

ISLAND JOURNAL

The Annual Publication of the Island Institute



DEDICATION



Matt Simmons 1943–2010

We dedicate this volume of Island Journal in memory of longtime Island Institute friend and trustee, Matt Simmons. Matt loved the Maine coast and islands, where he spent every spare moment he could with his beloved wife Ellen and their five daughters. Over the years, the Simmons family has provided generous college scholarships to many island students.

*When not in Maine, Matt traveled around the world delivering presentations to heads of state and energy industry leaders on the stark energy choices he believed the world currently faces. His book, *Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy* is widely regarded as the defining word on the subject.*

After retiring from his energy investment company, Matt became a tireless advocate for developing alternative energy sources, including here in Maine. He founded the Ocean Energy Institute, now part of the University of Maine, and helped convince Maine's governor to appoint an ocean energy task force to help Maine make a transition into a new and cleaner energy future based on offshore wind.

His loss leaves a hole in the heart of the Midcoast, large as the ocean.

TO OUR READERS



Peter Ralston

Island Voices—Here and Away

It is easy to romanticize islands, especially when reading or writing about them from off-island. We think of the independence, the peacefulness, the tightknit communities. To many, islands seem to exemplify Maine's motto: "The Way Life Should Be." For islanders, these characteristics may be what drew them, or keeps them, there. But islanders also live with the daily challenges, along with the rewards, that island life inevitably presents.

In this issue of the *Island Journal* we highlight islanders writing about their own island experiences. In one story, a lifelong resident describes his journey of rediscovery on Vinalhaven; another author struggles with the question of how to represent her community to the outside world; a former island student speaks to the difficulties of leaving—and returning to—a childhood island home; and a food historian and naturalist shares her experiences in island agriculture.

We also get a chance to hear from island voices further afield in interviews with islanders from North Carolina, Canada and Massachusetts. While the geography is different, these messages about community-based fisheries, leadership, working waterfront access and agriculture resonate alongside the stories from those closer to home.

Wherever the island might be, the *Island Journal* was conceived 26 years ago as an opportunity to give islanders a voice. And by doing so, we get an insider's look at what it means to grow up and live offshore.

—The Editors

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Volume Twenty-Seven



8
Island Circumambulation 8
A walking tour of the perimeter of Vinalhaven
PHIL CROSSMAN

It's Not About the Scenery 16
Writing from—and about—Matinicus Island
EVA MURRAY



20
Holding It Together 20
*An interview with Randy Cushman,
Captain of F/V ELLA CHRISTINE*

Reversing the Brain Drain 25
ANNA MAINE

Island to Island 33
GILLIAN GARRATT-REED



37
The Modern One-Room Schoolhouse 37
ANNE BARDAGLIO



43
Zen and the Art of Beachcombing 43
JOSIE ISELIN / TINA COHEN

The Penobscot Bay Steamboat "Wars" 52
HARRY GRATWICK



58
Community Kitchen 58
Celebrating local foods on Islesboro
SANDY OLIVER

Passionate and Committed 64
A new generation of island leaders
MARY TERRY

Net Change

Financing Fisheries Reform

ROBERT SNYDER

66



Fairfield Porter & James Schuyler

Paint, poetry and passion on Great Spruce Island

CARL LITTLE

71

Word from Europe: Plan Ahead

Europe's lessons on managing conflicts between offshore wind farms and fishermen

COLIN WOODARD

78



The End of the World

A voyage from Cape Horn to the Beagle Channel

PHILIP CONKLING

83

Island Institute Accomplishments 2010–2011

92

Yellow Giants

Excerpt from Islands in Time

PHILIP CONKLING

96



ISLAND INSTITUTE

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

*Publishers of Island Journal
and The Working Waterfront*

ISLAND JOURNAL

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Front Cover Photo: Peter Ralston

This *Island Journal* is printed at J. S. McCarthy of Augusta, Maine, where 100 percent of all electricity purchases are derived from wind power. The 2011 *Island Journal* is printed on Creator Star paper which has FSC and PEFC chain-of-custody accreditations. This guarantees the wood used in the pulp and papermaking process comes from responsibly managed forests. J. S. McCarthy uses highly pigmented nonhazardous vegetable-based inks to provide the best-quality images, while reducing the environmental impact.



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FROM THE HELM



Peter Ralston (2)

The Year of the Tiger—Mystery and Wonder

“**W**hen beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean’s skin,” Melville wrote, “one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it.” But Melville also sensed that in the “sweet mystery about the sea,” we sometimes sense the “hidden soul beneath.” If ever there were a year when Melville’s tranquil beauty and hidden mystery intersected around the Maine islands, it would be this past year.

The tiger panted beneath the tranquil ocean’s skin last year because the temperature of the water has been inexorably rising—not just in the bays of Maine, but all across the seven oceans of the world. Measurements from tens of thousands of ocean buoys deployed by innumerable national governments, when averaged together from all these watery corners of the globe, revealed that in the world’s oceans, covering 70 percent of the planet, 2010 was the warmest on record.

The mystery, of course, is what warmer ocean temperatures actually mean for any of us, but especially for Maine islanders and fishermen. So far, the answer depends largely on where you happen to live along Maine's sinuous 5,300-mile-long coastline. In eastern Maine, where surface waters in the summer are perennially the coldest in the Gulf of Maine, the warming waters mixing with the nutrient-rich upwelling waters off Grand Manan combined to produce monstrous hauls of lobsters—a happy circumstance foretold by the abundance of juveniles. Downeast lobstermen have been seeing in their traps during the past five years. Two-thousand-pound-a-day hauls were seen by lobstermen fishing from Cutler, Jonesport and Beal's Island. In fact, this bounty of lobster production held all the way west to Penobscot Bay, where many fishermen from this half of the coast landed their largest catches ever.

The ocean temperature pattern from Casco Bay and further west and south along the coast corresponds with the pattern in eastern Maine, but with different results. Warmer water temperatures meant that lobsters shed their shells earlier in the season than has been the pattern in most years in the past; some grew fast enough in the warmer water to shed their shells a second time. But the warmer waters also meant that lobsters headed out of the shallow waters of the bays to deeper offshore haunts where temperatures are more optimal.

If we follow temperatures all the way south to Long Island Sound, the lobster harvests there have declined steeply during the last decade as the water has become warmer and warmer. Poor water quality from urban runoff is undoubtedly a contributing factor to the dismal lobster landings in Long Island Sound and Rhode Island, but scientists know that dissolved oxygen decreases significantly in warmer ocean waters and are not surprised by the near collapse of the fishery. The large, fecund females have moved into deeper, cooler waters and the eggs they release

are being carried away, instead of settling in fertile juvenile habitat near shore. The number of lobsters has dropped low enough there that the scientific committee that makes recommendations to the interstate body regulating lobster harvests suggested the Long Island lobster fishery be shut down.

Thankfully, Maine lobstermen do not have to worry about the fishery here shutting down anytime soon. Landings for 2010 exceeded 93 million pounds and pulled in \$320 million to over 100 small fishing villages on the islands and coast of Maine. We will likely see some new pickup trucks on the ferries and at fishing wharves in the months ahead.

Maine island lobstermen have had a front-row seat in observing how the changing marine climate in their part of the coast is affecting their livelihoods. For the past five years, the Island Institute has been bringing lobstermen from different island communities and other parts of the coast together to share their detailed observations on such indicators as temperature, storms, migration times and shedding patterns that influenced their landings. These observations have been collected in an Institute publication, *A Climate of Change*. In 2007, Sonny Sprague of Swan's Island summarized his perspective on the changes he had observed during the course of 40 years of fishing: "I do believe global warming is happening because this year Hancock County was the top dog in lobsters, and the top dog most of the time has been Spruce Head and Vinalhaven. Now it's shifted a bit eastwards. Before long they're going to be by us; they'll be in Nova Scotia."

Lobstermen in the Institute's annual Climate of Change roundtable meetings have also reported that after the earlier shedding season, lobsters move off into deeper, cooler water earlier in the season than they used to. "The places I fish in August," said Jim Wotton of Friendship, "are the places we used to fish in October." Statistics collected by Maine's Department of Marine Resources show that

the peak harvests of the lobster-fishing season have shifted over time, with a tendency for the peaks to be later in the season. For instance, in 2000 and 2001, the peak harvests were in August. By 2003 and 2004, lobster harvests peaked in September. In 2005 and 2006, landings peaked in October.

This past winter, a larger group of lobstermen participated in the Climate of Change roundtables and described the huge increases in landings from eastern Maine. In fact, lobstermen from different sides of Penobscot Bay reported dramatically different results. Those fishing out of Stonington who fish East Penobscot Bay had a hugely successful year, while those fishing West Penobscot Bay had a good year, but nothing to write home about. Tom Marr, a lobsterman from Long Island in Casco Bay, who used to have big catches starting in July after lobsters had shed their old shells, reported, "We've been catching lobsters [shedders] in June—which is wrong." He added, "The shed just started so early. A lot of gear went into [Casco Bay] without buoys being painted." However, after shedders struck early in the season, fishing fell off quickly, and fishermen had to go further and further offshore to find good hauls.

An interesting sidelight to the lobster roundtable meeting this winter involved the use of a little technological wizardry. The Institute recently received a grant to install dedicated videoconferencing links to each of the 13 schools on Maine's islands. (Elsewhere in this year's *Island Journal*, senior fellow, Anne Bardaglio describes how five island schools have used this technology to align their curricula to share teachers, students and resources.) With the group of somewhat gray and grizzled fishermen sitting in our conference room, we dialed in three island schools so the students could ask questions of this group of veteran fishermen. When a fishermen asked the 12 students in the Frenchboro K-8 school how many of them had been lobster-fishing, they were not prepared for the answer—10 of them raised their hands. One of the students owned

his own boat, and a young girl was part owner in a boat. They mostly fished between 10 and 50 traps, but a few fished up to 200 traps, and they described some of the surprising creatures they had hauled up in their traps—coal from shipwrecks, thresher sharks, squid, scallops, quahogs, flounder and a geoduck.

Perhaps the students were equally surprised by the comments they received from the lobstermen. "You can always come back to the island to go fishing, but first go to college and get a good education, because you never know . . ." Also, always wear your life jackets. Pretty good advice for anyone, including prospective young island fishermen (and -women).

The marine staff that organized the Climate of Change roundtables is facilitating another series of meetings with fishermen focused on another potential change in the ocean—this one dealing with offshore wind. Most coastal and island residents are still only vaguely aware that one of the most potentially far-reaching pieces of legislation enacted last year directed Maine's Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP)—this is beginning to sound like government-speak—to identify companies interested in building a 25-megawatt (MW) "stepping-stone" offshore wind farm. The stipulations are that the wind farm must be at least 10 miles from the coast or inhabited island, in depths exceeding 300 feet of water, and be capable of expanding to 100 MW or more. The same piece of legislation set a statewide goal of siting up to five 1,000 megawatt (called a gigawatt) wind farms in the Gulf of Maine.

It remains to be seen how serious the proposals will be—they are due back to the PUC as *Island Journal* goes to press—but several large energy industry players have been doing their due diligence. The implications of Maine becoming a leader in deepwater offshore wind are potentially large. The Ocean Energy Institute, founded by the late Island Institute trustee, Matt Simmons, calculated that the Gulf of Maine has the potential to gener-



Past, present and future

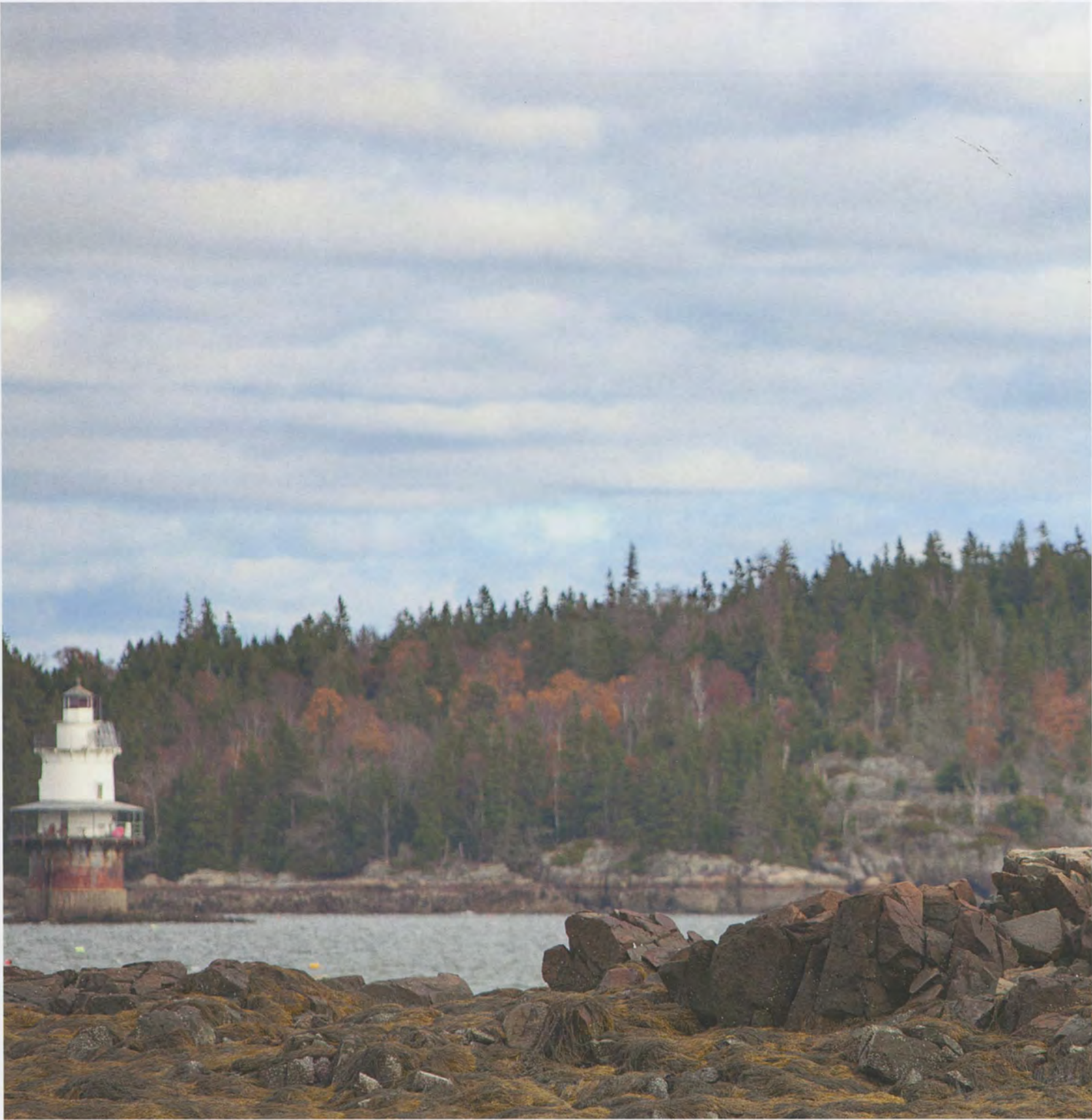
ate an average of 147 gigawatts of energy annually, so harnessing 3 to 5 gigawatts of that total may not seem like much. But if the offshore wind turbines are each 5-megawatt machines, and sited half a mile away from the next turbine, we are potentially talking about setting aside 250 square miles of the Gulf of Maine in wind farms. To someone who views the Gulf of Maine's tranquil beauty and brilliancy of its ocean's skin from the distant mainland, this might seem unremarkable. But to a fisherman, we are talking about a lot of fishing territory.

Heather Deese at the Island Institute and her staff have worked with the University of Maine's DeepCwind Consortium during the past year to pull together a scoping study of potential environmental impacts for prospective bidders to the PUC's Request for Proposals. The University's DeepCwind Consortium, involving approximately 40 government, academic, nonprofit and corporate partners, has

received up to \$30 million of funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to test deepwater platform designs and conduct preliminary environmental studies in the Gulf of Maine. Outside the auspices of the DeepCwind Consortium, Deese and her staff have also been working with fishermen to map fishing areas and territories that may be in the "eye of the wind." This is the kind of information that in the past fishermen have been loathe to share because it is like sharing your business strategy or trade secrets. But there is a sea change happening. Fishermen recognize that if they are going to get a seat at the table that decides if and where ocean wind farms will be sited, they need to prioritize their fishing areas, and the first step is to map them. Stay tuned.

When beholding the ocean's skin, one should not forget the tiger heart that roars *over* it, as well.

—Philip Conkling



Phil Crossman photographed on Leg 40, from Birch Point to Clam Cove, November 2010

ISLAND CIRCUMAMBULATION

A walking tour of the perimeter of Vinalhaven

PHIL CROSSMAN *with* PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON



On October 9, 2009, I stepped off the Dyer Island Bridge and began the greatest adventure of my life. That may seem like a stretch. I've lived over sixty years after all, and have squeezed in my share of excitement, even a recent sail across the Atlantic. Stepping off the bridge, though, I began to walk around Vinalhaven, this island that has been home all my life and which I'd only ever viewed, like most islanders, from the inside out, not often from the outside in. Having begun impulsively, the prospect of extending my walk to include the island's entire perimeter excited me. I resolved to do it.



Soon the parameters within which the rest of the exercise would unfold began to take form. Seeing how much more exploration was possible at low tide, for example, I committed to only walk then, within a couple of hours either side of that lunar juncture and, where possible, to confine myself to the water's edge. Walking at low tide would afford the opportunity to explore not only Vinalhaven and the four satellite islands joined to it by bridges, but also many of the nearby islands and ledges accessible only at low tide. I also determined to try to get in a couple of walks a week. When I returned home that afternoon I outlined in red, on a topographic map over my desk, the shore I'd walked that day. I estimated very roughly that, at this rate and with two walks a week, the entire exercise would take two or three years.

I confess that the impetus was not entirely the noble pursuit of exploring the unknown. Rather, I bear the company—I have all my life—of an inclination toward compulsiveness, and I know no way to engage it except obsessively. The appeal of undertaking a walk around the island, beginning each walk exactly where the previous one ended—in the same footprint, if possible—and concluding years later at precisely the same point on the

That all this discovery was right here in my own backyard, though, lent a curious heft to what might otherwise have seemed mundane.

Dyer Island Bridge, was irresistible. Accordingly, I drew that beginning step on the rock that received it that I might find it when, eventually, I returned.

As it happens, I chose to start at the only place on Vinalhaven's shore where two of its four bridge-connected islands are within a stone's throw of one another. That first day I walked around Dyer Island, ending back where I'd parked my truck. It took the next two walks to get around adjacent but larger Barton Island, and I realized that subsequent walks, unlike around these two little islands, would span distances which, while not very long, would begin and end at points so divergent that to then find the nearest road and walk back to the point of beginning was impractical. The fourth walk, for example, was a mile or two northeast, along the shore, from

the Barton Island Bridge ending at Basin High Mountain. A walk from there to nearby Folly Pond Road and back to the Bridge, however, would be about seven miles. I drove my truck to Folly Pond, unloaded my bike, left the truck, and pedaled the seven miles to begin my walk. When I was finished, I drove my truck back to pick up my bike. Thereafter every walk has begun and ended in the same fashion: I walk the shore, find my way to my truck, parked beforehand at the nearest road, and drive back to my bike.

I had taken 16 successive walks and had reached Crockett Cove before I was persuaded to record my trip with a camera and publish a blog. A friend who'd been following my progress suggested I was engaged in a *circumambulation*—a real word, but one with which I was unfamiliar. My wife Elaine gave me a digital camera she no longer used, and from that day forth I logged every walk on *islandcircumambulation.blogspot.com*. The camera has become my magical companion, producing magnificent images after automatically and instantly focusing and making adjustments for light and distance. I then publish the images and accept the accolades.

It is a relief to occasionally come upon an area where the prevailing winds and currents discourage the accumulation of rubbish, because the lowest common denominator of nearly every leg of this walk has, unhappily, been trash. There's such an accumulation heaved up everywhere on the shore that it seems intentional, as if each pile had been unloaded as a gesture of contempt for our island environment and for those who care about it. Three months into my walk, by this time on the Thoroughfare, I came first to one place and then to many more, where the shore bore witness to greater sensitivity. These were sites where pipes that once poured or flung effluent disdainfully to our fellow creatures lay discarded and dysfunctional, replaced by subsurface sewage-disposal systems. Certainly this was a cause for reflection and rejoicing and a panacea after having encountered so much litter. On the other hand, the discarded pipes were all right where they lay when disconnected, now 20 or 30 years later.

Thankfully, although trash was a recurring theme, so

was discovery. It was the excitement of knowing that at each turn I was about to see something I'd never seen before, and that the approaching unknown was a component of my island home, had been there all along, and might have been discovered anytime during the decades I'd spent in close proximity had I taken the time to look. No matter what was revealed at each of those junctures, I was consumed by, in varying degrees, awe and often astonishment. That wonder stood in contrast to walks I've taken elsewhere, in unfamiliar places all around the world, where certainly more startling surprises lurked around one corner or another. That all this discovery was right here in my own backyard, though, lent a curious heft to what might otherwise have seemed mundane.

This long walk is taking place on an island in the ocean and, where possible, right next to and often in a few inches of salt water. Every glance over my left shoulder is of the sea, often to the horizon. Nonetheless, it is freshwater, on my right, that is the more compelling. The ocean is beautiful and has many faces—angry and gray, beguiling and blue. Its sounds are soothing, even its big ones, and its smells—particularly the memorable but regrettably only occasional scent that comes in off the water when a certain combination of sun, wind, tides, and nutrients are present—mainline a feeling of well-be-

ing directly to the soul.

Still, it's freshwater that gets more of my attention. Surplus rain- or groundwater, if it is not quickly absorbed, will not linger, and over the years every opportunity for that surplus to exit quickly has been found. Everything is certainly relative in a modest but complete little environment like this island, but within that context, some of these waterways are substantial, draining large areas of wetland or watershed, or cascading down from higher elevations. Others carry away less water but are no less determined and certainly no less beautiful. If there has been rain or melting snow, or if conditions are simply other than a sustained deep freeze, an established stream announces itself well in advance of my stepping into proximity. The trickles, no less established, beckon as beseechingly but with much less fanfare, and so I need to pay attention.



Phil Crossman

LEG 21—FROM MOFFIT'S TO THE BACK SIDE OF TIP TOE—JANUARY 2010

Looking back up the inlet, a little pond of freshwater is held in place by the residual stone wall some industrious person took many long hours to build a long time ago, perhaps to capture freshwater for livestock, the upland being some very appealing pasture.



Hundreds of these have always been nothing more than a trickle and never will be, given the limited high ground from whence they fuel up, but the pathways they have excavated for themselves are entirely individual. One of the most beautiful has carved a tiny trench, a couple of inches wide in a long stretch of solid granite, and through this courseway it dutifully transports its allotment of nourishment to the sea, sustaining fauna and cultivating flora along the way. A community of the latter, having assembled itself in a way not precisely found anywhere else, has taken up residence in close proximity. It's not a stretch to think of that relationship as symbiotic, the little brook bringing sustenance to the flora, without which the whole arrangement might not look so much like a magic kingdom.

If, on the other hand, my walk takes me by these places during a

deep freeze, as was certainly the case in the early months of 2010, all these waterways are improbably frozen in midstream or in cascading glaciers that must be content to drip idly, not their nature, until things loosen up. Then the joy of all that water finally moving again is tangible, not only to the brooks and streams but to the plants nearby, and to the animals I've seen refreshing themselves, and certainly to me. It's an irresistible lifting of the spirits, the sight and sound of freshwater hastening to the primordial soup, not unlike that occasional smell from the sea.

Vinalhaven is home to 10 to 14 firths, depending on how one views certain of them. Nearly every one I've encountered has seen and bears witness to man's efforts to either rein in the inexorable march of freshwater to the sea or to keep the salt water at bay. Whether his intentions were to accumulate freshwa-



Phil Crossman

LEG 34—FROM THE HEAD OF MILL POND ON CALDERWOOD NECK AROUND BOY SCOUT POINT, TO JENNINGS COVE—MAY 2010

I've often seen apple trees during my walk. Now and then one seems interesting enough to go up and investigate. This was one of those. They are nearly all lovely, rambling old artifacts, now and then exceptionally beautiful.

ter in standing ponds for livestock, provide irrigation, or harness power, each of those clearly succumbed to the inexorable determination of water to get to the shore, or to technology having provided an easier way to do things.

Having resolved to walk only close to low tide and at the water's edge, I quickly realized that this decision was a little ill-considered, as now and then I've found the shore impassable and have had to climb up to dry land to make progress. On those occasions I have always discovered a well-used and readily identifiable animal trail at the very edge of land, sometimes precipitously close to dangerous drops. Clearly, creatures other than I stalk the perimeter. Their trails are unmistakable, as are the detours they create around blowdowns and rock slides. It's astonishing to think, given the difficulty I, with the benefit of arms and hands and a walking stick, have that these creatures, clothed in fur that must snag on everything, or carrying racks of antlers, or both, navigate as readily as they do.

Along miles of shore, all with a great deal in common, isolated areas are now and then found to accumulate just one thing or another: pockets of sand, for example, or colonies of juvenile barnacles, crushed clamshells, beautifully worn stones, driftwood, or stunning piles of cast-off, luminescent mussel shells. The shells, late in the day and with the setting sun behind them, are spellbinding. Living mussel colonies, which often span the considerable distance between opposing shores—at the head of Perry Creek, for example—are no less so. Their vivacious glow is broadcast above and below the water and, amplified by the sun, offers a mesmerizing and memorable spectacle.

Some areas of the shore, well-protected nooks and crannies, reveal, upon close inspection, less-weather-worn little environments. Here, barnacles are a little bigger than those on the beat-upon ledges, and they waft



Phil Crossman

LEG 42—FROM POLLY COVE TO THE OLD CARL AMES FARM—NOVEMBER 2010

This white-sand beach was a stunning surprise. How could I have lived here all my life and not known? It's right in front of a private residence so access is limited, but still—it's certainly been here as long as I have. What have I been doing with my life?

their feathery appendages about in laissez-faire colonies of security and comparative affluence. Water-front colonies of big healthy mussels live in tiny gated communities, and the seaweed in these places always looks newly coiffed and waves about in a much more casual and presuming unison than their counterparts in unprotected areas. I may have glimpsed fairies in these places. Certainly they're there, at any rate.

The recurring theme, though, at nearly every juncture, has been memories—at every turn another recollection. Here, on Dyer Island, is the first house I ever built. On this day I walk up to the house and examine the spot where, while delicately trying to maneuver a foundation stone, I flipped over a small backhoe when the owner buzzed the site in his airplane.

In the Basin I recall an evening past when my sweetheart and I launched a canoe from the Barton Island Bridge with a hot entree wrapped in a towel and paddled north a mile and a half to the newly built home of a friend to join him and others, who'd driven there, for dinner. Later that night, having no light and needing none other than the full moon and more stars than even a person with a mild obsessive-compulsive disorder felt like counting, we paddled back. On this day I hesitate on the spot where we'd beached our canoe

before carrying our contribution up to the house, and remember the warm reception of those gathered there.

