ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute

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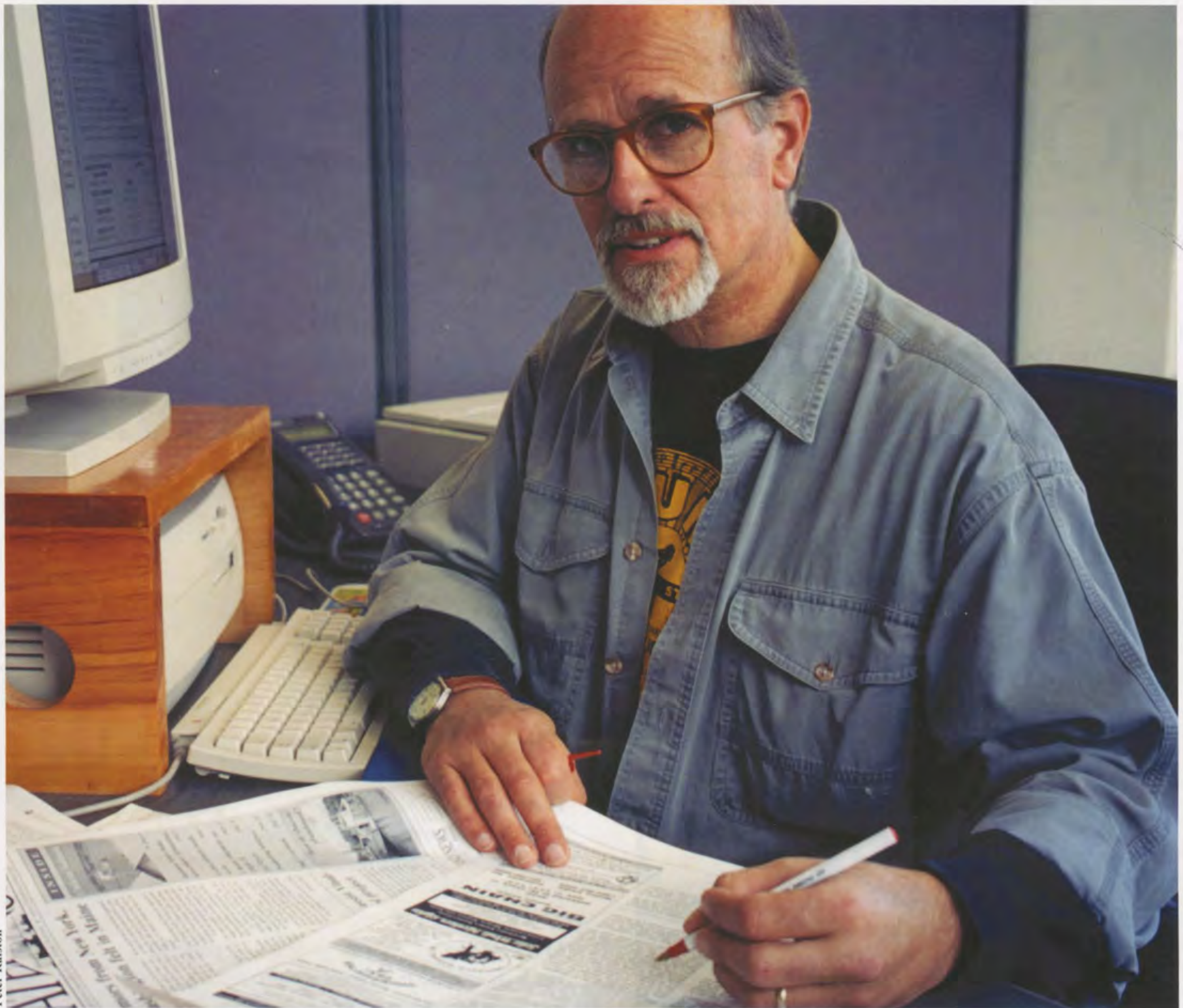
Peter Ralston

TO OUR READERS

Sometimes a single individual makes a huge difference. Charlie Oldham, who worked in the Publications Department at the Island Institute for ten years before he died last May, was such a person: he took *Working Waterfront*, the Institute's then-young newspaper, firmly in hand and gave it its own look: not too fussy, not too artsy, not too down-home, not too much like all the other papers out there. He didn't edit the paper, but he was never shy about expressing his opinions about what we put in it. Because he knew so much about so many things, he caught a lot of errors before they got into print. Using his enormous talent as a graphic designer, he gave *Working Waterfront* much of its character.

Charlie never worked directly on *Island Journal*—he was too busy with the newspaper, books and other projects—but his labors contributed mightily to the *Journal*'s success because he carried so much of the weight, enabling others to concentrate on the *Journal* when it mattered.

This year's *Journal* is a testament to the importance of individuals like Charlie: Island Fellows, artists, filmmakers, visionaries, historians, entrepreneurs, fishermen, soldiers and sailors—all the people who make life on islands and elsewhere a vibrant and satisfying experience. Each makes a difference in his or her own way.

So we dedicate the 2006 *Island Journal* to Charlie's memory, and to people like him who make a difference in their workplaces and communities. They sustain us, every day of the year.

The Editors

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ISLAND INSTITUTE
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Sustaining the Islands and Communities of the Gulf of Maine

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Cover: "Front," Peter Ralston

Peter Ralston

TAKING CARE OF THE FUTURE

PHILIP CONKLING

It amazes us to be reminded, as we frequently are, of the image Maine islands hold in the minds of people from around the country or around the world. Where so many other island communities have been displaced, withered away or gone extinct, how—we are frequently asked—have Maine's 15 island communities managed to survive, even thrive against the formidable odds they face? The answer has to do with the extraordinary efforts Maine islanders put into community-building on a day-to-day, week-to-week, year-in-year-out basis.

If you want to know the details of how some of Maine's 15 remaining year-round island communities are sustaining themselves, just turn the pages of this year's *Island Journal* and read some of the stories of the young people who are choosing an island way of life. In the final analysis, communities wither away, whether they are in rural North Dakota or on an offshore island, when they get old and gray and not enough young people replace those lost to aging and death.

It is no secret that Maine is graying, statewide; it has one of the highest average ages in the United States—a statistic that benefits mainly those in the health-care industry or the funeral business. Yet young families are either opting to stay on Maine's islands, if they happen to have been born there, or trying to settle there if they are "from away."

People "from away" have always been a little insecure about their status in these most traditional of all Maine communities, where being a native is rightly worn as a badge of honor. But our experience, especially through the Island Fellows program, is that islanders truly welcome outsiders who want to contribute to the vitality of year-round island life. As an islander once put it, "Summah people; some aren't." In other words, it all depends.

"Island culture has a great deal to offer the world: what it means to live instinctively by 'lifeboat ethics,' where everything and everyone is connected to everything and everyone else."

If island community vitality resides in the number of young people who are committed to staying, what can an island do to support its young people? The first thing, of course, is to invest in their education: by almost any measure, island schools are some of the best in the state. Small class size, dedicated teachers who care about and know the "whole student," multiage teaching and learning opportunities, place-based curricula with strong multigenerational community connections and service learning options are what national research tells us are important ingredients of successful schools.

Next, invest in scholarships to encourage island kids to get the best education they possibly can. Some will come back; some will not. One of our favorite island scholarship stories is that of the son of an island fisherman who got a scholarship to attend George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and who got a job on Senator Susan Collins's staff after graduation. Next, he is off to Harvard Law School on a full scholarship. We believe the surest way to kill any aging community is to try to lock up teenagers at home fearing if they see too much of the world they may never come back. Many will come back once they've seen that the best things the world has to offer can also be found on-island, and what cannot be found there is not—once you've seen it or done it enough times—really worth all that much.

Then invest in affordable housing for young families to get a foothold on the island. It is not an exaggeration to say that one, two or more affordable houses in a small island community can mean the difference between vitality and extinction. And it is in the interest of everyone, year-round elders and summer people alike, to develop cooperative strategies to blunt the sharp increase in land prices brought about by seasonal residential development.

Frenchboro, which embarked on Maine's first island affordable-housing program in 1984, has seen its preschool population explode —and has recently started an island nursery school program. Today 11 of 15 island communities have affordable-housing programs in place and came together this past April to begin more actively sharing information about what works and what hasn't. The Genesis Fund has developed an impressive small program to provide grants and loans to island housing groups. Still, it is important to recognize that Frenchboro's successful housing program took a decade and a half to really take hold—patience and perseverance rewarded.

Above all, we must take care of our marine resources and marine infrastructure. Fisheries, aquaculture and boatbuilding, all of which require access to the working waterfronts of the Maine coast and islands, cannot be outsourced to India or China. Not everyone can or wants to enter these industries, but they are the source of much of the region's historic wealth and traditional culture. If we don't attend to them, we run the risk of repeating the tragedy of Newfoundland's outports, where the disappearance of the cod fishery has devastated not just the economy of these communities, but their spiritual center.

Finally, invest in communications technology. For most of the 20th century, geographical isolation severely disadvantaged island communities. Now wireless and broadband communications technologies have flattened all playing fields, offering great promise in diversifying island economies in the 21st century.

A few of us on the staff and among our trustees at the Island Institute are part of the graying of Maine. Perhaps this is why we are thinking so hard about the future of Maine's island communities. Culture is the one lasting legacy that humans everywhere and for all time leave to the future; island culture is essential to the character of the Maine coast. Island culture has a great deal to offer the world: what it means to live instinctively by "lifeboat ethics," where everything and everyone is connected to everything and everyone else.

To find out how you can help sustain island culture, please turn to the information on the back pages of this year's *Island Journal*.

Philip Conkling is president of the Island Institute.

Erin and Aaron Gray at the Islesford store   Right: Rachel Damon and friends

BRINGING HOPE

What keeps young people on islands?

STORY BY
CHERIE GALYEAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
PETER RALSTON

It's a common refrain heard in all discussions about the future of Maine's islands: "We need to attract young people." Because "young people" bring with them energy, work and children—but most importantly, hope. A young family on an island means a viable workforce, new ideas, children in the school, a future. An island without young people is a dying place. The next step is usually a summer-only settlement.

Up and down the coast, communities can be heard discussing the difficulties they face. Without jobs there will be no young people. Without affordable housing there will be no young people. Without a good school, a strong library, a lively community center… there will be no young people. And in Maine, it's a statewide problem. The 2000 census showed that 18 percent of Maine's population was between the ages of 20 and 34, down from 24 percent in 1990. The general belief is that opportunities in Maine, and particularly in small communities like islands, are too limited, too low-paying and too rural to attract the younger generation.

But is it really true? Can island life, with its quirks and difficulties and uncertain future, be an attractive alternative to the younger people and families that are so desperately needed? What are the benefits for younger people? How can communities be more successful at recruiting and keeping this precious resource? Most important, what do young islanders need to keep them there?

ISLESFORD: "A HUGE JUMP OUTSIDE THE BOX"

As a seventh-generation islander, Erin Gray knew there was no place she wanted to be other than Islesford. Born on the island, Erin was on-island weekends and summers growing up, though she attended school on nearby Mount Desert Island. After attending Wellesley and getting her master's degree in geochemistry at the University of New Hampshire, she and her husband, Aaron, made the move out to the island. The largest of five islands in the town of Cranberry Isles, Islesford has a year-round population of around 80. When asked why two young people who could have gone anywhere settled on Islesford, Erin simply says, "The thought of being anywhere else made me want to cry."

They also wanted the benefits of island life for their future children. "I wanted to come back purely for kids. I wanted them to be able to walk down the street to their grandparents'," says Erin. "Our kids will be eighth-generation islanders," Erin says proudly. The couple's optimism about the future is palpable.

But it hasn't been simple for Erin and Aaron to make the jump to island life. One of the biggest challenges they faced was the lack of jobs. Erin was able to stern for her father, but Aaron had a harder time of it. Unable to fish because of seasickness and uninterested in carpentry, Aaron was facing a future of odd jobs: mowing lawns, teaching gym at the school, caretaking for summer residents. Finally, the couple turned their eyes to the Islesford store, the only one on the island and, as home to the island post office, a community crossroads. "Some members of my family own general stores like this, and I thought it might work for us," Aaron says. They approached the owner of the store, and she agreed to let the two of them run it for her.

Since taking over the store in August, the two have made some major changes: adding seating and enlarging the list of stocked items, taking special orders for delivery, serving lunch for workers and schoolchildren, even beginning a once-a-week dinner delivery service. The two clearly enjoy the sense of community they are creating with the store. Next to the register is a huge file of charge slips, saving islanders the bother of carrying cash. The phone frequently rings with islanders trying to track down a friend, and Erin claims to know what kind of milk every family drinks. The two are pleased with how successful it has been so far.

It hasn't been easy. Erin continued fishing while working at and renovating the store, clocking around 100 hours a week in the summer. They still are worried about making ends meet and know that the patchwork of jobs they have is standard on the island. "If you want to do it, you can," Erin says, "but it's a huge jump outside the box."

With family help, the two managed to buy a house on the island, but Erin admits it was tricky applying for a mortgage "when you can track your income to about 10 sources." They were able to purchase their home through an islander who wanted to sell to year-round residents and was willing to take a lower-than-market price. Erin believes the type of sacrifice that her seller made is ultimately the only way that many people will be able to stay on-island. "It has to come from the sellers. The times when it is successful is when the sellers give up a little extra money in favor of year-rounders. People need to be aware of their choices."

The Grays found family and community support to be critical as they tried to get their feet under them. They purchased their house through a family connection and their boat came from Erin's grandfather after he passed away. "It would be possible for someone to make it without that kind of help," Aaron says, "but it would be really hard." Erin disagrees. "We never could have swung it without my family," she admits, but she also sees the community rallying around another new resident. "A friend of mine just moved out here because she loves it. The whole community is working hard to find her a place to live, and jobs."

As home to the island post office, the Islesford general store is a community crossroads.

A member of the Fernald family, one of the oldest on Islesford, Erin found the move to the island fairly smooth. She heads up the island's first responders unit and admits that she rarely heads over to the mainland. The road has been a little bumpier for Aaron, originally from Bar Harbor. It's clear that while Aaron enjoys island life, he's also finding it a bit confining. Their recent boat acquisition has made things a little easier. "It's so much better with the boat," he says, as they are not dependent on the ferry schedule and Aaron can make trips over to the mainland as he wants. Despite his concerns, Aaron seems to be settling in, participating in weekly poker games and helping the island children with their basketball skills. "It can be hard to break into the community," he says, "but it is well worth it."

Despite the challenges, island life retains its appeal for the Islesford residents, mostly in its ability to inspire and encourage. "Out here, I have vast opportunities. There is enough room to create yourself," says Bill McGuinness, who moved to the island several years ago with his now-wife, Sonja Moser. McGuinness, an artist, most recently has been working on sculptures made from metal found around the island. "When we were living in New York City, it was incredibly competitive. Now, I don't hear the clock ticking; I can just collect metal and see what happens."

LONG ISLAND: "A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO BE INVOLVED"

Deciding to move back to Long Island after living in Portland was a positive choice for Melissa and Cade Brown. Both had strong links to the island: Melissa's parents, who were originally from Long but lived in Portland for a time, moved back to the island when she was in the fifth grade. Cade used to visit his mother on the island in the summer. When their son, Madison, was born, coming back to Long was the best way to build close family relationships. "Often, parents want to give their children the childhood they didn't have. I want my son to have the one I had living on Long Island," Melissa says.

Like the Grays on Islesford, Melissa and Cade considered family and community a priority. "I want him to live in a community where we know everyone's name and we all wave to each other." She thinks other people move back to the island for the same reasons. "There is another girl from my childhood who came back [after college], but she also has started her family. I don't see a lot of college graduates without families coming back to live here."

"If people don't have children, I don't have a job."

Melissa also sees the other side of growing up on the island. "Growing up on the island I heard many of my friends say (and I'm sure I said it too) that they couldn't wait to get off 'the rock.' " After fifth grade she experienced commuting to Portland daily for school. She ended up going to boarding school to finish high school, and is sympathetic to the difficulties that island living imposes: "Catching a boat at 6:45 to make it to an 8:00 class can be taxing on one's body. Not being able to play many sports, or join many clubs because the games and practices go past 5:45 is something many face. I stayed a lot—several days during the week—with friends on Peaks Island or in town."

Experience in early-childhood education led Melissa Brown to open a licensed day-care business on Long Island.

Moving to the island, Melissa and Cade immediately faced the same problem that struck Erin and Aaron Gray: few jobs. Although Cade was employed as a carpenter with an island builder, Melissa needed a job that would allow her to stay home with their young son. Her education and experience in early childhood education led her to open a fully licensed day-care business on the island. "I am really lucky that there is a market for this," she says. But, despite having a full house of kids Monday through Friday, Melissa still needs a second job to help make ends meet. She works two days a week at Casco Bay lines in Portland. "Day-care providers don't make a lot of money, and the small paycheck that I get from Bay Lines helps cover our budget," she says. In addition, her business is subject to fluctuations in island population. "If people don't have children, I don't have a job."

Even with both Melissa and her husband working full-time, "Staying on Long Island is certainly a topic that comes up from time to time," she says. A benefactor like the one on Islesford hasn't appeared for the Browns. "Land and housing are currently beyond our budget, and in the next few years we may decide that we are ready to buy. Unfortunately, we may have to go off-island to find something."

Even with all of their jobs and a young son, Melissa and Cade still manage to volunteer a considerable amount. Melissa is a member of the school board and recreation committee, while Cade serves on the planning board and volunteers with the fire department. Both volunteer for the library. "Young people out here have a great opportunity to be involved. In another place, I never would have had the opportunity to be on the school board at my age," Melissa says. "We continue to ask ourselves: Can we find a place to live that gives us what we want and have found here?"

VINALHAVEN: "YOU LIVE YOUR JOB COMPLETELY"

Mike and Keely Felton found that taking up permanent residence on Vinalhaven took several years and a lot of commuting. Keely, who calls herself a "fourth-generation summer person," had been coming to the island every summer since she was a child. She always knew she wanted to try winter living as well: "I was always sad to leave in the fall. I would hear people talking about their winter activities."

The summer after she graduated from college, she met Mike on the island, just as he was finishing up his first year as an Island Institute Fellow. After spending a year in Philadelphia, Keely also signed on as an Island Fellow in order to fulfill her wish to spend a year on the island. "I am the first member of my generation to live here year-round," she says proudly.

Unlike Keely, Mike knew very little about Vinalhaven at the beginning of his residence. During his senior year in college, a professor who had been working with the island school offered to bring Mike out to see the K–12 school. Mike almost didn't go because he had to get up so early to catch the ferry, but at the last minute decided to take the adventure. "It was the longest boat ride I'd ever been on," he says. He was drawn immediately to the islanders, especially the children. "I liked the kids and the school and the honesty of the people. On the way back, the superintendent was on the ferry and he asked me if I wanted to come out for a year." Mike took up the offer and served as an Island Fellow for two years, teaching Social Studies in the school and working to improve student aspirations. He admits the first winter was hard and he thought of leaving several times. "Then in April, I took the kids to Boston [as part of a college awareness trip] and it was such a success that I decided to stay."

When his fellowship ended Mike began working at the Island Institute as its Education Outreach Officer. Keely became an Island Fellow on North Haven, living with Mike on Vinalhaven and commuting daily across the Fox Islands Thorofare between the two islands. With Keely spending time on North Haven and Mike commuting to the Island Institute in Rockland and spending many nights on the mainland, the two found island life to be challenging. In 2004, Mike finally quit the commute when he took the position of School Leader on the island, a principal-like position he calls his "dream job." Keely's fellowship evolved into a position as the program director at the Waterman's Community Center on North Haven. Both consider themselves lucky in their positions. "There aren't a lot of career jobs out here," Keely says.

Mike and Keely Felton on Vinalhaven.

Mike Felton heads Vinalhaven's school.

But, as Melissa Brown experienced on Long Island, what an island lacks in jobs, it can make up in opportunity. "Because of the size of the place, I can really see the difference when I do something. I can start projects that no one else is doing," says Keely. Mike sees the same thing, "I know the kids as people, and can tap into the community of resources. There are things you can do in a small school that would be much more difficult in a large school. I can really see the difference that I make." Few communities would consider hiring a twenty-something to head up their school, and possibly even fewer people that age would be willing to take such a job. Mike says he wanted the job because "I love the interaction of education and community. It is a very intense job, though really good. You live your job completely."

Despite their slightly rough start, Keely and Mike Felton love living on the island. They're so busy, they haven't gotten involved in any community activities beyond their jobs. They say this is common. "People are so busy, trying to make a living and raise kids," Mike says. He is taking steps to battle this at the school, where "we've made a recent push to get people involved, and we've had a lot of the younger mothers come forward. They've added a lot to the school."

Both love the island, but Mike admits the isolation and smallness can get to him. Despite that, "There's nowhere else I want to be, nothing else I want to be doing," Mike says. "The more I go away, the happier I am that I live here."

SWAN'S ISLAND: "WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE KIDS?"

A Swan's Island native, Christal Applin never had to worry about breaking into her community—she was born into it. Christal has never lived off-island, with the exception of the four years she boarded on Mount Desert Island for high school. "I had planned to move off and go to college, but changed my mind," she says. "I didn't end up going to college, and I do have some regrets about it, but I think that if I had, my life would be totally different now."

Now a licensed real estate agent, Christal calls herself "very lucky to be one of the few women with a solid job that isn't physically intensive." But it wasn't always this way. Before moving full-time into an island real estate firm, Christal worked a full array of jobs: at the town aquaculture project, as a town librarian, school librarian, lawn mower, and clerk at a store in Southwest Harbor, all while she was assisting in the real estate office. "I used to wear many, many hats," she says, "and gradually I've been able to take them off."

Like many things in island life, the position at the real estate agency came about through luck, patience and knowing the right people. "It was only a two-person office, and one of the women wanted to retire. They wanted some fresh blood so they asked me. I've been there for six or seven years, and gradually increased the work." Christal now enjoys the freedom she has in her job: "With cell phones

Christal Applin is a licensed real estate agent on Swan's Island.

Christal Applin with Candi Joyce at the Swan's Island library.

and the Internet, I can really work anywhere." But she doesn't take her good fortune for granted. "Jobwise, there is no incentive for young people to move out here. There are few jobs if you aren't a carpenter or fisherman," Christal says.

Getting those jobs isn't always easy. Christal's husband, Josh, originally from Wiscasset, spent a summer after high school working as a sternman for a Swan's Island lobsterman. Attracted to the island and lobstering, he decided to move there permanently and begin fishing from Swan's. Christal explains, "It was during the decline of the urchin industry, and a lot of people were switching to lobstering. It was very competitive, and we had a lot of trouble." A friend in similar circumstances moved off the island because of the pressure, "but a lot of older folks on the island encouraged us to stay, to make a go of it. They kept telling us that young couples were too important." The two built a house on the island, and are now happily settled.

They aren't alone. "Of my class, I think the majority live on the island now," Christal says. Still, Christal notes, there can be a problem with community involvement among the younger generation. "There are very few younger people on committees. We need to encourage more of the younger people to be involved." She credits some of this reluctance to a fear of the pressures and conflicts that can come of taking a stand in a small community, but also something as simple as time. "I used to be on more boards; I used to have four meetings a week. I've dropped some because I just didn't have time to do them all well. I think people don't want to take on a board if they feel they don't have the time to devote to it."

The influx of younger people has brought kids to the island, where the school population has dropped in recent years. "When I was in school, there were 50–60 kids in the [K-8] school. This year I think there are 35. But the preschool has a good number now, so I think it is rebounding," she said. Babies are a special attraction in the community. "There was a new mother at the Thanksgiving dinner this year," Christal remembers, "and I don't think she held her baby through the whole dinner because she just kept getting passed around from person to person."

Islanders value children so much that Christal and Josh are feeling pressure. "We never planned on having children, and we are always defending our decision. It seems like in a smaller community the sense of family is so great that the next logical step after marriage is to have kids, and if you fall out of that role, then you are an oddball. They say, 'You've been married nine years! When are you going to have kids?' "

Asked why she chose to stay on the island, Christal turns contemplative. "My reasons for living on Swan's have changed. When I was a kid, I felt like it was all mine. The whole island was my playground. Later, I felt like I was living on an island where everyone was my parent. Now I love the security, knowing that if something happens, everyone is there to help." And as a real estate agent, Christal gets to relive her appreciation for the island over and over again. "Whenever I am showing someone the island, I get a real sense of pride to show them the island through my eyes," she says. "I don't plan on ever leaving. This is my home."

The benefits of island life for younger people are clear: strong communities that are good for kids; opportunities to create a unique life. Equally clear are the challenges. Without a concerted effort to develop employment opportunities and housing options, islands risk losing even the young people that love them.

Slightly murkier is knowing what allows some young people to be successful in island living, while others find it stifling. It's partly temperament, plus the ability to be creative about lifestyle and to think as an entrepreneur. It's partly a function of the community, which must be willing to bend and be supportive of new families. Mostly, it is an equal combination of these ingredients, plus some perseverance, patience—and a little luck.

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*A former Island Institute Fellow, **Cherie Galyean** was until recently the Grants Writer at the Institute. In March she joined the staff of the Maine Community Foundation.*

Inside Out

For an island insider, looking through the camera lens can change everything

RACHEL DAMON

I never thought that I would be living in Maine after graduating from college, let alone making a documentary about island communities. For most of my life all I wanted to do was get off Chebeague Island, move out of Maine and live in a big city. I knew that choosing a college would be the chance to make a change. Then I started to visit the big city schools and realized that I didn't really want to be as anonymous as I had once thought. I grew up in a community where everyone knew me, and while I usually felt stifled living there, at times it was nice. Going away to school gave me new insights into my island community.

Rachel Damon is making a documentary about Maine island boatyards.

When my friends came to the island for a visit I learned how to look at it from an outsider's perspective. As we waited on the wharf for the boat, they were shocked that everyone knew me by name and wanted to know how school was going. I had always taken the elaborate process of commuting for granted, but suddenly my friends helped me see what it looked like from the outside.

One course at Colby College literally changed my life. The goal of American Dreams, taught by Prof. Phyllis Mannocchi, was to make short documentaries about Maine topics. I never thought members of the class would want to make a film about lobstering, but they did, and I was proud of my community when *The Thrill of the Haul* was shown at the Maine International Film Festival during the summer of 2005. The project had forced me to look at my own community from the outside, and it helped me to realize how precious it was to be a community member—an insider.

Using my connections, we made a few phone calls and within 15 minutes we had commitments from three different generations of lobstermen, as well as an original score and a title song. I realized the meaning of networking and the importance of community, and my classmates were amazed!

This experience is why I am still in Maine. A family friend heard about my film experience and hired me to complete a project that his late father had left unfinished, a documentary about Maine island boatyards. A boatyard fulfills many needs that range from being the local gas station and unofficial hardware store to serving as the entry point and lifeline in many communities.

Making a film in my own community has been challenging. At times it is hard to distance myself and ask hard questions of people I have known my whole life. The sale of the boatyard on Chebeague was, from the community's perspective, about more than the sale of a business. There was anxiety: Would a developer turn the land into high-priced condos, and if so, where would we buy our gas and who would put our boats in the water? Having grown up in the community I understood the undercurrents, and knew it was important to document how people really felt. I was nervous when I conducted my first interviews, but my neighbors were much more candid through the whole process than I ever expected. I think it boils down to trust.

