

A.G.H. (Nina) took over “Jotting” duties in 1998. What I tried to do was expand our coverage. My brother, G.G.H., had already broadened the scope of what our grandfather was covering, which was island centered. What I tried to do was to set our island in the sea of local and national news, all of which influence our island “kingdom”. This was also during a time that the management was reaching out to the local community.

The information that we provided during those years took quite a bit of work to put together. George, because he was spending so much time there (up to ten weeks a year) was able to get a lot first hand; whereas I had to collect mine from the staff and family, and the local press.

In these past several years, the communication amongst all parties concerned - staff, trustees and members – has changed along with the technology, making this sort of record keeping redundant. In any case, it was always a little out of date by the time it reached the membership... Perhaps, our web-site will become a new and more timely forum for this sort of news?

JOTTINGS - 1998

January

Loretta Drumgool, the manager’s wife has been undergoing radiation treatments for a cervical tumor. The treatment is going well, and the staff has been very supportive to the family.

A heifer was born to Dawn, one of the milk cows. The mother had to be put down soon thereafter, and the calf, named Dusk, was bottle fed, becoming very tame. She has been Dana Drumgool’s special pet, and a source of entertainment to all.

Harvey, the bull, was butchered, yielding 1050 lbs. of meat. The pigs were slaughtered - one dressed out to 300 lbs. The eagles were fed the remains at the top of the pasture, where their antics and those of the ravens afford much amusement.

*The ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around;
It cracked and growled and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound.*

Samuel Coleridge

An historic ice-storm inflicted severe damage to New England and Eastern Canada. It came through Washington County on January 8th. Coastal Maine was not as badly affected as the interior: the warmer temperatures along the coast softened the impact; but all communities were hit with loss of power and telephone, as the lines went down all through the state.

At Roque Island, the initial onslaught coated everything with 1 1/4" of ice, but the next day, rain melted some of it away. Still, the electricity from the mainland was off for the better part of a week. The generator was powered up, and the furnace was stoked with wood (what a relief to know that we now have some measure of self sufficiency). The telephone, both regular and cellular, was inoperable, so the radio was used for communication when necessary. The animals had to be kept in the barn for several days. Little damage was inflicted to the trees.

The island managed ever so much better during the crisis than did the mainland where even the emergency radio system was not functioning. A commercial station, WVOM in Bangor, was one of the heroes of the day: it suspended its normal broadcasts to air information, concerns and pleas for help.

An unexpected pleasure: the ice was so thick and smooth that Dougie, the boatman, and Dana skated from the farmhouse all the way to Great Beach and even along the top ridge of the beach itself! That must be a first.

The water-pipe leading from the pump to the cistern broke. The ground is too hard and covered with ice to discover the break, so the staff has devised a system to get the water up to fill the cistern.

A new, and much smaller TV satellite dish was installed to replace the old eyesore in the garden.

February

Loretta Drumgool came back to the island, having finished her treatments. She is in good form, by all reports.

The Fischers and the Greggs spent the mid-February Valentine weekend on the island. It was cold and windy, but undaunted they worked on "twitching out" several large trees that James and Judd had cut in November to be used as masts on Judd's schooner. They were able to get the logs down to Paradise Cove, where they will season in the water until Spring.

Carter Newell, of *Great Eastern Mussel Farms*, came to the island on the 16th. He and Doug took the *Peabody* out and dredged for mussels in five areas in Paradise Cove. The mussels are growing well. In addition, they set a current meter off Roque Island Ledge to collect data for on a flow model of Englishman's bay, part of a larger research project that he is doing with E.M.C.I. funding.

Other fishing news: the Japanese demand for sea urchins was way down as a result of their economic recession, and the strength of the dollar compared to the yen. This may be a blessing for the Maine urchin fishery which has experienced a downturn in productivity. From a peak of 41 million pounds in 1993, the latest figure, for 1996, was 22 million pounds.

7 lambs were born in the last two weeks of February, and 8 more birthings are expected.

11.5 tons of ice were cut from the pond - good clear ice, 18 inches thick.

Snow and ice cover are mostly gone; it looks as if it will be an early spring

March

Tanya Fischer and Adi Gregg were joined by Ed and Gloria Harriman and Dana Drumgool from the island for a day of shopping for a bull. They went to the Chatfields' place in Rockport to look over the inventory of Belted Galloways. Out of the four available bulls they decided on the more expensive one (\$1500), as he had the best confirmation, and had been reserve champion at the livestock show in Springfield, Massachusetts. Ed will be registering the pure bred offspring and intends to sell the heifers. They should bring in \$1000 each. Aside from the money, which is always welcome, the other advantage will be that the herd will not get inbred, and the bull will be able to remain on the island for much longer than the previous one, Harvey. This one is called Majesty. He'll not be arriving at his new kingdom until May.

The water bird count is in for the year. The gull count has continued a trend downward, reflecting the closure of landfills on the mainland. The grebe count is up, as is the black guillemot. Purple sandpipers, first evident in 1997, are back again and in increased numbers.

The first robins and killdeer appeared on March 28.

An overflight of the island by the Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife revealed three active eagles' nests. The pair on Double Shot are building a new nest on Anguilla.

April

Work continues on the Gardner House basement, where a new wood burning furnace has been installed.

The staff has been working on renovating the ell of the barn, where they have now installed a complete workshop. The boathouse workshop will continue to be used, but chiefly for boat projects. The machine shop will eventually be moved also, as the equipment gets damaged whenever there is high water.

Also in the ell is a storage facility for recyclables, which will be taken to the mainland regularly. This system has been set in place by Marc Tenney, and is the culmination of several years of effort to clean up and finally close the dump. Everything that is not burned will now be taken off the island.

Work continues on new fencing so that they can better control where the animals graze. In addition, 8 tons of lime and fertilizer have been bought to spread on the fields, part of Ed Harriman's 5 year program to improve all 50 acres. This year particular attention will be

paid to Stump and Home Fields

9 lambs were born this spring. In addition, Tanya Fisher will be donating 5 wool sheep. They plan to put all the sheep on Great Spruce this summer, which will save the fields. The sheep will be fed once a week so that they will know to come when the boat appears.

Extra eggs are being donated to a soup kitchen.

There were not quite enough turkeys to go around last year, so 30 are being bought. 53 broilers were brought over and installed in the newly renovated and insulated chicken house.

An ongoing project has been cutting the lumber for the manager's house. On April 22, the island took delivery of the "Wood-Mizer", a bandsaw mill which will enable us to make our own boards - the initial report: "super user-friendly, safe and efficient". The cost (about \$25,000) will be amortized over 5 years, but we envisage making up for it in considerable savings over the long term.

2 woodsmen spent 10 days on the island and thinned out a five acre section on the right side of the trail leading to Head Field.

The official State wild blueberry figures are in for last year: 77.6 million pounds, representing 23% of the total North American production; the average harvest for Maine over the past five years has been 65.4 million.

Governor King signed legislation which grants limited saltwater fishing privileges to the Passamaquoddys, Maine's last coastal tribe, thus ending what had been a bitter dispute: 13 Indians were about to go to trial for violating state laws.

May

The ram, Little Man, was attacked by an eagle while napping in the pasture! He was able to break free, but with a long gash in his back.

In the boat department: a new Tohatsu motor been acquired for the Loon. New cables and throttle have been installed on the Buzz boat, which was launched on May 1st. Cranes have been built on the ends of both docks which will very much facilitate the loading and unloading of heavy items.

The Fisheries Resource Conservation Council has reported a very substantial increase in commercial fishing in the Bay of Fundy, which can be tied directly to the closure of the fishing grounds on the Eastern Coast of Nova Scotia. Local fishermen are concerned about overfishing and depletion of their stocks.

A moratorium on clam digging around Roque Island was declared by the Jonesport authorities, and then canceled soon thereafter as it was found to put too much demand on

the other flats.

The town of Roque Bluffs has started taking bids on building a boat launch facility at the end of Shoppee Point Road, where there is a sort of ramp now, not far from our garage. RIGHC's contribution of \$1000 towards the project was acknowledged in the local paper.

Roque Island has a new address! 243 Schoppee Point Road, Roque Bluffs - a definite improvement.

June

A new stove, a Garland, was installed in the Gardner House. It is big and heavy (500 lbs. plus!) and it was quite a job to get it in - "a feat the Pharaohs would have been proud of" wrote Owen.

Tatiana Papanicolaou had a house party to celebrate her graduation from Harvard; and Cauley and John Lukens celebrated their 40th anniversary on the island.

Clementine, the Guernsey, produced a heifer calf on the 7th. She was ceremoniously brought in to the barn on the back of the "Mule".

Work week: Bryan Monks and a friend, Adam Herrick, Nick Higgins, Nick jr. and a friend undertook the rebuilding of the Paradise Cove bridge. The new Wood-Mizer was used to provide the lumber. This is surely the largest family built bridge and it took only three days!

They also planted three Red Maples at the edge of the pasture near the road .

Work was completed on the renovation of the 2nd floor bathrooms in the Red House. The cost came in at twice over the estimate! Bond Builders will also be the contractors for the Monks House; they'll need to be very closely monitored. Another improvement in the Red House: the source of the leak around the beam in the living room was diagnosed, and we hope that it has been fixed forever. (It has been a recurring problem for years).

Ospreys were again setting up their nest on Squire's Point. A pair of Black duck are nesting there also. The swallows have returned after a two year absence. The George Herricks were on hand for the bird migration, and were very busy with housekeeping the nesting boxes. A bird banding station was set up again, conducted by John Brokaw and Mary Burke. This will be their third year.

The sheep, about 19, including 5 black ones, were loaded up and put on Lakeman's for the summer on the 11th. In the course of investigating Little Spruce as a possible summer pasturage, they came across a ewe who has been in residence there for 8 years, and who was not about to give it up!

Ed Harriman put some of the young visitors to work, assisting in catching the turkeys, so that they could have their wings clipped, and thus an arduous chore was turned into a few

hours of fun!

Jack and Susan Gardner spent part of their visit pruning the lilacs in the garden; and Tanya Smith “went at” the raspberry patch, but feels it needs further tending: next spring the bushes need to be pruned, and fertilized with lime and manure.

Weir Field was plowed and reseeded, part of Ed’s program to bring the fields back to full production.

Valentino, a gray Appaloosa, was rented for the summer (for \$50 a month plus shoeing). 4 piglets were bought. The new Beltie bull arrived, as well as a new Jersey milk cow. First hay on June 29.

Clementine, the old milk cow developed a severe case of mastitis, and had to be put down. Unfortunately the new cow, Apple Blossom became infected too.

The Pleasant River Fish Hatchery, located in Columbia Falls, is reported to have stocked the Narraguagus and Machias Rivers with 137,000 new salmon.

Record breaking prices - \$300 a pound - and lax rules have combined to put such intense pressure on the elver fishery that the department of Marine Resources stepped in on May 1 and cut allowable fishing days to four days a week. The number of licenses went from 1800 last year to 3800 this year; meanwhile elver landings have dropped by more than half in the past three years, echoed by the figures for adult eel harvests.

A new high speed catamaran ferry started service on the Bar Harbor to Yarmouth, N.S., run. It is 300 feet long and 85 feet wide and it cruises at 50 knots.

July

There was so much rain in June that the peonies rotted.

The trails were open by July 1, thanks to John Higgins and George Herrick. It seems to take three days or so and a two man team to do the job.

Water temperature was 53 on July 1, reported by our intrepid chairman. (The Smith children beat him to it this year, going for several dips in June!)

