limited to harbors. As hard-hit by last year's global financial meltdown and resulting recession as the United States, Canada embarked on an ambitious federal stimulus program in 2009. In July, the government announced it was steering $1.2 million to projects on the Burin Peninsula, including $41,000 for the fencing work at Fortune, as well as other funds for improvements at a visitor center in town. Marystown, a nearby community, got funding for work on a performing arts center and to expand a marine industrial park. A nonprofit training program in St. Lawrence, a third Burin Peninsula town, received funds to upgrade a jewelry-making operation.

But like stimulus expenditures in the United States, which continue to course through the economy in the form of highway paving projects, investments in infrastructure and grants for a variety of purposes, Canada's recession-related spending could wind down next year, depending on how well the economy does. Even if Canada's $56 billion 2009 federal deficit is tiny compared to the amount of red ink being generated in the U.S., it has generated enough controversy to prompt politicians like Premier Stephen Harper to look for cover. Officially, Harper maintains he can bring down Canada's deficit over the coming 10 years through economic growth. Unofficially, his next budget, which was due in Ottawa in March 2010, is expected to propose lower spending.

Meanwhile, the grants continue to flow. In New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, $23 million in stimulus funding went into a combined effort to "address the specific and urgent needs of the lobster fishing and forestry sectors," including $8 million for lobster marketing and product development. Harbourville, Nova Scotia, an eight-boat fishing port on the province's north shore that calls itself "the best-kept secret on the Bay of Fundy," received $318,000 toward an ongoing wharf restoration project.

Margaree Harbour, another Nova Scotia waterfront community, got $895,000 to reconstruct a breakwater and protect its shoreline. Lumsden, in Newfoundland, home to a medium-sized crab-fishing fleet, got funding for a $3.2 million wharf reconstruction project. And Pangnirtung, in Nunavut, the Native region encompassing much of Canada's Arctic, is getting an entire small-craft harbor. The price tag: $17 million.

Some of the money has gone into fisheries enforcement. Rosborough Boats Ltd., a boatbuilder in Tangier, Nova Scotia, received a $985,000 contract to build five rigid-hull inflatable boats for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, for use by fisheries officers. Overall, the national fisheries agency and the Canadian Coast Guard are in line to receive 60 new small craft and 38 other small boats and barges, and will undertake major repairs on 40 other large vessels—all funded with $175 million in stimulus money.

Along with funding has come recognition: Last December the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans honored Grand Manan, recipient of substantial federal investment over the past 20 years, for its harbor authority's successful effort to combine the island's eight harbors into one management entity. Encouraged by DFO, the Grand Manan Harbour Authority is now mentoring a group of harbor authorities from Cape Sable Island in Nova Scotia, the goal being to merge them into a similar all-island organization. Both the Grand Manan and Cape Sable Island projects, reported the *Halifax Telegraph-Journal*, are designed to promote efficiencies that will save money.

For more than 20 years, the SCH program has spent its budget dollars with a specific mandate in mind: keeping up the infrastructure in harbors because it's government-owned and therefore a government responsibility. "We're liable for these structures," says Margaret Hawkins, who administers the SCH program in southwest New Brunswick from an office in St. George. Her area of responsibility runs south from Alma, Nova Scotia, to Grand Manan, Campobello, and Deer Island, New Brunswick. "Our mission is to look after repairs and construction in all commercial fishing harbors in Canada, both traditional and aquaculture," Hawkins said of the SCH program as a whole.

Each year Hawkins's agency receives a specific amount in its budget for minor repairs and the like; in addition, it submits proposals for major capital repairs to Ottawa. Projects are selected using a point system, with top priority going to safety. Hawkins reports that there's concern over the condition of existing piers and floats, many of which are used these days by vessels they weren't designed for. "Structures here have been in fairly poor shape, considering the size and materials vessels are constructed from now," she said, noting that the barges and larger vessels that now use these harbors represent "a big change from wooden lobster boats." This year the SCH budget has been substantially augmented by federal stimulus spending. The government was looking last year for "shovel-ready" projects, Hawkins explained, and since New Brunswick "had done a lot of advance planning," it was in a better position than most areas to get its priorities paid for. Forty-four percent of the national stimulus budget for harbors came to New Brunswick this year.

Curiously, the Canadian press has paid relatively little attention to all this spending. Searches of newspaper websites turned up relatively little coverage over the past year in the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*, the *Toronto Star* and the Toronto *Globe and Mail*—all major dailies published in areas where the small harbors program has been active.

What coverage has appeared in the newspapers has largely been generated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the provincial fisheries departments, both of which stage announcements and put out news releases on a regular basis. While some of this media-relations effort winds up in the local papers, the evidence from Web searches suggests that interest among editors is low. Newspaper-reading Canadians, as a result, learn relatively little about their government's huge expenditures on harbors and other marine infrastructure.

An exception to this general media disinterest might be the *Montreal Gazette*, which reported on a federal watchdog's concerns about government stimulus spending. The parliamentary budget officer in Ottawa, the *Gazette* reported in December 2009, "says he hasn't been given enough information to assess the effectiveness of billions of dollars' worth of government stimulus spending on infrastructure projects." Keith Page, the budget officer, said about half of the federally funded projects had filed quarterly reports by the end of September 2009, and expressed concern that a large portion of the projects wouldn't be completed until March 2011. The *Gazette*, unsympathetic to the Liberal government in power, headlined its story FEDERAL WATCHDOG SEEKS DATA: GOVERNMENT IS WITHHOLDING INFORMATION ABOUT BILLIONS IN STIMULUS MONEY.

Canada has a long tradition of federal and provincial spending to assist regions, small towns, unemployed people and distressed industries. In the United States the story is different: With the exception of the New Deal in the 1930s, the federal government's approach to small harbors, isolated communities and other places affected by diminishing natural resources, changing markets or a sick economy has been largely hands-off. U.S. stimulus funding over the last year, especially if it continues in the future, could become a second exception like the New Deal—but so far, at least, the bulk of the funds have gone into transportation projects. Harbor improvements and other waterfront projects have largely been through the Department of Homeland Security, justified in the name of port security, protecting citizens against the threat of terror attacks.

But on the Canadian side of the border, successive governments have been generous to suffering communities. A well-known example is Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, where in 1961 the Ottawa government undertook what would become one of the largest historic reconstructions in North America: rebuilding, from the ground up, the huge French fortress constructed there between 1715 and 1745. The argument for the project, isolated as it was at the eastern tip of Cape Breton, was the need to provide jobs for coal miners displaced by the closure of mines in eastern Nova Scotia.

Beginning with $25 million from the federal government, Parks Canada sponsored an archaeological dig, dispatched researchers to archives in Canada, France, England, Scotland and the U.S, trained an army of craftsmen in 18th-century construction techniques, and rebuilt the fortress walls, several military buildings, and most of the town inside the walls. While the benefit of the project's association with historic New France probably wasn't lost on bilingual Canada's politicians, the idea was to create jobs and stimulate the local economy by building something that would attract tourists. Judging by the number of people who make the long trek to Cape Breton each year to visit Louisbourg, the idea isn't entirely far-fetched.

The Louisbourg project of the 1960s, in turn, speaks to what is going on in Canada's harbors today, through the SCH program and federal stimulus efforts. And the fact that none of these initiatives seem to be attracting much attention in the Canadian media suggests—to this visitor from the U.S., at least—that paying for breakwaters and wharves and other facilities in small communities, investing in them, if you will, is a maritime tradition that does not exist in the U.S.

David D. Platt is the former editor of Island Journal. *He visited Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland-Labrador during the summer of 2008.*

Colin Woodard

BORDER TROUBLES

On Campobello Island and other parts of the Maine–New Brunswick frontier, post-9/11 border thickening has complicated lives and business

COLIN WOODARD

If there's one thing about living on the U.S.-Canada border that gets Bobby Hooper mad, it's hot dogs.

Hooper is a real estate broker on Campobello Island, New Brunswick, which, by a quirk of geography, is connected to Lubec, Maine, by a bridge, but not to the rest of Canada. Ten months of the year, this bridge is the only way off the island, apart from using one's own boat to navigate the powerful tidal currents and fog banks that separate Campobello from the Canadian mainland, 10 miles to the north. For the island's 1,100 year-round residents, the bridge is a lifeline, but one that can be blocked at any moment by the whims of a foreign power.

By eating a hot dog in your car, for instance.

Peter Ralston (2)

That's what one of Hooper's friends was doing when he pulled up to the U.S. border post on the Lubec end of the bridge five years ago, smack in the middle of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's three-year ban on Canadian beef imports over fears about the spread of mad cow disease. "They stopped him and made him throw it into the garbage—wouldn't even let him finish eating it!" he says. "That doesn't make much sense when you realize that the garbage truck that collects our trash takes it over to the transfer station in Marion, Maine, hot dogs and all."

Indeed, along the Maine–New Brunswick border, just about everything is interconnected, from grocery shopping and children's sports to medical care and family trees, and waste is no exception. Fifteen percent of Campobello's is trucked straight to Marion, where it fraternizes with garbage from all over Washington County for days or weeks before the whole lot gets re-exported to mainland New Brunswick for final disposal. None of it is screened for hot dogs.

It's these sorts of unthinking policies that most upset residents on both sides of America's easternmost frontier, and they're encountering them a lot more frequently these days. The U.S. has been progressively tightening border security, travel requirements, and enforcement since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. And while people living in the border zone appreciate the need to protect against attack, many are upset by Washington's failure to take local circumstances into account.

Much like their counterparts in the Rio Grande Valley on the Texas-Mexico frontier, the communities on the Maine–New Brunswick border have more in common with one another than with the distant capitals of their respective countries.

Both sides of the Passamaquoddy and St. Croix rivers were settled by the Passamaquoddies millennia ago (they're still there), and the initial European colonists arrived in a single wave in the mid-18th century. Further north, French-speaking settlers straddled both sides of the upper St. John. Children married across the border, had children in each other's hospitals, and today share bowling leagues, fire departments, water supplies, community centers, and swimming pools.

Until the late 20th century, the border was almost entirely porous. Roads, structures, and families straddled the frontier. Many eastern Mainers born during and after World War II were delivered at St. Stephen's hospital, a fact that's now causing them headaches as they apply for passports and social security. "I remember riding with my grandparents to go grocery shopping in St. Stephen because the exchange rate was better," recalls state senator Kevin Raye (R-Perry), whose three older brothers were born at the Canadian hospital. "An American might have a spouse who is Canadian and they live in St. Stephen, but they have jobs in Calais and pop home for lunch."

Like the Rio Grande, the region also repeatedly changed hands between rival powers. But even in wartime, border residents often saw the conflict as an external affair. During the War of 1812, the people of St. Stephen, New Brunswick, sent gunpowder to their putative enemies in Calais to ensure that the annual Fourth of July fireworks display wouldn't be canceled.

"Down here on the border," St. Stephen mayor Jed Purcell explains, "it's all one community as far as we're concerned."

But over the last decade, the imaginary line separating Americans and Canadians has turned very real, complicating cross-border trips, disrupting time-honored routines, and in some cases, cutting communities off from one another. Border security has become more stringent, wait-

ing times at the crossing have grown, and, since July 2009, passports have become mandatory for everyone 16 and older.

"Nine-eleven changed our lives on the border significantly," says Lee Sochasky, executive director of the St. Croix International Waterway Commission. "We're still trying to adjust."

Adjusting is particularly difficult on Campobello, where crossing the border is a necessity. The island has no hospital, gas station, or hardware store, and the only bank closed in 2009. Visiting a Canadian bank or government office requires passing through customs at Lubec, an hour-long drive around Cobscook Bay, and a wait of unknown duration to cross the St. Croix at Calais. The trip to the rest of New Brunswick is sufficiently long and uncertain that Canada's national health service pays for island residents to get care at the hospital in Machias. With gas and other commodities only available in Maine, residents are acutely aware that they can be cut off from the rest of the world at the drop of a hat.

"Before 9/11 the bridge was just a way to get across the water," Hooper says. "Now we're always wondering—if something happens and the U.S. closes up the border, what are we supposed to do?"

Now that everyone 16 and older needs a passport to enter the U.S., Campobello has faced some unusual challenges. "Consider the sports leagues in the schools," says Eric Allaby, who represented Campobello and two neighboring islands in the provincial legislature from 1987 to 2006. "Teams from the other schools can't come to Campobello unless every child has a passport, even kids from Lubec."

Allaby has other examples: Every Canadian civil servant, transportation worker, postman, mechanic, or appliance repairman with business on Campobello needs an $87 passport to do work on the island. Even then, islanders report that Canadian contractors en route to Campobello are often delayed or even denied entry at Calais because their tools flummox customs officials. In 2006 one islander found himself trapped in no-man's-land; he was bounced back and forth between the U.S. and Canadian customs posts on each side of the Campobello bridge because neither side would let him enter the country with a bag of dog food, purchased 500 yards away at the Lyons IGA in Lubec.

"Sometimes you're not allowed to bring citrus fruit through," says Campobello resident Pauline Alexander. "Once my daughters were eating apples and they said next time, we'd need to have proof of where we had bought them."

"We're the only Canadians in Canada that have to have a passport to travel in their own country," Hooper adds. "People will adjust to the passport thing, so long as [U.S. officials] don't treat everyone like they're common criminals."

Tougher border security has also kept people away from Roosevelt International Park. Before 9/11, 150,000 people came every year. Since then, about 100,000 visit annually, according to Skip Cole, park superintendent. Tour bus visits are down 50 percent. Right after 9/11, everyone on buses returning to the U.S. had to get off and stand beside their luggage. "That's not happening now, but it's hard to change opinions," said Cole. A marketing effort is underway to bring back visitors, and the tour buses.

Frustrations haven't been limited to the island.

In Forest City, a remote cross-border hamlet of two dozen people 50 miles north of Calais, the local church and cemetery are on the Canadian side, while the post office and fishing lodges are located in the U.S. Surrounded by

woods and wilderness lakes, residents traditionally paid little attention to the frontier, until the U.S. began tightening border control in the late 1980s as part of the "War on Drugs."

Now the 30-foot-long bridge connecting the two sides of the village is blocked off at 4:00 each afternoon when the U.S. border post closes. On Sundays it doesn't open at all, forcing U.S. residents to travel 50 miles via another crossing to attend church or visit relatives a few hundred yards away. Pedestrian access to the local swimming hole across the top of a nearby dam has been blocked off by fences.

"The whole homeland security thing has made life miserable for everyone here," says Dale Wheaton, who operates Wheaton's Lodge, the hunting and fishing camp founded by his father in 1952. "We're under constant scrutiny: They send helicopters and planes up and down the lake, and there's a constant parade of Border Patrol vehicles that come in and out of Forest City, looking over everybody."

Wheaton recalls sneaking up on some ducks with a client and a hunting dog in the woods recently, only to have a Border Patrol helicopter begin hovering overhead. "It's like living in a police state here," he says.

More-stringent regulations and enforcement have also made it impossible for fishing guides and youth canoe groups to crisscross between remote campsites on the St. Croix and Chiputneticook Lakes, forcing the cancellation of what had been annual rituals. "There's currently no legal means to enter Canada at remote sites," explains Sochasky. "Even though they're in the middle of nowhere, you can't legally use them."

Seventy miles to the north, U.S. officials have been criticized for blocking Canadian mail deliveries and visitors from using a dirt road that briefly passes through U.S. territory en route to the Aroostook, New Brunswick, potato farm of 86-year-old Nickolaj Pedersen; Pedersen's farm has no other means of access.

In nearby Fort Fairfield, the Aroostook Valley Country Club straddles the frontier line: The parking lot and pro shop stand in Maine, and the clubhouse in Four Falls, Canada, testimony to the club's Prohibition-era origins. Senator Susan Collins, a native of nearby Caribou, intervened in 2008 to help ensure that the facility could continue to operate, and her spokesperson says they expect to find a workable solution.

Wheaton says border authorities in both countries should be more sensitive to local concerns and quality-of-life issues. "We understand they have a job to do, but they've gone way beyond what's reasonable to do things that are unpleasant and unnecessary," he says. "I'd like to see them be more responsive to the traditional uses and needs of these little communities."

David Astle, spokesperson for the regional Customs and Border Protection headquarters in Houlton, Maine, says the agency is cognizant of local concerns, but that it is responding to genuine problems. He says that a cross-border access road on Fort Fairfield's golf course was being used by people with interests other than playing golf, and that a major drug bust in 1995 involved hashish and hashish oil that had been smuggled over the top of the Forest City dam. All-terrain vehicles had been seen crossing the dam at peculiar hours, driven by people who were not local.

"We're not trying to change the way of life around the border communities, and we're using a commonsense approach as far as law enforcement," Astle says. "But we're here to enforce the law, not to compromise."

In July and August, Campobello residents can take advantage of an all-Canadian car ferry route whereby you ride across the passage to Deer Island, drive seven miles to its north end, and catch a government ferry to the New Brunswick mainland. It's a time-consuming trip—it takes two to three hours each way to the nearest shopping area—but nobody searches your bags, confiscates your food, or looks for your passport.