Moreover, I wasn't a film crew from Manhattan with no connection to the issues or the islanders. I didn't swoop in, film and leave, never to see the interviewees again. In some ways this has made my job even more difficult, because while people do open up in ways they never would to an outsider, they sometimes say things they regret later. I must present an honest and truthful look at the places where I film, but ultimately the people are more important than the story. I still want to be able to come home for holidays after this film is finished and airs. I want the islanders to be proud to have been a part of the project, not upset with the way they are portrayed.

Yes, to the Chebeague community I am an insider. I know the players and understand how the islanders fit together, but I was never an insider at the boatyard. Before making this film my experiences there were very superficial. I knew Alden and Madeline Brewer, who started the boatyard, because they were my neighbors. Madeline taught me how to needlepoint. I remember Alden as a man with a gruff exterior who was always incredibly kind to me. Both passed away when I was still fairly young. Other than that, my experiences with the boatyard included capsizing boats in the anchorage and folding sails on the lawn. I had no idea that Hartley Brewer, a quiet man and the current owner of the yard, could speak—let alone be the incredibly funny jokester I've come to know over the course of this project. Most Chebeaguers wouldn't believe that on a slow day he turned the tables on me and stood behind the camera to conduct his own interviews. After watching me film for a few months, he wanted to see what it was like from the other side of the lens.

Hanging out at the yard, I got to know—really know—some incredible people I had only seen in passing. I learned more than how to cover a sailboat; I watched the highly choreographed, dance-like act of hauling a lobster boat. I came to realize that there is much more to people than I ever imagined. How many preconceived notions I erased by taking the time to dig just a little deeper! Practical knowledge is grossly undervalued in much of American society, where a piece of paper written in Latin is seemingly valued above all else. Too few of us know how to navigate in the fog, how to set a mooring, how to haul a lobster boat—all vital skills important to the survival of year-round island communities.

I bring a unique perspective to this film because I understand firsthand the other side of the story. I know that behind the postcard views of "vacationland," there are real communities. I understand that islanders have always been quick to help each other in crisis regardless of how they feel personally, because in isolated, weather- and tide-dependent environments, one never knows when they will be the next person needing a hand. I understand how hard it is to live on an island. I have no idea where I will be or what I will be doing when this project is completed in the fall, but I do know that wherever I go and whatever I do, I will take with me a better understanding of the community that made me who I am.

Rachel Damon *graduated from Colby College. She is the daughter of Douglas and Donna Miller Damon and, like her mother, has Chebeague Island deep in her genes.*

CHILD'S PLAY

Never underestimate the value of growing up

KAREN ROBERTS JACKSON

For Christmas this year I ordered 20 buttons from the Syracuse Cultural Workers that proclaim YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE SOLUTION, NOT THE PROBLEM. By virtue of my own no-longer-children, ages 16, 20, 23 and 25, and the fact that my husband is a high school shop teacher, I am continually graced with the company of these vibrant people. The pins flattered my self-image: compassionate, hip, cool, an advocate and strong believer in my young friends.

Many of the adults to whom I gave these buttons, several of them teachers, sort of snorted when they read the message. The young folks groaned. One young friend needed two—they were going to hold up his suspenders at a costume party. I began to imagine what the message would sound like, read around midnight after a few drinks.

Young people tell me they are overwhelmed with possibility, yet feel that life is too damned short and the world is going to hell in a handbasket. They don't know where to begin. "A sense of belonging" is something they need, but which lacks clear definition. Still, what that little liberal pin says is true—they are the solution—and we who would like to mold and shape their perspectives and skills had better broaden our own.

In a small island community, influencing young people takes on greater urgency. Kids are the present, the future, the reason, the cause, the worry and the hope. They have the power and they lord it over us. We adults push and pull them along and they run headlong into it, whatever "it" turns out to be. Island kids are encouraged and allowed to ride a four-wheeler at age six, stern on a lobsterboat at eight, fish at ten, date at twelve, drive at fifteen, own a boat and business at sixteen, own a home by eighteen. Mix in there, at equal intervals, adolescence, alcohol, drugs du jour, sex, fear, no-fear, frustration and the state of the world. Their youth speeds ahead of them erratically and often void-of-course. We adults, at best, hold out our arms in a sort of safety net—a loopy, holey one at that.

The author Michael Meade writes, "Every path a child takes looks precarious to the parent's eye. And it is, and precarious is an old word that means 'full of prayers.' "

Incantations—reckless, cursed or pious prayers—guard over youth, island youth in particular. Punctuated by wind and ocean, precariousness and fate weave into the seams of their upbringing and existence. In many ways, the outside world affects them only as much as they choose to be affected. They can live in a bubble, or a caul perhaps, a protective, salty, amniotic sac that surrounds them and their island homes. But youth is youth, full of fire, passion and often misguided energy. How to direct it, contain it, make use of it, encourage it, are still the great questions for any small community.

For the last five winters our family has moved from our modest, primitive home and surroundings on a more remote island, to a cozy, oil-heated, dishwasher-equipped rental on the less-remote island of Vinalhaven. Over those years our children have shifted to young adults and are hinting that Mom and Dad are pretty close to being put out to pasture. Our greatest gifts to them now are not our wisdom, but purely our familiarity. We are comfort now, not inspiration. In some ways that is more than okay. I, for one, am tired; my fire has dwindled to a more sedate pile of smoldering coals.

Still, this shifting of gears and personalities is not easy. What do you do with their childhoods, for one thing? Where do you pack up and put away the artifacts of their curiosities, the sweetness that was their younger selves? When we go home in the spring it is a confusing time for me. In our 20-by-20-foot cabin I am trying to find space for the treasures I am sure they will want me to save. They are no more than broken Tonka trucks and moldy copies of our favorite books, dolls and miniature homemade tool belts. There is hardly room for their large, lumbering bodies and their more recent projects: the diesel engine in parts on the kitchen counter, the dandelion wine fermenting behind the couch.

Now that they are large and capable, I think of my own myriad projects I would love their help with, the hundreds of things that have been postponed in their growing up. As their eyes glaze over, my eyes take it all in—broken boats, rotting shingles, piles of stuff saved for "someday." The maintenance is a yoke around their bull necks. Every nerve in their freshly educated, newly formed selves is about forging ahead, breaking new ground. Our 20 years of efforts strike them as quaint and ridiculously underfunded.

Our rental in town is an interesting one in that it snugly abuts the school. The shop building is conveniently in our backyard. From our kitchen window I am witness to the restless churning of the island's youth. They drive endless circles through the school parking lot, do donuts in the gravel, pop wheelies down the long stretch. Over the years I have become a voyeur, watching responsible big sisters holding their little brothers' hands while crossing the street, then sloughing off that role as they become delicate blossoms on the arms of large, awkward boys in baggy pants. I have watched lovers' quarrels and fistfights between jealous rivals. Each year there is a new, fresh batch of older siblings urging along the lollygagging younger ones.

Daily I take a walk and pick up their trash; beer bottles, hard liquor that comes packaged in what looks like soda bottles, cigarette packs. I tisk-tisk and sigh and think all sorts of haughty thoughts. Some days I want to jump out in front of them and screech, "Do you realize that while you are wasting hundreds of gallons of gasoline there is an 18-year-old in Iraq dying for your sins?!?" I want them to "think globally, act locally." I want them to do oral histories on the island's elderly. I want them to see how beautiful our new school is and feel pride in it. I want, I want, I want.

There is not a moral to this story. I do not have any great insight into the guidance of our youth. A friend of mine once told me, as both her children and my children were deeply embroiled in the follies of adolescence, "All you can do is love them." I believe that island communities have a better fix on that than, say, large inner cities. It is a blessing and a curse. We love them and hold them, judge them and rate them by name. We forgive them their transgressions and weigh it against their family, their lineage. When we hear their brakes squealing around the corner, we not only follow their route with our ears, but our hearts are saying, ". . . SLOW DOWN, Randy, Johnny, Flora, Patrick, Kyle, Meagan, Nikki, Natalie, Susie, Tommy, Ben, Dusty, Allen. . . ." We love you, we don't want to lose you, we want to see who you become . . ."

Our family has been building our future home for the last 15 years, timber by timber, rock by rock, bag of cement by bag of cement, one stubborn cuss aided feebly by another stubborn cuss. Through luck and osmosis our children have picked up homebuilding and homemaking skills and their individual talents have emerged. Our eldest son is a fine carpenter, launched now in a career he truly loves. I am dumbfounded as to how this goofy kid with the dimples can now carve a beam to 1/64th-inch accuracy. How he can raise a three-story timber frame in a day, laughing and smiling with his friends through the pouring rain.

This last year he built a cabin for an island neighbor. Scavenging at the dump one day he found an old aluminum stretcher, the kind of thing you might see dangling from under a helicopter in an open-water rescue. He brought it home and, together with his friends, rigged it to 100 feet of cable from a previous dump find and their homemade go-cart. After a few weeks of hearing the laughter and clanging from the other side of the island, I finally went over to check out their progress.

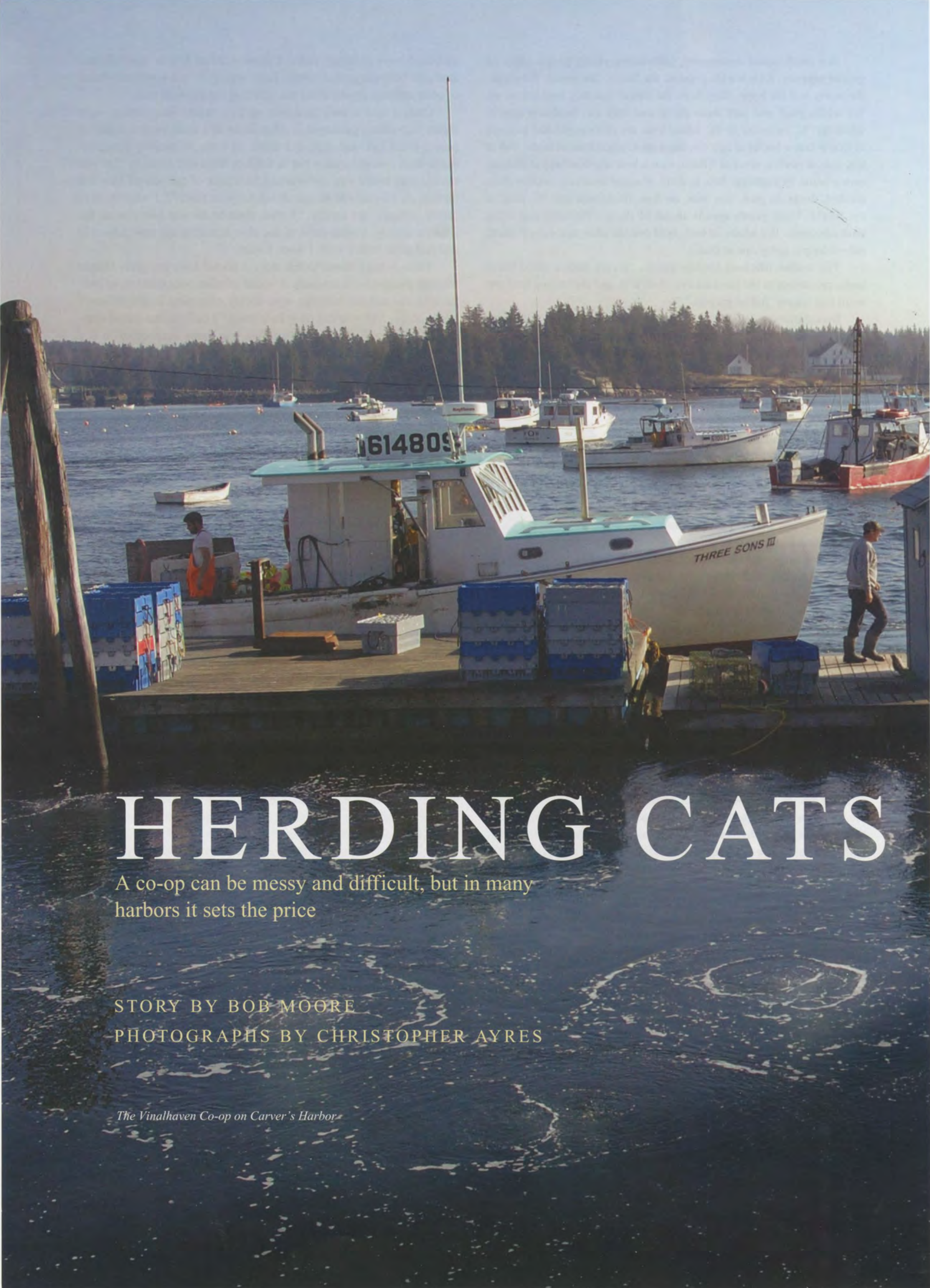
The building site was nearly 40 feet above shore level. From a tripod of spruce trees, braced every 20 feet or so, rose a taut cable, rolling back to the mother ship—the go-cart, still intact with steering wheel and tires. As my son and his friends sat there eating cans of sardines and crackers, drinking campfire tea, the rig smoothly delivered twenty-foot beams, loads of stone, bags of cement, bundles of shingles. I stood there, my mouth hanging open.

Thinking of our own 15 years of lugging and hauling, I stammered, "Dylan, how did you know how to do this? How did you know it would work? That it was safe?"

My son answered with a grin, "Mom, never underestimate the value of childhood play."

I grinned right back. They *are* the solution. The kids are all right.

Karen Roberts Jackson *lives on Vinalhaven in the winter, Greens Island in the summer. Several of her essays have appeared in* Island Journal.



HERDING CATS

A co-op can be messy and difficult, but in many harbors it sets the price

STORY BY BOB MOORE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTOPHER AYRES

The Vinalhaven Co-op on Carver's Harbor

Maine's 18 lobster-buying co-operatives are an interesting corner of the lobster economy, for while they represent a relatively small percentage of lobster-buying stations coastwide (about 13 percent), their contribution is far greater. Co-ops share many similarities with private lobster buyers and with each other, but important differences distinguish co-ops from the rest of the pack. Co-op profits go back into the business, which is owned by the members, while private buyers pocket some of the profits for themselves..

Industry observers agree that Maine's working waterfronts and lobster economy benefit from having it both ways, with private and co-op buying stations sharing the harbor. While co-ops' contributions ripple through the lobstering community, one unsung contribution may be their greatest: permanent access to prime waterfront, ensuring the continued survival of Maine's lobstering heritage.

In the same way a pure democracy is chaotic and calamitous, co-ops are the messy product of mixing dozens of independent and capable fishermen together in a mutually run business. The ruling principle of one-man-one-vote makes co-op meetings run like town meetings. Only here, everyone thinks he or she's the boss.

"My primary interest is the fishermen, not a company," says one former co-op manager.

University of Maine anthropology professor Jim Acheson, author of *Lobster Gangs of Maine*, says there are real costs to organizing and managing a co-op. A co-op demands a lot of work and participation from the membership, which can get complicated. Once it has been organized, it needs a bank to finance the building, parking lot, dock, winch, etc. Members need to hire a manager, elect officers and a board and hold monthly meetings. At these, the co-op manager quite often feels as if he or she's got 40 supervisors, or however many members the co-op has.

Sound like herding cats? "No, the cats are herding you! Sometimes it's just easier if you're a fisherman to pull up to a dealer's dock," says Acheson. "He supplies you with gas, bait, gloves, Styrofoam buoys and maybe also supplies low-interest loans—sometimes very large. I knew a lot of lobstermen in the old days who wouldn't be in business but for the dealer who could tide them over in the hard times."

University of Maine anthropologist Jim Acheson, author of Lobster Gangs of Maine.

It was the very power and strength of the dealers that prompted lobstermen to form co-ops in the first place. In the period after World War II, some fishermen felt too controlled by their dealers, or that they were receiving unfair prices from them, and formed their own buying co-operatives. Unlike most corporations, the co-op's owners are also its patrons, which posed an interesting conundrum for federal regulators; since the late 1800s the government has been very careful to monitor collusion between separate business entities. Could these co-ops possess monopoly powers in determining the price of lobsters? The Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890 was designed to prevent collusion and other potential harms associated with monopolies. It was primarily aimed at large companies, but it could be applied to Maine's lobster co-ops as well. Relief came in 1934 when Congress passed the Fishery Co-operative Marketing Act, giving fishermen and their co-operatives some exemption from antitrust regulations.

A co-op demands a lot of work and participation from the membership.

PRICES MAY VARY

"One Man, One Vote" is the old maxim by which co-ops still run today, though more women are involved in the industry nowadays. Any co-op manager will attest to the importance of co-ops in keeping prices as high as the market will bear, for the benefit of their fishermen members.

"The main advantage is price," says co-op manager George "Penny" Trundy in Stonington. "The fisherman owns part of it. The co-op forces all the other dealers to come up [in price] with us. If we didn't keep the price up, the independent dealers would let the price fall. The co-op sets the price and they follow suit."

"A co-op makes sense in a harbor because my primary interest is the fishermen, not a company. The fishermen are the company," says former Vinalhaven co-op manager Nora Warren. "In that way, co-ops put a lot into the harbor even non-members benefit from. If the selling price went up, a private company might be tempted to keep that extra margin. I make sure the boat price [paid to the fisherman] reflects the selling price, and in theory other buyers follow suit. The point of having a co-op on Vinalhaven is to keep the big boys on their toes."

A private lobster dealer might pay 50 to 70 cents more per pound for lobsters at the dock, but the co-op makes up for that at the end of the year when it does its books. This requires some discipline and long-range thinking on the part of the membership. At the annual meeting, a certain amount of the co-op's net profit is split up amongst the fishing members, after operating expenses, staff salaries and taxes are paid. Each member's "patronage dividend" or bonus is based on the pounds of lobster he or she landed during the season.

Co-ops enjoy certain tax advantages as well. Where all other business corporations pay taxes on profits at tax time, co-ops are given a nine-month grace period to pay. For example, if the co-op declared its dividend in December 2005, the IRS allows it to take a tax deduction as if it were paid promptly, while putting off the actual deadline to September 2006.

"Sound like herding cats?
No, the cats are herding you!
Sometimes it's just easier if
you're a fisherman to pull up
to a dealer's dock . . ."

"We know how important it is to have a working waterfront," says the manager of a co-op that recently bought a dock. "If we'd waited, we wouldn't have been able to afford it."

A FUTURE FOR WORKING HARBORS

Co-ops own some of the most strategic harbor property on the coast, pieces of the working waterfront that won't be developed or sold for private residential use. "It's critical for fishermen to have access to a good chunk of harbor where they can keep the equipment they own and keep their boats," says Warren. "To sell it you'd really have to have everybody's vote, which is unlikely. But a private company—the boss could decide to move out any time. It happened here, when a private buyer sold out. The fishermen had to scatter around and change buyers."

The North End Lobster Co-op on Westport Island was formed in 2002, making it Maine's youngest. "We know how important it is to have a working waterfront," says Dana Faulkingham, who started North End with 13 other fishermen. Membership now hovers around 21. The co-op opens up and gets ready in June, and buys through December. It gives members access to almost four acres for gear storage and their own dock, plus a Travelift and a big boat shop.

Faulkingham and other North End Co-op members have made their enterprise work, but with real estate costs prohibitively high, he acknowledges that things may not work out as well for others. North End Co-op was able to convince its financiers that the difference between the boat price and "middleman" (dealer) price would make payments on the property. "And we have," says Faulkingham. "We were lucky. If we'd waited, we wouldn't have been able to afford it. There isn't one of us that could've done it on our own. We could pool our resources and purchase the property. Once it's paid for, it's ours. It'll be paid for in no time." Perhaps thinking ahead long-term is what distinguishes co-op members.

Faulkingham asks, "If you look downstream, what if everyone sold their wharf and decided to cash in? The guy that's got the two million dollars to buy it isn't the local guy; he's not from here. If two, three or four say they'll sell out, where do all the boats go, where do they work out of? If we lose any more, it becomes a scary situation. We have to be protective of it, and somehow lock those properties in. We have to have them if we're going to lobster or go groundfishing and bring product in. That millionaire doesn't want stinking bait holders and boats firing up at 4:30 in the morning all summer long."

NOT EVERYTHING'S ROSY

Co-op membership can be a double-edged sword. "If [a co-op] has 30 full-time lobstermen members, the co-op is owned by them," says Clayton Howard, a Damariscotta attorney with experience establishing and representing both lobster co-ops and a Fishermen's Credit Union. "Technically the manager has 30 owners to answer to. If the wharf isn't maintained, or people are drinking on premise, you have 30 owners dealing with one manager. There's a lot of direct responsibility. If a manager has the right personality and keeps people intact, it works out."

Social ties in the lobster co-op can sometimes fray around the edges, says Professor Acheson. "Interactions can be rough and acerbic, fueled by alcohol and testosterone. I know a guy who organized a co-op and he quit because he got sick of shouting and screaming idiots trying to get their way when they don't know what they're talking about," says Acheson. "It's classic, New England democracy—the town meeting principle in operation. Everyone meets and decides. It's awkward and time consuming, but it works. It's a different model for people to choose from."

It may be just as well that co-ops aren't for everybody. Having a diversity of buyers to choose from in a harbor brings competition to the market. "It's an important feature having both a co-op and the private wharf owner, who typically is an entrepreneur willing to work seven days and long hours without pay while providing a place for lobstermen to sell," says Howard. "It wouldn't be good to have one private buying station. It's healthy to have a co-op to compete against,

Co-ops aren't for everybody, and having a diversity of buyers to choose from in a harbor brings competition to the market.

and the same works for co-ops too: if you have a co-op owning the entire lobster-buying capacity in town it wouldn't be healthy, because they could dictate boat prices. A mix of both is very healthy."

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Co-ops gain strength from selling high volumes of lobster. That in turn requires sufficient membership of active fishermen. One Swan's Island fisherman sells to a small, private buyer rather than to the co-op there, both out of loyalty and the recognition that competition is important. On Vinalhaven, younger fishermen are being lured to private buyers who may offer five cents more per pound, or beer and occasional barbecues at the dock. A co-op member there has a low opinion of such tactics. "Our whole concept is to make money and give it back. A lot of guys do go somewhere else for a nickel more a pound; that's enough to attract some fishermen who only think about short-term gain. I tell them we wouldn't be getting this price if it wasn't for the co-op. Somebody's got to support the place, and that takes lobster."

By their nature co-ops pool their resources, because they function more as a network than as competing businesses. Nora Warren says when she was managing the Vinalhaven co-op she would often call other co-op managers with questions about bait, who can fix this or that equipment, or to check the credentials of a new dealer her co-op might start working with.

One example of success these days is the Spruce Head co-op. Management there is split between operations (the dock) and finances (the office). Dave Sleeper runs the front office and negotiates prices and other financial arrangements. "Most co-ops have the general manager as the Big Job, and the operations manager below him. I prefer to look at it as a partnership," says Sleeper. What makes his co-op successful? "Volume and efficiency make the difference," says Sleeper. The volume part has come as the Spruce Head co-op's active fishing membership has grown, and because of bountiful landings.

Spruce Head's efficiency is the handiwork of Robert Thompson, a 20-year veteran on the docks. In the tight confines of ten feet of dock, winch and forklift, the daily loading and unloading of lobster, bait and traps is strictly choreographed. There isn't much room for error.

"You have to know what you're doing," says Thompson. "I try to get people to be organized and work together; that's the hard part. But I've been here as long as most of 'em. I been fishing enough that they respect me—I know what I'm talking about. I've also been here long enough that I know what'll work and not work. Just a knack, I guess. You bring a new guy in that thinks he has a clue and doesn't, it won't work."

Efficiency is a result of Thompson's personal involvement in every aspect of operations. He sums up his approach simply as, "Save me the aggravation of your doing it the wrong way, and yourself the aggravation of getting screamed at."

The 3,000 hours a year that he puts in at the co-op conclude in December, when lobster landings slow to a trickle. But from April on, Thompson is on the job. "I make it a high-pressure job because I want things to run smoothly," says Thompson. His two sons work there, as does his wife ("As much as I do, plus she runs the house!").

Like any business, co-ops seek a delicate balance between services offered and paid staff, and the costs they ultimately deduct from the year-end bonus. That bonus, after all, is what keeps bread on a fishing family's table, and what makes it worth putting up with the messy democracy of sharing one's destiny with dozens of other fishermen.

***Bob Moore** writes regularly for Island Institute publications.*

MACKERELING

For a short time in Maine's history, fast little schooners went in search of fast little fish

BEN NEAL

We all think we know about mackerel fishing, having so often seen kids and adults alike out on the pier in the slanting summer evening light, jigging a few hooks out over some now-quiet lobster bait float. They gather long after the real fishing of the day is over, when the lobsters are unloaded and in their cars, the boats refueled and back on their moorings. These small groups of local fishermen and summer folk alike try their luck together on the rising tide to catch a few fish for the bucket. We watch as they bring up glittering stringers of flashing jade-green arrows, slashing away with their improbably fast-beating tails, sounding a rapid tattoo on the boards of the dock. Maybe with some little effort they will catch a dozen, or perhaps the truly dedicated squad aiming to sell some bait might even fill up a tote. This seems to be the common role for mackerel on the contemporary Maine coast, as a fish of little economic consequence, a diversion for sport or bait, which might sometimes be grilled over the open flame or smoked in a barrel, but which would rarely find its way onto the center of the plate or be pursued by a hard-core commercial fisherman.

A mackerel schooner sails off Boothbay early in the last century.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

By 1887 mackereling was listed by the Maine Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics as virtually the only male occupation of the entire island of North Haven.

It is remarkable then to look back at the period just after the Civil War, when it was the mackerel fishery that made lobstering look like child's play, and sent forth hundreds of Maine islanders in the swiftest and most beautiful of schooners, to pursue the elusive shoals of fish along the coast from Nantucket Sound to the islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It was a boom-or-bust fishery where a few good sets could make a season.

This largely Maine-based fishery grew to such an extent that it was listed as "perhaps the most important fishery in the world" in the 1887 George Brown Goode Report. This seven-volume work by the U.S. Commission on Fish and Fisheries painted a stunningly detailed portrait of an industry vital to the growing national economy, one in which Maine was often making the lion's contribution.

THE ISLAND CONNECTION

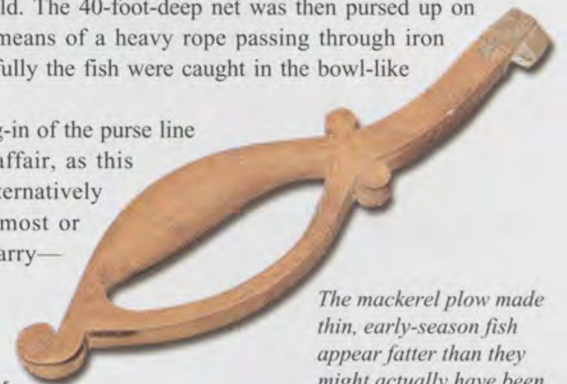
Maine islanders in particular went in for mackerel in a big way, having as they did an abundance of qualified men, a general lack of alternative agricultural summer employment when compared to mainlanders, and perhaps more than the usual amount of willingness to take financial risks. Mackerel could sometimes return ten times the share for a trip, compared to the reliable but somewhat plodding groundfish fishery.

The Maine island communities of North Haven, Islesboro, Swan's Island, Vinalhaven, Isle au Haut, Long Island (in Casco Bay), Southport Island, Deer Isle, and the Cranberry Isles are all known to have sent men and vessels to the mackerel fishery. By the 1840s Vinalhaven alone sent nine vessels to Canadian waters, and by 1887 mackereling was listed in the annual Maine Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics as virtually the only male occupation of the population of the entire island of North Haven.

