



Notes from the Chairman

Ariana Fischer

The new board convened for the first time at their annual retreat in mid-October on Roque. It was a very productive and upbeat meeting. We have two new trustees, and a diverse team of Trustee Observers. We are honored to follow in the footsteps of four dedicated retiring trustees: Randy Goodhue, Randy Mikes, Molly Cutler, and Alicia Monks.

Many thanks to our staff for another successful season – their commitment and hard work are greatly appreciated! There is much work done by many hands to make such an extraordinary place function....a lot of it unseen by us. I was lucky to attend the second annual community party that the staff held for all of the vendors and work people on the mainland. It was a great event – much chatting, delicious food, and good cheer – appreciation felt by all.

In regard to finances, we are happy to report that everything is in line to date - expenses and the state of the endowment – and we expect to have half of the capital campaign monies in hand by January 2017. Much work continues to be done in improving our tax status: (1) our appeals to the town of Jonesport are now going to the Supreme Court of Maine, (2) we have placed much of Roque in Farmland status and are endeavoring to do the same with those islands that are attached to Roque at the State Board of Appeals, and (3) we are receiving a significant tax credit for having placed Little Spruce, Anguilla, and Double Shot in a conservation easement with EMCI. Many thanks to John Higgins for championing our tax status on so many levels.

The Board is engaged and excited to be in a process of fully reviewing the Island and its operations: infrastructure, farm, membership, waterfront, community relations, etc. We are working closely with our staff, utilizing family expertise along with professionals to gain the most accurate understanding of the state of our infrastructure. We have reappointed all the committees, focusing on their

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ad hoc nature [ad hoc (adj.): formed, arranged, or done for a particular purpose only]. Our intention is to understand the state of the island and strategize for the upcoming years. It is certainly not a science and much input is required.

The Building Committee is assessing all the structures and developing a schedule of repairs and maintenance, needed capital improvements, and designing an annual and multi-year program so as to avoid the expensive path of deferred maintenance. They are also working on architectural/building standards so that each building utilizes appropriate and durable materials and that the infrastructure has consistency.

A new Marine Committee has been tasked with “all things waterfront”. The immediate things that have come to light are maintenance on the Bluffs dock, structural assessment of the Shorey Cove pier, significant work for the Peabody, and the possibility of acquiring a second vessel. The Peabody has been slated for many years to have cosmetic and structural repairs done. We have been told that she remains an excellent boat at 25 years of age, and will give us another 25 if properly maintained. This, of course, requires several weeks of work on land, so we are looking into a second vessel – for hire or for purchase. We sold our second boat, the Buzzard, this last spring as she was not big or seaworthy enough to meet the island’s needs. The MC is looking into the acquisition of an appropriate second vessel.

As you know, we hired the Maine Farmland Trust to review our farm operation this last year. Their recommended consultant, Jed Beach, came to the island and gave a presentation of their findings to the trustees (more on this on page 6 of this issue and the complete report is available online at www.roqueisland.com). It was mostly a detailed analysis of direct expenses and labor so that we could have a sense of the cost centers of the farm. Highlights were: a pound of butter costs \$67 (worth every penny!); our horse program needs bolstering or retirement; in order to be more efficient we should increase production in certain areas and be less diversified; and finally that the staff needs to help drive the program. For the upcoming year, we are making modest changes: retiring the existing horses and pausing on expanding the riding program until we know if we have the constituency to fully support it; focusing the garden so that it is less labor intensive; and researching areas where we might increase production (e.g. lamb meat for sale on the mainland). As the farm remains even more instrumental for the future of the island, we will continue to analyze it and the various programs that need to be scaled down or enhanced.

There is a lot of activity and attention being paid to Community Relations – within in our own and outside with the larger community. The web site has been completely redone and is much more interactive (thanks to the tireless work of John Patrick Higgins!). It also features a ‘face page’ that is accessible to the public that gives a brief history of the island and our philosophy. This committee will continue to work on family communication as well as develop programs and further relationships with key people and organizations on the mainland. In this regard, we owe much gratitude to George Herrick for his tireless efforts in allying Roque with members of our community, locally and at large. Indeed, this past June, George, joined by John Higgins, gave a lecture to the Jonesport Historical Society – standing room only!

Per the request of the membership at the Annual Meeting in May, the Trustees discussed our process for Nominations and Elections and have asked that committee to review the system in anticipation of the next election in 2019.

We have a great team - the new board and vibrant committees working diligently together. As always, we encourage all of you to get involved and contact us if you should have any questions or input. I would also like to acknowledge the premature loss of a lovely man, family member, and newly elected trustee, Milo Ryan. He will be greatly missed.