Thirty years earlier my dad and I had driven down the Crockett River Road till we got to the private drive that cuts across to the narrow entrance to Long Cove. We parked there, on the west shore, loaded all our gear into a punt with an outboard, and ferried ourselves and our equipment back and forth till we'd transported it all up to a summer cottage, in preparation for beginning work on an addition. Having finished pouring concrete by hand, Dad wanted to bring his wheelbarrow back to

town. At the end of the day he pushed it to the shore where he found me in the boat, at the helm with the outboard started and, as always, very ready to stop work and leave.

I had nosed the bow in toward shore so he could board. He lifted the heavy steel wheelbarrow by its big wooden handles high in the air and stepped into the punt. Impatient, I put her in reverse and opened the throttle. Losing his balance, having only had time to land one foot in the boat but not having eased his grip on the barrow, he fell backward into about six feet of water. I could tell the depth exactly because I could see a few

Unlike nearly all the others, this oak, with a very comfortable exposure, well protected from the northeast and prevailing winds, had retained all its fall foliage.



strands of his meager head of hair fluttering just on the surface as he landed on the bottom. Beneath the surface I could see he still had the wheelbarrow handles in his hands.

Ever stoic, he took a step toward shore and his head emerged. Now able to breathe, he pushed the wheelbarrow toward shore till he and it emerged from the water. He turned it over, emptied the water from it, and turned to face me. I, having panicked and let go of the control, the better to tear my hair out, was a few feet offshore going 'round and 'round in reverse. He summoned me solemnly, and in a few minutes we were in the truck and headed back to town. He was very wet and quiet and I was uncharacteristically chagrined.

On this day, though, I walk up to the house alone. There, sitting on the concrete piers we poured that day, is the addition we subsequently built, and there, behind that stand of spruce, is the place to which I retired regularly to sneak a smoke, time that might have been better spent if I'd lingered with my dad a little longer.

At Leadbetter Narrows a wonderful old farmstead stands largely unchanged, a summer home for as long as I can remember. My grandfather and grandmother both worked for the fine Massachusetts couple who owned the property, and my dad regularly handled carpentry projects around the place. They had two daughters and a son near the same ages as two of my younger brothers and me. I walk up and cross the considerable wooded peninsula behind the old farmhouse. While in residence during the summer, they thought up the most wonderful means of entertainment for us: scavenger hunts around and through these woods. The clues were discovered not by means of written messages alone, but also by strings that had been laboriously strung for thousands of feet from tree to tree and eventually back again to the house or boathouse, leading us to a big family picnic attended by the five generations of my family and three or four of theirs. I walk back to the boathouse on this day and stand at the edge of the mudflats where, as a 10-year-old, I dug my first clam.

Long ago, at Tip Toe, I was awkwardly introduced to the magic that is a girl and stumbled through that experience for a little while until she, perhaps sensing impending recklessness, changed the subject and, from there, I set off to do what I presumed needed to be done but equipped, sadly, with only what I'd learned



that day. Today I sit down at a picnic bench near the spot and try to recall the excitement of that early evening over 50 years ago. I find I'm a little overcome but am not sure it's because I remember; it may be nothing more than the effort of trying to.

Here on the Thoroughfare is a house my dad built, one of many. There, around a bend, in 1959, I buried a truck I'd taken without permission in the clam flats and watched, helplessly and hopelessly, after having made matters much worse by trying to dig it out, as the tide came in halfway up the engine block. I walk over there and look at a big rut in the mud. Some other kid has done the same thing, and not long ago.

Here at Mirch's Brook I brought a girl smelting, and there, right there on that rock, she snuggled up to a different guy while I watched from the shadows, there, where the detour in the brook rejoins the main waterway. I snuck off hurt and unhappy and, on this day, I find I don't want to linger here for long.

A rocky beach on the Thoroughfare is private property now, like so much of the island, but in the 1940s and '50s, it was the most popular family picnic area on Vinalhaven. My folks regularly took my three brothers and me on extended outings at Real Calderwood's Beach. Shrieks of excitement and shock accompanied afternoon

forays into the surf, followed by hot dogs and hamburgers at an open fire on the bluff overlooking the shore, and then by the sun setting beyond Crabtree Point. Stories and songs followed, then to bed, all of us filling a big tent and the back of a van Dad had transformed into a camper.

By the time this is published the walk will have continued way beyond these places. Even now I've gone around Calderwood Neck and am heading into Winter Harbor. At every juncture memories overtake me. I'm ashamed of some, proud of others, simply shake my head at still others, am moved to tears at times, but I'm no longer eager to put my foot back in that outline of my first step back at the Dyer Island Bridge. I'm having too much fun. Perhaps it will have faded and I won't be able to find it. I'll have to start over, I suppose.

Phil Crossman is a Vinalhaven native with ancestors on the island dating back to 1792. Phil is a regular contributor to the Vinalhaven Wind and author of Away Happens, a collection of essays having to do with life on Vinalhaven. Excerpts from Phil Crossman's blog islandcircumambulation.blogspot.com.

It's Not About the Scenery

Writing from—and about—Matinicus Island

EVA MURRAY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Ilive on Matinicus Island, but one day in early June of 2009 I was lucky enough to be perched on a high rock outcropping, enjoying a brilliant Monhegan seascape. The sun was hot and the fragrant woods behind me were quiet. The shops back in the village were open but the crowded tourist season hadn't kicked in yet. I had a notepad, a camera, and a pint of chocolate ice cream. As I stretched my legs, leaning back on the warm rock and enjoying another mouthful of ice cream, I thought, *I love my job.*

My job, on that especially beautiful day, had been to talk to a few people on Monhegan for a piece I was writing. That day, my visit to our neighboring island seemed perfect. I found friends and coffee in the Black Duck store, more friends and pie in the Carina, the trails were nearly empty, and when it was time to leave we could stand in the middle of the deck of the LAURA B. without holding on. How often does that happen?

Not a lot.

For the past decade I've been writing essays and articles for a number of magazines, newspapers, and websites, and in July 2010, Tilbury House brought out a compilation of some of the Matinicus-themed pieces. My book is called *Well Out to Sea*. My son still calls it *My Life in Kenya*.

I didn't think finding a title for that collection of island stories would be a problem, because I like making up titles . . . or so I thought. I should have known trouble was coming by the way most of my newspaper and magazine editors have been changing my titles over the past couple of years. WHENCE A CATAMOUNT?, a description of how island teenagers grow up and go away to high school or college, became ISLAND STUDENTS LEAVE HOME EARLY. PIE, KALE, AND SHEETROCK became THANKSGIVING ON MATINICUS. Editors do not like obscure references; they want their headlines blunt, and they want them easy-reader

style. The truth is, they want them search-engine friendly.

When my neighbor, author and illustrator Gail Gibbons, brought out her children's book, *Surrounded by Sea: Life on a New England Fishing Island*, one local smart aleck chose to rename it *Life on a New England Fighting Island*. Likewise, most any title I chose would be subject to the arch cleverness of my friends and family. "Out on the Edge," recalling the title of my column that ran in one of the Rockland newspapers for four and a half years, was briefly a possibility, but, around here it had already become "On the Ledge" or "Out on the #\$\$^* Ledge." "Out to Sea" was considered, although my husband normally rendered that "Out to Lunch."

Friends made all sorts of helpful suggestions. One sent a note proposing that the collection of articles be called *Dispatches from the Matinicus Tactical Team Spa and Grill*. Others picked up on every one-liner and advised that this become my title; thus, we had options like *This Isn't Little House on the Ledge-pile*, *The Second of the Two Guys who Shot at Me Is Dead*, and *How Can They Play Sibelius in Weather like This?*

My husband Paul just suggested, *Write If You Find Work*.

People ask all the time, but no, I do not have a nice view from my writing space on Matinicus. I love looking at our beautiful Penobscot Bay as I fly over it in the airplane each time I go to the mainland, but I don't get to sit and muse over an ocean view very often. To me, writing from an island is not about gazing out over the twinkling sea. It's about participating in a lifestyle—a lifestyle more about improvisation and creative problem solving, and reminders that we aren't in charge of our lives (because the weather is) than about peaceful bucolic scenes. Islanders live "on the edge" in dozens of ways: geographic, legal, psychological, metaphorical. I think I've become a specialist in all of these edges.

Writing from an island—which is not always the same thing as writing *about* an island—doesn't really have all that much to do with the scenery. My articles, my perspective, my opinions and my interests are greatly influenced by living on Matinicus, being a part of this special place, this rough neighborhood, this land of the defiantly free and home of the accidentally brave. But I do not write exclusively about Matinicus. The idea is usually not to describe Matinicus for its own sake, but to get at some bigger issue, something about humanity

after the worst of the storm. The caller said, "You ought to come see this, and bring your camera!" I took a photograph and sent it to the Rockland paper. One of the island guys had tied the buoy off so that it wouldn't keep smashing into the wharves and eventually do some real damage to them. He grabbed some heavy rope from a fisherman's shop and tied it to some old stonework that had steel pins in it. After riding out at least one tide like that, one or more of the fishermen towed the buoy away from the inner harbor with his boat and put it on

a mooring (I assume), where the Coast Guard could get to it and replace it. That kind of thing doesn't happen everywhere. People take a lot of initiative here because they have to. Those stories make great examples when we want to suggest wider social and human issues. When there is an emergency, you don't stand around and worry about whether or not you're authorized to help.

Rob Caldwell asked me during my interview on 207 in November 2010, "What is the one thing you want people to come away knowing about Matinicus?" I just looked at him. I had no idea what to say. There is no "one

thing." I resisted being a smart aleck and responding with something like, "If you come out to the island, remember to bring your own sandwich." I should have said that. By now I ought to have a stock of snappy answers for those really broad questions. "What's it really like living on an island?" "What makes a person love an island?" "What is it about Matinicus?" The widely divergent assumptions are tricky, too. We often get one extreme—"Oh, it must be magical!"—or the other—"Why would anybody want to live in a horrible place like that?" That's a good question. I should rehearse some kind of answer.

I have written a couple of hundred essays and articles directly or indirectly about Matinicus over the past nine years, and not one of them has answered the question "What is it like, quick, in 25 words or less?" That can't really be done. Anything you say that briefly will just be a generalization, and that's exactly what I'm battling against. One hopes that people will read between the lines a bit and get a sense of how this place works from the stories I tell. For instance, we only get about 30 vehicle ferries a year, and generally whatever has to be delivered to the island by truck has to get on one of those few ferries. The ferry-riding trucker only has an hour to



Murray writes all of her columns in longhand, sitting with her feet in the oven.

or community in general. I just use Matinicus as sort of a touchstone or a point of reference. The island is often a good example because here individuals can do a lot without having to go through channels, asking permission or stopping and filling out paperwork. When the island post office burned down in an accidental fire in April of 2008, every last person on the island responded in some way. One man (I think I heard that it was the lobster buyer) took it upon himself to unhook the propane tanks from the building while the propane guy was busy with the electricity. All the lobstermen came in from hauling to help; somebody kept an eye on the small children; and people with brooms and shovels and Indian tanks spread out upwind to keep burning debris and sparks from starting a forest fire. Nobody said "It's not my job because I'm not a certified firefighter."

When the large bell buoy, which belongs anchored well outside the breakwater, broke free in a violent February 2010 storm and worked its way into the inner harbor, the island men dealt with it. I got a call from the powerhouse, which is down by the harbor, the morning

unload everything—every tank of propane, every two-by-four, every cinder block, every 50-pound bag of coal or flour or cement or dog chow—and then reload anything that has to go back to the mainland, which is usually busted metal junk. So every time there’s a truck on a ferry, a bunch of us drop whatever we’re doing, leave our real jobs, and scramble to unload somebody else’s truck, because there is so little time to get that done and



At home with the author and baker

get the truck back on the boat before it leaves. That reality, with all its quirky details—like seasick truck drivers, or brawny women who can carry bundle after bundle of shingles, or some island high school kid’s bicycle going back on the ferry strapped down to the otherwise-empty lumberyard flatbed—hopefully speaks to the larger issue of community interdependence better than the bland statement, “Matinicus people often have to rely on each other.”

Likewise, I might write about the seven children in our one-room, kindergarten-to-eighth-grade school doing an unusual art project or science lab, or going skiing at Sugarloaf or hosting their own photographic exhibition in Rockland, in hopes of conveying the broader reality of how our tiny school really can offer a rich, well-rounded, 21st-century education. The island students are exposed to more art, more new books and materials, more special enrichment activities and trips than any students I know of, yet people elsewhere always seem to think our kids are isolated, deprived children who sit on splintery benches in their bare feet, writing on slates and reciting their times tables in the dark. It’s a lot of fun to disabuse readers of that misconception. Matinicus can be very proud of its little elementary school, as can the other Maine islands with similar tiny schools and well-educated children.

There are other ways in which I am very, very proud

of this community. I like to brag about how everybody gets involved with search and rescue, with firefighting, with tending to a sick neighbor whether they really feel all that ready to or not. My children, who grew up here, have become the sort of adults that others go to when they need help . . . if they need to talk, need a wrench, need a Band-Aid, need help with baking a cake or filling out a tax form or fixing a piece of equipment . . . whatever. On Matinicus, you don’t say *No* when you can help someone. I’m proud of our recycling program. I’m proud of our power company—how we have fewer, shorter power outages during storms than the mainland generally has. These things deserve attention—a lot more attention than a couple of rubber-booted bozos taking swings at each other deserve.

I work hard to defy the stereotyping, the “tabloidization” of Matinicus. This island gets stereotyped mercilessly. You hear the same clichéd expressions all the time: the “unique lifestyle,” the “simpler life, away from the hustle and bustle,” and, sadly, the other extreme, the “lobster wars.” Poorly chosen quotes in the newspapers propagate the myth that everybody out here enjoys a little recreational assault and battery on a Saturday night. I try to do a little damage control and a lot of myth-busting. If there has been too much in the news about violence on Matinicus, I’ll write about school programs and church suppers. If there has been a flurry of “cute and quaint” tourist pieces in magazines, I’ll write about the guys going shark hunting, grittier stuff like that.

Somewhere along the line I appointed myself unofficial advocate for the backstage, cold-weather community of Matinicus. I don’t try to speak for the fishermen; they can do a much better job speaking for themselves. So many people who do have some influence, though—legislators, law enforcement and regulatory personnel, and members of the media—really do seem to believe the stereotypes about not only this, but all of the Maine islands. Either islanders are wealthy summer snobs in 30-room “cottages” who don’t need anything except the grass cut, or we are lawless cranks who reject civilization and attack outsiders. Where does that leave the families working to make a living? Where does that leave the phone man, the schoolteachers, the EMTs, anybody like that? I like to represent those voices.

Occasionally I have to more or less plead the Fifth Amendment when somebody asks me to elaborate on some parts of Matinicus life. I’ve never claimed to offer “everything you ever wanted to know about Matinicus.”

It's none of your business what my neighbors do with their leftover chicken bones, and it isn't all that interesting. I get a lot of good-natured ribbing from people who assume I am not telling the "real" story, because if I did, "those boys out there" would break my kneecaps. It's not quite like that; I'm just not looking to start trouble.

One writer did a story out here a few years ago that required him to fly to the island on a bitterly cold winter day when the island was almost deserted. He seemed to think it would add some edgy backcountry authenticity to his tale if he described the ride with the flying service from Owls Head as "treacherous." I was furious. That 10-minute airplane ride is not only far from treacherous (for example, we island mothers put our small children on those planes all the time), but that word also completely misrepresents the flying service. Those pilots are very good at what they do, and they really do make us feel safe.

Sometimes journalists mention, just as background to their real subject, the name of some islander who maintains an outhouse or drives an uninspectable vehicle or sells bootleg whiskey or who burns his kitchen trash in a barrel; the off-island writers don't realize that they should never print those details with names attached. They think it's just "local color," maybe a bit quaint. I wouldn't do that, because I know that somebody could get into trouble. There is no reason to name names when the story isn't even about those people.

It is not my job to report on day-to-day life on the island. That sort of material might be fun, light reading for people elsewhere, but it's not really respectful of my neighbors. I don't want my friends thinking they can't say anything without me pulling a notepad out of my back pocket and writing it down. It's important that I not be a reporter, not be perceived as a reporter. Sometimes, though, it's hard to resist making a few notes. Matinicus truly is the land of "You just can't make this stuff up!" Some of what happens around here is pretty funny. We told the story for years about a storekeeper who used to live out here. He had a wheel of cheese he wouldn't sell. It was a beautiful, big wheel of old-fashioned store cheddar. Three or four different guys from the island stopped in and asked for a chunk of that cheese, and he'd just growl

and say "No." Finally, one of the men thought he'd try another tack, stopping in on a Saturday when Sue, the substitute postal relief clerk, worked behind the counter. "I'll have a pound of that cheese," he said, all nonchalant and casual. She looked at him sort of sadly, made a strange face, and told him, with some reluctance, "Dick said I couldn't sell it." "Rats," said the customer (you bet he did). "That's not the worst of it," added Sue. "He told me to make sure and dust it every Saturday."

What matters is having the freedom to express my own opinion, to choose my subjects (and my timing), and to leave something alone when writing about it might do more harm than good. Some people think that means I've been bullied away from telling the truth. That's baloney. If you bully me, you *will* end up in the newspaper.

The final essay in *Well Out to Sea* is entitled, "Nobody with Any Sense Would Write about

an Island." It describes the process of writing about Matinicus as being akin to steering a ferry: Sometimes you hit somebody's pot buoy, although of course you don't want to, and there is a lot of fog, and there are dangerous ledges, and weird things happen, so experience helps. It gets easier with time, but there are still some risks. I don't intend to make a career of writing about Matinicus. I'd like to write *from* this island more than *about* this island. However, when somebody needs to stand up in public and speak loudly for this place, I'll do it. I'm not afraid of lobsterman thugs in oilskins, and I'm not afraid of men in suits.

One of the air service pilots asked me a few years ago why I started writing newspaper columns about Matinicus when the island has such a tough reputation. I told him, "If you want something done right, you'd better do it yourself." I was just being flip, but I guess that sums it up.

Eva Murray has lived on Matinicus since 1987, when she moved to the island to teach in the one-room school. She is currently at work on her second book about the tiny island schools of Maine. To read more of Eva's work, visit www.workingwaterfront.com/evamurray.



A former teacher in Matinicus's one-room school, Murray advises newly arrived instructor Dave Duncan.

Holding It Together

An interview with Randy Cushman, Captain of F/V ELLA CHRISTINE

INTERVIEW BY ROB SNYDER *with* PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON

Born in 1962, in Port Clyde, Maine, Captain Randy Cushman has lived his life according to the tides. He and his wife Melony are proud new grandparents. Their granddaughter, Isleabay Lorelei Ross, takes her name from their lived experience.

Those who have had the rare opportunity to sit and listen to Randy will learn about more than fishing. His stories speak to the vision, optimism, perseverance and ingenuity required to survive on a depleted ocean. Randy's experiences also tell of something deeper—of how family, boats, fish and fisheries management come together to shape fishermen's identities, as well as their hopes and fears.

The following article is excerpted from an interview conducted in May 2010, shortly after fisheries managers privatized the fish in the ocean, giving them to Randy and other fishermen under a management scheme termed "sectors."

Four Generations of Fishermen

I was on boats way back. My first two-day trip was when I was five years old. My father, he talked about that lots. My mom, she was pretty upset, but I still remember . . . I still remember seeing the fish.

The boats were a little smaller back then. Today we're using boats that are around 50 feet, but back then the majority of boats were 40 to 45 feet. 'Course, you didn't have the net reels then; they had side rigs, called eastern rigs. Even with the wheelhouse forward, they had eastern rigs. The boat my father, Lee Cushman, ran was the F/V HILDA AND HELEN. He was the captain; he never owned his own dragger, [although] he owned his own lobster boat.

It was more diverse back then; there were seasons. Some of the guys stuck to one fishery. Old Ed Thorbjornson, he was a full-time groundfisherman and a shrimper, like I am now. My father was more

diverse: He went groundfishing, he went shrimping, he went scalloping, and lobstering—those four things, every year.

I worked the decks during summer months and on weekends. That's how I grew up; that's what I did.

I was taught by my father's crewmates. Back then, the captain stayed in the wheelhouse and did his job. You didn't have the electronics that you have now, [so the captain] had to stay in the wheelhouse. That has been taken away because we don't have the third person anymore. So now, we as captains are also deckhands, and I have been for a long time. I have to go out there and help my crewmate; he can't be out there all by himself. It changes things.

I was capable of not only catching fish; I could [also] keep the boat



"I am the one that is holding it [groundfishing] together for the family."

going properly. Those are the two qualities you look for in a captain. Melony and I, we talk about this a lot . . . Something happens to me—there comes a time, you know—who would we get to run the boat? It's a scary thought because we can't think of anybody.

I know that I can find somebody to catch fish and make money with it, but how much are they going to break doing it? It's one thing to make money with a boat, but it doesn't make any sense if you're breaking more than you are bringing in.

My son, Nathaniel, he just got his bachelor's degree. He is doing very well. He is the reason that I still stay in it, because he says, "Dad, I don't want to do it now, but down the road I might like to come back to it if I choose." That don't mean he will do it, but the door should be left open for guys like him. If you shut that door, then it is gone. The only way young guys get in is if guys like us let them in.

The part that scares me the most is the knowledge. We are all getting older, I'm getting older, you know. I've got maybe 15 years left here to teach somebody if they are going to do it.

Shipbuilder's Son

The 1960s—that was when the boats started to be more modernized. Net reels, ground cables, more horsepower, electronics—that was a huge thing. And we were young and eager, and it started to become more of a big business than a family-oriented or a community thing.

It was when I started running boats for a couple of other guys. You just couldn't go enough for 'em. The owners wanted you to go because the money was coming in. The more you had, the more you wanted.

If you didn't [run the boat hard] they would let you know, and they would let you know that you could be replaced. It was not unheard of to have that said to you. We were a dime a dozen; back then, guys were lined up on the docks. They couldn't wait. I was getting calls every day. When I'd get in, guys on the dock would be asking me for jobs. It was just booming.

That's when you fished 'em hard and they went to shipyards [for repairs]. Back then, each boat, when they knew what had to be done, would spend one to two months each year in the shipyard. The rest of



Mike, Gerry, Dennis and Randy Cushman

the time you fished hard. You fished as hard as you could, [and the] little things that needed doing, you just wrote it down and passed it to the shipyard.

While [the boats] were at the shipyard between seasons the crew would repair the masts, gear—whatever had to be done. When you got that done, you had the option: If the boat wasn't done yet, the boat owner might offer you \$10 an hour to go down to the shipyard to help get it done faster. So I would do that, to make sure that I had an income.

It's all different now. No one wants to go [fishing] anymore. No one is at the dock. No more phone calls, and you see who is working on the boat [Randy points to himself]. The luxury of taking it to a shipyard is not there anymore. It all depends on me as the owner and the captain.

We started from the ground up. What we got, we got on our own. I fished boats, and I fished them hard for the owners, but not only that—I [also] did it to get my own vessel. I figured I would have to save x amount per year for a down payment. Back then, boats weren't cheap. Back then, to get a good boat—I mean, a half-decent boat—you paid \$200,000 to \$300,000. So you needed a \$50,000

to \$75,000 down payment.

Melony and I, we had a goal. We already had the house by then, [so] we were going to save as much money as possible to put down on a boat. My goal was to get a \$200,000 boat. We were within one year of having the money saved up.

We [Randy and the captain he was fishing for at the time] hauled the boat for the year. I worked on it for four months, and the owner said he would pay me, [but] he never did. At the house our septic [system] went at the same time. We lost about 40 percent of our savings during that haul-out.

We said, If we are going to do this, it's now or never. We just had to lower our standards. Instead of a \$200,000 boat, I was looking for a \$100,000 boat. [For six months] I looked at a lot of boats.

I bought her used in 1996. She is 35 years old. Two brothers in Surf City, South Carolina, built her in their dooryard. That is where the name comes from; [they named her] ELLA CHRISTINE.

She is the second-oldest boat in the [groundfishing] fleet, and the second-oldest boat in Port Clyde. I bought 'er for three reasons: [First,] it was the right price, because that



"Others try something once or twice and they don't get rewarded, then they get mad—they get mad at the system. I do too; I've felt like, Why the hell am I doing this?"

was all I could get at the time for a loan. The second reason is the wood, and the third reason is the fasteners.

It's knowing your materials. You know, back in the day, my father and I, we built wooden boats when I was younger. I know wood, and I know boats.

She's made out of cypress, that swamp wood you see on the Discovery Channel. We would have given anything to have the materials that my boat is built out of. Back then no one could afford it. [The wood is] 35 years old, and I can show you a piece of it down by the bilge that is as good as the day she was built. It's probably the only wooden trawler in the state of Maine right now.

The fasteners are Marnel, and if you understand fasteners, then you know that Marnel is the best you can buy. Three times better than stainless . . . and three times the cost. It would be \$80,000 to replace the fasteners on that boat now. That's why I bought her.

A lot of people say their boats are dying. Not mine. I bend over backwards and, Melony and I, what we save goes back into the boat. It's pretty simple. You have to, to keep it

going. The boat will outlive me. That boat will still be going when I die.

Where are all the fish?

I asked where Randy was in 1976, the year that federal fisheries management came into existence.

I remember seeing the Russian boats outside, around the winter bottom. Back then, my father and the other fishermen in Port Clyde were mainly day boats—day fishermen. They went out for the day, came in and unloaded. They would be home in the evening.

Back then [fisheries management] really wasn't to the point that it was affecting us. It didn't really affect the business or the income at that time. Whatever regulations there was were not worth talking about. They still went out and made a living.

The true effect hit me when I became captain of the F/V SIRIUS—that was Eddy Thorbjornson's boat. I was running the boat, and I was 20 years old. It was when they changed the mesh size. It didn't really affect us. The only reason I remember is because we laughed about it, because

I [had] already increased our mesh size a year or so prior to that. I didn't like what I was seeing.

I asked why Randy bought a boat in the 1990s at a time when fisheries management was becoming far more restrictive by limiting the number of days fishermen could fish.

I knew that if I was going to do it, I had to do it then [1996—the year that the government began limiting the number of permits in the fishery, and the days of fishing]. I'm glad I did it. I couldn't [have] done it two or three years afterwards. [The price of permits was climbing, as the number in circulation was soon to be capped by the government.]

When I started—I was in high school—I can remember going down to "Three Doors" with my father. It was like a city. At night, you looked out and you could count a hundred lights. This is two hundred days a year, and [with] old gear. And the catch was not decreasing; it was sustainable [for the boats]. Then all of a sudden we start taking these cuts. It don't add up to me, in my mind. I am not seeing the benefits out there. I'm doing what I can here ashore, but out there at sea, we should be buried in fish, plain and simple. Not just with [cuts in] days, but with the Nordmore grate [1 percent bycatch in the shrimp fishery], the mesh size. The effort is just nil, compared to what it was . . . it is just nil. You put a percentage on it, it's not even 10 percent of what I remember when I started. It's not even 10 percent.