July 4 was celebrated with a large clambake and bonfire near the dock. It was a beautiful evening.

Outward Bound visited Great Beach 3,7,12 of July. Otherwise boat traffic at the Beach was down due to foggy weather.

Work has begun on the Monks House, which is having a major renovation, scheduled to last 4-5 months. Family members will not be able to stay there until it is finished.

The Farmhouse plumbing system was having problems; after several days of fussing with it, a plumber was brought over to install a new sump pump for the septic system.

A raccoon was caught in a trap at the dump and sent back to the mainland.

Carter Newell of Great Eastern Mussel Farms was conducting research on “marine snow” in Shorey’s Cove; part of the project is being funded by E.M.C.I.

80 bales of hay were brought in from Rye field on the 21st (to add to the 700 already in the barn). That evening the staff had a celebratory clambake on the waterfront. Carter and his crew were there too, and he provided further entertainment with his fiddle.

Senator Olympia Snowe has sponsored a bill to authorize federal funding for research on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABS) which include Red Tide, and *Pfisteria*; the massive outbreak of the latter in the Chesapeake Bay last year brought national attention, but it is only one example of a much larger problem. The incidence and intensity of HABS has been increasing over the past 25 years, but little is known about why it is happening or how to prevent it. The bill will be up for consideration by the Senate in August.

Work started on rebuilding the marine railway.

August

The *Stella Ann* owned by Benny Beal of Jonesport won the fastest Lobster Boat of the year award at the season finale in Stonington. He clocked close to 55mph! The wooden boat is 45 years old and was built by him and his father, following a model of his grandfather, Riley Beal.

Norm and Marcia Famous, our naturalists, camped on Halifax Island to observe the fall migration. This was part of a larger study they are conducting in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of flora and fauna on that island and the Brothers with funding from E.M.C.I. There were 35 species of birds in all, including a new one for the area, Bicknell’s thrush.

There were ten sightings of the rare Harp seal (400 lbs. vs. 250 lbs. for the Harbor seal) in the area this summer. That northern seal is moving into the Gulf of Maine.

Eagles: the Parker’s Head nest was successful and produced one eaglet. The Great Head nest had a good start, but the nest fell down in June. One of the pair on Double Shot died last year; a new nest was started on Anguilla, but did not produce a brood this year.

One of our young members hit a rock while driving the Mule - a big no-no. His father will pay for the repairs.

The stretch of road between the ice pond and the hill has been a constant headache. A lot

of work was done on improving the grade; but more thought and work will have to go into it.

John and Jennifer Donaldson came and took some samples of spruce rounds to be sold to instrument makers (for guitars and violins). John has done a lot of research on this project.

Estimates were being collected for building the manager's house.

Sandy and Phil Bowers' son, Dylan, was christened in chapel grove on August 9.

Towards the end of the month Ed *et al.* started to process the turkeys; however they proved to be only about 12 lbs. so will hold off doing the rest until they grow a little more.

September

This summer's dry hot weather has had a negative impact on the blueberry harvest, and the total harvest for the state will be less than had been expected.

Al Burchie of Milbridge, who made several ship models for the museum there, repaired and re-rigged George Gardner's model of a turn of the century schooner.

16th of September, the island was visited by a group of lichenologists from the Humboldt Field Research Institute in Steuben. They identified 99 different species, three of them new to Maine, and one (*Pertusaria Flavidia*), a European species never before recorded in North America.

80 species of birds were observed during the fall migration. G.G.H. also reported three weeks of sandpiper counts at Squire's Point for the E.M.C.I./ U.S.F. & W.S. survey. A breakthrough: he discovered that the birds are not alarmed when approached in a boat, as their predators do not come from the sea. The state is considering a plan to designate the point as an important water bird concentration area, which would provide some official protection for it

Good cranberries reported on the southern tip of Anguilla.

More trash picked up along the shore. The Maine Annual "coastal cleanup" day was September 26. Last year 3318 people participated and collected 33,000 lbs. along 162 miles of shoreline, which makes an average of 200 lbs. per mile!

24 tons of hay were brought in this season. Need 30 tons to make it through the winter.

October

The Trustees' gathered on the island for their fall meeting, October 3-5. In attendance were: Sandy and Phil Bowers, Bryan Monks, Nick and Rosa Higgins, Jennifer Donaldson and Charlotte Alexander, Tanya Pertzoff Wells (and her two children), Ari Gregg, Tanya Fisher, Chris Cutler, Randy Goodhue, George and Nannette Herrick, Ann Barry and Nina

Herrick. We had a fine spell of weather; one of the high points was a festive dinner at the Gardner House hosted by the G.Herricks, assisted by E.J. Hampson who was on tap again this year for the weekend. Dinner included a very tasty "Harvey" meatloaf, with a puree of island vegetables, for dessert an apple crisp, from our own, of course....

There was much to be discussed as the meeting coincided with the departure of the Drumgools - Owen felt overwhelmed by the job and tendered his resignation following a meeting with the Operations Committee. The situation was handled well, and the transition should be fairly smooth. The Trustees had a chance to talk and pose questions to Ed Harriman, who stepped in as interim manager. We left with a feeling that the island was in competent hands.

The engine on the Peabody again failed completely. It is apparent that there is something wrong with its design and construction: this is a fairly new Caterpillar engine with only 500 hours, and the previous one failed in the same manner. Although it is still under warranty, they are going to negotiate and try and get some money towards a different one. In the interim, Doug Dodge's father has lent us a boat.

The new furnace at the Gardner house was put through its paces during the Herricks' stay. It made a huge difference in the level of comfort in the house. One thing they discovered was that they tended to use the study as their sitting room on cold days. The final price tag for the furnace: \$4250 for the machine itself and \$4250 for removal of the asbestos.

Last outing for the *Sandpeep* was October 4th. The first frost was on October 5th. Bed linens were pulled from the linen closet to cover the vulnerable plants in the vegetable garden for the night and the harvest took place the next day. It included a giant turnip, 7 inches high and 22 inches in circumference!

On October 7, Bernard Thompson from Bangor came to the island to build a new eagle's nest at the suggestion of the Maine department of Wildlife and Fisheries. It is 70 feet up in a spruce just off the trail to Clam Cove. This, it is hoped, will provide a replacement for one nearby that fell down this past June (it had been there since 1983).

The first load of sheep was brought back from Lakeman's.

The Herricks repainted the ice house shingles with Federal Blue Marine Milk Paint.

Teresa Davis, the forester, was back on October 9 for the annual review. She found no evidence of spruce bark beetle, which has been wreaking havoc on the coast.

November

Prompted in part by the problems with the Farmhouse's septic system earlier in the season, it was decided to pump out the tanks for all the houses. (It had not been done for 12 years).

Both the Monks House and the Farmhouse tanks were filled up with solid waste that had no business being there. We'll have to be much more careful in the future.

A group from the Maine Audubon Society visited the island on November 7, along with Norm Famous. Unusual numbers of loons were noted, over 180.

During Tanya Pertzoff Wells's visit mid-month, Teresa Davis, the forester came over to map out a new lumber road, which will start in back of barn field. It will be sited in such a way as to minimize visual impact. In the course of the survey they came across a lone White Pine, which Teresa estimated to be 200 years old! The need for this new road is prompted by the fact that it has become increasingly difficult to access hardwood. In fact, we will now be burning some pine in the fireplaces. The firewood supply continued to be a problem this past year. It is one of Ed's priorities to catch up and indeed get ahead of the demand. A woodshed will be constructed so as to improve storage and drying - the basements are all pretty damp and that has not helped the condition of the wood.

More turkeys were ordered and are being grown in time for Christmas. Over 100 bags of recyclables were taken to the mainland.

Apple Blossom did not recover from the mastitis and will have to be put down.

The annual meeting was held at the Country Club in Brookline with an attendance of 34 (29 members and 5 spouses). At the Trustees' meeting which followed it was decided to appoint Ed Harriman as full-fledged manager.

News from the Drumgools was exceedingly bad: Loretta is diagnosed with terminal cancer. Owen is looking after her and they are staying with his grown daughter in Kentucky.

Tanya Fischer and family were at the island over Thanksgiving - "6 dogs, 6 humans, but peaceful". The obligatory turkey on "the day", was followed Friday by island venison, shot on Tuesday by James Gregg and Dougie Dodge - it was pronounced "delicious"!

December

The laying hens were dressed up, as they were not producing. They make good chicken stew according to Amy, the island cook. The innards were fed to eagles and ravens. 2 steers and 6 lambs were butchered on the mainland.

The moorings were made ready for the winter, and the one off the Roque Bluffs dock was rehabilitated. (It had not been used for several years). The *Peabody* was back in commission with a different engine; negotiations continue with Caterpillar about the original engine, which had to be replaced twice.

The work on the septic systems is not complete and will need to be resumed come spring.

Test holes were dug for the manager's house to ascertain the whereabouts of the ledge.

December 16, Teresa Davis, the forester, returned to mark trees for the building. About 20,000 board feet are needed, or about 40 cords. These will be taken principally from the western shore. During this same visit, she and Ed and Doug explored the possibility of harvesting from Great Spruce. Teresa is much concerned that our island wood-cutters be well instructed as to safety and procedures.

Doug and Amy took the accumulated sheep's wool to *Green Mountain Spinners* in Vermont to be processed. Of the batch, 70 lbs. were accepted, which will produce 40 lbs. when cleaned.

The power went out for 24 hours on December 22. Doug and Amy were the only ones there for Christmas. None of the family were there for New Year's as the weather was foul. All family houses are now closed down.

In a recent decision, the state has banned all commercial ground-fishing in state waters for April, May and June for the next five years. This seems indeed very drastic, but the intent is to protect the spawning grounds of cod and haddock, with the hope that they can replenish themselves.

Nick Higgins finished up his thesis, Islands: Language of the Psyche, Ecosystem of the Self, which is derived in large measure from his observations on Roque. This work is towards an M.A. in Counseling Psychology.

1999

January

Teresa Davis was out in December to identify areas to be cut for firewood. Four wood cutters are coming this month and the plan is to have them cut 20 cords of firewood, and the lumber for the manager's house. TD has also arranged for a professional woodsman to come out and give safety training to our staff.

Gertrude, the goose, died of old age. I don't think any of us will regret her. Gus, her mate, is still with us, and is down below in the barn with the ducks to keep him company.

There is no milk cow at the moment as Ed Harriman has decided to wait until spring to replace Apple Blossom who had to be put down because of mastitis.

The root vegetables froze and were a loss. They plan to build an insulated cellar so that this will not happen again.

Two new employees started in at the first of the year. They are Wes and Melissa

Rines, and they come with their two daughters, 12 and 13, who are home-schooled. Wes has been a carpenter and electrician for the past 15 years, and will work as our handyman. Melissa will be working as the housekeeper, and will also be working on the garden.

We were sad to learn of the death of Loretta Drumgool on Friday, January 22. She had been in a hospital in Tennessee where the family has been staying with Owen's grown daughter. Dana will be returning to Maine where she will stay with her godparents in the Bar Harbor area, while Owen looks for a job.

At the January trustees' meeting, we went through some of the projects for the coming year: the roads need work (estimate: 2 men, 1 month); the chimneys need to be relined in all the houses; the fire-alarm system which was put in at great expense needs to be re-examined. These are just a few examples of what will be a year of catch-up and fix-up.

The work on the Monks House is not finished and will be resumed, come Spring, with the hope that the house will be open for the summer season.