I wish you all great health + happiness,

Vive la Roque!



Dear Family,

It is my great honor to announce the implementation of the new Roque Island website!

www.roqueisland.com

The address is the same, but you'll notice straight off the bat that things look very different. First off, there is a new introductory page with our new "public" face for Roque Island. Essentially, it will act as our controlled catch-all with basic information about our role in education and science.

For the actual Family part of the website, in the upper-right corner you'll see a new button called "Member Login".

Click it and type in the password, which has remained the same.

This will take you to the actual website. Bookmark this page, and you won't need to enter a password again, which will make things simpler.

However, we decided that it would be wise to protect some of the more sensitive information about the island, so we will not be posting it on this part of the website. We are looking into creating a more secure layer on the site in the future for posting things pertaining to financial and legal matters. In the meantime any such documents are available to family members on request.

We've spent a lot of time and effort trying to create a site for the family that really meets our needs and helps bring all of this information together in an easy-to-use manner. But do contact me with questions, suggestions, additions, etc.

My thanks go to the web-site committee for their advice; also a very special thanks to Heather Monks and John Higgins (my dad) for their contributions of photos.

John Pat M. Higgins (web master & designer)
jhiggins@mac.com



John Pat Higgins demonstrating the web-site at the Trustees' meeting on the island

Photo by Heather Monks



A Word from Our Manager

It is my hope that all of you who made it to Roque this year had a wonderful time, enjoyed the beauty of the island and were able to leave the other world behind for a bit while experiencing what Roque is really about. I want to thank the resident staff, our seasonal farm staff and our other seasonal workers for their dedication to the island, their hard work and their understanding of what it takes to care for the family, their guests and this special property.

The farm was again the center of activities for the younger crowd with many horse and pony rides, egg gathering, mucking out of stalls and helping in the garden. We should start our own branch of "Future Farmers of America". Even though 2016 was a very dry year our fresh water supply held up nicely and we were able to water the garden on a regular basis. The garden was again a piece of art that provided many meals for the family and staff.

On Sunday September 25th the staff put on a gathering for some of the people and their families that assist the island in some way over the year along with a group from the Jonesport Historical society. With the family members on the island we had a little over 100 people participate including the staff. A roasted pig, 3 grills cooking burgers and hotdogs, a Roque turkey for sandwiches, many side dishes and a keg of beer made for a great day.

With the winter fast approaching we are in the process of getting all aspects of the island ready for the much colder time of year. The garden is being put to bed, the Polly and the Sandpeep have been winterized and shrink wrapped, the smaller moorings are being brought in, the ramp and float at Shorey Cove are out of the water, the Red House has been winterized with the Gardner House will be done shortly, along with the Roque Bluffs property, all the small equipment and vehicles have been winterized and many other winter prep projects are taking place.

There is a good bit of needed work planned for the Peabody to bring her back to her glory days. Most of the work needed is above the waterline. In order for this to happen we are looking to lease another vessel for about 6 weeks or to purchase a 2nd island work vessel that would be economical to maintain and operate.

The new web site is very professional and will allow easy updates from the staff once we get a handle on it. We hope to keep you informed of island activities on a regular basis.

Best,
Bruce

Flotsam

Births

Henry Dana Ridall to Isabella D. and Andrew H. Ridall on December 1, 2015.

Graham Cutler Goodhue to Sam and Jennifer Goodhue on 19 May, 2016

Maitland Lilly Alexander to Ben Alexander and Carly Cope on 24 July, 2016

Deaths

Olga Kimball October 3, 1937- 25 June 2016

Real Flotsam!

The message in a bottle found on Great Beach by Bobby Cutler and Stephanie Mongan (verbatim):

Dear Gardener Family,

Thank you for sharing all your kindness to every boat that passes through these parts.

Enjoy!



In Memoriam

Milo Ryan January 10, 1973 - May 13, 2016

is that you brushing the green field below
is that you in the phoebe song telling us spring is here

i feel you in the sunlight on my back;
in the warmth of the limestone beneath my belly

i imagine you floating by, watching, surprised, by how much you are already missed;
surprised you were not, it turns out, invincible

is that you in the wet wind whipping down the coastline
is that you in the unseasonable frost, seeping down where my vulnerable seeds try to take root

i feel you lurking in the empty cabinets;
in the belly of regret

i imagine you caught between love and hate, between life and death;
they are one, you read, 'like the river and the sea'

is that you raising my goosebumps
is that you sizzling in my cast iron pan

i feel you in the swoosh of the rising swing, momentarily blinded by the branch-crowned light;
in the transitional moments of the tide pushing and pulling into patten's cove