One solution would be for the province to establish year-round ferry service to Deer Island, creating a connection to the rest of Canada. "What happens if there is another attack and the borders are closed?" asks Allaby, who lives on Grand Manan. "That would constitute an emergency for the people of Campobello."

New Brunswick officials say the province won't be establishing ferry service anytime soon. Transportation minister Denis Landry has told reporters that the province only provides ferries to islands whose residents have no other way of getting off, but they are willing to contribute to a feasibility study if federal officials will do the same. Islanders, in turn, are considering forming their own municipality, in part to increase their political leverage on the ferry issue.

"As far as any progress being made for year-round ferry service, the government just cries poverty," Hooper says. "We feel pretty rejected down here. We're not treated like we're part of Canada."

Colin Woodard is an award-winning journalist and author of The Lobster Coast, The Republic of Pirates *and other books. He lives in Portland.*

New Pages

Journey to a new library started with burned pages

LIZ AWALT

In July 2008 the Swan's Island library was completely destroyed by a lightning strike. This was a devastating loss to island residents, as the beautiful old building and its contents (including the historical society collection) had been a treasured center of our community.

Liz Awalt

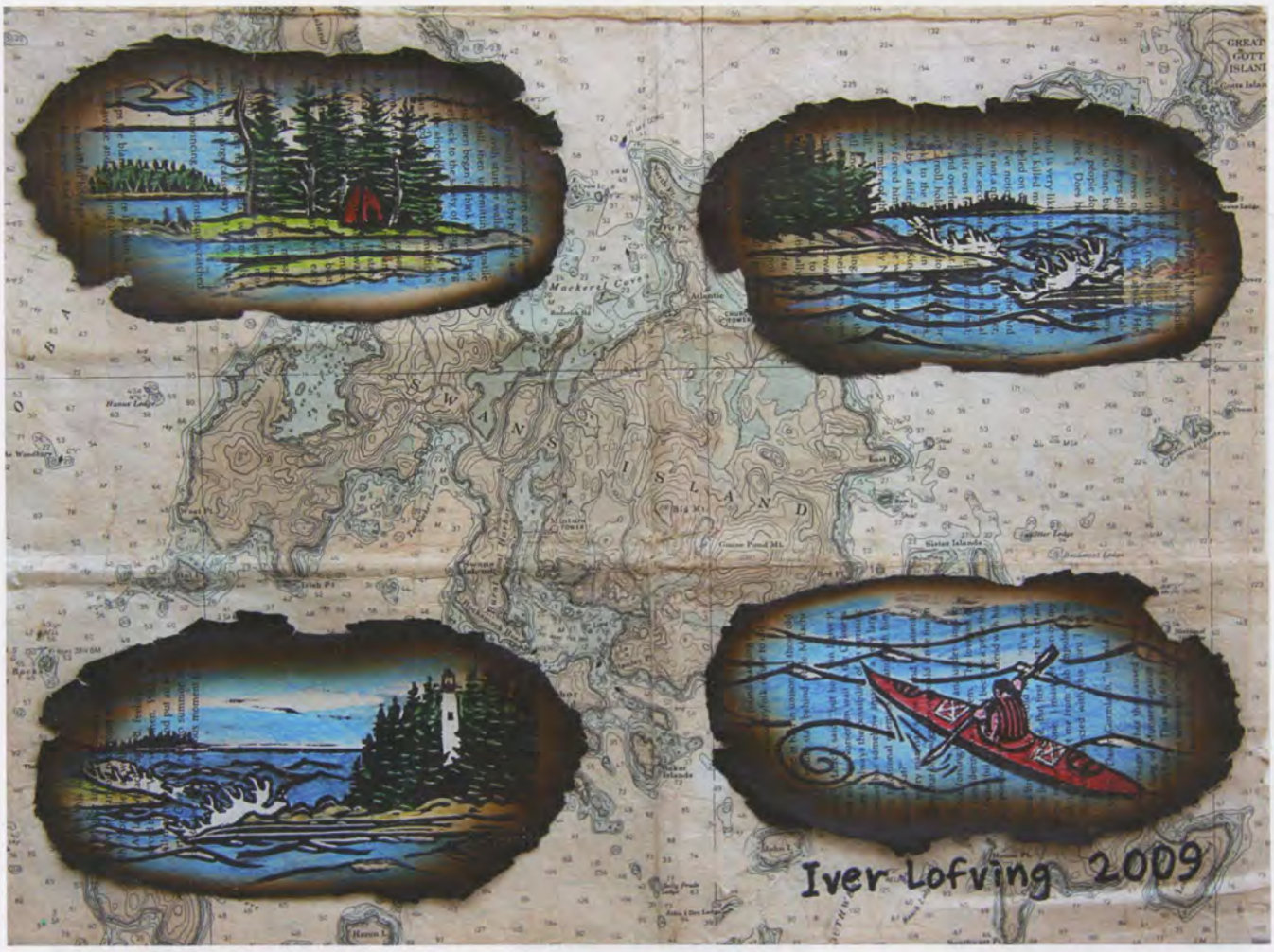
Scott Nash

Susan Shatter

John M. Bryan

Peter Ralston

Dahlov Ipcar



Iver Lofving

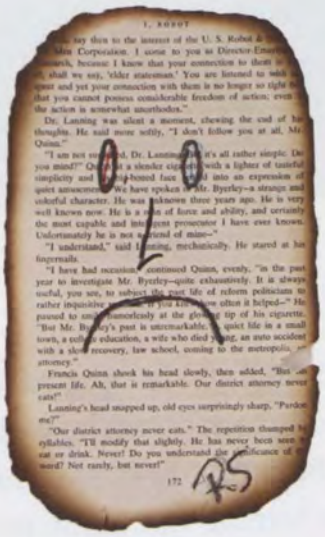
A week after the fire, I drove by the remains of the library and noticed hundreds of pages blowing like leaves along the side of the road. I stopped and found thousands of scorched loose pages scattered among the burned debris.

The delicate, seared pages were partially intact but transformed by the fire into unique and strangely beautiful shapes. With encouragement and support from Candis Joyce, our librarian, and the library board, I collected boxes of charred material and began a project called "New Pages."

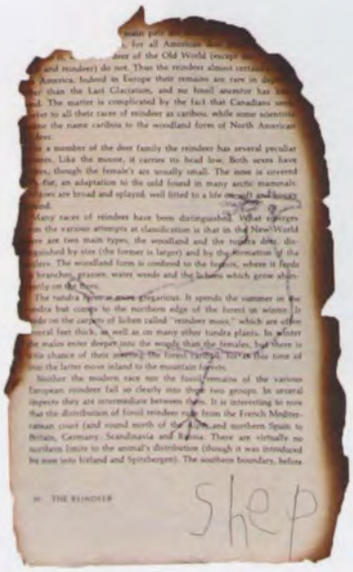
In August 2008, I set up a table with the scorched pages and some art supplies and invited islanders to draw on them. Children naturally joined in, along with many of the grown-ups. I was asked, as artists often are, "What are you going to do with this?" I didn't know the answer, but it led me to develop the project further.

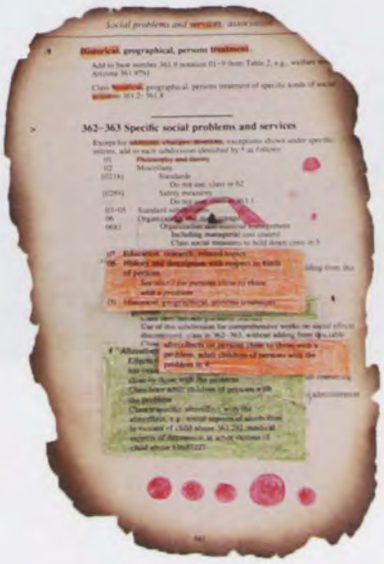
Throughout the winter, preschool and elementary school children worked on their chosen pages as part of their daily activities. The project also became a fund-raising effort for the new library, with 26 established

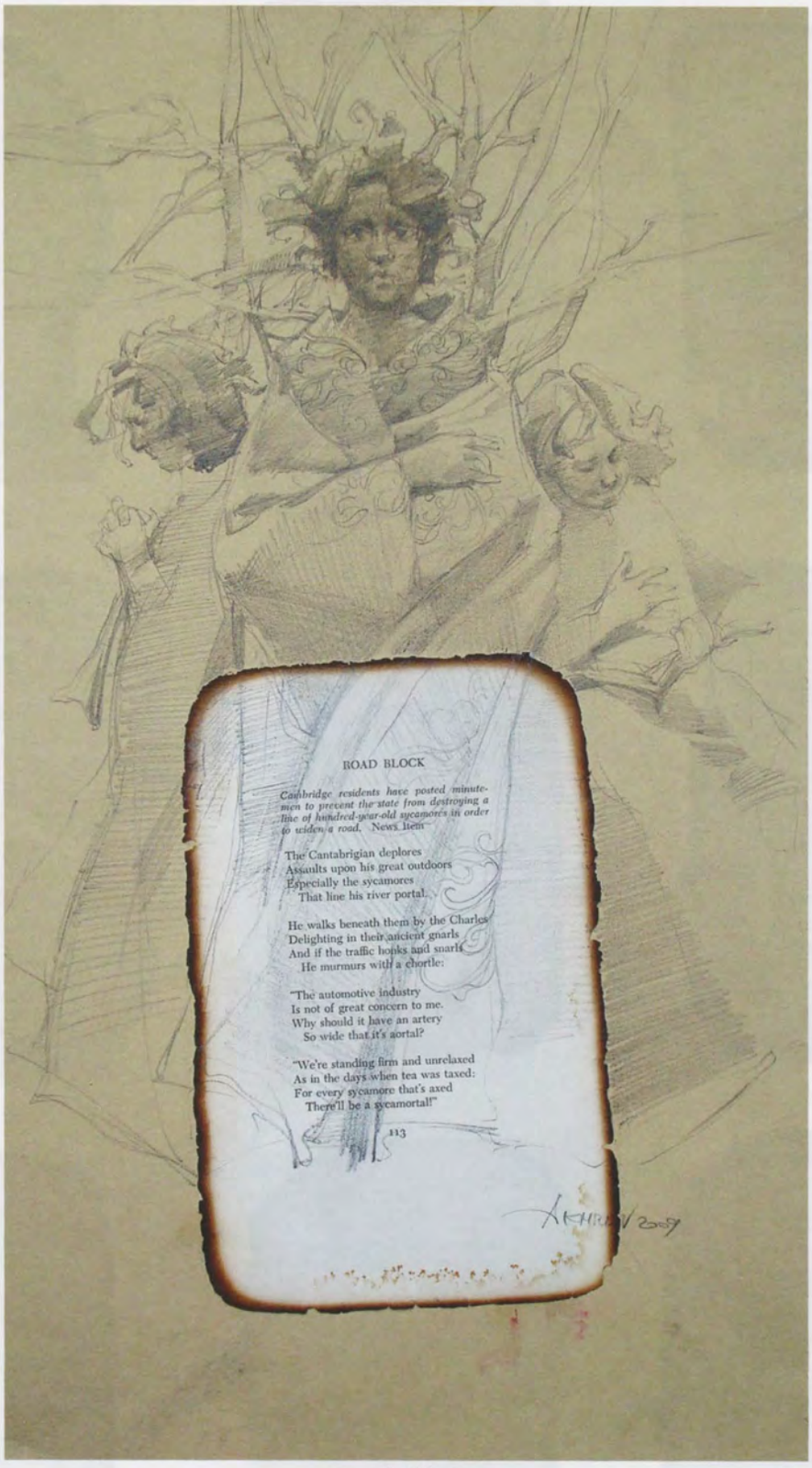
COMMUNITY PAGES



COMMUNITY PAGES







Daud Akhriev

"I stood there the day of the fire. I could look in through the window and see books still sitting on the shelves, all lined up, all in order. It was like they were still standing at attention as the fire blazed around them."

CANDIS JOYCE
DIRECTOR, SWAN'S ISLAND LIBRARY

Bill Laurita

Jill Hoy

Scott Nash

Maine artists creating original work on the scorched pages. Their work was auctioned off at an event in Northeast Harbor in August of 2009, netting over $46,000. In the spring, the town voted to spend $10,000 for the project.

Work on the new library building is likely to begin in the summer of 2010. The entire project will cost $1.2 million, including all shelving and interior items, landscaping, and a paved driveway. The project has also received federal stimulus funds.

"New Pages" has become a visual document of our community's tragic loss and a creative expression of our hopes, memories, prayers, and vision for the future.

Liz Awalt is an artist whose work is inspired by the natural world. She's a summer resident of Swan's Island.

Visit www.swansisland.org/library.htm for more information about the history and future of Swan's Island Library. Contributions are eagerly and gratefully accepted.

More new pages can be seen on the Island Institute's website, www.islandinstitute.org/newpages.

IN SEARCH OF THE *Smithy Boat*

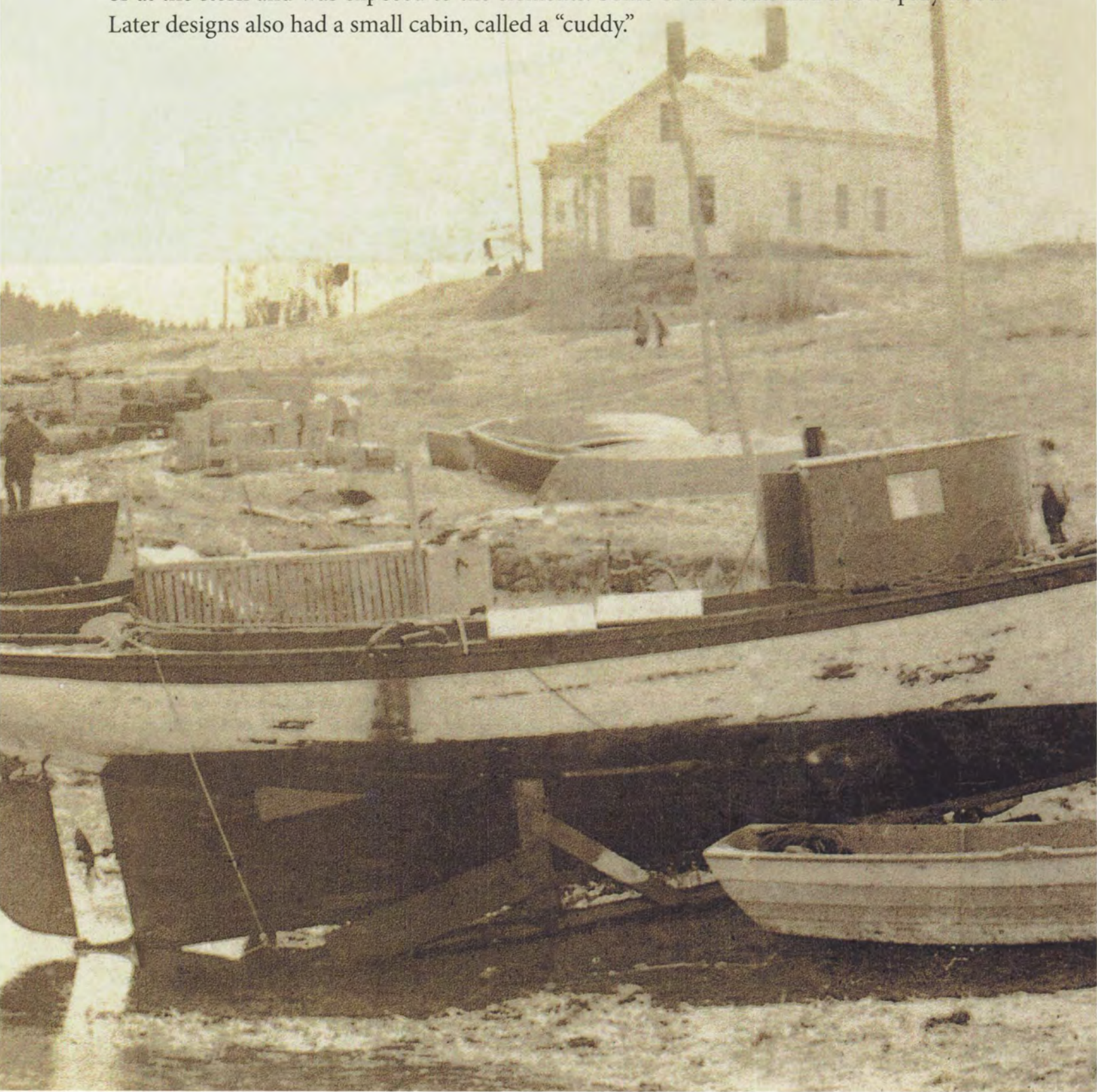
Smithy boats along the shore in Creeds Cove, Vinalhaven, circa 1920s. The home and boathouse belonged to Russell Whitmore, a North Haven boatbuilder, who moved to Vinalhaven.

HARRY GRATWICK

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF VINALHAVEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

If one looked at a picture of Carver's Harbor on Vinalhaven 100 years ago, one would see a lot of sailboats and a few funny-looking little craft that looked like sloops but lacked a main mast. This was the Smithy boat.