As the original *History of Swan's Island, Maine*, published in 1898, recalls of mackerel fishing in the 1870s and 1880s, "So alluring and profitable was the occupation that almost every male inhabitant, except those enfeebled by old age or the younger boys, would be gone from the island for most of the summer." In 1837 Isle au Haut sent the schooner PORPOISE in pursuit of mackerel to the northern grounds of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and then, after unloading a profitable cargo back in Portland, recorded a second good catch off the Maine coast later in the season.

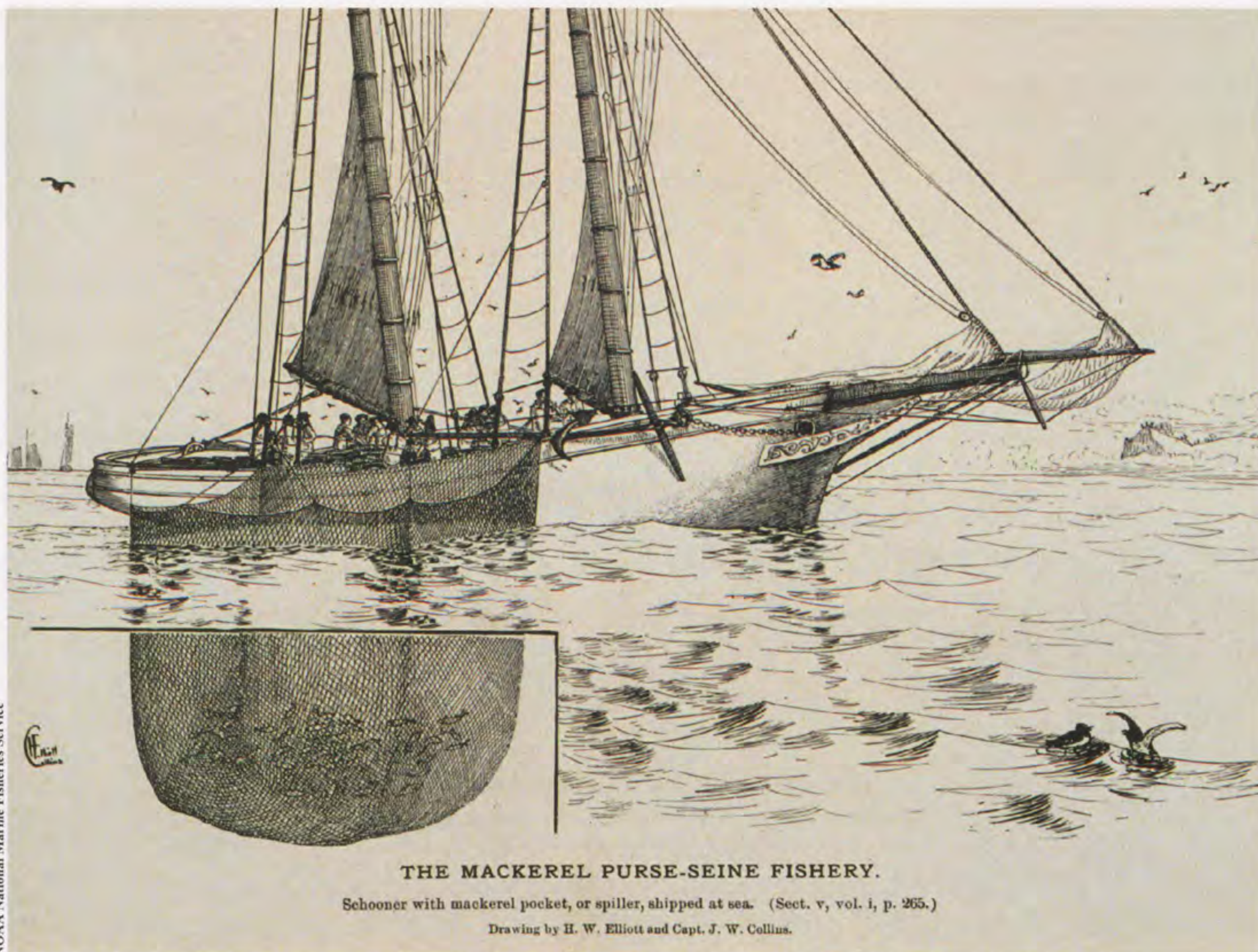
Until the 1850s, the much smaller mackerel were fished in a similar manner to groundfish, by men lining up on the side of the vessel and jigging by hand. The introduction of the purse-seine net after the Civil War made the fishery much more efficient and potentially lucrative, revolutionizing it in the process. Twelve-hundred-foot-long nets were carried in gigs or dories towed behind the main schooner, and when a school was spotted, often by noting the phosphorescence in the water at night, the net was rapidly played out by a crew of up to eight men rowing stealthily in the seine boat around as much of the fish as they could. The 40-foot-deep net was then pursed up on the bottom by means of a heavy rope passing through iron rings, and hopefully the fish were caught in the bowl-like pocket.

The hauling-in of the purse line was a hurried affair, as this action could alternatively enclose either most or none of the quarry—



Ben Fuller, Courtesy of Penobscot Marine Museum

The mackerel plow made thin, early-season fish appear fatter than they might actually have been when they were caught.



A good crew could make up to ten purse "sets" a day.

mackerel can be very elusive, diving out of the seine before it can be closed at the bottom. The rest of the twine was then brought in by hand, or "dried-up," and the catch was hand-brailed on board with dip nets. A good crew could make up to ten sets a day.

Once on board the thousands of fish were individually gutted, split and salted down in barrels. If the catch was large the processing would often take all night. In a departure from the methods of most fisheries, they were split down the backs and not down the bellies, and laid open and sold in one piece.

Especially large, fat, fall mackerel were the most prized, and sold in the market as the first of three grades. With the price of No. 1 fish in 1878 at $16.50 a barrel compared to No. 3 fish at $6.00, fishermen were eager to present their catch at its fattest and most lucrative. It is not surprising then that the trick of the mackerel plow was developed to make thin, early-season fish appear fatter than they actually might have been at the time of catch. This small tool, consisting of a small blade about the size of the tooth of a wood saw set snugly in a crooked handle, was quickly used to cut shallow creases in the backs of the poor-quality "leather-belly" mackerel, which would open the flesh in such a manner to look as if a superabundance of fat had burst the mackerel just as it does for the most corpulent specimens. The "plowed" mackerel then swells when salted and soon becomes solid to the touch, and the general appearance would be that of a more weighty fish worth top price in the market. Fishermen would not have to take to the plow as the season advanced, because mackerel would grow fat on plankton as the summer waned, and by October they were usually in the best condition for preserving.

According to New England food historian Sandy Oliver of Islesboro, fresh mackerel was never highly sought-after for the formal dinner table, and consequently, there is little mention of the relatively oily fish in period New England cookbooks. Mackerel's relative lack of profile in written culinary accounts of the time may also be explained by the fact that it was for the most part a common food of the growing immigrant and urban masses, mostly Catholics who strictly observed the requirement for eating fish on Fridays.

Large markets quickly developed for salt mackerel in southern and even Midwestern cities, and often the fish were shipped on island-based schooners as well. These runs would often take place when the fleet was not fishing, as in the case of the Deer Isle schooner BLUE BELL, which was wrecked in January 1856 while coasting to Baltimore with five hundred barrels of pickled mackerel on board, and another schooner, the CONSTITUTION of Swan's Island, which went down off the Cape in November 1860 while carrying a consignment of mackerel to Virginia.

The bulk of the lower-grade fish were shipped abroad as laborers' food, chiefly to the West Indies, and this export market was important not only for the fishermen but also for their deepwater merchant cousins. Interestingly, although it is little eaten in the States today, salt mackerel remains an important fish to this day in areas such as Jamaica where it became well rooted in the popular culture. It is ironic that the greatest legacy of the once vast and important Maine mackerel fishery lies thousands of miles from the source on a sun-drenched Caribbean island, and that as much as 170 years ago it was common for mackerel landed off of Maine's granite- and fog-bound summer shores to find its way deep into the tropical mountains of Jamaica. In what is heralded as a time of globalization and new and emerging world markets, it is interesting to realize what mercantile roads we may have walked before.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

A crew in a whaleboat pays out a mackerel seine. Even small mackerel schooners carried plenty of sail.

THE FASTEST MODELS OF SCHOONERS

The mackerel schooners themselves represented an extreme evolution of the type, built both for maximum speed (to bring the perishable catch to market) as well as for maneuverability (as they were, unlike the groundfish boats, an integral part of the actual fishing operation). By the mid-1850s the "clipper" type, with a sharp concave entry and a long bowsprit, had emerged to dominate the fleet. As marine historian Howard I. Chappelle has noted, "The class in which the clipper was the particular favorite was the mackerel schooners. The mackerel fishery always attracted the fastest models of schooners, including some of the most extreme designs."

Even though they were small, the mackerel schooners piled their sail onto lofty rigs, carrying topsails on both main and fore, and with a fishermen's staysail to top it all off. Joseph W. Collins, a government official and Islesboro native who was an astute contemporary observer of the fishing industry, commented that "the mackerel schooners commonly carry all the canvas their rig will allow," and added that "these mackerel vessels as a rule spread more sail, in comparison with their size, than any other vessels in the world, except, perhaps, the extreme type of schooner-rigged yacht."

These beautiful little ships could operate with limited crews, and came to fruition during the period of full flower of Maine's shipbuilding industry. Local yards were busy in the years 1847–1857, producing the largest number and tonnage of wooden ships built in Maine in any decade. This period just before the Civil War coincided with the emergence of a vigorous New England edge-tool producing industry, as well as the specialization of block makers, sail makers, ship's blacksmiths, rope walks, etc., all of which contributed to the efficiency and proliferation of the shipbuilding industry, which could crank out high-quality small schooners on remarkably short timelines.

The speed and responsiveness of these sprightly schooners did not come cheaply, however, and a mackerel schooner often represented a considerably larger investment than a cod-fishing vessel of comparable or even larger size. In 1852, 12 of the 35 fishing schooners sailing from Belfast were engaged solely in mackerel, and they had an average value of $3,942 each, compared to the average of $1,970 in value for the cod schooners, which actually had a larger average tonnage.

A bad year came in 1886, which brought the worst fishing in half a century. A contemporary news account noted, "The fishing season has been one of the worst known. The total amount of mackerel packed at Portland this year was only 12,000 barrels, against 80,000 barrels in 1885, and 155,000 barrels in 1884. Out of some 50 [Maine] vessels which fitted out this season only about half a dozen have realized a profit . . ."

In another year the ALICE M. GOULD of Boothbay returned wages only to the cook, and the rest of the crew had to literally buy their way off the vessel after four months of hard work. This boom-or-bust activity was common in the fishery, even in the heyday of mackereling, and while lending an air of uncertainty to the venture, was also certainly attractive to the risk-taking, hard-driving captains and fishermen of the day.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service

The bulk of the lower-grade fish were shipped abroad as laborers' food, chiefly to the West Indies, and salt mackerel remains an important fish to this day in areas such as Jamaica.

CRASH

This hotly pursued fishery could not last. In a progression that has become so familiar in other fisheries today, catches began to decrease, more effort and days at sea were needed, and the nets became larger. By 1887 it was recognized that the catches were not recovering, and in 1893 the southern New England fishery was suspended. There was some recovery in the early 1900s, but mackerel fishing was never to regain the economic or social prominence it commanded in the second half of the 19th century. The elegant schooners were converted to groundfish work (which was soon to have its own revolution with the advent of the powered trawler), sold into the growing yacht market, or just run up on the shore.

It was in fact the adoption of the seine net, which was the very technology responsible for making the fishery so successful, that was blamed for much of the decline. In a statement that could have been written today in the groundfish fishery, a delegation of Maine fishermen told federal regulators in Washington that "seining has ruined the mackerel fishing business, and until it is stopped and the old method of catching on the hook adopted again there can be nothing better expected."

As the catches decreased, the fishery became more concentrated in the hands of more highly capitalized Massachusetts operators who could ride out the bad seasons, and the Maine fishermen began to turn more to lobstering. Prior to 1876 only 200 men were recorded as being engaged in full-time lobstering in the entire state, and only 20 vessels were registered as participating in the fishery, but the 1880s saw a meteoric rise as fishermen left the mackerel- and cod-fishing fleets in droves, and the catch of lobsters would double to 25 million pounds by 1889. By the middle of the decade of the 1880s almost all Matinicus and Vinalhaven fishermen had left the distant-water fisheries, and a 1926 history of Matinicus records that lobstering "had become more profitable than any other branch of the fisheries of the region."

In an increasingly industrialized world, Maine's surpluses of entrepreneurial and skilled fishermen and highly specialized wooden boatbuilders ultimately lost out in the sea fisheries to more sophisticated powered vessels supported by higher amounts of capital, and the easier access to growing populations enjoyed by the southern ports.

Thus ended, for Maine, one great and nearly forgotten age of independent ownership and small-scale capitalism. Perhaps, however, the legacy is not entirely gone, as there developed within the mackerel fishery an inherent social and economic fishing ethos that remains strong and recognizable in nearly every independently owned and operated lobster fishing boat of today.

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LEST WE FORGET

When America mobilizes, Vinalhaven turns out in force

HARRY GRATWICK

Honor Roll, late 1940s

Phil Brown

In December 1944, 1st Lieutenant Phil Brown (Vinalhaven High School class of 1939) found himself and his radioman pinned down by German shells at the height of the Battle of the Bulge. Brown recalls hearing an incoming shell "that had our names on it."

"So long, kid," he called to the radio operator.

"So long, Lieutenant," was the reply. Then the shell hit, destroying a tree between the two men, yet miraculously failing to explode. When demolition experts later examined the dud, it was found to be stuffed with enough sawdust to stop the detonation. Inside it a note was found written in English, but in the style used by Europeans, saying, "We can help you to live."

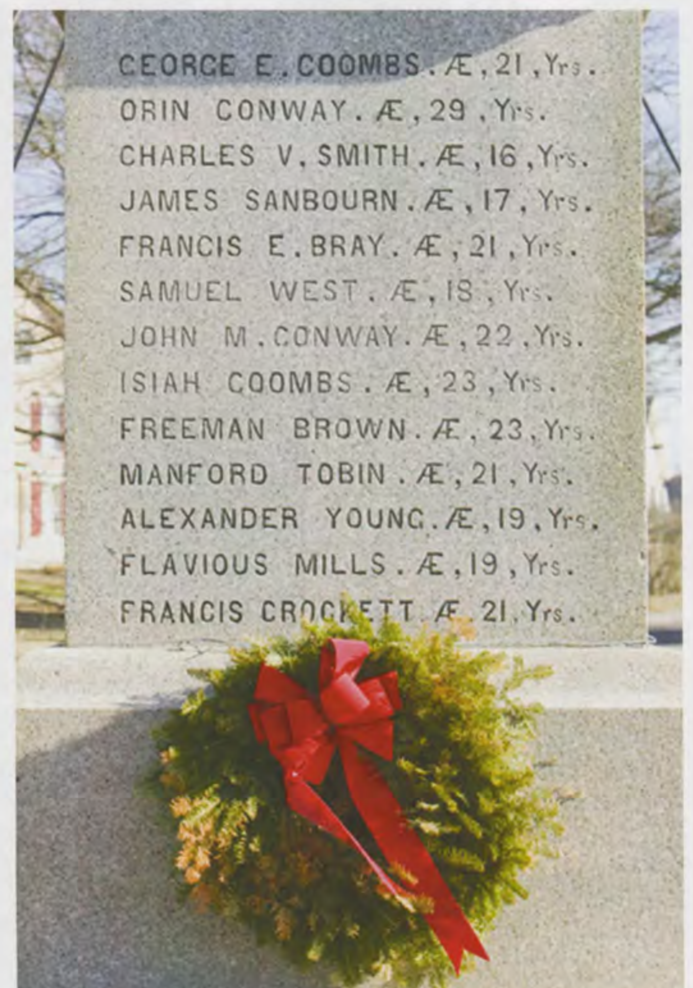
As Brown said in an interview after the war, "I owe my life to some poor human being in one of those slave labor camps."

Memorial Day, late 1940s

Not everyone was as fortunate as Lieutenant Brown and his radioman. Sixteen of the more than 300 young men and women from Vinalhaven who served died in the war. Their names, along with those who fought in all of America's wars, are read annually during the island's Memorial Day parade. Beginning at the American Legion Hall, the parade proceeds through the town to the Civil War monument across from the library. The band plays, prayers are recited and the names are read.

Burke Lynch served in the Marine Corps for 22 years before retiring in 1988 to live on Vinalhaven. A Vietnam veteran, Burke has taken part in many Memorial Day parades and yet he says, "I have never seen anything like the one on Vinalhaven. I consider it a privilege to participate."

Vinalhaven residents have traditionally supported their country in time of war. During the Civil War 125 men fought for the Union. Of these, 23, including a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old, GAVE THEIR LIVES IN DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY DURING THE GREAT REBELLION, in the words inscribed on the impressive monument at the end of Main Street. In 1898–99 ten men served in the Spanish American War. Seventy men fought in America's brief (1917–18) participation in World War I; four of these died. More recently, 16 fought in Korea and ten in Vietnam, one of whom died.



During the Civil War 125 men fought for the Union.

Peter Ralston

Inscribed by Life *photographer Bernard Hoffman: "Best Regards to a swell bunch of guys"*

FROM DEPRESSION TO WAR

Like most communities across America in 1940, Vinalhaven was still feeling the effects of the Great Depression. The population of the island had declined from a high of almost 3,000 people in 1880 (when the granite business was booming) to the 1,630 year-round residents counted in the 1940 census. There simply wasn't much money to be made. Most of the quarries had closed down. Lobsters were selling for six cents a pound. Across the bay in Rockland, many businesses were boarded up and homes were neglected. Few houses had refrigerators and less than half had indoor plumbing. One newcomer to the town recalled that "coming to Rockland in 1940 was like stepping back 50 years into history."

But in a year, America would be at war with Germany and Japan. Many Vinalhaven families would leave the island for jobs on the mainland in the defense industry. The Vinalhaven Historical Society lists 27 men and women who went to work for one firm, Pratt & Whitney in Hartford, Connecticut, and 364 men and women, out of an island population of slightly more than 1,600, would fight for their country during the course of the war.

Ivan Hakon Olson

War first came to Vinalhaven in the form of German submarines. On Christmas Eve, 1941, island residents heard heavy gunfire southeast of the island. Authorities refused to comment and government censorship soon prevented such reports from even appearing in the press. In 1942 Fred Tripp, lobstering off Criehaven, recalled listening to U-boats at night charging their batteries; he often heard bits of German drifting over the water in the darkness. Soon the Coast Guard issued shortwave radios to lobstermen working off the outer islands of Penobscot Bay so they could report suspicious activities. Phil Dyer tells the story of a lifeboat riddled with bullet holes that was found on the eastern shore of Vinalhaven. One theory was that the boat was from a sunken merchant ship and that its occupants were shot up by a submarine. Submarines continued to be sighted off the East Coast throughout the war and residents of island communities were advised to keep a sharp lookout.

Shortly after the United States' entry into the war, Hitler ordered an extensive sabotage campaign designed to disrupt American industry. Several would-be saboteurs were arrested in eastern Maine. On Vinalhaven, a watchtower was built above Carver's Harbor on Ambrust Hill, with a direct phone line to Bangor to report "suspicious activities." Townspeople manned the tower around the clock, women during the day and men at night. Residents remember the box-like structure being very cramped and very cold in winter. At one point Virginia Webster spotted "a black shape low in the water," which she called in, giving its approximate distance and direction. She found out later that the suspicious object was nothing more than the

oil boat laden with fuel. Vinalhaven's Roy Ames kept homing pigeons aboard his boat that could head for designated places on the mainland as a part of the coastal alert system. Later Ames received a thank-you from the government for his assistance.

The war affected life on Vinalhaven in a variety of ways. Blackouts were enforced at night and wardens patrolled the town to ensure compliance. Windows had to be completely darkened and the few cars on the island were instructed to use only their parking lights when out at night. Gas, sugar, meat and rubber were rationed. Buddy Skoog, whose family had moved to Rhode Island so his father could work at a shipyard but who persuaded his parents to let him return to the island to attend high school, recalls that most families had gardens, kept a few chickens and often did a bit of hunting. Phil Dyer remembers Coast Guard ships coming in to Carver's Harbor with extra gas. Enterprising sailors would "exchange" gas for lobsters with local fishermen, boosting the local economy a bit.

In 1942 the ferry W. S. WHITE was commandeered by the Army to transport troops in Portland harbor, leaving Vinalhaven (and North Haven) cut off from the mainland. For a year Capt. Charlie Philbook filled in as best he could with his 40-foot fishing boat until the VINALHAVEN II began service in July 1943. Throughout the war, nearby Seal Island was used by the Navy for target practice. Buddy Skoog remembers sitting in school, feeling the walls vibrate and watching shells and bombs hitting the island five miles away. One afternoon Phil Dyer and his brother Joe were fishing off Seal Island. To their horror, several destroyers suddenly appeared and began target practice before they could get out of the area. The boys returned to Vinalhaven with shells flying over their heads for the first part of the trip. Today Seal Island is a bird sanctuary that still contains rounds of live ammunition.

Allen Healey Middleton

STORIES TO TELL

Many of the young men on the island chose to enlist in a particular branch of the service to avoid being drafted into the Army. John Beckman and his younger brother Francis both enlisted in the Marines in 1942. Francis was one of the 12,000 Americans killed in the brutal battle for Okinawa in 1945.

John Beckman survived the bloody Anzio landings in Italy early in 1944. A few months later he found himself on a ship headed for the invasion of France. For some reason that has always puzzled him, he was ordered off the ship and as a result missed the D-Day landings on the Normandy beaches. He later heard that his section of the ship sustained a direct hit by a German shell and that 50 of his crewmates were killed.

After the war Beckman returned to his beloved island and spent the next 60 years of his life lobstering and building boats. Today at 87 he and his wife still live on Vinalhaven, where he enjoys talking with his friends and recounting his war experiences.

Dr. Earle Enlists

Vinalhaven Man To Be 1st Lieutenant In the Medical Corps

Dr. Ralph Earle

Arnold Barton and his cousin Fred both joined the Navy in January 1944. After six weeks' training in boot camp, 21-year-old Fred Barton was sent directly overseas. He was killed at the height of the D-Day landings, when the minesweeper he was on sustained a direct hit from a German shore battery. Arnold Barton served on a tanker in the Atlantic and a repair ship in the Pacific until the end of the war. After the surrender of Japan, he returned to Vinalhaven and resumed his life as a lobsterman and fisherman. "His life pretty much returned to normal as he took up fishing and caretaking," his wife, Charlotte, recalls. As he got older he enjoyed talking about his wartime experiences with his family and friends.

Alan Middleton, who graduated from Vinalhaven High School (VHS) in 1934, was president of his class and a high school pitcher good enough to be signed by the Boston Red Sox, although he never made it to the major leagues. Middleton joined the Air Force shortly after Pearl Harbor, and in 1942 he was assigned to the 91st Fighter Squadron based in North Africa. On January 27, 1943 Middleton was killed when his plane was shot down over the Mediterranean. His body was never found.

Following his extraordinary escape from death in the Battle of the Bulge, Phil Brown returned from Europe, having won three Bronze Stars. At Dartmouth College he resumed his studies, which had been interrupted by the war. Brown completed his degree in 1946 and pursued a career in business, though friends say he had the potential to be a big league pitcher. In 1948 he went to work for North & Judd, a precision manufacturing company in New Britain, Connecticut. In 1970 he was named CEO of the company. Brown retired to Boothbay and occasionally visited Vinalhaven. He died in 2003.

Frank Peterson (VHS '38) played first base on the high school team with Phil Brown. Following graduation, he went to the University of Maine at Orono, where he got his civilian pilot's license while an undergraduate. When war broke out he joined the Air Transport Command and flew Air Force equipment and personnel from Africa to India. After the war Peterson became a commercial airline pilot, flying for New England Air and Delta for 38 years until he retired in 1980. Peterson currently spends his summers on Vinalhaven and winters in Florida.

In November 1945, 1st Lieutenant Ralph Earle, MD, returned from three years of serving in the Air Force. Like many young men just back from the war, he was trying to decide how to spend the rest of his life; in his case, where to resume his medical career. Earle had grown up in Philadelphia, graduating from Hahnemann Medical School, where he had completed the four-year program in two years. From 1937 to 1942 Earle had what he considered to be a "dream job" for a young man just out of medical school, when he served as Vinalhaven's island doctor. In 1942 he enlisted in the Air Force Medical Corps, realizing the military's desperate need for doctors. In November 1945, Dr. Earle was invited to meet with the Vinalhaven town selectmen, members of the Lions Club and two summer residents who, as former naval officers, had access to surplus naval diagnostic and therapeutic equipment. The result was the formation of The Islands Community Medical Services, Inc., established in 1946 as a tax-supported, nonprofit organization to "operate a dispensary on Vinalhaven." Dr. Earle was also interested in helping the young people of Vinalhaven, and through his efforts a Community Hall and Credit Union were established. Earle continued to serve as the island doctor for Vinalhaven until his death in 1975.

Vinalhaven Sergeant Is Killed In China

Special Dispatch to The Press Herald

Vinalhaven, March 6 — Sgt. Kenneth Clinton Thomas was killed in an airplane crash in Luliang, China Jan. 25, according to word received from the War Department by his widow, Mrs. Edith Thomas here. Sergeant Thomas entered the service in July, 1942, and the past 18 months had been stationed in India. He had received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and Presidential Citation. Besides his widow, he is survived by his mother, Mrs. Carrie Thomas, a sister, Mrs. Lyford Ross, and a brother, Frank Thomas, all of Vinalhaven.

POSTWAR CHANGE

The demographics of the island had begun to change during the late 1930s, as people left for better-paying defense jobs on the mainland. Some returned after the war, others did not. The island drew veterans like Arnold Barton and John Beckman back to resume their lives on the sea, while others like Phil Brown and Frank Peterson sought their fortunes elsewhere. Of the 27 men and women who went to work for Pratt & Whitney, almost half did not return, although several have come back since as retirees. Others took advantage of the GI Bill and went to college.

Arnold and Fred Barton

VINALHAVEN RESOUNDS WITH THE NOISE OF BUSY BUILDERS, read a headline in the March 1948 issue of the old *Maine Coast Fisherman*. The article by Larry Gould reported that "Vinalhaven is proud of its boatbuilders; both of their quality and number. A 'cruise' around town includes eight or nine 'ports of call' where saws rasp, hammers pound and planes shave curls of clean-smelling wood in island boat shops." With the price of lobsters still low, a number of ex-servicemen had begun to make boatbuilding a part-time if not full-time business. A good example was Bob Johnson, who spent two and a half years in the Pacific as a member of the Engineer Corps.When he returned, Johnson opened a boat shop in partnership with his brother-in-law Edwin Maddox. Bob's first boat was the HAZEL R., which had the unusual distinction of appearing in the 1948 20th Century Fox movie *Deep Waters*, filmed on the island and starring Dana Andrews and Cesar Romero. Bob Johnson was just one of a generation of Vinalhaven boatbuilders who helped pump life into the island's economy when they returned to the island in the years immediately following the war. The legendary Gus Skoog, Buddy's father, was another. Gus built close to 80 boats before his death at 91 in 1987, and Phil Dyer—whose father Les bought the HAZEL R. from Bob Johnson—finished his 100th boat last year and shows no signs of slowing down at the age of 79. For Phil, as for so many islanders of his generation, World War II was life's watershed event.