So where are all the fish? That's what gets me, Rob—that's what breaks my heart. I just don't get it. I come home, I tell Melony every year [that] something else is going on out there. It can't be just us. I says, I know we are a factor—we have been right along. But, I says, I can remember year in and year out, it was the

same thing every year. You never decrease, never go in the hole.

Then all of a sudden you start cutting back. It seems like the more we cut back, the less there is. The two don't add up. So you [say to] yourself, there's got to be other factors, but I don't know what it is, Rob. I don't know. I can't put one finger on it. I do know one thing: There is not the fish there as when I was young, I do know that. And it is like I have been telling everybody: You could shut this down and not go for 10 years, and I don't think you will see improvement. Why? I don't know. I can't explain it. Because right now, we are not taking enough fish out of that ocean to do anything. We don't even go to areas where we used to go—places I haven't been in 15 years.

I think other fisheries are a factor, but I don't think that is the whole thing. I don't know if it's climate, global warming—I don't know what it is. There are other factors than just fishermen. It has something to do with Mother Nature, and I can't put a finger on it. Maybe it's pollution, I don't know. I think it depends on the species.

Maybe it is mismanagement. Maybe there is too much of one thing?

There is another factor in all of this. We have increased our mesh size over the years along with the [cuts in] days. Back when the fishing was [economically] sustainable, we were fishing 4- to 4.5-inch mesh. I often wonder—if you went out here off of Monhegan with a 4-inch mesh, [I wonder] what you would catch. It might surprise you. Nobody knows; nobody can know. If you go out and fish the same way they fished 30 years ago, would the stocks appear to be rebuilt? Can you answer that? I can't. I have thought about it a lot.

We were always a day late and a dollar short. We were independent. We were competitors. We were com-



"I was capable of not only catching fish; I could [also] keep the boat going properly. Those are the two qualities you look for in a captain."

peting with each other. We grew up in this town. We were all friends and family. When we came ashore, we were [the] best buds in the world. When we were on the water, it was just like [what you've] seen on *Deadliest Catch*. When those guys are ashore [they're the] best of friends, but when you get out there, you better not be setting no string across mine or you're gonna lose it.

So what we done in the past year [create a cooperative, or "sector," where fishermen pool the pounds of fish they have been given by the management system], we had no choice. It took us a long time to figure [out] that if we don't band together, then we're all going out of business. I'm stubborn; I don't give up that easily. I keep going. So this is like a last stand, but it was really hard.

I've heard people say, "That ain't gonna work." Independent as we had been, it was really hard [to form a sector]. We were out there making a dollar for our families, catching fish for the people, but we were always competing with each other. Who wouldn't want to beat the next Joe? Think about it: Wouldn't you rather be in the boat with 50,000 pounds

instead of 10,000? Our reputations are built on that. You build character doing that.

Clean Break

I'm the type of guy, I like a clean fishery. I've done what I can with my gear to make it as clean as possible—for quality reasons, and for the fish itself. We have done pretty well [with gear modifications], that's for sure. Last year I was at about 5 percent [bycatch].

My father wouldn't know the shrimp grate [Nordmore double grate]. All them years they went 20 to 30 percent bycatch. It was awful. I was on deck. You worked, you got in [to the dock] and you worked. After you got in, you worked two, three hours. Holy nightmare, the captains back then could be assholes [he says, laughing]. They put their hands on their hips up on the docks, watching you. Barking out orders. Yeah, it has come a long ways. I'm not exaggerating—it was 20 to 30 percent. I wish my father was alive so that he could actually see it today.

I showed my great-uncle, because that's what he'd done for a liv-

ing. He fished on the Grand Banks most of his life, red-fish boats. He was on them 40-fathom boats out of Rockland. Before he passed away—I think he was 73—he called me up and said, “I want to go out one more time.” I said, “You show up [at] 4 a.m. tomorrow morning and we will go.” I took him out and he passed away about a month after that. He couldn’t believe the difference. He went, “Wow.”

I’m looking for more conservation now in the fuel, although I have been doing that right along, too, without everyone knowing about it. I was the first one to take the chaffing gear off. I’ve been doing that for six, seven years. They all look at me, like, “What are you doing?” I get better fish; I get a dollar, they get 60 cents. I guess what I mean by being stubborn and not giving up is that, it don’t happen the first trip; it takes time. It does. You have to be persistent. Others try something once or twice and they don’t get rewarded, then they get mad—they get mad at the system.

I do too; I’ve felt like, Why the hell am I doing this? It would take me sometimes five, ten trips. It took working with the [Portland Fish Exchange], with my broker, God bless her. She says, “Randy, it ain’t gonna work.” She says, “You need to come to Portland and day-fish; you ain’t gonna compete with these guys.” I say, “You know, I have said it every year, and I will say it again: If I can’t make a living fishing out of Port Clyde, then I ain’t fishing anymore. This is where my roots are. I ain’t moving to Portland, and you’re not gonna get me to move to Portland.” She says, “All right, go ahead.” So I go ahead and create better quality.

The last thing I did, the auction called me up and said, “What [are]



“A lot of people say their boats are dying. Not mine . . . What we save goes back into the boat. The boat will outlive me. That boat will still be going when I die.”

you doing to your fish?” I said, “Do I have to tell you?” It comes back to that competitive thing. One guy says, “The buyers want to know when you are coming in.” See, now you know you’re doing something right. You take what resources you have, and you try to make it work. That’s how I look at it. How can I make this work—how can I turn it around?

Our Heritage

It comes down to access. My brothers know it. We talk. My brothers go lobstering. It used to be 50/50. My two youngest brothers went lobstering, and Dennis used to be a groundfisherman like me. He ran the O’Hara boat, the enterprise. My brother Denny, [with only] one hand, one eye. Used to have to stand on a milk crate. He was captain the last five years it was in Rockland.

So, he chose to go lobstering when everything was done in Rockland. It was a choice he probably didn’t have at the time. The reality is that I had a choice. I was the one that was really staying in it—Port Clyde as a community. Dennis went outside to Rockland. I had my foot

through the door down here, all the guys I grew up with—[we] went to school together.

I am the one that is holding it [groundfishing] together for the family. I worry that if you pull that one link out, it will all come crumbling down. I’d just hate to lose access in Port Clyde, I really would. I love that town. I’m fourth-generation. We have the fifth generation fishing there, Billy. He’s actually fishing a boat that my father and I built for my father-in-law. So, my wife’s dad, my father, and I built his boat. Now my nephew is fishing it. It’s true; it’s a beautiful boat. Just like the day we built it, too.

So, there is a lot of heritage there. Family, community—I’d hate to be the one who gave up. I’d hate to be the one that people [talk about, saying] “Randy gave up.” It ain’t gonna happen. Melony is just as stubborn as I am about it. She keeps saying that we aren’t going anywhere. But it gets hard. Every year we talk about it. Am I still gonna do this?

Rob Snyder is executive vice president of the Island Institute.



Reversing the Brain Drain

ANNA MAINE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GRAY FAMILY

We were late for the boat—as usual. But my mom and I couldn't just leap on at the last minute as we often do because I had so much luggage. Boxes of school supplies. Bags of clothes. Towels, bedsheets, a desk lamp. It wouldn't be good to begin my college career by missing the ferry, so we hustled all my worldly possessions into the car, then out of the car, down the ramp, and onto the familiar steel-hulled ISLANDER. I said a quick good-bye to a few friends who'd managed to roll out of bed to see me off. They presented me with parting gifts so I wouldn't forget where I came from: a book bag from the library, a cucumber from the garden and a map of Casco Bay.

I stood on the stern and waved good-bye to my friends and the place I had called home for 18 years. Chebeague Island looked postcard-perfect in the morning sun: swaying trees, matchstick houses and the sparkling sea. And then, with one last glance, I turned and looked forward to the beckoning shore. I knew I would miss the island. I was headed to a new place—a city, a big university. I had grown up in a small world, accustomed to a community where I knew everyone, where it is a scramble to even field a pickup baseball team.

But it was time to take the leap. No longer having my life dictated by a boat schedule was just the beginning of this new adventure.

Ask any college freshman where he or she will be in five or ten years, and it's unlikely you'll get a definitive answer. Life's too uncertain—and new horizons beckon. Yet, for a state like Maine—and especially Maine's island communities—the answer is critical, for their future lies in luring these young people back home, to put down roots and sustain the fragile economy, to produce the next generation and sustain a way of life.

Maine has the oldest population of any state in the U.S., according to census data. In the last two decades 50,000 young Mainers departed—for higher education, employment opportunities, or simply to experience life elsewhere. The phenomenon has been called a “brain drain.” In more populous areas, the exodus might not be so noticeable. In Maine, and its 15 year-round island communities, it is.

“It doesn't take a whole lot to change the dynamics here,” says Ed Gray, a longtime resident of Great Cranberry Island.

In many respects, the Gray family reflects the tugs and pulls on young people as they decide what their futures hold. All five children of Ed Gray and his wife, Jane, grew up on Great Cranberry. All have chosen to leave.

“I don't think I could live out there,” says Josh Gray, 27, Ed's eldest son. With a year-round population of just 40, the island only has four residents under the age of 40. (Ed, at 60, is himself one of the younger residents.)

Even though Josh spends the majority of his time working on Great Cranberry at the family boatyard, Newman and Gray, he lives on the mainland, commuting daily from Bass Harbor. On the mainland, he says, he can have a social life, including being part of a basketball league. Social interaction with contemporaries just isn't possible on the island.

“It's fun to be out there in the summer, but once Labor Day hits, people clear out. There's more going on over here,” he says, referring to the mainland.

Josh's sister Martha, 26, agrees. And his sister Hannah, 31. And Molly, 29, along with Seth, 22. Among them, the five Gray siblings can come up with a number of pretty serious reasons to stay off Great Cranberry. Real estate on the island, especially waterfront property, is extremely expensive, Hannah says. As a future engineer, Seth points out the logistical difficulties of getting materials and equipment shipped to an island. Martha's new job will require a lot of international travel, which isn't really suited to the island's isolation. Molly has moved south to escape the harsh Maine climate. Their reasons read like a checklist for the problems plaguing island communities.

But this “brain drain” affects more than just island communities. Maine is a state with serious out-migration problems, where often there is no choice but to leave. According to a study by the University of Southern Maine, conducted jointly with the Finance Authority of Maine, more than half of the state's college graduates in 1998 said they wanted to live and work in Maine. Nonetheless, three-quarters ultimately left the state because they believed employment opportunities were better elsewhere. If anything, the current economy has only exacerbated the dilemma for young Mainers.



Ed and Jane Gray at Ed's first boatyard, Cranberry Island Boatyard, which he purchased in 1978



Ed and Jane Gray at the Newman and Gray boatyard in 2008

Josh, who graduated from Colby College, attended his fifth-year reunion last fall. Not a single person he knew from his time there is still living in Maine, he says. Most of his college friends are in the fields of banking or finance and reside in Boston, New York or Chicago, where jobs are available. For them, Maine doesn't provide the same kinds of opportunities for job training or advancement.

"Nobody stays in Maine from my experience," he says candidly.

And yet the Gray family itself challenges Maine's brain-drain phenomenon. Three of the five Gray siblings currently live and work in the Pine Tree State. They have seen the world, and ultimately were drawn back to Maine. Their individual life choices, though still taking shape, have brought them home.

HANNAH, SAILOR

Hannah is the oldest of the Gray children, and she has returned to Maine, lured back by the coastal waters where she grew up. Those same waters have provided her with a career she loves: sailing master at Maine Maritime Academy. There, she oversees the maintenance of 60 sailboats—from dinghies to cruising boats—and the sailing programs at the school.

Like all of Great Cranberry's children, who must leave the island to attend high school, Hannah left the island at age 13 to board at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, the only Gray sibling who did not attend Gould Academy. After graduating in 1997, she applied to Colby, Bates and Bowdoin colleges, but instead found herself at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Wesleyan's liberal academic climate appealed to her, she says. She majored in Latin American studies.

"I was initially interested in international development," she recalls. After graduation, Hannah moved to New York City for three years. She began work as a paralegal in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, writing grants and articles for a year. She then worked for two years at the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services, a criminal justice system reform group in New York.

"It was everything I could have asked for in that field," she says of her second job. She



August 1988—(L-R) Martha, Molly, Hannah and Josh



Hannah in Newfoundland on board the Maine Maritime Academy sail training boat, BOWDOIN

loved living in the city, but says that she would look at her supervisors and realize she didn't want to do what they were doing for the rest of her life.

"Now, retrospectively, I know I do not like office work," she says with a chuckle.

Hannah moved back to Maine without a clear plan as far as what she'd do next. Soon, she was presented with a golden opportunity for the summer: Her father owned a 25-foot Friendship sloop he was trying to sell, which, in the meantime, was available for her use. As a child, she had begun sailing at the Little Cranberry Island Yacht Club and had always enjoyed it, although she "never planned on leaving the city and being a sailor." Living on board and cruising up and down the Maine coast in her gaff-rigged sailboat, she changed her mind. It was a trip she describes as "the seagoing equivalent of a road trip in a Volkswagen bus."

Her summer voyage began Hannah's career. Soon she found herself working on the tall ship *AMISTAD*, sailing to Sierra Leone. The *AMISTAD* is a replica of a slave ship by the same name. After working on the *AMISTAD*, she was "hooked on traditional sailing."

Two years ago, she returned to northern Maine and worked on the *BOWDOIN*—one of Maine Maritime's boats—sailing to Newfoundland and Labrador. There were no doubts now about her future career.



(L-R) Molly, Seth, Josh, Martha, Hannah and Jane



Molly and Josh on one of the many creations they made out of beach debris

"All those experiences cemented in my mind that I wanted to work in maritime trades. I see Maine as a really good place to do that," she says, citing Maine's "incredible maritime tradition."

Hannah Gray now lives in Belfast. At Maine Maritime she teaches what she calls "normal college classes" such as celestial navigation. She also gets out of the classroom for her navigation labs, where students must take her along a route, utilizing terrestrial navigation.

"I like living in Maine because there's a real 'do-it-yourself' attitude, and part of being a mariner is being more self-sufficient."

MOLLY, HERBALIST

"Our parents rock!" declares Molly Gray, laughing, and explains that even though she lives far from Maine these days, she regularly talks to her parents on the phone.

She has lived in North Carolina for nine years, the past six outside the small town of Hot Springs, nestled in the mountains near Asheville. Hot Springs bears a striking resemblance to Molly's childhood home of Great Cranberry, she says. Sure, the weather is milder; there are no mosquitoes in this part of North Carolina, and the naturally occurring mineral water there pours out of the ground at a temperature in excess of 100 degrees, not the bone-chilling liquid of Maine's springs. There are mountains, and Hot Springs sits astride a portion of the Appalachian Trail, which is perfect for Molly, who enjoys hiking.

The town is home to 600 people, and the economy is driven by tourism. In many ways, says Molly, life in her rural community is akin to living on an island, especially when it comes to logistical challenges. She compares the half-day it requires to get groceries in Hot Springs to a similar voyage for Cranberry Islanders. Another similarity, she says, is the casual attitude toward authority (she knows some "moonshiners" in these mountains), and everyone shares a tendency toward driving around in pickup trucks for fun.

"It's the same culture of small-town people piecing stuff together to get by," she says of the two communities, reflecting on the independent nature of islanders and her Appalachian neighbors.

Molly's 20-acre property is home to dogs, cats, chickens and bees. She grows and cans vegetables from her garden. More than just a casual gardener, Molly is an herbalist. She makes tinctures and teas to treat people medicinally. She also works at the preschool in the Hot Springs Community Center.

She traces her work with plants to the lawn-mowing business she started on Great Cranberry years ago. She called her company Mr. Pinchy Lawn Care and mowed about 50 lawns with a push mower, with her sister Martha pitching in. She then moved up to gardening and landscaping, and eventually herbalism, in what she calls a "plant progression."

While Molly has no intention of returning to Great Cranberry (or even Maine) in the near future, the island has helped to shape her identity and her future.

"I wish that I wanted to move back there," she says.

JOSH, BOATBUILDER

In the solar system that is the Gray family, Josh's orbit has brought him closest to home. At 27, he is a partner in the family's Newman and Gray Boatyard and works designing boats. He is also a licensed captain and runs a charter boat and year-round water taxi service. However, rather than living on the island, he lives on the mainland in Bass Harbor and commutes on the ferry every day.

Josh was the second in the family to attend Gould Academy, after his sister Molly, and then chose Colby College in Waterville because the environment was similar to his boarding-school high school—and it was in Maine. He knew he wanted to stay in the state, he says. He was awarded a Mitchell Scholarship, established by former U.S. senator and Maine native George Mitchell, and granted to one graduating senior from each high school in Maine.

"When I was in college, I didn't have too firm a grasp of what I wanted to do," Josh recalls. He ended up double-majoring in economics and government. Colby has a strong travel abroad program, and Josh headed to Australia for his junior year, where he studied the Australian government at the University of Sydney for six months. His fondest memo-



Josh at the helm of the CADILLAC, a 26-foot lobster yacht built at Newman and Gray in 2009 which provides private charter and passenger service to and from the Cranberry Isles

ries, however, were not of the classroom, but of driving up and down the coast in a van he'd purchased, and surfing off the Australian beaches.

After graduating in 2005, he wanted to move to a city. He lived in Washington, D.C., and worked for a lobbying firm, but returned to Maine after six months—in part because he missed being on the water.

His work at the boatyard as an adult was a lot more interesting than it was during his high school summers, when he did a lot of shoveling and painting. He decided to attend the Landing School of boatbuilding and design in Arundel. He lived in Kennebunkport for 10 months, and in 2008 received his degree in yacht design, which provided him with more advanced computer-modeling skills in the extremely technical field of boat design.

"There's more to it than physical labor," Josh says of boatbuilding and design. "There's more skill, trade and craft."

MARTHA, ENGINEER

Martha Gray remembers biking to school, building forts in the woods, ice-skating, and sledding during her childhood on Great Cranberry. When she left for college in the fall of 2003, she imagined she'd move back to the area, if not back to the island. Now she's not so sure.

"I've changed. When I was younger, I was a different person, and I need more going on now," she says.

After graduating from Gould Academy, Martha went to North Carolina to Warren Wilson College, where her older sister Molly was a junior. Martha liked the school because she could work in the auto shop at the college while pursuing a liberal arts education.

"I liked working with my hands, and I liked mechanical things," she says, but she also wanted to receive a four-year degree. Just not right away. She left school in January of her freshman year to return to Maine. She worked in the boatyard for a few months, restoring boats, and then moved back to North Carolina briefly in the fall. Soon she moved farther south—to Nicaragua, where she worked in an orphanage.

Martha returned to school in 2005, entering Worcester Polytechnic Institute as a freshman to study environmental engineering. Immediately after graduating in 2009,

she moved to Pennsylvania to work for a company called Tetra Tech, Inc., a global engineering and consulting firm.

Living in Pittsburgh, she found that she wanted to be in a different field and work for a smaller company. She was considering moving back to Maine, but looked at job openings everywhere. As fate would have it, her brother Seth was interning at Ocean Renewable Power Company, a new enterprise based in Portland that hopes to produce energy through tidal action.

"I thought it would be interesting, and it was a good opportunity in my field," she says. She describes the work there as "cutting-edge." Not only did the job allow her to return to her home state, but it also appears that she will have unlimited opportunities for foreign travel, as well. Her father speaks excitedly of the places she'll go, as the company hopes to expand to Alaska, New Zealand and Australia.

Martha explains that part of her reason for joining the company was so she could be closer to her family. Pennsylvania offered two benefits, she says: more daylight hours in winter, and her own identity in a larger community. "But you don't have that guy who jumps your car for free," she laughs, explaining how fellow islanders always help each other out, even when it comes to restarting car batteries. "I really like having a support system where



Martha, on board Blair Colby's ex-army truck, rides out across a bar on Great Cranberry to help rescue another truck that got mired on the beach.

you know everyone.” Overall, Great Cranberry is a wonderful place, “but if you want to experience culture or social aspects . . . you can’t get those things on the island.”

SETH, STUDENT

As the youngest of the Gray siblings, Seth says it was tough when he was growing up and his siblings were away at boarding school. (Martha, closest to him in age, is four years older.) There weren’t any other kids his age on the island, so he spent a lot of time with his dad.

Seth also spent some of his childhood living off-island, attending school in Northeast Harbor, from second grade on. The family rented a house where Seth lived with his mom, brother, and sister Martha. He remembers taking the last boat home on Fridays, spending the weekend on Great Cranberry, and returning to the mainland on Sunday night or Monday morning. The system worked well because the ferry’s operator was married to the secretary at the school, so if they were running late on one of those Monday mornings, the driver would simply call his wife.

Life on the mainland wasn’t too bad, Seth remembers, even as the occupants of the house dwindled from four to three, and finally, to just him and his mom as his older siblings went off to boarding school.

Now 22, Seth is a senior at Wentworth Technical Institute in Boston, where he is studying mechanical engineering. Although he considered attending the University of Maine, the city of Boston held more allure. Wentworth’s degree program requires internships, and last semester he worked with Portland-based Ocean Renewable Power Company, where his sister is also employed.

When asked how he discovered Ocean Renewable Power, Seth says that he had been interested in tidal power for several years, and there were only “a handful of companies in the country that were actually doing stuff.” The other firms, he says, are still at the drawing-board stage. He began an e-mail campaign with Ocean Renewable Power, hoping to land an internship.

“I guess my persistence paid off,” he says of the 10 months he spent e-mailing the vice



August 2002—Martha and Josh built a 110-foot dock for the boatyard. It took their entire summer vacation to build the dock, main float, and two finger floats.



Spring 2009—Seth and Josh on board the Jarvis Newman 32 OLD SQUAW on the first day of sea trials, after doing an extensive rebuild of the boat

president of technology, until the company obtained funding for an intern.

Before Ocean Renewable Power, Seth interned at a company called Space Exploration Technologies in Los Angeles. There he worked on resupplying the International Space Station with the *Dragon* space capsule. The company has offered him a job upon graduation, he says. Although he was awed by SpaceX’s growth and interesting projects, Seth didn’t like living in Los Angeles. “The city made me appreciate Maine more,” he concludes.

Seth will graduate in August. By then, he will have chosen between two job offers, one at SpaceX and one at Ocean Renewable Power. He calls Ocean Power an “awesome company,” and explains that they understand the challenges of living in Maine.



Thanksgiving 2004—(L-R) Seth, Molly (with dog Otis), Ed, Martha, Hannah, Josh (with Annie), and Jane at the end of the dock at the boatyard



One family, five children, living vastly different lives. The one thing they all have in common is their love for the island where they grew up, became self-reliant and independent—like Maine islanders everywhere, regardless of age.

Maine can offer Hannah and Josh the opportunities—and lifestyles—both seek. Indeed, both are pursuing careers in the most traditional line of work that exists in the state, tied to the water and boats. Cold winters aside, Molly, the herbalist, might find contentment growing her plants on a Maine farm. And Maine's newfound interest in “green” energy manufacturing and generation holds promise for young engineers like Seth and Martha in a cutting-edge technology.

But for now, Great Cranberry can't provide the employment options or social interaction they need, as young people, to thrive.

It will be impossible to predict the future of Great Cranberry and other Maine islands whose young populations are faltering. We can only guess at the reasons why some return, and only time will tell if the Gray kids will join those ranks. It may require a drastic change of lifestyle—families of their own,

perhaps? The opportunity to provide children with the same tiny school and bike-riding adventures, inspiration and independence that the island afforded them?

Yes, Maine is losing some of its best and brightest, and those numbers are worrisome. But what of those who leave and then come back, drawn by a sense of place, knowing that opportunities can be found, and that creativity and hard work are rewarded? For them, the islands instill a fierce loyalty.

And we have to believe that if anyone can come back to such a small, isolated community after seeing the world—sailing around the globe, living in cities on the East and West coasts—that these five young adults will be among them.

Hannah Gray may sum it up best of all: “Nowhere will ever be home for me but Cranberry.”

Anna Maine is a native of Chebeague Island and is currently a student at Brown University.

Anna began writing professionally as a participant in The Working Waterfront's Student Writing Program and has written for the paper since then.

To read more by Anna Maine, visit www.workingwaterfront.com/annamaine. For more information on The Working Waterfront's Student Writing Program, visit www.islandinstitute.org/studentwriters.

The Gray family has received assistance from the Island Institute Scholarship program. For more information, visit www.islandinstitute.org/scholarships.

Island to Island

INTERVIEWS BY GILLIAN GARRATT-REED

The world is not designed to be fair or equitable, and the inequities are particularly strong motivators when you live on small islands. You simply have to learn how to do a lot of different things at once, and to become multiskilled and to be quick on your feet. That way of living appeals to me, and I admire people who do it well.

—Dr. Irene Novaczek, Prince Edward Island

Islanders, by necessity, are leaders in thinking and living sustainably. Because islands have finite resources, achieving a balance between natural systems and societal needs is critical to maintaining healthy communities. In November 2010, islanders met in Rockland, Maine, for the third annual Sustainable Island Living Conference. Joining residents of Maine's islands were visitors from islands and remote coastal communities around the continent, who attended the SIL conference to discuss the commonalities that islands—wherever they are located—share. The following excerpts are taken from conversations that took place with these visitors during the conference.

COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED FISHERIES

Karen Willis Amspacher, Harkers Island, North Carolina

The job I'm supposed to be doing is [serving as] director of Core Sound Waterfowl Museum & Heritage Center, but that's a bit of a misnomer. We started out with a group of decoy carvers; what they wanted in the beginning was a decoy museum, and that was a great idea. But my theory was that decoys were a piece of a much larger puzzle that included commercial fishing, boatbuilding, sacred music, quilting, and all the pieces of our culture. The museum started in 1992, and over the years it has expanded to include the whole of the area's culture. And from a programmatic side, this sense of community is what the museum is all about.



Our first step was bringing the 14 Down East Carteret County communities together to be Core Sound, and to embrace commercial fishing and decoying, the schools, and the natural history. Not a piecemeal look, but a collaborative look of how culture and natural resources and the future and the past are all linked.

We're doing community-supported fisheries in our area as a way to achieve our goals. There are three of them, and all three of those are Down East. They got the idea from Maine. The guy on Harkers Island who I work with, Eddie, he's getting ready to hire a driver to deliver. That's

great news. Think of what we can do if we start adding value, keeping those dollars in North Carolina where Eddie can sell that shrimp for \$7 a pound instead of selling it for \$1.70 and shipping it out of the state.

The thing that was holding the fishermen back in Carteret County was that there were no leaders. They came to me to get our organization involved. What they needed was push. Out of roughly 40 restaurants in the county, probably less than 10 serve local seafood. So we've started this whole branding thing, and there's a mind-set change in the works.

We're looking for models of marketing efforts and processing facilities, because that's one of the complaints—and it's a valid complaint—that the restaurants have had: They can't head and

clean those shrimp when they get there. They want it in five-pound blocks, and they want it a uniform size, and there's nowhere in North Carolina where we can do that. So we're looking at processing facilities.