The "tier III" committee has put together a Farm Plan, part of the management plan for the island. It outlines present requirements and future improvements, and ties those in with the broader goals of the long range plan for the island .

The Department of Marine Resources has adopted a new regulation to increase the vent size in lobster traps in an effort to decrease the number of small lobsters which are caught before they have had a chance to produce eggs. Although the lobster harvest has been good these past few years, it appears that they are being over fished..

Both Maine Senators, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, voted against the impeachment of President Clinton.

February

In her thesis for a doctoral degree from the University of Maine on the subject of spruce stands in coastal and interior Maine, Molly Schaufler included some research that she did on Roque Island. She has found that spruce has been a dominant tree on the island since its arrival following deglaciation, about 9500 years ago. As to evidence of fires, she quotes an item from the *Machias Union* of 1854, which describes an extensive fire on Roque Island. (That particular summer was a very dry one and there were many fires throughout the state). This is the fire that is mentioned in the History of Roque Island which consumed the woods on Great Head.

Maine has outlawed all commercial groundfishing in state waters (up to three miles off the coast) during April, May and June to allow stocks to spawn. This is in addition to the federal ban on cod fishing in the western Gulf of Maine from February 1 to May

1.

However, if the traditional fisheries are failing new ones are being discovered. The latest in our area is sea cucumbers for the Chinese trade. These are now being processed at the Carver Shellfish plant on Great Wass Island. Two products are produced from this cephalopod: a small muscle meat, which is vacuum packed and frozen; and the cleaned skins which are cooked and fresh packed; the latter are used by the Chinese in stir fried dishes. This new industry does have an historical precedent in New England, as in the 19th century some of the ships used to stop in the Fiji islands to load up on “beches de mere” on their way to China. Both these and the sea cucumbers are what the Chinese call “trepane” and consider a great delicacy. Let us hope that we will not yet again hear in five years’ time of their having been over-fished, as has happened with the urchins and the elvers!

Six boatyards are active in the Jonesport, Beal’s Island area this winter. In addition to lobster boats, they are producing sport fishing and pleasure boats. And the Libbys of Beal’s island are reported to be building a “garish Newport green” racing lobster boat, on speculation! Perhaps she’ll test her colours next 4th of July?

Sadly, a fire broke out in Benny Beal’s shop on February 21st which did quite a bit of damage to the boats under construction and to his racer, the *Stella Ann*, last year’s champion, which happened to be stored in the back of the building. The fire was reported to the fire department by Barbie Bubar who lives across the road from the boat shop.

A debarker has been installed on the “Woodmizer”, which will improve performance and lengthen the life of the cutting blade. Milling lumber for the manager’s house, and cutting firewood has been one of the principal occupations on the island this month.

Bangor Hydro came out to inspect the transmission lines. In the spring, they will be replacing the wires on the poles and expect to increase the line voltage.

Three bald eagles, two adults and a yearling, visited the compost pile in the garden.

February 16-17: Ken Rich and Jim Porter came out for a visit, and took the initiative to cut some ice. They pulled out 10 blocks before they had to leave. The rest of the staff’s time was consumed with wood cutting, so they were not able to follow up on this good start.

A big snow storm in the last few days of February, but otherwise a mild winter so far.

March

Two big storms early in the month made up for the lack of snow during the rest of the winter.

The first lamb was born on March 6th, with two more following the next day.

The Law comes to Roque Island! Doug Dodge was getting the Peabody ready to take across two workmen when he was accosted by a Coast Guard vessel, who asked if he knew the whereabouts of a certain man. Doug said that indeed he was about to give him a lift to the mainland. The Coast Guard tied up to another mooring, and waited until the two men came to board the boat and subsequently arrested one of them who was wanted in a domestic misdemeanor.

A water sample was sent to the Public Health Lab. to be tested. The spring, cistern and water lines were chlorinated as some bacteria were reported.

The equipment shed is being reinforced and a woodworking shop set up in one end. This will be an improvement over the one down at the dock, where the combination of salt and humidity are not good for the tools.

A leak developed in the kitchen ceiling in the Red House. On opening it up, it was discovered that a water pipe had not been properly connected during the bathroom renovation last summer. We'll have to see if we can't get some of the repair costs taken off the final bill.

Some encouraging news was included in the annual report of the *Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District* which showed that the cost per person per year had dropped from \$44.54 to \$27.15 and the volume per person had dropped from .355 tons to .19 tons. These figures reflect the fact that recycling volume has increased by 27%, and that people have been responding to recommendations to compost and burn.

Some very restrictive regulations of the elver fishery have just been approved by the House of Representatives despite the ardent opposition of the House members of the Washington County delegation. Because of its status as an emergency measure, the bill required a two thirds majority and will take effect immediately after it is passed in the Senate, where it is unlikely to encounter much opposition. The law will limit the number of nets to two per license holder, and will shorten the fishing season.

A poem by William Diaper (1686?-1717) on the subject of eels:

Strange the formation of the Eely race,
That knows no sex, yet loves the close embrace.
Their folded lengths they around each other twine,
Twist am'rous Knots, and slimy bodies joyn...
And littel Eelets soon begin to creep.
Half-Fish, half-slime they try their doubtful strength,
And slowly trail along their wormy Length...

Finlayson, assistant commissioner for the D.M.R., received a plaque from the *Downeast Draggers Association* in appreciation for his dogged work to ensure that Eastern Maine's quahog fishery was acknowledged in an amendment to the federal

Magnuson Fisheries Act. Had it not, the fishery would have had to close down, affecting about 70 license holders.

Norm and Marcia Famous were out for a winter bird count on March 27 and reported seeing a Thayer's Gull - a first for the island; they also spotted a gray seal pup on Double Shot. They stopped off on Halifax too, where they picked a gallon of cranberries.

Sunday gave birth to a pure-bred belted galway calf on March 28.

The laundry room has been moved to the basement of the farmhouse; and the milk room will soon be transferred out to the barn. That unoccupied space will become the new back entry, redirecting traffic away from the cooking area.

April

We are having endless trouble with Bond Builders who have been working on the renovation of the Mansion House. The latest sally: they have put a lien on the house, on the grounds that they are not being paid with enough alacrity!

James Gregg will be going up a few days a week to help with wood-cutting. Ari Gregg and her mother, Tanya Fischer, were on the island for a few days during which they "went at" the basement of the Mansion House, and tossed out 4 truckloads of stuff. As part of the improvements to that house, two side by side furnaces have been installed, one wood and one oil burning.

Two new staff members have joined the crew, Milton Farrington and his wife Anna. He will be working on the farm, and she will be taking over some of Amy's cooking duties so that Amy can work on the garden. They are signed on for six months, which will cover the period of high demand

Not enough lambs this spring; we may need to get some new stock.

The foundation of the manager's house has been started.

The fields were fertilized.

May

Six small apple saplings were planted in the orchard garden.

Nick Higgins is heading up the Cemetery Committee. They have a design (by Monro Associates) for the new burying ground, and will be examining where best to site it over the summer. They will also establish guidelines for those who wish to put in a commemorative marker.

There has been a severe drought for the past month. Precipitation was below 1 inch

for the month of April in downeastern Maine. There have been a number of fires on the mainland prompting a statewide ban on all outside burning.

Mother's Day (May 9) at Roque Island: the unfortunate Kvac, the last of the puddle ducks, was attacked by a flock of crows. James Gregg and Doug Dodge sprang to his rescue, grabbing their guns, and running out followed closely by the rest of the farmhouse. The crows beat a fast retreat... This nasty incident explains the demise of Blanche, Kvac's mate, a few weeks previous.

The federal government has informed the state that it must come up with more money to protect wild Atlantic salmon or face having the fish listed as an endangered species, which would curtail all fishing.

The market for elvers has apparently collapsed : the price per pound went from \$300 last year to \$15 this year. Demand was down because the catch in Asia was very good.

May 14 - Floating dock set out.

May 18 - Donna Kausen and friend, Jeri came over to shear the sheep. After the shearing, the lambs didn't recognize their mothers; and two of the ewes started fighting because they didn't recognize each other either!

The Fischer family was on the island over Memorial Day. They had a picnic at the Brothers and reported seeing 6 Bald Eagles flying around there. Also found many cranberries left from last year, and still harvestable.

George and Nannette Herrick were on the island at that time too. They put in 24 hours of hard labour in the garden behind the Gardner House. Also pulled the whale's baleen from beneath the dock where it had been stored for these past seven months, getting cleaned by tide and current.

The Mansion House kitchen and other renovations have been completed....

May 28-29, the Beach Field was mowed with the new Brush Hog, 5 hours each day, with excellent results. Mill Field will be next, when time permits.

June

72 birds were identified on the spring migration. The biggest day was May 29. Rarities include the Yellow-breasted chat, the Clay-colored sparrow (a new bird for the Roque list) and the Golden-winged warbler. The barn swallows are back, and a pair of Tree swallows seems to be nesting in the orchard garden. There are active bald eagle nests at Parker Head, Anguilla, and a new nest on Great Head, not far from where the old one that fell down last year. During his circumnavigation of the island June 18, Nick Higgins noted an unusual number of Blue Heron (15).

Early season fishing for lake trout and salmon has been excellent, reported the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department.

June 5-13. The work week crew consisted of Mary Ellen Donaldson and her friend Gabe, Nick Higgins and his son, Nick, and Charlotte Alexander. They rebuilt the bridge on the trail around Patten's Cove; it is big enough to support the "mule" or the new "gator". They cleared the trail that goes from there past Indian landing to Great Beach, so that the whole loop is now accessible to the small vehicles. They also did some clearing around the proposed site for the new burial ground.

June 7-10. List of wild flowers collected by Ellen Higgins around the houses during her visit:

Common cinquefoil Common buttercup Dwarf dandelion Common dandelion
 Yellow rattle King devil Blue-eyed grass Birdfoot violet White clover Lesser
 stitchwort Labrador tea Bluet Thyme-leaved sandwort Wild lily of the valley
 Ox-eye daisy Star flower Wood strawberry Dwarf bunchberry Mock bishop's
 weed Red clover Orange hawkweed Spring beauty Wood sorrel Twin flower
 Yarrow Beach pea Purple vetch Mountain cranberry Downy wood-mint
 Slender blue flag

June 10-11 Hay cut in cable field.

June 10. Annual trip to Halifax and the Brothers for ornithological and botanical surveys (conducted by John Brokaw and Norm Famous as a service to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department) was combined with a visit to the fishing grounds at Libby's - again no fish.

E.M.C.I. made the front page of *Downeast Coastal Press*. The article listed the grants for 1999.

The manager's house continues to progress at a good rate. They are hoping to have it finished in August. Everyone is thrilled with the improvements in the Mansion House, though we had to get a lawyer to settle the dispute with Bond Builders.

Ed Harriman has been in touch with Harold Nillson, the hydrologist. The spring water is still not testing perfectly and will be tested again after some improvements to the spring house. Also since it has been so dry and there has been much demand on the water supply - for cement making and watering the gardens - that we will need to be watchful as the season progresses.

The Rines family resigned (too much work) and the new couple, Milton and Anna, have also resigned (health reasons), so we are short-handed.

Most of the trails on the lower part of the island are open, thanks principally to the

hard work of James Gregg. Head Field badly needs tending, and we hope it will get some attention this summer.

Maine placed at the top of *Education Week's* rankings among the states in the quality of the school climate in 1998. Characteristics that contributed to this ranking were small class size, high student engagement, strong parental involvement, and strong local autonomy. Maine is also the first state to successfully connect all its public schools and public libraries to the Internet. Despite this good news, the percentage of students going on to college has remained low.