Retired from teaching in Philadelphia, ***Harry Gratwick*** *spends much of the year on Vinalhaven. Except where credited otherwise, all photographs courtesy of the Vinalhaven Historical Society.*

WXLD

COMING HOME

Sixty years ago, "Saipan Ann" was the Allies' answer to Tokyo Rose

SANDRA DINSMORE

Theodora and Stephen McCormick planned careers that would make good use of their fine voices and outgoing personalities. Theo had wanted to pursue a singing career. In the 1930s she received three voice scholarships, but had to leave Boston University after being hit by a car and missing a semester. Steve's rich, resonant voice led to radio. In 1935 he moved to Washington, D.C, at his brother's suggestion, where he landed a job at Mutual Broadcasting. Within a year he was introducing President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats" to an audience of several million listeners.

Today the McCormicks (he is 91; she is 88) spend much of the year on Swan's Island, where the accomplishments of their lives make them "perfect examples of 'The Greatest Generation,'" in the opinion of Myron (Sonny) Sprague, an accomplished islander himself.

Sandra Dinsmore

Today Theo and her husband, Steve, live much of the year on Swan's Island.

In 1945 Theo McCormick was on the air for an hour a day as "Saipan Ann," the Armed Forces Radio girl-next-door to American airmen flying missions over Japan.

Courtesy of Theo and Stephen McCormick

Steve McCormick (center, rear) in uniform

World War II was a defining event for the McCormicks. They met in 1945 in Hawaii, where Theo had been working for the Red Cross. Steve had been in the Western Pacific for nearly two years, involved in the invasion of Saipan. It was on Saipan, in fact, that Theo subsequently made a name for herself: as "Saipan Ann," the Red Cross broadcaster who was on the air an hour a day for six months, welcoming pilots back from their dangerous bombing runs over Japan.

Theo, then 27, had applied for staff positions with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the American Red Cross. Both accepted her and she chose the Red Cross. She took her training in Washington, D.C. "I had my choice of theater of war," she said. "My first was China-Burma-India because it was the farthest away and was challenging, actually."

The Red Cross sent her to Honolulu, where she did some radio work, mostly talking, which she still does well. Her primary job, though, was to work as a liaison between American families with husbands and sons in the service.

"I'd go to the post office and help track down boys who were not writing home," she recalled.

"I got orders to go to Saipan," she went on, "and the day after I arrived, I was asked if I could do an antidote to Tokyo Rose for Armed Forces Radio. I said, 'Sure.' "

American Armed Forces Radio had set up a 500,000-watt signal on Saipan that reached Australia and the Southwest Pacific. There were 400 to 500 planes involved in hostilities there at the time and, Steve said, "Theo would be heard by these flyers coming back." He recalled a saying the airmen had: "It was five hours of boredom on the way to the target, five minutes of hell over the target, and five hours of boredom if we made it back to base."

Theo was on the air an hour a day for the eight or nine months of 1945 she was on Saipan. She did a "girl-next-door" kind of show during which she played records and chatted about and to the boys she visited in the hospital.

According to her husband, those few Red Cross women played an important role by encouraging the servicemen and keeping their morale up. Of course, with only six or eight of them compared to the thousands of servicemen on the island, Theo said, "We always had to have two armed men as an escort when we went anywhere."

Movie star and Marine pilot Tyrone Power, who also had a radio show on Saipan, told Theo she ought to save the many thank-you letters she received from the B-29 aviators. "They told me they felt as though they were coming home," she recalled. "So I felt I was doing something good for them." Theo kept some of the letters, but has no idea where they are—probably with a daughter in Virginia.

She'd start her show each day by saying, "This is Ann of the American Red Cross Music Canteen," and then she'd say, " 'Hi, fellas,' and go into requests. "It was ordinary, everyday, kind of plain talk." It must have been just what those lonely, scared young men wanted to hear from the girl next door.

A sprightly, sparkling, strong-minded and slightly eccentric 88-year-old, Theo refuses to shake hands because it spreads germs (she even lectures her physician about it).

Steve, a healthy, hearty 91, is a natural talker who never seems to run out of steam or words: a perfect choice for a career in radio. In

1936 he found himself in the enviable position of introducing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Fireside Chats" to a Mutual Network radio audience of several million people. As a newsman he covered Capitol Hill and the White House for press conferences.

"It was a wonderful experience," Steve said of the prewar years in Washington.

Roosevelt selected the first several hundred thousand men between the ages of 18 and 30 in the first draft drawing. Steve's number came up, and, on the air, he remembers blurting out, "That's my number!" An Associated Press headline the next day read: ON THE AIR CAUGHT IN THE DRAFT.

"I had what I called 'a new brown suit' and $21 a month for a 12-month hitch," Steve recalled. "I came home five years later." Starting out as a private in the spring of 1941, he peeled potatoes and washed dishes. After a couple of days of that, he decided to pull strings. He called the White House, asked to speak to President Roosevelt's "right arm," Missy Le Hand, and asked her to write him any old thing, but to write it on White House stationery. A couple of days later the captain of the squadron called Steve in and asked him if he knew somebody in the White House. When Steve explained, his career took off.

He was soon ordered to Washington to the Intelligence Office of General "Hap" Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Corps. A few months later, the commanding officer of the G-2 section [Intelligence] recommended he go to a new entity, an Officer Candidate School for the Signal Corps. "Ninety days later, just after Pearl Harbor," Steve said, "I graduated as a second lieutenant. I was then ordered to a new force on the East Coast called the Anti-Aircraft Artillery Command as an aide to General Sanderford Jarman."

ON THE BEACH

Steve, then Major McCormick—he ended his service as a lieutenant colonel—had been "out forward" in the Western Pacific action for a year when, in early 1945, he was sent back to Hawaii for two weeks. There he met Theo Henelt, who remembers someone from the Red Cross approaching her and saying, "We have this major coming for a couple of weeks. Could you get him a date?" Theo said, "I arranged a date with one of the Red Cross girls. I met him and thought he was very nice. He had different dates." Theo and Steve didn't have regular dates. They went for walks on the beach; they saw movies together; they ate some meals together. That was about it.

In early 1945, the Allies were getting ready for a big assault on the islands of Japan. "If the A-bomb hadn't been invented and brought over and dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and ended the war, we would have gone ahead with our plan, and it would have been pretty rough," he said.

Once the war ended, Steve proposed to Theo on the beach at Saipan. They both remember everyone rushing to get back home. Theo got a berth on a hospital ship; Steve reached Oahu a month later, then spent the next couple of weeks trying to get a flight to California. Once back in Washington and together again, they married in Alexandria, Virginia, and Steve went back to his job covering the White House for the Mutual Broadcasting System.

"Harry Truman was a wonderful man," he said. "I had occasion to thank him when I came home. He'd take a newsman or two with him when he went for his walk. When my turn came I said, 'Mr. President, I want to thank you, not only for myself, but for all of us. Thank you for your courage in dropping the A-bomb and ending the war.' "

" 'It really wasn't that difficult,' " Steve remembers the president telling him. " 'Remember, I was in World War I, and I'll never forget how tough it was on the battlefield and the screaming and the mud. Until I was president, they didn't tell me they were working on a new weapon that could end the war. I told them, Push it. Drop it. Maybe we can end the war.' "

In addition to Steve's work in covering the news and politics, he later did two television shows for NBC, and he and Theo did a "Mr. and Mrs." radio program in which they'd invite people to submit questions. Theo recalled, "I would do the research at the Library of Congress, then one of us would answer the questions."

Her career stopped after she found she was going to have her first child. To this day she resents having had to give up her job, but that was the way things were done in the forties and fifties. After her two daughters grew up, she wrote a newspaper column and took up painting, returning to college in the 1960s to study art. In recent years her paintings have increasingly absorbed her interest.

Over the years they both thought they'd like to find a place in Maine. Steve said, "We both love New England; I was born here," and Theo added, "I spent vacations in Sanford and Old Orchard when I was a child."

"So we took a week off and came to Maine," Steve continued. "I said, 'Let's start halfway up.' So we came up to the general area of Bar Harbor. We spent about five days looking around, and one day we saw an ad [for a house] in the local paper. We called up, and it turned out to be [on] a place called Swan's Island. We found that there was a ferry, so we came over here and looked at the place, and it wasn't quite what we wanted, so while we were waiting for the ferry, we drove around and found an airstrip run by two delightful old ladies who had a lunch counter there. We had lunch and got talking to them and told them we had come over to look for a house, but didn't like it. And one of the ladies said, 'I have a house for sale—it's rented now, but you can tell the renter I said you could look at it.' So we came down. She had a real estate agent, but the sign was in the grass. The place was locked. Nobody was there. We looked through the windows, and it looked kind of interesting. Came back to the mainland, stopped and talked with the agent. Went home, discussed it, made an offer, and got word from the agent that she'd accepted it."

"We never entered the thing until the sale was completed," Theo said.

Steve picks up the story: "We went to Bar Harbor for the settlement [closing] and then we said, 'Let's go see our house.' So we went over to the ferry. And we're on the ferry, and the deckhand says, "Mr. McCaamick?" and I says, "Huh! How do you know my name? It's only the second time we've been here." He said, "Well, the word got around that you've had a settlement, and we thought you'd be coming over to see your house." I said, "Yeah, that's right." I said, "Who are you?" He said, "I'm John Martin, the tax collector.' "

They both love that story.

Theo's months of broadcasting as Saipan Ann continue to follow her. In 1995 the *Bangor Daily News* did a story on Theo's Saipan Ann radio shows. A photograph of her spinning records was part of an exhibit at the Army-Navy Club of Washington honoring those who flew the missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Someone pinned the BDN story up at the Swan's Island post office, where it was seen by islander James Gillespie, who died in 2005, but who, all those years ago, had listened to Saipan Ann in the Pacific whenever his submarine surfaced. When he read that Saipan Ann was his friend, Theo McCormick, he wept.

__Sandra Dinsmore__ writes regularly for Island Institute publications.

District 9 Schoolhouse c. 1898, now the Museum of Chebeague History (Unless credited otherwise, all photographs courtesy of the Chebeague Island Historical Society)

Memorial Day, circa 1930

EXTENDED FAMILY

On Chebeague, Ambrose Hamilton's legacy endures

L-R Solomon Hamilton and his daughter, Statira Hamilton, the author's great-grandmother and great-great grandfather, both lived to be over 90. Longevity is a Hamilton trait. (Author's Collection)

DONNA MILLER DAMON

Why is it that some islands thrive, while others wither and fade away? A century ago the Maine coast was dotted with hundreds of islands that sustained year-round communities. Today the number has dwindled to 15.

For some islanders the connection to family and place are indistinguishable. Oral traditions hold families together, connect the present to the past, and provide a reason for islanders to hang on when adversity knocks on the door.

Maine Historic Preservation Commission (3)

The family of Captain Jeremiah and Matilda Hamilton, c. 1881

Jeremiah and his older son must have been at sea when the photographer came the next year.

Three generations of the family of Captain Roswell and Georgianna Hamilton

During the summer of 2006 the Museum of Chebeague History will mark an important event that occurred 250 years ago when a 21-year-old named Ambrose Hamilton bought 50 acres of land on the island. Within a few years he had more than doubled the size of his homestead, cleared enough of the lot to build a home and married a young woman named Deborah Soule, whose New England roots went back to the MAYFLOWER. Eventually the Hamiltons had 14 children and 72 grandchildren, the majority of whom settled on Chebeague.

By numbers alone one might expect the Hamiltons to play an important role in the history and evolution of Chebeague, but they did more than outnumber the newcomers who moved to the island over the generations. The Hamiltons welcomed these neighbors. Their sons and daughters married the new settlers' children, and the families shared grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Some say that the connections between the first few generations of Chebeaguers created an extended family; in many ways, this is true. This entwining of the island's roots, in fact, laid the foundation of a community that has sustained itself for nearly a dozen generations.

Hamilton descendants continue to collaborate with other islanders to carry on the island traditions. Other families also played important roles in the island's history, but no matter how you tell Chebeague's story, it always begins with Ambrose Hamilton.

George II was King of England, Maine was part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and North Yarmouth was still thought of as part of the Northern Frontier when Ambrose Hamilton bought his land from Zachariah Chandler in 1756. Hamilton, born in North Yarmouth in 1735, was a teenager when a conflict with the Indians threatened the settlement. Neighbors were gunned down, peers were captured and carried away and many mainlanders sought protection in garrison houses. Moving to an island may have seemed like a good option.

Ambrose Hamilton married in 1763, the year the French and Indian War ended with the Treaty of Paris. By the spring of 1775 the Hamilton family had grown to eight. After the battles at Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill the British cruised the New England coast hoping to intimidate the inhabitants. Ambrose Hamilton joined the Continentals patrolling the seacoast of Cumberland County, while Col. John Waite, who owned the eastern half of Chebeague, was so concerned about the British cruisers that he packed up and moved back to Falmouth Neck (now Portland). But when the British burned Falmouth, Waite lost everything in the fire, and Chebeague was spared. Many years later, Deborah Hamilton told her grandchildren about the October day when she and her children listened to the British cannons and watched the conflagration as Falmouth burned. There is no record that indicates she considered leaving the island. The Hamilton roots were taking hold.

With each successive generation, the people became more connected to the island and were willing to take risks to stay there. During the War of 1812, for example, some islanders put common sense aside and crewed aboard Casco Bay privateers cruising the Atlantic, searching for British ships to board and claim for America. They were legally sanctioned because the American Navy had neither the ships nor the manpower to challenge the British Navy. If successful, a captain and crew could sell a ship and cargo, and they stood to make a relative fortune. If they failed and were captured, they were sent to a British prison or worse. Because of the pirate-like appearance of this activity, subsequent generations of Chebeaguers spoke of this swashbuckling chapter of their history in hushed tones in the privacy of their own homes—or between the stones in the island graveyard. It is assumed that privateering brought needed capital into the pockets of Chebeaguers, enabling them to buy more land and invest in new economic opportunities.

Sometime during the early years of the 19th century, Chebeaguers attended a revival meeting conducted by an itinerant evangelist who was spreading John Wesley's Methodist message. Tired of the hierarchical approach of the mainland Congregationalists, most of the Hamiltons and their in-laws embraced this newfound sect. In 1810, island matriarch and widow Deborah Hamilton was excommunicated by the established church "for joining herself with the Methodists." Records from that time show an active congregation, meeting regularly in a small meetinghouse. Class meetings were led by Deborah's son Ambrose, who was also the island's justice of the peace and legal expert. The church thrived on the island and served as the focal point of religious and social interaction.

ROCK SLOOPERS

In 1821 the community of North Yarmouth, of which Chebeague was a part, became embroiled in a civil conflict. One-third of the town was attempting to leave and form a new town, Cumberland. Of the more than two dozen islands within the bounds of North Yarmouth, the inhabitants of Cumberland proposed taking only two small islands located close to the main shore. Chebeaguers appeared to be on the periphery of the conflict and seemed destined to remain with North Yarmouth, but at the eleventh hour everything changed. In the days before Medicare and Medicaid the towns were responsible for the care of the poor, the old, the infirm, the widows and the orphans. Maritime communities were doubly challenged, because the loss of a fishing vessel or a merchant ship could leave many widows and orphans without means of support, and over the years Chebeague lost more than its share of mariners to the sea. The mainland residents saw the islands as a burden because of the potential paupers who might become their responsibility.

The rock sloop LETTIE HAMILTON and her crew at Eastport, c. 1898 (Cumberland Historical Society)

When the conflicts between the mainland residents became contentious, the legislature jumped into the fray. A legislator who lived in the Cumberland part of town sailed to Chebeague and circulated a petition for islanders to sign. His request was simple: Would the residents of Chebeague leave North Yarmouth and join with Cumberland? The Hamiltons and their growing number of kin signed the petition. Chebeague and the outer islands became part of the new town and quickly proved to be a financial asset rather than a liability. However, within a decade there was discontent: Cumberland Foreside and Chebeague, upset over the proposed location of a new town hall, attempted to separate from Cumberland and create a third town. The issue was defeated at town meeting, but the idea of leaving the town did not die with the vote, and was contemplated by islanders whenever a disagreement occurred between the mainland and Chebeague.

By the 1850s more than 400 people lived on Chebeague. The community had two schools, three churches, two stores, and a flourishing maritime economy based on what was known along the New England coast as the Hamilton Stone Fleet. During the 19th century Chebeaguers captained, crewed and owned shares in more than 70 of these shallow draft vessels. Almost every able-bodied Chebeaguer spent some time on a sloop, but still there were opportunities for enterprising young mariners from away to join the crew of a sloop. Several eventually married and settled on the island. The captains, mostly Hamiltons and their kin, held an elevated place in island society, which made them admired by some and resented by others. The rock sloopers, as they called themselves, filled an important niche in 19th-century maritime history because of the sloops' adaptability and the skill of the mariners/marine contractors who manned them.

Several Hamilton descendants became shopkeepers, including Reuben Cleaves, who ran a bakery, and Solomon Francis Hamilton, who operated a general store. (Joan Robinson Postcard Collection)

The building of Ram Island Ledge Light, Alfred Hamilton, Superintendent, circa 1904 (Ray Hamilton Collection)

Fishing for different species was an island and family mainstay over the years.

No job was too big when a captain was negotiating a contract to freight a load of stone or to build a wharf, a breakwater or a lighthouse, because he knew he could count on his father, brothers, cousins, or in-laws to combine forces with their vessels and equipment to get the job done. The Hamiltons' kinship network included skilled carpenters who could build a boat ramp and a keeper's house while the sloopers were laying up the lighthouse stonework.

Many Chebeague sloops spent a good part of the year down east, transporting building stone from the quarries to railheads, or working on projects as far south as St. Augustine, Florida. Rock slooping brought outside money to the island, gave young people a reason to stay on the island, and helped to create a middle-class community with all the trappings of Victorian society. Some of the Hamiltons saw themselves as the island elite.

On Chebeague the schools were bursting at the seams as the population grew to 523 in 1860. Islanders used some of their rock-sloop money to build houses in the Greek Revival style, which kept on-island craftsmen busy making each house a little fancier than the last.

John Hamilton, grandson of Ambrose Hamilton, was an island entrepreneur. Known as Uncle Jack, he was a successful farmer and slooper who helped several of his sons to buy their own sloops. He realized that the community needed a full-service general store, so he set one of his sons up in business. Known first as Hamilton and Ross, and later, Hamilton and Company, the store had an extensive stock of goods ranging from dynamite to sewing needles. The store sold food, fabric and seeds by the bushel. Children could buy a new pair of shoes as well as their schoolbooks, slates, tablets, pens and even an apple for the teacher. The store owned shares in stone sloops, mortgaged land, and established a lucrative business buying, salting and selling clams for bait to New England fishing vessels bound for the Grand Banks. While some Chebeaguers dug clams for cash, many used clams to pay off their store bills.

John Ross Hamilton. At one time there were as many as eleven John Hamiltons living on Chebeague! (Author's Collection)

When the pogies (menhaden) came into the bay, Jack Hamilton built the Hamilton Fish Oil Factory, sold shares to his extended family and provided an opportunity for Chebeaguers to make money close to home. During the Civil War his sons and the extended Hamilton family used their sloops to build Fort Gorges in Portland Harbor.

Through ingenuity and innovation, Jack Hamilton and others in his generation created a community that provided spiritual guidance, economic possibilities, cultural awareness, and educational opportunity in hopes of sustaining the community.

The 1890s was a time of transition. Ambrose Hamilton had been dead for a century and his grandchildren were in their 80s. Enough time had elapsed that the young Rosses, Bennetts, Littlefields, Bowens, Cleaves, Grannells, Soules, Hills,

Chebeague Island High School c. 1936: many of these young people, the majority of whom were Hamilton descendants, married soldiers, left the island, or went to war and never returned to raise their families on Chebeague. (Author's Collection)

Curits and others were forgetting their Hamilton connections, but the Hamilton name still had a strong presence on the island.

Chebeague's population peaked in the mid-1890s when islanders comprised more than 40 percent of the Town of Cumberland, and more children attended school on the island than the mainland. But all of that was about to change. The family patriarchs died and their heirs subdivided their farms out of existence. The rock-slooping business declined because of new technologies. Young men who would have sailed on board a rock sloop a generation before turned to fishing for smelts and groundfish. Summer rusticators discovered Chebeague, brought by steamer to new landings built for the purpose. Hamilton women, supported by their children, began taking in boarders during the 1870s while their menfolk were away, and as the tourist business evolved the Hamiltons were positioned to make the most of it.

But many of their children did not want to spend their lives making beds and catering to the summer people, and began moving off the island in record numbers. The out-migration reached its peak between 1910 and 1920, when the population declined by more than one-third. Portland, Maine's largest city, was visible in the distance, and islanders saw opportunity ashore.

STAYING HOME

The Hamilton connection was not powerful enough to stop this out-migration, but it did keep some family members on the island to care for the older generation. Like their ancestors, these islanders turned to the sea for economic opportunity, but instead of privateering or rock slooping, they bought Hampton boats and one-lung engines and went offshore fishing for groundfish.

During the Depression years some Chebeaguers returned home after losing their city jobs. They could raise a garden and find a market for their clams, fish and lobsters. Compared to a city breadline, life on the island looked pretty good. In 1936 more students graduated from Chebeague High School than Greely, its mainland counterpart.

World War II changed things again on Chebeague, as it did in so many Maine communities. Most of the young men went to war; many of the young women married soldiers who came to the island and then moved away with them. Many island boys had no reason to return after the war. The Maine coast went into a depression of its own; lobster prices were low and banks refused to mortgage island property. Still, a core group of Chebeaguers remained.

In the 1950s the Town of Cumberland closed the Chebeague High School and more people moved off. It was then that some retired professionals spearheaded an effort to connect Chebeague to the mainland. While they had the support of many islanders, others feared that rather than saving the island, a bridge might bring uncontrolled growth that could force out the longtime Chebeaguers. The bridge was defeated in a statewide referendum in the 1960s. At about the same time a few islanders started a water taxi business that eventually evolved into the Chebeague Transportation Company, an island-owned and -operated ferry service that opened up possibilities similar to what had motivated Chebeaguers to support the bridge. Islanders were able to hold jobs on the mainland and teenagers could participate in after-school activities. Easier access to mainland medical care together with improved rescue services attracted retirees and allowed elderly residents to stay on the island. Rising lobster catches and new construction strengthened the island's economy and encouraged more families to stay.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

During the 1990s islanders initiated several capital projects that provided needed infrastructure. Although Chebeague was part of a mainland town and school district, the library, recreation center, assisted living facility and historical society were financed by grants and donations, in a partnership between the year-round and summer communities, without municipal support.

In 2006 Chebeague seceded from the Town of Cumberland. Negotiators from the island and the mainland school district worked to hammer out an agreement dividing the district's debts and assets. Early in the year the Town of Cumberland reached an agreement with island representatives over the boundaries of an independent island town and the allocation of assets. At the Legislature, the hearing room was filled with islanders, many of whom could trace their roots on Chebeague back to the days before the Revolution when a young man named Ambrose Hamilton bought a parcel of land and laid the foundation of a community.

Donna Miller Damon *is a descendant of Ambrose Hamilton. This article is adapted from an essay written for an exhibit on the Hamiltons at the Museum of Chebeague History.*

SEPARATENESS AND TOGETHERNESS

On islands, one imposes the other

"Who are we? We are islanders, and no matter how we got here, whether by design, by choice, or by chance, it is our sense of community, and our will to maintain it, that keeps us here."

—Donna Colbeth, Chebeague Island resident

DAVID TYLER

"When you live on an island, every journey begins and ends with a boat ride." These are the words of Chebeague Island resident Donna Colbeth, part of a PowerPoint presentation she wrote and narrated to help show Chebeague Island to Cumberland town officials.

For islanders, Colbeth's statement is a fact of life. But it's an aspect of island living that mainlanders never seem to get. The journey emphasizes the essential separateness of island communities: you have to cross an ocean to get there.

Islanders know the ferry is part of community life: everyone has to take the same boat to get where they want to go. On every ferry ride, islanders spend time with their neighbors catching up with the daily news, a ritual missing from the mainland.

The separateness of islands imposes a unique sense of togetherness that does not exist in suburban towns. The limitations imposed by a ferry schedule would seem incomprehensible to most mainlanders for whom community is often the place with the best commute to and from work.

A powerful sense of togetherness allows island communities to accomplish remarkable things. But the increasing divergence between the mainland and islands means those on the mainland often don't even understand island issues, which only compounds the challenge of maintaining year-round island communities.

This problem is particularly acute in Casco Bay, where all the year-round communities on un-bridged islands are governed from the mainland, with the exception of Long Island. Casco Bay's island communities are the only ones along the Maine coast that do not run their own affairs.

The suburbanization of the mainland over the past 35 years in the Casco Bay area has led to a disconnect between island and mainland communities. In 2005 this disconnect led residents on three of Casco Bay's island communities—Cliff, Chebeague and Peaks—to consider seceding from the mainland governments that now run these islands. Cliff and Peaks are part of Portland, Maine's largest city, and Chebeague has long been part of Cumberland.

Although individual circumstances are different, what all these secession movements share is a passionate desire to preserve unique island communities and a belief that islanders—not mainland governments—know what is best for their own survival. The specific event that triggered Chebeague's independence movement was a proposal by School Administrative District 51 to remove the fourth and fifth grades from the island school. But the root cause is that island and mainland communities have been growing steadily apart.

In the 19th and early-20th century, island and mainland shared a rural, maritime way of life. In the 1890s, 40 percent of Cumberland's population lived on the island. But in the 1960s, Cumberland grew by 48 percent, marking the start of the divergence between the island and the mainland.

Peter Ralston

As Cumberland changed from a farming village to a bedroom suburb of Portland, Chebeague maintained its age-old ties to the sea. On Chebeague, fishing remains the island's largest industry, with at least 47 residents working as lobstermen.

Chebeague remains a small, rural community of 350 where the median income is $32,000. Mainland Cumberland is a growing suburb of around 7,200 people where the median income is $73,000. Fewer than 5 percent of mainland Cumberland residents have lived in town for more than 30 years, compared to 40 percent of residents who have lived on that island for that period.

As the mainland population grew and Cumberland abandoned the town meeting form of government, Chebeague residents increasingly felt they could no longer have a significant voice in the town's direction. They are outnumbered and often unable to attend government meetings on the mainland because of ferry schedules.

Islanders in Casco Bay don't blame mainlanders for the different goals each community has. But they believe passionately in their right to fight for their own way of life, which is rooted in the separateness of these islands and their unique geography.

Those who live on an island cherish that place, its landscape and its features, in a way that those in suburban communities, where the emphasis is on mobility and access to services, may not understand. The island is viewed as a shared resource, not a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder. On Chebeague and Cliff islands, many depend on the ocean and the land for their living; they are bound to land and sea in a way that has vanished in suburban towns.

"Most islanders have a sense of place, and we are on the road to re-emphasizing that place," said Mabel Doughty, a secession representative, speaking at a public hearing on Chebeague Island's effort to become independent in August, 2005. Doughty, married to Sanford Doughty, a retired fisherman, has lived on Chebeague for 60 of her 83 years.

For many suburbanites, community and identity are no longer tied to a sense of place. Thomas Urquhart, former executive director of the Maine Audubon Society, wrote of the fundamental human desire to be connected to the land in his 2004 memoir, *For the Beauty of the Earth*.