They came in different sizes, but they had several features in common. One characteristic was an undercut stern. Another was a large, 4- or 5-foot keel, and a few had a little stern sail. All of them had a small 1-cylinder (or "one-lunger") engine that sat in the center of the boat or at the stern and was exposed to the elements. Some of the boats had a low spray hood. Later designs also had a small cabin, called a "cuddy."



Hunting duck on a Smithy boat at Leadbetter Island, to the west of Vinalhaven, circa 1912.

Smithy boats first appeared on Vinalhaven in the early 20th century when it was determined that gasoline engines could be used to power fishing boats as well as pleasure craft. How extensively they were used elsewhere on the coast is hard to determine.

This unusual craft was an early powerboat, part of the transition from sail that fishing boats made in the early 20th century. The boat was wide and stable—a good sea boat, fishermen said.

Smithy boats were clearly influenced by the design of the Friendship sloop. They could have been built as early as the late 1890s, and were probably built for about 30 years, to the late 1920s. There was considerable variation in their size and design. Phil Dyer, who has built over 100 boats himself, said, "To build a Smithy boat, you had to know a lot about boatbuilding because of the way the stern and keel are constructed."

Before the advent of the gasoline engine, oars or sails powered fishing boats. The dory was a high-sided, flat-bottomed rowboat used by many New England fishermen beginning in the late 18th century. The peapod was named for its double-ended, round-sided shape that resembles the garden vegetable, and was thought to have originated on Penobscot Bay in the mid-19th century. The Friendship sloop began its career as a fishing and lobster vessel in Muscongus Bay, later evolving into the familiar pleasure craft we know today.

According to Vinalhaven historian Roger Young, once gasoline engines became reliable, fishermen realized they needed a different kind of boat. Boats with engines could extend the range as well as the season for fishermen. Thus, the Smithy boat was born as an early powerboat. As noted, the Smithy boat hull was similar in design to that of a sloop with a large keel and undercut stern. Instead of a main mast, they often carried a small stern "jigger" sail for stability in heavy weather. Over time the design was modified. A cuddy cabin was added and the keel length was reduced so that fishermen could set their traps closer to the rocks and ledges.

POSSIBLE ORIGINS

In search of information about the Smithy boat, I spoke with a number of retired Vinalhaven fishermen and boatbuilders who were familiar with the design. Some of them had owned Smithy boats when they were young men. Others remembered them from the days when their fathers and grandfathers owned them.

There are several possibilities as to the origins of the Smithy boat. In the early 20th century there was a Vinalhaven boatbuilder named Ernest H. Smith; an advertisement for his boats appeared in the Knox County section of the 1907–08 Annual Maine Registry of Businesses. Further investigation reveals that Smith was born on Vinalhaven in 1875 and died in 1944 in Brookline, Maine. Certainly Ernest Smith is a possible Smithy boatbuilder.

Then there is Hibbert Smith. Vinalhaven Historical Society records indicate that he was born in Nova Scotia

in 1862, moved to Vinalhaven, and later died on the island in 1929, at the age of 67. Smith's occupation was listed as "fisherman." Did he also build boats during the winter for extra income? There are those who think he did. Ivan Olson is one of them. Now in his 80s, Olson is a retired lobsterman who fished out of Vinalhaven his whole life except for a stint in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Olson remembers hearing about Hibbert Smith, who built boats down on Clamshell Alley, off of Main Street.

A third option is that the Smithy boat was not named after the builder but after one of the first owners. Vinalhaven resident Doug Hall remembers when Smithy boats were built in Carroll Gregory's boat shop just off Main Street on Clamshell Alley (the same shop that Hibbert Smith formerly used). In fact, Gregory built a Smithy boat for Doug's grandfather Clarence Hall in 1917. Is it possible that the first Smithy boat was built in the Gregory boat shop for a Vinalhaven fisherman named Smith early in the 20th century?

Local historian Roger Young suggests that although Smithy boats may have first appeared on Vinalhaven, the name became a generic term for the hybrid fishing craft used in the early 20th century on the Maine coast. I have checked photos of coastal harbors from 100 years ago and have found a few vessels that looked like Smithy boats, though not as many as were seen in Carver's Harbor on Vinalhaven.

For example, there is a picture (taken in 1907) of what is clearly a Smithy boat in Dean Lunt's book, *Hauling by Hand*, a history of the town of Frenchboro. Retired North Haven boatbuilder Bud Thayer told me that his father had a Smithy boat; he remembers repairing some of them, although he associates them mostly with Vinalhaven. Paul Stubing on Deer Isle and Paul Pendleton on Islesboro also remember seeing local fishermen using Smithy boats, but agree that they originated on Vinalhaven.

Ivan Olson began lobstering at the age of 10, when a couple of "old guys gave him some traps to patch up." He remembers Smithy boats were in use when he was a kid. "They were popular in the 1920s. There were a lot around Vinalhaven in those days, but I never saw them anywhere else. Today they are a forgotten boat."

Ivan recalled, "Although I never saw any on the coast, some may have migrated to North Haven from Vinalhaven. They were widespread in Vinalhaven and were used for fishing and lobstering, not for pleasure. No one had money for pleasure boats in those days." Olson doesn't know why they had such a big keel. "Probably it was the influence of sailboats. Some had a wheel, some had a tiller. Most boats used a Ford Model T engine, converted to a marine engine, although there was a lot of variation in the design."

I asked Ivan why Smithy boats disappeared and he shrugged. "I guess guys just wanted bigger boats."

LOOKED LIKE PUMPKIN SEEDS

Ivan described the typical Smithy boat as being "maybe 15 to 20 feet long—none of them were very big. They looked

like pumpkin seeds," he said. I asked Ivan how far out he went and he told me only three or four miles, adding, "But there were plenty of fish to go around. Matinicus claimed the waters around Seal Island and Wooden Ball in those days," Ivan said. "I stayed away from Matinicus."

Dean Lunt confirms the limited range of the Maine fisherman in *Hauling by Hand*. "Fishermen might row or sail a couple of miles or so each way to haul traps, which numbered maybe 50 to 70 traps. In fact, some adult fishermen continued to row around the island [Long Island], hauling their traps by hand into the 1950s."

Ivan Olson reiterated that the Smithy boat was built especially for fishing and was not just a modified Friendship sloop. "They were good sea boats, and were comfortable and quite rugged," he said. "Better than the stuff they are building today," which he calls "Tupperware boats." Olson fished for pollock, cod, and hake, and did some lobstering. "In those days I'd be embarrassed to say I lobstered." (Remember, lobsters used to be so plentiful that they were used for garden fertilizer.) Vinalhaven's Ivan Calderwood wrote in *Uncle Dave's Memoirs*, "Trawler fishermen sometimes laughed at the little lobster catcher and called him 'a landlubber,' as they sailed by in their big trawlers headed for the Grand Banks to fish."

Vinalhaven lobsterman Dallas Anthony is in his 60s and remembers when his father Francis had a Smithy boat. Francis Anthony was born in 1908, and Dallas told me that he bought the boat from a guy on North Haven. "When I was a kid they were all over the place," said Dallas. He confirmed that they were built as lobster boats, even though "they looked like sloops." Dallas showed me a picture of his father taking some of the family out for a Sunday-afternoon ride on a Smithy boat, the EDITH A., a photo that was probably taken in the 1930s.

Doug Hall was born in 1929 and grew up on Vinalhaven. He is a Korean War veteran and a retired German professor who taught at the University of Maine. Doug began fishing in 1943 and has owned two Smithy boats. He bought his first, a 21-footer, in 1948 from Josh Williams, for $75. Doug told me that when he got the boat, the engine was shot, but his friend Harry Philbrook somehow got it going. The stern was falling apart, but legendary Vinalhaven boatbuilder Gus Skoog replaced the sternpost and planks for $150. Doug put in a Model A engine and a new transmission. He soon realized the boat was too small for haking, so he sold it to Tudor Peterson, who used it for lobstering for the next 10 years.

Doug bought his second Smithy boat in 1949 from Pete Dyer. Doug's boat was essentially a sloop, 26 feet long by 9 feet wide, and it drew 4½ feet of water. He told me the keel had been laid in 1917 by Carroll Gregory, and the boat was still "absolutely watertight when he used it 30 years later." Pete Dyer had built a canopy and a cuddy cabin with a stove, and Doug added a gaff-rigged sail on the stern.

With his "new" boat, which he named FLASH, 21-year-old Doug Hall was ready to go haking. Hall remembers leaving Carver's Harbor in the middle of the night with his 6-cylinder Chevy engine wide open. He told me he'd never run a boat at night before, and he panicked when he hit a fog bank so thick that he couldn't see the bow of the boat. As he slowly crept back into the harbor, Doug had the good fortune to run into his brother, Dave, who couldn't get his engine started. So the two brothers then went out haking together, in Doug's boat, and made "a real killing." Doug told me his brother said it was the best boat he'd ever used for hauling hake. According to Ivan Olson, what made the Smithy boat so good for hauling hake was the boat was roomy, beamy and had lots of space.

Doug had some close calls on FLASH. One time off Wooden Ball, south of Vinalhaven, he was trying to find his gear in a thick fog and a big sea came rolling in. He headed for the lighthouse at Matinicus Rock by listening for the foghorn, which helped him get oriented.

I asked Doug how seaworthy his Smithy boat was and he told me, "I could have crossed the ocean if I'd had the gas." In rough water the propeller lifted out of water, but she was very stable riding with the jigger sail, which steadied the boat. "If I went slowly while I was hauling gear, I could adjust the sail as I pulled up the nets," Doug said.

Doug found haking much more interesting than lobstering. "Each day was different; depended on what was in the nets. The tide was a factor, as was the number of fish. You could have 1,000 pounds of fish and gear coming up from 45 to 55 fathoms, including dogfish and skates. Every day was just an adventure," said Doug, who fished through the summer of 1950 before he went into the service.

"AN ABLE SON OF A GUN"

Bert Dyer graduated from Vinalhaven High School in 1940, and that summer he bought a Smithy boat from his brother Les, for $150. It was 26 feet long and had a 4-cylinder Gray engine, with a rounded steamboat stern (the latter indicating this was a later Smithy boat design). "It was a good boat, well rigged and freshwater-cooled," said Bert. "It never gave me any trouble. It had a small propeller, a pot hauler, and a spray hood. She was nice and wide and comfortable as hell. I could go to Rockland and back for 70 or 80 cents' worth of gas. I used her for hauling lobster and haking and trawling outside of Matinicus Rock. Once I brought in 4,000 pounds' worth of fish in four tubs. What an able son of a gun she was."

Bert didn't know why they were called Smithy boats. All he knew was that they were built on Vinalhaven and that

there was a lot of variety in them, which supports what others have said. The longest were probably 30 to 32 feet. Most were 26 feet or less, although they were all very seaworthy. Some you had to shut the engine off when you stopped, some you didn't. Some had a mast, some didn't. Bert told me his boat had a jigger sail on the stern for stability. "That would steady them down if it was blowing."

Bert didn't recall seeing Smithy boats on North Haven or Matinicus, although "there might have been a couple in Rockland." He had his boat for a year, then sold it for $125 before going into the U.S. Navy in 1942. Bert told me the guy who bought it let the engine freeze up and sold it to a guy who lived in Dogtown on Old Harbor.

Bert told me a story about Carl Magnason, who had a Smithy boat with an engine that broke down. While he was waiting for a new engine, he went fishing with his dad in a different boat. When they were off of Seal Island, near Matinicus, he slipped off the boat while pulling in a line and got tangled in his sweater in the water. His father jumped in after him, but Carl, who couldn't swim and had his boots on, sank in front of his father before he could be pulled out. Carl's body was never found.

Although he never owned a Smithy boat himself, Bert's brother Phil Dyer remembers the one his grandfather bought after World War I. It was 18 feet long and had a small 4-cylinder engine that was very reliable. His grandfather used it for trawling, fishing, and lobstering. One of the highlights of Phil's boyhood was the time he took the boat to Rockland, "to get some booze." Phil remembers seeing 15 to 20 Smithy boats in the waters around Vinalhaven when he was a kid, and that most of them were "real deep," drawing 5 to 6 feet.

Smithy boats were like old cars; they had lots of owners in hard times. They were popular on Vinalhaven during the Depression because they were cheap to operate. Older fishermen who already owned Smithy boats were reluctant to change over, but each new generation wanted something better.

Smithy boats began to disappear after World War II, and were replaced by the more-efficient modern lobster boat. However, the deteriorating Smithy boat hulls remained on the shore for a long time. There is a picture taken in the 1950s of what may very well be Bert Dyer's old boat with its rounded stern, covered with snow, sitting on the shore at Vinalhaven's Old Harbor.

Up to the 1960s, people liked to congregate at Carroll Gregory's boat shop on Clamshell Alley to watch him work and hear Carroll and another old-time boatbuilder, Dick Young, swap stories. Phil Dyer learned the craft of boatbuilding from these two men, recalling that Dick Young was in his 80s by this time, having built his first boat on Matinicus in 1897. Phil said he was told to "sit quietly and watch how boats were built."

Phil remembers that Dick had a bottle of Lighthouse rum hidden in the shavings of a nail keg. Once in a while Dick would reach in and take a drink. "I have throat trouble and this is my medicine," he told young Phil. "Just don't tell my wife." The "medicine" must have worked, because Dick lived to be 94!

We may not know the exact origins of the Smithy boat, but we do know that Carroll Gregory, probably the last of Vinalhaven's Smithy boatbuilders, died in 1966 at the age of 69. I wonder what he would have to say about the "Tupperware boats" lobstermen are using today?

Harry Gratwick has written two books about Maine, the most recent of which is Hidden History of Maine. *He is a seasonal resident of Vinalhaven.*

Vinalhaven Historical Society closes for the winter but reopens for the season in June. Summer hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Open daily in July and August.

Visit year-round at www.vinalhavenhistoricalsociety.org.

A Face, a Place, a Taste

Rejuvenating local food production on islands

RUSSELL LIBBY

We eat from—where? At the end of World War II, Robert Peter Tristram Coffin had a clear answer: "We eat out of the air, the sea, and the earth." Today, most of our food either comes from a supermarket or it's prepared in some institutional setting.

How did we move from that clarity to a place where most of what we eat can't be traced back to a single source? And what do islands have to tell the rest of us about what a different food system might look like?

Coffin grew up on an island that is no longer an island—Great Island, part of Harpswell, Maine—in the 1890s.

Just before World War I, he describes, in *Mainstays of Maine*, literally dozens of foods that he and his family harvested from near and far: seven kinds of berries, clams, lobster, fish of all kinds, deer, duck and other gamebirds, and everything that could possibly be produced in garden or orchard or wild-harvested.

He wrote beautiful essays in many books about growing up on a coastal saltwater farm on Great Island and coming across to Brunswick with the food. He styled himself in his later years as an epicurean John Steinbeck. He wrote for *Gourmet* magazine in the 1940s, about growing up on the coast of Maine, and the foods that his mother made. I want to give his mother credit, because although it is clear that Coffin enjoyed food immensely, it was his mother's training that got him there.

His experience was by no means unique. Eating from the garden, the fields, the forest, and the sea was the typical Maine diet for, literally, centuries. This was especially true on Maine's islands, where the options for purchasing food were generally limited.

The 1925 Census of Agriculture lays out the numbers, town by town. Here are a few selected examples:

BEARING APPLE TREES: *North Haven, 1,252; Swan's Island, 209; Vinalhaven, 1,551*

POTATOES (ACRES): *Matinicus, 1; Isle au Haut, 1; Islesboro, 5*

SHEEP (BREEDING EWES): *Swan's Island, 183; North Haven, 847; Matinicus, 22*

MILK COWS: *Cranberry Isles, 17; Long Island, 1; Islesboro, 55*

Every island reported apples; almost all reported potatoes, sheep, and milk cows. These are just proxies for the wider variety of foods that were being produced in almost every community in Maine, whether on-island or onshore. What does this mean? Essentially, a lot of food was being produced on almost all of the islands—enough to eat there, with some extra to sell.

From the earliest European settlements, and even before, islands have had some obvious benefits and advantages for food production. Seafood is available, and for a long time was abundant. Isolation from the mainland made it possible to raise livestock without worrying about predators—and led to a thriving sheep industry, even on islands where there were no people living year-round. Obviously,

Peter Ralston (3)

Cider pressing on North Haven

remnants of the tradition of sheep production still remain. Finally, there were obvious transportation advantages for island producers when the only way to move products long distances was over water.

These advantages are still there, at varying levels. Seafood, particularly the lobster harvest, is important, both economically and socially. Some species, particularly sheep, are especially suitable for island production. Boats still run—although the dense network of coastal shipping has significantly eroded.

Islands have some limitations, too. Soil fertility can be a real issue when the underlying granite isn't too far away. Fertile soil is a critical element in growing good crops. We can't afford to lose nutrients in a relatively closed system. Weather can be a real island challenge as well. Fog and cool temperatures mean that Vinalhaven won't be a tomato production center anytime soon. But those cool temperatures are great for growing peas and other crops that suffer when it gets really hot.