Peonies blooming on June 24.

Nick Harriman, Ed and Gloria's grandson, came on for the summer as a farm intern June 29. Jack Gardner reported a moose ambling through the compound; JLG was so surprised that he did not think to notice whether it was male or female. The sighting was confirmed by George Herrick who excitedly went in search of scat and footprints.

July

The "new" 1806 flag was raised in celebration of the 4th. Flag was acquired along with one for 1882 by George Herrick from the National Flag Company in Virginia.

Benny Beal's *Stella Ann* retained her title of the world's fastest lobster boat at the races in Moosabec Reach on July 3rd.

First raspberries July 10.

7 pairs of Razor Bills were observed nesting on Pulpit Rock - this is the 2nd year they have been there. The State reports 217 nesting pairs of eagles this year. At Roque, one eaglet was produced in the nest at Great Head, and there are two young at Parker's Head.

39 bales of hay brought in from Rye field, and 90 from Stump field.

Installed culvert and hauled some gravel to Patten Cove Road.

Two Outward Bound groups visited the 3rd and 4th. Camp Chewonki had a group on Great Spruce the 8th and 9th; they came ashore and worked at splitting and stacking firewood.

S. Parkman Shaw of Boston, a direct descendant of Francie Shaw who owned the island from 1773-1785, made the first family visit in over 200 years and pronounced everything in good order.

Ed and Gloria picked up a load of furniture in Rockland from Nina Herrick to help furnish the manager's house.

A group of downeast worm diggers is exploring ways to protect their industry, the last unregulated trade on the coast. In recent years there has been a tremendous increase in the number of harvesters and the tidal flats are susceptible to overuse.

August

In mid-August the Maine Department of Marine Resources turned down a request by *Atlantic Salmon* for a lease of 42 acres in Blue Hill Bay. *Atlantic Salmon* is the largest producer of farmed salmon in the United States; their operation off Machiasport comprising 60 pens holding 1.4 million fish is one of the biggest in the world. Leading the opposition to the request was an alliance of summer and year-round residents who have formed a group called "The Friends of Blue Hill Bay". Anticipating other such lease applications in the future, the group is commissioning studies of the bay so that they will be better prepared at the hearings. The issues are more than just aesthetic. This recent controversy underlines how important our natural resources surveys are: there may be an opportunity for us to support having Englishman's Bay designated off limits for fin fish cultivation by providing data to the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. This would be a positive achievement for our bay.

Federal grant money is now available to crab pickers to upgrade their facilities in order to comply with new food safety regulations. Last year the State Department of Agriculture required that home-based processors adhere to rules similar to those for large plants - for many it was both impractical and unaffordable, and they went out of business.

Ed Harriman has been interviewing candidates for the positions of farm manager and housekeeper. So far he has had 12 applicants for farm manager.

Nick Higgins reported on his exploration of Little Kennebec Bay: very beautiful with unusual natural features such as a tidal mill pond. Suggested that it would be an excellent area for bird watching.

A record number of boats have been anchoring at the Beach this summer, especially in July.

Two big rainstorms, 1.7 and 1.8 inches, in an otherwise extremely dry summer - so dry that all watering of lawns and gardens had to be curtailed, for fear that the spring would run dry.

Bought 50 broilers and 30 turkey chicks. A heifer calf was born to LaHambra.

The house and land near the dock in Roque Bluffs was purchased from Nina Whittaker for \$199,686, including closing expenses.

Bill Haney met with Lyn Goodhue, Chris Cutler and Ed to review the situation at the Gardner House which has severe structural problems. He will draw up a proposal.

The Goodhue family have begun clearing a trail on Great Spruce, starting at a cove directly across from Bunker's Hole, it hugs the shore and leads to a cove on the Thoroughfare.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports a record number of ducks this year, which fact was echoed by the Maine annual winter waterfowl survey which noted a 24% increase overall this year - in particular, high numbers of black ducks and scaup.

A pod of Orcas (Killer whales) was spotted off of Grand Manan in late August. This is the first sighting since 1985; orcas have not actually lived in the Bay of Fundy since the 1940's.

September

60 bales of hay brought in from Bonney Field.

A long article in the New York Times described the alarming and sudden decrease in wild Atlantic salmon stock. The cause is unknown, but many scientists suspect the farm-raised salmon which escape their pens and intermingle with the wild salmon, possibly spreading disease and producing genetically weaker fish. There are nine spawning rivers in New England and they are all situated in Maine.

Because of the dry summer the water level still stands at 23" (usually 85") despite the recent rains.

Ann Barry and her household continued work on their trail, which will eventually connect Clam Cove with the tip of the head. This project has been on going for several years.

Third week in September: a bumper crop of meadow mushrooms all over the pastures. Cranberries very plentiful on Double Shot.

Blueberries were recently ranked number one among fruits and vegetables in antioxidant power, and researchers are taking a closer look at them for their anti-aging potential. Scientists attribute these benefits to anthocyanins and other natural compounds found in wild blueberries. Anthocyanins are what make the blueberries blue.

Nina Herrick took a group of friends on a canoeing expedition on the Pleasant River through the Great Heath with Bobby Beal and his wife as guides. It is a beautiful area, but they were disappointed not to see some wildlife. Bobby's opinion is that the pesticides used on the blueberry barrens have been very nefarious to fish and wildlife in the area.

September 28. A field trip by plant taxonomy class from University of Maine,

Machias, was led by Professor Allen Lewis and Norm Famous. Areas of study: shore between the dock and Squire's Point, the beech forest, Great Beach.

Noticed among the fleet of fishing boats at Roque Bluffs, were several of a different design than the usual Jonesport lobster boat. They have a high, plumb bow, and are known as "Novi" boats, because they come from Nova Scotia. With the present exchange rate favoring the American dollar, it has proved economical for fishermen to buy Canadian built boats; to this add the depressed fishing industry in that part of the world which has made for a buyer's market. The CAT ferry to Yarmouth has also made the market much more accessible.

In order to fill the vacant positions on the staff, Ed Harriman placed an ad in the Bangor Daily News, and which resulted in 14 inquiries. Of those 4 couples were interviewed. Bradford (Brad) and Dee Goodwin were hired and started in on September 30th. Brad will be in charge of the farm; but he also has good experience with boats. Dee will be working with Amy as assistant in her duties of cook and house keeper. The Goodwins are 48-50 years old, have been married 28 years and have three grown sons. There is still a need for a handyman, but Ed is holding back on that to see if there are any further changes in the present staff.

October

Randy Goodhue, aided by Nina Herrick, continued work on the Great Spruce trail. It now leads to the high point on the island from which there are stunning views over the Thoroughfare and Little Spruce.

Trustees' meeting October 1-4. A festive gala dinner was held on Saturday night at the Mansion House where all had a chance to view the new kitchen in full swing. Two roast piglets (bought on the mainland) were served up for the occasion.

The manager's house, christened "Overview", is nearing completion. It is coming in within its budget of \$165,000. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held during the Trustees' weekend.

Precipitation for September was 300% above normal in the State; it dramatically reversed low ground water and stream-flow levels and ended the drought.

Roque Island Ramblings by Bertha Hanscom, daughter of Herbert Long, manager of the island 1880-1903, was published by George Herrick, and a handsome and interesting book it is.

The "Wood-Mizer" has been earning its keep this year, having cut 25,000 board feet, 25 cords of firewood, with 5 more cords ready to be processed. It is not as portable as it might be, and should either be kept in a permanent location, or installed on a trailer.

Deer appeared in the garden, as if by local knowledge, just after each wind storm blew

the apples off the trees. In a calmer period it was left to Max Monks to climb the tree and knock the apples down to a confederate.

Fall migration was spotty and late. Most active days: October 7-9.

Fall foliage was not at its best this year, probably due to the drought. Also because of the drought, the island produced 800 bales of hay, as compared to 1100 last year.

Four hundred pounds of topsoil were spread on the croquet court, and the grass seeded and watered which should show good results next year. Speaking of croquet, George Herrick has just produced a croquet anthology, Match Game, a copy of which is in the Library.

A sawbuck was built to simplify the cutting of firewood. The new brush hog, donated by two members, was used to good effect in Beach Field.

Doug Dodge, Tanya Pertzoff-Wells and Nina Herrick are going to look into improving telephone and internet communications for the island.

Lynden Rockwell, an accomplished local mason, built a fine stone hearth at Overview. He will also be undertaking the foundation and structural work at the Old Farmhouse.

Senators Collins and Snowe, Governor King and Representative Baldacci are all fiercely opposed to listing the Atlantic salmon under the federal Endangered Species Act, holding that the present state conservation plan was far preferable as it is less intrusive. "Listing the species as endangered will have horrendous economic consequences on the very poorest areas of Maine... This could potentially affect the jobs of people not only in the aquaculture industry, but also in the forest products and blueberry industries, the tourism industry as well as any other natural resource-based industry." - Senator Susan Collins.

The Department of Marine Resources met with representatives of the sea cucumber industry to discuss possible fishing regulations as it appears that the resource is already being overfished: the average daily catch per boat is 1500lbs, which used to be harvested in 3-4 hours. In Alaska, the only other state where they are harvested, there is a quota of 1.5 million pounds a year. In Maine, it is estimated that the present fleet of 12 boats brings in about 900,000 lbs. a week. Those in the industry were not pleased, especially as a new law empowers the commissioner to limit the number of participants in a new Maine fishery for three years. Considering that so little is known about the sea cucumber, it might be wise to find out a little more about them and develop a management plan that would ensure a sustainable fishery.

November

Dee Goodwin, the new assistant cook/housekeeper, collected 6 pounds of rose hips from the property at Roque Bluffs and made 14 jars of jam.

Roque's beech forest is known throughout the conservation community as the only stand of beech on a coastal island. Protection and restoration efforts started two years ago and show excellent results, with extensive development of root sprouts from American beech, yellow birch and striped maple trees; and seedling establishment rates by sugar maples, yellow birch and striped maple are very high. (This taken from report compiled by Norm Famous).

The roof on the spring house is being rebuilt and the foundation secured which should prevent any contamination by ground water which may have been the cause of the high bacteria counts this past year.

Some facts about deer: there are approximately 292,000 white-tailed deer in Maine (as compared to 160,000 in 1986). Northern and Eastern Maine average less than eight deer per square mile, whereas southern and central Maine where hunting is severely restricted carry populations between 50 and 100 per square mile. This year may be a record year for numbers taken by hunters as last year's mild winter throughout most of the state improved the deers' survival rate.

Deer season opened on October 30 for residents, and November 1 for all hunters. The bow season opened in the beginning of October.

Island staff is going to work on clearing the site of the burying ground, and hope to have it tidied up in time for Ellen Higgins' visit at Thanksgiving.

The proposal from the National Marine Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list wild Atlantic salmon as endangered became official on November 17.

Two pigs, one steer, 8 lambs and 28 turkeys have been processed and are in the freezer. So there will be plenty of birds on hand for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The contract for repairs on Old Homestead has been approved and signed.

The Stonington Fishery Alliance is experimenting with a Japanese technique for seeding scallops. Spat is collected and allowed to grow in mesh bags until the scallops have reached a less vulnerable size; at that point they are set on the bottom and allowed to continue their growth undisturbed. Using this technique over the past 60 years, the Japanese have developed a successful and sustainable scallop fishery. They currently set a million bags a year; the experiment in Penobscot Bay is starting with 2000.