There's so much to be learned back and forth. We've got to get some [of our] fishermen up here [to Maine] to talk to the fishermen up here. I can go back and sing and holler and scream and dance, but until our fishermen come up and talk to the fishermen here, nothing will really happen. And we need to have some time to get Maine fishermen into a North Carolina fish house and really begin that relationship.

To read about the Island Institute's focus on fisheries, visit www.islandinstitute.org/fisheries.

ISLAND LEADERSHIP

Dr. Irene Novaczek, Prince Edward Island, Canada

I'm the director of the Institute of Island Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada. The Institute of Island Studies has a terrific mandate, with four parts: to be a bridge between the university and broader civil society; to intervene in positive ways in progressing public policy for PEI; to perform, facilitate and encourage research that helps to explain the island to its own people; and lastly, to similarly engage and foster comparative global island studies.

PEI is on the larger end of [the scale of] small islands, and now that it has a bridge, one could certainly argue that it is no longer an island. So the challenges that PEI faces are somewhat different than the challenges that face a truly small island that is further offshore. The constraints [on small islands] are much stronger as far as the costs of transportation and the availability of local resources, and the relative need to import materials or export yourself to access services such as health care or jobs. But still, PEI, even with the bridge, does struggle with that relative margin-



ality, limited land, limited numbers of people with the appropriate skills and education to make everything work.

We are very fortunate in that we are a province, so we have jurisdictional powers and are self-governing. It's ridiculous for an island of our size with 140,000 people to have a legislature with 31 members in it. If you have all the departments of government replicated and you need x number of people to do anything, you end up being ridiculously overgoverned, but that's it. We still have to operate all those governmental systems. So that is [both] an extreme challenge and a blessing, because even though it's difficult to do, we have guaranteed support and control.

Filling seats at the municipal or local level is the hardest because they're volunteer [positions] and very low-paid—always on call. The voters are very intimate with their representatives. They do not hesitate to call them 24 hours a day. They know where they live, they accost them on the street. It's a very tough full-time job with little in the way of compensation. So those positions are difficult to fill.

Provincial-level positions are much more hotly contested, as are the federal-level positions. But even at the provincial or federal level, the intimate scale of the political system on the island is both a boon and an absolute trap—an invitation for all kinds of old boys' clubs, cronyism, patronage, fiddling of the books, unaccountability, non-transparency. Because everybody knows everybody else, things get kind of loose and slack. And nobody really wants to say, "Show me the receipts," or "Why didn't you come to work?" because they're either cousins or school buddies or some such thing.

When your population is so small, you'd think that governance would be much tighter, more collaborative and well-oiled. But, in fact, all those relationships—[while] they can make

things happen very quickly, they can also be an impediment [when it comes to] getting anything done at all, depending on the complexity and the sensitivity of the issue. So for a small jurisdiction such as ours, having a healthy balance of federal interference in our business is absolutely critical. We absolutely need it. People at a distance—following rules with proper criteria that are published and public and well-known, in order to establish an even playing field of services for all Canadians across the country, of which we are a part—that is critical for the well-being of Prince Edward Island.

To read about the Island Institute's focus on leadership, visit www.islandinstitute.org/islandleadership.

PRESERVING WORKING-WATERFRONT ACCESS

Leesa Cobb, Port Orford, Oregon

While we're not an island, we're very remote in Oregon. We're on the most westerly point that juts out into the ocean, and our port is on the open ocean instead of up a river, which is different than any other port on the West Coast. So it's a very isolated area.

Fishing [accounts for] 30 percent of the jobs in our community. I can't imagine our community without fishing. It's just really difficult to imagine what the future of the community would be, what the face of the community would be, if something did happen to fishing, so we've been working really hard to retain our opportunity and access to fish.

We're really interested in the work that the Island Institute has done on working-waterfront access and the potential for national policy on that. We'd definitely like to be involved in that. We feel that there isn't any clear direction from federal or state government about working waterfronts. We watch folks in Maine come up with innovative ways to try to deal with securing access versus Oregon, where not much is happening, and I think we could learn a lot.



The working waterfront here [in Maine] is very interesting. For us [in Oregon] it's different than [it is] here [in Maine], where you have fishing docks in different places. We have one port, and it's public; it's [also] a taxing district, so it's taxed on [residents'] property taxes, and that's how the public investment is maintained. The port is a very small footprint, so there's not a lot of economic-development opportunity. If you put something in that's not a fishing type of business, then you would be elbowing [out] fishing, no matter what you did. It is a public facility, and there is no other access for fisheries other than that public port.

When my husband started fishing, and I would fish for salmon with him sometimes, we could go into Gold Beach, 30 miles south, and Bend, 30 miles north. Bend is no longer a fishing port, it's strictly tourism, so we've watched that fall off—no hoist, no ice—you know it's gone. Gold Beach used to be a viable port; now they have six boats that go in and out of there. It's now primarily tourism at their port. So we've

watched it happen on both sides of us, in the towns closest to us. And I can see how we could get squeezed.

We have the Port Orford Ocean Resource Team, made up of fishermen working to try to keep fishing strong, so we're not considered marginal and can't be pushed aside. We're trying to increase income with different strategies, many of [which] are political things and science projects, so we can continue to make the argument that we are a viable industry; that way it's harder to shove us around. We try to do a lot of outreach to the community. We shared our socio-economic report with everyone and said, "Here's what fishing means to our community." We had never had a report before our organization [was]

formed, and one of the first things we did was say, "We've got to explain to people why fishing's important," so we spend a lot of time doing that. But we're ultimately at the will of the port commission and what they decide to do.

Right now, people in our town are either related to a fisherman, or they've moved there and like to say they live in a fishing village. So right now it's okay. But the first investor that rolls in with a better idea about how to use the space down at the port—it's gonna be a fight to hold on to it.

To read more about the Island Institute's focus on working-waterfront access, visit www.islandinstitute.org/workingwaterfrontaccess.

ISLAND FOOD SYSTEMS

Ted Bain, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

In the 1940s the Vineyard had six dairies. There's no viable dairy today, but we're trying to get [one] started up again. There used to be considerable sheep and pigs that were butchered [on the island], because back then, there were no Department of Agriculture requirements. Now there are, and we're trying to [obtain permission] to butcher four-legged animals and have local meat, along with local agriculture and a local dairy.

We're what you call wash-a-shores. You know how islands are: You're only a native if you were born there. So we're very new, but we're moving fast because we care a lot about the issues.

There's a group called Island Grown Initiative that has maybe four years under its belt. We're lucky to have the guy who owns the market as a real fan and an activist about getting the local farms going again. He's a very experienced supermarket manager and operator, but he's also really interested in green energy. He's helped in the Vineyard Power co-op, and he's also doing the farm resurgence. You can already see an impact on the island restaurants. All the restaurants are



doing local. They'll put the name of the farm where the food came from in the menu, and it makes them look good. It sells. It's great. The restaurants are doing that, and the supermarket is doing it as well, and providing more and more shelf space for locally produced goods.

A lot of people who are involved in the things that we're trying to improve on the island are people who haven't been on the island all that long. It's interesting when you get an old, stable population and then new people come in with newfangled ideas. But I think it's here to stay. We'll just keep chugging. I think that eventually people will sign on because it makes sense for their own self-interest. But the question is always resources. There are so many things on the island that are dysfunctional because of limited resources. We're having to really scratch our heads on that.

I admit that I'm not an island person, but I'm quickly being made into one.

To read about the Island Institute's focus on island agriculture, visit www.islandinstitute.org/islandfoodsystems.

Gillian Garratt-Reed is The Working Waterfront editor at the Island Institute.

The Modern One-Room Schoolhouse

ANNE BARDAGLIO



The modern one-room school is tied into the world through technology.

When Josh Holloway starting teaching in Cliff Island's K-5 one-room school in 2007, he wasn't planning on staying more than a year. There was limited year-round housing on Cliff, so Josh commuted from neighboring Great Diamond Island, where his wife, Heidi, was getting ready to give birth to their first child.

Heidi's family lives on Great Diamond, and Josh and Heidi were married there in 2004 by Josh's grandfather. Immediately after the ceremony, they returned to Maui, Hawaii, where they were both public school teachers. When Josh bought a 24-foot sailboat with a red sail, intending to sail around the Hawaiian Islands, Heidi suggested the South Pacific instead. "It was a pretty unusual way to start a marriage," Heidi admits. "Alone together in the middle of the ocean in a tiny boat." The trip lasted for three years, and when Heidi became pregnant, they sold the boat in Brisbane, Australia, and moved to Great Diamond.

During their trip through the South Pacific, Josh and Heidi made a point to volunteer in the schools they came across, deliberately avoiding more densely populated areas and gravitating instead toward isolated communities with one-room schools built of reeds and palm fronds, often without electricity or basic school supplies. They would spend months at a time on small atolls, living on fish and coconuts, before sailing on to find another community in which to teach and live. There was one school in particular they loved, a two-room school with 10 students in a former aircraft hangar on an atoll in the Republic of Kiribati. “Everywhere we went we tried to work and volunteer in the schools, but that school we happened to spend a lot of time at,” Heidi says, pausing. “We really enjoyed it.”

When Heidi and Josh talk about their trip, there is a certain affectionate undertone to their stories, but perhaps more telling is the matter-of-fact realism in Heidi’s

voice as she describes those years: “It was hard,” she says. “Some days we didn’t know where our food would be coming from. We were the only people we knew of sailing around the South Pacific in a 24-foot boat.”

It is this realism, in part, that must account for at least some measure of their success on Cliff. While it may be easy to romanticize the idea of living on a Maine island and teaching in a one-room schoolhouse, the reality is often far more complicated—and rewarding. “One of the biggest challenges,” Josh says, “is the infrastructure—it’s more than just being the teacher.” In a one-room school—even one that is part of a larger district like Portland, as Cliff is—the teacher is never just the teacher. The teacher is also, to varying degrees, the informal guidance counselor, principal, nurse, and secretary. “It’s partially what makes it hard,” Josh says. “And it’s partially what I like.”

Cliff Island is one of 15 remaining year-round island communities in Maine, the last stop on Portland’s Casco Bay Line circuit, with a year-round population of approximately 60 people, though summer draws as many as 200 to the island. The ferry runs three times daily, but takes an hour and a half—a long commute for the handful of middle school students who live on Cliff and go to school in Portland. It is precisely this relative isolation that appealed to Josh and Heidi. “We liked that it was remote and quiet,” Heidi says. “Before we moved back to the United States, we had wanted to work in a one-room schoolhouse in Papua New Guinea, so the fact that there was a one-room schoolhouse out here was really enticing.”

The Cliff Island School may be relatively isolated, but it is far from disconnected. The one-room island schools on Cliff, Isle au Haut, Islesford, Matinicus and Monhegan are all part of a new project known as The Outer Islands Teaching and Learning Collaborative (TLC). The Outer Islands TLC, under the aegis of the Island Institute, promotes collaboration among students and teachers in an effort to help both groups feel more connected. While this is the first official year of the project, island teachers and students have been collaborating on a smaller scale for years. In 2008, the teachers on Isle au Haut, Islesford, Matinicus and Monhegan started a Critical Friends Group—a kind of professional support network backed by a national organization called The School Reform Initiative. Soon the group realized that it only



Cliff Island students range in age from preschool through fifth grade.

made sense to try and provide their students with a similar sense of connection and support. In a short video the students recently made about the project, Quinn, a fifth grader on Monhegan, pointed to the sense of growing connection within the group. "Working with the TLC project is fun," he said, "because you get to go to other islands, hang out with other kids, make new friends. It's also challenging because they have different schools and do different things than you."

While all the outer island schools face challenges that are as specific and unique to them as each island is specific and unique, certain challenges the schools face are more universal. One of the most pressing among these common challenges is figuring out how to attract teachers, students and families. The next trick, and one of the long-term goals of The Outer Islands TLC, is to help support teachers and students so that families do stay. Making a life on a year-round island is a complicated endeavor, and a successful, vibrant school is only part of the equation. But there is a certain undeniable quality to the kind of learning environment an experienced island teacher can help create, and The Outer Islands TLC is itself a testament to what happens when teachers do decide to stay. All of the teachers who originally helped to imagine and create the Critical Friends Group and The Outer Islands TLC are now in their third, fourth, fifth—even sixth—years of teaching on their islands.

The connection that exists between supporting island teachers so that they, in turn, stay and help to create excellent schools is often articulated most directly by parents. Three-quarters of the way through his first year, Josh asked the Cliff Island parents how they felt the school year was going. Cheryl Crowley, mother of three and president of the Cliff Island parent-teacher committee, wrote Josh a letter that concluded with a request: "The only thing I would ask for is that you stay." Later that fall, Heidi was hired as the school's education techni-



Josh, Kai, Heidi and Cove Henry Holloway

There are only six one-room schools in Maine, and they are all on the islands.

cian, and a rental opened up—a rambling, wooden house with a side porch and a yard, a few minutes' walk from the school. In the fall of 2008, Josh and Heidi moved to Cliff with their newborn, Kai, and three years and another child later, the Holloways say the hard thing to imagine now is not staying, but leaving.

It can be tricky, Heidi admits, to live and work in such a small community, but it's worth the balancing act. "I think probably the biggest challenge is that you're living in the community you work in," she says, "so you have to kind of stay back a little. You need to be kind of a moderator sometimes, and then you also have to be a role model."

Josh interjects, adding, "You have to be the most upstanding citizen."

"The kids come play at our house," Heidi says. "We're friends with them. We

meet up here on Saturdays and Sundays, and for some people, I think that would be a lot." As she speaks, she bounces baby Cove on her lap and pats his back. Heidi is quick, somehow warm and tough at the same time, while Josh, in a green button-down and rolled-up jeans with blue flannel cuffs, speaks more slowly.

"We're just kind of fortunate that we're already squeaky clean," Josh jokes, "because if we weren't, it wouldn't be a good place to be."

"We do love ghetto rap," Heidi says, in a semi-serious, lilting voice. Josh breaks into laughter. "Speak for

yourself!” he says, and Heidi turns toward him, never breaking her rhythmic patting on Cove’s back, saying, “You liar! You love Nelly!” and Josh laughs again.

“People here are really good to us,” Heidi says, and Josh agrees. “Everybody knows us. Would it be great to raise your kids in the schoolhouse?” he asks. “Yeah!” he says, emphatically. “We feel this sense of responsibility.”

Heidi interjects, teasing again, “Maybe they want us

to leave and we just don’t know it.”

“It would help if they’d let us know,” Josh responds.

“It would help if they were jerks to us.” Heidi laughs, and Josh says, “For a little while anyway. Something to get us moving. It’s just too good.”



Heidi works with Cliff’s three preschoolers and teaches art and English language arts to the island’s four older students—second graders Eliza and Elwen and fifth graders Olivia and Julian. The older students work together in almost every subject except for math, and over the years, Josh and Heidi have worked hard to develop teaching strategies that engage both their younger and older students equally, often pairing students of different grades together. “You start to find out what works and what doesn’t,” Josh explains. “You get more creative in your pairings. The older students are so mature and so responsible and such good role models that if you can utilize that, it makes a big difference for those younger students.”

Josh says the question he most frequently hears when people learn of his job is “How do you deal with all the different grade levels in the same room?” The question doesn’t surprise him. “People have a really hard time picturing it,” he says. “And I’m sure the picture they come up with is nothing like it actually is; it wasn’t for us, coming out and seeing it from the outside and then seeing it from the inside.”

The misconceptions are easy to understand: While there were over 200,000 one-room schools nationwide in the late 1800s, there were only 400 in 2005. Today, there are less than 200. There are only six one-room schools in Maine, and they are all on the islands. The last two one-room schools on the state’s mainland, in Shirley and Rockwood, both closed in 2009. Type *one-room school* into your Internet search engine and you’ll pull up a list of links directing you to historic registries and black-and-white photographs of white clapboard school buildings with potbellied woodstoves and girls in pinafores. “Seeing our school from the exterior,” Josh says, “it looks like this simple white building—very *Little House on the Prairie* style—and then you go inside and it’s got all the technology, and then some. More than you’d find in a regular classroom.”

And by “technology,” Josh doesn’t just mean laptops. The Cliff Island School has four desktop computers connected to the Portland public school district by a VPN (Virtual Private Network), a SMART board, videoconferencing capabilities, and an iPad on loan from



The Matinicus Island School joins other schools on Monhegan for the Inter-Island School Event, designed to bring students together at the beginning of each year



Cliff Island’s one-room school



Matinicus students attend a virtual “meet the writer” with author Cynthia Lord along with students from Frenchboro, Isle au Haut and Cliff.

one of Cliff Island's three nonprofits, ACE (Athletics, Conservation and Education). Cliff students use Skype, blogs, wikis, and websites on a regular basis, and they are increasingly using them to connect with other island schools. Thanks to a nearly \$500,000 USDA Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program grant awarded to the Island Institute last year, videoconferencing units were installed in 24 schools up and down Maine's coast this fall. "When they get on that videoconferencing unit with another school they're in heaven," Josh says, referring to his students. "They love that interaction."

This fall, students across the outer islands read *Touch Blue* by Cynthia Lord, a book based on the true story of Frenchboro's effort in the 1980s to expand the school's population by bringing foster children to the island. When the author visited Frenchboro, students on other islands were able to "meet" her by videoconferencing in during Lord's question-and-answer session with the Frenchboro school. In addition to videoconferencing, the schools also took turns "hosting" book discussions online by posting student-developed questions to a wiki, an easily edited type of website to which students can upload text, photographs, and video. Students created and scanned in collages and drawings, wrote skits and videotaped them, shared poetry, alternate endings, and reader reviews through the wiki, all the while discussing the chapters for the week, sometimes with students they had never met face-to-face. When I asked Olivia, one of two fifth graders on Cliff, if she knew any of the other students from the other island schools, she exclaimed, "I know from the wiki there's a Dalton!"—Dalton being Quinn's younger brother on Monhegan, and one of three students in the school.

In schools this small—where students often have, at most, one peer in their grade—it's hard to overstate the importance of knowing there's a "Dalton" in another island school. "It feels a little weird," Olivia admits, when I ask her what it's like to videoconference with students she's never met before. "It's definitely different than meeting them face-to-face. But it's cool, because if we didn't videoconference with them we wouldn't be able to meet them—unless we had a field trip." Olivia sits across from me in a green T-shirt embroidered with an owl, and she speaks somewhat quickly, but thoughtfully. Her younger sister, Eliza, is in the second grade, and she bounces slightly, taps her fingers, agrees with Olivia, and, when the discussion turns to Olivia's upcoming sixth-grade commute to the mainland for middle school, pronounces, "I'm gonna be the oldest in the

school! The tallest and the oldest!" When Josh started teaching on Cliff, Olivia and Julian—his current fifth graders—were in second grade. Back at the Holloways' house that evening, over bowls of coconut curry soup, Josh says of his two oldest students, "Now all of the sud-



Peter Ralston

Cliff Island students in a greenhouse constructed as a school project



Jessie Campbell (2)

Monhegan students celebrate the completion of a timeline they created with Islesboro students.



Videoconferencing technology allows students from different schools to work together on group projects.



Students from Frenchboro, Monhegan, Matinicus and Islesford join together in a game of Capture the Flag.

den they are the role models for the next generation, the next group of younger students. It's neat to see the progression. It's neat to see them take over that leadership role."

Not only does the technology allow students to connect with each other across islands, but it also allows them to share their work with a broader community—parents, family members off-island, island residents who may not have children in the school but still like to keep up with school news. Cliff students post their work to their school website, and, in the process, learn valuable technology skills. Josh sees his students' relationship with technology as a fundamentally healthy one. "They are comfortable with it," he says. "They are little sponges, and very interested in it. There are a lot of ways we can use technology to aid with instruction, especially with review."

Technology in Maine's island schools isn't superfluous; it's essential. "The first year I started," Josh says, "we didn't have videoconferencing, we hadn't touched Skype, we didn't have a school website that the kids were involved with—it was just a really generic 'Who's the teacher?' kind of site. Now we have all of that and the iPad." Heidi adds, "I think a lot of people expect it to be a classroom with wooden desks lined up and the teacher in front of the room. There were those days, but at this point, it's modern. I think that's what surprises people."

Josh nods, adding, "One-room schoolhouses change with the times—just like everything else."

Anne Bardaglio is the Island Institute's senior education fellow. To read more about her work, visit www.islandinstitute.org/schoolseducation.



Zen
and the Art
of Beachcombing

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSIE ISELIN

INTRODUCTION BY TINA COHEN



Think back to those walks you took on the beach when you were little, that wondrous way of looking at the world without labels, categories, preconceptions, judgment. You were immersed in a sensory experience, and everything held Truth. Sometimes, as adults, we can still access that magical realm, but it needs to be nurtured, offered in a way that is accessible. One connection for me has been through the work of Josie Iselin, her pictures offering the opportunity to reengage with a primal world on its own terms.

I first "met" Josie Iselin through her 2007 book, *Seashells*. The pages of her now five books are full of pictures, accompanied by some lesser amounts of text, some written by her, some by others. The most meaningful part of *Seashells* for me was seeing things afresh, no matter how mundane or familiar they were. The book was enlightening in a factual way, as well as aesthetically satisfying. Shells would never be just shells again. From there I branched out to her book on leaves and pods. I became smitten with *Heart Stones*, also published in 2007. Finally, emboldened by curiosity about what she was working on next, I called her. It was summertime and we were

both on Vinalhaven. I wondered if I could accompany her, watch her work.

Josie replied, as I now know is typical of her, with much enthusiasm. We met at low tide on Lane's Island for a foraging foray. I watched her eyes sweep and dart, taking in the large landscape and then all its finer details. We walked and talked and poked around, sharing that resonance one can experience when beachcombing, a "zone" one enters—not just the interstitial one between tides, but also one in the mind. It is the wonder that there can be so many "things"—periwinkles, mussel shells, stones—in one place as to be indiscriminate, and yet individual ones stand out for us, catch our eye, and seem to beckon with a seductive "Come and get me," murmured so only *we* can hear it.

When we left, Josie had a few select shells in hand. Tucked into a Ziploc bag were a cluster of *Rosa rugosa* blooms, a clump of seaweed and a spray of beach peas. We headed back to her family home for the next step of the process. In a cramped bedroom, a large flat-bed scanner was set up amid a kind of lost-and-found of that season's jaunts. She put the treasures we'd gathered on the scanner's glass



plate and began to experiment with their arrangement. I began to realize how important composition was to her pictures, along with all the other artistic decisions—colors, sizes, amounts and types of objects coming together. When *Beach: A Book of Treasures* was published in 2010, there were all the Penobscot prizes: roses, beach peas, seaweed, rocks, shells, bones, sea glass, lobstering gear, driftwood—objects now both ordinary and extraordinary.

Wabi-sabi is part of a Japanese aesthetic philosophy, an appreciation for small, unobtrusive details. Josie describes it in *Beach*. It suggests beauty is a dynamic event occurring between you and something else, and can occur spontaneously at any moment given the

proper circumstances. She quotes from a book about it by Leonard Koren, who wrote, “Pare down to the essence, but don’t remove the poetry.” Josie Iselin understands this. Her work, as seen on the following pages, creates and celebrates “possibility” for us, the viewer. Here is the opportunity to experience what we once knew effortlessly in childhood: spontaneity and resonance, discovery and discourse.

The Archipelago Fine Arts Gallery will host a show of Josie Iselin’s work from June 24 through August 19, 2011, with an artist’s reception on Friday, July 8. For more information, visit www.islandinstitute.org/josieiselin.



The beach becomes the locus for art and science to dance together, to intermingle and connect. It is the place where our attraction to form sparks our natural creativity and curiosity; it is where the artist and the scientist in each of us come alive.

Excerpts from *Beach: a Book of Treasures* by Josie Iselin

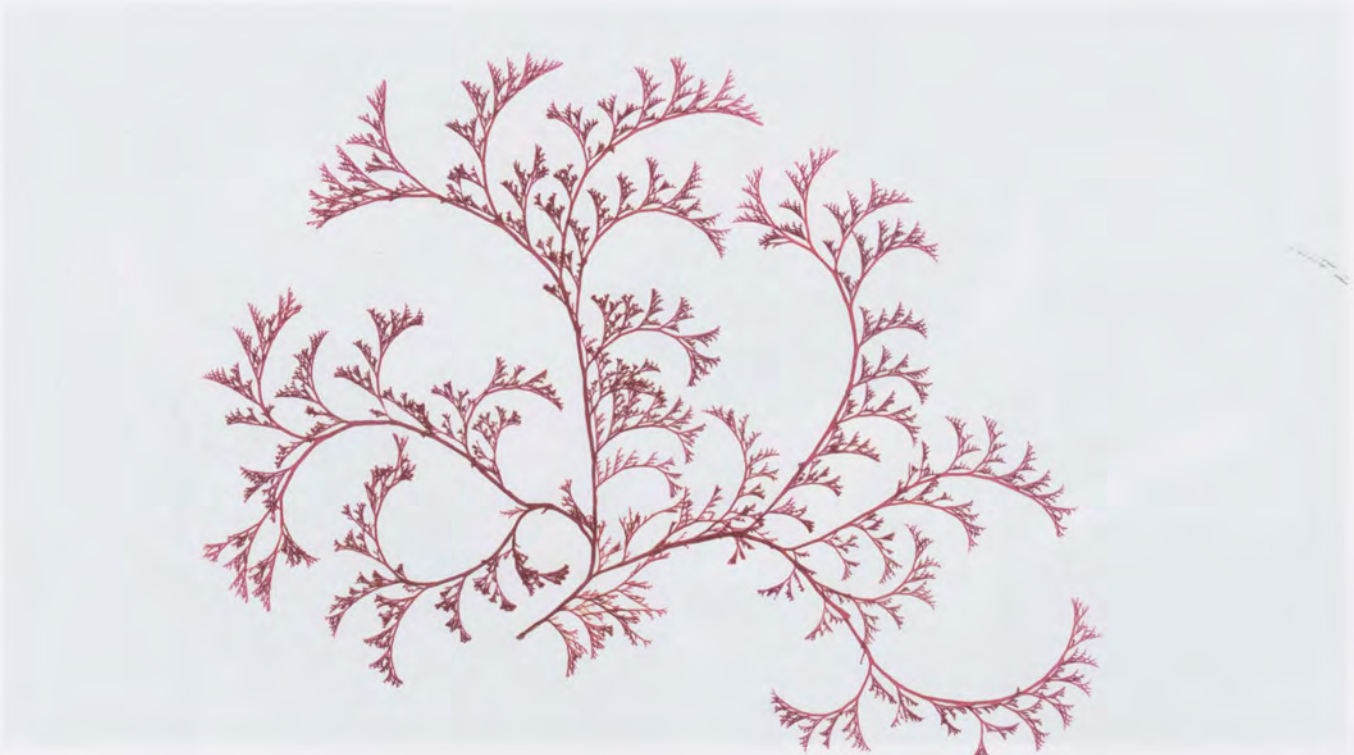






What do we find when our gaze comes down from the horizon to the cusp of the waves near our toes?





Framing the sand and stones and other jewels of wrack is always the mark of the receding wave.