The food system has moved a long way from Coffin's Harpswell of the 1900s, where his family was intimately connected to almost everything that showed up on the table. What was common then is now a rarity. How do we move even a few steps closer to having access to more island-produced foods on the table?

To me, one of the best models—on a larger scale—for thinking about a region's food security is the post–World War II agricultural policy of Sweden and Norway. Because they were isolated during the war, the issue of what to eat became very real, very personal, and sometimes, very immediate. After the war, they used that experience to shape an agricultural policy that was based on maintaining the capacity to produce 80 percent of the calories needed by their population. Even if they exported products—and they did, and still do—they wanted to focus on their capacity to produce food if it became necessary.

Island residents may be in an ideal position to take that model from northern Europe and look at it from an island perspective. Some islands are already well beyond the "80 percent of calories" level, but lobster alone doesn't make a balanced diet!

There is another important rule to consider on islands, and that is: no toxins. If we're bringing toxins onto an island, where are they going to go? They're staying on the island, but the same is true upstream, up in the airstream, or anywhere else. Why are we putting toxic materials into the environment? At some point we are going to ingest them; those in the seafood business have already seen this. We all see that the waters are not as clean as they need to be; neither are the air and the soil.

How do we reverse this trend? If we just stopped using toxic materials, we'd start the process of healing. Upstream is everywhere and everywhere is downstream. It's all interconnected.

Peter Neill, director of the World Ocean Observatory, has said, "We can't talk about the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean—it's all one ocean. It's all connected." It is all one planet. There is no "there"—it's all here. We have to be aware of that.

Fishing and farming are two sides of the same coin. We need to eat well, and we need farmers. Good conversations have been taking place between some of the members of the Working Waterfront Coalition and the farm producers about how they can work together. Ultimately, what are people going to eat? They are going to eat fish; they are going to eat meat; they are going to eat things that grow in the ground. They will eat the food of the sea, the air, and the earth. There are many different approaches to local agriculture that make sense, but they depend a great deal on which part of the food system you represent.

One model—not yet dominant, although it could be—is "A face, a place, a taste." *A face*—meaning, Do you know who is growing your food for you? Who's your farmer? Can you identify somebody from either personal contact, through the retailer, or through the label—a real person, not Mr. Green Giant—on the other end of that transaction?

A place. Five thousand or so island residents can make a real difference in this transformation just through their

buying practices. If every household on the islands spent just $10 a week on local food (farm side, not fisheries side), it would keep at least $20,000 in the local economies each week. Because islanders often have access to seafood in a way that other communities don't, island residents could do this year-round.

Summer residents on islands are likely to be some of the largest supporters of this idea, so the market would effectively more than double during the summer months.

For farmers and other food producers, what would be some natural first steps?

A taste. The first thing that comes to mind for me is potatoes. They grow well in cool climates. They store well. They can be a foundation of a family diet. They are relatively affordable. When I looked at the 1925 census, it looked to me like every island had enough potato production to maintain a year-round supply.

My friend John Bunker from Fedco Trees is continuously amazed by the apple diversity that he finds when he visits Maine islands. Apples are growing in abundance, and some of them are amazingly healthy and disease-free, even with minimal management. Last year's Common Ground Country Fair poster featured a North Haven apple that seems to be unique, and to have large potential on the islands and beyond. If every community had a cider press, or several, then the apples that aren't good enough to store could become a resource as well.

Apples may not be the extent of it, however. I saw some amazing peaches on Islesboro last summer. Maybe that could become another "export" crop that could help to balance out some of the things that are going to be hard to grow on islands in major quantities, like grains. Islesboro Island Peaches . . . hmm . . .

One advantage of growing food today is all the knowledge that has been gained about protected cropping systems. Already some farmers and gardeners on the islands are working with greenhouses to help offset the lack of summer heat and to allow the growing of food throughout the year. Eliot Coleman is a national leader on these issues, and Cape Rosier, where he grows, escapes being an island by a pretty narrow piece of land. These are investments that pay back fast, even before you start to make the quality comparisons that go with food that's been harvested only hours before instead of traveling across the country.

The possibilities of food production on Maine islands are only limited by the time and energy that goes into solving the problems. I'm looking forward to tasting a lot of those solutions in the years to come.

Russell Libby is executive director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), based in Unity, Maine. MOFGA is currently working with the Island Institute to help provide more technical support to island food producers.

To keep up-to-date on this issue, please visit www.islandinstitute.org/islandagriculture.

Crabtree Point

Island Farms: A History of Abundance

JAMES CONKLING

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF NORTH HAVEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In years past, island agriculture was critical to sustaining island communities, yet little has been written about this part of island life.

When the Maine islands were settled it was the robust fishery and other industries—such as granite quarrying—that linked these islands to distant markets; yet it was the hard work of many farming families that made the island way of life self-sustaining.

It is likely that Maine islands were under cultivation from their earliest permanent settlements in the mid-18th century. However, little information exists about the actual scope of these farms until the early 19th century, when farmers started to keep records.

From the outset, island farming was a difficult endeavor. Capricious weather meant that favorable seasons could be followed by crop failures. Much of the land was rocky and had to be worked over thoroughly before cultivation. For early settlers, it was a task that required year-round labor.

Crops needed to be planted and tended. Animals needed care—both those used as beasts of burden, such as horses, oxen and other cattle, as well as those destined for market. Maintenance of houses and machinery was a perennial task, as was tending to the many acres of cultivated land, which, without constant supervision would soon revert to spruce. Landscape photos and maps from the 20th century provide a graphic measure of the slow decline of island agriculture, as nature reclaimed what were once cultivated lands.

This constant hard work usually paid off. A look at any island agricultural census shows a great diversity in production: potatoes, wheat, corn, rye, oats, peas and beans, butter, milk and cheese, eggs, poultry and various cured meats. Almost all of this stayed on the

Crockett Farm

farm to keep the family's larder well stocked, creating tight-knit, self-sufficient extended families and communities on the island.

As time passed and these extended families grew, the total acreage of farms expanded. Farmers' sons and daughters tended to marry into other farming families, creating "neighborhoods" on the parts of each island most suited for agriculture. Rich communal ties were fostered, and families shared work and skills when necessary, bolstering the strength of these communities through interdependence.

External support for island agriculture did exist. The 1780s saw the formation of the first agricultural societies, and within a few years, islanders were regular attendees. These societies could provide farmers with a forum in which they could trade farming advice as well as produce. By the 19th century, the state started offering formal agricultural education, and in 1850 began recording each farm's statistics in a detailed 10-year census. The Maine State Grange (part of a national movement) was another important network that connected island farmers. Local granges promoted cooperation for mutual benefit and also worked with state agencies to support agricultural reform, among other issues.

Haying at Crabtree Point

Like most farmers across Maine, island families were farming for a living, not for a profit. This meant that, of the abundant variety of meats, wool, grains, produce and dairy products, the majority stayed within the family larder or were sold locally. Larger farms, which had anywhere from 150 to 300 acres of land, would have sustained themselves through this abundance. It is likely that smaller farms, ranging from 20 to 50 acres, had an additional source of food or income, whether from fishing or various other skills. Much of the food stayed local, and the wool was used primarily for local clothing production.

However, some island agriculture did reach outside markets. Fish, apples, wool, beef and dairy products were among some of the goods to make it to markets in cities like Portland, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and even London.

Milk production on the island of North Haven was particularly telling: In the year 1870, the census began recording the gallons of milk sold. Even though nearly every household had milk cows (totaling 147), only 11 farms chose to sell that milk. That year, 820 gallons of milk were sold, half of which came from David Wooster's farm. The rest of the town's milk was presumably used mainly for home consumption, where much of it was churned into butter or made into cheese. By 1880, this export had increased only slightly, to 920 gallons. Similarly, for the year 1870, Vinalhaven exported 898 gallons of milk from its 194 milk cows.

Since milk does not last long without proper refrigeration, it maintained this small but important niche within the islands' exports. Other products did not fare as well, and by 1880, island farming began what was to be a decisive decline. The construction of the Erie Canal in the first half of the 19th century started this process. Through preexisting railroad systems, New England was suddenly opened to agricultural markets in the Midwest. Grain prices plummeted, and the cultivation of wheat in particular was no longer profitable, even for home consumption. Rye and oats suffered a similar fall.

Although there is much speculation, it is hard to pin-

Sampson Farm, July 1905

point one specific trend that doomed island farming. One possibility is changing demographics. In the first half of the 20th century, two successive world wars claimed swaths of America's young and healthy males who traditionally would have been tending the farms. This meant that only a handful of large-scale farms could stay in business as the smaller ones lost their labor force.

Another important development for island communities was the arrival of rusticators. Starting in the 1880s, wealthy families from around New England began searching for renewed contact with the "rustic" life, and many of them chose Maine island communities as the perfect vacation retreat from city life. With farming in decline, rusticators bought as summer houses the many shoreside farms that were no longer sustainable. The tourist market meant tourist-related jobs, and many fishermen who worked seasonally gained employment in the winter months as caretakers for these summer people. Since farming requires year-round work, those who didn't sell their farms gained nothing from this change in island community culture.

Atrophying in the face of competitive pressures, island agriculture continued in its much-diminished state throughout the first half of the 20th century. By the 1940s, the only viable business for island farms was dairy production. As a staple of island agriculture, dairy had long been a purely local product, the ease with which it would spoil making it one of the few products that did not have to compete with foreign producers. However, with the invention of the freezer truck, milk too became a product for long-distance transport. The freezer truck, like the Erie Canal before it, obviated the role distance played in regulating the market's geographical spread. Undercut by more-efficient foreign producers, by the second half of the 20th century, dairy had also become unprofitable.

By most accounts, it was market innovations that led to the decline of small-scale agricultural enterprises. Developments in food processing and transportation opened remote Maine coastal communities to cheaper, more-abundant imports from across the country. Many of these same innovations also opened Maine fisheries to markets world-

wide, bringing in massive amounts of capital.

Recent developments have revealed the costs and benefits of these globalized systems, sparking a renewed interest in localism. Communities are now beginning to weigh the benefits of purchasing food that has been cultivated locally and organically, possibly by one's own neighbor, against food that requires extensive processing and a massive supply chain to bring it to the grocery-store shelf. Once considered a thing of the past, there is now an urgent call to bring back sustainable island agriculture.

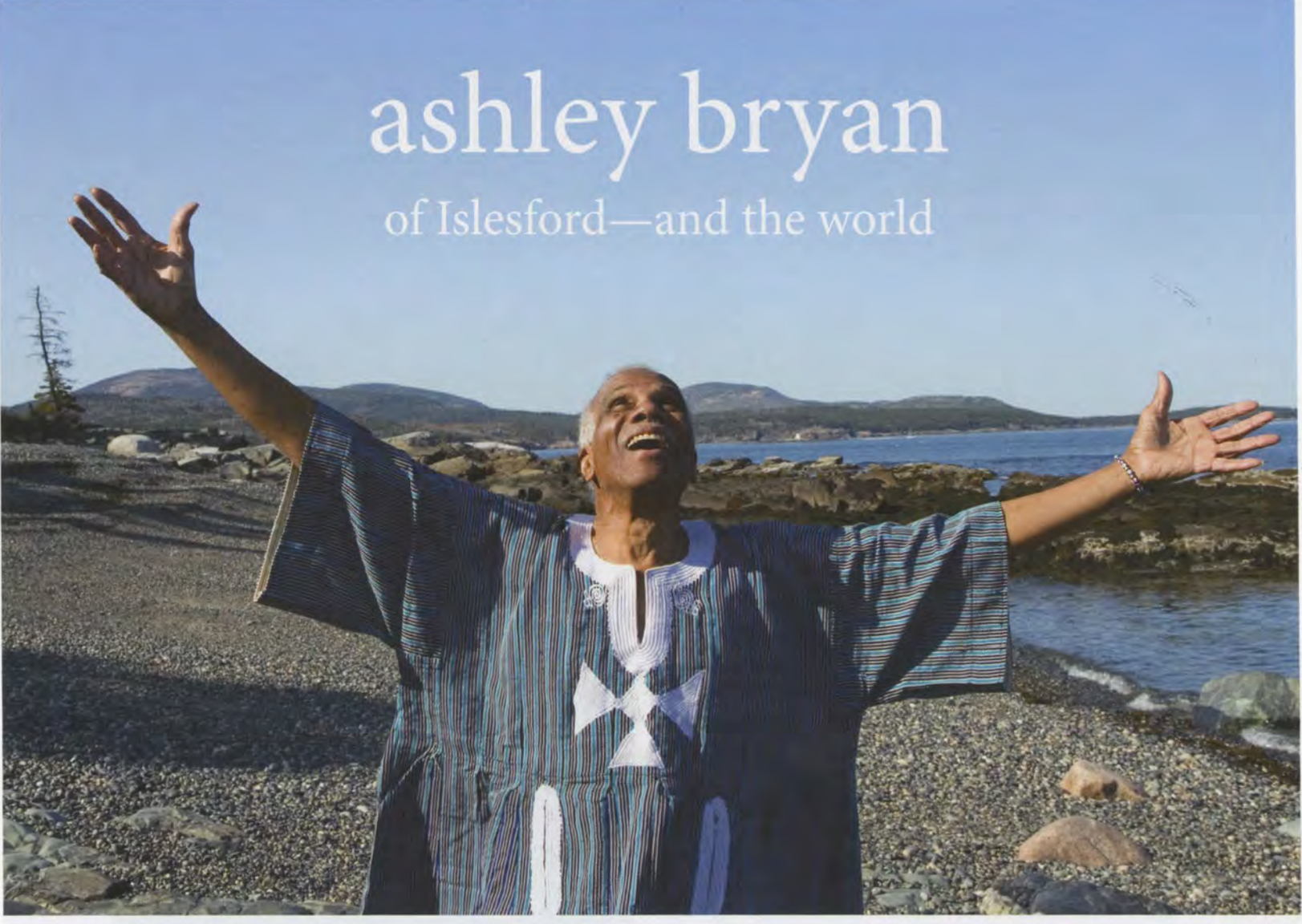
James Conkling worked last summer for the Island Institute helping to research the history of island agriculture. He is currently a student at Middlebury College in Vermont.

Sources for this article include Island Saltwater Farms: Farming on Vinalhaven, 1820–1860, *by Jeannette Lasansky, published by the Vinalhaven Historical Society and the Maine Census records.*

The North Haven Historical Society's North Island Museum is open Sunday from 2:00 to 4:30 in July and August. The Archives Building is open Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m and Sunday from 2:00 to 4:30 in July and August. It is best to make an appointment by calling (207) 867-4752 or by e-mail at nhhist@midcoast.com.

ashley bryan

of Islesford—and the world



CARL LITTLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL MCGUINNESS

Painter, puppeteer, storyteller, author and illustrator, this artist finds his creative center on Little Cranberry Island

When Ashley Bryan retired from the art department at Dartmouth College in 1988, he knew where he was headed next. Not to New York City, where he was born and raised, and where he had studied art. No, the African-American painter and children's book author and illustrator had made up his mind to move to Little Cranberry Island.

How did Bryan find his way to this small island community off the coast of Downeast Maine? In 1946, he received a scholarship to attend the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the first year of the prestigious summer art program's existence. On weekends he traveled to the coast with friends and discovered the Cranberry Isles, that spruce-clad five-island archipelago that, in the words of the late Ted Spurling, historian of the islands, "fit into the Great Harbor of Mount Desert Island, nestling nicely under its shorter arm."

Cousin Boots, 1937

My Dad's Birdcages, 1937

Bryan first rented the home of artist Gretna Campbell on Great Cranberry. At the time, the "big island" nurtured a growing community of artists, with poet and printmaker Charles Wadsworth and his wife, writer Jean Howard, the first to set down roots. They were followed by John Heliker, Robert LaHotan, Campbell, Emily Nelligan, Marvin Bileck, Dorothy Eisner, William Kienbusch and others.

In the 1950s, Bryan moved over to Little Cranberry, renting a room in a fisherman's house that had a large barn studio. Around 1980 he bought a house from his friend Sula Benet (1903–1982), an eminent Polish-born anthropologist who had taught at Hunter College. Over the years, he built onto the simple structure, which had to be winterized. Four "push-outs" have expanded the space to hold his incredible collection of art, toys, dolls, books and other treasures.

Little Cranberry, also known as Islesford, provides Bryan with what he calls the "beautiful essentials": earth, sky and sea. "We're making a wreck of it," he acknowledges of mankind's impact on the world, but "it still holds." He is continually overwhelmed by the wonder of his surroundings.

For Bryan the island is the ideal place to work. While he loves cities—the lively spirit of his native New York, for example—Islesford provides what he calls "a swift route to the center." He doesn't have to work as hard to tap into that "quiet still center where you focus" on your art.

Over the years, Bryan's island home has been the site of amazing creative work, from a host of award-winning children's books to windows made from sea glass, from lively canvases of flower gardens and blooming pear trees to puppets made from odds and ends found on the rocky beaches. The artist's vast assortment of carved figures, whirligigs, wind-up cars and other objects from around the world transforms the house into a veritable museum.

