

Notes from the Chairman

Ariana Fischer

Dear Family,

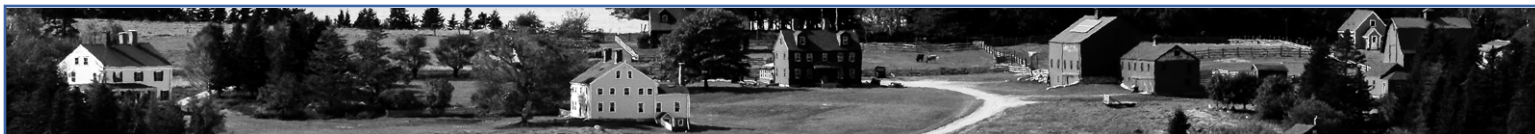
Spring has sprung reluctantly at the island - the weather is certainly not cooperating (just 49 degrees this morning!). The staff are busy with a variety of projects, most notably a major re-do of the lower cistern. The Peabody is back (work not complete but looking much better) and work on the main barn and Red House is slated for the fall. Bruce and Stephanie’s articles are terrific and give more details.

I have spent a lot of time thinking about the island recently and talking to a variety of members... What has become so clear to me is how valuable the people are and how they make our operation and family organization run. From our year round, long term staff to the inquisitive and hard working interns. From our elders to the children running through the farmyard doing chores, from our cousins with particular talents to share to our cousins who volunteer for the sheer love and appreciation of the Island, from the spouses who support us and put their own oars in the water. And from the support of all those who may be quiet and not directly involved but share the great connection to Roque and are there for moral and/or financial support at any given moment. We are a lucky family to have survived (and thrived) for over two hundred years and this is due the people we have had amongst us.

In modern Roque times, if-you-will, it appears that about every 25 years or so there is a distinct moment of reflection that brings about change (or an adjustment) that carries us for another generation or two. It appears we may at this very time now. There is so much review and research that is being done by the board and volunteers - our operating model, by-laws, elections, budgeting, investment strategy, modes of communication, etc. . It is a terrific time to get involved or just even put your two cents in. Always know that your input is important to the Trustees making decisions for the future. I encourage you always to share your thoughts!

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A major area that we are currently focusing upon is the Farm and Homestead operations of the Island. Is the Farm there to serve us or is the Farm the basis of Roque and the land, and we are there as witnesses, enjoying its bounty? This is a model worth exploring as it may have a significant impact on the operating budget. With feedback from the Maine Farmland Trust, we are also looking at the best “crops” for our land and locale. The possibility of increasing our sheep herd and selling lamb stands out most at this point.

As daunting as it may be to think about things differently, it is also exciting, and our survival depends upon it. With a chuckle and shake of my head, I am continually reminded as things change they do not really change very much. If we increase our sheep herd, at the turn of the 20th century there were over 300 sheep being farmed on the Island by the tenant farmer/manager, Herbert Long. As we contest the prejudicial increase in our taxes, Long was doing the very same in 1890's. In 1946, my grandfather, Constantin Pertzoff, wrote a letter to Cousin Peabo about his great concern for the never-ending problem of a wet basement in the Red House!

Cheers to you all as we soldier on.... Looking under every rock and in every cranny, if only to arrive back where we started (maybe 100 years ago!). It was our alternative energy advisor, Hilton Dyer, who said “old is new!”

My very best to you all,
Ari

A Word from Our Manager

Bruce Patterson

The grass has turned green, some items are being harvested from the garden, the greenhouse is packed, the houses have people inside and out, the boats are sitting on their moorings, boat trips are being made daily, so I guess the 2017 Roque Holiday season has started.

Selena and I have had the privilege over the years of watching some of the younger generation on Roque as children and then watching them arrive for the first time as full members without adult supervision. The first arrival for the season was a new full member and it was great watching her share the island with her good friends. It is obvious that Roque will be loved and cherished for many generations to come.

The *Peabody* is looking good after much structural and some cosmetic work. Matthew is striving to keep her clean and in good shape. New shingles were put on the Mansion House and the Gardner House by a local contractor who did excellent work.