Ellen Higgins and extended family (17 in all) were on the island for Thanksgiving.

The staff has trapped 4 raccoons.

December

The annual meeting was held at The Country Club in Brookline on December 5.

George Herrick, the chairman, and Jennifer Donaldson both stepped down having served a full term of five years as required by the 1994 by-laws. New trustees are Jason Herrick and Randy Mikes, with Tatiana Papanicolaou and Rebecca Barry chosen as trustee observers. The new chairman is Nick Higgins.

Six turkeys were ordered by family members (off-island) for Thanksgiving; and seven for Christmas. It seems like an unusually low number...

Number of deer culled during hunting season was 6, which includes the six point buck taken by Doug Dodge. Since hunting season closed about that many have been seen wandering about.

Ed and Gloria Harriman moved in to "Overview" during the course of Christmas week. They are very pleased with their new abode, and like their new routine.

Amy Hilchey, housekeeper and cook, will be staying on at the island through the end of August. She has been accepted at the College of the Atlantic for next fall. Dee Goodwin is presently her assistant but will take over the job when Amy leaves.

Work is being done in the current Farm House to add a bathroom and reconfigure the second floor so that it includes a self-contained suite. This will be used by the Goodwins.

The work at the "Old Farm House" was completed. The beam across the living room ceiling was strengthened and consolidated (originally it was thought it needed to be replaced entirely), and quite a bit of shoring up was done in the basement. The plaster

was repaired where it had cracked and all it needs now is a coat of paint.

U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins were able to get federal officials to agree to schedule additional public hearings on the proposed listing of Atlantic salmon under the Endangered Species Act.

This year's blueberry crop in Nova Scotia was up 75% and in Quebec double the average, resulting in Canada producing 29% of the North American crop and Maine producing 19%. (This from *D.E.C.P.*). Interesting research continues on blueberries at Blueberry Hill Farm in Jonesboro, a University of Maine research facility which we all pass on the road. An historical item of interest: blueberry growing as an industry began during the Civil War, when there was a demand for fruit for the Union soldiers.

Bill and Sue Monks, their daughter, Sandy, her husband Phil Bowers with their children, Landyn and Dylan, were in residence in the Mansion House for ten days over Christmas and New Year's. They arrived in time to witness the very beautiful and bright full moon, which coincided with the solstice, a very rare occurrence: the moon is then at the closest point to the earth. It caused very big tides with water

lapping at the thresholds of the boathouses. They had only the faintest dusting of snow at Christmas, so no sledding for the grandchildren! Some of Ed and Gloria Harriman's family were there for the holidays and went skating on the fire pond - the ice pond was not yet frozen. It must have been a picturesque sight out the window of the Living Room - straight out of Currier and Ives! After their sport the skating party came by the house and sang Christmas Carols.

Before the family's arrival, Gloria had decorated some lovely wreaths for each of the doors: balsam fir with sea-shells. Adding to the seasonal decorations, the Bowers chose and cut a perfect 8 foot Christmas spruce, which was decorated the old-fashioned way with popcorn and cranberries, garlands of colored paper loops, and pine cones frosted with gold and silver glitter. One of the other indoor activities was to build a gingerbread house with a Roque theme: sea-shells on the roof and with a crab to guard the door... The final product was not quite up to the original vision; however, a good time was had by all.

The staff was invited over for an evening meal during the course of their stay. All in all there were many feasts, and this New Year's eve was the culmination of all of them! The radio was tuned so that they could hear the happenings in Times Square, which must have seemed very remote, and scarcely distracted anyone from the festive fare, which included fondue, and champagne, of course.

Sandy was very enthusiastic about the visit. Admittedly, the weather was relatively mild but she stressed how warm and cosy the house was, even on the windiest of days. They had many outings in the woods, and the Gator proved invaluable for trundling along the little ones.

2000

January

Ike, the draft horse has been sold and went off the island on the 2nd. Handsome though he was he was not being used, and was quite intractable when being shod. Come spring, Ed and Brad will look for a horse that can be both ridden and driven.

An estimated 12 deer were taken during the fall hunting season. Deer hunters appeared to cooperate with the first ever Roque Island regulations, which restricted hunting to eastern part of the island, away from areas of logging. Each hunter is required to have written permission and to carry the permit with him when on the island. The system worked well and should be continued.

A fierce gale with winds of 45-50 m.p.h. and driving rain on the tenth of January caused some water damage in the Old Farmhouse, with water coming in seven windows on the east side. What a pity with all the work that has been done there recently! They'll need to examine the flashing. The present Farmhouse also had three leaky windows.

This unexpectedly fierce storm caused several fishing vessels to break free from their

moorings in Cutler, Jonesport and Milbridge.

The *Peabody* was moved to Patten's Cove.

January 14, winter's first real bite: temperature 5 degrees, wind 25 knots from the Northwest.

George Herrick, in the course of his omnivorous reading, has come across a reference to St. Roche's day, August 16. It was known colloquially as "Rocks Day" and was "celebrated as a general Harvest Home". (This from *The Countryman's Log Book*, by Viscountess Wolseley, Citizen and Gardener of London).

At a public hearing on subject of Atlantic salmon, George Jacobson, Jr., a professor at the University of Maine put forth a theory that the Salmon have disappeared because of climate change. Furthermore he cited archeological evidence that they may have moved into Maine from more northerly habitats during the period of the Little Ice Age (1450-1850). Now that the climate is warming up they are again moving north, to Canada and Arctic Russia. "The Endangered Species discussion should include the broader global context. We cannot assume the status quo climate or that any given species will be suited to Maine habitats in the changing future simply because it was here in the past." An interesting point.

Municipal officials in the county's two largest towns, Calais and Machias, joined those in Eastport and Lubec, along with other smaller communities in voting resolutions expressing their opposition to the proposed listing of Atlantic salmon under the Endangered Species Act. Federal agencies are expected to rule on the proposal later this year.

A real cold spell at the end of the month: the record wind chill was - 48 F.

February

The eagles have been fed in Bonney's field.

Sea cucumber products are now advertised in the local paper (D.E.C.P.). They are produced by a company called *NutriSea*. "ArthriSea" is for arthritis relief (for humans); and "Sea Jerky" is a healthful treat for dogs; both are available at health food stores.

The level of water in the spring's cistern is back up where it should be. It had gotten very low during the drought last summer.

The new bathroom in the Farmhouse was finished, so the Goodwins have moved into their suite.

Amy has been starting seedlings in the Greenhouse.

The entire staff is going to be certified for CPR the week of 21st.

Doug is doing some work on the Patten's Cove dock - installing rails and a ladder.

February 26: 40 cakes of ice were cut and stored in ice-house. More would have been cut, but it started to rain, and did not freeze up again. The work was done by island staff and a few visiting friends, one of whom also pruned all the apple trees.

Brush was burned at site of burial ground.

March

Ed Harriman put an advertisement in the Bangor paper looking for a handyman and housekeeper. There have been 15 responses so far. The paper is online, so it reaches a broader community than the state of Maine: one of the responses came from Ohio!

Downeast Coastal Press featured an excerpt from Roque Island Ramblings by Bertha Hanscom and included George Herrick's introduction to the book. He has already had one response and request for a sale.

The boatyards at Beal's and Jonesport have been busy. The first boat out will probably be *Kristina K* from Benny Beal's shop. She's 40' 3', with a beam of 15' 6', and a 500 hp engine. She's to start off in the quahog fishery.

Hearings continue on the salmon question.

The very successful effort to preserve Maine lighthouses, which was spearheaded by the Island Institute and which has managed to preserve 36 lighthouses in the state, has spread southward: there is now the "Southern New England Lights Program" aimed at those in the area from Portsmouth Harbor to Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

The Maine Aquaculture Training Institute will be offering courses this spring to teach people to create small-scale shellfish farms, and will include the raising of oysters, clams, mussels and scallops. This is an effort to redirect commercial fishermen whose industry has been badly affected by declining stocks and subsequent dire regulations into another area which, one hopes, will be more sustainable.

The edges of Bonney Field were trimmed back, and the brush burned. The thinning of the woods along Patten Cove road, an ongoing program during this past year which was funded by the State, was completed.

Interviews for the jobs of handyman and housekeeper were conducted. Four couples were brought out to the island. E.J. Hampson, whom many of us know as an occasional "pinch-hitter" on the island these past several years, and her spouse, Carl Delahunt have been hired and will start in April. Carl is an experienced carpenter who has been working at the Jonesport boatyard these past seven years.

Trailers have been purchased for the *Loon* and the *Buzzboat* which greatly facilitate their being hauled on to the shore. At the moment they are stored in the open during the winter months, though it would be preferable to have them under cover. The *Sandpeep* is stored in the old ice-house.

Velton and Earl Peabody have started the Beals Island Historical Society. They will have a web-site where they hope to collect as well as provide information.

April

A deposit of Green Chalcedony is reported to be on Marsh Island, this in Maine Mines and Minerals, volume 2, by Philip Morrill and Wm. P. Hinckley, 1959.

A male beltie was born the first week of the month. No lambs yet. Sheep shearing is scheduled for April 12th. The grass is greening up and the animals should be out to pasture by the end of the month.

The staff has been sawing wood for lumber with which to reinforce the problematic equipment shed.

A Trustees' meeting was held in Portland on April 8th with several regular members in attendance. We viewed the premiere of Mark Tenney's video, "A Year on Roque".

Greenhouse, a report from Amy (April 13th):

I have started the following from seed and have developed some hardy seedlings (I hope!):

onions, leeks, scallions, celery, several varieties of tomatoes and peppers, brussels sprouts, perennial and everlasting flowers, several different medicinal and culinary herbs.

In addition, I have spinach that I wintered over under glass that is ready for cutting, and have just completed my second planting of lettuce. I will soon be planting several other greens, some early carrots, and shallots in the raised beds.

April 22: 2 calves born (to different mothers), a bull and heifer, the latter brownish black with belt 3/4 of the way around her.

Census Bureau enumerators have been fanning out across the region. It will be interesting to see the new figures. Looking to past figures: Washington County's population was 35,187 in 1950; and 35,308 in 1990, representing an increase of 3.03 residents a year. This includes sharp decreases in both the 1960 and 1970 counts. The state as a whole had its largest population increase in a century in 1970-1980, when the population went to 1.1 million.

Supporters of the restoration of the Machias railroad depot have raised the funds (\$90,000) they need to restore the structure. The depots at Machias and Cherryfield

were nearly identical and at the time of their construction were typical of the style used for North American rural branch lines. The one in Machias was built in 1898, by Joseph Rockwood from Calais. Passenger train service ended in 1957 (some of us still remember coming up on the night train from Boston), and freight service ended in 1982. Some of the busiest times at the depot were during the early 1960's when steel was brought in for the construction of the Navy's towers at Cutler.

April 28: 50 broiler chickens arrived. Plan to order another 50 during the course of the summer, and possibly 25 young layers as well.

Interesting bit of information: Wood frogs croak only during the breeding season which occurs in early spring. The sound is low-pitched, about an octave below middle C, and is emitted by the males.

May

Dee and Brad Goodwin have left the island. Ed is looking to hire a farmer, and an assistant housekeeper/cook to replace them.

Two weeks into the season which runs for the full month of May, Maine turkey hunters had set a new record, having already harvested 961. The largest bird so far has weighed 23lbs. Wild Turkeys had been exterminated in the state during the 1800's. They were reintroduced in the 1970's when the state received 41 turkeys from Vermont. Hunting has been permitted only since 1986.