What a mysterious and wondrous thing this shard of sea glass is. When studied, it encompasses the nuances of man's intellect and ingenuity. And yet, when discovered at the water's edge, all this invention of man is washed clean by the sea; it is irrelevant.



The Penobscot Bay Steamboat “Wars”

HARRY GRATWICK

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF
THE VINALHAVEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



W. S. WHITE *under steam*

The Penobscot Bay steamboat wars were a lengthy and spirited competition between rival steamship companies. Each company was seeking to have the fastest boat on the increasingly lucrative ferry route between Rockland and the Fox Islands (Vinalhaven and North Haven). The “wars” unofficially began in 1873, when the Frenchman’s Bay Steamboat Company challenged the Fox Island and Rockland Steamboat Company. The boats would change, but the wars would run well into the 20th century.

In his book *Fish Scales and Stone Chips*, Vinalhaven historian Sidney Winslow tells us that in 1867, the New Hampshire–built PIONEER was the first steamboat “to ply a regularly scheduled service in Penobscot Bay. PIONEER was the cause of much rejoicing, and people from the remotest parts of the Fox Islands came to get a view of the wonder craft that was to be their communication with the outer world.” Faster vessels came and went, but the little 92-foot-long PIONEER was to run from 1867 to 1892.

For the next half-century, the Fox Islands would be served by more than 20 different steamboats, even though many were in service for only a short time. Although most boats have long since been forgotten, those with names like FOREST QUEEN, EMMELINE, MAY FIELD, GOLDEN ROD, SYLVIA, and ISLAND BELLE are a reminder of a departed era.



PIONEER was the first steamboat to ply a regularly scheduled service in Penobscot Bay.

Who Would Be the Fastest?

PIONEER's first challenger was ULYSSES, which was put on the route by the rival Frenchman's Bay Steamboat Company. In 1873, her owner, Captain David Robinson, saw a favorable business opportunity and decided to challenge PIONEER's monopoly on the Vinalhaven run. The 239-ton side-wheeler ULYSSES was more than twice as heavy as PIONEER, and considerably faster. ULYSSES had already been in service since 1864 and was a proven contender on the Rockland–Mount Desert route. For the next few months ULYSSES dominated the Fox Islands route, forcing PIONEER to temporarily withdraw from service.

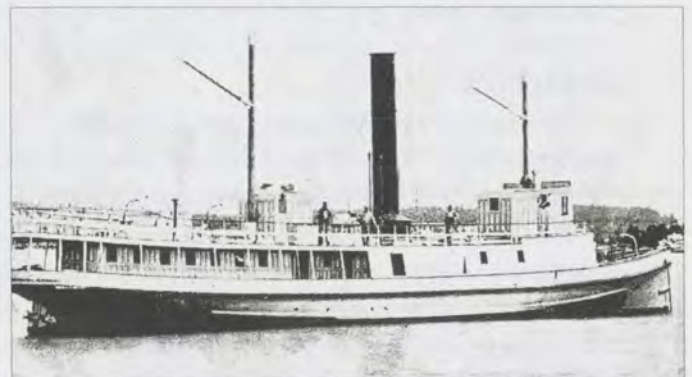
According to Rockland native John M. Richardson, a formidable rival to ULYSSES soon appeared in the form of CLARA CLARITA, a converted fireboat from New York City. Richardson's authoritative book, *Steamboat Lore of the Penobscot*, was published in 1941. He uses a baseball analogy when he describes CLARA CLARITA as "a pinch hitter brought in to bat for PIONEER when ULYSSES tried to break into the island business." CLARA CLARITA was 115 feet long and extremely fast.

Passengers loved CLARA CLARITA's speed and her fare—just 25 cents round-trip—but the company was unhappy with the amount of coal she consumed, as well as with her deep draught. Sidney Winslow wrote, "Her time for crossing the bay from wharf to wharf has never been beaten by any steamer employed on the line." To continue with the baseball analogy: "[A]fter pinch-hitting a single, she was thrown out stealing second." The costly CLARA CLARITA would eventually be withdrawn

from service, but not before forcing ULYSSES back to her previous Rockland–Mount Desert run.

ULYSSES's untimely demise deserves mention. Early in 1878 during a savage winter storm, the side-wheeler broke loose from her mooring and ran onto the ledges at the southern end of Rockland harbor. Her hull was quickly reduced to splinters and her engine wrecked beyond salvage. Like most ships of the day, ULYSSES was uninsured, and the Frenchman's Bay Steamboat Company suffered a \$200,000 loss.

With the "benching" of the costly CLARA CLARITA and the exile and later destruction of ULYSSES, a refurbished PIONEER, captained by William R. Creed, was put back on the Vinalhaven route. After 20 years of faithful service, however, it was becoming clear that PIONEER was simply not equal to the task of serving the burgeoning Fox Islands population. One problem: She was too slow. Reportedly her time for the 15-mile crossing



Passengers loved CLARA CLARITA's speed and her fare—just 25 cents round-trip.

ranged from two to five hours. Jokes abounded, according to Sidney Winslow. “Considering the amount of time it takes, the trip to Rockland on PIONEER is not expensive. For 75 cents you can stay on the boat all day.”

In the fall of 1891 a number of dissatisfied Vinalhaven residents met with George Kimball, president of rival Frenchman’s Bay Steamboat Company. With the growth of the granite industry on Vinalhaven, the island’s population had expanded rapidly, from a few hundred people to 3,000 by 1880. Clearly a faster and more reliable transportation service to and from the mainland was needed. Town merchants were also unhappy. Because of cheap fares, more and more island folks were doing their shopping in Rockland, to the detriment of Vinalhaven’s shopkeepers.

During the meeting, company president Kimball announced that he had purchased the steamer EMMELINE, and that she would shortly be put into service to oust the aging and slower PIONEER. Reassured by his promise, many citizens agreed to give Kimball’s new outfit, the Vinalhaven Steamboat Company—a subsidiary of the Frenchman’s Bay Line—their business. At about the same time, W. S. White, manager of the Fox Island and Rockland Steamboat Company (aka the Rockland Company), announced that he had leased a new steamer, the FOREST QUEEN, and was prepared to challenge EMMELINE for supremacy on the route.

Neck and Neck

The year 1892 would be a momentous one in the annals of island ferryboat competition. Partisans for each boat split into warring camps, and the Penobscot Bay steamboat war broke out in earnest. The question as to which line had the faster boat provoked intense wagering and fistfights in Rockland bars and pool halls, resulting in frequent calls for the police.

Vinalhaven was literally split into two camps. The majority supported EMMELINE, although a significant minority favored W. S. White’s entry, FOREST QUEEN, the boat he had chartered to replace PIONEER. FOREST QUEEN was the first steamboat in the area to have electricity. In addition, she combined speed and comfortable accommodations for passengers and crew. EMMELINE, the so-called “People’s Boat,” was also a handsome craft, considered more seaworthy, and one that inspired intense loyalty. According to one wag, “[H]er supporters would rather row than take FOREST QUEEN.”

EMMELINE was the first to go into service in the spring of 1892, and she quickly proved to be a much faster boat than the venerable PIONEER. Although many islanders remained loyal to the elderly vessel, it was apparent her days as a ferry were numbered. When FOREST QUEEN arrived on the scene, PIONEER was quickly retired and sold to the Maine Central Railroad for use as a lumber lighter.

THE END OF THE PACKET ERA

It should be noted that prior to PIONEER’s appearance in 1867, Vinalhaven and other islands in Penobscot Bay were served by sailing packets that, weather permitting, visited the islands every three weeks. (The term *packet service* refers to a regularly scheduled line that carried freight and passengers.)

The sailing packet era was a short one, however, since wind-powered vessels were unable to provide reliable service to the islands. With the growth of the granite industry on Vinalhaven, the island needed a more regular and reliable transportation service to the mainland and, with the end of the Civil War, it finally began.

Indeed, “regular service” by sailing packet was something of an oxymoron in the mid-19th century. The service had begun in 1855 with Captain John Carver’s little vessel, the GREYHOUND. Carver had the ship especially built to serve the route. Two more packets, GOLDEN RULE and MEDORA, would follow, the latter skippered by James Arey.



1846 Sailing Packet

Courtesy of Jamestown Historical Society

In April 1892, the time had come to see which of the two new boats, EMMELINE or FOREST QUEEN, was the faster. A clipping in the *Rockland Courier-Gazette* described the atmosphere as the two boats prepared to square off: “Monday and Tuesday of last week were days of excitement such as Vinalhaven has not had for a long time. On Monday, when the hour approached for the boats to show up on the trip from Rockland, there were crowds lining the shore. Friends of each boat were confident that their favorite would be the victor.”



The Rockland Company's GOVERNOR BODWELL took over from FOREST QUEEN.

Sidney Winslow picks up the story from there. “All eyes were directed toward Green’s Island Point, when all of a sudden the tall smokestack of FOREST QUEEN shot by the point and came to finish first.” EMMELINE arrived four minutes later, spreading gloom among her supporters. The next day, however, the order of finish was reversed, and EMMELINE finished first.

Winslow, although a partisan of EMMELINE, eventually admitted that FOREST QUEEN was the faster boat. EMMELINE’s victories usually occurred when she carried fewer passengers and little freight. The careers of both boats, however, were short-lived. On May 1, 1892, EMMELINE hit a ledge in the fog off Green’s Island and had to be towed off—ironically, by FOREST QUEEN. She stayed on the route until 1892, however, when another newer and faster steamer, VINAL HAVEN, was built to replace her.

FOREST QUEEN’s problem was that she did not handle well when the sea was rough. It was reported that many of her passengers “fed the fishes” when the wind blew up and she began to roll. In June 1892, FOREST QUEEN was removed from service and the Rockland Company replaced her with GOVERNOR BODWELL. FOREST QUEEN was returned to Portland and eventually sold to shipping interests in Cuba.

The next round of the steamboat wars began in the summer of 1892. The Vinalhaven Steamboat Company, aka, the Frenchman’s Bay Company, was building the aforementioned VINAL HAVEN to challenge the Rockland Company’s new entry, GOVERNOR BODWELL. While EMMELINE was being repaired after her encounter with the ledge, a fast little steamer, the VIKING, was briefly brought in to challenge the Rockland Company’s FOREST QUEEN. There was a single race between VIKING and FOREST QUEEN that appeared to favor the former, until a “puff of steam enveloped VIKING and she began to slow

down and finally stopped,” done in by a broken steam pipe. Winslow continues with baseball lingo when he tells us “the Mighty Casey had struck out.”

By July 1892 both of the new steamers were online. The Rockland Company’s GOVERNOR BODWELL took over from FOREST QUEEN, which had been leased from the Casco Bay Line in Portland, and EMMELINE was replaced by VINAL HAVEN, built in Searsport, Maine. VINAL HAVEN was 86 feet long and carried with her the hopes of most of the Vinalhaven community. Even the town band made the trip to Searsport to provide her with a return escort.

Up in Flames

Much to everyone’s disappointment, VINAL HAVEN’s appearance and performance were less than impressive. When Sidney Winslow got a glimpse of their new champion, he said, “I swallowed—and swallowed hard.” The ungainly pilothouse became the butt of jokes. “It looked like a packing box. There was nothing of dignity in her entire anatomy, with the possible exception of her hull.” Unfortunately her engine was already outdated, and the skinny smokestack had been painted an unsightly yellow. What had been an even contest now shifted to favor the Rockland Company’s stylish new boat, GOVERNOR BODWELL. Everyone agreed: Had a race been held that summer, VINAL HAVEN would have been disgraced.

What must be considered a blessing in disguise occurred early on the morning of January 13, 1893. A fire broke out in VINAL HAVEN’s coal bunker, and the superstructure of the wooden ship was badly damaged. Fortunately, what remained of the boat was scuttled at her berth in Rockland before the fire reached the hull. John M. Richardson wrote, “If it were of incendiary origin it



In 1905 VINAL HAVEN got caught in the ice and sank at Tillson's Wharf in Rockland.

must have been set by one of her friends. Her enemies were entirely satisfied with the status quo." Talk about being damned with faint praise.

The *Courier-Gazette* reported that when the fire broke out, "GOVERNOR BODWELL lay at the wharf and her crew was the first to arrive and render assistance." Happily, the crew of VINAL HAVEN escaped, although Arthur Mills lost everything and was severely burned before he got out. Mills received sympathy in the form of this verse from a local wit:

*"Bullet" Mills was in his bunk
He got out before she sunk.*

Although VINAL HAVEN was not insured, the hull was raised and her engine cleaned up. Four days later the boat was on her way to Searsport, even more remarkably, under her own power. A strike delayed the rebuilding process so that it was six months before a redesigned and refurbished VINAL HAVEN was back in the water. A new engine was installed and a more attractive and functional pilothouse and passenger cabin added. Although VINAL HAVEN's engine was vastly improved, GOVERNOR BODWELL was still considered the faster boat.

Naturally there were still those who yearned for a race between the remodeled VINAL HAVEN and GOVERNOR BODWELL. Sidney Winslow describes an informal contest that occurred when Hunting's Circus visited Rockland. Both boats took excursion parties to Rockland in the morning. On the return trip, VINALHAVEN, being the first to fill with passengers, got a 10-minute head start on her adversary. Halfway across the bay, GOVERNOR BODWELL began to catch up. Then she began

to slow down, and finally stopped altogether. After a few minutes' delay she started up again. VINAL HAVEN, however, was the first to reach Carver's Harbor. GOVERNOR BODWELL's supporters claimed their boat would have won, were it not for an overheated shaft bearing and a brief stop at Hurricane Island to drop off passengers.

Perhaps this is as good a time as any to declare an end to the ferryboat wars, since following this last "race," both sides felt they could claim victory. As George Kimball, president of the Vinalhaven Steamboat Company, wrote in an open letter, "Our interests are identical in the work in which we are so enthusiastically engaged. May the present harmonious and friendly relations long continue and more firmly unite us in the days that are to come."

Faithful Old Craft

Over the years the hard feelings between supporters of the two steamboat lines gradually subsided. In 1898 the Vinalhaven Steamboat Company went bankrupt, and VINAL HAVEN was sold to W. S. White, president of the Rockland Line. For the next 30 years there was plenty of business for both GOVERNOR BODWELL and VINAL HAVEN to ferry travelers and freight across Penobscot Bay to Hurricane Island, Vinalhaven and North Haven, and as far east as Stonington and Swan's Island. In 1920, GOVERNOR BODWELL, being the faster boat, was transferred to the longer Rockland-Swan's Island run, whereas the remodeled and larger VINAL HAVEN made the shorter trip to the Fox Islands.

Both boats encountered misfortune in the years that followed. In 1905 VINAL HAVEN got caught in the ice and



w. s. WHITE was requisitioned by the navy and sent to the Caribbean, where she served as a dispatch boat.

sank at Tillson's Wharf in Rockland. She was removed from service, given a refit—including an additional 15 feet in length—with the result that she was “a remarkably well-arranged boat with ample passenger quarters and good freight capacity,” according to John M. Richardson.

In January 1924 GOVERNOR BODWELL ran onto Spindle Ledge, near Swan's Island, during a blinding snowstorm. Local fishermen responded to distress signals, and the *Rockland Courier-Gazette* reported, “[P]assengers were taken off and the mail saved, though the craft appeared to be a total loss.” A month later, after “days of patient, painstaking effort” by Captain John I. Snow, the ship was brought to the surface and the damage found to be less than initially feared. A decision was made to rebuild and modernize “the faithful old craft,” which was mostly covered by a \$40,000 insurance policy. After a refit she was put back into service.

After years of continued service, GOVERNOR BODWELL's existence came to an end in March 1931 when she caught fire at her Swan's Island berth and was completely destroyed. John M. Richardson wrote, “In a matter of minutes the harbor was as bright as day from the devouring flames. Gathering islanders stood hopelessly by, as lines were cast off and the fiercely blazing craft towed clear of the threatened wharf by a motorboat.” Richardson adds, “No Penobscot Bay steamboat has ever received the genuine affection which was universally accorded the GOVERNOR BODWELL.” Could there be a better epitaph?

By 1938 VINAL HAVEN had become a “spare” boat used only when her replacement, the w. s. WHITE, was being repaired. VINAL HAVEN's demise occurred in No-

vember of that year when, according to a *Portland Press Herald* story, “She caught on a piling at Tillson's Wharf and began to list heavily. With the incoming tide she remained partially submerged despite efforts to right her.” VINAL HAVEN was condemned, stripped of everything valuable, and abandoned at one of the old “Point Kilns” docks. Finally, in 1945, her hull was towed out of Rockland Harbor and sunk between Munro and Sheep Islands, beyond Owls Head.

The United States entered World War II in December 1941, and the nation immediately went on a wartime footing. w. s. WHITE was requisitioned by the navy and sent to the Caribbean, where she served as a dispatch boat. Shortly after this, company president White announced that after 75 years, the Rockland-Vinalhaven Steamboat Company would be going out of business.

For over a year the Penobscot Bay islands had no regular ferry service. Local fishermen and boat owners filled in as best they could, carrying passengers and freight back and forth to the mainland. Then, at a special town meeting in August 1942, Vinalhaven voted to raise \$55,000 to build a powerboat. The result was a 65-foot, diesel-powered “motorship” named VINALHAVEN II, built in Southwest Harbor, Maine. The boat went into service in July 1943, and Charles Philbrook was her captain—but that begins another story.

Harry Gratwick is a lifelong summer resident of Vinalhaven and author of many books, the most recent of which is Mainers in the Civil War. To read more of Harry's work, visit www.workingwaterfront.com/harrygratwick.

Community Kitchen

Celebrating local foods on Islesboro

SANDY OLIVER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER RALSTON



Instead of digging potatoes one rainy September day in 1893, Captain Emery Bunker wrote a letter from his Islesboro home to a fellow captain at sea. “My potatoes don’t turn out as well as I expected,” Bunker reported, along with news of other island doings and how Islesboro “boys” had managed through a recent hurricane.

Emery and Adrianna Bunker’s house is on the northern end of Islesboro, what today is called “up-island,” just past Church Turn and just before Bluff Road. He and Adrianna lived there from the very early 1870s until his death in 1900, and Adrianna continued living there until 1927, when she moved to the Boston area in her declining years.

Today, the house is occupied by Jamie MacMillan and me, Sandy Oliver. We acquired it in 1981 and moved into it in 1988. From the start, coming to live on Islesboro was largely about growing vegetables. As we sought property here, we learned about the soils under any house we looked at by sending for soil maps from the county Soil and Water Conservation District.

The earliest settlers on the island, amphibians that they were, knew perfectly well that Islesboro’s soil was “cold”—swampy and clayey—and that there was an awful lot of ledge to cope with. Some land was acceptable for grazing; some supported grain crops. There was fishing and shipbuilding to pursue, and access to food supplies on the mainland nearby. Few early island settlers would

have seriously considered complete self-sufficiency.

Typical of back-to-the-landers, we planned a vegetable garden, orchard, chickens, pigs, maybe goats to milk. Romanticizing about an island farm stand, I wanted to be a market gardener. That was 22 years ago. The plain fact of the economic matter then was that during the summer growing season, islanders scrambled to take care of summer people, carpentering, cleaning, painting, cooking, mowing, and planting flowers and vegetables for summer cottages. Some locals did not even have vegetable gardens of their own, gleaning what they could from summer people's gardens, abandoned at summer's end.

The soil surrounding our house and barn proved to be "Marlow fine sandy loam," with the emphasis on sandy. Upon moving to the island, we left a seven-year-old garden with rich and gorgeously organic soil. It was a hard transition. Our neighbor Steve Miller plowed up a spot for us a stone's throw from the kitchen door. I watched as the plow turned up rock after rock. As he prepared to drive away, Steve looked at me, raised his eyebrows dubiously, and shrugged.

Over the years we have pulled tons of rocks from that garden, and poured into it tons of organic material—so much, in fact, that one soil test came back with some nutrients off the chart, and the emphatic admonition "Do not apply organic materials to area for at least one year. Organic material is getting too high." It was good to knock back on the seaweed gathering, hay scrounging, and manure chasing. Over 20 years, that garden gradually increased from its original 800 square feet to 2,000 square feet, with an asparagus bed, rhubarb patch, and the annual planting of a wide variety of vegetables.

Out of that garden we managed self-sufficiency in potatoes, onions, beets, carrots, garlic, rutabagas, and winter squashes, plus all the array of summer vegetables and salad stuff. Some years, we grew enough cabbage for keeping, usually went into winter with leeks and Brussels sprouts in the cellar, and we dug parsnips as soon as the ground thawed in spring. I often imagined our life in the house paralleled the Bunkers' as we grew and stored food for year-round consumption. I doubt they grew garlic, and I know they did not freeze green beans, though I am sure they grew them. Adrianna certainly made cucumber pickles as I do.

I doubt they wasted time and ground planting tomatoes. Some years I wonder why we bother. The garden does not hold heat well, and tomatoes ripen slowly, if at all, often waiting until September to do it.

The Bunkers certainly coped with rocks as we do, and digging on the north side of the house for fruit trees and discovering relatively few rocks makes me wonder if perhaps their garden was there. Relict rhubarb suggests that, too. In all likelihood they did not cope with the superabundant deer population typical of modern-day Islesboro. Islesboro has no porcupines, gray squirrels, possums, skunks, or raccoons to rob corn. The woodchuck and rabbit populations are relatively manageable. Without tall deer fencing, however, no one can have a garden on Islesboro, conduct large-scale market gardening, berry growing, or establish a new orchard. The deer, plus high property values with the resulting taxes, are probably the two most potent reasons for the lack of commercial growing; when combined, they effectively put a brake on home gardeners' ambitions.

Deer were not troublesome for our first 10 years. Poaching, which effectively controlled the deer population and kept many island freezers well stocked, came to a screeching halt in the late 1990s with the arrest of an is-



Sandy Oliver and Jamie MacMillan have been living and gardening on Islesboro for over 22 years.



"Our gardens were a destination, as customers and friends brought visiting relatives and houseguests for tours."

land poacher. Fencing or shooting became the option for many. At least one neighbor obtained a permit to shoot garden-eating deer. Rumor has it that she plugged four from the comfort of her back porch. We were obliged to begin fencing in 2002 after a frustrating spell of the deer munching down beans and pulling our carrots for us, and eating them, too.

The fence actually gave the garden a pleasant atmosphere, with beanpoles leaning against the top rail and morning glories and a vine called *Cobaea* spreading themselves along one side. Cucumbers climb up the fencing, too.

Our garden has always been a thing of beauty and tremendously productive in the care of garden artist Jamie, a master at successive sowing. We always have a continuous supply of lettuce and greens, and as soon as one vegetable is harvested, another takes its place. One year we weighed everything and discovered that we had grown 1,200 pounds of food there, not counting lettuce.

There were, in fact, surpluses, and three years ago, in an effort to capture some vegetable value and help coun-

ter expenses, I began an experiment based on a community-supported agriculture (CSA) model, whereby customers pay for a share or half-share, and take delivery on harvested produce—whatever the farmer is able to grow given the conditions in any year. Two households paid in \$250, and I delivered up a basketful of vegetables weekly—twice weekly at high season. The income paid for seeds, some soil amendments, and biological controls, essentially giving us vegetables for the labor.

In the spring of 2010, our operation took a great leap forward. A fairly flat spot northeast of the barn—with many fewer, smaller rocks and similarly sandy loam, and where we had already planted fruit trees—turned out to be a fine location for soil improvement. Leveled, with major large rocks removed by backhoe, and surrounded by fence, an additional 6,000 square feet was added to our to-do list.

There were four major goals in this enterprise: One was to expand fruit-growing for peaches, plums, cherries, high bush blueberries, cranberries and strawberries. Another was to improve our household vegetable self-sufficiency by planting, at last, truly enough corn and peas to freeze for winter, and to have enough ground to lavish on my particular longing for drying beans. We expanded our asparagus patch, too. Another goal was to grow greens, lettuce and some root crops through the winter with an unheated mobile greenhouse, a la Eliot Coleman's and Barbara Damrosch's Four Season Farm in Harborside, Maine. The greenhouse, supported generously by a grant from the Island Institute's Four Season Agriculture Fund, may also improve our chances of ripe tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and melons, and give us a place to start seedlings in spring.

We also wanted to have a small market garden. What an education that turned out to be. We established a prepaid-shares system against which people purchased vegetables they chose, using prices available online at the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association website. We started with nine households, some individuals and some couples, and at high season added five more, both summer people and year-rounders. Additionally, we maintained a list of people who showed an interest in participating, and when we had great plenty, I e-mailed them and they, too, came for fresh produce. Our greatest surprise was that we had scarcely passed the word around that we were doing this when we had easily twice as many inquiries as we could possibly have handled. Even the Tarrantine Club restaurant chef paid a





“This season our new and old gardens produced a little upward of 2,500 pounds of vegetables, valued at about \$6,500.”

visit and asked if we could grow for them, too. It was clear that we could have a whole acre of ground under cultivation instead of one-fifth of one acre, and still find homes for all the vegetables.

Over the years when people have said to me, “What a lot of work a garden is,” I have often thought that *work* was code for *attention*. The garden does require attention, especially since we grow a great variety of vegetables. Certainly it requires a good deal of labor in planting, transplanting, thinning and weeding. Then we have to pay abundant attention when it comes to monitoring for watering, boosts of fertilizer, pests and diseases, at which Jamie is fortunately a champ. All the brassicas—cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower—are prone to cabbage worms and need constant attention. The squashes get powdery mildew and beans catch viruses. So much of modern life has been designed to save us from having to pay attention, which makes having to be observant seem like a bit of an imposition.

We could save ourselves a lot of trouble if we decided to grow only a simple garden of basic veggies, but over the years I have come to delight in a wide variety. For instance, I like growing three or four different kinds of green beans: two pole beans—one, a long, flat bean named Nor’easter, is terrific for freezing, while the

purple-streaked pole bean named Rattlesnake is so delicious raw that I would grow it just for crudité’s, even though it, too, freezes well. Then, of course, it is fun to have the delicate slender filet beans for variety, and good old Provider for dilly bean pickles. Same story with summer squashes—one each of a straight-neck yellow, a zucchini, and a pattypan—and winter squashes—Delicata, Kabocha, Butternuts, Buttercups, and a Baby Hubbard. Plus pumpkins. It’s fun to head into winter with such an array, just as it is fun to toss a salad midsummer with six or seven different lettuces, each their own shade of green or red or speckled red and green, with varying textures, from tender Buttercrunch to firm Romaine. We have fallen in love with a brilliant red little number named Merlot that stunningly brightens a salad, and a tender and gorgeously shaded green to red lettuce named Skyphos.

We discovered that many people have a pronounced preference for beans, carrots, corn, beets, tomatoes, peas and lettuce. Only the most adventuresome will tackle a kohlrabi; a handful will greet chard with joy; and many still look askance at a pattypan squash, which is merely a differently shaped zucchini-like squash. Most Americans come honestly, historically, by a preference for substantial vegetables like beets, potatoes, carrots, corn, and

beans. These are the time-honored vegetables that produced the caloric punch people like the Bunkers required as they labored around their homes and farms, at sea, and walked or rode miles to attend meetings or to socialize. You'd be hard-pressed to build stone walls on a diet of lettuce and arugula.