i imagine you next to each who aches in your absence, reminding us that we are special for knowing you, loving you,
finally able to hold us, unabashedly, soothing us with your sweet talk, as we let you go

is that you in the salty warm smell of blanket ship cove and burning cob pipes
is that you in the songs of the peepers or the glance for an open player on the field

i feel you in the stroke of my hand on my son's head, in the supple sweet suction of my daughter's kiss;
in the in breath of my laugh and the cracking open of an uncannily handsome smile

i imagine you now, as bright as that smile, as expansive as that competitive spirit, as wise as that kind soul,
laying your backpack down, as you drop to your knees, atop that grand mountain

there you are, above and below; behind and in front;
there you are, all around me

This poem by Milo's first cousin, Georgia Goodhue Reath, was read at his memorial service.



Report

The Maine Farmland Trust Survey

Roo Reath, Chairman of the Farm Committee

Undisputed is the fact that the farm is central to the Roque experience. It is the physical plant and landscape that greets us as we pass Great Head on our approach to the island. It is the butter and bacon that fills our bellies as we begin our Roque days, plan our next adventures or recap those from days past. The Farm exists to both nourish us physically as well as serve as an anchor for some of our most cherished memories and photographs. However, the Farm is at the root of some of the most challenging questions that face the board of trustees and staff as we work to manage the finances of this unique family island. Perennial questions on our agenda: What is the true “cost” of the farm? And: How does the experiential value compare to the financial cost?

Following the 2015 October trustees’ weekend, the RIGHC farm committee and board of trustees established a working relationship with the Maine Farmland Trust (MFT). You may remember that John Piotti, then the director there, was on our advisory committee and came to give a presentation at the RIGHC annual meeting in May 2015. On MFT’s recommendation Jed Beach was appointed as a consultant and commissioned to do a complete survey and inventory of the farm, its activities and produce. Its purpose was to obtain an objective and professional perspective on both what we expect from the farm and how we finance the operation. He worked on this over the course of a year, meeting with the staff and the farm committee on numerous occasions, reviewing all the records in detail; he had several onsite visits as well. All of this required extra work from the staff, who cooperated and contributed very positively, and learned a lot in the process. It really was a team effort.

The first part of the MFT engagement entailed a family survey. We had 54 respondents, thus providing us with a solid data base on our view and desires of/from the farm – the experiential value of the farm, if you will.

The second stage of our work with MFT was to establish the costs of the farm. While not surprising, the analysis shows that the diversity of livestock and product made available by the farm comes at a significant cost. What did we learn? 59% of the farm expenses can be attributed to labor. But the main reason for that high cost is a question of scale, not efficiency: if you are milking 20 cows, it takes less time per cow, than if you are milking one. It is important to remember that the Roque farm is not set up as a commercial farm and it will likely never be a profit center. However, in our role as stewards of the island, it is imperative that we be objective and think how best to manage and prioritize the farm operations. Following this recent October trustees’ meeting, we established that future decisions the farm will not be solely based on what has existed in the past, but rather decisions will be made based on the following factors:

- Does it fit within the Farm’s budget?
- Does it fit within the context of the RIGHC Long Range Plan?
- Does it fit with the desires and direction of the membership?

The work of MFT and Farm Committee will remain a work in progress as we look towards the future of the farm on the island. We will continue with the enterprise budgeting advice received from MFT, and have committed to a more commercial view of the farm. We do not intend to impart vast change to the farm, but we do expect to be thoughtful, realistic, and direct about what the farm can support based on our defined market and purpose. We have asked for additional leadership and involvement from both Bruce and Stephanie as we look to evaluate the highest growth potential and cost areas.



The Maine Farmland Trust Survey, cont'd.

The complete Farm Survey and MFT report have been posted on the website and we urge all to review them: the details are fascinating and often unexpected. If you would prefer a paper copy, please get in touch with me at rooreath@yahoo.com. We understand how important the farm is to the island and to the island experience. We welcome any and all thoughts or ideas. Please send them to me at and I will be sure to circulate with the rest of the team.

Roque Island Holiday Decorations

Bring a bit of Roque to your home this season! All of the items used in these products are gathered from Roque Island and the surrounding area. Proceeds of your purchase go directly to supporting the island and supporting a local cottage industry. Happy Holidays!



WREATH \$75
22" round

CENTERPIECE \$80
18x18x6 with one votive candle

• Order by e-mailing Katie Watts: foaom@myfairpoint.net
(Katie Watts of Roque Bluffs)

• Shipping is included. • You will be billed by RIGHC directly. • First ship date of the season is November 17th.