> *"Better career opportunities have made us mobile beyond our grandparents' dreams, but our geographical roots continually erode until home is no longer an unqualified place," he wrote. "We have let the treasure of rootedness slip through our fingers."*

Not only do islanders treasure that rootedness, they are prepared to fight for it. And to fight to preserve a unique community in the face of the forces threatening it is a radical act. "We're concerned that we're going to be gentrified, we are going to be homogenized," says Chebeague Island resident Donna Damon, the island's representative on the Cumberland Town Council.

The secession movement in Casco Bay, particularly on Chebeague Island, is not, at its heart, a reaction to a specific event. It is the result of changes on the islands and the mainland over decades. "Separation is a step in reclaiming our values, in making our day-to-day decisions, and solving our own problems," said Doughty.

"What Chebeague is undertaking is just as American as apple pie and as American as the Fourth of July," said Chebeague Island resident Phil Jordan, at a September secession hearing. "From the earliest days of this nation, people have decided that their future required them to separate and take charge of their own affairs."

It is a process of self-determination that began with the American Revolution. It continued in 1820, with the creation of the state of Maine. As more people settled here, and the needs and goals of different communities diverged, new towns were created. Four towns emerged from what was originally North Yarmouth: Freeport, Pownal, Cumberland and Yarmouth.

For Casco Bay residents, the rewards of self-governance are evident on Long Island, the only island community that achieved independence during a baywide secession movement in the early 1990s when Cushing, Great and Little Diamond, Long and Peaks sought to secede from Portland. It took Long Island several years, but on July 1, 1993, it became its own town.

Many thought Long Island was crazy to go it alone. But 12 years later, the Town of Long Island has a stable tax rate, a new library and school addition, a new fire truck and its own rescue boat.

The metaphor Chebeague islanders have used for their independence movement is rooted in the family. "The time is right for us to leave our parents, and for them to wish us luck," said Doughty at the September secession meeting.

Negotiations between Cumberland town councilors and representatives of Chebeague, which were generally held with civility and goodwill through a lengthy and complex process, demonstrated that debates between island and mainland communities do not have to be acrimonious.

Indeed, Chebeague's negotiations with Cumberland showed that islanders and mainland communities can remain on good terms, even as islanders make the case that they need the power, through secession and independence, to run their own governments and preserve their way of life.

David Tyler *co-publishes* Island Times, *the community newspaper on Peaks Island, and also writes regularly for* Working Waterfront.

On April 5, 2006, the Maine Legislature approved the bill allowing Chebeague Island to secede from Cumberland and become its own town. The House of Representatives approved the bill by a vote of 136 to 1; the Senate approved the bill 31 to 3; Gov. John Baldacci signed it into law at the end of the day.

A HIGHWAY HOME

A network of private ferries and mailboats connects islands to the mainland and each other

STORY BY STEVE CARTWRIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Ferries take us back—back to the islands that some of us call home or back to the mainland where most of us live. Independent ferries and mailboats along the coast are the island taxicabs, taking us where we want to go, at a pace where we have time to get acquainted, time to absorb the sightings of seals, lighthouses and seabirds; time to appreciate the passage we are making.

Sometimes, as with our lives, it's the journey that matters.

When you're headed for Peaks Island and you catch a whiff of the Casco Bay breeze, the effect can melt the stress of deadlines, phone calls and city traffic. The hubbub is replaced by blue water and blue sky and fishing boats. Or just the solitude of fog. Long before cars took over our lives and before railways carried us from place to place, Native people ferried goods in their bark canoes and gathered eggs on islands; wooden boats brought the first white settlers to the islands and the mainland, and steamboats carried the first tourists down east. The sea was and still is a highway, with exits to harbors and roads leading upriver to towns and cities that only grew there because boats could reach them.

Above and left: JACKIE RENEE, *Rockland*

MINK, *Isle au Haut Boat Company*

Josh Weed is a captain at age 27. He skippers a ferry from Stonington on Deer Isle to Isle au Haut, a community of about 55 year-round people. He earned a teaching degree from St. Joseph's College, and still plans to teach in a classroom, but a deck-hand job evolved into full-time work on the MISS LIZZIE and the MINK, the two ferries of the Isle au Haut Boat Company.

One of the best things about making the 40-minute trip to and from Isle au Haut is friendship. Passengers like to chat with their captain, and that's fine with Weed. "You not only know their names, you know their off-island family, too. The wheel isn't separated from the rest of the boat. People can come up and talk with me."

But he isn't distracted from piloting his 50-foot vessel. "One of the most important things is keeping the boat running, keeping an eye on kids to make sure they don't fall overboard from another boat's wake." He makes the run in all kinds of weather, from fog to 50-mph winds if he can find enough shelter in the lee of islands. Rarely are runs canceled, and if they are, islanders get anxious.

MISS LIZZIE, *Isle au Haut Boat Company*

Captain Larry Legere of Cape Elizabeth has put in 28 years with Casco Bay Lines, and daughter Alexandra has joined the business selling tickets for the ferries to Cliff, Peaks, Long, Chebeague, and Great and Little Diamond Islands. The service runs 365 days per year, from 5 a.m. till 11:30 p.m. Casco Bay Lines has been carrying people and the mail to the islands since 1871. "It's a nice tradition," Legere said.

Over the years, the same passengers ride the same ferries and they become pretty familiar faces to captain, crew and each other. "It's a very small community. We're their lifeline. We have the opportunity to know a great many of them," said Legere. Peaks Island has by far

ISLANDER, *Chebeague Transportation Company*

MAQUOIT II, *Casco Bay Lines*

Andrew Reichline

Jim Barstow at the helm of ELIZABETH ANN

the biggest year-round population in the bay at about 1,000; Chebeague is home to 250 people; Long Island is next with 200; Cliff and Great Diamond islands have about 75 year-rounders; Little Diamond has seasonal homes only. As with most inhabited Maine islands, the numbers swell in the summertime.

It's 17 minutes by ferry from downtown Portland to Peaks. The trip to Cliff Island takes an hour.

Legere's father was the last captain of the SABINO, a coal-fired wooden ferry operated by Casco Bay Lines from the 1930s until 1961, originally on a Popham-to-Bath run. Sold, it later sank in the Damariscotta River. Rescued, the SABINO is now preserved at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut.

Legere "came ashore" after shipping out on oil tankers, and said he is happy to ply the bay by ferry, collect old ferry photos and other memorabilia and generally maintain reliable transportation to the inhabited islands. Casco Bay Lines, a nonprofit company, has five ferries in operation, including the 85-foot MAQUOIT II, strictly a freighter. Legere likes the Native American names, and has worked to keep them in circulation. "Maquoit" means salt marsh, he said. The rest of the Casco fleet features the 110-foot AUCOCISCO, new last April and named for an old steamer; the 122-foot MACHIGONNE, a car ferry to Peaks Island; the 65-foot ISLAND ROMANCE; and the 85-foot BAY MIST, a charter vessel and party boat.

Monhegan Boat Line, owned for more than three decades by Judy and Jim Barstow, has served Monhegan since 1914. The Barstows met on Monhegan, where both had summer jobs. Jim and his family had been spending part of the year on the island since Jim's childhood.

Now, the parents are selling the Monhegan Boat Line to daughter Karen McGonagle and her younger brother Andy Barstow, a graduate of Maine Maritime Academy and a merchant seaman. "I always wanted to work with my brother," said Karen, who joined the business as a deckhand on the LAURA B. at 14. Even if not related to the Barstows, "The people that come to work for the boat line are like family" she said.

ELIZABETH ANN, *Monhegan Boat Line*

Karen said the LAURA B., a 65-foot wooden vessel used on the Monhegan run for half a century, was like a "fifth child" in the family of four kids. The old boat is the soul of the business, beloved by the Barstows and generations of Monhegan people. Built in 1943 as a World War II patrol boat in the Pacific, the LAURA B. now has been joined by the modern ELIZABETH ANN, which has more comfort and less character than its older sister. The older boat, rebuilt in Rockland, has traditional sheer and the look of a fishing boat—it once carried lobsters from Vinalhaven to Boston—while the new boat has glassed-in decks and two bathrooms, known as "heads" at sea.

Monhegan, mecca for artists and tourists alike, is also served seasonally by Balmy Days Cruises of Boothbay Harbor, named for a former ferryboat much like the LAURA B., and by Hardy Boat Cruises of New Harbor. The average fee for the 10-mile trip from Port Clyde to Monhegan, or the 12-mile trip from Boothbay Harbor, is $18 one way.

LAURA B., *Monhegan Boat Line*

Why is Monhegan so popular? "It's a step back in time to go there," said Karen McGonagle. "When people ask, we tell them to bring a flashlight and two pairs of shoes. And the island store closes at 6 p.m." She said the beauty of a ferry, particularly the LAURA B., is that it brings people together on an equal footing, at a slower pace. Passengers and crew are temporarily caught in the embrace of a small voyage, a small island village, a peaceful sense of place.

Tom and Sharon Daley visited Islesboro several years ago for the wedding of ferry and island boatyard owners Earl and Bonnie McKenzie. They loved Islesboro and immediately bought six acres there. Now they are the owners of QUICKSILVER, a South Shore 34 built in Northport.

Tom, originally from Boston and Cape Cod, said he has liked boats since riding with his uncles, who owned tugboats. As skipper of QUICKSILVER, he is on the water year-round, taking contractors, basketball teams and summer people to and from Lincolnville Beach. Unlike the state ferry that departs from the same mainland location, he can make the 15-minute run at all hours. Tom Daley believes there wouldn't be much of a sports program at the Islesboro school without his ferry.

Tom Daley can have his second boatload of contractors on-island by 7 a.m., he said, giving them a full day's work. Islesboro residents have set a limit of 10 building permits per year, but it hasn't slowed a

QUICKSILVER, *Islesboro's water taxi*

boom in expensive houses. Three houses are under construction; a lot of remodeling is going on.

"In the spring, I like to watch all the wildlife come back," Tom said. "The porpoises, different kinds of ducks, cormorants, seals—that means the fish are back. The Camden Hills are green after everything's been so gray."

Sometimes there is a wedding party aboard QUICKSILVER. Sometimes Tom spreads the ashes of an Islesboro citizen on the waves.

Sharon Daley is a registered nurse aboard Maine Seacoast Mission's SUNBEAM, bringing "telemedicine" to island communities. "Her boat is bigger than mine," Tom said.

Navy veteran Jim Kalloch has served on an aircraft carrier in the Arabian Gulf, but he is finding operating his 38-foot Young Brothers ferry, named for daughter Jackie Renee, is enough of a challenge. After 30 years in the military, the Owls Head native figured he would "retire" to lobstering. But because he let his lobster license lapse for one year, he lost a chance to renew and wasn't about to start over as an apprentice. He began fishing at 13.

Tom Daley aboard QUICKSILVER

So he bought a boat with a 450-horsepower diesel from Art Stanley of Owls Head, and he was off and running. "I'd been pushing water uphill for a long time," he joked. His Penobscot Ferry and Transport operates from Knight's Marine in Rockland, and serves North Haven, Vinalhaven, Matinicus and Criehaven at competitive rates.

Kalloch is a substitute teacher in the Rockland schools, an accomplishment for this Rockland High dropout who later earned an MBA. He owns a small house on Criehaven where, if his schedule permits, he can spend some quiet time. "It's a great life," he says. "I love what I do."

Two former Outward Bound instructors teamed up, not only to marry and have children, but also to start a flexible ferry service with their 40-foot, Clark Island lobster boat, the EQUINOX. Sometimes, John Morin and Sue Conover take their children, Simon, 6, and Lydia, 9, on boat trips. Licensed for 28 passengers, the Rockland-based boat makes runs as needed to Vinalhaven and just about any island where people want to go, including the Outward Bound school at Hurricane Island.

In the summertime they offer tours featuring a half-dozen lighthouses. Mostly, EQUINOX does charter work, including a partnership with the Maine Lighthouse Museum in Rockland. Rates vary,

KATHERINE, *Eagle Island*

with the lowest prices for islanders "because they're the backbone of the business," John said. A one-way trip to Vinalhaven costs $10. John has a second job in sales at Wilbur Yachts. He bought EQUINOX through that job "because I wanted to get out on the water more; I needed to."

EQUINOX was built for Monhegan lobster fisherman Zoe Zanidakis who acquired celebrity status when she appeared on the TV show *Survivor*. The boat is blue, considered bad luck by old-time fishermen, but John Morin noted it's also a color on the Greek flag, something Zanidakis wanted. Anyway, he likes blue. It's the color of his 1969 Lightning sloop.

Dave Bunker was a deckhand as a teen and got his captain's papers at 18, when he graduated from high school. Now he runs the barge between Northeast Harbor and the Cranberry Isles for Beal & Bunker, the ferry company founded by his father, Wilfred Bunker, and business partner Clarence Beal.

EQUINOX *serves Penobscot Bay*

The younger Bunker is busy throughout the year barging fuel, vehicles and heavy equipment to Great and Little Cranberry islands. Summer, of course, is the busy time for Beal & Bunker, as the year-round island population swells from 150 to several hundred seasonal residents. The company makes three round trips per day off-season; six round trips in the warmer weather. The trip from Northeast to Great Cranberry takes 15 minutes; it's another 10-minute ride to Little Cranberry. A one-way ticket is $8.

Beal & Bunker has three boats plus the barge, and the ferries carry the mail six days per week. "There's always something going on," Bunker said.

Helene and Bob Quinn are fifth-generation residents on Eagle Island in East Penobscot Bay, and they are the only people who live there year-round. Since taking over Sunset Bay Company from Bob's cousin—also Robert Quinn—in 1998, the couple has operated the boat service and mail run nonstop. In the off-season, from September to June, they make the mail run twice weekly from Sylvester's Cove on Deer Isle to Great Spruce Head and other islands. In the busy

SEA QUEEN *and* ISLAND QUEEN, *Cranberry Isles*

summer season, with passengers and sightseers along, it's a seven-day-per-week operation. They run the 38-foot KATHERINE in the summertime to Bear, Butter and Oak islands, among others, and use Bob's smaller lobster boat, the TM II, during the off-season. Bob fishes, too, and is caretaker for summer places. His boat is named for grown daughter Trina Marie.

In the wintertime, when floats and ramps are hauled, the Quinns must row ashore to rocky island beaches.

A passage from Deer Isle to Eagle Island costs $12, but the fare may increase with rising fuel costs. The Quinns hold a year-round mail contract, but Helene acknowledged it's the summer people that keep the ferry service alive. "We're like other Mainers," Helene said. "You patch together a lot of different things to make a living."

Is it lonely, staying in their early-1800s home on Eagle? "We need it after the summer season. We kind of look forward to it," she said. A phone connects them with the outside world, and weather permitting, they can head inshore when they want to go shopping or to visit their grandson. Given the nature of their work, "we probably interact with more people than the average person on Deer Isle."

For Helene, living on Eagle Island and running the ferry isn't a lifestyle choice, "it's a continuity of what you've been handed. Not that we couldn't have chosen to do something else. But it's who we are. We can't separate ourselves from it."

"We have to know the weather, the tide," she said, "things other people don't have a clue about." As for crossing to Deer Isle, "just think of it as a long driveway."

SEA QUEEN

Steve Cartwright *writes regularly for* Working Waterfront, *and chronicled changes on Maine's working coast for* Island Journal *in 2005.*

A CERTAIN DARKNESS

All of his varied life, North Haven has been Herb Parsons's emotional center

STORY BY KEITH EATON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Walking in through the dusty, off-season clutter of North Haven's Calderwood Hall, it is difficult to imagine that a changing of the guard is taking place. The only change visible appears to be the usual: the lobster boat winterized and cradled in the front yard, merchandise in various stages of packing on the retail floor, Christmas lights in the windows. But after 21 years of managing one of North Haven's few retail businesses, Herb Parsons is making this seasonal transition one last time.

Parsons moved to North Haven to live year-round in 1983. In 1984, Parsons and his then-wife, Jane, decided that they needed more space to display and sell their various arts and crafts. Jane had been raising sheep for wool and meat on the old Lewis farm, a gentle slope with southern exposure on the Fox Islands Thorofare. She spun and dyed wool, creating various knit products in addition to the raw material. Parsons painted all winter, and together they sought the benefit of a retail space to sell their wares all summer. But this is only one small part of Herb Parsons's story.

Herb Parsons in Calderwood Hall.

My Father's Shadow, Close-Hauled, 2000

"Herb Parsons has played the role of artist (painting, sculpture and graphic design), competing distance runner and cross-country coach, singer-songwriter, newspaper editor, gallery and small business owner, yachtsman, teacher, television writer and actor."

Half Fog, Mill River, 2001

Like many islanders, Herb Parsons is something of a Renaissance man. He has played the role of artist (painting, sculpture and graphic design), competing distance runner and cross-country coach, singer-songwriter, newspaper editor, gallery and small business owner, yachtsman, teacher, television writer and actor. He holds an advanced degree. He served in the Coast Guard, has lived on the Pacific and the Atlantic in rural and urban settings. In all of these endeavors, Parsons has lived humbly and frugally. "I never needed much," he says.

How does a character like Herb Parsons end up living above his gallery on an island like North Haven? Family history, summer residence and, he adds, "North Haven was always the emotional center of my life." Growing up, Parsons can only recollect two or three summers during World War II that he "endured" on Long Island, New York. His father, a neurosurgeon, was serving the war effort while Parsons, his siblings and mother stayed home. He knows that he had been coming to North Haven since he was a baby because, he says, "there are photographs of me here from before I can remember."

In the late 1920s, Parsons's paternal grandmother, famed anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons, had bought a house on Seal Cove on the Vinalhaven side of the Thorofare. She had advocated trial marriage before World War I, written under a pseudonym and later produced a definitive treatise on Pueblo Indian religion. Thus, the life of the intellectual and artist was part of Parsons's family tree. His maternal grandparents, the Worralls, also summered on North Haven, renting at the Haven's Inn. His parents met on the island. But the draw to North Haven was deeper than that. As a child living in New York City's Upper East Side, Parsons "never felt a sense of community" the way he did on the Fox Islands. The island bug bit him early.

The summer experience fueled Parsons's passion for sailing. "From the time I was five I had a tiller in my hand," he says. By 1960, when he was in graduate school at Yale, Parsons and Cecily Vaughan started the sailing program at the Casino Wharf, North Haven's sailing club. The two taught youngsters the art of sailing in a fleet of North Haven dinghies, a tradition that continues today in Optimists and 420s. Parsons also crewed for Irving Pratt of the New York Yacht Club, sailing in the Monhegan and West Penobscot Bay races, among others. He had been a champion sailor in high school and had crewed for CBS newsman Walter Cronkite when he sailed the coast of Maine. Summer-friend-turned-year-rounder Barney Hallowell reports that Parsons was always an avid sailor. "When we were young, we'd see Herb tracking currents with buoys in the waters around North Haven. We always admired his skills as a sailor."

A love of the ocean led Parsons to join the Coast Guard reserves in 1961. It was the one service that made sense to him. He had graduated from Harvard in 1959 with a degree in art history and then earned a second bachelor's degree in painting at Yale. Service in the reserves led to Parsons's first paid gig as an artist. Knowing his ties to the area, his unit commanding officer arranged for Parsons to be stationed in Rockland and Southwest Harbor for summer training. When it was discovered that he was a painter, the Rockland commanding officer, Ken Black, commissioned a sign for the base. "After drawing up a design and having folks at the station vote on it, I can remember being sent to Crie's Hardware in Rockland to get paint for the job," Parsons says.

CALDERWOOD HALL

In 1983, following sojourns in Boston, California and the Pacific Northwest (Herb had married Jane Robinson, a native of Washington State), the Parsons were back on North Haven as usual for the summer. It was their week to display art in June Hopkins's downtown gallery. Pat MacBrayne paused to review the couple's resumes, and she liked what she saw. At the time, MacBrayne was running the Rockland branch of the University of Maine at Augusta. She asked Herb if he would like to teach art history here in Maine. He accepted, and after one more winter to fulfill obligations in Washington, the Parsons returned to North Haven. George Lewis had just purchased Calderwood Hall, and Jane Parsons, with Herb a reluctant accomplice, carefully planned how to turn the former community movie theater-dance hall-production stage into a retail gallery space.

Originally intended as a place for the Parsons to gain more exposure and build up a clientele, Calderwood Hall became a lot more. The first seasons featured Herb's paintings and Jane's woolen and textile products, as well as her meats. She even went so far as to make lamb "mini-meals" for the cruisers in the Thorofare. "She really had get-up-and-go," says Parsons. "She was definitely the creative business mind behind us."

Seal Bay Rocks II, 2001

Sardine Carrier & Lobster Boat, 2002

Despite his self-deprecating asides, it is clear that Parsons had a lot to do with Calderwood flourishing. In need of a wide variety of merchandise to fill the spacious hall, he sought the work of local artists and craftsmen. He pulled in material from the Common Ground Fair and local wholesalers while promoting islanders' works. He collected commissions of 20 percent for islanders, 25 percent for summer residents and 30 percent for off-islanders, allowing individuals more take-home profit than other retail deals.

Parsons had also been developing another skill: at various running meets in Maine and New England, he had begun to sell greeting cards based on running themes. He drew and designed the cards, and they proved to be popular. On North Haven, it was easy to make the transition into designing cards based on the visual themes of Maine islands and the fishing trade. His graphic design efforts soon adorned letterheads, coffee mugs, hats, T-shirts, posters and hooked rugs. Winters would become busier and busier.

While Calderwood Hall's retail space on the main floor filled out, the gallery space upstairs became the perfect place for Parsons to display his paintings. Open and airy, with an old barn or wharf house feeling due to the rough finish, the space faces north, discouraging distracting plumes of dusty light. In addition, a small stage quickly began to nurture Parsons's other interests and talents: theater and music.

Calderwood Hall had once been a flourishing community center. There were dances, skit nights, movies and all manner of evening events. Downstairs there had been Aunt El's restaurant, a favorite local haunt people might frequent on a Sunday morning after having spent all of Saturday night upstairs. As happens, these uses gradually faded until Calderwood sat idle. The Parsonses' retail renovation helped open the building back up to the public. That little stage in the upstairs gallery helped, too.

Drawing on thespian and musical interests nurtured since his school days, Parsons began hosting concerts, open-mikes and plays. Cindy Kallet, Anne Dodson, Gordon Bok and Cindy Bullens all performed at Calderwood Hall. Parsons and island native Chris Brown collaborated on "12 Miles Out," a vocal and guitar duo, which allowed both room to share songwriting and instrumental duties. The young, the not so young, folks who were just passing through or islanders tested the performance waters there for the first time, singing in public with a supportive audience.

Early North Haven Arts and Enrichment (NHA&E) plays debuted in Calderwood not too many years after the Parsonses bought the building from George Lewis in 1986. In the early- to mid-'90s, Janis Jones, then the English teacher at North Haven Community School, hosted a young playwrights' night at Calderwood Hall. Students wrote plays and submitted them to a jury. The prize was the privilege of performing the plays in this small theater space. Soon, the space was boasting such notable performances as the Edward Gorey/John Wulp collaboration on Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Calderwood Hall was alive again.

Herb and Jane Parsons separated four years after opening Calderwood, but Herb was determined to continue with the shop. "I wasn't about to let it fold, even though I'd been dragged into the process kicking and screaming," he says. Once it got under way, Calderwood developed a momentum all its own. Never really advertising, Parsons viewed the project as more of a community venture. A fortunate combination of a booming economy in the 1990s, coupled with cooperative weather and good merchandise, ensured that Calderwood remained an active business downtown. When Brown's Market, a small grocery store nearby, closed, Parsons began carrying various beverages, mostly so that folks mooring for the night in the Thorofare would have provisions.

Courtesy of Herb Parsons

Parsons with the Fox Islands cross-country team

RUNNING WITH TEENAGERS

For the past 11 falls, the front yard at Calderwood has also been the warm-up area for the Fox Islands cross-country team. Parsons had never stopped racing at any point since he started running in earnest after college. Having competed in six Boston Marathons and placing in five national age-group championships, and with a long running resume (including meticulously keeping track of his interval timings since 1962), Parsons was more than qualified to assist the island kids in their endeavors. In addition, he had been feeling the need to paint more. So in 1995 he gave up his teaching position with the University of Maine at Augusta. "I felt the need to give back in some area that's given me both strength and pleasure," Parsons says. And he trained alongside his students.

In 2002, at the age of 65, Parsons completed a strict race-training regimen for the last time. "You're always balancing on the verge of a body breakdown when you train like that," he says. That summer, he placed second in the U.S. National Master's Championships 10K run. By autumn, still in top form, he was able to train evenly with Kelsey "Crazylegs" Jones, who placed third in the state cross-country meet that year. Not many people approaching septuagenarian status can boast that they run every day with teenagers.

Today the running is winding down a little. Parsons says, "I still run most days to keep active. It's much cheaper than psychiatry." He has had 11 successful years as coach on North Haven and hopes to continue. He has had a strong run as gallery owner and manager for 21 years but will now retire from that position. It is time for Parsons to try something new off-island during the winter months, while continuing to focus on his painting. Calderwood Hall will be run by Mickey Bullock beginning in the summer of 2006, but that doesn't mean Parsons will be staying away. After all, the islands are still his emotional center.

His paintings reveal that center. Long shadows of autumn, or that gray light that is difficult to describe to the uninitiated, saturate his canvases. Sunlight tips branches, but does not wash out scenes or blind the viewer. Parsons's style, though he claims it to be traditional, is different from the average mid-coast landscape. As Christine DeHoff, who runs The Gallery at 357 Main Street in Rockland, notes, "Herb's paintings have a certain darkness."

Riding an afternoon ferry across to North Haven, I notice that darkness despite the blinding glare of a December sun off the snow on shore. The gray-green water absorbs more light than it reflects. The stone shoreline looks like the very cold that envelops Maine islands this season. The thin strip of land dividing sea from sky as we approach the Thorofare calls to mind Parsons's panorama landscapes. "We couldn't keep the panoramas in the gallery," says DeHoff. Surveying the scene before me, it is obvious why. Anyone who knows this thin island landscape would be able to identify with Parsons's vision immediately.

An island of 350 year-round residents is fragile. Losing one or two key community members can create a tectonic shift. Herb Parsons is just such a keystone. For the last two decades, he has been instrumental in maintaining and editing the *North Haven News*. He has operated a large gallery and retail space that has also served as a community center. He has inspired music, drama and art in others, while continuing to nurture those interests in himself, even playing Scrooge in Waterman's Community Center's first performance, *A Christmas Carol*. The varied interests and experiences of his past all seem to have come together and blossomed here on North Haven, much to the community's benefit. New experiences during a winter off-island might generate new ideas.

Inspired early on by painter Gardner Cox and his joy for art, Parsons will no doubt continue to venture out aboard his boat BRIMSTONE to paint on calm summer days for the sheer love of it. He will produce more work to share with the community. Walking through downtown at night, now, we don't see Herb's lights on in the studio, or steam from his soup pots fogging the windows. But the boat is still in the front yard, there's a car waiting for summer, and he's had the foresight to leave Christmas lights set on a timer. All in all, we are reminded that when Herb comes back to the islands in the spring, he'll be coming home.

A former Island Institute Fellow, ***Keith Eaton*** *teaches at North Haven Community School.*

BORROWING & GIVING BACK

Connie Hayes meets her muse on Maine islands

CARL LITTLE

Maine islands lie deep in painter Connie Hayes's memory. Born and brought up in Gardiner, hard by the Kennebec River, as a child Hayes went on family camping trips to the Phippsburg peninsula where she spied islands in the distance and experienced the edge of Maine. In the early 1980s she lived for a time on Peaks Island in Casco Bay. Some of her first island paintings, of Peaks, were included in her graduate thesis show at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia in 1982.