When asked about artistic influences, Bryan credits "the whole world of art." He mentions the early Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance artists; Russian icons and the art of Africa; Hokusai's Manga (scenes of everyday life) sketchbooks; and the Impressionists. He is especially captivated by the so-called outsider artists, who approach their work "without anxiety or frustration." Two of his books, *Sing to the Sun* and *The Night Has Ears: African Proverbs*, emulate a folk art spirit, but, he notes, "it is the style of a professional artist inspired by the folk, by the child—like [the 20th-century painters] Paul Klee or Jean Dubuffet."

Bryan paints en plein air, searching for essential rhythms in the landscape. "The eye is always on some kind of voyage of adventure," he explains, "to try and understand the relationships of how the areas work." He loves working outdoors, wheeling a garden cart, with the legend CHOICE POTATOES UH HUH painted on it, across a neighbor's backyard to a nearby motif. Crows "make their comments" as he paints.

Previously an oil painter, Bryan now works primarily in acrylic. Last summer he did a series of paintings of the late Lillian "Lil" Alley's rock garden, an island landmark next door to the Islesford Congregational Church. Proceeds from the sale of the paintings will support the upkeep of the garden.

Bryan's extraordinary hand puppets, which he brings alive for visitors, begin with bedposts. Objects retrieved from the island beaches are added, with papier-mâché holding everything together. The found materials—a bird's breastbone, a gnarly piece of driftwood—suggest figures and forms and inspire endless narratives.

In a small bedroom at the back of the house, sea-glass panels filter sunlight. Emulating the simple style of Gothic stained-glass windows, the artist has depicted the Four Evangelists and the life of Christ. The shards of uneven sea-worn glass, held together with a papier-mâché and wallpaper paste mixture, glow against the window, creating a kind of intimate island chapel.

Bryan's art has been shown in venues across the country, including the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts, the Children's Museum of Hous-

Cargo Ship Signalman, WWII

Casals Festival, 1950

Freiburg im Breisgau Marketplace, 1959

Grandma Sarah Bryan, 1963

Ashley and Charlie, 1969

ton, the Cincinnati Museum Center and the Farnsworth Art Museum. This past winter the Savannah College of Art and Design's museum mounted "Songs in Art and Spirit: The Illustrations and Puppets of Ashley Bryan" as part of the city's Black Heritage Festival. Locally, Bryan's Little Cranberry neighbors, Dan and Kate Fernald, carry his work in their Islesford Artists Gallery.

Bryan loves his Maine island routine: picking up the mail at the store post office, walking the coastal reaches, hosting a never-ending stream of visitors, from family and friends to a College of the Atlantic class studying puppetry. He admits to writing down appointments and then forgetting to look at them, but somehow everyone finds him—it's not a large island.

"When I came to [Little Cranberry]," Bryan once told writer Susan Hand Shetterly, "I touched on the sense of community immediately. If you get off the [mail] boat with a package, you don't have to struggle with it. It will pass to one person. It will pass to the other person. It will be a chain of hands. And it has nothing to do with what they think of you—it is reaching out in terms of this sense of community."

Islesford reminds Bryan of the city of his childhood, where there was always "a kind hand to help you." Born in Harlem in 1923 and raised in the Bronx, he was the second of six children of parents originally from Antigua in the West Indies. The home was filled with birds and with books borrowed from the public library. Bryan's father printed decorative greeting cards. The scrap paper he brought home from his job in downtown Manhattan became the budding artist's first art supplies.

Bryan's mother loved to sing. She made clothes for the family and did crochet and embroidery work. When she died, her scissors were given to Ashley, who used them to cut the collages for *Beautiful Blackbird*, which won the Coretta Scott King award for illustration in 2003 (he also used them to illustrate *Let It Shine: Three Favorite Spirituals*, 2007, and his most recent book, *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, 2010).

In his picture autobiography, *Words to My Life's Song*, published in 2009, Bryan offers many poignant reminiscences, among them, listening to wandering musicians perform in his backyard during the Great Depression ("We'd wrap a few spare coins in newspaper and toss them down in thanks") and his father's pride at owning a house. When people praised the gray-shingled structure,

Chipo, 1976

Nkosi, 1982

Osaze, 1964

African Folk Tales, 1946–1949

Mr. Bryan replied, "Oh no, that's not gray. It's heather!"

For a children's author-illustrator who has received many of the most prestigious honors in his field, Bryan limits the boasting in his autobiography to a few early triumphs: an honor certificate for poetry recitation from the Benjamin Franklin Junior High School (the foundation of his mesmerizing performances of African-American verse later in life), and the set of pins he earned for perfect attendance at Sunday School at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church on Fulton Avenue and 169th Street in the Bronx. His was the first black family to join the church.

Bryan began his teaching career there. "You have a talent; you must share it," the church superintendent told him, and gave him a room and materials. He taught drawing and painting through junior high and high school, eventually deciding he wanted to study art professionally. After graduating from high school, he took his portfolio to various schools. He remembers being told at one prestigious institution, "That's the best portfolio we've ever seen, but it would be a waste to give a scholarship to a colored person."

Bryan eventually won an art scholarship to the Cooper Union School of Art, but World War II interrupted his studies. He worked on the docks in Boston and then sailed to Scotland as part of the 270 Port Company, 501 Port Battalion. He took courses at the Glasgow School of Art when he wasn't on duty and kept a sketchpad and art supplies in his gas mask. "There would have been a tumble of materials if I were ever in need of that mask!" he writes.

In June 1944 the 21-year-old Bryan took part in the invasion of Normandy, landing at Omaha Beach. He remembers being unable to tighten the joint of his collapsible shovel to dig a foxhole.

After the war, Bryan completed his degree at Cooper Union and enrolled at Columbia University on the GI Bill as a philosophy major, "trying," he once remarked, "to understand why man chooses war." Upon graduation in 1950, he sailed for Europe to continue his art studies, supported by the GI Bill. He enrolled at the Université d'Aix-Marseille in Aix-en-Provence, studying French but mostly painting.

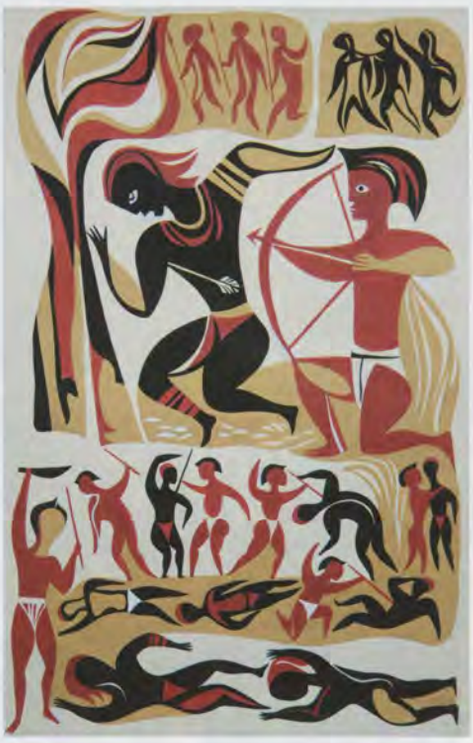
Around this time, master cellist Pablo Casals broke his protest of silence against the Franco regime in Spain and held a series of concerts, in honor of the 200th anniversary of Bach's death, in a cathedral in Prades, a small Catalan town near the Spanish border. Bryan made lively sketches of the musicians rehearsing in the ruins of the Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa Cloister.

Drawing Casals, Bryan writes in his autobiography, gave him "the first sense of momentum, of spirit, of feeling that was my own in painting and drawing." He has built on that spirit ever since: "a sense of rhythm, direction, and the interplay of form and motion in ensemble." He sent Casals illuminated sheet music for some of the songs he performed. The cellist sent him warm thank-you notes in return.

Bryan went back to Europe in the mid-1950s on a Fulbright fellowship, spending two years as a student at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau in southern Germany. He studied the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke and painted, working from drawings made in the marketplace near the Freiburg Cathedral.

In a recent profile in *At Cooper*, the Cooper Union alumni magazine, Bryan noted that his choice of Germany after the war was not so unusual. "Remember," he told the interviewer, "my closest friends whom I'd grown up with and who I was still really close to were German, from the German Lutheran Church." While seeking to discover what drove people to such destruction, Bryan turned to the arts as a counter force—"our weapon," he says, "because just as we are all human, so we are all responsive aesthetically to being human."

Bryan's career as an illustrator of children's books began with a fortuitous meeting with Jean Karl, an editor at Atheneum Books. Karl came to Bryan's studio in the Bronx, hav-



ing been told about a man who was creating books for his family and friends. He ended up working with her for more than 30 years (she died in 2000). "[Jean] knew that I was so caught up in community work," Bryan once recalled, "helping to raise my younger sister's children, teaching full-time and all of that, but she was always asking, 'What are you working on now?' "

Beginning with the illustrations for a book by Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, *Moon, For What Do You Wait*, published in 1967, Bryan went on to write, illustrate and create numerous books, including collections of African folk tales and African-American spirituals, as well as his own poetry. He introduced readers to characters with wondrous names, like Upsilimana Tumpalerado, and revived myth and legend. Thanks to him, we know how the cat got his purr and why frog and snake never play together.

Many of Bryan's children's books have grown out of his ongoing research into African folk tales. Working from a reference work that documents the tales, he chooses a motif to develop into a story. For example, the tale that inspired *Beautiful Blackbird* (2003) comes from the Ila-speaking people of northern Rhodesia (present-day Zambia). When asked by the ringdove who the most beautiful bird is, all the brightly feathered creatures respond, "Blackbird is the most beautiful. How very black he is." It reminded Bryan of "Black is beautiful," a rallying cry of the civil rights movement.

Bryan has won numerous awards for his children's books, including the Arbuthnot Prize, an international lifetime achievement award; the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award, the only award of its kind to honor children's poets; and the Virginia Hamilton Literary Award, which recognizes an American author or illustrator whose books make a significant contribution to the field of multicultural literature for children and adolescents.

The honors continue to come Bryan's way. In 2005, the Boston Public Library named him one of its "Literary Lights" (he joined the likes of Noam Chomsky, Bill McKibben and Ada Louise Huxtable in receiving this recognition). Two years ago, the New York Public Library anointed Bryan a "Library Lion" (fellow "lions" include Salman Rushdie, Edward Albee and Nora Ephron). In 2009, he was presented with the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, which honors an author or illustrator, "whose books have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children." His most recent honor came this past winter: *Words to My Life's Song* received a Golden Kite Award, the only prize awarded to a children's book author and illustrator by his or her peers.

Bryan has also been honored in his home state. He received the Maine Library Association's Katahdin Award, which honors lifetime achievement; a Master of Philosophy in human ecology degree from College of the Atlantic; and the Maine College of Art's Leadership in Arts Education Award.

Bryan's whole adult life has been involved in teaching. He has been a professor at Queens College and the Dalton and Walden schools in New York City; Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania; the Brooklyn Museum; Philadelphia College of Art; and Dartmouth. He has traveled this country and the world teaching people of all ages about the importance of community, color and creativity. He once told writer Donna Gold, "The arts are the most important thing for growing people and for creating a citizenry for whom you don't have to make a jail."

The author-illustrator advocates the importance of discovering ethnicity through children's books. "Children should know about others among whom they are living," he once said. There are lesson plans built around his books.

At the same time, Bryan has rejuvenated the oral tradition, with vocal performances that never cease to amaze audiences. Today's rap singers could take a few lessons from this man, who has been playing with language and rhythm

Seaglass panels, circa late-1950s

Song, 2010

Village Voices, 1992

all his life. "I don't just read the words," Bryan once stated. "I try to roll them up to Heaven."

"At every moment," Bryan has noted, "I strive for connection. If you are in the moment, you are stretching out to reach that which you recognize in others." A student at Dartmouth once gave him a Muhammad Ali boxing figurine at the end of a course, with a note that read, "To the professor Ashley Bryan—a real fighter for us."

Bryan will be 87 years old this summer. He shows little sign of lessening his daunting pace of world travel and creative production. In October, he will return to Africa. Over the past 10 years or so, he has made yearly trips to Kenya and South Africa, participating in several different projects to help the poor.

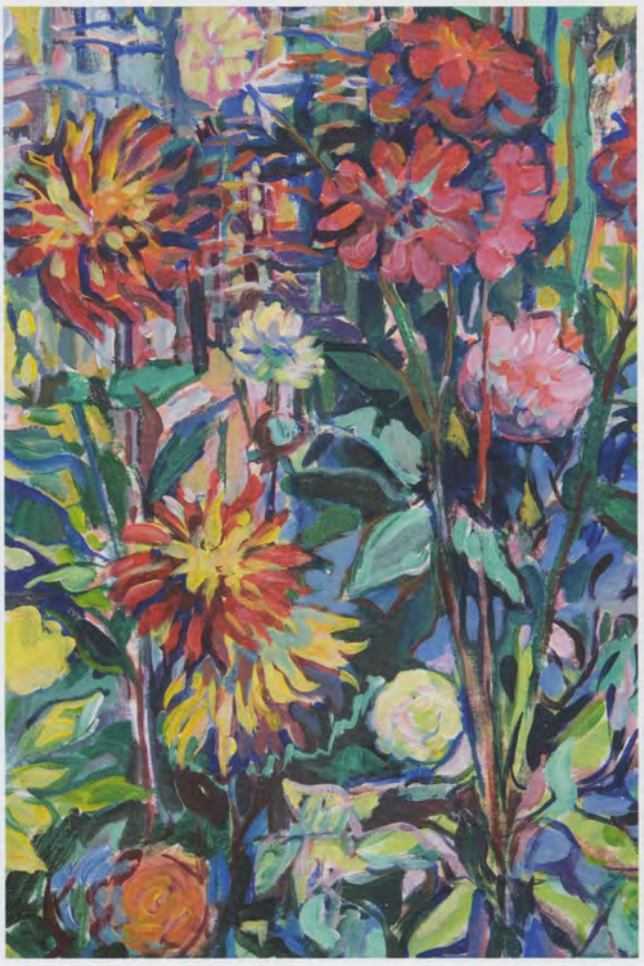
Working with Charity Mwangi and Kemie Nix, Bryan has brought books and school supplies to Kikuyu communities in the region of Nyeri in Kenya. He also adopted the Kiboya Elementary School, the poorest in the region, purchasing water tanks and building a library for the villagers.

In South Africa, he has been involved with the Ubuntu Project, started by Jacob Lief, a fellow Little Cranberry islander. Since visiting a school in Port Elizabeth as a student at the University of Pennsylvania, Lief has set up libraries and computer centers in the township schools (he was recently appointed to the World Economic Council's 2010 class of Young Global Leaders). At a fund-raiser for the project in New York City in 2008, Bishop Desmond Tutu was the keynote speaker; Bryan opened the program by reading a poem by Langston Hughes.

Swing Low Sweet Chariot, 1973

The artist also supports the Kopanang project near Johannesburg. This collective, established in 2001 to help women struggling with HIV/AIDS, produces embroidered tapestries, quilts and beaded jewelry that are sold around the world.

Bryan is always happy to return to Little Cranberry because, in his words, "the island is home." He experiences everything that he believes in there, through his work, walks through the woods and the families and community. While there are "absolute differences" between Africa and Islesford—climate, landscape, the color of people—Bryan taps into "the spirit of what it is to be human" wherever he goes.



Heat of the Day, 2008

Lily Swirl, 2007

Line of Poppies, 2006

"Responding to life, creatively, in whatever form it takes, has always meant everything to me. It's what I would encourage in everyone. The whole essence of my life comes from that."

ASHLEY BRYAN

Award-winning poet Naomi Shihab Nye once called Bryan "a luminous force of nature," noting how "each hour with him feels like dipping into a deep pool of wisdom and care." She has wished many times that her friend were running the world. "It would be a happy world," Nye stated. "No one would be having wars."

Seated at the breakfast table in his wondrous island house, handing a slice of toast to a visitor, Bryan reflects on the importance of art. "Responding to life, creatively, in whatever form it takes, has always meant everything to me," he states. "It's what I would encourage in everyone. The whole essence of my life comes from that."

His words and actions sing with truth.

Carl Little is the author of many art books, among them, The Watercolors of John Singer Sargent, Edward Hopper's New England *and* The Art of Dahlov Ipcar. *He lives on Mount Desert Island.*

To view more of Ashley Bryan's work, please visit www.islandinstitute.org/ashleybryan.

They All Lived Happily Ever After

Children's book illustrators and authors flourish on Peaks Island

DAVID A. TYLER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

"When it comes to work that you can sustain and that sustains you, it's really great to live in a community where the way you live, the choices you've made, are supported."