Barnyard Buzz

By Stephanie Gardner

Phew, with the north wind at my back, I am running around putting things away and the garden to bed... It is nice to sit and reflect on the success of the garden and animals, despite the incredibly dry and hot summer season. We are all hoping for as mild a winter as we had last year.

The gates have come down and all the animals are roaming the island. Although I must admit, they never are very far from the barnyard. The sheep have been wormed, their hooves have been trimmed and they are eagerly awaiting November when the rams will be set free! The horses are outnumbered by the cows this year and have decided to give more respect than in the past. Our new calf Ella, born on Roque in April, is becoming quite “people” friendly and enjoys daily “scratches” when she isn’t busy shoeing the horses away from HER hay. The chickens are beginning to molt and missing the daily “lobster shell” treats. Though the cold is settling in we are still enjoying the fruits of labor from the garden. Peas are plentiful and the spinach is greener than ever. The walk-in is bursting at the seams with onions, carrots, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and winter squash. Sadly we will miss the variety of potatoes we had last winter, as our harvest this season was severely affected by the drought. Garlic has been planted, strawberries mulched, the many glorious sunflowers pulled and the beautiful design that was so warmly and kindly complimented all season has been taken down. Who knows what whimsical things we can create next year; I’ve got all winter to dream up ideas.

With fall comes a change of landscape and the farm is no different. Our season ended this year with sad goodbyes to both Farm Assistants Kat and Erica. I am so happy they found Roque Island and dedicated two seasons; their work ethic was mighty and spirits bright. Both young ladies truly love the island, family and the inner workings of the farm. They will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.

Before I head out to do chores for the evening, I’d like to talk about the information gathered over the season by Maine Farmland Trust. It is well known that the Farm Committee, Board members and I have been fortunate to have a relationship with Maine Farmland Trust this summer. They have helped us gather information about the farm, what your priorities are and over all how much the farm is costing. The numbers are in! I don’t think it will come as a shock to anyone that running an island farm to accommodate an ever growing family and their guests is expensive.

After reviewing all this information, I have been asked by the Farm Committee and the Board to be involved in discussions regarding the future of the farm going forward. I am honored to have a place at the table in these discussions and will help in whatever way I can. No matter what cuts will be made, decisions will be hard but I would like you to know that I empathize with the challenges you are facing. I may not be a member of the family but this farm, meeting your needs and delivering the wonderful Roque experience you all love, is my life. It brings me great joy. So these coming decisions, I don’t take them lightly; they are personal for me as well. This island, this farm are a legacy. I intend to do my best to keep it as one you can be proud of and enjoy for years to come.



The new meat locker. Notice all the turkeys on the top shelf: not too late to order for the holidays!



Squire's Point

On Remoteness by George Herrick

Some notes from John R. Gilis' *Islands of the Mind* (2004) help us to appreciate that feeling of remoteness we associate with Roque Island. (Gilis, himself, is a product of Gott's Island, off Mount Desert.)

The value of remoteness increases even as modern communications make all parts of the world more accessible.

Remoteness is not a matter of physical distance. It is in the eye of the beholder. Remote places may be near but not within an easy commute.

Remoteness is the product of social processes, of autobiography and history, of economics and politics as well as sociology. It is culturally constituted and maintained.

Travel to the remote is invariably ritualized, a series of passages, each stretching the sense of temporal and spatial distance. Getting there must be something of an adventure, a test, amounting to a trial, transporting the traveler mentally as well as physically to a different world. That feeling is enhanced when there are several different modes of transportation. The more starts and stops, the remoter the destination feels.

The rites of passage involved in our constructions of remoteness...are passed on, like an old family recipe, from generation to generation, and become a product of history rather than geography.

"Islands have become the contemporary world's favorite location for remoteness, not because they are distant but because they necessitate the spatial practices that create a sense of remoteness." The creation of remoteness is rarely the product of a one-time journey, but is usually constructed over a number of years.

The remote must be one step technologically; communications must not be too easy. Instant communication is considered a threat to solitude.

"Contemporary remoteness is as much associated with a sense of pastness as with physical distance. It has that quality of being there rather than here. But also of being then rather than now."

The Naturalist's Column

Photos by Norm Famous



*This lichen belongs to the group known as *Cladonia chlorophaea* agg. called in English Pixie cups.*



Downeast Dispatch

Yankee Ingenuity in Marshfield, ME

By Nina Herrick

In the late 1990's, Stephen Cook saw some brands of sea salt that came from the Mediterranean, which got him to thinking... His family had run Cook's Restaurant and Pound on Bailey Island since the 1950's where their specialty was lobster cooked in seawater. Stephen's initial thought was to provide a packet of real Maine sea salt to sell for cooking lobster specifically – a way to recreate Maine's sea water in the kitchen. A lot of research went into developing the product for those initial 1 oz. packets.