Peter Ralston

Connie Hayes in her Rockland studio

Since that time, Hayes has become a full-fledged painter of the Maine archipelago. A list of the sea-encircled places she has captured in pigment would include Vinalhaven, Chebeague, Deer Isle, Cliff, Cushing's, Little Cranberry, Great Diamond, Islesboro, Monhegan and North Haven. Several sections of the monograph on her work, *Painting Maine: The Borrowed Views of Connie Hayes*, published in 2004, are devoted to Maine islands.

Intown, Vinalhaven #1 (detail), 2000

Bed at Christmas Cove, 2005

Kitchen at Spruce Point, 2003

Poppies on Peaks, 2002

AN ARTIST PACKS FOR AN ISLAND VISIT

In my [Rockland] studio . . . is a pile of L.L. Bean tote bags of a variety of colors and sizes in a range of stain and fray. Some have open tops and some have the newer zipper-closing tops. Two [bags] have a particularly dark set of stains from years of transporting my sticky jars of turpentine, oils and varnish.

Once a date comes into focus for a trip to an island, the bags line up and stand ready to accept my supplies: stained aprons, green vinyl gloves, a tub of brushes, Q-tips, Swiss army knife, palette knife, waterless hand cleaner, drop cloths, Ziploc bags loaded with tubes of paint, a glass scraper, and rolls and rolls of Bounty paper towels (plain, no design). I also pack a hat with a visor, sunscreen, insect repellent, pliers, matches, jars of medium, jars of turpentine with wire scrunched in the bottom of the jar, and a gallon of Sterling turpentine.

These bags sit next to stacks of canvases, a portable easel, more tote bags of food and clothing and another tote bag with a sketchbook, digital camera, portable digital printer, yoga mat and props. Years of gathering these things together for each trip have made this a ritual process, creating a combination of excitement, and performance anxiety. I am about to face the unknown again. —Connie Hayes

Ready to Set, Vinalhaven, 2004

Truck at the Back Door,
Monhegan, 2005

Writing Desk, Coombs Neck

ISLAND WAYS OF LIFE

Speaking in generalities, the island pace of life is often slower [than the mainland's]. The values are on spending time with each other. Getting errands done can wait. Hard work is often considered enjoyable because many fishermen and -women set their own schedules in negotiation with Mother Nature.

There is often a wild spirit, nearly lawless in some cases, but the scale of the community is often tribe size. So, getting caught or squealed on or shamed is a strong tribal method of law enforcement. Consequences of bad behavior are near at hand on a contained landform.

I love the way older citizens are individuals, noticed and looked to for wisdom and history of a place. Islands seem to have the attitude of "we are all in this together," and one day one of us might need the other because islands do create situations that make people rely on one another to accomplish daily living.

The entertainment value of telling stories about, and to, one another is high. This may also be called gossip, but the degree of cattiness is self-regulating because everyone can get a turn to tell and be told about. So some caution about getting mean is good insurance for self-protection, and humor is a higher and more entertaining path to take. —Connie Hayes

Green Boats, Vinalhaven, 2004

Today, Hayes finds herself in an ideal centralized location for island visitations. She moved with husband George Terrien, an architect, to Rockland in May 2005 after completing renovation of a sea captain's house. Fittingly, Edward Hopper painted in the neighborhood on a visit to the city in the 1920s. Hayes shares his penchant for New England architecture, often at its most vernacular.

This past November, following a summer of painting sojourns, the couple was still moving in, boxes piled here and there ("Unpacking is problematic," Hayes explained, "because life has to go on"). On a tour of the house the painter pointed out various architectural features, including a stunning spiral staircase and certain "green" features, as well as the view from the attic where one can glimpse the lighthouse on the Rockland breakwater in the distance.

Last stop was the artist's studio, spacious after years spent in more restricted quarters in Portland. Hayes had filled one of the walls with a group of her signature renderings of Maine motifs: islands floating mirage-like on the water, a sunlit bedroom in a house at Christmas Cove, brilliant poppies in a Peaks Island yard. All are painted in a representational mode that often leans into the abstract. As Hayes has written, "Documentation and poetic reduction are in constant negotiation in my work."

In a feature profile in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* in 2004, art critic Bob Keyes called Hayes a "colorist on a grand scale." No matter the size, each canvas is an engaging color composition, the palette often heightened, as the artist stated in the catalog for the 2003 Portland Museum of Art Biennial, in order to "awaken slumbering sensibilities through arresting colors, colors that catch, snag and attack."

Much of her favorite subject matter Hayes finds on Maine islands. She doesn't know beforehand what she will end up painting. In fact, she considers herself "impulsive" in her choice of motifs. "I get there and [the subject] has to electrify my arms, you know, [make them] jump toward the brushes." Her preferences re-occur, but she doesn't set out to do a series or a specific subject. "I'm not the same person every day and I'm grateful for that."

Many factors come into play as she paints, including the weather. Pointing to a painting of a bright interior, Hayes explains that yellow "is a stand-in for sunshine when you have a lot of fog." A view of Coombs Neck on Vinalhaven captures the bleached-out look of the landscape in early spring. In recent years Hayes has been bringing along a digital camera with a small printer to catch a certain light for reference while she works on a painting.

This painter is not interested in the nostalgic or sentimental qualities of island living. She loves the "visual sparkle," yards filled with bright blue tubs and the tangle of multicolored rope, and orange boots by the door. All the color accents she likens to confetti. She even loves the back ends of pickup trucks—"an opportunity for abstraction right in front of you," she avers. Houses remain a favorite subject, be it stiff-peaked structures on the Vinalhaven harbor, a grand Victorian residence on Little Diamond or a freight shed on Squirrel Island off Boothbay.

Hayes doesn't play favorites with islands; she loves them all. That said, she acknowledges that Vinalhaven has had an especially strong pull on her over the years. "I could make a lifetime of going there," she says. Currently, she visits every summer, staying in a variety of different spots, in town and in more remote parts of the island.

Noting the steady flow of seasonal visitors, Hayes describes this largest of lobstering communities in Maine as a "very metropolitan place," but quiet and low-key in its own way. People from away, she notes, seek and find simplicity and ecological responsibility on Vinalhaven. "It's the non-bragging island," Hayes says, "a place of quiet core values." This despite a trend she has witnessed toward building extravagant places that "trumpet their wealth."

Hayes is also fond of Islesboro where wealth and large-scale homes coexist with a local community. She worries about the pressures of real estate prices on the year-round populace. "There could be a huge impact on them if the prices keep climbing," she says. She gave a slide lecture in the island church last summer, focusing on the paintings she has made on Islesboro over the past five or so years.

Some islands are more hardscrabble than others, often in proportion to how difficult it is to reach them. "The remoteness of some of them gives you a sense of the special hoops people have had to jump through to get to them," Hayes explains. She speaks with pleasure of the topographical variety, from the quarries of Vinalhaven to the cliffs of Monhegan.

Hayes's introduction to the latter island came in 1991 when she received a Carina House artist-in-residence fellowship that allowed her to live and paint on Monhegan for five weeks. Such residencies, she feels, are a means to "rescue those places from being taken away from artists." She would like to see more opportunities of this kind elsewhere in Maine where rents can be prohibitive. "The people who are paying those high prices should be glad that there's a subsidized system to create the wonderful atmosphere that artists bring to an island—that's the benefit," Hayes suggests.

How do islanders react to her as a painter? "I think they respond to a stranger with suspicion," Hayes observes, but once she has unpacked her art supplies and starts to show up in different places, she distinguishes herself from the tourist. "It doesn't take long for the news to spread," she notes. "They see the easel and say, 'Ah, okay, a painter.' "

An island fisherman may come up to Hayes and propose another view: "Now that's pretty nice, but there's a better spot over yonder." They may even offer a boat ride to take her there. These are people, she says, "who know exactly what the light is doing." They may not know it from an artist's point of view, but it's like a built-in light meter, and she appreciates the good counsel.

Last summer, Hayes showed some of her paintings in the New Era Gallery on Vinalhaven, run by Elaine Crossman, herself a painter. Hayes feels a special affection for exhibiting there; it's part of her connection to the islanders. She relishes the feedback from visitors, residents and summer people alike. She has even used their comments, like "Now that seems right," for titles. "I don't think that they would say something like that if my painting was the cliché," Hayes notes. "They see a million lighthouses, a million lobster traps painted, and it gets old. I'm hoping that that place I hit is a much more substantial statement."

After a longtime association with Greenhut Galleries in Portland, today Hayes represents herself. She maintains a website, www.conniehayes.com, and in addition to the New Era Gallery on Vinalhaven, shows in a few select venues, including Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers in Freeport and the George Marshall Store Gallery in York. She was the subject of a retrospective at the Farnsworth Art Museum in 2004; the year before, the Maine College of Art awarded her an honorary doctorate. One of her island paintings graces the cover of a new short story anthology, *Contemporary Maine Fiction*, edited by Wesley McNair.

The audience that appreciates art is bigger than ever, Hayes says. She credits the museums and galleries for placing "better and better-quality art under the noses of people who might not have had that happen before." She singles out the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport for praise, hailing its commitment to showing challenging contemporary work in a relatively low-population area.

Hayes has visited many Maine islands courtesy of her *Borrowed Views* project, which she embarked upon more than 15 years ago. In 1990 she sent out a note to acquaintances at the Portland School of Art where she was working, asking if anyone would entertain the idea of lending their home for a weekend or a week to a painter craving solitude and fresh motifs. That inaugural summer she had 15 offers.

"I've been on the road for a long time," Hayes replies when asked about how she settles into a new place, "and I've got systems down that are very efficient." She arrives as a "contained unit," with drop cloth at the ready. She always finds a place where she can set the wet paintings to dry while she is working on others. She wears rubber gloves so that when she is painting she can remove one to turn a doorknob. Most lenders report no evidence of her visit aside from the aroma of paint left in her wake.

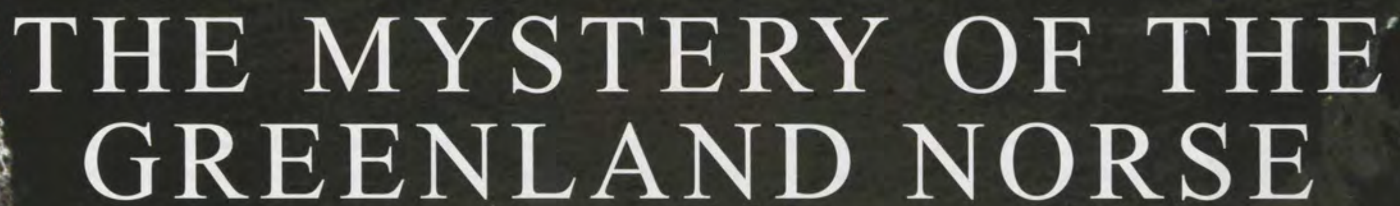
The *Borrowed Views* project remains "a healthy, wonderful process" for Hayes. While she is not able to get to as many locales as she once did, she spends more time at some of them, which allows her to sink her teeth deeper into a place. She has slowed down the absorption time, which has led to a deeper understanding of what the painting is about. At the same time, Hayes has standing invitations to return to certain places each summer.

Even with her extensive island visitations, Hayes still feels an adrenaline rush when she steps onto the mailboat or ferry. "There's the anxiety of excitement," she explains, "and the anxiety of panic"—the latter if something has been forgotten. The tenseness of getting ready to leave is soon replaced by decompression: "I can let go now." She finds the passage over profound—"It's about time and it's about death"—and, she says, it's about landing in a different world.

Hayes is shocked by how much money people will pay for the sanctuary provided by a Maine island, but she also understands the law of supply and demand. Without getting political, she acknowledges that her own choice of subject matter relates to value choices and systems. She paints those places that have a human scale, that are inviting, that inspire conversation by the side of a road that hasn't been widened to accommodate more cars.

The passage of a bond in November aimed at protecting working waterfront in the state pleased Hayes. "I was impressed to find that the Maine community at large values working waterfront highly." Reflecting on this, she says, "It's almost a question that should have been asked a long time ago," adding, "Maybe there are other questions that can be asked about what we value." Meanwhile, Hayes will continue to seek and find her muse on Maine islands, borrowing and giving back in equal measure.

Carl Little*'s latest book is* The Art of Monhegan Island *(Down East Books). He wrote an introductory essay for* Borrowed Views.



THE MYSTERY OF THE GREENLAND NORSE

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP CONKLING

For some reason, the Viking Norse settlement in Greenland collapsed in the 1400s, after nearly 500 years of successful occupation.

Did an abrupt climate change cause the collapse? If so, why did other similar Viking civilizations, notably in Iceland, but also in the Faeroes, Orkneys and Shetlands, survive? Did the Greenland Vikings just freeze to death in the cold? Were they attacked and killed by hostile Inuit? Or did they pick up, move south or otherwise blend into native populations?

This past summer, I accompanied an expedition of scientists to Greenland who have been studying the dynamics of abrupt climate change there. It was the third such expedition in four years. Our research platform was businessman and philanthropist Gary Comer's 150-foot exploration vessel, TURMOIL, and the company included three of the most eminent scientific minds in the rapidly emerging field of abrupt climate change: Wallace Broecker, Richard Alley and George Denton. All three are trying to understand what the past may tell us about our future.

Statue of Leif Eiriksson overlooking Eirik's Fjord.

Wally Broecker of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Laboratory is now the grand old man of abrupt climate change research. Twenty-five years ago, Broecker proposed a bold new theory to explain climate shifts that have periodically plunged the northern half of the North Atlantic into periods of intense cold.

Broecker has suggested that surges of melting ice or increased precipitation at high latitudes causes the slowing of deep water "conveyor" current in the North Atlantic, thereby weakening the flow of the returning northward-flowing warm water of the Gulf Stream. When this happens, the Gulf Stream turns eastward at lower latitudes than it would at other times. Such a physical oceanographic mechanism, he has argued, explains why Northern Europe and North America can be periodically plunged into periods of ice and cold.

Richard Alley is a glaciologist from Penn State University. He is best known as one of the leaders in a team of scientists who have worked to decode climate signals trapped in the annual layers of snow compressed in Greenland's ice cap. Beginning about a decade ago, these layers were brought to the surface during a multiyear drilling project that produced a two-mile-long ice core.

Broecker and Alley's colleague on this voyage is George Denton, from the University of Maine. Denton is one of the great glacial geologists in the world, having studied the dynamics of ice sheets and glaciers on six of the world's continents (and New Zealand). Denton acts as a walking field test for Broecker and Alley's more cerebral theoretical flights, as he explains at each location how the earth's geological past is etched in the surrounding glacial landscape.

TWO SETTLEMENTS

On July 17, 2005, the fifth day of our voyage to the southern Greenland fjords, we break off our geological and oceanographic investigations for a trip to Eirik the Red's farm at Brattahlid and then on to Hvalsey where the Norse eventually built a beautifully preserved large church. Archaeological research and other lines of inquiry have convincingly established that Eirik the Red arrived in the fjord where he made his home in approximately 985. He had led a flotilla of 25 Viking longboats from Iceland, 14 of which successfully reached Greenland.

The Greenland Norse settled in the deep fjords of the island's southwest coast and also clustered further north on the western coast of Greenland in two areas that came to be named the Western Settlement and the Eastern Settlement. Archaeologists and historians also generally agree that the Norse Church at Hvalsey in a fjord near Eirik's farm was built around 1300 when the population around Eirik's "Eastern Settlement" had reached 4,000. The population of the colder and more isolated "Western Settlement" on the west coast of Greenland (near the present-day district of Gothab near Disko Bay) did not exceed 1,000 at its maximum.

The dates of the Viking civilization of Greenland neatly circumscribe most of the era that climatologists now call the Medieval Warm Period, when temperatures across northern Europe dramatically warmed. Contemporaneous records from England show that the last 200 years of this period, between 1100 and 1300, were especially warm in Europe, and that agricultural crops from southern Europe such as barley, oats and wheat spread far into northern Europe for the first time. Richard Alley's observations from reading the Greenland ice cores corroborate that this warm period also occurred in Greenland.

As we approach Eirik's farm, we are impressed by the amount of lush green pastureland along the rim of this and other nearby fjords. This is truly Eirik's "green land," explained by the absence of glaciers at the upper ends of their valleys. The land here is warmer and more productive than it is in fjords with glaciers. At the edge of Brattahlid ("steep slope" in old Norwegian), a friendly Inuit fellow waves us to a landing spot near the steep-sided shore that Eirik claimed after being

Ruins of the stone church at Hvalsey

driven out of Iceland for his murderous temperament. It seems subtly ironic that it is an Inuit who greets us at Eirik the Red's abandoned farmstead, a member of a community of 30 or so Native sheepherders and farmers who have survived and successfully adopted an updated version of Eirik's way of life.

An official guide materializes from nowhere and offers to show us around. Birgit, a Dane on a three-month assignment from the Danish Museum, leads us to a reconstructed long house and replica of the church that Eirik's wife, Thjodhild, built. Thjodhild became a Christian in the late 990s after their son, Leif, returned from a trip to Norway where he converted to Christianity and promised the king he would bring Christianity back to the settlers of Greenland. Thjodhild apparently readily converted, but Eirik refused, although he allowed his wife to build a church in the year 1000 as long as he didn't have to see it from his own doorway. The replica of a small building that might seat 10 to 20 souls is at once a sweet and powerful reminder of the influence of the cross, the simple symbol that helped pacify the quarrelsome and murderous impulses that were part of the traditional Viking culture, dominated by its dark, vengeful gods, Thor and Odin.

Archaeological excavations at Brattahlid and elsewhere have yielded a great deal of information about life in the half-dozen fjords around the Eastern Settlement. The Vikings brought with them cows, horses, sheep, goats and pigs as well as ducks, geese and dogs. Over the centuries, the sheep and goats proliferated. The cattle survived but became progressively smaller, ultimately little larger than the settlers' hunting dogs. The Norse were very partial to their horses, although they appeared to play little role other than symbols for the chieftains like Eirik to assert their status. Pigs, geese and ducks all failed to thrive in Greenland and disappear from the archaeological record after a short while.

In the spring, expeditions of Norse high-prowed, seaworthy longboats set out for the *Nordresetr*, or northern hunting ground, far up the western coast of Greenland. There they hunted seal and seabirds, but also concentrated on products prized for trade back in Europe: polar bears (occasionally live), walrus ivory, the magical tusk of the narwhal that was believed to be the horn of a unicorn, and most precious product of all, the gyrfalcon, the largest falcon on earth. When the Duke of Burgundy ransomed his son from the Saracens after the defeat in the Second Crusade, he paid for his freedom with 12 gyrfalcons.

Archaeologists have also firmly established that the Greenland Norse traveled widely throughout other parts of the western Arctic, primarily in search of timber for their long houses and barns, and also for their longboats. Such timber was chronically in short supply in Greenland. Eirik's son, Leif, after returning from Norway as a converted Christian in 1000, set out a year later to explore lands to the west. These lands had been described in sagas after another Viking sailing between Greenland and Iceland had been blown off course and sighted them.

The Graenlendinga Saga describes how Leif Eiriksson bought the boat of Bjarni, the Viking who had been blown off course and had originally seen the western lands. Leif encouraged Eirik to lead them

on an expedition to these western lands, but Eirik fell off a horse and hurt himself so Leif took the helm instead. They landed first at Helluland (Baffin Island), then sailed across the sea to Markland ("Forest Land" on the coast of Labrador), and then back across the sea to an island where they discovered the grapevines for which they named Vinland ("Wine Land"). There they wintered over.

From the remains of long houses built that winter, including the evidence from carbon-dated iron nails unearthed there, archaeologists have definitively shown that Leif Eiriksson's Vinland was Newfoundland, and that they wintered at L'Anse aux Meadows, on the northern coast of Newfoundland. Thus, Leif indisputably discovered North America, although Christopher Columbus continues to get the credit in the popular mind.

Scholars have sometimes dismissed the names Greenland and Vinland as Eirik's and Leif's hyperboles, but multiple sources of evidence indicate they were more accurate than their skeptics might have imagined. In addition to the grapevines Leif found, a later expedition by the Viking, Karlsefni, spent a number of years living in Vinland. The Greenland Norse went there for timber supplies that enabled them to repair their vessels and houses and barns back home. The Iceland annals record that Karlsefni sold his figurehead carved of Vinland "maple" to a man from Bremen for a mark of gold.

The presence of grapevines and maples in northern Newfoundland a thousand years ago, fully 500 miles north of their present northern limit, suggests that the Medieval Warm Period in Greenland and Newfoundland had persisted long enough to create a much more temperate environment than exists there today.

The years of comparative warmth in the 11th and 12th centuries encouraged Viking voyaging. In 1121, one of Greenland's early churchmen, Bishop Eirik, according to Icelandic records, left Greenland in search of Vinland, never to be heard of again. Approximately a century later, a band of Wabanaki Indians at Naskeag Point in the present-day town of Brooklin on the Maine coast, interred a Norse coin, since recovered by an archaeological dig. It is certainly possible this coin showed up in an archaeological deposit in Maine because it had initially been traded between the Vikings of the Western Settlement after they encountered the Thule Inuit, and then subsequently traded further and further south between different bands of Indians. But some believe that Bishop Eirik and his expedition voyaged all the way to the Maine coast and left Viking runes etched in the rocks of places like Manana Island off Monhegan.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND SAGAS

The mystery of the Norse Viking settlements deepens when we arrive at the next fjord to the east, Igaliko, or Einar's Fjord. There, on the sloping sides of a lonely and virtually uninhabited fjord at a place called Hvalsey, stand the lichen-encrusted ruins of a lovely medieval stone church perhaps 70 feet long and half as wide. All four walls and the keystone arch over what once was the sanctuary are still intact. Only the wood and sod roof has collapsed on itself. A series of smaller foundations 100 or so feet away lead into a "Great Hall" where festivals occurred. Attached to it are a long house, storerooms, a pantry and perhaps a kitchen to support the novitiate. A circular horse corral that could pasture many animals indicates that the priests here commanded even higher status than the local chieftains.

For several centuries, in exchange for tithes to the church paid in the currency of ivory, polar bear pelts and gyrfalcons, the Norwegian crown promised to send at least two royal ships to Greenland (six went to Iceland under the same agreements). The ships from Norway brought such necessities as iron and timber, but also European clothing, sacramental wine, vestments and stained-glass windows for the Norse churches and cathedrals. The size of the farms that sustained the churches and cathedrals alone suggests their dominant role in Greenland life and how many scarce local resources these institutions commanded.

George Denton, Richard Alley, Philip Conkling, Gary Comer and Wally Broeckner

What happened? Richard Alley's research on the ice core indicates that Greenland's climate entered a generally cooler period beginning about 1300. Other records from historical annals and archaeological research confirm that the climate in Greenland continuously deteriorated throughout the 14th century. Between 1308 and 1319, Greenland experienced the lowest winter temperatures until the 1500s. The period between 1343 and 1362 was the longest period of colder-than-average years in Greenland. Between 1367 and 1379, Icelandic annals also recorded "very cold years."

We would expect the effects of this abrupt change in climate to have been most severe at the Viking Western Settlement that was more isolated, further north and more choked with ice from huge calving glaciers at the head of every fjord. Most scholars have concluded that a catastrophic abandonment occurred in the Western Settlement shortly after 1349, the year when word reached the bishop at Gardar that the settlement was in great trouble. It took another two years for the bishop to get a boat there, whereupon the bishop's men found only sheep and cattle wandering in the hills.

Archaeologists, historians and ethnographers who have studied the remains of the Western Settlement and read the Icelandic and Greenlandic sagas for clues do not find any definitive answers. To some, the end of the Western Settlement appears to have been sudden, since it involved abandoning precious wooden lintels from their long houses, and the butchering of dogs for food. Others point to the lack of much in the way of material remains, suggesting an orderly withdrawal back to the Eastern Settlement. Still others believe conflicts with the Inuit led to an attack that wiped out remote farms and settlements, although no graves or bones have been found anywhere. In fact, the absence of bones anywhere in Greenland from this period is one of the most perplexing parts of the puzzle, seeming to indicate that at least some of these skilled, intrepid sailors packed up and headed for warmer, more-southerly and more-productive landscapes.

The inhabitants of the more populous Eastern Settlement, around the most productive farms of Brattahlid, Gardar and Hvalsey, continued to hunt, farm and trade for at least another half century or so after the abandonment of the Western Settlement. But life there appears to have been increasingly tenuous. The year 1367 is the last record of a royal ship reaching Greenland bringing Bishop Alf, the last Bishop of Greenland, who presided for a decade until his death in 1378. In the 1380s, Icelandic annals mention only four or five trading expeditions between Iceland and Greenland.

Thereafter, the records begin to sound like unanswered echoes. What is known for sure is that in 1408 a wedding was celebrated at the lovely church at Hvalsey, after the bride's family arrived from Iceland. Because the wedding guests did not return to Iceland until a year and a half later, in 1409, to record the event officially, either it was a very long party or weather for the return voyage was consistently poor and stormy.

That is it—at least as far as the written records go. A decade later, the English begin to show up in Greenland waters as their fishing and merchant vessels had begun to compete on the great Icelandic cod grounds. In approximately 1418, a small cross of English pewter was lost at Hvalsey, but whether any Norse remained or the English were simply occupying an abandoned site is unknown.

PERILOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Scientists now believe that the climate system of the North Atlantic is delicately balanced and repeatedly swings back and forth between warm and cold phases. Furthermore, the shift from warm to cold and back again occasionally occurs in the course of a decade or two and often within a century or so—not over the course of thousands of years as we once thought. The Norse were clearly faced with the challenges of such a change during the middle and late decades of the 14th century. There had been cold winters before, even a succession of back-to-back cold winters, but nothing like the persistent, decade-long cold snaps and cool rainy summers of the 1350s, '60s and '70s. Icelandic communities based on a similar culture survived, while the Greenland Norse did not.

Undoubtedly, the dangers of navigating through the ice in the Greenland Sea during storms and persistent fogs even in the best of summers began to strangle trade and communication. Successful summer hunting expeditions to the northern hunting grounds in the spring for food would have been similarly difficult. Prolonged cold winters and short, rainy summers made raising livestock increasingly marginal. The church, a drain on resources during the best of times, exercised less and less control, particularly after Norway failed to replace Greenland's last bishop after 1378. Starvation must have been a major preoccupation. In perilous circumstances, isolated farms may have been tempting targets for outsiders—Inuits or pirates.

Still, it is hard to imagine that a total of 5,000 rugged Norse inhabitants all stoically starved to death in the cold over a period of six or seven decades and left behind no signs of their demise. Would they have all experienced a common fate—starvation, migration or assimilation into Inuit communities? It seems most likely that small groups of the Greenland Norse, faced with the reality that their way of life in the increasingly cold and icy fjords was no longer viable, adopted different strategies and experienced different fates.

Until research uncovers other answers, I prefer to believe that some individuals of this proud seafaring culture, when faced with a catastrophic climate change, took their fate into their own hands. It is certainly possible to imagine that some of the strongest chieftains, with generations of ocean navigation experience celebrated in sagas from tribe to tribe, loaded up their longboats for a better life somewhere over the horizon. Others may have cast their lot in with their neighbors, the Inuit, with whom they shared a geography if not a way of life; while others probably hung on in small bands until the last individuals wandered away looking for food. Whatever their fate, Greenland would not be habitable for an agriculturally based culture for another 500 years, until the ocean system had turned once more.