John Higgins and crew are presently on Island clearing trials from many blow downs. Much appreciated by all.

The year round staff is the same as last year. This season we have Katerina who is the farm assistant, Robby doing many odd jobs, Nate and Laurel as interns and great workers, Jutta helping out in the houses and we may have Ashley back for a couple of months starting around mid June. A great group of hard working and fun to be around people.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone that is visiting the Island this season. If anyone has any questions about your upcoming visit please let me know.

Flotsam

Betsy Mikes writes with good news: her daughter, Macauley, graduated Magna Cum Laude from Gettysburg College. A week later she and the Gettysburg Women's Lacrosse team won the NCAA Division III National Championship! Macauley was a 4 year starting Defender for the Bullets.

Marco Herrick Kearns recently travelled with his parents to Northern California from Hong Kong to celebrate his first birthday and his christening. His two grandmothers, two aunts, two uncles and three cousins were in attendance.



Barnyard Buzz

By Stephanie Gardner

This morning's fog has burned off to reveal a beautiful June day. The lilacs are almost fully open and the apple trees are bursting with blossoms. The barnyard is abuzz with the usual spring babes and the garden is coming to life. We had our first major harvest of greens by mid-May which is a first for me on Roque. Sixteen lambs are providing great entertainment for all, with their running and leaping around the farm. The first round of meat birds are almost ready to be processed and piglets have just arrived.

Mika'ela Pertzoff, daughter of Dino and Tanya, has been volunteering on the island since the early part of May. I am always excited to support any family wanting to learn about the "behind the scene" operation of the farm. Encouraging Roque Island hands on participation, not only assists in the day to day activities, but often leads to long-term involvement. During a recent visit, Cosi Gregg, daughter of Ariana Fischer, spent many hours participating in all aspects of the farm – from weeding to cleaning barns to exercising horses. During the same week, Zach and Nina Herrick, children of Jason Herrick and Lindsay Smith, added their skills to chore time and carpentry. Not to forget Laughlin Alexander, son of Benjamin and Carly, who assisted with lamb bottle feedings. I appreciate seeing the future leaders of Roque Island in their early days of active participation. How amazing to see all generations with such a passion for the Roque Island Farm.

Our seasonal staff has arrived!! Nate and Laurel Gustafson traveled to Roque from Minnesota. Visiting as many breweries and donut shops as possible during their travels. These two are providing many hours of entertaining stories and laughter. Katerina Graham has found her way to Roque from East Machias. She is a University of Maine student, majoring in education and is excited to learn all aspects of farming. She brings her own great stories and laughter to the table.

As always, we look forward to a great season and to welcoming everyone back to the island.

New lambs in the Barnyard



Englishman Bay Trading Company

Alicia Monks

This year our Romney mix sheep produced 126 pounds of wool. Some of the wool was made into wool comforters and some is off to the weavers to be made into blankets. Goods made from last year's wool are available in the on island store as well as online. Blankets, scarves, hats and more all made from Roque wool are available for you and your guests to purchase. I encourage you to share the website with anyone you believe would be interested in locally made artisan quality woolen goods. All proceeds are returned to the island.

englishmanbaytradingco.com



Reflections

Mikaela Pertzoff

This is an account from a young Pertzoff who decided to venture into a whole new world for a few weeks this spring to have a first hand look from behind the scenes at the adventure that is Roque Island. I am not just talking about having a holiday, but of long and hard work days – very different from my usual visits when the only heavy decision making one endures is deciding whether or not to nap on the porch swing or in the living room by the fire. For 20 years this was my understanding of Roque Island. I am sure anyone would agree when I say that Roque is one of the most amazing places on earth but it was not until this past month that my eyes were opened and my appreciation deepened.

Just to give a bit of insight, I will run through the basic outline of a day on the island. Chores typically begin around 5:30 in the morning. The workers labor until 7:00 when breakfast is served and they can relax until 8:00 (even though most of them get right back to what they were doing). Then everyone splits off and attends to their areas of specialty or basically anywhere the island needs attention. They work continuously until 12:00 when the lunch break begins (and I will add, with a very delicious lunch!). Again, though they have a whole hour to relax, the staff will quickly resume their hard work for the remainder of the day until around 5:00. The farmers will farm, the boat men will boat, and the sheep will keep doing what sheep do. Each person has his job which is executed with precision and determination. Such is life on the farm.