He and his wife, Sharon, investigated the various methods then practiced, and came up with their own – which is dependent on solar energy, as most of the others are too; but since their operation is in more northerly latitudes than is customary, they thought to use green houses.

The operation started out small on Bailey's Island. In 2006, they moved to Marshfield, where they have built 4 plastic "hoop houses" in their back yard, 15 feet wide by 200 feet long. The floor of each is lined with (FDA approved) black plastic. Stephen told me that the plastic for the structures has to be replaced every 5 years. The process works like this: he sends a tanker truck to the public access boat ramp in Buck's Harbor, which loads up. That water is then filtered and poured into the first house, where it goes through the preliminary evaporation. No other heat is used except that from the sun: the heat within the house can reach 140 degrees. But the season is short – April to October. When the slurry reaches a level of 70%

salinity, that water is then transferred to a "finishing house", where the salt will actually crystallize. This is scraped up; drained and dried further before being taken into their garage, where the second part of the operation is set up. The salt is ground with a cuisinart (just like the one in your kitchen), sifted for different size grains, bottled, packaged and sent all over the country to health food stores, and specialty stores – such as Stonewall Kitchen, which has carried the product but under its own label. There are four people working this operation and they are now producing 30,000 lbs a year. It has become very popular as the salt is never washed nor heated, other than by the sun, and therefore contains all its original 90 trace minerals which give it a special flavor as well as providing health benefits.



The "finishing" hoop house

Look for it in your neighborhood specialty stores: Maine Sea Salt it is called, made right around the corner from Roque Island!

We want your articles and photographs!

To submit an article or photograph for the next Thoroughfare, please contact the editor, Nina Herrick.

Email: ninaherrick@gmail.com Telephone 202 986-7545 Cell 202 255-5974

Henceforth we will be publishing online. Let her know if you would prefer a paper copy.



From the Kitchen Cupboard

Beet Soup in Roasted Acorn Squash by Zana Brooke

This recipe uses up multiple ingredients from our garden that have a long shelf-life. It is a real treat to have some fresh veggies to get us through the cold winter months. This soup will warm your body and your soul.

Ingredients:

For roasted squash

8 (1- to 1 1/4-pound) acorn squash

3 Tbls vegetable oil

1 Tbls kosher salt

For soup

1 large red onion, chopped

1 1/2 Tbls vegetable oil

5 medium beets (2 pounds without greens), peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces

1 red apple such as Gala or Braeburn, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces

2 garlic cloves, minced

4 C chicken or vegetable broth

4 to 5 C water

2 Tbls cider vinegar

1 Tbls packed light brown sugar

Preparation:

Roast squash:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Slice off the "tops" of each squash (about 1 inch from stem end) and reserve. Scoop out seeds and feed to the chickens.

Cut a very thin slice off bottoms of squash to create a stable base. Brush "bowls" and tops all over with oil and sprinkle salt inside. Arrange squash bowls, with tops alongside, stem ends up, in 2 large shallow baking pans.

Roast squash in upper and lower thirds of oven, switching position of pans halfway through baking, until flesh of squash is just tender, about an hour to hour and a quarter total.

Make soup while squash is roasting:

Sauté onion with pinch of salt in oil in a 5-quart heavy saucepan over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until soft. Add beets and apple to the pan, stirring occasionally. After about 5 mins. add garlic and cook, stirring, 30 more seconds.

Add broth and 4 C water bring to a simmer. Cook uncovered, until beets are tender, about 40 minutes. Stir in vinegar and brown sugar.

Purée soup in a blender until very smooth, at least 1 minute per batch (use caution when blending hot liquids), transferring to a large bowl. Return soup to pan, and reheat. If soup is too thick, add broth to thin to desired consistency. Taste, season and adjust.

Serve soup in squash bowls.

Squash flesh shrinks a bit during baking so if a small hole forms, serve soup in squash but set in a soup bowl.

Soup can be made 3 days ahead, just cover and keep refrigerated.



The squash bowls



Photo Gallery



Birdwatchers on the new porch. Photo by Molly Cutler.



Shorey Cove. Photo by Dino Pertzoff.



Eagles feeding - caught on the "stealth camera".



Jay pressing cider while Ella looks on.



Fall colors. Photo by John Pat Higgins.