The trapping season is over but predictions for next year's fur prices are out: heavy beaver, \$30; otter, \$60; muskrat, \$3; mink, \$20; marten, \$45; fisher, \$25; coyote, \$25; red fox, \$20; raccoon, \$8; weasel, \$4; bobcat, \$50; deer antler, \$14 per pound; moose antler, \$40 per pound.

Robert Alley, Jr. and his brother Jeffrey hooked a 230 lbs. halibut on a "trawl", one of three they had put out. Their bait was alewives, which they had picked up locally. A trawl is a long line anchored on the bottom and set with a number of baited hooks. They had quite a time bringing in the fish, which in fact landed on one of the fishermen. Apparently both the Boston and Portland Fish Exchanges were glutted with halibut and offered less than \$2.00 a pound. The fishermen chose to fillet the fish themselves and sold the enhanced product to area restaurants for \$4.00 a pound. Given that the head alone weighed 40 lbs., they did not do so well in dollar terms, but certainly they have a fish story for the new century. Let us hope for more...

Brian Beal of the *Beal's Island Regional Shellfish Hatchery* is proposing to set up a marine research facility in partnership with the University of Maine on the site of his present hatchery. The proposed building with equipment is estimated at 2 million dollars, for which Beal will be seeking grants. This new laboratory would allow him to expand on the valuable work he has been conducting over the years. BIRSH began raising clams for seeding in municipal flats in 1987, and since then has distributed

stock to 45 of 60 coastal towns with shell fish ordinances

Murderous crows, or most probably ravens, attacked the hens: two bodies were found and raccoons were at first suspected. Then two ravens were discovered methodically killing the hens: one had cornered the flock in the outside pen, while the other was decapitating them one by one. They had killed three before they were intercepted. Last year it was the ducks who were the victims

9 lambs were born. Ed will be looking to buy 12-18 more ewes.

George and Nannette Herrick have been at the island and have worked at least 40 hours in the Old Homestead garden, along with Eric Smith whom they hired for that purpose. George reported the Spring migration as having been early this year. He recorded 70 or more species, but no unusual ones so far this year.

He also sent along an article from the March issue of *Northeastern Naturalist* which compares data on spring arrivals from the period 1899-1911 to the more recent period 1994-1997. The data do not reveal any significant trends; in fact contrary to what was expected 20 species, one quarter of those in the study, arrived earlier in the 1899-1911 period.

June

Air Force reservists have begun dismantling the dam in East Machias. After demolition is finished later this year and water is diverted to its natural channel, environmental agencies plan to restore the river banks, plant trees and restore the river to its pre-1926 appearance, when the dam was originally built by the Bangor Hydro-Electric Company. It is hoped that the restoration of the river will improve the chances for fish, salmon in particular, to reach spawning grounds.

Bears have been reported in the blueberry barrens, where they have damaged beehives set out for the pollination of the blueberry blooms. A bear was also sighted in the vicinity of Harrington.

Great Eastern Mussels have closed their operation in Shorey's Cove. The density of wild mussels in the area meant that there was insufficient food for the seed mussels, so the site was not as productive as they had hoped.

Ed Harriman's grand daughter is on the island for a couple of weeks working to get the horses in shape for the season. He will take her over to inspect some horses in Lemoine, as we need to buy one.

The Project Week crew has been hard at work and has completed a bridge on the trail around Paradise Cove, this one over by Mill Field.

The entire Smith household went swimming on June 16 and recorded a temperature of

52 degrees. During their visit they very much enjoyed using the sea-kayaks. They reported seeing many seals with their young.

Ellen Higgins is working on setting up the Bluffs House. The first tenants are due in June 17th. Apart from two weeks, the house is rented out through September 23rd at a rate of \$750 a week, of which we will net \$637 after paying the broker's fee.

It has been a cool and wet spring; in fact the cistern is full to overflowing. Haying started the 12th, surprisingly early, so a second cutting should be possible. It is a very good crop this year, thanks to the rain.

Jim McCormick has been hired as a cook for the staff, and will be starting in on June 19.

June 16 - a group of lichenologists from the *Humboldt Field Research Institute* visited the island. Their report will be forthcoming.

New cedar gutters have been installed around The Old Farm House.

After 39 years of manning the radio station at Cutler, the Navy is handing over the facility to a civilian director, although the communications station will continue to be associated with the military and under the aegis of the command center in Norfolk, Virginia. The radio transmitting facility was originally opened in 1961 and was nicknamed the "Big Voice" as it is capable of communicating with ships in the North Atlantic and as far away as the Mediterranean. Its array of towers has certainly become a familiar part of Roque's surrounding landscape.

June 29-30. 24 Outward Bound students visited the island and did some trail work

July

During the 4th of July Lobster Boat races on Moosabec Reach, a thick fog delayed and interrupted some of the events; nevertheless, all classes were able to finish their race. This year's champion was *Red Baron*, entered by Team Holland.

July 7 - Another group of Outward Bound students visited and did some trail work

Thomas Gardner (15) circumnavigated the island in the *Sandpeep*.

George Herrick was pleased to see the lupine plant he had planted last fall blooming below the croquet court.

Numerous seals (over 55 until they tired of counting) were noted by Stewart Gardner and family on a rock island close to the Brothers.

The presence of Spruce Bark Beetle has been confirmed along the road to Bonney

Field. This pest has been a real scourge in mainland forests. Another pest, “army worms”, invaded this year’s bountiful pasture to such an extent that the animals are being fed the new hay. Luckily the first cutting brought in 2000 bales, so there should be enough to make it through the winter. Army worms are the larval stage (i.e. caterpillar) of the moth *Pseudaletia unipuncta*, which lays eggs by the thousands especially during a rainy spring, which this past one was.

New stairs and a ladder of island lumber have been installed on Roque Bluffs dock.

A standard bred bay gelding called Parker has been acquired. We now have three saddle horses. Two Corridale ewes have been bought, and we are looking for twelve more. This breed was recommended by *Green Mountain Spinnery*, which processes our wool, as being good for both wool and meat.

A new pond has been excavated at the bottom of back field. Most of the cat-tails have been cleared out of the fire pond; this project took two days of work with the backhoe.

The National Marine Fisheries’ Service reported Maine as No.1 in the Northeast States with landings of 256.8 million pounds. In dollar terms: Lobsters \$184.6 million; farmed Atlantic salmon \$58.2 million; sea urchins \$20.3 million; softshell clams \$10.5 million; monkfish \$5.2 million.

August

Randy Goodhue and family have continued their work on the Great Spruce trail. John Higgins worked at widening the Marsh Island trail.

Bad mosquitoes this summer!

Doug and Carl have been supplying the island with lobsters from each of their five traps permitted with their resident’s license.

18 campers from Outward Bound came ashore. They spent a day constructing a fence around the new pond and removing more cat-tails from the fire pond.

The bird banding team, under the leadership of John Brokaw started in June and made eight visits. This project has been funded by E.M.C.I. Other bird news: starlings not visible this month after (human) attack on their nests in June. The ospreys are no longer taking to the nest on Squire’s Point. One tree swallow nest was successful, but the family left early. Five eagles were observed soaring over Bonney Field.

Ed is still hoping that a second cutting of hay may be possible in Stump field, but there is evidence of army worms there too.

A shipment of new broilers and turkeys is arriving the second week of August.

The kitchen and flower garden are superb this year, but the raspberry crop was disappointing.

John and Nano Higgins rescued two fishermen from a sinking boat near Roque Bluffs dock.

An earthquake of 2.1 magnitude was recorded as having occurred at 3:00 a.m. on August 22nd on a Canadian list of earthquakes in the Maritimes. The epicenter was directly under the island at a depth of 5 kms. Chris and Molly Cutler report having heard something similar to a sonic boom at just that time, strong enough to wake them up.

Louvers have been installed in the barn cupola, which will keep birds out, but provide ventilation. Another improvement is a sawdust box in which to collect what is produced by the milling machine on the floor below. The sawdust provides bedding for the animals, and serves other purposes as well.

A power harvester is being tried out by the *Jasper Wyman* blueberry company. It is powered by a gas engine which pushes the rake through the blueberries. The return is 120 to 200 boxes a day as compared with the 50 to 100 boxes harvested by a good hand picker.

The University of Maine is conducting an experiment to see if halibut can be farm-raised. 31 fish over 36 inches long were captured in the wild and placed in tank. Only two have died so far.

Meanwhile a company in Clark's Harbour, Nova Scotia, is investing \$15 million (Canadian) in an effort to raise halibut from egg to marketable size. The venture is half owned by *Fiskeldi Eyjafaroar hf.* of Iceland. Icelanders have been very successful in their attempts to grow halibut in captivity.

September

234 pairs of eagles produced 204 eaglets in Maine this summer (there were only 30 pairs in the 1970's). The prosperity of the eagle population is putting pressure on the ospreys. Few ospreys were observed at Roque this summer. Of our resident nests, the Great Head nest failed, but the Anguilla nest produced two eaglets, and the one on Parker's head produced one.

Harbor seal survey reports continue to dribble in. We are closing in on a date (early September) when the seals move from the Little Spruce ledge off Bonney Point to the ledge at the entrance of Bunker's Hole. More reports are needed for the period around Labor Day.

George and Tanya Gardner enjoyed playing croquet during their visit.

The landing ramp on the island dock was reinforced, and the cement wall was continued around the boathouses to prevent flooding during big tides.

As part of a study of herring spawning sponsored by the Island Institute, two fishermen from Cutler reported the largest incident seen in the four years of the study. The egg mat covered an area of 1 3/4 mile by 1/4 mile. Cutler seems to be a fertile area for herring spawn, having had similar events in three of the last four years.

Concerned that Maine is making the same mistake with rockweed as it did with sea urchins, hundreds of Washington County residents are petitioning the D.M..R. to set a moratorium on commercial rockweed harvests until further research is done. Roque Island has joined the group: George Herrick has drafted a letter to the attention of the Director of the Quoddy Regional Land Trust, which agency has been collecting letters from coastal residents from Roque Bluffs to Eastport, as well as from the immediately threatened area of Cobscook Bay, where Acadian Seaplants Ltd. of Dartmouth, N.S., is planning its third commercial harvest. The plant is an important resource for marine animals, as well as for the birds and other sea-dependent creatures that fish in the rockweed.

Sea water temperatures in Shorey Cove for the year so far, recorded by Doug Dodge:

Jan. 15 37 degrees
 Feb. 16 36 degrees
 Feb. 26 38 degrees
 Mar. 10 39 degrees
 Mar. 21 40 degrees
 Apr. 8 44 degrees
 Apr.19 44 degrees
 May 1 45 degrees
 May 12 46 degrees
 May 26 50 degrees
 June 6 52 degrees
 June 25 59 degrees
 July 9 56 degrees
 Aug. 11 59 degrees
 Sept. 6 58 degrees
 Sept. 14 59 degrees
 Sept. 25 56 degrees

The “recreational” lobster traps belonging to two staff members have yielded 280 lbs of lobsters for the summer season. The Maine lobster catch up until Labor Day was considered very strong, so much so that the price for lobster was lower by about 50 cents than last year.

During a late September trip to Halifax and Anguilla, the boat sailed through a cloud of migrating Mourning Cloak butterflies.

A 24 foot basking shark was spotted in the Dennys River. This was the second sighting in 20 years in our area.

First frost on September 28.

The Washington County commissioners unanimously declared their opposition to a proposal by RESTORE: the North Woods and other environmental organizations to create a 3.2 million acre federal preserve/national park in northern Maine.