This season our new and old gardens produced a little upward of 2,500 pounds of vegetables, valued at about \$6,500. Our gardens were a destination, as our customers and friends brought visiting relatives and houseguests for tours. Over and over people walked past the barn and gasped in delight and awe at the gorgeous plants, growing neatly and greenly. Jamie led them around, describing how to defeat insects, advising on varieties to grow. We both took pride in our gardens' sheer beauty.

I came to regard our gardens as an inspiring and lovely tyrant who kept us in his thrall until finally, reduced sunlight at season's close and a blessed frost put a stop to the diurnal gardening round, ended the lives of tender plants, and left us merely with carrots and beets for storage, Brussels sprouts and kale. Still in the ground are parsnips for next spring. Jamie will blanket the spinach in the old garden with mulch, and we will begin to eat it next April and May. Under the new greenhouse are rows of new spinach, lettuce, mache, a sweet carrot called Napoli, claytonia, and other salad stuff for harvesting later this winter.

On Tuesday and Friday afternoons all through the super-productive months of August and September, after all our customers had carried off their produce, I reviewed what was left, and often spent the rest of the day beating back the pile of vegetables that still remained. Freezing roasted squash. Cutting corn from the cob and sliding it into zipper bags for the freezer. Pickling. Looking for relatives and friends upon whom to foist remnants of vegetation, or concocting suppers to which the unsuspecting might be invited to eat what saner people might conclude ought to be composted or donated to the pigs. It is a terrible thing to be so tired of dealing with vegetables that Chinese takeout—were it even available

on-island—begins to sound attractive.

By mid-November the cellar held 100 pounds of potatoes, 15 pounds of beets, lots of carrots, stalks of Brussels sprouts, leeks, and a spackle bucket filled with rutabagas, large heads of cabbage, and endive roots for sprouting next winter. Elsewhere in the cooler regions of the house are a couple dozen winter squashes of five sorts, and in the cellar way hang strings of onions on which I am keeping a close eye because they seem to have a tendency this year (probably virus-related) to soften and rot. Quarts and pints of pickles, canned tomatoes and

peaches, jams, chutney, relish—all reflect the summer's work; 89 varieties of 39 different kinds of vegetables, plus 11 herbs, produced this bounty.

Two fine pigs continue to root, though their days are numbered. Nine chickens, fooled into thinking the days are still long, hunt and scratch all around

our yard as the Bunkers' son Newton's chickens did once. Like Adrianna, we have to protect our garden from the feathered marauders. A few chickens can flatten even a large compost pile faster than a human can pile it up again. Two of four young birds will have their showy combs and incipient spurs to thank for the fact

that they will be dinner in the near future.

Next year? We will have blueberries, strawberries and quite a few more peaches. Moving toward increased self-sufficiency and expanded household storage is an option for sure. Growing high-value greens for sale to a single customer is another. Friends hint at our producing value-added products like pickles, jam and chutney. Growing for market clearly requires a different scale of land, equipment and labor than we applied this year, and I am pretty sure we can't do it with broccoli and carrots. Back to the drawing board on the commercial aspect.

But for us, ultimately, the gardens are about dinner.

Sometimes I feel like the vegetables have the upper hand at our house, and that I am no match for them. Can't we just get pizza? Even though I moan and groan, I enjoy the challenge of varying the preparation of the



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small selection of vegetable ingredients remaining in March and April. The vegetables push me to be creative. There is the coleslaw repertoire with cabbage, carrots, apples, pickles, shredded rutabaga and even beets playing different leading and minor roles. There is the full panoply of winter squash soups, from creamy little numbers made with milk (or even coconut milk) to the stouter ones with meat broth, with or without beans, corn, and intense seasonings like chili powder or huge whacks of garlic.

Show-off events, such as island-produced dinners, demonstrate how productive a place can be. A year ago last October, islanders gathered for a splendid potluck dinner with about 125 in attendance. The meal featured island-raised meat—pork, ham, turkey and venison—plus eggs, island-gathered shellfish—crab, lobster, mussels—and every imaginable vegetable and many fruits, assembled into a variety of baked, boiled and roasted dishes. With the exception of some dairy products and flour, and a smattering of chocolate and citrus, plus wine (all from off-island), we managed a festive and widely

varied repast, the majority of it produced from island food.

While Islesboro isn't blessed with the soils that North Haven has, neither is it a mere pile of rocks like some islands. Adrianna and Emery Bunker and their island forebears certainly turned to the mainland and even distant ports for some of their food, but drew largely from island resources for most of their meals. We can do the same, and with freezers and Internet access to plenty of interesting recipes, we can probably do it more easily—as long as we can keep the deer out of the vegetables. We ought to have them for dinner.

Sandy Oliver has been active in food and food history for 37 years. She is the author of Saltwater Foodways: New Englanders and Their Foods at Sea and Ashore in the 19th Century, and is a freelance food writer with regular contributions to Bangor Daily News and Maine Boats, Homes, and Harbors. To read more of Sandy's work, visit www.workingwaterfront.com/sandyoliver.

Four Seasons of School Lunches

Through Islesboro Central School's horticulture and orchard projects, 86 K–12 students, their teachers, and many of the 600 or so year-round island residents are helping to grow food and feeding their community. The school's orchard, gardens and greenhouses produce a bounty of vegetables for school lunches and a summer farmer's market, while a student-led inventory of the island's fruit trees has helped identify and save heritage varieties. Starting in 2001, students, teachers and community residents cleared the land for a one-acre orchard, now home to apple, peach and pear trees that will nourish future generations. In 2010, horticulture teacher John Pincince and his students boasted production of over 1,000 pounds of vegetables and 14 bushels of fruit. As young islanders learn to enrich the soil, nurture tender seedlings, and harvest their crops, they are deepening their connection to their island home. And, by working with and interviewing their elders in the community, they are reaping the stories of their island's agricultural heritage—one that they are now helping to sustain.



Jean English

At Islesboro Central School, a hoop house protects warm-weather crops in the summer and is slid over the plot of greens for an extended fall harvest. The plastic net fencing keeps out deer.

Passionate and Committed

A new generation of island leaders

MARY TERRY

During the summer of 2010, the Island Institute launched the Island Leadership Program. Kathy Warren, Ellen Mahoney, Natalie Ames and Donna Wiegler were invited to participate. These four women differ in background, experience and interests; however, they share a history of committed volunteer leadership and a deep respect and love of their island communities. Each brings a passion to the work she does and recognizes the need to work collaboratively within and across island communities.



Kathy Warren
Vinalhaven

KATHY WARREN'S OPTIMISM about the opportunities for her Vinalhaven community is infectious. In conversation, her wide-ranging ideas and thoughts are threaded together with her love for and commitment to the community, especially the school and the need for economic development. At the moment, she is concerned about the core of the community: Main Street. "Main Street has changed; businesses here are challenged to maintain sales and encourage local people to shop locally," says Kathy. In response, she has become interested in comprehensive planning and downtown revitalization planning as ways to "help Vinalhaven be a sustainable successful community as a town and an island . . . to control our local economy."



Ellen Mahoney
Peaks Island

A FIFTH-GENERATION PORTLANDER, Ellen Mahoney brings enthusiasm and energy to her community work. Committed to her home state, Ellen has a 20-year professional background in Maine's private and nonprofit sectors. Over the past five years, she has dedicated her time to Home Start, Peaks Island's affordable-housing nonprofit organization. This past fall, Home Start received final approval to build two new energy-efficient affordable homes on Peaks. Working alongside a dedicated board of volunteers to move this project forward, Ellen hopes ground will be broken in the spring. She sees this work as "protecting the diverse population that drew us, and others, here." She strongly believes that "there is a place for regular working Maine people" in coastal Maine and on Peaks. Her work around affordable housing is dedicated to this belief.



Natalie Ames

Matinicus

WITH MATINICUS ISLAND ROOTS dating back to 1825, Natalie Ames grew up on-island, left for school, and moved back as an adult with young children. Natalie remains a year-round island resident where she lives with her three children and her partner, John Griffin, a lobsterman. Remembering her own island schoolhouse experience, and wanting her children and community to have a strong school, Natalie began to work with the teacher to create resources and to think about curriculum needs. Looking back, Natalie says it took eight years from initial idea to implementation of a fully working program. Now, there are internal systems in place, a curriculum in use, and it is regular practice for the outer island schools to work together. “It is really neat to work across islands, to have teachers talk to each other and share,” she says. Now, she adds, the focus is to “make sure ideas don’t get lost.” And she is looking toward her own future and how to share her learning with others.



Donna Wiegler

Swan’s Island

OVER THE PAST 10 OR SO YEARS since moving to Swan’s Island, Donna Wiegler has learned a lot and has increasingly become engaged in the community. As a person from “away,” she keenly recognizes the value of islanders’ history and the hard work islanders, past and present, have dedicated to the community. As Donna puts it, “Islands have a unique way of governing themselves, with the town taking care of people who need extra help.” Donna’s concern for her neighbors is clear when she asks, “How are island elders going to shovel 12 inches of snow on a day like today? How can my elderly friends and neighbors age and stay living on the island comfortably?” This past fall, she began participating in an ongoing island eldercare discussion group to explore what services are currently in place and what else could be done to help elder community members to remain on the islands. Donna describes this work as, “My passion . . . to help my friends and neighbors stay in their homes, be safe, and remain connected to friends and to the community.”

Mary Terry is the community development director at the Island Institute. To read more about the Island Leadership Program, visit www.islandinstitute.org/islandleadership.



Sitka Harbor, Alaska

The fish in the ocean off the coast of New England were privatized on May 1, 2010. At that time the fish were granted to fishermen and became a bundle of rights that could be leased,

traded or sold. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the agency that oversees all federally managed U.S. fisheries, has identified privatization (termed “catch shares”) as the national policy under which all fisheries should be managed.

Fishermen with a history of groundfish landings between 1996 and 2006 were granted a portion of the pounds of fish scientifically determined to be in New England waters, stretching from Canada to Connecticut and offshore to 200 miles. “Paper fish” were created, a tradable asset around which markets could emerge.

Most fishermen stayed ashore on May 1, gripped

Net Change

Financing Fisheries Reform

ROBERT SNYDER

by the uncertainty of an unformed market for their catch. *What price will I get for my fish when I land? Should I go fishing or lease the fish I own to others? How much should I lease my quota for? Is my busi-*

ness worth more or less? Should I sell my permit, and, by extension, my fishing rights? All of these questions were racing through fishermen’s minds at the time.

The primary idea driving this trend toward privatizing the ocean commons is that neoliberal markets and regulation will produce fisheries conservation. Much debate surrounds this assumption, but one thing is clear: Fishermen are becoming more dependent on the emergence of efficient markets for trading and selling their quota of fish.

With two months left in the 2010 season, it is fair to say that uncertainty defined the first year of this new

management scheme. More fish stayed in the ocean as fishermen stayed ashore, and proponents of catch shares celebrated. Late in the winter of 2010, federal officials proclaimed that overfishing had been avoided across the 17 species in the groundfishery for the first time since regional fisheries management councils were established in 1976.

The privatization of fisheries resources began more than 25 years ago in Alaska. As an increasing number of fisheries are privatized, we see similar effects from harbor to harbor around the country. The cost of fishing permits rises as the value and quantity of quota increases, making it difficult for people to afford to enter the fishery. Furthermore, the costs of monitoring and administering the new management system must be paid for by those participating in the fishery.

This becomes a particularly acute problem for owner/operator small-boat fishermen. Like any small business, they are hit hard by regulations that are structured as one-size-fits-all solutions. For example, the cost of “at-sea monitors”—federal employees who go out on boats to ensure that the fishing is done by the rules—make up a much larger percentage of the cost of a boat owner’s daily costs on a small boat than they do on a big boat. The price of diesel might climb one week and the



Robert Snyder (4)

Larry Collins of San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association shares ideas with Glen Libby of Port Clyde, Maine.

price for fish might be low the next; as this happens, the small boat has less of a margin to fall back on. These factors caused fishermen to reach out to like-minded community-based fishing ports around the country for solutions.

Ecotrust, a nonprofit based in Portland, Oregon, developed the “Community Fisheries Network” (CFN) to bring together highline fishermen / community leaders from eight of North America’s small-boat working

waterfront communities in order to develop solutions to these challenges. Fishermen in the CFN (shown in images throughout this article) see the challenges clearly. Fishermen in the port of San Diego feel the pressures of gentrification, and see consumer awareness of what they catch as a key to a long-term presence on the water. Fishermen in Port Orford and San Francisco see direct access to consumer markets as critical to providing the capital they need to buy infrastructure. Those in Sitka and a number of groups on the East Coast have developed quota banking mechanisms and direct marketing schemes, and now they see access to flexible capital as critical to helping young people enter the fishery in the future.

Much can be done to lower fishing-business costs by pooling risk through cooperatives, and creating more-efficient boats and more-selective fishing gear. However,



In order to help finance fisheries reform, the Island Institute has invested in Calendar Islands Maine Lobster and Port Clyde Fresh Catch through the recently established Island and Coastal Innovation Fund (ICIF). Through loans, investments and permit-banking, the ICIF supports entrepreneurs,

invests in transformative business models, and purchases and reallocates assets that will ensure a diversified economy for the future of Maine’s island and related coastal communities. The permit-banking component has allowed the Island Institute and its partners to begin to purchase groundfish per-

mits for deployment in island and coastal economies as fish stocks rebuild. These permits are being leased to fishermen to support gear research, incentivize the use of more-selective fishing gear, and provide a way for future fishermen to enter the fishery.

the ability for community-based groups of fishermen to afford this transition to privatization may actually hinge on our decisions at the seafood counter. We as consumers must demand transparency in the seafood commodity chain, such that we know.

Chain Reaction

As coastal residents, we are spoiled. We can know our fishermen, we can know how they fish, and we can know where our fish is landed. Not so for many consumers throughout the country.

What kind of fish do consumers want? According to research conducted by Cheryl Dahle, who runs a “co-entrepreneurship” network called Future of Fish, consumers want fresh, flaky, mild, white fish that can be breaded. Monkfish, haddock, hake, sole, cod—it’s all the same to the person who has never experienced a whole fish, let alone cleaned one. People want “mystery fish,” and they want it cheap. Ditto for salmon, shrimp, lobster, c(k)rab . . . and the list goes on. The consequences for fishermen and the ocean have been significant.

Participants in the Future of Fish have discussed how substitutability leads to fishermen ending up as price takers. They unload their boat to a buyer/processor who may not tell them what they are going to get paid



Linda Behnken and her crew

(no deal closure). But the fishermen don’t have much choice: The perishable nature of the product forces the fishermen to unload everything they catch in one tranche.

The processors that fishermen sell to are likely the marketers, sales force and logistics people all vertically integrated into one company. Processors have amassed tremendous power

in this model, playing off of the fishermen’s need to sell everything they land at the dock.

Furthermore, processors are leveraging the compressed timeline that consumers create by demanding fresh product. Through Future of Fish I learned about a fundamental assumption that informs our taste for fish—that fresh fish is of a higher quality than frozen. You only freeze fish right before it goes bad, right? Because of this, fish has to move quickly and be substitutable in order to satisfy the average seafood consumer who wants fresh, unfrozen fish at their grocery-store counter.

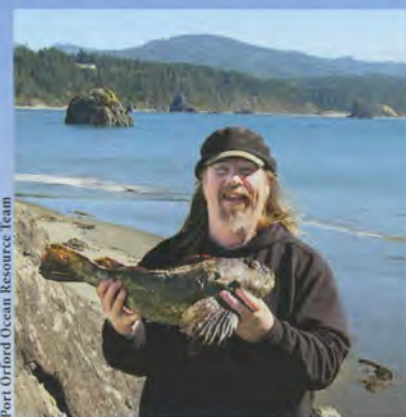
Sales representatives working for processors work on timelines that are not much longer than a day. The day starts with sales staff all over the country selling what people want to buy without knowing what will be landed. Their sales managers must negotiate who gets the product that was actually landed—either what the



Hahlien Behnken Barkhau



Barbara Emley



Port Orford Ocean Resource Team

Linda Behnken, president of Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association (ALFA), is a listener, a strategist, and generous with the methods ALFA has used to create a sustainable community-based fishery in Sitka, Alaska. She wants to “bank” quota in her community so that future generations can access the fish, and she wants to establish new markets for her fishermen.

Larry Collins is president of the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association, and much more. His bespectacled eyes smile even as he is leaning over the table, yelling at someone about the challenges his fishermen are experiencing just to stay on the water. He’s working for a wharf, a lift and a seafood market.

Aaron Longton, president of Port Orford Ocean Resource Team, presents as an outlaw but puts himself out front with those who are looking for the story of sustainable fishing in Oregon. He is working for access to quota, and a processing facility.

end user actually bought, or a renegotiated contract for a substitute fish.

In addition to putting fishermen in an untenable economic position, another consequence of our preference for fresh, substitutable fish is that destructive fishing practices are hidden from consumers. The ocean pays the price as wild-caught fish stocks continue to plummet. In fact, wild-caught fisheries now supply just less than half of the fish consumed in the world. By 2050 the United Nations predicts that wild fisheries will experience a nearly complete resource collapse if nothing changes with how the business of fishing is implemented on a global scale.

In the most general of senses, we, as consumers, have enabled a fish commodity chain that looks like this: suppliers (fishermen) sell to processors who contract with distributors and then sell to retailers/consumers.

Taking Calculated Risks

For John Jordan, fisherman and CEO of Calendar Islands Maine Lobster, “Sustainability of communities is tied to sustainability of fishing. People can’t afford to live in our communities anymore.” The way John sees it, “Producer-owned brands around the country are



Calendar Islands Maine Lobster booth at the 2011 Boston Seafood Show

successful. But you don’t see this business model quite so much in the seafood setting. Fishermen don’t see what happens beyond the boat as part of their job description. As we band together, we build a better image of what we represent collectively in the marketplace. If we want to embody what we believe in socially and ethically, the more people we have involved, then the stronger our

message is going to be.”

John Jordan and the 38 fishermen owners of Calendar Islands Maine Lobster believe that fishermen should become majority owners in business partnerships that represent their brand in the marketplace. The marketing and branding company tells the story of the fishermen; it may seek third-party certification for fish; and it works with fishermen to help them constantly improve the quality of the fish they are landing. This is, in effect, what Calendar Islands Maine Lobster has done.

Beyond marketing and branding, innovators like Jerry Knecht with North Atlantic Seafood, based out of Portland, Maine, see how quality can be improved when fish are processed and frozen near where they are landed. In fact, he believes in this to such an extent that he is restructuring his Indonesian operations along these lines. According to top seafood chefs, fish that are frozen as



Glen Libby is the president of the Midcoast Fishermen's Cooperative. He recently addressed Maine's newly seated governor, saying, "We used to complain about no fish. We would blame management; when we were done blaming management, we would blame the moon, the weather and the tides; we would blame anyone . . . We're not blaming anyone anymore. We are rebuilding the fish stocks, and we're taking our fish straight to the consumer."



Pete Halmay, San Diego urchin diver, puts those he interacts with under the same pressure he feels as a diver, letting them know that the time he is spending with them is taking away from his estimate of the number of weeks he has left to live. Don't waste Pete's time; he is tired of seeing his port gentrified, and he wants access to the water and to a diversity of fisheries for his community. He is working to create a Community Fisheries Association and seafood market.

close as possible to where they are caught can equal the quality of “fresh” fish that has been trucked and flown great distances so that consumers can buy it within a few days of when it was landed. If you process and freeze fish close to where they are caught, you can dramatically increase the quality of the fish, begin to control the flow of goods, and ultimately smooth out supply—a critical step toward building markets.

Rather than taking issue with the power that has been amassed by processors, fishermen-owned companies could provide more contracted work to processors to do higher-value processing. Perhaps there is more profit in a processing business that processes all day, maximizing the number and quality of the lines they run.

This points to a key role for flexible capital, and this is why Monica Jain, head of California-based Manta Consulting, has built a network of colleagues focused on “Financing Fisheries Change.” One of her collaborators is Paul Parker, based in Chatham, Massachusetts. Paul pairs the Mr. Clean look with the vocabulary, appetite for risk, and sense of self of a venture capitalist. He is executive director of the Cape Cod Fisheries Trust and former CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen’s Association. Paul has worked hard to raise and blend capital for purchasing scallop and groundfish quota. His organization then reallocates the quota through leases so that fishermen in his community can build a financial basis for purchasing quota in the future.

Monica and others in her network are strategizing how to attract investors to those businesses within the seafood commodity chain that care about transparency. She is encouraged by fishermen to cooperatively create brands and then raise the capital to launch their companies by allowing non-fishermen investors to become minority owners. She sees a real need for working capital that can provide the float that fishermen need to smooth out distribution. Fishermen are normally paid for their entire



Financing Fisheries panel: Monica Jain (Manta Consulting), Neel Inamdar (Verde Ventures Fund), Lisa Monzón (David and Lucile Packard Foundation), Larry Band (California Fisheries Fund), Scott Hackenberg (RSF Social Finance), and Paul Parker (Cape Cod Fisheries Trust)

catch within days of landing it. Fishermen-owned companies that represent a brand will need to buy everything that their community lands and provide at least 30 days of float, if not more, so that they can buy from multiple boats, contract for services, and freeze and hold product while smoothing out supply.

The fishermen-owned marketing and branding entity then contracts for services.

They contract for processing, cold storage, trucking, etc., while retaining ownership of their story, their fish, and, ultimately, their brand. This, in turn, creates more transparency throughout the commodity chain.

Each day we learn of new ways that networks—infused with new forms of capital, technology, and storytelling—are changing the world. These networks represent a way of thinking and acting together that is new, and they are underpinned by ethical commitments that include sustainability, conservation, and community economy alongside profitability.

If we invest in fishermen-owned brands that create higher-quality fish, frozen where they are landed, and reposition processors as contracted services, we gain the ability to know who caught our fish, and how. Either buy local (if you’re on the coast), or buy frozen fish produced by fishermen-owned brands. These changes in preference and practice could restructure the global seafood commodity chain for the better. A net change in the health of the ocean and fishing economies would follow.

Robert Snyder is executive vice president of the Island Institute, and an active participant in the networks referenced in this story. Follow him on Twitter @prooutsider.

For additional information go to: www.islandinstitute.org/fisheries, www.ecotrust.org, www.futureoffish.org, www.mantaconsultinginc.com.



Big House with Hawkweed, ca. 1948 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY,
Gift of the Estate of Fairfield Porter

Fairfield Porter & James Schuyler

Paint, poetry and passion on Great Spruce Head

CARL LITTLE

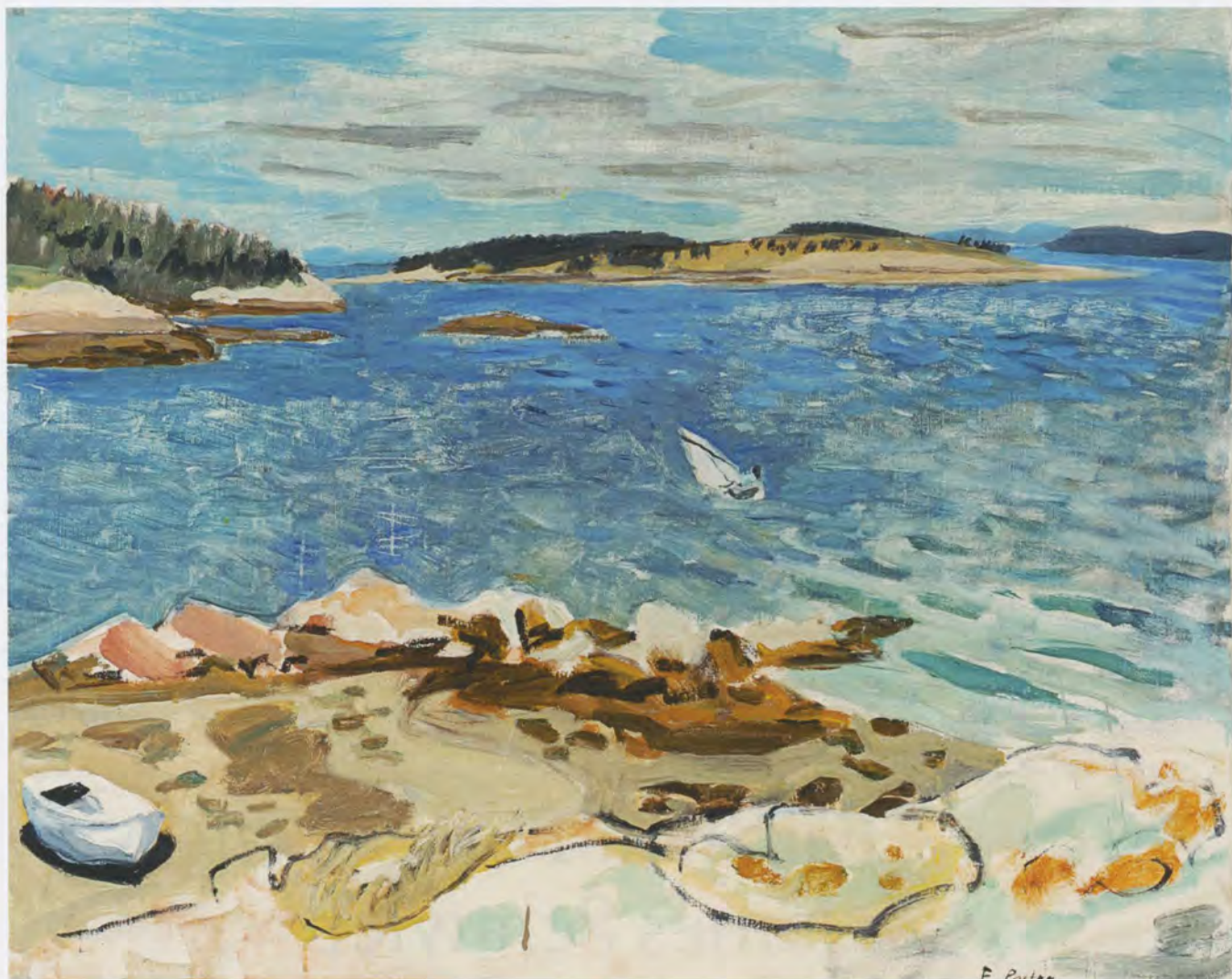
Great Spruce Head Island's place in the history of American art is widely recognized. The island served as the touchstone for two of the last century's most eminent American artists, the painter Fairfield Porter (1907–75) and his brother, photographer Eliot Porter (1901–90). Fairfield painted canvases there that are icons of American realism; Eliot created the images that appear in that landmark and still-influential collection of color photography, *Summer Island: Penobscot Country* (Sierra Club, 1966).

Several hundred acres in size—roughly a mile long by a half-mile wide—Great Spruce Head Island was purchased by the brothers' father, James Porter, in 1912 for \$10,000 (he had learned of its availability while visiting friends at a marine biology laboratory in Casco Bay). In June of that year, Porter and his son Eliot designed

the principal structure, the “Big House”; it was built the following winter on a headland overlooking the Barred Islands.