Philip Conkling *is president of the Island Institute.*

Courtesy of Barbara Ann Ware

COMMUNITY

In loving memory of Herb Ware, for Georgie and their girls

When the copter from Eastern Maine Medical
circled the Ladies Aid Field
to take Herb off the island,
Lorraine had just gotten off the radio to them,
It doesn't look good. 10/4.
Red-faced and sweating, she labored,
gentle-voiced inside the ambulance
to make him comfortable.
Georgie was in there holding his hand,
whispering that it was all right to go
that Nancy Jean, their daughter, years gone now,
was coming to take him across.
Barbara Ann, another daughter, red-eyed
and teary, rubbed his temples.
Don climbed in, ducking, six foot plus,
to offer a prayer, Gracious God . . .
Norman stood at the rear door, stocky, stalwart.

I was headed over to their place on foot,
a casserole in my boat bag
when I met the ambulance coming toward me.
Lynn and Emmy, following behind,
motioned for me to jump in their truck.
Just this morning he'd been alert and jovial,
but the cancer had spread too far,
the pain was too sharp and he was gasping.

Gaile, a visor haloing her bushy gray curls,
stood by with the aid of her ski pole cane.
Junior Bracy in a flourescent red vest
motioned the copter down. A small crowd
of witnesses, murmuring and hugging each other
surrounded Herb in respectfully spaced rings:
folks he'd given ride after ride to in his boat
or truck, folks whose houses he'd replumbed,
whose sheds, ramshackle from rot, he'd built back,
a grateful smile, for him, payment enough—
even some he'd shouted off his turf
if they were noisemakers or litterbugs.

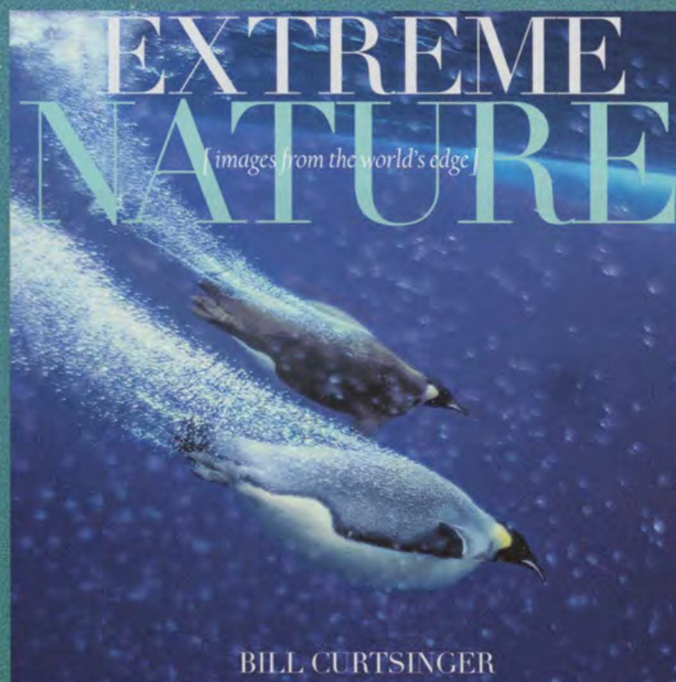
Herb could be tight-lipped and gruff,
more inclined to show how he felt
by unchugging your rusty water heater,
by tinkering your dead engine back to purring
than with words, and, though happiest,
probably, when taking his one-engine Cessna
farther Down East up over this rugged coast
still unspoiled, almost, long-fingered and
trying to keep hold of the sea, he was damned
if, after barging back in his vehicle
from the hospital, he'd spend his last moments
alone in that contraption. So, just as
the copter touched down—one puff, one puff . . .
Children inching forward to ask what was wrong,
shrank back when told we thought Mr. Ware
had just passed on. Kelly tore off to get Dr. Liebow,
but there was no need to confirm it.
We all knew. Herb had died as he wanted to,
out on the island among us
and the love here, the love.

Susan Deborah King

Extreme Nature is a retrospective of my career in book form. One of my favorite chapters is "The Gulf of Maine". More than one chapter I originally wanted in the book fell by the wayside during the long process of editing and layout, but the Gulf of Maine chapter remains intact. Many of the images from that chapter are published here. My editors in Italy loved this work and recognized it as an important part of my career and this book.

I learned to swim in a dark, brown, tannin-filled river called Rancocas Creek in southern New Jersey, not too far from the Pine Barrens. It is a small, overgrown tidal riverlet that flows into the Delaware River. As a young boy it felt wide and deep. It held mystery and harbored many secrets. In the many hours spent fishing for catfish and pickerel and bass in the creek's deep, black holes, I tried to imagine what this underwater creekscape looked like—every fisherman does this—but this was not to be.

So it's no wonder that a defining and unique characteristic of my work is that I have very little interest in the colorful, flamboyant world of coral reefs that most people associate with underwater marine photography. I like cold, remote, dark places best. The Rancocas Creek of my youth did this to me. The Gulf of Maine is often dark and murky and not the clearest water for making photographs. The most productive oceans on the planet are polar and temperate. The Gulf of Maine is one of the best examples of a temperate, biologically rich sea on earth. I have dived from Cape Cod to Nova Scotia and everywhere in between. While I have seen and brought to light a few of the secrets of this cold, dark ocean, many remain there.



Extreme Nature, *written and photographed by* ***Bill Curtsinger****, published by White Star, Italy, October 2005, distributed in North America by Random House*
www.extremenaturebook.com

As the photographs here demonstrate, the benthic world of the Gulf of Maine can be as colorful and beautiful as any warm-water environment. In the summer many migratory species move close to shore, becoming "available" to a photographer like myself. The effort required to undertake this kind of photography is difficult and often dangerous. Photographing the underwater world of a coral reef is one thing; working on the bottom of a cold, dark sea is quite another.

The effort to just get myself into situations where I can encounter the animals I want to work with can be enormous. Workable dry suits changed cold-water diving forever in the early 1970s, but the trade-off for that warmth and relative comfort is reduced mobility and 30 to 45 pounds of lead around your waist just to overcome the inherent buoyancy one has in a dry suit underwater. It is cold, demanding work—but it's what I love to do.

—Bill Curtsinger

Gray Seal, Gulf of Maine

Atlantic Wolf Fish

Ocean Sunfish

Gray Seals

Rock Crab

Rock Gunnel

Harbor Porpoise

NO DOG BUT HIS

An island with a privileged past confronts the complex present

DAVID D. PLATT

From the tall windows of architect Henry Hobson Richardson's 1888 Victorian railroad station in New London, Connecticut, one can look across tracks and parking lots to the Thames River and out to Long Island Sound. There in the distance, is a Gilded Age monument with an even longer pedigree than the redbrick station: Fishers Island, New York.

A century and a quarter after the Romanesque station was built and Fishers Island became a resort catering to some of America's wealthiest people, these two survivors of another time continue to regard each other across the Sound; each wondering—as if islands and buildings could have such thoughts—what has happened to its world.

The station has endured railroad bankruptcy, a transportation revolution, urban decline, a brush with demolition and partial redevelopment as an office building.

Across the Sound, Fishers Island endured financial collapse as well, when one of its developers went under in the late 1930s. The island has survived the coming and going of the U.S. Army, which built a fort there in 1900 and abandoned it in the 1940s, leaving a set of derelict structures that remain today. For a short time in the late-19th century there was an attempt to attract tourists. In fact, the island has gone through starkly different phases for nearly 400 years, engineered by a succession of owners whose priorities for the place sometimes reversed course at the stroke of a pen.

So it's understandable, given its history, that Fishers Island is something of a curiosity today: an island linked economically and by public transportation to Connecticut but politically part of a distant town in New York; a community without real self-government that must rely on volunteers to get things done; a gathering of some 250 year-round residents amid a larger seasonal community; a place where property values are determined by distant, hyper-rich buyers.

Fishers is a place where powerful people come to relax—but while they're relaxing, they're essentially powerless.

The U.S. Army fortified part of the island in 1900.

NO NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

"The island has a ferociously loyal population—at the top, at least—who want to keep it the way it is," says Pierce Rafferty, director of the Henry L. Ferguson Museum on Fishers. Housed in an impressive new Shingle Style building near the island's western end, the museum is a storehouse of information about Fishers Island. An author of several books and monographs about that history, Rafferty is intensely aware of the island's curious past.

"From 1644 to 1876," he explains, "Fishers experienced no normal development like a normal New England town—the workforce was entirely either hired by the owning family or its lessees. It was as close to feudal as you can get—hired hands, indentured servants, slaves, Indian workers."

A single family, the Winthrops of Connecticut, owned Fishers outright for two centuries, having purchased it from an Indian tribe in the 1640s and then received a "patent" for a "manor" from the Duke of York in 1664. The Duke of York's grant specified that Fishers was to be part of New York, not Connecticut. Even after the two colonies became

Courtesy of the Henry L. Ferguson Museum

Members of the Winthrop family owned Fishers for generations.

Fishers' legendary golf course was laid out at the turn of the last century and was part of Fishers Island Farms.

states, they quarreled over the boundary between them, and it wasn't until a commission was established in 1878–79 to settle shellfish rights in Long Island Sound that Connecticut gave up its claims.

John Winthrop Jr. envisioned the island as a profitable offshore livestock plantation, and for the next two centuries, seven generations of Winthrops and their employees raised cattle and sheep there. The Winthrop proprietorship led one early historian to observe that "no man unless a Winthrop had a right to hunt there; no dog but his had a right to bark there."

The Winthrops sold the island in 1863 to another proprietor, Robert R. Fox. "There is no record of anyone staying over from the Winthrop era," says Rafferty. "No town, no fishing community, only five permanent houses. [Fishers] was in a state of total underdevelopment."

Things began to change in 1876, when a second generation of the Fox family took over, looked at the books and concluded that cattle and sheep farming wasn't bringing in enough revenue.

"Between 1876 and 1889 we have a new, distinct period," observes Rafferty. "The modern town develops, as does a fishing community, and land sales begin." The Fox family and its agents oversaw the development of a tourist hotel and the sale of 101 parcels of land for summer houses. The island community blossomed with a school, a library, the summer community and a workforce to sustain it. "There was a transformation in 10 years that normally would have taken 100," Rafferty observes.

By the late 1880s, it seemed that Fishers was becoming like Block Island or other resort destinations in eastern Long Island Sound.

But in 1891 a single transaction changed everything again. Edmund and Walton Ferguson, brothers who had grown wealthy in the coke and steel business in association with Henry Clay Frick, bought nine-tenths of the island and effectively shut down the tourist business. Says Pierce Rafferty, "In one day, they transformed the island into an elite seasonal resort."

Christopher Ayres (6)

Pierce Rafferty, director of the island's museum

What the Fergusons would create, in stages on a huge scale over the next four decades, was a rustic equivalent of nearby Newport, Rhode Island. Beginning with a water system and other basic infrastructure, they eventually shut down the farming operation and brought in a nationally recognized development team to create an exclusive residential colony. They built one world-class golf course and planned a second; laid out roads, water lines and sewers; and sold lots to America's elite. The Fergusons and "Fishers Island Farms" dominated the island until the onset of the Great Depression. "It was a very benevolent one-company town," says Rafferty.

In a sense it has remained that way: seasonal property owners and their needs dominate the island's economy and provide the bulk of the jobs available there. The 200-odd year-round residents live in the shadow of the resort that surrounds them. In recent years, however, the year-round community has begun to assert itself in a variety of ways. Change is coming, slowly, to Fishers Island.

The Fishers Island ferry terminal in New London

THE FERRY'S BROWN WAKE

Despite its reputation for exclusivity, Fishers is easily accessible via public transportation. Two large ferries, RACE POINT and MUNNATAWKET, make daily trips to Fishers from a new brick terminal adjacent to the historic New London station. In summer on certain days there are up to 11 daily runs; in winter there may be as few as four. These are large vessels: the 132-foot MUNNATAWKET carries 150 passengers plus vehicles; the 183-foot RACE POINT accommodates 200 passengers in addition to the cars and trucks that, for some reason, must all be backed aboard at both ends of the run.

The ferries are run by a self-governing taxing district. Both vessels stay in New London overnight after the day's runs, an arrangement some islanders find inconvenient, pointing out that an island-based ferry would be useful in an emergency. Citing costs, the Ferry District has resisted the idea.

A glimpse around the passenger deck can reveal a lot about this community and the people who travel to and from it. Late-morning runs in October and early November from New London to Fishers were populated with regulars and their guests headed out to the island for the weekend: a chatty Cincinnati woman and her dog out for a last visit before winter; a taciturn photographer carrying cases of lights for a portrait sitting in a private home; a few late-season golfers with their clubs; students going home for the weekend; community members on their way to a monthly meeting on the island; an occasional day-tripper taking advantage of the clear fall weather.

Most of the passengers aboard a 4:45 p.m. boat from Fishers to New London in early November, on the other hand, were construction workers employed by the wide variety of contractors who visit the island to build, remodel or maintain houses for well-to-do owners. Largely African-American or Hispanic, carrying tools and a few boom boxes, they were headed home to Connecticut for the weekend. While it's possible that some of them had been able to spend nights at their jobs on Fishers, most had come out on an early-morning boat the same day. Depending on the time of day, the contrast between the passenger populations on these outbound and inbound ferry runs could not be more stark.

Fishers Island's ferries have not escaped controversy. In September 2005 the Fishers Island Ferry District's operations manager pleaded guilty in federal court, reported the *The Day* (New London), "to deliberately allowing thousands of gallons of raw sewage to be discharged daily into the Thames River and Long Island Sound from 2000 to 2004." The manager's guilty plea was the result of a Coast Guard investigation into reports of toilet paper and other evidence of open wastewater valves aboard the ferries, plus evidence that the ferry's operators had deliberately ignored Coast Guard requirements that they pump their holding tanks ashore, instead of discharging into Long Island Sound. "The Coast Guard takes this matter seriously—they're pissed," the elected mayor of the New York town that includes Fishers told a community meeting in early November. "They're offended, and they're not going to let it ride." The case, he said, could result in substantial fines, for which the Fishers community "would be holding the bill." The ferry manager remained on the job through the fall of 2005 to the discomfort of some residents and the Coast Guard; when he was sentenced in January 2006 to a month in prison and a $10,000 fine for discharging an estimated 472,000 gallons of untreated sewage and sludge, he was still on the District's payroll at a salary of $130,000 per year.

THERE IS NO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In 2002 a group of community members became concerned about Fishers' lack of self-government and took small steps to change things. "It had become clear," says Meredith Harr, a 28-year-old planner from Georgia who came to Fishers as an Island Institute Fellow in 2004, that "we had organizations running in all directions" in an attempt to make local decisions on matters of importance to the community. "There is no local government," she points out. "Fishers is just a hamlet of Southold, New York, and the old rule was 'embrace the inconvenience'—they didn't bother, we didn't complain." But a shrinking population and growing property values, among other factors, were conspiring against the old way of doing things; it was time, Fishers residents believed, to take more control of their own future.

So in 2002 a delegation traveled to Maine to meet with staff members and others at the Island Institute in Rockland. The discussion, as participants recall it, focused on problems common to many islands: the difficulty of running (and paying for) a small public school; the costs and challenges of law enforcement; state and federal mandates that don't fit island situations; the need for health care and other social services; what it means to be "out of sync" with mainland communities. In addition, Fishers, with its large number of expensive summer homes and its proximity to Long Island Sound's over-the-top real estate market, was forced to deal with a housing market, property taxes and real estate values that—from a small community's standpoint, at least—could only be described as out of control. And all of this in a setting where the government was miles away, across Long Island Sound by small boat. Fishers Island's fleet of ferries runs from the island to Connecticut, not to Long Island, which is in New York.

"How do you get anything done there?" asked one Maine islander who attended the 2002 meeting. At the time Fishers had nearly three dozen different organizations trying to accomplish a wide variety of things. "Get more than five people together in a room," the man told the visitors only partly in jest, "and you'll never get anything done."

Meredith Harr, Island Institute Fellow on Fishers, in front of the proposed community center.

Fishers Island Community Board

"ORGANIC" LAW ENFORCEMENT

At their November 2005 meeting members of the Fishers Island Community Board spent nearly an hour discussing law enforcement. New York currently provides Fishers with a resident state trooper for part of the year, but some residents said they would like a full-time local constabulary. Supervisor Horton, who was at the meeting, pointed out that hiring police can be difficult and expensive—"you're dealing with unions"—and that a year-round state trooper might be a better option. "Be careful what you wish for," Horton cautioned in an interview several weeks after the meeting. "The island now polices itself organically," he added, meaning that residents of such a small community can always be counted on to report suspicious activity. But Southold, of which Fishers is a part, has a full-time police department, leaving many Fishers residents feeling underserved in comparison. Meanwhile, Fishers has been promised an additional local constable.

Would Fishers benefit from being part of Connecticut instead of New York? Probably not, Horton and others believe. Distant government can even be an advantage in some situations: "If I lived on Fishers I'd like the government I have," Horton says. "It's government on demand—there may be a benefit from Fishers organizing as its own village [in New York State] but informal government . . . seems to work quite well."

And "informal government" is what the islanders are creating. Meredith Harr refers to the Island Community Board as a "shadow government" designed to be more inclusive and proactive than the old Civic Association. Eight permanent members represent the island's four taxing districts—ferry, fire, school, solid waste—plus the utility company, the Fishers Island Development Corporation, the island's affordable housing project and the medical clinic. Six other members are elected from the community, three representing seasonal residents, three from the year-round community.

Chaired by John Spofford, the board meets monthly at the fire station. Horton, the town supervisor, made a point of attending at least four meetings a year while he was in office—a significant departure from the Southold town council's previous practice of holding one of its meetings annually on Fishers.

In January 2004, at the Fishers community's request, the Island Institute sent Nate Gray to work as Fishers' first Island Institute Fellow. Gray's arrival followed a period of reorganization on the island: a group had begun meeting regularly, a steering committee had been formed, the nearly moribund Fishers Island Civic Association that had previously met four times a year and been unable to accomplish much was ready to vote itself out of existence. With Gray's help over the next six months, islanders held a well-attended election, formed a new governing entity, dissolved their Civic Association, wrote a mission statement and even described a job—Island Administrator—that would be held temporarily by the Island Institute Fellow. "We set up governance that can address things and involve the whole community," said John Spofford, a one-time island summer resident who now lives there permanently and was a major force behind these changes. From now on, he said, "we want to do things intentionally, instead of leaving it to chance."

Nate Gray's energetic tenure on Fishers lasted nearly a year, after which Meredith Harr arrived to replace him. A planner by profession, Harr also brought an unexpected asset: her southern accent. Callers to her office know immediately that they're dealing with an outsider, and a no-nonsense one at that. Harr's winning ways have enabled her to build on what Nate Gray, John Spofford and the members of the new Community Board started. Deftly, she has negotiated her way through small and large matters such as the ferry sewage case, the scheduling of meetings so as not to offend summer residents or year-rounders, and the always-complex relationship with the distant New York town, Southold, of which Fishers is a part.

"Meredith's southern accent is what's gotten us where we are," Spofford says half seriously. "If she starts losing it, we'll have to send her back to Atlanta for a refresher course."

An important new communication vehicle for Harr and the Community Board was a newsletter called the *The Fog Horn*. Billed as the island's monthly calendar, this small publication carries a wide range of news about community events, sports and other happenings at the school, meeting minutes and even the latest on the continuing ferry sewage controversy. There's a monthly surf report ("... the water temperatures must be between 45 and 50 degrees. So I finally just purchased a new wet suit and a new surfboard at 7 Ply surf shop ...") and an update from the island medical center. *The Fog Horn* is posted online as well as printed, and—like comparable papers on some Maine islands—fills an important island niche.

Josh Horton (right) aboard Southold's police boat

"We try to manage around the stuff that goes on here," says Spofford. "People here are willing (and able) to support good causes. Still, they're getting tired—when voluntarism gets into the necessities of the community you're leaving things to chance. We can be more directed about it." Pointing to the high turnout at the election to pick representatives to the new Community Board, Spofford says "you could see that somebody was trying to do something."

The relationship between Fishers and Southold is "very interesting," says Horton. "If Fishers is self-sustaining it's because of the self-confidence of the year-round community... they're saying, 'We want more from the town, but we don't want you here.' "

John Spofford owns the former Winthrop homestead on Fishers.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It's a familiar problem: as island living, particularly seasonal island living, has grown more attractive to crowd-weary people looking for an idyllic vacation spot, the price of an island's limited amount of real estate begins to rise. It's not a conspiracy by brokers or really an effort by sellers to squeeze the last dollar out of their properties; island real estate in the Northeast, at least, is subject to a global market. Buyers "from away," some of them capable of paying almost anything for the property they want, bid up prices and drag an island's entire real estate market along behind them. Before long there's little left that might be considered affordable.

"There's nothing here under $500,000," says John Spofford. "There's not a lot of land left; the expense of building is very high; properties for sale aren't publicized." On the other hand, memberships in the island's two golf clubs are capped, a factor that could be making properties unattractive to some buyers. "People who could buy real estate here would want to get in," Spofford comments, implying that despite the pressure, not all of the world's hyper-rich are heading for Fishers. But the overall trend is certainly upward, leaving year-rounders in a somewhat desperate situation.

About 15 years ago an affordable housing group got going on the island. The Walsh Park Benevolent Association, a private group, held a pair of fund-raisers, bought 24 acres and developed 12 houses for sale to qualified buyers. Walsh Park "owns the dirt and the foundation," says Harr, while the homeowner owns the house and can sell it at a reasonable price to another qualified buyer. Walsh Park has first refusal, and sells houses only to year-round residents. The organization also developed a number of rental units, for which prospective tenants must apply and answer questions such as "What are you doing for the community?" Harr herself lives in one of the rental units, many of which are occupied by employees of the local utility company and the Ferry District.

"Fishers has taken affordable housing very seriously," says former Southold town supervisor Josh Horton. "People attribute a lot of our success [with Fishers' self-development efforts] to that group," says Meredith Harr.

SURVIVAL AND ADAPTATION

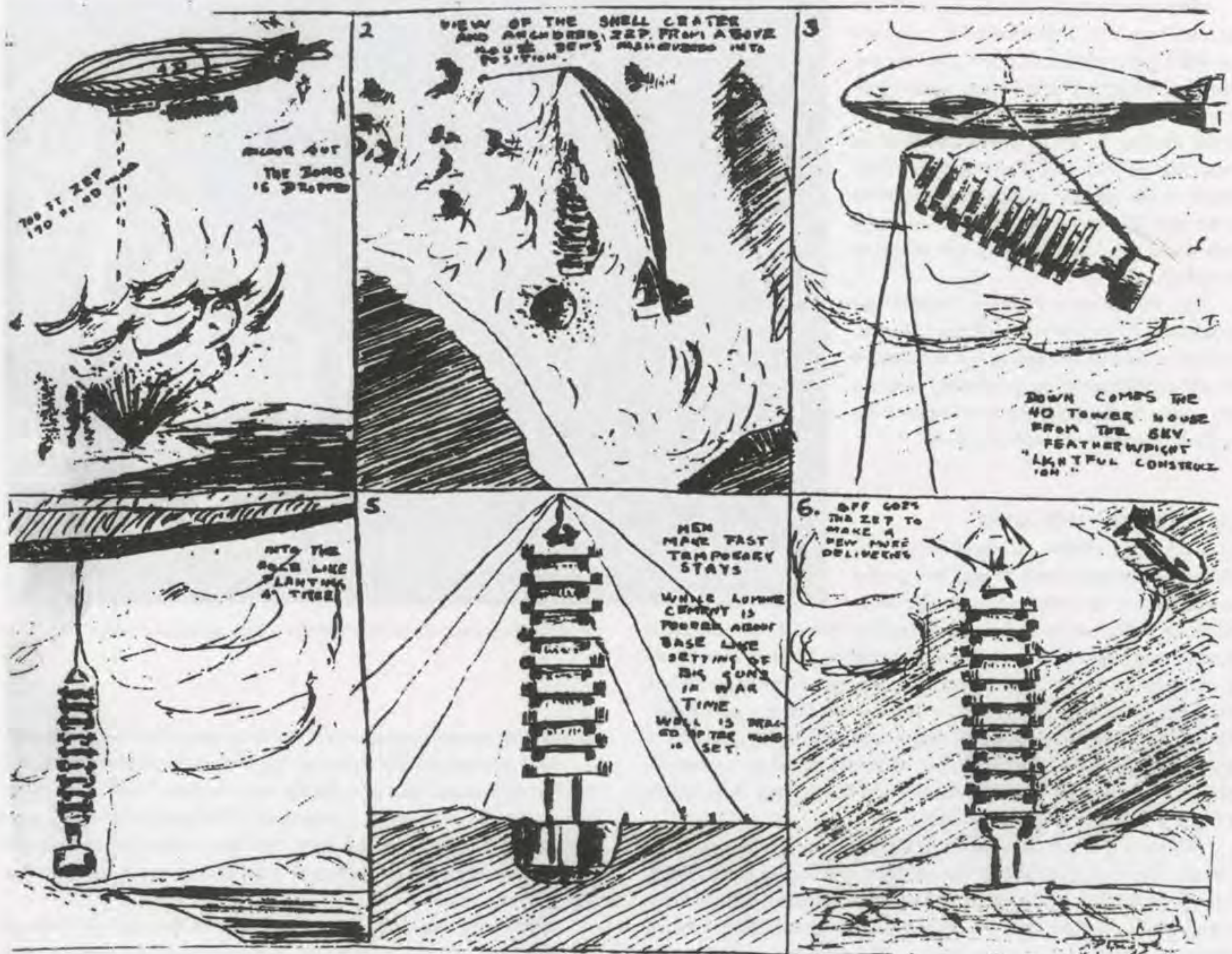
For all the changes that have occurred on Fishers in the past several years, much remains the same. The essential atmosphere—well-kept seasonal homes, tucked discreetly behind hedges and long driveways, overlooking the expansive golf links and their well-planned views of Long Island Sound—remains as it has been since the 1920s or before. The summer population is still much larger than the winter population, and Fishers remains part of a distant town in New York State, rather than nearby New London, Connecticut. The cost of housing isn't likely to come down anytime soon, and the prospect of contractors, construction workers or tradesmen coming to live on the island in large numbers remains as unlikely as ever.

In small but important ways, however, this community is changing. The Island Community Board continues to assert itself; a new, privately financed community center is in the works; *The Fog Horn*, in both print and web formats, continues to keep islanders and others informed. The relationship with Southold seemed solid and constructive as town supervisor Josh Horton left office at the end of 2005, and there is every hope that it will continue that way. The Ferry District, because of the transgressions of an employee, is still a matter of concern, but the Coast Guard and the U.S. District Court have made it abundantly clear that island taxpayers could be held accountable for future problems.

On Fishers, the contrast between 2006 and times past is likely to remain subtle and elusive. Whether the island's year-round residents feel empowered in the face of absentee owners, a distant government and a quirky history will likely depend on a combination of people and events: the presence or absence of leadership; a critical mass of concerned citizens from both the seasonal and year-round camps; the ability of community members to communicate with one another; an appreciation of the needs of different segments of the population.

The story of Fishers, like the history of the grand railroad station across the Sound in New London through which so many travelers to this island have passed since the Gilded Age, is one of survival and adaptation. And the signs that the entire Fishers community will adapt to sometimes daunting circumstances, and even thrive in the coming years, are all there.

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



In the late 1920s Fuller was convinced that Maine islands would become sites for his first manufactured 4D tower houses. Construction, he proposed, would begin with a blast from a bomb dropped by a zeppelin, creating a deep crater.