Although it takes just a few short sentences to outline the work day, it hardly describes what it is really like to be in the field... literally. I could run through and explain what muscle straining activity we did for nine hours (i.e. shoveling A LOT of manure, herding sheep and cows, and getting attacked by chickens). Instead, however, I would like to make this account a little more personal. Working here on the farm made me feel cleaner than I ever have before, even though I was constantly covered in dirt, manure, and cow saliva. Describing this experience as clean is a little odd but I am

not sure how else to describe the feeling of having all of my insecurities and worries wiped away so effortlessly. With each task I accomplished, my desire to keep working, keep doing and moving forward, grew. It blossomed into not only caring for the farm and the animals, but also into caring for myself and the people around me. It sparked a stronger sense of ambition in me, which I hope will always remain. The feeling of denying your own wants moment by moment for the greater good of what's around you can only be described as necessary. It is necessary to learn the discipline of not always giving into what you want. It is necessary to push yourself to work in the garden even though the sun is beating down and you have a wicked farmers' tan, because you know

how important it is that these plants grow. It is necessary to feel the gratification of knowing that you did a good job that day; And it is necessary to know the appropriate time to grab a cocktail and kick back on the porch. I can truly say that my appreciation for the island has grown so much deeper now that I know how much work it takes to sustain it. But I feel even more than that, and that is a true and deep appreciation for the people with whom I worked and interacted. Each person, with his beautiful and amazing stories, attacking each task with such driven passion is enough to make you take a step back and recognize the splendor that is life.

I came here with the intention of understanding how the island operated and to help benefit the island in any way I could. Instead, I had the honor of observing these amazing people and

developing unique relationships with each of them. Every single person here, whether through word or action, has taught me something that I know will resonate with me forever. These are life lessons that I wish to live out and teach my loved ones and my children: what it means to work hard, what it means to fail, what it means to take pride, what it means to sacrifice, and to dedicate, and to care for and love... what it means to be human. All in all, I have had the privilege of being a part of something real. This is what it has meant to me to work on the island.





Report from the Archivists

Casey Riley

On May 18th, Shana McKenna and I had the pleasure of traveling once again to the lovely shores of Roque Island. As the archivist at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and as a consulting curator for exhibitions at the museum, we were delighted to accept the family's invitation to review the collection of historic photographs, scrapbooks, manuscripts, and other materials housed on the island. During our initial visit to the island last summer, we both recognized the historical importance of the family's island archive: it comprises a compelling visual record of the extended family's activities, at home and abroad, from the middle of the 19th century into the first decades of the 20th century. The faces and voices captured throughout the cabinet cards and photograph albums within the collection bring an immediacy and vivacity to the family's history; these same figures were instrumental to the formation of a number of institutions, rendering the collection a critical record of the private lives of important public figures. Shana and I were therefore eager to use our training--as an archivist and as a historian, respectively--to support the family's beginning efforts to catalog, preserve, and interpret these precious objects.

Throughout our three-day stay on the island, we were glad to work side by side with Rebecca Gardner Campbell, Ellen Higgins, John Higgins, and others to survey the objects in the island archive and to produce a Word document as an overview of our activities. Because of the number and variety of objects within the island archive, and in light of our time constraints, we sorted objects into groups or types and, when possible, described or named the people, places, and things depicted within those groups. We also performed a preliminary assessment of the condition of all of the objects and noted objects for conservation treatment. We hope in the future to work with the family to produce an itemized inventory of the island archive, to help to rehouse and store the objects for preservation, and to help family members to consider ways of displaying these materials through digital or physical exhibitions.

It is a privilege to work with such a fascinating collection and to share in the family's time on the island--a precious thing in and of itself! Shana and I are grateful to the family members who hosted us so graciously. The experience of Roque is unlike any other, and we are so very happy to have shared in everyone's time there, as colleagues and as friends.