Great Spruce Head lies in the middle of Penobscot Bay, with other islands visible in every direction: Dirigo, Peak, Barred, Bear, Isle au Haut, Deer Isle. This is the landscape that led the painter John Marin to pronounce that when “Old Man God” made this part of the Earth, “he just took a shovelful of islands and let them drop.”

Nearly every summer the James Porter family traveled from their home in Winnetka, Illinois, to their Maine playground. After marrying Anne Channing in September 1932, Fairfield continued the tradition, retreating with his own family (the couple had five children) to Great Spruce Head. He later assumed dominion over the “Big House.”



Penobscot Bay, ca. 1952 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, Gift of the Estate of Fairfield Porter

For Porter, the island was truly at the center of his life. As he wrote in a 1972 letter, “The fact is, we go to Maine in the summer because I have since I was six. It is my home more than any other place, and I belong there.” In another letter, from 1961, he stated that the island was “the one place in the world where I have a sense of connection to my own past.”

Over the years, Porter invited friends, both artists and writers, to join the family on Great Spruce Head, hosting a kind of summer salon. He and Anne were known for their hospitality (the latter once referred to their residence in Southampton, New York, as “Porter’s Rest Home for Broken-down New Yorkers”).

With its multiple rooms, the Big House could accommodate quite a large gathering at any given time. In the summer of 1955, for example, the Porters hosted nine friends, including painters John Button and Jane Freilicher, sculptor Richard Stankiewicz, filmmaker Rudy Burckhardt, and poets John Ashbery and Frank O’Hara. Visitors were expected to entertain themselves, but they gathered for meals (Anne Porter’s poem “Houseguests”

is a delightful evocation of the hurly-burly atmosphere).

Among the Porters’ most frequent island guests was poet James Schuyler. Born in Chicago in 1923, Schuyler grew up in Washington, D.C., and East Aurora, New York, served in the navy, and then lived in Italy, where he was for a time the poet W. H. Auden’s secretary. In the early 1950s, when Porter met him, Schuyler was a member of the New York School of poets, a dynamic group of writers, several of whom doubled as art critics.

The poet made his initial visit to the island in 1954, “the first of Porter’s new, younger friends . . . to avail himself of the hospitality of Great Spruce Head,” writes Justin Spring in *Fairfield Porter: A Life in Art* (2000). The next summer Schuyler lingered longer and Porter painted one of his many portraits of his friend and future lover.

According to Spring, the painter had revealed his bisexuality to his wife as early as 1931, and she accepted it. His attraction to men was reignited by Schuyler, whom the biographer describes as being “handsome, well-read, and, when he cared to be, charming and romantic.”

After suffering a serious mental breakdown in 1961,



Islands, ca. 1945 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, Gift of the Estate of Fairfield Porter

Schuyler was taken in by the Porters; as Anne Porter once put it, “Jimmy came for a visit and stayed 11 years.” This arrangement wasn’t without its strains, for the painter was in love with the poet. At the same time, Schuyler was drawn, in Spring’s words, to “the Porter way of life, for he had a lifelong love of family and children and the security of a settled domestic existence.” He made himself at home “as an adopted uncle in some ways, in others as a fully grown child.”

Schuyler spent a part of most summers at the house on Great Spruce Head Island. The family-plus-Jimmy dynamics are reflected in Porter’s 1964 painting *The Screen Porch*. The poet is depicted seated, reading a book on the screened-in porch of the Big House, with Porter’s two daughters, Katharine and Elizabeth, standing close by; Anne Porter, somewhat ghostly, looks in from outside. The artist’s family referred to the canvas as *The Four Ugly People*.

Schuyler was, in a manner of speaking, the poet laureate of the island. A number of other poets visited, and some, like Frank O’Hara, wrote verse inspired by their sojourns, but Schuyler truly absorbed the place. Some of his finest poems, including “Light from Canada,” “Closed Gentian Distances,” “Today” and

Closed Gentian Distances

A nothing day full of
wild beauty and the
timer pings. Roll up
the silver off the bay
take down the clouds
sort the spruce and
send to laundry marked,
more starch. Goodbye
golden- and silver-
rod, asters, bayberry
crisp in elegance.
Little fish stream
by, a river in water.

—James Schuyler, from *Selected Poems*,
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989 © Estate of James Schuyler



Portrait of James Schuyler, 1955 Anderson Galleries, Locust Valley, NY

“Buried at Springs,” were written during Great Spruce Head stays.

Schuyler also kept a diary, which is full of descriptions of the island. “The spruce give the islands the profile of a totally worn toothbrush,” he observed in the entry for June 26, 1968. Like Porter, he loved the light. “A wonderful freshness,” he observed on September 1, 1970, “the air billowing like sheets on the line, and the light with a clarity that opens up the huddled masses of the spruce and you can see their bristling individuality.”

The New York City resident was especially attuned to Maine’s changing weather. On August 4, 1969, he wrote that the fog was as “gray as the insides of a buckwheat pancake,” and offered a bit of witty dialogue on the subject:

It’s one of those peekaboo fogs.

I could do with a little more peek and a little less boo.

Porter, too, acknowledged the Maine coast atmosphere. “Each day is a different weather,” he wrote to a friend in late July 1967, “and it is so intense, that by breakfast, you think that the weather has always been whatever it is that morning. . . . And it is most changeable.”

Porter painted his island surroundings from the 1920s on, often returning to favorite motifs, working in watercolor and oil. Drawing on a range of artists, from Diego Velazquez and Edouard Vuillard to John Marin and Willem de Kooning, he developed a painterly realism that eventually placed him at the forefront of American art.

In Maine, Porter painted amid family and friends. He sometimes took his children along with him on painting expeditions. In a letter to friends on June 20, 1955, he recounted such a trip: “I made a painting on Eagle Island which I rowed John and Jerry to and came back with our canvases like sails dragged against the wind.”

Porter painted island landmarks, including the harbor and the tennis court that his father had built in the woods. When the court was being constructed, rumors spread that the great concrete slabs delivered to the island were being used to build a bunker.

The Big House was a favorite subject. *Interior with Dress Pattern* (1969), among Porter’s best-known island paintings, shows the main hall with the plaster cast of one of the Elgin Marbles from the Parthenon that his father had hung on a balcony. The painting was featured in Alan Gussow’s landmark book, *A Sense of Place: The Artist and the American Land* (1972)—the only interior in a collection of landscapes.

Porter persuaded Gussow to include the painting. “I like Maine very much,” he wrote, “but I don’t always paint my best landscapes there, because if something is beautiful in itself, that takes you away from making a painting. It makes you think of reproducing it.” He felt that one painting “happily resolved” the question of place: “a picture of a living room in a house my father built on Great Spruce Head Island in Penobscot Bay, Maine. . . . I’ve painted that room often, and it’s Maine to me.”

In the same statement, the painter noted that it was “the quality of light in nature” that set him off. Kenworth Moffett, curator of the Porter retrospective at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1983, placed this ardor in an art-historical context, tying it to Edward Hopper and Winslow Homer. “All three [painters] were American realists who found the same thing: light,” he wrote. “With Porter, this light was explored for its own sake and for what it did to color.”

In *Material Witness: The Selected Letters of Fairfield Porter* (2005), David Lehman writes eloquently of the aesthetic alignment of painter and poet. “There is a sense in which Porter’s paintings and Schuyler’s poems amount to a largely unconscious collaboration of kindred sensibilities.” The poet confirmed this; asked whether he ever wrote poems about Porter’s paintings, Schuyler replied that he didn’t, adding, “‘but I tried to write poems that were like his paintings.’”

Painter and poet both focused on their island surroundings. In a letter to Frank O’Hara in June 1955, Porter reported finishing a still life of “some innocent hawkweed, which shuts up around six in the evening, though it is still light, like a good child that goes to bed when it is told.” Writing to another poet, David Shapiro,



The Dog at the Door, 1971 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, Gift of Mrs. Fairfield Porter

From the Island

The hawsers of my life loosen: a tinny toot:
the goodbye boat.
By these sky-sutured spruce and that white distant sail,
though I go in fog on a black and bucking bay,
all winter will an island welter in my sight.

—James Schuyler, from *Other Flowers: Uncollected Poems*, 2010 © Estate of James Schuyler



James Schuyler Papers. MSS 78. Mandeville Special Collections Library, UCSD.

Light from Canada

For Charles North

A wonderful freshness, air
 that billows like bedsheets
 on a clothesline and the clouds
 hang in a traffic jam: summer
 heads home. Evangeline,
 our light is scoured and Nova
 Scotian and of a clarity that
 opens up the huddled masses
 of the stolid spruce so you
 see them in their bristling
 individuality. The other
 day, walking among them, I
 cast my gaze upon the ground
 in hopes of orchids and,
 pendant, dead, a sharp shadow
 in the shade, a branch gouged
 and left me "scarred forever
 'neath the eye." Not quite. Not
 the cut, but the surprise, and
 how, when her dress caught fire,
 Longfellow's wife spun
 into his arms and in the dying
 of its flaring, died. The
 irreparable, which changes
 nothing that went before
 though it ends it. Above the wash
 and bark of ruffled water, a gull
 falls down the wind to dine
 on fish that swim up to do same.

—James Schuyler, from *Selected Poems*,
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989 © Estate of James Schuyler

on July 25, 1972, he described trying to paint "some terrific flowers on the shore, evening primroses of uniquely beautiful yellow, and field roses of an equally unique pink, with the colors of lichens on the rocks, gray-green and orange." The flowers, he found, "were much harder to paint than people."

Those same flowers appear in Schuyler's poems, diary and letters. An amateur ornithologist, he had a keen eye for wildflowers and plants. He also loved gardening, and his plantings sometimes showed up in Porter's paintings. Describing *Morning Landscape* (1965), a portrait of his daughter Lizzie seated on the front porch of the Big House, Porter noted the "pink and purple canterbury bells and foxglove" to her left, "planted the preceding year by Jimmy."

While Porter depicted friends and family seated in Adirondack chairs on the lawn, enjoying the island ambiance, Schuyler provided island bulletins in his letters. Writing in mid-July 1965, he sends greetings from "Droughtsville Island" (Maine had been suffering an unusually long dry spell), and reports on Porter's recovery from an illness. "This afternoon I found him in a far meadow painting with nothing on but a big straw hat, so I guess it's safe to say he's all well."

Porter's penchant for painting in the nude turns up in "The Morning of the Poem," the title verse of the book that won Schuyler the Pulitzer Prize in 1981. In among various reminiscences, the poet offers a humorous account of how one day, while painting in the "fairy woods" beyond the Double Beaches on Great Spruce Head, Porter encountered another naked man who had rowed over from Bear Island with a woman for a picnic in the all-in-all. The story ends with the painter meeting up with the man at a party in New York City some time later and the latter exclaiming, upon recognizing Porter, "You're the man in the hat!"

Schuyler could be quite amusing in his letters. Writing to artist Joe Brainard on June 28, 1970, he remarked on a "bright pale blue morning," and what he suspected was "a spanking breeze" blowing on the island. "Wait a minute while I put my ass out the window," he writes, and then confirms that the breeze is indeed of the spanking kind.

In 1971, the Porters began to separate themselves from Schuyler; as biographer Justin Spring noted, the couple recognized that their situation with him "had become unlivable." In June, they left him in their home in Southampton when they headed for Maine. Soon after, Schuyler suffered several mental breakdowns. Fairfield and Jimmy would remain friends, but no longer would they share Great Spruce Head.

Fairfield died in 1975, at the height of his fame; his painting, *Cliffs of Isle au Haut*, painted in his final year,

was commissioned by the U.S. Department of the Interior as part of the 1976 bicentennial celebration.

Schuyler, much younger, lived for another 16 years. He often reminisced about his time on Great Spruce Head. In a 1985 letter, he tied his lack of correspondence to “not going to the island any more: somehow it was a wonderful place to receive mail . . . And there’s something especially enchanting about letters that have to come by mailboat, their arrival announced by the toot of a nautical horn.”

Something Porter wrote to Alan Gussow in 1971 encompasses his and Schuyler’s passion for Great Spruce Head: “A place means a lot to me not because I decided that it did. It just does; I can’t help it. The most important thing is the quality of love. Love means paying very close attention to something, and you can only pay close attention to something because you can’t help doing so.”

Schuyler recognized that love, especially in Porter’s paintings of the island. In a review in *ARTnews* of his exhibition at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in 1962, which consisted mainly of Great Spruce Head canvases, the poet praised the way in which Porter could return to a subject year after year, “finding new aspects, trying to penetrate more deeply to the core of his feelings about it.” And then Schuyler paid a wonderful compliment: “Porter, in the lyric solidity of his work, embodies the virtues of man: love of family, of carved fields, of the beauty of the everyday.”

Today, Great Spruce Head continues to be a place of creativity and camaraderie. Porter’s niece, Anina Porter Fuller, hosts an Art Week residency every year near the end of June, inviting painters, poets, printmakers, sculptors and musicians to stay in the Big House, which has changed little from the days when Porter lived and worked there and Schuyler came to stay.

Meals are taken care of so that the artists can make the most of their visit. They set up temporary studios on the porches. As would be expected, they often find themselves painting the same motifs Porter did, be it the south meadow, the Double Beaches or a distant island.



A Day Indoors, 1962 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY,
Gift of the Estate of Fairfield Porter

The poet Sylvester Pollet, a resident in 2002, referenced this continuum in one of the 60 haiku-like “kechiks” he wrote during his stay: “Yo, Fairfield, / Anina’s painting hawkweed! / Not bad either, not bad!”

The legacy of Porter and Schuyler is made manifest in their canvases and poems, and in the ongoing spirit of the island as creative sanctuary. “O Air!” the poet wrote at the end of a diary entry in July 1969. He might have said, “O Art!”

Carl Little is the author of Edward Hopper's New England, The Watercolors of John Singer Sargent, Art of the Maine Islands, and many other books. His poetry has appeared in the Paris Review, Hudson Review, and other literary journals, as well as in the collection Ocean Drinker: New & Selected Poems. Little lives on Mount Desert Island.

Word *from* Europe

PLAN AHEAD

Europe's lessons on managing conflicts between offshore wind farms and fishermen

COLIN WOODARD

It's an idea that could transform Maine's economy: reduce the state's energy costs and petroleum use by building a network of oceanic-scale wind farms out in the Gulf of Maine. Built out of hearing and nearly out of sight, and possibly from Maine-sourced wood composites, offshore wind turbines might be generating 5,000 megawatts of power by 2030—more than double the current demand—perhaps cheaply enough to let homeowners swap their oil furnaces for newfangled electric heaters. Carbon emissions would go down, while demand for construction workers and engineers would go up. It appears that everybody would be a clear winner.

Except fishermen, that is.

With oil and gas exploration banned in the region, Gulf of Maine fishermen have generally had the ocean to themselves, with users of different gear types competing with one another for access to the ocean bottom and the water above. Other potential competitors—aquaculture pens, tidal energy turbines—have generally clung to shore, leaving most fishing grounds to the fishermen.

Offshore wind is the first major industrial sector to barge in on Maine fishermen's turf, with the potential to displace trawlermen, scallop draggers and lobstermen from productive grounds. The two sectors could coexist and prosper—exclusion zones around turbines could theoretically help fishermen by creating fish havens that boost overall populations—but only if the details, practices, and mutually acceptable locations are worked out well in advance.

Fortunately, Mainers can tap into the experience of northern European governments, fishermen and wind energy developers who've been fostering, confronting and building offshore wind farms for a decade now. In the process, our friends across the pond have learned a fair bit about what to do and not to do in regard to managing conflicts between harvesters of air and sea.

Offshore wind has been growing at a breakneck pace in northern Europe, where governments face more pressing energy-security concerns (Moscow can cut off winter heating to much of the continent at a flick of a switch) and take global warming more seriously than the United States does. Some 3,000 megawatts' worth of wind turbines have already been built in European seas, and 37,000 megawatts more are expected in the coming decade. (To put those numbers in context: Total peak electricity demand in Maine is about 2,000 megawatts.)

Don't Do What Germany Did

Experts have one piece of advice: Don't do what Germany did.

Ten years ago, the German government announced its intention to encourage 12,000 megawatts of wind farm development in the North Sea and German Bight



PAI Photography



**“The fishermen argued they had to protect every square inch,
and therefore ended up protecting nothing.”**

by 2020, and 13,000 more by 2030. Most of the wind farms were to be located beyond the country’s 12-mile territorial waters and within the 200-mile Extended Economic Zone, partly to avoid strict regulations on land or resistance from neighbors ashore. Germany’s Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency guided the approval process, and made sure no wind farm proposals intruded on international shipping lanes. And that’s about as far as the planning went.

“It was a totally market-led approach, and it turned into a Wild West situation, with developers trying to get in fast and stake a claim to a marine area with no real regard for what else was going on out there,” says Stephen Jay, an offshore wind expert at Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom. “They planned to later do Environmental Impact Assessments on each proposed site, but there were no real studies about the effects all these wind farms would have collectively.”

Nor was there much consideration of what the ef-

fect would be on German fishermen, who were effectively left out of the discussion. “They were asked by the German agencies what part of the sea bottom they would like protected, and the fishermen weren’t able to give an answer,” Mr. Jay notes. Fish move around, of course, and fishermen are loath to reveal exactly where they go. Additionally, sacrificing certain areas of the sea bottom altogether was a political nonstarter for Germany’s fishing associations, as in many situations it would leave small-boat fishermen in a given area nowhere to fish at all. “The fishermen argued that they had to protect every square inch, and therefore ended up protecting nothing.”

The result was an uncoordinated hodgepodge of wind farm sites, each surrounded by a 500-meter-wide exclusion zone. Each site took up a relatively small area, so studies usually found their individual effect on fisheries to be negligible. “They would say, well, this is only a tiny area, so the fishermen can go fish someplace else,”

says Matthias Kloppmann, a research scientist at the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute of Sea Fisheries in Hamburg. “But when you look at all the wind farms together, they would cover a huge area where fishing [wouldn’t be] allowed anymore, and [would therefore] have a great impact on the fisheries in the end.”

How great? Mr. Kloppmann and five colleagues published a study in the journal *Marine Policy* in 2010 that concluded the impact would be “quite substantial.” While cod catches would be unaffected—electronic monitoring data on large fishing vessels showed only 1.6 percent of the catch came from within proposed wind farm sites—other fisheries would be devastated. Dab catches in the North Sea were estimated to fall by 32 percent, plaice by 37 percent, turbot by 40 percent, and sole by 53 percent.

The real effects could be greater still. Mr. Kloppmann notes that nobody has any idea what the ecological effects will be if all existing fishing effort is displaced into a reduced area of the seafloor. The prudent course, he notes, would be to build a few wind farms and ob-

serve what happens, but that’s not what German authorities have had in mind. “They want to build all the wind farms they’ve approved so far”—7,000 megawatts’ worth—“and see what happens,” he notes. “From my point of view, it’s a really dangerous thing they’re doing.”

Britain’s Learning Curve

Currently, much of the action in offshore wind is taking place in British waters, where the world’s largest offshore farm came online in the fall of 2010, and some 20,000 megawatts are expected to be deployed by 2020—enough to power 10 Maines. Some 1,300 megawatts of offshore turbines have already been built, most of them close to shore, but the new developments will be taking place farther out to sea, well beyond the United Kingdom’s 12-mile limit.

In short, the UK made some of the same mistakes as Germany, but did so much earlier and on a much smaller scale. The trick ahead is for wind developers, fishermen and the government to negotiate mutually

Mapping Working Waters

Fishermen’s stake in the commons

On a rainy, blowy day in January 2010 the Island Institute first floated our fisheries mapping idea with a group of fishermen from the St. George peninsula. Everyone had heard talk about marine spatial planning, and the possibility that one day fleets of floating wind turbines could be anchored off Maine’s shores. It seemed that the time was right to start documenting where, when, and how fishermen use the ocean, and how their communities depend upon the sea.

Did they want to start documenting their fishing grounds? Was getting a place on the map important enough to put long-held family and community secrets into the public domain?

The answer was a reluctant but determined Yes.

So began a labor-intensive, delicate process, with

Island Institute staff conducting anonymous interviews with fishermen under strict confidentiality. In the past year, the fishermen have drawn new lines—lines that all fishermen know, but don’t appear on your chart. They have named areas of ocean—based on the shape of a shoal, the reputation of a high-lining family, the loss of a vessel, or the look of the land from sea (“barn over buoy”). And they have told stories—about where they, and the guys from their home harbor, fish.

In early 2011, we presented maps from a pilot study to the same fishermen who had given us marching orders a year previously. The response was a relief, but has set us marching again. “Yeah, what you’ve covered you got about right. Now get to work on the areas where they’re looking at wind turbines offshore.”

acceptable solutions to the inevitable conflicts that will arise from the massive arrays of turbines soon to be deployed offshore.

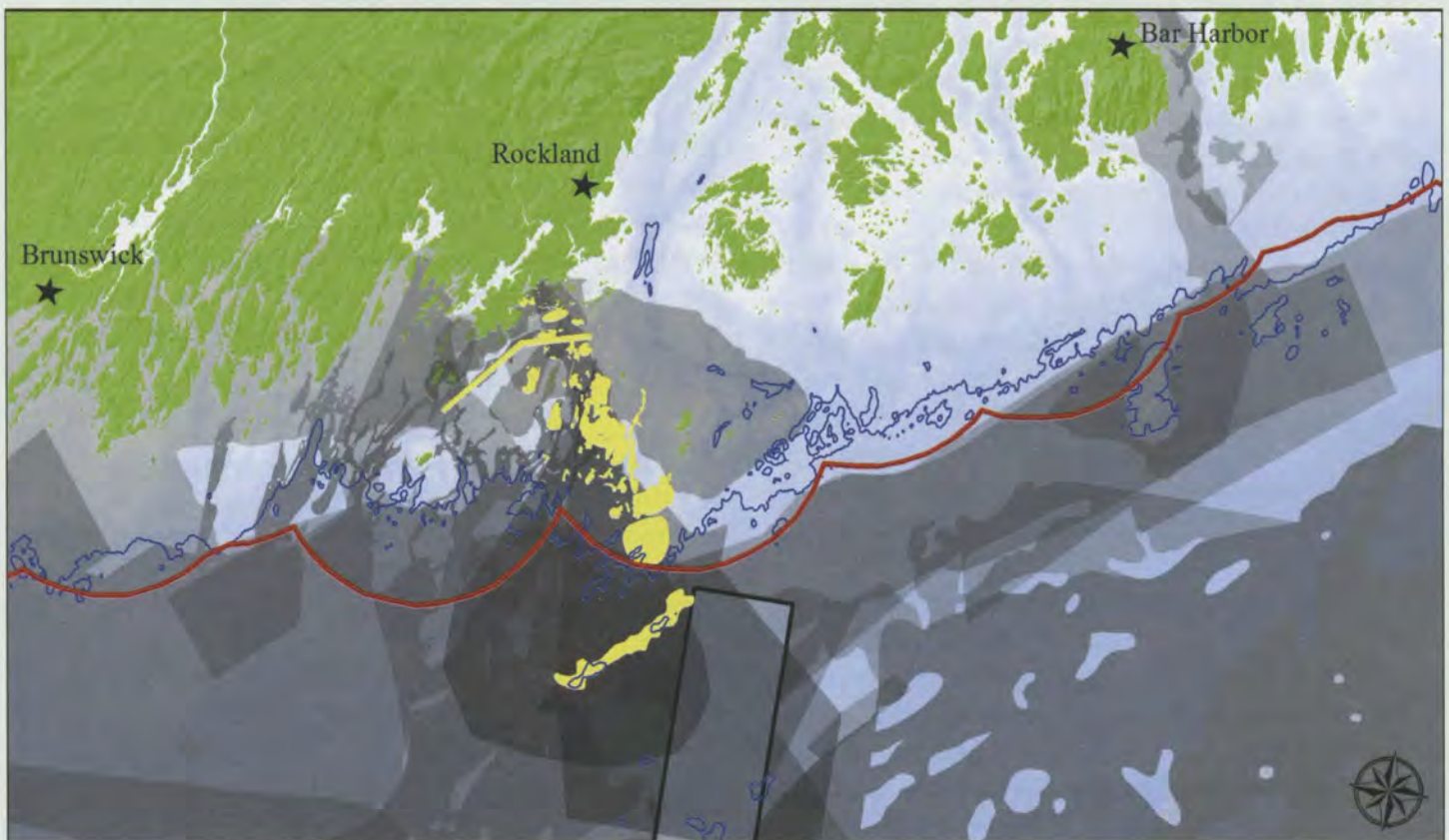
The early phase in the UK had characteristics that may match those of the first projects in Maine: For technical and economic reasons, they were located relatively close to the coast and, therefore, in and around productive fishing grounds. Fishermen were initially relatively optimistic that common ground could be found, especially given the productive working relationships they had been able to develop previously with offshore oil and gas developers. Theoretically, wind farms had more flexibility in terms of where they could be located when compared to a drilling platform, and the two sectors set up a liaison group to facilitate communication and dialogue based on the oil and gas model.

Relations haven't been as smooth as they had hoped, says Dale Rodmell, assistant chief executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, based in the northern English city of York. Part of the problem was cultural—it takes time for different sectors

to understand one another—but the central stumbling block was procedural. The liaison group could grapple with issues that came up during wind farm construction and operations, but it had no role to play in determining where the wind farms were built. That function was controlled by a separate public body, the Crown Estates, which made its decisions German-style, approving individual farms without assessing cumulative impacts. "From a practical perspective, we were preempted from putting forward site alternatives," Mr. Rodmell says.

"Some farms were built in very sensitive fishing grounds," he adds, with serious impacts for small-boat fishermen in the affected areas. In the UK, each turbine has a 50-meter exclusion zone, but trawlers and scallop dredgers are effectively displaced from areas in between the turbines because of the presence of inter-turbine power cables. "You get siting wrong and it affects entire communities."

Developers agree that the process was inadequate. "The one key lesson learned from the projects we've developed is that early engagement is the key to resolving



Preliminary fishing-territory data collected from interviews with fishermen in Saco, Port Clyde, Tenants Harbor, Spruce Head, Wheelers Bay, Friendship and Bar Harbor

- 10 NM from Mainland and Inhabited Islands
- 90 Meter Contour
- Year-Round Groundfish Closed Area
- Community Fishing Territories (Lobster, Eel Barel, Gillnet, Otter Trawl, Shrimp)
- Named Bottom—Tenants Harbor, Wheeler's Bay and Spruce Head

potential issues with fishermen and other stakeholders,” says Peter Madigan, head of offshore renewables at RenewableUK in London, a national wind and tidal energy industry association. “If there was one thing to take from the UK experience, this is it.”

The central problem for northern Europe was that offshore wind materialized before anyone had even thought about how best to manage the situation. “Just a few years ago nobody even had it on their radar screen that we might be building offshore wind farms in Europe, and we never had the chance to have the planning discussions beforehand,” says Christian Kjaer, the Danish-born CEO of the European Wind Energy Association in Brussels.