"FOR A DOLLAR DOWN..."

Seventy years ago, Buckminster Fuller foresaw Maine's island real estate boom

RANDY PURINTON

Disney World's Epcot Center is the world's most famous geodesic dome, a monument to inventor Buckminster Fuller's genius. Few recall, however, that earlier in the 20th century Fuller designed a much different structure that he hoped would be adopted by the world as a standard for efficient and easily constructed housing and be his claim to fame: the 4D tower house.

In the late 1920s Fuller was convinced that Maine islands would become sites for his first manufactured 4D tower houses and that once he had established his reputation there, the rest of the world would become his marketplace.

Fuller's plans for his 4D tower house are illustrated in a visionary manual he wrote in 1928, titled *4D Time Lock*. The manual was an attempt to teach architects, businesspeople and relatives his worldview, while persuading them to invest in his dream: the manufacture of lightweight, portable, multilevel towers that would be affordable to all people in all nations and climates.

He would begin in Penobscot Bay.

In his youth, Fuller spent summers at his family's retreat on Bear Island in East Penobscot Bay, south of Great Spruce Head Island, since made famous by photographer Eliot Porter. Because Fuller was familiar with the area, knew its proximity to urban centers and appreciated its potential for development, he thought the bay would be an appropriate incubator for his revolution in affordable, mass-produced housing. In July 1928 he wrote to his mother in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from his home in Chicago:

> *Are you going to the island this summer... I am now giving my whole time to 4D work and have been doing so for the last six months. From my contacts and continued studies I am now confident that the many changes which I have predicted in 4D will surely come about and I am very fearful for your capital holdings... I recommend selling the Cambridge property at once... island property should be tremendously increased as I outlined to you a year or so ago... With but a handful of islands on the whole Atlantic coast, our group [in Penobscot Bay], reachable from New York in 3 hours and from Boston in 1 hour in the coming models of planes, are likely to become of tremendous value... I should recommend transferring the money from the sale of the Cambridge property to the purchase of additional islands, picked for their landing facilities... In a year or so when my 4D houses are ready we will be able to put them up on the islands in one day, with every facility of modern city living built in... on the installment plan, for a dollar down.*

Fuller envisioned a great decentralization of population as a consequence of the ease with which his housing units could be purchased, built and transported to any site in any climate in the world. Air travel by plane, zeppelin and blimp would facilitate this great change, making islands that could support an airfield particularly appealing and potentially of great value. In his book *4D Time Lock*, a rewrite of his 1928 manual, he included a sketch of what a coastal island might look like with a 4D tower installed on a bluff near the shore. The sketch is drawn as if the observer is the pilot of a small plane, looking over the left wing of the craft at two towers, one installed on a bluff overlooking the shore and another on an island in the distance. Two gaff-rigged sloops are visible under the wing of the airplane.

In 2004 the U.S. Postal Service issued a 37-cent stamp depicting Fuller and a tower house.

So convinced was he of the truth of his vision that in 1927 Fuller also sketched a view of 4D towers erected on sites all over the globe, including the North Pole, as if the observer were looking down on Fuller's triumph from outer space.

The tower house resembles a cubist artist's impression of a spruce tree. The tower has a core or column like the trunk of a tree and floors devoted to specific domestic activities are stacked at measured intervals looking, if not like branches, like a stack of hexagonal pancakes with space enough for adequate headroom reserved between them. Utilities are housed in the column. The outer walls of each floor are glass. An external crane is permanently mounted at the top of the tower—to hoist furnishings, add additional floors later or provide a mooring for a blimp—but which gives the tower the appearance of being perpetually under construction.

Fuller drew a sketch of how a 4D tower would be delivered and installed in an island setting. The six-panel illustration reveals what looks like a costly process involving a zeppelin, a bomb and lots of concrete. Even if the tower itself were reasonably priced, planting it in the ground anywhere in the world and equipping it with utilities, water and a septic system would have been very expensive.

In the first of the six panels, a 700-foot-long zeppelin is anchored high above a shore with a 170-foot tower house lashed to its belly. A bomb has just been released from the zeppelin and has exploded near the head of the beach, creating a deep crater that is the excavation for the foundation of the tower. In succeeding panels the tower is lowered upright and the base of the tower is positioned in the crater. The tower is tethered vertically and temporarily by cables, and concrete is poured into the crater, fixing the base of the column in the ground, "...like setting of big guns in war time," Fuller writes. After the pour, the zeppelin is released and drifts away to make more deliveries. If Fuller's vision were realized in our time, given the heated waterfront real estate market he forecast in the 1920s, zeppelins would be bombing islands (if local ordinances permitted the practice) and planting 4D towers frequently.

In May 1928, Fuller asked his mother to buy airplane stocks so that she would benefit from the increase in air travel that would result from the establishment of numerous towers that would be erected in a matter of years and would be most easily accessed by air. He wrote:

> *I suggest getting rid of all railroad holdings and putting the money in . . . airplane manufacturers... These air stocks seem to be selling very fast but I am confident of their going up a thousand points or more in the next year or so... You were always quite a one for prognostications and will be much excited when you receive my paper [4D]. This is strictly confidential. It is too early to do any boasting but it is thought by others as well as myself, and they of great authority, that I have struck a 'gold mine.'*

Fuller had convinced himself that his 4D buildings were going to be a worldwide architectural phenomenon. Two months later, in the letter to his mother on Bear Island, Fuller stated confidently, "There is no question that what I have predicted will come about."

Fuller created a 4D corporation and patented a manufactured house that rested on a column and featured floors suspended by cables, but none of these were built for a mass market. In fact, a 4D tower was never built. The corporation folded during the Depression. Planning for the 4D housing revolution faded, to be replaced by the advent of the geodesic dome, which Fuller patented in 1954. The popularity of the dome comes close to Fuller's dream of inventing a structure that can be built inexpensively and quickly anywhere in the world.

The geodesic dome has never been a popular design for a home though it is used successfully for industrial and commercial use. The best place to see a tower house is on a 37-cent U.S. postal stamp printed in 2004 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the geodesic dome patent. The drawing of Fuller was done originally for *Time* magazine, the crown of his head shaped like a geodesic dome. On the left side of the stamp is the 4D tower with a helicopter flying over it, carrying a geodesic dome suspended by a cable for delivery and installation on some distant shore.

***Randy Purinton**, a regular contributor to Island Institute publications, spends his summers on Islesboro.*

Some members of the 2005–2006 LFKP team at Jonesport-Beals High School look on as teacher Linda Church, seated, checks out the project's database on the NOAA website. Standing, from left: Christopher Merchant, 15; Lawrence Baillargeon, 18; Alan Crowley, 14; consultant Jim Roberts; teacher Pam Smith and Dennis-Lee Emerson, 15. Seated, Whitney Durkee, 14.

STORING KNOWLEDGE

In a fishing community, an interviewing project brings young and old together

NANCY GRIFFIN

The world changes when you drive toward Jonesport from Route 1. Already communities have grown smaller than their counterparts to the south and west; houses are scattered here and there, as if the land had been stretched out, leaving long gaps between homes. The landscape and the light are, uniquely, down east Maine.

Sparsely populated Jonesport and Beals Island are true fishing communities, places where fishing—now mostly lobstering—is the economic mainstay, and where generations of fishermen followed their forebears into the only way of life once imaginable.

In Jonesport, street signs are carved in the shape of lobster boats. Lobster traps serve as winter lawn decorations. In the off-season, lobster boats dominate dooryards. Boat dealers along the roadside display lobster boat after lobster boat. Sailboats and motor yachts are in short supply here, although one hand-lettered sign along the road read LOBSTER BOAT YACHT FOR SALE.

There's no escaping the fact that these are fishing towns, and as in many other towns nearby, families here count back generations of living by and from the sea. But what is happening in so many fishing towns everywhere is happening here as well. The fishing culture has been changing for many years and many reasons, including the loss of some traditional fisheries, more stringent regulations and fluctuations in the remaining resources.

And if the fishery no longer offers to provide a good, dependable living, the younger generation is less likely to be enticed into sticking with the family business. The kids know what's available in the rest of the world; even in towns like these, many youngsters know less than they should about the fishery, the fish and the traditional way of life that sustained their families for generations.

Enter the Local Fisheries Knowledge Project (LFKP) at Jonesport-Beals High School, funded by federal grants through the Rural School and Community Trust. This project is connecting youngsters with their town and often family histories through interviews they conduct with older town residents involved in some aspect of the fishery. All the information the students retrieve from the subjects of their interviews is being loaded into a database at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for retrieval by scientists doing fisheries research, or anyone who wants to read them. And the students have other, creative plans for their work.

The brainchild of a senior social scientist with the Office of Science and Technology within NOAA Fisheries, the LFKP began when Susan Abbott-Jamieson retired after 25 years as a professor at the University of Kentucky, took a new job and "heard three conversations going on at once" in her new office. Those conversations included the need for the Fisheries division of NOAA to do more outreach, a need to entice more young people into careers in the marine environment and talk about fishermen criticizing agency staff for failing to listen to or appreciate the knowledge fishermen have about fish, fishing and fish habitat.

"Over the years in Appalachia, I saw the effect of projects like Foxfire, in which students interviewed elders about their disappearing way of life," said Abbott-Jamieson. "Local fisheries knowledge is difficult for biologists to use, because of the way it's stored—it's usually in the form of stories. I thought we could put together a project that included all three."

She came up with the Local Fisheries Knowledge Project, an education, outreach and social science project in which students would interview older community members involved in the fishery, videotape the interviews and share the interviews with the rest of the community. Interviews are transcribed verbatim and posted on the NOAA website (www.st.nmfs.gov/lfkproject/) in a database that can be searched using many keywords. This organization of the information makes it usable by scientists who may search for specific information about stocks, habitats and other historic, local information.

The project is funded by a NOAA grant administered through the project's partner, Rural School and Community Trust, a national organization that works with rural schools throughout the country. During the first two years, Jonesport-Beals was joined in the project by Ellsworth High School, where students also conducted interviews. At Ellsworth High School, all 10th grade students in English, science and social studies participated during the two-year project.

Of the eight interviews transcribed and loaded onto the NOAA database, six were done by the Ellsworth students and include a shellfish dealer, two urchin divers, a seafood restaurant owner and a lobsterman. The two Jonesport interviews already posted are with two fishermen—Jonesport's Tuddy Urquhardt, 77, and John Faulkingham, 63, of Beals Island.

Interviews were not the focus of the 2005–2006 student group that worked on the project, partly because of the transcription backlog. This group, larger than previous teams, thought they would branch out to use the information as a fund-raiser, perhaps by preparing a calendar with pictures of the interviewees and studded with local historical information.

"They will use the pictures students have been taking over four years," said Linda Church, teacher of the "Entrepreneurship: We Mean Business" class at Jonesport-Beals High School and a project participant since the beginning. "When we interview the fishermen, we take pictures of the kids and the fishermen." So far, when interviews are conducted, all members of the student team have attended each interview.

"We created a PowerPoint presentation with music," said Church. "We have shown it locally, and in Florida, at a National Marine Science Foundation meeting." Equipment provided through the grant included a video camera, a scanner, a printer and a digital still camera.

Kristi Smith
"I am a 17-year-old fisherman. I attend Jonesport-Beals High School. I own my own fishing vessel named the LITTLE UGLY *along with 500 traps. I have been fishing since I was in the sixth grade. I am a sixth-generation fisherman."*

Lawrence Baillargeon
"I am a student lobster fisherman and I attend Jonesport-Beals High School. The name of my boat is THE HUNTER. *I have lived all my life on Beals Island. I think the NOAA Project will teach me a little more about fishing."*

Jim Roberts, working on the LFKP database in Jonesport, is a teacher and consultant to the Rural School and Community Trust.

Soundtrack music that students have recorded as part of the presentation includes Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" and Dan Fogelberg's "The Reach," said Jim Roberts, local project coordinator, teacher and consultant to the Rural School and Community Trust. "People are in tears when they see it."

The project affords students the opportunity to learn real-life aspects of history, science, social studies, economics, arts and language arts concepts and skills, say the teachers. As part of the curriculum supporting the project, students are assigned to read relevant books such as Mark Kurlansky's *Cod*.

"There have been so many wonderful side effects of this project. One girl who got involved had no college aspirations. No one in her family had ever attended college," said Roberts. "But she liked the interviewing and discovered she had a talent for it. Now she's enrolled in the New England School of Communications."

Besides recording local fisheries history, the project has energized the historical society. "The Jonesport Historical Society was just an idea," Roberts said. "We invited them to come talk about the project. Now the historical society has more than 130 members and NOAA has awarded them a grant of around $10,000 for technology to support their doing videos." Each year for three years, the students involved in the Local Fisheries Knowledge Project have presented the student work to the historical society.

Another development was the delivery by a local resident of a set of audiotapes made in the 1960s by a local historian, Alton Norton Jr. Norton interviewed local people who were old-timers back then and in the background are the sounds of someone building a wooden trap. Students at Shead High School in Eastport offered to enhance the quality of the cassettes and convert them to digital format, using the school's state-of-the-art digital recording studio.

During the first years, students involved in the project were all older, but during the past school year, team members ran the gamut from freshmen to seniors. In Jonesport-Beals, if the interviewees are fishermen, there's a chance the interviewers are, too. At least three members of this year's team are fishermen themselves and one is the grandson of a woman interviewed last year who spent many years working in a now-defunct sardine cannery. Lawrence Baillargeon, 18, of Beals Island fishes from his boat, THE HUNTER. Freshman Alan Crowley, 14, also from Beals Island, fishes 100 traps from his boat, LITTLE NOVI. Kristi Smith, 17, is a sixth-generation fisherman who started fishing in sixth grade. She fishes 500 lobster traps from her boat, LITTLE UGLY. Pictures and short biographies of team members may be found on the NOAA project website.

"Ultimately, the point of this program is to preserve local knowledge," said Michael J. Kimball, associate professor of anthropology at the University of Maine at Machias. Kimball is a project advisor along with Jim Acheson, author of the iconic book about the Maine lobster fishery, *The Lobster Gangs of Maine*.

"I'm concerned about science overrunning local knowledge, knowledge not from books, schools and diplomas, but handed down generation to generation," said Kimball. "Such knowledge has traditionally been underappreciated by scientists. As a social scientist, Susan realized the importance of that knowledge."

Alan Crowley

"I am 14 years old and a freshman at Jonesport-Beals High School. I have lived all my life on Beals Island and so has my family. I have my lobster fishing license, 100 traps and my own fishing boat. The name of my boat is the LITTLE NOVI."

Sonya Kozlowski

"I am 17 years old and have lived in Jonesport for the vast majority of my life. I am a junior at JBHS and I am part of the NOAA Project in my school. I enjoy interviewing local fishermen and learning about their day-to-day lives."

Christopher Merchant

"I am 14 years old and have lived most of my life in Jonesport and Beals Island. I am a freshman at Jonesport-Beals High School. I play sports and I am very energetic. I enjoy interviewing the local fishermen."

The relationships students developed while doing the work in their community created "a tremendous appreciation of their heritage," added Kimball. "When they did the first presentation to the historical society and saw the reaction, they were validated. The benefits of the project go beyond the obvious, to the tendrils that reach out to other projects."

Despite his interest in saving the local knowledge of coastal communities, Kimball is neither a Maine nor a coastal native. He was born and brought up in Western Massachusetts, hours away from the coast. But he developed an interest in archaeology that took him to an internship in Edinburgh. On the advice of an advisor, he didn't pursue his graduate studies in Scotland, but in Ireland, where the coast won his heart. He followed Ireland with Bar Harbor's College of the Atlantic and found down east Maine "similar to Ireland. I fell in love with it."

Projects like LFKP are called "place-based education" in teachers' parlance, and their aim is not only to save local knowledge, but also to give students an appreciation of their home. One aspect of life in down east Maine that excites Kimball is seeing how it's "possible to help kids faced with so many temptations from TV, video games and movies, who could choose to live in an imaginary world where reality for them is not enough."

Kimball wrote a grant for his department to enable to him to invite distinguished speakers to his class. "I did one on cultural conflict and consensus," he said. The invited speaker, a Harvard College faculty member, spoke not only to Kimball's class, but also to several of the LFKP students who were invited to the Machias campus. "We got my senior seminar students involved. The speaker led us through an interesting problem—the issue of coastal access and some beaches being off-limits in Jonesport-Beals. The kids blossomed. They got to talk about what they knew best—their families, their town and the issue.

"One of the things traditionally missing from education is the notion that the place where you are is relevant," Kimball said. "If you travel, the place you go finds a place in your heart. It has all to do with your compass and caring for places not otherwise connected to you. If you start here and make connections to things going on in your community, it creates a sense of excitement, exploration and possibilities. We live in an age of information overload. The curious part that wants to go deeper often just goes to sleep. Projects like this ignite the spark."

And if the local kids from the multigenerational fishing families are benefiting from the chance to save their families' histories, they are not the only ones, said Kimball. Like the professor, some students learned to appreciate the coast after living somewhere else.

Nancy Griffin (3)

Michael J. Kimball, associate professor of anthropology at University of Maine-Machias, said the LFKP is being "watched nationally" because of its all-around usefulness as a teaching tool, not only for the historic value, but also to help students with speaking and reading.

"One of the kids is from New York City. His dad was in the Coast Guard," said Kimball. "There were five shootings in his New York City school in one year, so his dad looked on the Internet for a safe place with a good basketball team! He found Jonesport-Beals. This kid is so passionate about protecting coastal access. It's a powerful thing to watch these kids."

Nancy Griffin *is a freelance writer specializing in fisheries. She has also written extensively about Newfoundland. Visit the project website at www.st.nmfs.gov/lfkproject/.*

Whitney Durkee

"I am 14 years old and have lived in Jonesport all my life. I am a freshman at Jonesport-Beals High School. I enjoy being part of the NOAA Project and interviewing local people. I am also part of the JBHS Varsity Cheering Squad, and have recently joined gymnastics."

Dennis-Lee Emerson

"I am 15 and have lived on Beals Island all my life. My mother's side of the family has lived on the island for many generations, and my father's family has lived in Addison for many generations. I hope to learn what life is like for fishermen and their families."

SUSTAINING A WAY OF LIFE

The Campaign for Maine Islands and Working Waterfronts

Maine's islands and working waterfronts are threatened as never before. As more and more people are attracted to the relative tranquility of island community life, the coast's maritime traditions and beautiful seascapes are under tremendous pressure.

For 22 years, the Island Institute has helped to sustain Maine's island and working waterfront communities. No single community or group can cope with the complex challenges that threaten the Maine coast and its islands. Accordingly, the Island Institute works in innovative partnerships with other Maine organizations to develop both broad-based initiatives and specific community strategies to help sustain a way of life in Maine's most distinctive island and coastal communities.

Every day and at an increasing rate, year-round island and working waterfront properties are being converted to seasonal use. The intensively harvested lobster fishery is virtually the only resource now sustaining Maine's traditional fishing communities. What would happen if the lobster went the way of the cod? If fishermen lost access to the waterfront? The results would be almost unthinkable.

Maine now has the oldest population of any state in the country as a result of young people leaving and retirees arriving. We need to invest in young islanders and fishermen if Maine's island and working waterfront communities are to have a viable future.

As a result of these threats to the future of Maine's island and working waterfront communities, the trustees of the Island Institute have initiated a major capital campaign.

"Islands, as communities, are all endangered species. If people value this way of life that has been sustained in my family since 1756, then we're going to need all the help we can get."

— Donna Damon
Chebeague Island

"The islands of Maine are part of a vision of what the world could be. But it won't last—the Island Institute won't last—unless we find a way to put some real money into the organization."

— Louis Cabot
Chair, Capital Campaign

We are seeking to raise $20 million to endow three core programs for the future.

ENDOWING ISLAND FELLOWS
Goal: $14 million

The Island Institute's Island Fellows program has been a clear success because it matches highly motivated and skilled college graduates with urgent community needs where they can make a real difference.

Island Fellows provide fresh energy for island communities to help get projects started. A single Island Fellow truly can make a significant difference to an island community. With the help of a Fellow, for example, a local school can offer more innovative programs; a community or school library collection can remain up to date; and extracurricular programs in the arts can be offered that might not have been possible without a Fellow. Fellows bring new energy and enthusiasm to remote communities and become important role models for island kids. During the last five years, the Institute has placed 49 Fellows in 18 communities.

The Island Institute currently has 12 Island Fellows working in as many communities. But the demand for Fellows from Maine's island and working waterfront communities far exceeds this number.

We are seeking to endow up to 18 island fellowships. Each fellowship requires $750,000 to endow a Fellow on a permanent basis. To date we have completed four endowments and have initiated endowments and capital funding for Fellows in the following seven communities: Cranberry Isles, Swan's Island, Deer Isle-Stonington, Vinalhaven, North Haven, Islesboro and Monhegan.

"I worked for three years for those kids to give them a better understanding of the larger world and a stronger sense of pride in who they are and what they can offer the world."

— Emily Graham *(center)*
North Haven Island Fellow 2000–2003

David Conover

"The Island Institute, through its leadership of the Working Waterfront Coalition, helped pass a referendum that changed Maine's constitution to preserve our working waterfront. Their monthly newspaper, The Working Waterfront, *distributed to 55,000 readers, also educates the public as well as my colleagues in the legislature about this and other issues so critical to Maine's coastal future."*

— Dennis Damon
D-Hancock, Senate chair of the Maine Legislature's joint standing committees on transportation and marine resources

WORKING WATERFRONT PROTECTION FUND
Goal: $4 million

Working waterfronts are extremely scarce—of the 5,300 miles that make up Maine's island and coastal shorefronts, less than 25 miles have the necessary conditions to support working waterfronts.

Working waterfronts are found in those few places along the Maine coast where deep-water access and all-tide frontage exist in protected harbors, and where public roads connect the shoreline to the wider world. Less than one half of 1 percent of Maine's waterfront provides access for 40,000 year-round marine-dependent jobs that sustain economic activity worth nearly $1 billion to the state.

This past November, the overwhelming success of two ballot initiatives—one to provide $2 million in state bond funds to purchase working waterfront properties and another to amend the constitution to tax working waterfronts at lower rates—sends a clear statement from the people of Maine that they overwhelmingly support protecting Maine's fishing heritage. The Island Institute is proud to have helped lead the coalition and the political action committee that achieved these successes. The Island Institute has also been selected by the Department of Marine Resources to help administer this pilot bond fund with our partner organization, Coastal Enterprises Inc.

The Island Institute helped build this statewide awareness of the threats to access to the waterfront for working fishermen, boat builders and aquaculturists through our community newspaper, *The Working Waterfront*. This lively newspaper, distributed monthly to 50,000 regular readers, is the fourth-largest regularly published newspaper in Maine. As part of the campaign, we seek to expand the online version of the newspaper, Working Waterfront Online (see www.workingwaterfront.com).

The Working Waterfront Fund will also ensure that the Island Institute is able to provide private individuals, communities and lawmakers with the specific, targeted information they need to implement this integrated strategy to protect Maine's working waterfront access.

Peter Ralston (6)

"None of us, nor any island, is an island complete. It is our friendships, both given and received, that rekindle our essential humanity. A hundred years from now, just as today, Maine's surviving island cultures will give the region a distinction that no other place in America, and few on the globe, can replicate. And all of their friends can and must do their small parts to help."

— Philip Conkling, *Islands in Time*

ISLAND SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT
Goal: $2 million

The goal of this fund is to help increase educational development opportunities for islanders pursuing either higher education off-island or technical training to learn skills to remain on-island.

With this fund the Institute currently supports scholarships for island students pursuing higher education or training for traditional island occupations. A limited amount of scholarship support is also available for high school scholarships for island students from communities without a high school.

During the past five years, the Island Institute has awarded a total of $272,256 in scholarship funds that have benefited 427 island students. In 2005, we awarded a total of $64,586 to 94 students.

Based on a recent comprehensive analysis of education needs and costs, the Island Institute has established a goal to provide at least 15 percent of the direct costs of education for the 80 to 85 island students who are in college or technical training programs each year. Our island scholarship endowment goal thus aims to raise a total of $2 million, the earnings from which will fund this need.

"To get a scholarship from some place like the Island Institute, the kids say, 'Wow, these people must think I can do this, so maybe I really can."

— Walter Day
Lobsterman, Vinalhaven, whose son received an Island Institute scholarship to attend George Washington University and who will enroll this year at Harvard Law School

The Island Institute's programs are making a very real and lasting difference among the year-round island and working waterfront communities along the Maine coast. But we need *your* help!

If you would like to know more about how to participate in this important campaign, please contact Philip Conkling or Peter Ralston at the Island Institute, 386 Main Street, Rockland, Maine 04841, (207) 594-9209, or by e-mail pconkling@islandinstitute.org, or pralston@islandinstitute.org

www.islandinstitute.org/campaign

ISLAND INSTITUTE

Sustaining the Islands and Communities of the Gulf of Maine

OUR MISSION

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

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

- Supports the islands' year-round communities
- Conserves Maine's island and marine biodiversity
- Develops model solutions for the coast's cultural and natural communities
- Provides forums for discussion of wise stewardship of finite resources

JOIN US!

Each and every one of the Island Institute's more than 4,400 members helps us make a difference in Maine's island communities, and we are deeply grateful for their support. To find out more about joining the Institute, visit our website, or call the Membership Department, toll-free, at (800) 339-9209, ext. 113.

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

www.islandinstitute.org

Since its establishment in 1984, the Island Institute has undertaken a wide range of programs dedicated to supporting and sustaining island and working waterfront communities in Maine.

Our flagship programs—Island Fellows, our efforts to protect Maine's remaining working waterfronts, and our scholarship program—are described in detail on pages 93–95.

Some notable current activities include:

- A three-year, $1.2 million project funded by the National Science Foundation to encourage Maine students to use technology to find creative solutions to community challenges, and to promote students' awareness of technology-related careers in Maine.
- A statewide effort to use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to map working waterfront access along the entire Maine coast.
- A project with the Maine Islands Coalition to address the issue of affordable island housing.
- The Island Community Fund provides seed money to island communities for a wide variety of education, recreation, arts, library and other efforts—money that has leveraged an additional $35,000 in support for these community efforts.

The Working Waterfront, one of Maine's largest newspapers, is published by the Institute 11 times a year and is the only regular news outlet in the state that focuses exclusively on coastal and island issues.

The Institute's store and gallery, Archipelago, showcases the diversity and beauty of art, design and craft from Maine's island and coastal communities. Featuring both functional and decorative items, Archipelago provides income and exposure for more than 60 island artists, as well as for many additional Maine-based artisans.

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Peter Ralston

STARTING THE SUBARU AT FIVE BELOW

After 6 Maine winters and 100,000 miles,
when I take it to be inspected

I search for gas stations where they
just say beep the horn and don't ask me to

put it on the lift, exposing its soft
rusted underbelly. Inside is the record

of commuting: apple cores, a bag from
McDonald's, crushed Dunkin' Donuts cups,

a flashlight that doesn't work and one
that does, gas receipts blurred beyond

recognition. Finger tips numb, nose
hair frozen, I pump the accelerator

and turn the key. The battery cranks,
the engine gives 2 or 3 low groans and

starts. My God it starts. And unlike
my family in the house, the job I'm

headed towards, the poems in my briefcase,
the dreams I had last night, there is

no question about what makes sense.
White exhaust billowing from the tail pipe,

heater blowing, this car is going to
move me, it's going to take me places.

Stuart Kestenbaum

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