ANNE SIBLEY O'BRIEN

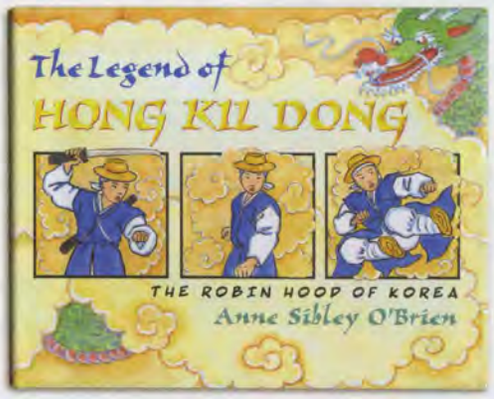
Once upon a time, there was an island in Casco Bay filled with artists. Among those artists was a group of picture book illustrators and authors. They came to this island from all over the country to find a quiet place to practice their craft. These artists thrived, and produced dozens of books that entertain and inform kids all over the country.

This is not a fairy tale. Peaks Island, well known for its vibrant arts community, is home to four successful children's book illustrators: Anne Sibley O'Brien, Jamie Hogan, Scott Nash and Tim Nihoff. Author and illustrator Kevin Hawkes, who now lives in Gorham, spent eight years on Peaks. Between them, these five have produced over 100 children's books.

Anne Sibley O'Brien

All of these illustrators talk about Peaks Island as a place where their young readers play and explore in ways that are almost impossible on the mainland. "The kids have the freedom to just kind of run around in little packs—there's not a lot of awkward distractions, like technology," says Tim Nihoff. "They are more creative in their activities."

And while each illustrator has different sources of inspiration, they all say that Peaks Island nourishes their creativity in ways they did not find on the mainland. "When it comes to work that you can sustain and that sustains you, it's really great to live in a community where the way you live, the choices you've made, are supported," says Anne Sibley O'Brien. "You look around you, and you see reflections of yourself everywhere." She adds, "It's really easy to start something. You get an idea, ask a few friends if they want to create something with you, and you make it happen."



O'Brien's parents went to South Korea for the Mission of the Presbyterian Church to do medical work. O'Brien lived in South Korea from the age of seven until she left for Mount Holyoke College, returning for a year after she graduated from college. She moved out to Peaks Island with her husband, O.B. O'Brien, in 1980.

The playwright, actor, singer, author and illustrator has written or illustrated 29 books, all with a focus on embracing people of different cultures and races and exploring the stories of other countries. Her illustrations—in watercolor, water-soluble pastel and a Korean painting style using brush and ink—are expressive and direct. O'Brien also writes a blog called "Coloring Between the Lines," about race, culture and children's books.

O'Brien has published an award-winning seven-book series about an African-American girl named Jamaica. Other books include *Talking Walls* (1992) and *Talking Walls: The Stories Continue* (1996), both published by Maine's Tilbury House, about different walls and buildings around the world; *The Princess and the Beggar: A Korean Folktale* (Scholastic, 1993); and *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* (Charlesbridge, 2009), which she illustrated and co-wrote with her son, Perry Edmond O'Brien. Lately she has branched out into graphic novels. In 2006 Charlesbridge published O'Brien's *The Legend of Hong Kil Dong: The Robin Hood of Korea*. She is also co-writing a graphic novel with her daughter, Yunhee.

O'Brien endured seven years of rejections from publishers before she got her first contract, to create board books. The memory of her big break is still vivid. "I got the phone call from John Lanman at Holt that they wanted to publish my board books on October 28, 1984." Soon after, she got a call from an art director at Houghton Mifflin to do the illustrations for a book by Juanita Havill about an African-American girl, called *Jamaica's Find*.

In 1986, O'Brien formed a writers' group with another Peaks author, Ruth Sargent, who lived on the island from 1954 until she moved to the mainland in 2001, just before she died in 2002. Sargent's most famous book was *The Original Biography of Abbie Burgess, Lighthouse Heroine*, published in 1969. Her other books include *The Littlest Lighthouse*, *The Island Merry-Go-Round* and *The Nautical Alphabet*.

"I was starting to write more, and I was getting comments from editors and I agreed with them, but had absolutely no idea how to do what they suggested," O'Brien says. "So I figured I needed to learn how to write."

As part of that effort, in 1988 O'Brien helped organize an annual children's book retreat, held in the summer on Peaks. The 1990 retreat drew another illustrator to the island.

"I really loved the island," says author and illustrator Kevin Hawkes, who came to Peaks in 1990 for the retreat. During that week, he recalls, "I felt like a kid again. I loved the fact that people on the island were laid-back. You could

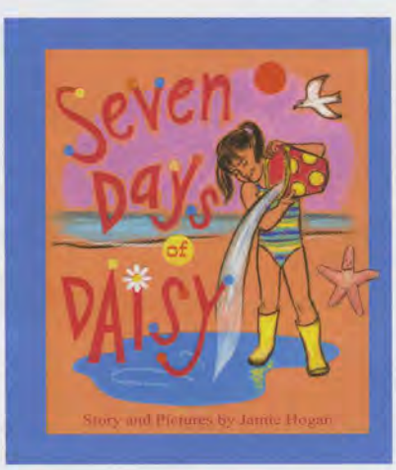
Jamie Hogan

just walk everywhere—kids rode their bikes around—it was a bit like going back to the 1950s." His wife, Karen, came out to visit him in the middle of the week, and when Hawkes met her at the ferry terminal, "I was walking around barefoot with a stick."

Originally from Boston, they had moved to Portland because of the high cost of living, and a sense that Maine was a less-hectic place to raise children. After the retreat they looked into living on the island. They soon found a house they could rent for less than their one-bedroom apartment in Portland's West End.

When they and their two children moved to Peaks in 1991, Karen quit her job as a phlebotomist at Maine Medical Center to help Kevin market and promote his work. By that time, Hawkes had already published two books. In Boston he'd illustrated business and technology publications, but had always wanted to illustrate picture books. After the first two, "it just sort of snowballed," and he got offers to do more work.

Life on Peaks helped his nascent career. "It was inspirational. We were near the ocean. I could ride my bike every day." He also appreciated the slower pace of life and the lack of distractions. "I know that I drove art directors in New York bonkers because I spoke so slowly," he says.



While on Peaks, Hawkes produced about 16 books. He has now illustrated over 40, including *The New York Times* best-seller, *Library Lion* (Candlewick, 2006), about a lion that helps out at a local library; *Weslandia* (Candlewick, 1999), about a boy who grows a garden with giant plants; and a witty tale, *The Wicked Big Toddlah* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), which he wrote and illustrated. The illustrations for the book about a giant baby are filled with quirky touches enjoyed by children and adults alike, such as the scene where every vehicle sports a snowplow (including a bike, motorcycle, and canoe), and another scene where a snowman wears a scarf and deer antlers and the truck bringing the baby home has a moose-head hood ornament.

The creative community on Peaks surprised illustrator Jamie Hogan when she moved to the island with her husband, Marty Braun, in 1992. "We thought, we've found this amazing place—aren't we so clever," Hogan says. "And then we found that there is an illustrator under every rock."

Hogan began her career in Boston doing editorial work. In 1982 she met her husband, a designer at the *Boston Globe*. Braun is now an illustrator for corporate, advertising and editorial clients.

Hogan and Braun discovered Peaks Island while checking out Portland as a possible place to move from the West Coast. After the move to Peaks, Hogan recalls, "I was more interested in doing landscapes. I started doing pastels of the beach at low tide, and I started walking the dog a lot. I felt I was more aware of the environment than I might have been in San Francisco or Boston, where it was more urban."

Living on Peaks, getting to know other illustrators, and giving birth to daughter Daisy in 1996 got Hogan thinking about illustrating children's books. "Getting to know people like Annie and Scott and Kevin—I thought, 'I'm going to take a stab at that.' "

O'Brien also influenced her. "She has always been a mentor to me because she is so prolific, and she's a writer and does lots of school visits," Hogan says. "She is speaking through her work, and that's what is really inspiring to me."

A children's book class at the Maine College of Art in Portland in 2002 got Hogan started. During that class she made a "dummy" of her book, *Seven Days*

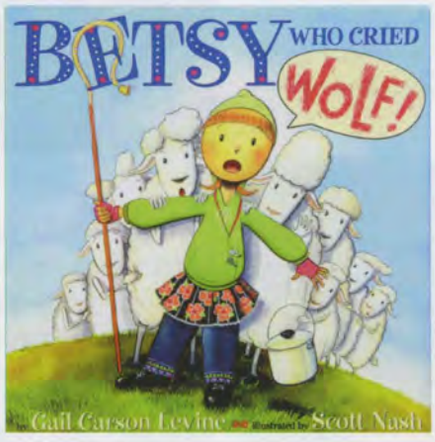
of Daisy, highlighting a week in her daughter's life on Peaks Island.

Hogan spent a lot of time on the beach, walking with other mothers and their children. Afternoons doing "nothing" were, in reality, "these really rich experiences." Kids who grow up on an island or along the coast "have this amazing natural resource that they can explore and make things up about and be creative about," Hogan says. "I actually think that kids are naturally observant, because everything is so new to them and looms large—like the tiniest thing on the beach will fascinate them."

She worked on several dummies of the book about Daisy and received 10 rejections. In the meantime, she illustrated a book by Jeanann Alves, a Peaks Island resident who runs a horse camp, called *Maddie's Magical Ride* (BookSurge, 2005).

In 2007, Charlesbridge published *Rickshaw Girl* by Mitali Perkins, about a Bangladeshi girl's efforts to save her father's business through alpana paintings (geometrical or floral paintings that girls and women create for special holidays). Hogan supplied the charcoal illustrations. "With this particular book, they just sent me the story with some spaces in it," Hogan says. She appreciated the artistic freedom, but notes, "I was pretty nervous that the illustrations wouldn't pass muster on a cultural basis." She did a tremendous amount of research, and the author was thrilled with Hogan's drawings.

Scott Nash



After seven years, Hogan decided to self-publish *Seven Days of Daisy* in 2009. The exuberant charcoal and pastel drawings reflect the joy and spontaneity of an island child's summer. Hogan created collages for several of the pages, incorporating beach china, nylon rope and a plastic starfish.

Hogan is part of a group of three island illustrators whose close connections from past work in Boston led them to Peaks. One of her friends, Mary Ann Lloyd, worked at Big Blue Dot, a design firm specializing in children's media in Watertown, Massachusetts. Scott Nash was a co-founder.

After Lloyd moved to Portland, Nash and his wife, Nancy Gibson Nash, came to visit. "The next thing I remember, we were at a closing and I was buying a house on Peaks," Scott Nash says. They bought their house on Peaks in 1996 and moved to the island in 1998.

For him, the attraction of Peaks was its proximity to Portland. "What I liked about Portland was that it is such an open, creative community—and Peaks is a concentrated form of that. It was even better; it was sort of crazy."

So Nash sold his partnership in Big

Scott Nash and Nancy Gibson Nash

Blue Dot and decided to change his career. "I was bored with graphic design—it was too corporate for me. We moved up here and I decided I wanted to write and illustrate children's books," he says. "The real shift was moving from running a big company to wanting to create my own stories."

Nash has other ventures, too. He owns Nashbox, a design studio that develops multimedia products for kids, including Web design, toys, and more. His wife, Nancy, is project manager at the company, and also a mixed-media/collage artist.

Nash, who thought about being a children's book illustrator ever since he was a kid, has now illustrated over 40 children's books. His recent illustrations are in pen and ink (combined with Photoshop), and his designs are bright, witty and playful. Each animal he draws has a personality.

You can see his touch in books like *Betsy Who Cried Wolf* (HarperCollins, 2002), a clever, modern retelling of Aesop's fable, *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*. Nash suggested that the sheep in the book be anthropomorphized with poodle-like haircuts and their own witty dialogue. He also added amusing business signs, such as BO PEEP GAS and MOM'S PIES FOR EWE.

One of his books, *Tuff Fluff: The Case of Duckie's Missing Brain* (Candlewick, 2004), is a kind of Raymond Chandler book for kids, starring a stuffed rabbit detective with an eye patch. This book was developed in a writers' group on the island that began in 2003 and included Anne Sibley O'Brien.

Tim Nihoff worked with Scott Nash at Big Blue Dot in Boston. "He helped us move," says Nash. "I have this picture of him perched in the back of a moving van, looking contemplative. I swear he was thinking 'I'm going to move here.' "

Nihoff remembers visiting Scott and Nancy on Peaks. "I really got attached to this place. And I wanted to get out of the city." In Wolcott, New York, where he grew up, the nearest neighbor was three miles away. "Peaks reminded me of my hometown," Nihoff says. "It's a small community where you kind of know everyone. It has sort of a college-campus kind of feel."

That sense of freedom and safety for island children nourishes his art, and allows him to connect with the joyful creativity that kids feel. Island parents "feel comfortable with their kids out here—it's not just one parent, it's a thousand parents looking after each other," he says.

Nihoff is also a commercial illustrator and creates toys, furniture, and what he calls "fun fine art" from found objects. This summer he is opening his own gallery on Peaks. "I dabble in everything," he says. "I don't like to define myself in a box."

In the book *Teddy Bear Counting* (Charlesbridge, 2010), Nihoff has created whimsical, balloon-like bears in different colors. He also illustrated *Toilet of Doom* (Dutton Juvenile, 2002); Candlewick's *Otter Everywhere* (2007), a learning-to-read primer about the adventures of a purple otter; and the

Tim Nihoff

cover of *I Fooled You* (2010), an anthology of stories that all begin with the book's title.

Scott Nash is amazed at the number of illustrators on the island. "It's only a matter of time before the entire island is taken over by illustrators," he says. He helped the island illustrators extend their influence to the Maine College of Art in Portland. Nash co-founded MECA's illustration department where he and Hogan teach. Nihoff also taught in the department for two years.

One island event epitomizes the creativity and fun that these illustrators enjoy on Peaks Island. For the past 13 years, Scott Nash and Nancy Gibson Nash have hosted a Halloween extravaganza at their home. A theme is chosen, and about 10 people (including Nihoff) dress up in costumes, create posters and papier-mâché sculptures, and decorate rooms to entertain the island kids. "It's fun to get together for dinner, but it's more fun to get together and play," says Scott Nash.

Nihoff attended the first Halloween party at the Nashes' before he moved to Peaks, and credits this event as one of the reasons he moved to the island. According to Nihoff, the Halloween event is "about celebrating the island and the day. And it has the interconnectedness of a creative family."

"We've never grown up, basically," says Nancy Gibson Nash.

What better place for the magical creation of children's literature?

David A. Tyler is director of publications at the Island Institute.

Morgan York, Vinalhaven

Zeke Bryant, Matinicus

Through the Eyes of the Young

Children see the world through uniquely open eyes and minds. The pace, intimacy and particular challenges of island life give island children enhanced motivation and opportunity to be especially tuned in to what's going on around them. Several recent island photography projects have yielded striking results, and we thought two of them eminently worth sharing as representative of what young islanders make of their world.

The Farnsworth Art Museum's Building Bridges program was launched in 2007 in partnership with Island Institute and five offshore islands: Matinicus, Vinalhaven, North Haven, Isle au Haut and Islesboro. The program was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Paintings, drawings and sculpture from the partnering islands constituted a traveling show in 2008.

Using funds left from the NEA grant, staff from Julia's Gallery for Young Artists at the Farnsworth partnered with the Matinicus Island School, photographer Charlotte Dixon, and island artist Maury Colton. All six students at the island school were given digital cameras in January 2009, and they worked from January through May, learning photography skills and documenting island life. The students' photographic exploration culminated in Matinicus: The Place Beyond, an exhibit that opened on Matinicus in July 2009, and at Julia's Gallery in September.

Katie Hamilton, Vinalhaven

Ashley Hodder, North Haven

The partnership with Matinicus expanded in early 2010 when 9 mainland high school students from Julia's Gallery and 20 college students from Unity College partnered with the Matinicus Island students on a collaborative, interdisciplinary project focusing on birds, migration and climate change. The culmination of this project is the exhibit, "A Bird's-Eye View: Journeying through 21st Century Climate Change," showing at Julia's Gallery from May 2 through August 29, 2010. The exhibit features photographs, sculptures and writing submitted by the six Matinicus Island students, as well as installations, a video and interactive learning displays created by the high school and college students.

Another project that deeply engaged young island photographers was the National Geographic Photo Camp. Camden's Pop!Tech conference and the Island Institute partnered with National Geographic Photo Camp to provide support and help recruit students.

The National Geographic Photo Camp came to the Fox Islands in October 2008. Funded by National Geographic, 20 students from North Haven and Vinalhaven were each provided with a professional-grade digital single-lens reflex camera.

Erin Cooper, North Haven

Max VanDyne, Matinicus

National Geographic photographers instructed the students on both the basic principles of photography and its value as a means of communication. The camp's first two days were spent shooting photos, and the third day, editing and producing a slide show of the students' work. Shooting one day on Vinalhaven and one day on North Haven, the 20 students produced nearly 18,000 pictures of life on a Maine island. Over 100 photos from the camp were part of a show in November 2008, held at the Island Institute's Archipelago Fine Arts Gallery, titled My Island: Images of Everyday Life.