Studies, Buy-offs and Buy-ins

Indeed, Mr. Kjaer’s native Denmark pioneered the modern wind power industry, including the construction of some of the first offshore wind farms, including Middelgrunden, the iconic 40-megawatt array that dominates the view from the Copenhagen waterfront. Like most northern European nations, Denmark has a long tradition of careful land-use planning with an emphasis on finding consensus between various stakeholders. But when Middelgrunden was built in the late 1990s, there was no such system in place for dealing with sea-use conflicts, including those with fishermen. The government wanted the project built. The discussion was merely over how much compensation fishermen should be given.

“The fishing associations realized that it would be a stupid idea to just say no, no, no, because they were up against a government decision to make fossil-free electricity,” recalls Hans Christian Sorensen of SPOK, a consultancy that helped plan Middelgrunden and other offshore farms. “At times it was difficult to decide what the right price for compensation was, but in general I feel it was a success because we didn’t see any delays in the end.”

Fortunately the initial stakes were low: Middelgrunden’s 20 turbines were built on a shoal that wasn’t particularly valued by fishermen, save for those harvesting eels. The eelers agreed to compensation for construction-related closures of the grounds, and the long-term impact of sedimentation and damage to eelgrass beds appears to have been limited. Fishermen returned to fishing near the farm thereafter. “In Denmark the issues weren’t that hotly debated,” says Kjaer. “It’s unfortunate because there could have been discussions about overfishing and how to perhaps use the wind farm footings as artificial reefs within marine reserves.”

Plan for Thy Seas

Indeed, the wider lesson from northern Europe is that locating offshore wind farms and managing their effect on fisheries, marine life and navigation really requires systemic planning, not unlike zoning on land. The wonky term is *marine spatial planning*, and the fishermen, developers and scientists we spoke to all think it’s essential not only for doing marine wind farms right, but also for the general management of the oceans in the 21st century.

In the absence of a comprehensive planning system, decisions in Europe were made by various national governmental departments and agencies operating in isolation from one another, and each focused on their respective agenda: shipping or fish, minerals or energy. Mr. Jay’s research suggests that a more-inclusive and holistic planning exercise can ensure not only that wind energy projects get placed in areas fishermen can live with, but also in ways that might actually strengthen the ecosystem and the fish stocks within it.

“In Europe there’s a consensus that the number-one principle in marine planning is that it should forward ecosystem-based management,” he says. “There’s going to be a real attempt to apply such principles much more rigorously going forward.”

Last year, the British Parliament passed a new law that will effectively make marine spatial planning compulsory for future projects, and Mr. Rodmell of the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations is optimistic. “The act recognizes disturbances to marine users like ourselves,” he says, noting that it also ensures the early involvement of fishermen. “Having engagement before siting decisions are made is a critical thing, and the earlier the better.”

Colin Woodard is the author of three books about the sea: Ocean’s End: Travels through Endangered Seas, The Republic of Pirates, and The Lobster Coast. He lives in Portland. To read more of Colin’s work, visit www.colinwoodard.com.

To read more about the Island Institute’s focus on offshore wind, visit www.islandinstitute.org/offshorewind.



The End of the World

A Voyage from Cape Horn to the Beagle Channel

PHILIP CONKLING *with* PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CONOVER

For the past 15 years, a group of six friends, who originally met on Hurricane Island as Outward Bound instructors three decades ago, have met with each other regularly to run, while we talk about our jobs, families and other events in our lives. We call ourselves “the Mustangs,” for reasons too obscure and embarrassing to relate. One of us is a builder, one a business consultant, one an owner of a heating and air-conditioning company, one a yacht captain, one a filmmaker, and one runs an environmental nonprofit.

When our heating and air-conditioning company owner, also the most accomplished sailor among us, contemplated his 60th birthday, he suggested chartering a sailing vessel in Tierra del Fuego for a voyage down the Beagle Channel and around Cape Horn—if we would agree to join him. In the actual event, five of the six of us were able to make the trip. What follows are some of the adventures we shared on our 16-day expedition.



Ushuaia, Argentina to Puerto Williams, Chile

When we arrive in Ushuaia, Argentina, after 27 hours of flying, we meet our British captain, Miles Wise, and first mate, Laura Parrish—who is also Miles’s actual first and best mate. They take us down to the harbor where we stow our gear aboard the 54-foot PELAGIC, a cutter-rigged, steel-hulled sloop, owned by the legendary ocean sailor and adventurer, Skip Novak, who pioneered cruising in this part of the world.

The following morning, we cast off early, and within moments we are sailing!

Almost immediately we fall into the roles we had once enjoyed on Hurricane Island. The HVAC owner becomes the admiral and expedition leader, the business consultant becomes the senior watch officer, the building contractor becomes dinghy master and sheet handler, the filmmaker becomes the helmsman, and, well, the filmmaker and the nonprofit president become the naturalist and sea cook.

That afternoon we make Puerto Williams, Chile, where we will need to clear customs because most of the waters we will be sailing in are Chilean. The harbor



David Conover (5)

at Puerto Williams does not look like much on the approach, but a deep creek comes in from the west, which we enter to find a little fleet of cruising boats from a variety of nations tied up to a wrecked cargo vessel called the MCELVEY. The captain brings PELAGIC carefully alongside the wreck, where we tie up and clamber over its rusting steel sides.

After dinner aboard that evening, there is intense peer pressure to visit the MCELVEY’s interior, which,

aside from serving as our wharf, is also the liveliest little bar in the southern hemisphere. This bar serves a very potent drink, appropriately called a McElvey, three of which are impossible to drink, says the captain, without losing track of the vertical dimension—an important local tradition for sailors returning from Antarctica.

The next morning we head for Puerto Toro near the extreme southeastern end of the Beagle Channel, where we intend to tuck in for the night to give us a shot at Cape Horn the following day. A stiff 20-knot breeze takes us down the Beagle under pelting rain. But it is magnificent. Albatross swoop by on huge dipping wings; arctic terns swoop over shoals of fish; sleek black-and-white cormorants skitter in and dive to the depths, while rafts of strange Magellanic penguins paddle past our vessel.

Puerto Toro is the southernmost community in the world, which we reach by early evening. Earlier in the day our captain had brought a whole, skinned lamb out of the forepeak. When the temperature below increases after firing up the stove, he decides to hang the ingredients of a future dinner from front and rear legs on the stern gantry under the radar. It does give us a certain man-o'-war look, which we appreciate, and so too does a hawk that our filmmaker finds perched on the gantry, trying to pick off little lamb kebabs. The filmmaker chases the hawk off, but we have to take turns standing watch on deck before dark to make sure our celebration dinner will stay intact.

After a night in Puerto Toro, we awake early for an attempt to round Cape Horn. It is before 5 a.m. when our senior watch officer, who rarely sleeps, rousts us. It is still stormy out as the low-pressure system that has dogged us for the past few days slips by. The captain says the forecast is for the winds to ease during the day. We cast off a short hour later under low scudding clouds and head out beyond the eastern end of the Beagle Channel. Looking back to the west, we can see a silver edge of light under the clouds at the back edge of the low. Soon the winds freshen out of the southwest as we crank down, close hauled, toward the southeast point of a distant island that we need to weather before a wide stretch of open water to the Wollaston Archipelago where Cape Horn lies, 50 or 60 miles to the south.

It is now gusting over 30 knots as we shorten sail again. We're hull-down as we continue to take in more canvas—sailing with a third reef and a shortened staysail after the yankee has been cranked all the way back in.



The admiral wisely moves into the doghouse, while the rest of us cluster in the cockpit with spray testing the effectiveness of our foul-weather gear. Meanwhile, our first mate clips in her lifeline and crabs her way forward to secure the anchor on the foredeck, while the filmmaker, who is also a transatlantic sailor, tries to keep the helm from burying the bow in the short, steep seas. He fails, and two waves completely wash over our plucky first mate on the foredeck.

Our captain keeps going below to check the plotter and wind-speed indicator as the seas continue to build. Everything is different shades of gray—just like the southern ocean is supposed to be. Are we really having fun yet? After we have been knocked about by a number of 45-knot gusts, the captain suggests we postpone our attempt at the Horn and return to Puerto Toro for the day. No one protests. We bear off and run back to the small harbor and formulate Plan B, which is to spend the day in port and depart after an early dinner for a night sail to Cape Horn, which we should make by sunrise if the forecast of diminishing winds obtains in the actual event.



Thirteen on the Fun-o-Meter

We slip the lines at 6 p.m. Monday night from Puerto Toro. The winds have spent themselves and the Beagle Channel looks benign. The first mate assigns the watches, and those of us with the dogwatches creep belowdecks to catch what sleep we may.

Coming on deck for the 2 to 6 a.m. watch, the naturalist finds the dinghy master and filmmaker on deck with the first mate. We are all so smitten by the spectacle of the night skies that our speed has fallen to less than 2 knots on the inky ocean. We northerners get our first glimpses of the Southern Cross overhead in the star-studded firmament. The first mate points out Orion off to starboard, and we watch him plunge slowly headfirst into the sea, trailing his upside-down sword behind him.

Meanwhile, torpedo-shaped porpoises streak in from the port side and explode from the dark water to leap off the bow waves. Then they circle and approach again, trailing ghostly streaks of phosphorescence as they vector in on the bow. By 4 a.m. the admiral joins us on deck; it is overcast, and the winds are beginning to increase. By five it is raining steadily, and by the end of the watch, we are all thoroughly soaked on deck. By six the

senior watch officer comes triumphantly into the cockpit, thrilled by the dirty weather.

When the naturalist comes back on deck after a three-and-a-half-hour kip, all hands have assembled in the cockpit in a 30-knot slapping wind, watching the vast Gothic cathedral of Cape Horn materialize out of the enveloping clouds and murk. The winds from the south continue to build as our expedition leader constantly adjusts the sails to keep us headed up with enough sea room to keep PELAGIC a safe distance off this most famous of all lee shores.

By 11 a.m. we are abeam of Cape Horn, all of us howling into the howling wind, cold, wet, raw and exhilarated. We quickly cluster on the lee rail as the filmmaker sets up to record this immortal moment in our collective history. An hour after rounding the Horn, the rain slows to a few spits and then gives up altogether. The winds slacken to a gentler breeze, the sun burns a hole in the gray overcast, and all is well in the world. The naturalist asks for his sunglasses and tells the admiral, "This is what we signed up for."

A Day with the Gaucho

After rounding Cape Horn and beating back up the Beagle Channel for several days, we turn north into the fjord known as the Bahia Yendegaia, where our captain and first mate plan to introduce us to Jose, the gaucho, caretaker of a vast *estancia* (ranch), who has wildish horses we might ride.

We are greeted in front of the *estancia* by Anna Marie, a Belgian woman who, according to our first mate, came here on a cruising boat with her husband several years earlier and jumped ship to take up as the gaucho's bunkmate. Apparently life with the gaucho is more exciting than life in Belgium.

Jose the Gaucho greets us in handmade horsehide chaps and a black beret, with his long black hair pulled back in a ponytail. In a sling across his back he carries an 18-inch blade called a *falcone*. Life may be simple and rough here on the *estancia*, but Jose unquestionably is a rake. Since he is a man of few words and doesn't speak any English, we are spared any sustained effort at communication. He and Anna Marie have briskly rounded up the horses from the huge outback pastures—there are 40 of them that have been tamed—and six are saddled up and waiting for us.

We climb aboard an assortment of horses of various colors and sizes and head out with Jose at the head of the column. We wind through thick brush, across beaver-flooded terrain; we ford streams, cross bouldery outwash plains, and follow muddy trails along the lacustrine forest on the banks of the meltwater river as we make our way up to the head of the valley. These old Mustangs have finally found their calling. Suddenly we are *caballeros*! Jose, a real *caballero*, hand-rolls cigarettes at a full canter while the rest of us mostly concentrate on keeping one leg on either side of our horse with our minds in the middle.

When we reach the head of the valley after a two-and-a-half-hour ride, we dismount and Jose stays with the horses that he has tied off under a huge mountain headwall. This is real Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid landscape. We begin on foot up over the terminal moraine and through an unearthly landscape that has been massively reshaped by the grinding glacier. Vast slabs of melting ice have been stranded in front of the receding glacier, and we feel like small specks walking up the valley toward the ice face at the edge of the high corrals of the williwaws. Three Andean condors



Bob Weiler



David Conover (2)

ride the thermals overhead.

When we return to the horses, everyone mounts up for the ride back down the valley. The admiral, who is having a new experience as an equestrian, has been joking nervously about the ride back to the *estancia*. Our senior watch officer takes off in the lead—because he is one with his horse. Jose does not like the challenge and gallops easily past the watch officer and suddenly it is all over—all mounts are instantly at a full gallop, and it's Katy bar the door. Most of us, especially the naturalist, are holding on for dear life. The ride (it took us two and a half hours to get to the head of the glacier) is compressed, and compressed is the operative word. Our return trip takes us less than an hour—one of the wildest single hours in our long lives.

When we finally get back to the *estancia*, it is all several of us can do to dismount and pretend to walk down to the shore, where our captain retrieves us and gently lifts us aboard the dinghy.



Over the Top at Yendegaia

We opt for another day in Yendegaia—not only because it is spectacularly beautiful, but also because for the past week, the lamb hanging on the stern gantry has been curing, and we plan to roast it over an open fire ashore. Our filmmaker observes that our intended lunch is perhaps the only lamb in recent times that has been carefully seasoned in the salt air while rounding Cape Horn.

Our first mate arranges an *asado*—a Chilean word for “cookout”—with Jose, who gestures to a fire pit in front of his woodshed and to trees in the pasture as the place to cut sticks for the spit on which we plan to cook the lamb—just like we saw in a movie once. The admiral has arrived in the meantime with the lamb slung over his back, and we drive the spits into the ground at either end of the fire we’ve built, with everything looking ready to go. Jose, however, takes one look at our efforts, shakes his head



Tom Amory

emphatically, and heads back out to the pasture. Fifteen minutes later he is back with two perfectly sized thin poles perhaps eight feet long, which he quickly de-barks with his razor-sharp *falcone*. The Boy Scouts have met the gaucho and have wordlessly deferred to his superior campcraft.

We have learned that Jose is famous throughout the whole Tierra del Fuego region for his prowess as a hunter. Back in the hills, there are many wild bulls; we have been told by the locals that if they encounter you, “They kill you.” Instead, Jose hunts the bulls and kills them. Jose has been hired by the owner of the *estancia*, Doug Tompkins, who, along with his wife, started the clothing company North Face and then later, Esprit. Tompkins’s intention is to return the 40,000 acres of the *estancia* to its original complement of plants and animals.

After fashioning the new spits, Jose makes a few quick cuts with his knife near the joints of the leg and the shank and deftly pulls the side of lamb onto the skewers, which he places along the sides of the fire without using our spits. During the next several hours of slow cooking, Jose occasionally bastes the side of lamb with a bouquet of fresh herbs, consisting of chives, garlic, oregano, and mint in a water-and-vinegar brew. We have a pot of couscous from the boat, along with potatoes, whole onions, and several heads of garlic that the admiral wraps in foil and places around the edges of the fire. Under the full sun of midday, we hydrate with numerous beers and glasses of fine Malbec wine. Haute cuisine meets cowboy cookery.

At the penultimate moment, Jose places the skewer with an entire side of lamb down in front of us. With a few quick cuts from Jose's knife, there is the largest pile of lamb any of us has ever been served. The first course is completely *mano a mano*. Never did the Mustangs ever dream of such a feast, and the dogs chewed on the bones-oh!



David Comover (2)





Tom Amory

Cruising Through the Andes

During the next five days, filled with many adventures, we sail and steam to the far eastern end of the Beagle Channel—130 miles from its eastern entrance at Puerto Toro—and we eventually round the corner of Isla Darwin, where we are soon bobbing along in the long, high, rolling swells of the Pacific. Then the wind begins to fill in off the starboard beam. We set the main and the yankee, and for the next several hours we are really sailing again for the first time, it seems, since Cape Horn. We marvel at the feel of a wonderful downwind sail without wind and rain lashing our faces.

We enter our last uninhabited anchorage of the cruise as the evening sun quickly descends behind the tall mountains surrounding Estero Penhoat. The anchorage is up against a vertical wall in a small cove that drops off, again almost vertically, into very deep water, making it impossible to anchor. Someone, possibly cruisers, have hung iron rings from the overhanging trees, from which we run lines fore and aft to secure the boat in position. If it hadn't promised to be a fair night with barely a



David Conover

breath of wind, our captain never would have consented to spending the night in such an exposed location.

In view of the fact that this will be our final day, we plan to make a coordinated assault on the snow-covered ridgeline overhead. As the faint light of dawn begins to turn the starlight off star by star, we are all climbing up the mountain to our various destinations.



Philip Conkling

After climbing to about 3,500 feet of elevation, the admiral and senior watch officer come tap-tap-tapping down the rocky slope, feeling for secure footholds with their ski poles, where they meet the naturalist on ascent. In the snowfields high above the anchorage, it is pristine in the crisp mountain air as we begin to traverse a large snowfield, but soon discretion trumps valor as we calculate the risks of effecting a rescue should one of us drop into a crevasse and need to be hauled out with the equipment at hand—a ski pole and a pair of shoelaces.

During this exceptional voyage, we were constantly overwhelmed by the outsized splendor of the region, the tame and wild weather, the seabirds, the numerous mountain ascents, the ride on a gaucho's horses followed by an *asado* of roast lamb, bracing swims, night sails, stargazing, downwind reaches, and adventure beyond our wildest imagining. And laughter, laughter and more laughter to round out this most grand weatherly experience of our lives.

Philip Conkling



David Conover

Philip Conkling is the president of the Island Institute.



ISLAND INSTITUTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2010-2011

The implementation of the Institute's 2010-2013 strategic plan is moving forward to sustain its core programs, including the Island Fellows program, scholarships, *Island Journal*, *The Working Waterfront* newspaper, Archipelago and state and federal policy support for the islands. There are also new goals in the areas of economic development, island schools and education, and support for local leadership.



Island Fellows

Seven second-year Fellows completed their work over the summer, and the three remaining members of the 2009-1010 cohort were joined by eight new faces at the September orientation. Funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Maine Commission for Community Service, this is the largest group in the program's 21-year history. An "extra set of hands" is busy at work on eight island-specific projects and three coast-wide initiatives.

Scholarships

The Island Scholars luncheon in May marked the Maine Island Scholarship program's 20th year of providing financial assistance to students from unbridged island communities. More than \$90,000 in scholarships was awarded to 97 students, bringing the total awarded since 1990 to \$750,000.

Education

A new "Energy for ME" program for middle- and high-school students received initial funding from Time Warner Cable, an additional grant of \$124,000 from the EPA, and is a finalist for a \$1.2 million from the National Science Foundation to increase STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) skills and an interest in STEM careers through activities using smart-meter technology, and exposure to careers in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Another new program, STORMS (Students and Teachers Observing and Recording Meteorological Systems), which received \$132,000 from the NSF, will en-



gage elementary students and teachers in using the tools of digital mapping, digital storytelling and graphical analysis to discuss how climate change will affect their communities.

This fall, all island schools received distance-learning equipment to provide teachers and students with expanded curricular and professional-development opportunities, and a new Senior Island Fellow who will work with five island and coastal schools to develop a shared curriculum and other learning materials.



ISLAND INSTITUTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2010-2011



Sustainable Island Living

The third annual Sustainable Island Living Conference, Island to Island, engaged nearly 100 participants in Rockland over the weekend of November 5-7, featuring discussions, workshops and presentations for sustaining community in the areas of strong schools, leadership, economies and energy resources. Friday evening's keynote speaker was Woody Tasch, founder of Slow Money. On Saturday, experts on each of the four topics, from Maine's island and coastal communities as well as other parts of the country and Canada, led breakout sessions. Field trips to projects in nearby island and coastal communities rounded out the event.



Island Agriculture

Thanks to a grant from the 1772 Foundation, \$10,000 in small grants was provided to island farmers, schools and municipalities in May. A grant from the Partridge Foundation in September has made it possible to provide an Island Foodways Coordinator beginning in January 2011 as a resource to all of the year-round island communities to help increase on-island food production and consumption.

Archipelago

The Institute's retail store and fine arts gallery had an extremely good year, showcasing the works of Brita Holmquist, Herbert Parsons, Ashley Bryan, and a collective of six Monhegan painters. Strong summer sales bucked the economic forecast, and put more profits back in the hands of island and coastal artists.



ISLAND INSTITUTE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2010-2011

Marine Programs

The new Mapping Maine's Working Waters, launched over the summer, is designed to document through Geographic Information Systems technology how the year-round island and working-waterfront communities along the Maine coast use and depend on the marine environment. It will fill a critical data gap in discussions pertaining to marine spatial planning, ocean renewable-energy development, and new fisheries-management approaches.

In collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, the Institute has established a permit bank with a goal of \$1.2 million to purchase groundfish permits for deployment in island and coastal economies as fish stocks rebuild. These permits will be leased to fishermen to support gear research, incentivize the use of more-selective fishing gear, and provide a way for future fishermen to enter the fishery.

Affordable Housing

The Institute led efforts to establish a \$30 million state bond fund through MaineHousing, with \$2 million set aside specifically for island-based affordable-housing and energy-efficiency projects. Eight island communities are in various stages of the process, ranging from exploring the feasibility of applying for funds or approaching completion of projects.



Kate Taylor

North Haven Affordable Housing



Offshore Wind

The University of Maine's DeepCwind project has engaged Institute staff to assist with community outreach efforts, one of which was a one-day conference held on December 14, 2010, at the Hutchinson Center in Belfast, hosted by the Institute and several partnering organizations. This event was designed to help empower coastal stakeholders with the information and tools they need to effectively engage in discussions about offshore wind in Maine. Topics discussed included Maine's new offshore wind goals, critical factors that will impact the development of offshore wind, East Coast experiences with offshore wind siting, concepts and tools for evaluating ocean renewable energy projects, and ways to improve the community outreach and permitting process.

Fox Islands Wind

It's been one year since the largest coastal community-wind project in New England was completed on Vinalhaven, and the project has exceeded its annual power-production goal of 11,600 megawatt-hours. The average annual electric rate on Vinalhaven and North Haven has been reduced by 15 percent through renewable energy generation equaling the BTUs of 7,075 barrels of oil, and with 5,615 tons of carbon dioxide not released into the atmosphere. A "Heating with Wind" initiative is testing electric thermal storage heating units as a way to use excess electricity generated by the turbines to supplement home heating oil, propane, gasoline and diesel fuel.



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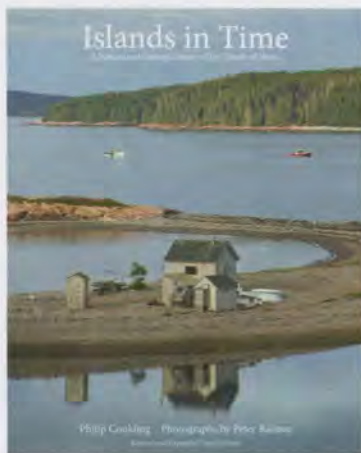


While I was still working as the staff naturalist at Hurricane Island, I was hired by U.S. Forest Service researcher Ray Leonard to help establish a series of long-term research plots in undisturbed forests on Maine islands. Leonard, who worked in the forest service's lab in Durham, New Hampshire, was an avid single-handed sailor. Our research platform was his cutter-rigged double-ended Westsail 32, *SATORI*, which he kept in Little Harbor, Portsmouth. He would often single-hand overnight to Hurricane Island, sometimes, he said, "under double-reefed main and diapers." His envious forestry colleagues in Durham chided him that the real reason he was interested in establishing plots on the Maine islands was to be able to spend time aboard *SATORI*. That might not have been far from the truth. But what's wrong with having fun while you work?

From my earlier island surveys, I had a pretty good idea of where some of the most impressive old-growth stands of trees could be found along the archipelago. At the outset of the research, I knew that mature spruce forests covered perhaps 90 percent of the islands east of Cape Small, and thus, we intended to lay out long-term forest plots in primarily spruce forests.

I told Ray that we might find an old-growth red spruce stand on the remote southern end of Allen Island where I had landed a few years earlier, so we returned there to run a transect. After landing we crested the island's high southern spine, picked our way through wind-thrown tangles of fallen spruce, then crossed huge fern glades, acres in extent, and looked back at our footpaths, which made little wakes in the luminous green sea of waist-high hay-scented ferns. Then we headed down the western slope of the island where we stumbled into a protected ravine and first saw them—a dozen or so mammoth yellow birch trees spread up and down the slope amid scattered old-growth red spruce.

They were the most majestic trees I'd ever seen in my life. Their gnarled trunks were between four and five feet in diameter, supporting enormous drooping boughs with leafy green crowns that grew into the light of spaces where 200-year-old spruce had fallen. Their spreading branches gave them a drip line of some 150 feet in diameter. The whole grove was not more than 10 acres in size; it felt like finding a treasure chest filled with artifacts from a primeval island forest.



Islands in Time
A Natural and Cultural History
of the Islands of Maine

By Philip Conkling
Photographs by Peter Ralston
Island Institute, 344 pages
Hardcover, \$39.99
Softcover, \$29.99

DEDICATION



Matt Simmons 1943–2010

We dedicate this volume of Island Journal in memory of longtime Island Institute friend and trustee, Matt Simmons. Matt loved the Maine coast and islands, where he spent every spare moment he could with his beloved wife Ellen and their five daughters. Over the years, the Simmons family has provided generous college scholarships to many island students.

*When not in Maine, Matt traveled around the world delivering presentations to heads of state and energy industry leaders on the stark energy choices he believed the world currently faces. His book, *Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy* is widely regarded as the defining word on the subject.*

After retiring from his energy investment company, Matt became a tireless advocate for developing alternative energy sources, including here in Maine. He founded the Ocean Energy Institute, now part of the University of Maine, and helped convince Maine's governor to appoint an ocean energy task force to help Maine make a transition into a new and cleaner energy future based on offshore wind.

His loss leaves a hole in the heart of the Midcoast, large as the ocean.



Farmhouse From The Beach, ca. 1948 Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY, Gift of the Estate of Fairfield Porter

Today

The bay today breaks
in ripples of applause.
The wind whistles.
Spruce and bright-leaved birch
at the edge
are flat yet plump
as letters with "see enclosures."
A gull mews, the mailboat toots,
the wind rises and pours with a noise like water
and spills black jazz
from spiked brown seed cups of red columbine.
The wind takes with it
a wrack of voices: "the who?"
and unintelligible shapes of phrases
or one scrape: hickory on cement.
Across the bay today
a white house smaller than a thumbnail moon
shines like the light

it shows at night, a star
or sun of kerosene.
The barn swallows from the eaves
are up to something, maybe
showing their fledglings how to do it, scything
an insect harvest from the air.
Round and brown as rabbit droppings,
seed pods of blue-eyed grass
bobble and split along the seams:
so big for so small a flower.
A sailboat scuds,
a poplar tugs at roots
in soil a scurf on rock.
Everything chuckles and creaks
sighs in satisfaction
reddens and ripens in tough gusts of coolness
and the sun smites.

—James Schuyler

Selected Poems, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1989
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ISBN 978-0-9835613-2-3



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