October

Amr Ismail of Jonesport, a blueberry expert, visited the island to make recommendations on how to increase production of our blueberry patches. A dowser visited on October 3

Coast Week Cleanup is scheduled for Sept. 30 - Oct 7. This is part of an international effort to clean up the seas and is organized by the State Planning Office. Last year almost 2,000 people picked up 15,000 pounds of trash from 268 miles of shoreline. (Given the amount of shoreline in Maine, there was still plenty left to pick up!). Roque Island residents did their bit by picking up 18 lbs. of debris from North Beach which included a tire and rim, the usual assorted soda containers, and engine oil cans.

16 new sheep arrived, and seemed to be happily settling in.

Both of the major political parties have lost ground in voter registrations. As of November 1999, Independents made up the largest bloc of the registered voters in the state of Maine.

Clouds of party balloons drifted over the island on October 6. Some were still being disentangled from branches a week later. Festive though they looked, they were released during a sad occasion - a memorial service for a young resident of Beal's Island, Roger Beal, IV, 10 years old.

Mrs. Starr Kopper, a seasonal resident at Roque Bluffs, visited the island on several occasions to paint views of the island.

The Ruggles House Society has started a 50th anniversary campaign with a goal of raising \$500,000 to reconstruct the ell on the back of the house in order to provide space for an education room, an interpretation of an historic kitchen, and a space for archives. The house is situated in Columbia Falls and is a remarkable example of early 19th century American architecture and decorative arts. It was built by Thomas Ruggles who made his fortune in timber. His descendants lived in the house until 1920. Many of the original furnishings have been rediscovered and installed in the house.

Although minor adjustments were made to strengthen the D.M.R.'s rules governing the harvest of seaweed, the petition drive by Washington County residents to halt all harvesting of rockweed until further study failed. The area of concern is Cobscook Bay where *Acadia Seaplants* of Dartmouth, N.S., is planning to operate. In the face of this setback, Alan Brooks, executive director of the Quoddy Regional Land Trust promised that area fishermen would monitor the harvesting operation.

Green crabs which were introduced from Europe in the 1850's gradually scuttled their way up the coast and arrived in Maine a hundred years later. They have been terrible predators of young clams and have been one of the causes of the decline of the clam industry. In response to a recent upsurge in their numbers, Bill Walton of the Beal's Island Shellfish Hatchery has received a grant to study the life cycle of these crustaceans. He is hoping to discover the secrets of their shedding cycle, and perhaps turn them into a marketable product by selling them when they are soft-shelled. Hard-shelled they are too small and have too little meat to make commercial harvesting practical. Who knows - these pesky crabs may become a sought-after delicacy!

A ship worm infestation has been reported from Damariscotta to Stonington in mid-coast Maine.

Shipworms have plagued mariners for millenia. No wood is safe: they eat through pilings and wooden hulled boats. Curiously, their reappearance in Maine waters may have been encouraged by cleaner waters and thereby higher oxygen levels in the water.

The D.M.R. has announced the closure of the coastal herring fishery as the annual quota has been reached.

November

In the Presidential election, Republicans George W. Bush and Dick Cheney carried Washington County with 50.7 percent of the total vote, but lost the State. In the State elections, Democrats have increased their majority in the House from 79 to 88; in the Senate the count is even, at this stage, though two close races are being recounted.

Two referendum items of interest to Roque Island were both turned down: Question 4 was a constitutional amendment to require commercial fishing property to be taxed at its current use instead of as marketable waterfront. The rejection of this measure by many coastal communities came as a surprise, but may be attributed to voters sensing that amending the constitution was not the appropriate way to address the issue.

The other item, which could potentially have had a dire effect on our planned forestry project, was also turned down. In particular, Question 2 would have limited cutting levels to the average annual growth during the past ten years, which would have been a totally impractical yardstick for an operation such as Roque Island's.

In general, the election results do point to a split in the State between the southern half and the northern and eastern region. As an editorial in the *Downeast Coastal Press* points out: "Although the demarcation is north-south, the real difference is not so much geographical as between what is generally considered urban and rural.

Urbanites tend to be liberal and collectivist in both cultural and political views, and rural dwellers demonstrate allegiance to individualism and more traditional values.”

November 13 - The wild Atlantic salmon was officially designated an Endangered Species. The listing applies on eight rivers: the Sheepscot and Ducktrap in mid-coast Maine; the Narraguagus, Pleasant, East Machias, Machias and Dennys in Washington County; and Cove Brook, a tributary of the lower Penobscot. Under the law, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service will review any federal project or action that might affect the fish, as well as any activity on private land that requires a federal permit or federal funds. Fish farms, which are required to obtain permits under the Clean Water Act, will be under close scrutiny, and will probably be strictly regulated.

This year biologists estimated the total wild salmon population on all eight of the rivers at 150, which would seem to indicate that this protective measure may have come too late. However, on a positive note, 1,000 adult salmon of spawning age were released in the rivers last month. The salmon were raised from broodstock collected in those same rivers; *Atlantic Salmon* hatched the eggs and raised the fish in their pens off Machiasport. This was a laudable collaborative effort between state and federal agencies and the aquaculture industry. Will such cooperation continue if the federal agencies declare war on the fish farms?

It has been a record year for scallop landings, this after the reopening of three areas on the Georges Bank which had been closed since 1994 to protect the diminishing stocks of groundfish. The catch is expected to reach 39 million pounds, up from 12.2 million in 1998.

The blueberry harvest was also a record one this year, coming in at 110.6 million pounds, vastly surpassing the previous record of 84 million set in 1992. Excellent growing conditions, and improved production management (including increased use of bees for pollination) contributed to the record. Fortunately, there is increasing demand for blueberries in Europe and Japan; for with the cranberry harvest which also set a record (9,000 100 lb. barrels), there was not enough demand and the prices were depressed. 85% of Maine's cranberry acreage is in Washington County.

Despite the prediction that the lobster population might be hurt by overfishing, this past season was another good one. Landings in Maine have increased from 20 million pounds in 1985 to 53 million in 1999. In the four years from 1995 to 1999 the number of traps in Maine increased to 2.7 million from 1.5 million - an indication of the increased pressure on the fishery, and a just cause for concern.

On November 20, a boat slammed into an Eastport aquaculture pen, tearing a hole in the net and releasing as many as 13,000 farmed salmon near the Dennys River, one of the rivers where wild salmon are listed as endangered. Luckily the fish in question were not sexually mature, so would not be heading up the river any time soon. They'll probably not survive until such a time.

The much anticipated rooster has arrived, and is a handsome addition to the Roque barnyard. He is a Light Brahma, black and white with feathered feet. Jessie, our farmer, acquired him for \$2.

Two woodcutters have been at work on the area of the Clam Cove trail.

Captain Doug Dodge and Amy Hilchey were married on November 19.

Only 4 turkeys - out of the 28 that were processed - were sent to family members for Thanksgiving. We should remind people to order some for Christmas! Nina Herrick was on the island for the holiday with a group of friends and family.

Roque Bluffs clam-digger, Tyrone Preston, spotted a new bird for Roque's list, a Pomarine Jaeger, flying over the island. He also noticed an unusually large migration of Bohemian Waxwings, which were feasting on mountain ash berries as they went through. (Nina Herrick noted with disappointment that all the berries were gone from the trees at Squire's Point where she had gone to collect some branches for decorations. Apparently the birds had gotten there first.)

December

At R.I.G.H.C.'s annual meeting, held in Brookline on December 3rd, a new tradition was started when a handsome malacca cane was presented to George P. Gardner, the oldest member of the corporation.

Dave, the cook, left citing "personal reasons". He seemed to be working in well, so his departure came as a surprise.

Passenger rail service between Boston and Portland is expected to begin in January. The trip will take 2 1/2 hours, and there will be four trains daily. Round-trip tickets are expected to cost \$35.

A coalition including fish farmers, blueberry growers and the forest products industry has joined the state in suing the federal government to stop the listing of wild Atlantic salmon. The group has raised \$600,000 to finance the legal challenge. This is the first instance of a state suing to stop a listing decision from taking effect. As it stands now, the listing is scheduled to start on December 17.

December 11 - Majesty, our prized bull was found dead in the pasture, from unknown causes. He was only four years old. It is possible that he may have had a heart attack or a "strangled gut".

U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins have announced that three projects in Maine will share \$502,000 In National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant funding. This foundation was set up by Congress in 1984 and is dedicated to the conservation of fish,

wildlife and plants, and the habitat which sustain them. \$212,000 will be going to the Beal's Island Regional Shellfish Hatchery to support their research on scallops.

George Herrick has produced two new books, which he has had privately published. They are Another Season on Roque Island and Ten years on Roque Island, 1988-1997.

A fierce storm from the southwest hit before Christmas with wind gusts up to 90 miles an hour. A mussel fishing vessel with three in crew was lost just off Ballast Island. The fierce wind brought down 98 trees across West Shore Road.

The "Wood-Mizer" is happily housed in its new building.

Only 6 Turkeys ordered for Christmas.

Seven (!) eagles observed feeding on a sheep carcass in Bonney Field - 4 mature, three yearlings.

2001

January

Over 800 mourners attended the joint service held at the Jonesport-Beal's High school in memory of the three crew men of the *Little Raspey* who were lost when their boat capsized in a storm in Chandler's Bay on December 14. This fatality added to others this year brought the total of fishermen lost in the state to 9 for the year. These fatalities have renewed the concern of several agencies which are having discussions on how to improve the use of safety equipment and the response of the seamen. Boats today are now better equipped than they were 15 or 20 years ago: most carry survival suits, life rafts and EPIRBs, but they are of no use if a person doesn't know how to use them.

Moose footprints were sighted on a path around Patten's Cove. Jesse and Doug took a photograph of them.

Our neighbor, and blueberry consultant, Amr Ismail and his wife, Marcia, have been a great help to the local communities in identifying and assisting in the applications for state grants. As a result of their efforts, \$400,000 was made available in Washington County to home-based crab-pickers who were in danger of losing their licenses because of non-compliance with the new federal food safety regulations. Ismail intends to apply for another grant this one aimed at replacing faulty septic systems and polluted wells for households who would not be able to afford such improvements.

Speaking of polluted water, a test of Roque Island's water supply last spring again showed trace amounts of coliform bacteria, despite improvements made to the housing to make it both waterproof and rodent proof. Where this contamination could be coming from is a mystery; however, the levels are so low that it should not cause concern.

The number of people on welfare in the state has hit a record low: 10,715 households, as contrasted with a high of 23,246 in 1993. This indicates that there is less unemployment, as Maine, contrary to other states, has no time limit on how long people can stay on welfare.

In land conservation news: the Legislature has just voted to set aside 70,000 acres of state-owned lands as ecological reserves where timber harvesting and motorized vehicles can be restricted. The purpose is to protect native plant and animal habitats and to make them available for study. In the private sector, the Nature Conservancy announced that it had raised \$50 million for land acquisition projects throughout the state. The biggest contributions came from *MBNA* and *Perrier* (which owns Poland Spring).

Barry and Kim McLaughlin started in as cook and housekeeper respectively. As part of his job, Barry will be in charge of the garden, with help and advice from Amy.

February

Ed Harriman is trying out a new format for the staff, whereby there will be three “lieutenants”, each in charge of a particular area: boats, farm, houses; and each lieutenant will have an assistant, so at the optimum there will be as staff of seven.

Tom Nelson was hired as the farmer at the beginning of the month. Jesse is staying on and will be his assistant.