These two wonderful programs have added a depth of understanding and accomplishment—not to mention an expansion of the limits of possibility—to the young lives of several dozen islanders and their communities.

Zeke Bryant, Matinicus

Emma VanDyne, Matinicus

Fiona Twombly-Hussey, Matinicus

Ashley Hodder, North Haven

Lydia Twombly-Hussey, Matinicus

Brittany Cooper, North Haven

More student work from these programs can be found at www.farnsworthmuseum.org/exhibition/matinicus-place-beyond and http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/photos/photo-camp-maine-islands.

ISLAND SCHOLARSHIPS

20 Years of Helping Island Students Realize Their Dreams

CYRUS MOULTON

In 1990, when the Island Institute launched the Maine Island Scholarship program, awards were modest because there was only $2,000 in the fund. Twenty years later, thanks to several generous individuals and foundations, the program has grown tremendously. In 2010, the Island Institute scholarship fund provided $85,000 to nearly 100 island students, bringing the two-decade total to over $730,000 and almost 600 recipients. These awards represent the Island Institute's ongoing commitment to help island families keep pace with rising college tuition costs, and the Maine Island Scholarship program has become one of the most visible and valued resources that the Island Institute provides. By offering financial assistance to all qualifying island students, it enables them to pursue academic and life-enriching endeavors at colleges and universities across North America.

To mark the 20th anniversary of this important program, we decided to tell the stories of several island scholars. They are just a sampling of the hundreds of young men and women whose determination to succeed has inspired us to help ensure that their goal of a college degree is never entirely out of reach.

David Tyler

The 2009 Maine Island Scholars

The Maine Island Scholarship program is made possible by the generosity of the ERQ Foundation, Nancy and Robert Jordan, the McLane Fund for Maine Island Education, the Otter Island Fund, the Shaw Fund for Mariners' Children, Bobbie and Cyrus Sweet and the Wilson Family Foundation.

LEAH DOUGHTY

Maine Island Scholar: 1990–92

Leah Doughty, a resident of Long Island, graduated from Portland High School in 1988 and attended the University of Southern Maine.

"I applied for many scholarships, but this was one scholarship that was specific to island life, so it was really great to be able to apply for that," Leah said.

And not only did island living give her access to funds that enabled her to attend college; it also provided her with the focus of her studies.

Although she could always stay with family in Portland—Leah is one of seven children, four of whom also live on the island—she lived on Long for most of the school year. While she was in college, the community was moving toward secession from the City of Portland, and Leah was involved with the research committee to make it happen.

Years later, Leah still divides her life between Long Island and the mainland. She owns A Clean Sweep residential-cleaning service, which brings her to town five days a week. But her family, including her husband, Michael Maloney, whom she met when he was a cook at the island restaurant, and her many volunteer commitments, remain on the island. "I always thought that I would live on the island—that's why I went to college at USM," said Leah. "I wanted to go to college locally so I could be a part of the secession process. I do all of my volunteer committee work on the island, and I go to the mainland to make a living."

JESSICA STEVENS, ISLE AU HAUT

Maine Island Scholar: 1991; 1994–95

Like many families on the small islands, Jessica Stevens's family moved from Isle au Haut to Penobscot in the middle of Jessica's eighth-grade year to help her make the transition from Isle au Haut's one-room schoolhouse—where she was the only eighth grader—to a school with 100 students per grade.

Jessica considered herself lucky, however, because she had always been an athlete. And even though she didn't have the same access to the leagues and training as her future teammates on the mainland, she knew that her athletic skills would provide her with a group of peers.

The Island Scholarship helped when she made her next transition from George Stevens Academy in Blue Hill to Wheaton College, where she received a bachelor of arts in environmental science in 1998.

In fact, scholarship money was one of the main reasons Jessica attended Wheaton. Financial support, from scholarships, can provide the necessary confidence that you are truly wanted at the school. "To be able to receive a scholarship, and to have the confidence that you're getting a scholarship—it's nice," Jessica said.

It's that sense of support that Jessica tries to emphasize in her new role as the chair of the School Committee on Monhegan Island, where she has lived since she met a Monhegan fisherman, Matt, while working as an Island Fellow. She now runs a gardening business in addition to being a full-time mom for the couple's two-year-old son, Brownell.

"For an island family to make the jump to living inshore, or having your kid go off to college, a scholarship is a huge help."

AVERY DAY, VINALHAVEN

Maine Island Scholar: 1998–2001

Avery Day has maintained some kind of connection to Vinalhaven even while in the halls of the U.S. Congress, Harvard Law School, and the State House in Augusta.

Avery attended Vinalhaven schools from kindergarten through high school. In 1998, he received an Island Scholarship to attend George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where he majored in history. After college, he worked in Senator Susan Collins's office, advising her on fisheries issues. He entered Harvard Law School in 2006, and is now an attorney for Pierce Atwood LLP in Portland, although lobbying work keeps him in Augusta when the legislature is in session.

Avery said that he has complicated emotions about Vinalhaven, especially working in a field that he couldn't easily do from the island.

"I'm not sure I could live on the island now," Avery said. "I have a hard time going out there sometimes. After living on the mainland for so long, I've gotten used to having some anonymity—I miss that a lot when I go home. At the same time, I miss my family, and feeling like I'm from someplace. I've always felt bad for people who live someplace and have no family history there; they seem sort of rootless. I'm in that boat right now."

And he still considers himself an islander. "I don't live there, but I was talking to someone the other day about the basketball tournament, and said 'we' lost to Richmond."

NICOLE, ANNIE AND JONATHAN BOLDUC, ISLESBORO

Education is important to the Bolduc family. Their parents are teachers, and Annie, Nicole and Jonathan are now teachers themselves. Annie said that having teachers as parents gave them a respect for the profession, and that learning was always a constant in the Bolduc household. Now the siblings promote the idea of lifelong learning in their own classrooms.

NICOLE BOLDUC

Maine Island Scholar: 1999, 2001–02

Nicole Bolduc said she probably always knew that she was going to "follow in the footsteps of her parents" and become a teacher. After graduating from Islesboro Central School, she attended the University of Maine in Orono. She graduated in 2004 with a major in elementary education and psychology. She now teaches third grade at the Marcia Buker Elementary School in Richmond, Maine.

Nicole said that the most valuable lesson she learned from Islesboro and Islesboro schools was the importance of community support. Nicole was diagnosed with a brain tumor during her junior year of high school and required extensive and difficult surgery.

"The entire community came together in a way that I have never seen to support my family," she said. "The aid of the community in a situation like that, from diagnosis all the way to recovery, was amazing." She still misses this sense of support now that she has left the island, and has found a similar community network elusive.

Nicole often thinks about whether she wants to return to the island. Although she is unsure, she said she draws from her island upbringing every day as a teacher. "I make sure to give my children the individual attention that I understand was so important, and to which I can attribute much of my own educational achievement."

ANNIE BOLDUC

Maine Island Scholar: 2001–05

Annie attended the University of Maine, Farmington, where she studied elementary education with a concentration in mathematics, and took an extra semester to do student teaching. After graduating from college in December 2005, Annie worked at her aunt's health-food store, traveled to Europe, and returned to work on Islesboro before starting her first teaching job in the fall of 2006.

Annie currently teaches seventh- and eighth-grade algebra at the Great Salt Bay Community School in Damariscotta. "I have always loved working with people and teaching them things that I am passionate about," said Annie. "Teaching seemed like a natural path for me."

Annie said that she valued the small size of the Islesboro schools that she attended from third through eighth grade. "This gives the student a lot of access to the teacher and puts more responsibility on [the student's] learning," Annie said. "A lot of times classes are combined, giving students exposure to different teaching styles, classmates, and content."

It was an atmosphere that Annie said brought students together with a shared identity. "This created a feeling of unity [from] kindergarten through grade 12," she said. "Little kids looked up to the older kids (instead of being scared by them), and the older kids looked out for the little kids and helped them when needed." In other words, it was just like the Bolduc home. "The school felt like a big family."

JONATHAN BOLDUC

Maine Island Scholar: 2003–06

Jonathan Bolduc also followed in the family profession.

Like his sister, Annie, Jon attended the University of Maine at Farmington, studying elementary education with a concentration in math. He then attended the Extended Teacher Education Program (ETEP) at University of Southern Maine, becoming certified to teach grade 7–12 mathematics.

Since December 2008, he has taught at Carrabec High School in North Anson, Maine.

Jon is also very dedicated to the school's extracurricular activities, serving as coach for the school's soccer, tennis and math teams. It's a commitment that he says helps him bring a little bit of the Islesboro Central School to central Maine.

"[At Islesboro] I got a sense that each member of the school and community was supporting me," Jon said. "This was especially true during sports seasons with large home crowds and parents traveling to away games."

Other island experiences are a little harder to re-create. He remembers doing GPS work on the island's road network for his advanced computer class. "We mapped out the roads using a GPS for the E911 [Emergency 911] project. This was a very unique experience that could only be possible in a special place like Islesboro."

And some island experiences, he said, are impossible for him to re-create. "I miss the feeling of driving onto the island after riding the ferry and just getting a sense of freedom."

ROBIN AND CAMERON FERNALD, ISLESFORD

Twins Robin and Cameron "Fritz" Fernald spent kindergarten through the eighth grade in the two-room schoolhouse in the village of Islesford on Little Cranberry Island. Both said that they carry the lessons they learned from their early educational experiences far beyond the perimeter of the island.

ROBIN FERNALD

Maine Island Scholar: 2001–04

Robin considers island living to be on the other side of the spectrum of his current life. He owns a home in Baltimore and works in industrial food sales, brokering and distributing ingredients to large-scale users in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Robin never considered his schooling abnormal. "It was the only school, and the only type of education and social interaction that I knew," he said. But he realized that he wanted some point of reference as he grew older and sought a wider social network. "I had some weaknesses that I wasn't aware of until high school, when I had many other students to compare myself to," Robin said. It's a similar theme in his education. After attending school on Islesford from kindergarten to eighth grade, and then attending Mount Desert High School, he attended Goucher College in Baltimore, a smaller school. "Attending such a small school growing up made me want a small school for my higher education," Robin said. "While at Islesford, I learned to thrive in small communities and with a high level of involvement and interaction in my schooling."

And while he is glad that he experienced this environment as a student (especially since he met his fiancée at Goucher), he is uncertain whether the urban lifestyle will retain its appeal. On an island, "there are many less distractions from the important parts of life," he said. "What it comes down to for me is how many of these distractions will I be willing to give up as I get older?"

CAMERON FERNALD

Maine Island Scholar 2001–04

His twin brother Cameron, or "Fritz," said that the island school's small size didn't seem like a limitation, but rather, made him more open-minded.

"Living in such a small community, I had an openness to all types of friends because growing up, I couldn't really pick who my friends were," said Fritz. "Later in life, this led to me having a more-diverse and varying social network."

This openness led him from Islesford to Mount Desert Island High School, and then to studying sociology at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. He said it is not a lack of social diversity but a lack of diversity in jobs that currently keeps him from living on the island.

His social network is very different now. He lives with his girlfriend Meghan in Cambridge and works as a line cook at two restaurants in Dorchester, Massachusetts—the Ashmont Grill, and Tavolo.

It was an island job, and an open-mindedness borne from island living, which inspired him to attend a short culinary school program at Boston University, founded by Jacques Pepin and Julia Child. "I had decided I wanted to cook when I came back to the island in the summer of 2007, after two years in Cambridge, and the only spot available at the Islesford Dock Restaurant was in the kitchen," Fritz said. "I fell in love with that side of the restaurant business."

Nevertheless, he said he has considered returning to Islesford.

DANIELLE RICH, CHEBEAGUE

Shaw Fund for Mariners' Children 2008–09

Danielle Rich of Chebeague Island has received the Shaw Fund for Mariners' Children to provide others with the help that she needed to reestablish her life.

Rich is a recovering alcoholic, a disease from which she suffered for eight years. She got clean when she became pregnant with her daughter Drea, now a happy, chortling three-year-old, and decided to return to school. After graduating from Andover College with an associate's degree in criminal justice, she is now taking courses at Intercoast Career Institute in Portland to become a drug and alcohol counselor.

"I wanted to help people, and to make them aware of the opportunities that are available, which weren't available to me," Rich said.

Rich said that she felt a bit lost after leaving the comforting, close-knit island school in Chebeague for Greeley High School in Cumberland.

"Island kids weren't up on the 'in' stuff, and it was a really hard transition for me," Rich said. She began drinking at age 17 to help deal with that transition.

Living on Chebeague again, she says that the island support network and the friendships that she still retains from her childhood on Chebeague have helped her to get—and stay—clean. But most important was her daughter. While pregnant she attended a "Mom Group" for women trying to get clean. "I want to work with moms and parents who are trying to recover."

She values the island, although she said it has changed significantly since her childhood. "The island is where I learned to build long, healthy relationships," said Rich. "I want my daughter to have that part of the island, too."

Cyrus Moulton is the editor of Wareham Week *in Massachusetts. He was an Institute staff member and Island Fellow.*

To keep up-to-date on the Maine Island Scholarship program, please visit www.islandinstitute.org/scholarships.

Peter Ralston

ISLAND FELLOWS

In their own words

WHEN we launched the Island Fellows program more than 10 years ago, we had no idea how quickly it would become the Institute's "flagship" initiative, the one most visible to—and valued by—island and coastal communities. Our intent was to respond to the many requests we heard from islanders for help with projects critical to their communities' sustainability; for an extra set of hands and the expertise to tackle difficult, sometimes tedious work. We worried about how successfully our first idealistic college graduate would adjust to a life regulated by ferry schedules and the astronomical tidal clock.

After nearly 70 Island Fellows since that first placement, we continue to be astonished at the degree to which closely knit island communities embrace their new Fellows, and at how eagerly these young people tackle difficult tasks. On the following pages, you'll learn more about two of our Island Fellows. Through their own words, we hope you'll gain a deeper understanding of why these special places—and the people who inhabit them—deserve the best and the brightest Island Fellows we can find.

To keep up-to-date on the Island Fellows program, please visit www.islandinstitute.org/fellows.

MORGAN WITHAM

I am learning how vast are the demands of island life, and how wide the heart.

ISLE AU HAUT

I am an introvert. It doesn't mean I am entirely shy or retiring, or that I somehow lack social confidence. It means that in order to function, to replenish the stores of my soul, I need solitude to process the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. I need to run away into the woods, to be where other people are not. When I moved to Isle au Haut for an Island Institute fellowship, I'm sure many of my acquaintances probably gave me up for a hermit. Hell, at the outset, even I probably did.

Stereotypes of coastal seclusion aside, I have chosen a place and a manner of living that is inherently very social. From banter in the store or at the landing, to a culture of game nights, community volleyball, and potlucks, my days are often packed with human interaction. I've come to an island where anonymity is not an option: Good news travels at the speed of light; bad news is slowed only slightly by people clinging to their privacy. The light, the dark, and the mundane middle happen everywhere. On islands, we just jostle together so much that facades tend to wear away. Secrets and sorrows surface and spread.

While the island has particular social circles, triangles, and line segments, we do come together as a broader community. To one extent or another we all work together, play together, argue, grudge, and grieve together; there is no escaping the joy or the pain that comes down the pike.

I cataloged the course of a week last June: I literally babysat my students and also staged their spring concert; I swapped baked goods and jokes, poured coffee, explained the new library system; I cuddled kittens and pitched kitten-ownership to any likely taker (goods still available!); I took a good friend to see a divorce lawyer, and then played volleyball wildly well with her husband—who I love like a brother; I held the hand of their young son when he slipped his in mine, and I gave him five minutes in at recess when he was being a little twit; I welcomed back the snowbirds and listened to talk of lobstering. A lifelong church-avoider, I gratefully confided in and sought counsel from a minister, and even visited the church to pray (on its off-hours, so no one would see). I ate, drank, laughed, wept, and spoke in subtext that would put Chekhov to shame. I kept secrets, but worked with determination for their release.

These are the bizarre and varied things I am fairly good at. It is a life that I love, even as an introvert. Thankfully, before my fragile little human mind cracks from the speed of the spinning, I find I can stop the world. I lie in the warm sun with the book club book. I dive into the frigid water of the thoroughfare. I run away to the island's interior, tracing its spine from chakra to chakra: Champlain, Sawyer, Jerusalem, Bowditch. Island time, and the proximity of solitude is the foil to this intense social interaction, to all of the demands on one's time, patience, and empathy.

The Island Institute fellowship was an exercise in the elucidation of what island life means to me. What do I derive from the island that makes me want to stay indefinitely? Why, as a twenty-something Maine native, am I not living in Portland? The best answer I've found is that living on Isle au Haut demands I be unapologetically human. Every day I experience those highs, lows, and muddy in-betweens. It affords plenty of time alone, but there is no hiding from the complexities, trespasses, kindnesses, and contradictions of my friends and neighbors. Or from my own. To borrow from Elisabeth Ogilvie: I am learning how vast are the demands of island life, and how wide the heart.

Morgan Witham was an Island Education and Library Fellow on Isle au Haut from 2007 to 2009.