From Ellen Berger

Dear family,

We had the pleasure of hosting two consultants from the Isabella Stewart Gardner museum over the weekend of May 20th. They made significant progress in the surveying, sorting and undertaking of basic surface cleaning for improved preservation of a large selection of our artifacts (including, photos, daguerreotypes, letters, scrap books, etc.), along with providing us with proper storage containers and materials. This effort was in preparation for the next steps of inventorying, cataloguing and historicizing those materials. It was a very successful outcome given the limited time in which we had the consultants on the island!

There is still more work to do, however, and they have offered to come back in late October to continue to guide and support us in our efforts. That said, the artifacts have been organized and stored in drawers and on shelves inside the two armoires in the living room of the Mansion House. Wherever artifacts are stored that have been surveyed and sorted, there are basic flyers indicating that a survey is in progress. Family may look at the artifacts, but we ask that anything removed from those storage spaces be put back exactly as found. This will enable us to seamlessly pick up where we left off in October and maximize the time of the consultants while we have them on the island.

As we continue this effort, we also have a view to future digitization, preservation and displaying of our artifacts. For anyone interested in discussing further or with ideas, please feel free to reach out to John (Sr.), Becca or myself.

Thank you,
Ellen Berger



From the Kitchen Cupboard

Strawberry Rhubarb Crumble with Cinnamon Vanilla Ice Cream

Zana Brooke

This recipe comes with an anecdote from the farm house. Katerina (farm intern) is very excited to be getting more experience in the garden. She shared with us that, every time she walks by the rhubarb she thinks about what she could make with it. Growing up in Maine, she had never cooked with rhubarb, but she loves to eat it! So just a few nights ago after all the evening farm chores were done, she asked to use the kitchen. About an hour later we had a warm crumble for dessert with another in the walk-in to be served after lunch the following day! Even though it's not as good as ice cream from fresh Emma cream, I did make this cinnamon version of the classic vanilla and it was such a nice complement to Katerina's creation. We hope y'all have a go at this sweet duo next time you visit the Roque Island garden!

Ice Cream

Makes 1 Quart

With hand held mixer, blend 2 cups heavy cream, 2/3 cup half-and-half, 3/4 cup sugar with 1/2 tablespoon vanilla and a tablespoon cinnamon. After it's light and airy, put into an ice cream maker and follow operating instructions. While this churns, start the crumble.

Crumble Ingredients:

3/4 cup AP flour
 2/3 cup plus 1/4 cup sugar
 1/4 cup brown sugar
 Large pinch of salt
 6 TBLS (3/4 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
 1/2 cup old-fashioned oats
 1/2 TBLS Vanilla
 1/2 tsp Cinnamon
 2 cups strawberries, hulled, halved
 8 cups rhubarb (preferably bright red), ends trimmed, stalks cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick pieces

Preparation:

Combine flour, 2/3 cup sugar, and salt in medium bowl; whisk to blend. Add butter. Rub in with fingertips until mixture sticks together in clumps. Mix in oats.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Butter 11 x 7 x 2- inch glass baking dish. Place remaining sugar in large bowl. Add strawberries and rhubarb toss to coat well with sugar. Add vanilla and cinnamon. Scrape fruit filling into prepared baking dish. Sprinkle oat topping evenly over filling. Bake crumble until filling bubbles thickly and topping is crisp, about 45 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes. Spoon warm crumble into bowls. Serve with ice cream. Enjoy!!



The crisp with apple blossoms



Squire's Point

by George Herrick

Robert P. Tristram Coffin (1882-1965), poet, writer, Rhodes Scholar and professor lived in Brunswick, Maine, from where he wrote thirty or so books, including much poetry, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1936. He spent much of his childhood on a Maine island that he remembers nostalgically in *Mainstays of Maine* (1944), a beautiful narrative cookbook describing island life. In *Yoke of Thunder* (1931), his poems describe simply many things we know so well at Roque island, such as starfish, fireflies, sea urchins, nighthawks and whippoorwills. Here is one on the barn and tree swallows whose aerial acrobatics we admire as they slice through the air, feeding on insect life around the family compound. There is a copy of the book in our library. (Sadly Roque no longer is home to bank and cliff swallows).