CHERIE GALYEAN

Although I grew up in a small town, it wasn't until I was living on Vinalhaven that I realized what it really takes to make a community work.

VINALHAVEN

In the summer of 2002, I took a position as an Island Fellow in the Vinalhaven School Library.

As a recent library school graduate, I thought it would be an excellent entry-level position, and it was. I was there to help automate and build the collection, do some grant writing, and assist the school librarian in readying the library for the move to the new school building. I was given a level of responsibility and autonomy beyond what I would have gotten in any other position my first year out of school. But it was what I learned outside of the job portion of my placement that was invaluable.

Although I grew up in a small town, it wasn't until I was living on Vinalhaven that I realized what it really takes to make a community work: I learned the value of showing up. It takes event planning and volunteers, but mostly it requires willing participation. A potluck dinner can't build community if people don't turn out; it's just an empty table. A Fourth of July parade isn't a celebration if no one is watching or parading. And a school can't move from one building to another if no one appears to carry the boxes. Showing up is the simple key to a community's success. And in my experience, no one shows up like they do on islands.

While the library work that I did was meaningful and fulfilling, and I loved working with the students, that wasn't where I experienced the true impact on my future life. I learned that it wasn't enough for me to do my job and then go home. If I was truly going to make a difference and get everything possible out of my time there, I needed to get involved. So I started doing just that. I went to lectures and dinners and helped with the school book club. I shopped in the island stores and learned to drop in on people, just to say hello. I learned how to get outside of myself and connect on multiple levels with the people around me. I learned how to properly show up.

I have taken this lesson with me as I've moved on to other things. In my work at the Maine Community Foundation, I continue to look for projects that offer opportunities for residents to connect for a greater purpose. I want to see communities do more than write comprehensive plans and build budgets. I want them to sing together, play together, create together, and prioritize their future together. I want to see them offer opportunities to show up. In my own town, I work hard to be one of the people who turn out for volunteer days, story time, and board meetings. I go to community dinners and the local coffee shop when I can. I join in much more than I used to before I was a Fellow. I show up because I really believe my fellowship showed me how important it is.

Being an Island Fellow can be a lonely experience. It can be challenging to force oneself out into a new community after a day of work. But, ultimately, that's where the real work of islands is done. Beyond the list of goals and strategies for each fellowship, beyond the incredible and useful work that all the Fellows do, the most important part of any fellowship is to simply show up.

Cherie Gaylean was a Library Fellow at the Vinalhaven School from 2002 to 2003 and a Senior Library Fellow from 2004–2005. She also worked as grants writer at the Island Institute.

Fox Islands Wind Project

With support and technical assistance from the Island Institute, the island communities of North Haven and Vinalhaven completed construction of the Fox Islands Wind Project, the largest community-wind facility in New England, designed to lower and stabilize electric rates for many years to come.

Island Fellows

Ten Island Fellows—bright, talented college graduates—went to work in island and coastal communities from Casco Bay to Downeast, bringing the 10-year total of placements to almost 70, and providing assistance to schools, municipalities, libraries, historical societies and nonprofit organizations.

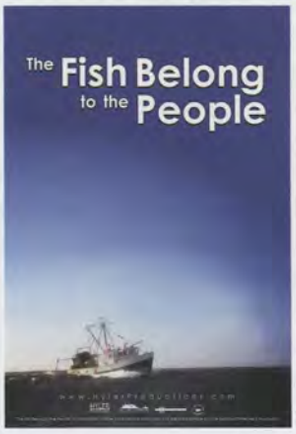
Workforce Housing

In 2009, the Institute helped lead a successful effort to obtain $30 million in Maine state bond funds for affordable housing and energy-efficiency work, with $2 million available in 2010 for programming that will benefit remote coastal and island communities.

Island Scholarships

Through the contributions of several generous donors, the Institute awarded $85,000 in college scholarships to more than 90 year-round island students in 2010, bringing the total of Maine Island Scholarship awards provided since 1990 to over $730,000.

Sustainable Fisheries



The Institute helped make possible the production of *The Fish Belong to the People*, a full-length documentary about the Port Clyde groundfishermen's efforts, assisted by Institute staff and funding, to save their fishery through the innovative marketing and branding of their sustainably caught, value-added seafood products.

In collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, the Institute launched the first fishery permit-banking program in Maine, designed to keep groundfish permits in the state and advance sustainable-fishing research.

Island Schools

In December 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture awarded a $500,000 competitive grant to the Institute for the creation of a teleconferencing network for island schools to expand curricular offerings and share best instructional practices.

The Institute's biennial Island Teachers Conference in October 2009 attracted more than 100 island educators and community members, with professional-development workshops, presentations and networking opportunities.

Four-Season Island Farming

4 SEASON
ISLAND AGRICULTURE

Thanks to a generous grant from the 1772 Foundation, more than $10,000 in funding was awarded to 12 island farms, schools and nonprofits to support farming/gardening projects that contribute toward increasing the amount of locally produced food, and/or raising awareness about island-based agricultural efforts and heritage. A partnership with the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) resulted in hands-on training and workshops.

Sustainable Island Living Conference

Sustainable Island Living
CONFERENCE

The second Sustainable Island Living Conference in November 2009 relocated to Rockland and provided 130 island and coastal residents with presentations, workshops and tours designed to increase knowledge of resources in the areas of local food systems, sustainable housing, renewable energy, and economic development. The 2010 SIL Conference will be held on November 5th and 6th.

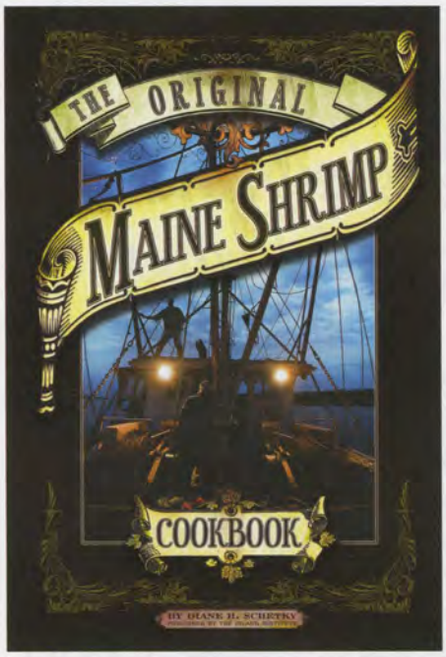
Information Technology Education

In June 2010, the Institute completed a five-year, $2 million IT education project funded by the National Science Foundation. The Community for Rural Education, Stewardship and Technology (CREST) project effectively engaged over 3,000 students and teachers from 16 island and coastal communities in place-based IT skills-building activities that increased technology use in the classroom, and has received national recognition.

Working Waterfronts

As of December 2009, the Institute's leadership role in the preservation of Maine's commercial working waterfronts had helped secure 19 properties totaling 40 acres of land (more than a mile of coastline), with a fair market value of over $17 million, supporting more than 520 boats, 950 fishing-industry jobs, and more than 1,000 families.

The Original Maine Shrimp Cookbook



The Institute published *The Original Maine Shrimp Cookbook* to benefit the work of the Midcoast Fishermen's Association and our efforts in the area of sustainable fisheries management. It contains more than 75 delicious recipes and can be purchased at www.thearchipelago.net.

The Lobster Industry

The Institute helped a group of Casco Bay lobstermen launch Calendar Islands Maine Lobster, an innovative business model that could provide replicable strategies for lobster cooperatives up and down the coast.

To increase the capacity of the Maine Lobstermen's Association to expand membership and funding, the Institute provided full-time staff support and technical assistance in the creation of a newly designed monthly newsletter that has grown readership to more than 5,000.

Island Journal

The expanded 25th anniversary edition of *Island Journal*, the Institute's acclaimed annual magazine of island life, included a special folio of Andrew Wyeth's Maine-island work, and the first publication of his last finished painting, "Goodbye, My Love." It is available at thearchipelago.net.

Archipelago

The Institute's retail store and fine-arts gallery, featuring the best of Maine arts, craft, design and publications, had its best year ever in 2009, providing a Main Street and online marketplace that supported the "creative economy" along the coast.

www.islandinstitute.org/accomplishments

www.thearchipelago.net

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ISLAND INSTITUTE

CAPSIZED

ELLEN RUPPEL SHELL

The State of Maine, it's often said, is a state of mind—a state sometimes inscrutable to relative newcomers like my husband Marty and me. So we were not surprised to be the only boaters heading out from the dock north of Portland on a gorgeous Saturday morning last November. We launched onto calm seas, so confident of the weather that we neglected to pack our safety gear—the extra paddles, whistles, radio and flares. The views went on forever, unobscured by the usual fleets of commercial and pleasure craft. A half a mile from shore, we learned why no one else was out. The wind blew up, as did the chop. Our boats got skittish. Marty's Red Sox cap blew off, and I begged him not to circle back for it. He assured me that we'd seen much worse; that we'd be fine. It was the response I had come to expect from him.

Marty tends toward the analytical; he believes what he deduces, but not always what he sees. A reflexive logician, he plays the odds, and the odds were good: In nearly a decade of kayaking, neither one of us had run into trouble. Still, my look of sheer terror persuaded him to turn around. Just as I came about a gust took hold and dumped me headfirst into the 47-degree surf. I surfaced, sputtering and disoriented. Hypothermia takes the lives of many kayakers every year. Marty worked the odds: Without a wetsuit, I had about 40 minutes.

With low, steady tones, he guided me back into my flooded boat and calmly handed me the water pump. He waited until the boat was almost drained to tell me the awful news: In the rush to save me he had lost his paddle. My own paddle was long gone, and with every passing second, we were getting pulled farther out to sea.

We spotted an island maybe 100 yards away. Abandoning the kayaks was risky, but the island seemed so close. I saw no choice but to swim for it. Marty objected, but before he could make his case, I rolled back into the water and began hauling against the waves. I looked back pleadingly, but Marty was still in his boat, weighing his options.

Marty grew up in an apartment in Far Rockaway, just a few blocks from the boardwalk. He loved the beach, and still does, but he hates the water, especially cold water, and it was against all instinct that he dumped his boat. But while he tried to swim, he made little progress. The look on his face was one I had never seen before—it read, *this time, the odds stink*. Suddenly, I was the analytical one—the water was frigid and rough, but we could do this, for our daughters if not for ourselves. I swam back toward him, screaming encouragement. Angry, he barked, "Just go, now. Save yourself." It flashed through my mind that he was right, that the kids would be better off with one parent rather than none. Then it flashed through my mind that our life insurance was paid up, and that our kids—one a college grad, the other well on her way—would be fine. And that I would not be fine without their father. I decided to stay.

And then I heard a motor.

It was off in the distance, a skiff with what looked like a grizzled figurehead standing watch in the bow. As it approached the figurehead lit up a smoke and then, suddenly, was upon us—reaching down to pull me up and out of the waves, while Marty clawed up and into the hull. The skiff rode low in the water with our weight and that of five grown men. They wore camouflage garb. The skiff's floor was piled deep with carcasses, a tangle of white-tailed deer. One of the guys looked at me and laughed—my shivers, he said, were strong enough to power the boat, which was good because they were almost out of fuel. Another guy, also laughing, said, "We've got enough to get these fools home."

A joint was lit, and offered, as were bottles of Twisted Tea. Someone threw a blood-stained blanket over my shoulders. The figurehead was a retired ironworker, now a lobsterman. The other men were his sons and their friends. The lobsterman had only one good eye, and it was this eye that had spotted the red hull of Marty's kayak as he rolled it. What luck, what dumb luck, we agreed. The lobsterman cleared his throat. Lobster had been a tough sell that summer, he said, and they'd barely broken even. Venison would help fill the gap. They'd need a lot more deer to fill their freezers, more than the legal limit. "We'd be grateful if you didn't mention the hunting," he said, as we putted into his dock.

The lobsterman's wife loaned me some dry clothes and drove us back to our car (Marty stayed wet). She asked what possessed us to go out on a day when the winds were strong enough to shift the docks on their moorings. She told us her brother had lost his life on such a day, but at least he was working—fishing—at the time. I guessed he'd had no life insurance.

The hunters returned to the sea and found our kayaks. We knew they would, and we went back to the dock with cash. The lobsterman accepted it gladly. Then we strapped the kayaks to the roof of the car, got in, and sat for a very long time, heater blasting, weighing our options.

Ellen Ruppel Shell, a correspondent for The Atlantic, *is the author most recently of* Cheap: The High Cost of Discount Culture.

ISLAND INSTITUTE

Boat Donation Program

TRITONA III

Morris 32 Flybridge Cruiser (1998), hull and deck built by Flye Point Marine.
Interior and systems finished by Morris Yachts. $205,000

HALF SHELL

28' Ellis hull (1988) fitted out as a "lobster yacht," originally built for singer Billy Joel.
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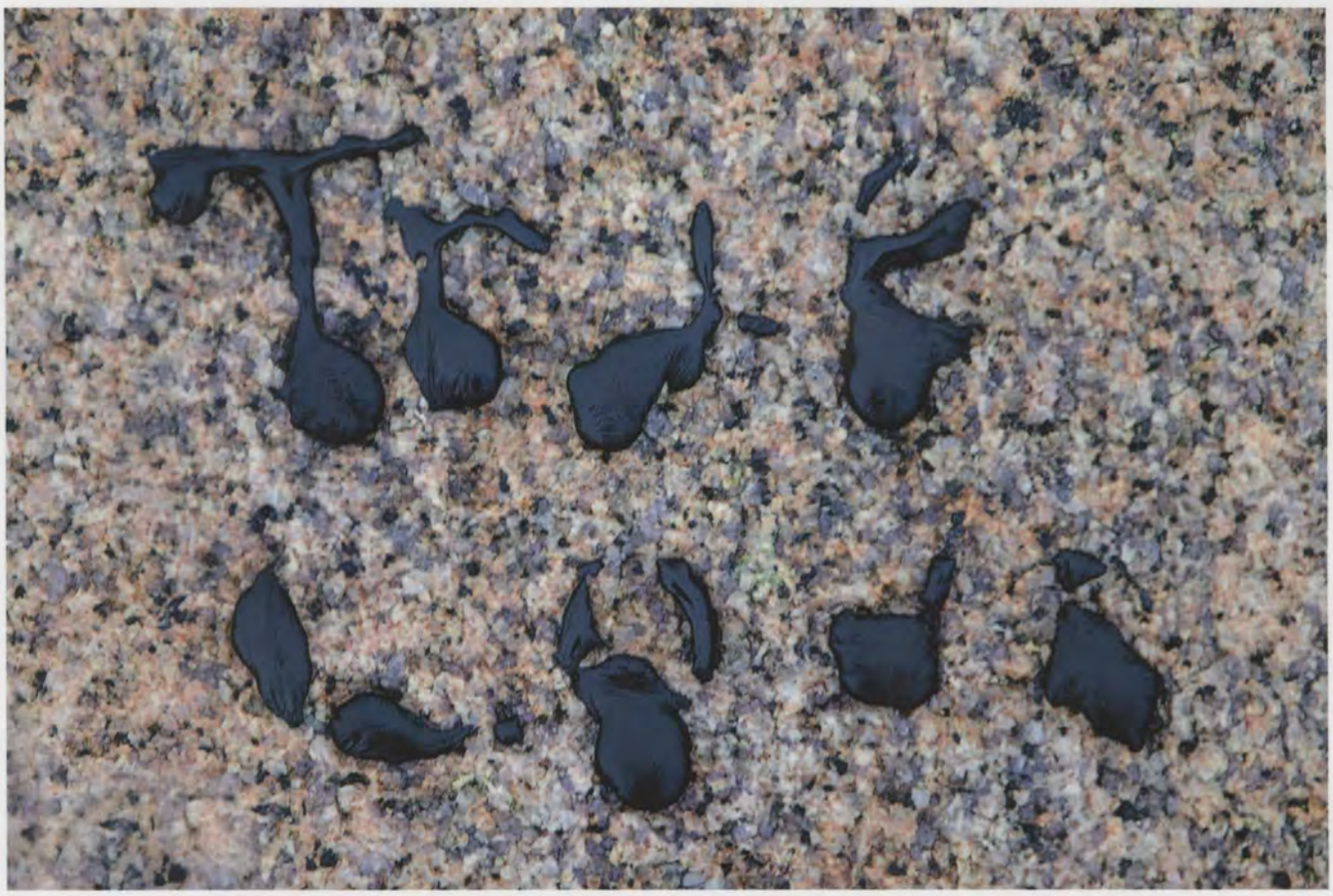

IN MY NEXT LIFE

I will own a sailboat sleek
as fingers of wind
and ply the green islands
of the gulf of Maine.
In my next life I will pilot a plane,
and enjoy the light artillery
of the air as I fly to our island
and set down with aplomb
on its grass runway.
I'll be a whiz at math, master five or six
of the world's languages, write poems
strong as Frost and Milosz.
In my next life I won't wonder why
I lie awake from four till daybreak.
I'll be amiable, mostly, but large
and formidable.

I'll insist *you* be present
in my next life—and the one after that.

MARK PERLBERG

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