The Swallows

They have dipped in secret springs
Of music, and have wet their wings
With a mystery of motion
Such as animates the ocean.

Clean as scissors, straight as knives,
Their wings work with a dozen lives
Beyond the one that falls and rises
In their ribs in new surprises.

As the light wind if it knows
Or plans the journey that it goes,
But never ask the swallows where
They will next caress the air.

The Naturalists' Column

Periwinkles by Nina Herrick

They are ubiquitous on the island's shores – always a source of fascination to children who collect them in pails and watch them intently to see when they will come out of their shells and start their slow procession. There are actually three different species in our waters; the rough periwinkle and the smooth periwinkle are native species; but the common periwinkle (*littorina littorea*) actually came to our shores from Europe some time in the early 1800's, most likely traveling amongst the ballast rock in a ship's hold. The three species co-exist amicably. Their chief predators are crabs, both the Jonah and the green crabs; but humans are also predators.

Washington County is where 90% of Maine's periwinkle harvest takes place. The fishermen are known as "wrinklers". A commercial fishing license is required by the DMR if they are harvested for sale, though one is allowed to collect 2 quarts for personal use. A professional is able to bring in as much as 100 to 150 lbs. a day. Recent annual harvests for the State have been around a million pounds; the wholesale price per pound in 2015 was \$1.06. The dealers ship them principally to Europe and Asia.

In France and Belgium they are a staple on fresh seafood platters and they are known as *bigorneaux*. To prepare them: let them soak in seawater (or even fresh water) for 24 hrs. Then put them in a pot of cold water, seasoned liberally with salt and pepper and a bay leaf. Bring to a boil. As soon as the water boils, remove the pot from the heat and let them sit in the water for another 5 minutes. Drain and serve them up! Most of the *opercula* (their little protective door) will have come loose, but if not can be easily removed using a pin, the preferred implement used to coax the snail out of its shell.

(Much of this information was taken from an article by Dana Wilde in the April issue of *The Working Waterfront*).





Sheep Shearing - Alicia Monks

In March, I participated in shearing on the Island. A crew came over for the day to work and make the laborious effort go smoothly. All morning the barn was abuzz resulting in 24 shorn sheep and 126 pounds of neatly bagged wool.

The morning's efforts were rewarded with a warm and delicious lunch enjoyed around the farmhouse table. I had the pleasure of eating next to Donna Kausen, the shearer, and was able to chat with her over lunch. She has been coming out to Roque to shear our sheep since 1980. 37 years is a remarkable career by any standard. When I asked her what she thought had changed over the years, her reply was "on Roque Island, not much." But she commented on the decline in "gentlemen farming" and sheep flocks in general in Down East Maine. An example she cited was at one time she would have 17 places to shear on Deer Island, now there is only one place with three sheep. The reason for the shift away from farming is not clear except that we all live in a different day and age.



One would never guess that Donna was raised in Glendale California and moved to Addison Maine in her 20s. Like many locals, she didn't have just one job, she had dozens over the years. In addition to shearing, she picked blue berries and apples, dived for scallops and dug for clams. These days, she enjoys carving and turning wood bowls and is a member of the Flatbay Collective. <http://www.flatbaycollective.org/dk.htm>

In the early days, she would bring her bagged lunch and eat quietly on the porch. One year, Ken's dog "marked" her lunch making it inedible. Since that incident, every year she enjoys eating a hearty meal with the staff in the farmhouse. Donna herself keeps 35 Romney-mix sheep (same basic breed as Roque) of her own. Her flock is kept year round out on Flat Island, which is owned by the Maine Coastal Heritage Trust. The sheep are tended to monthly in the winter, daily during lambing and otherwise left to themselves. They are shorn annually and their fleeces sold and processed into yarn for hand spinning.

Keeping sheep on Roque Island is not only part of our family tradition, but is also part of Maine's rich tradition of keeping flocks on islands. We should give ours thanks to Donna for not only helping us to maintain our traditions for 37 years, but helping to maintain the traditions of Down East Maine.

We want your articles and photographs!

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

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

The next issue will be coming out at the end of October