The January Trustees’ meeting had to be cancelled because of bad weather, and was finally held on February 8th in Boston. The budget was carefully gone over. There are a number of big capital expenditures this year, which include rebuilding the landing craft, renovating the Red House kitchen, adding a bathroom and renovating the 3rd floor of the Farm House. This latter improvement will provide space for the lumberjacks when they come next fall to start on the wood harvest.

There are more snow-mobiles than ever in Maine: almost 86,000 were registered last year, an increase of 50% from just 10 years ago. Along with the increase in the number vehicles, has been an increase in the number of accidents.

There have been many reports of seals being stranded this year - Harp seals, which are not typical to our area, as well as the resident harbor seals.

100,000 farm-raised salmon escaped from an *Atlantic Salmon* pen in Machias Bay. The pen was broken open during the fierce storm this past December. Luckily the salmon were not mature enough to breed, and will likely not survive in the wild for very long. Still, this is the largest such accident, and it comes at a sensitive time, when the new law to protect the wild salmon is just being enacted. Furthermore, there was general astonishment and outrage that it took seven weeks for the state Department of Marine Resources to report the incident to the federal agencies.

It will be a year or two before federal agencies complete a recovery plan for Atlantic salmon, but meantime local volunteer groups are working on all eight Maine rivers where the salmon are listed as endangered, and are charging ahead with a variety of projects to protect the fish's habitat. For instance, 1000 adult salmon, which were raised in captivity by Atlantic Salmon (the aquaculture company), first at their fresh water hatchery and then in ocean pens off Machiasport, were released in the rivers last fall. There is evidence that the fish have been laying eggs, but it remains to be seen whether the fish that hatch will be able to survive, go to sea and then return to produce another generation.

At their meeting this month the Sea Urchin Zone Council reported that the fishery was going to require significant cuts in the harvest, as much as 20 to 50%. This fishery started in the 1980's. At first whole urchins were shipped to Japan for the select restaurant market. In the early 1990's a processor in Portland, Atchan Tamaki developed a method to extract the roe, the only part of the urchin that is eaten, and package it in plastic trays. It is known as *uni* in Japanese - you may have encountered it at a sushi bar. This made it marketable in Japanese grocery stores and substantially increased demand for the product. At the peak in 1993, also the peak of the Japanese economy, 41 million pounds of urchins were harvested in Maine. Since then there has been less demand, but also fewer urchins to be harvested. Last year's harvest was 14 million pounds.

International Paper has announced it will close two mills in Maine, as the present state of the industry meant that the company could not justify the expense of modernizing the mills. One of the chief factors affecting the industry is that prices for lumber have been the lowest in a decade, as many American companies are unable to compete with government-subsidized Canadian-based lumber operations. The trade agreement between the two countries expires on March 31. This inequitable situation will certainly be one of the items on the table as they negotiate a new one.

Maine's congressional delegation is united in their stand against the administration's proposal to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our two senators in particular have been an effective team, frequently working in tandem. In an annual report card on all members of Congress published by National Journal in Washington, Collins and Snowe were rated amongst the most liberal of the Republicans in the Senate.

March

It has been an especially snowy winter, though not a record-setter. In fact, it was a more normal winter than has been experienced in some years, due to the fact, meteorologists say, that neither El Nino nor La Nina have been disrupting the jet-stream.

The McLaughlins had to be let go. Karl left at the end of the month, which is what he said he would do. E.H. says there is a problem finding staff which will fit in on the island. Those who come in just for a job don't work out; they get bored and make trouble. On top of which, those who apply for such a job are often thinking that they will escape problems they have had on the mainland: they are basically anti-social. Living in

a communal situation requires great adaptability. The hiring process needs to be further refined. An idea is to have a psychological questionnaire, such as is used by police departments.

Lobster landings in Maine totaled 56.7 million pounds last year. The lobster boom is a relatively new phenomenon: annual landings averaged 20 million pounds for about a century before soaring in the last 15 years.

Hunters in Maine bagged a record number of bears last year, 3,951. There is no fear of over harvesting as their numbers are strong.

At the annual meeting of the Beals Historical Society, there was a display of locally produced model boats. One of the stars of the exhibit was a half-model, the work of Harold Gower, great-great uncle of our own Doug Dodge, who produced it in the '30's.

Four boatshops have been active in the Moosabec area: Osmond Beal's, Calvin Beal's, Wayne Beal's and Ernest Libby's. They have mostly all switched to fiberglass, though Calvin Beal will be producing one wooden boat which will be used both as a "plug" (a model from which molds for fiberglass hull will be made) and as an actual lobster boat for his son, Calvin.

Following the new interest in the edibility of green crabs, the Legislature has been considering developing a commercial license for fishermen - at the moment they have to have a lobster license which is considerably more expensive and difficult to get. The pesky creatures were introduced in the late 19th century, and have proliferated to such an extent that they have become a pest, as they eat baby clams as well as consuming the bait in lobster traps. Besides the research being done on their molting habits - with the hope of predicting when they will be soft-shelled, experiments are under way at the U. of Maine in Orono, where they have been extracting the meat with a special machine, and grinding it up to make crab pate, and crab pasta!

There has been much concern in the neighboring communities over the announced closing of the *Resthaven* nursing home in Jonesport. Cutbacks in federal reimbursement of Medicare and Medicaid have caused the facility to run a deficit. Amr Ismail jumped into the fray and called together a meeting to discuss what steps could be taken to forestall the closing. Two weeks later he chaired a public hearing to seek support in applying for a Community Development Block grant, which would bring in \$50,000. In addition, the town of Jonesport voted to provide as much as \$25,000 to pay some of the operating costs of the nursing home. Other towns will probably follow suit at their upcoming town meetings.

A seismometer has been installed at the University of Maine in Machias. It will be part of the network of recording machines operated by the Weston Observatory at Boston College, which is the central earthquake tracking point for New England. Data from the Machias machine will be posted on UMM web-site (www.umm.maine.edu). We will

thus be able to check on our occasional temblors.

The eagles were fed 7 or 8 times during the winter, resulting in 6 being spotted March 22 - this at a time when they are going in for nesting. Good news for the season!

April

The Census figures show that the state as a whole had a very modest increase in population mostly along the coast, except in Washington County which had a net decrease.

The director of the Atlantic Region of the Canadian Wildlife Service notified puffin tour operators that they will no longer be permitted to land passengers on Machias Seal Island. The communiqué gave safety concerns as the reason for the ban. The Canadian edict appears to be just another salvo in the ongoing tug of war between the two countries over the sovereignty of the island, which even in a fairly recent decision of the World Court in the 1980's, has been left in limbo. Captain Barna Newton of Jonesport, who has been taking birders to the island since the 1940's, says that his son, John, who now runs his boat, is not about to be deterred; that in fact the island belongs to him having been claimed by his great-grandfather, "Tall" Barney Beal, following a skirmish with British sailors in 1865 during which he single-handedly knocked down five of them who had dared to question his right to fish in those waters. The Nortons are quite convinced that this latest Canadian ploy is another effort to take possession of some prime fishing grounds.

The spring Trustees' meeting was held in Portland in less than spring-like conditions. Several members were present as well. The big item on the agenda was the dip in the stock-market, which affects the money we receive from the endowment. We need to trim our sails to respond to respond to current economic climate. Unfortunately, many of the capital expenditures we decided upon in rosier times only a few months ago have already been started. We shall have to be very careful in the near future.

A third fish farm in Cobscook Bay has been hit with the salmon disease that has been devastating fish farms in New Brunswick. The virus is infectious salmon anemia. It is harmless to humans, but kills the fish. This epidemic has terrible implications not only for the farmed fish, but also for the rare wild Atlantic salmon.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has allocated \$4.2 million to the restoration and conservation of Atlantic salmon. Senators Collins and Snow co-sponsored the amendment which provided the funds to the foundation.

The Legislature dismissed proposals to change forestry regulations which would have restricted annual harvests to one year's worth of growth, and supported a plan to allow companies to try new harvesting techniques in small plots on privately owned land. These decisions were another defeat for Jonathan Carter, who spear headed the referendum on forestry last fall

The crow hunting season ends April 30. The latest fur prices are: beaver \$30 to \$40, muskrat \$8, otter \$60, mink \$10, raccoon \$14, coyote \$20, red fox \$20, bobcat \$25, fisher \$25, marten \$25.

A dramatic increase in drug-related crimes in the county has led to the creation of a “drug court”, a rigorous program designed to rid non-violent offenders of their addiction. The program has been funded for only a year, so there is real pressure to see that the program succeeds.

April 24 - Seven lambs were born in the space of six hours, probably a record! More lambs expected.

Two calves were born during the month.

A new tractor was bought for \$22,500.

A bathroom was added on 3rd floor of Farmhouse; and work was started on fixing up some bed- rooms on that floor.

May

Ann Milano was hired as a cook. Her boyfriend, Scott Kimball is a logger, and will do some work in the woods on a part-time basis.

E.M.C.I. has provided a grant of \$2000 to the Jonesport-Beals High School to enable it to buy a mini-ocean aquarium to be used in the science classes. The principal and science teacher are both anxious to develop a marine-related curriculum in their school.

Total number of lambs this season: 24. Bought 54 “broilers”; another flock will be started in August along with turkeys.

Gov. Angus King was in Machias at the beginning of the month where he spoke at the Chamber of Commerce on the need to re-orient the state’s economy towards the high tech, computer-based world. He pointed out that traditional natural resource-based industries are losing jobs. He spoke enthusiastically about his proposal to provide computers to each seventh and eighth grader. He feels that improving computer literacy would have a beneficial effect on the state’s economy.

The weather has been dry and there have been a number of forest fires on the mainland. 500 acres burned near Addison, and one house was lost.

The Ruggles House received a \$100,000 gift for its capital campaign from an anonymous foundation. Their target is to raise half a million dollars.

A dairy farm in Cherryfield which had been worked by two generations of the Smith family closed down. There is only one other left in all of Washington County.

Amr Ismail who has been helping coordinate efforts to save the nursing home in Jonesport, received news that the State had approved a \$50,000 grant application. This brings to \$100,000 the amount that has been raised in the past few months, when it first became known that the facility would have to close because of lack of funds.

The remodelling of the kitchen in the Red House should be completed in time for the first visitors on Memorial Day weekend. The cabinet-maker is Chris McCormick, who did all the work himself. The cost came to \$28,500, just under budget

The roads were open by Memorial Day, but the blow-downs from last December's storm were abundant. The manager hired a team to clear some, but more work remains to be done.

Mike Morse rebuilt the foundation under the kitchen ell of the Mansion House, which had been improperly done during the renovation. In addition the drainage around the area was improved, using island staff and equipment.

George Herrick was on hand for the last of the bird migration (it was early this year). 63 species of bird were identified, including a new addition to Roque's list: the chimney swift; he was also pleased to see a pair of rare wood ducks in the Mill Pond. Also, during his visit, the annual trip to the Brothers was made on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and John Brokaw's bird banding team was back for its sixth year.

The Master Site Plan research is completed. Steve Mohr will be producing a report (Cost: \$11,000).

June

An equipment operator, David Look from Jonesport, brought to the island several pieces of heavy equipment on a barge, which was chartered for the purpose. The instigation of this was the need to clear the site for the burial ground, but given this unusual opportunity, several other major projects were worked on. Mr. Look is a hard-working man and was at it for over a month (May 18 - June 22). The total cost was \$27,350, which includes hiring the barge. The projects in descending order of magnitude in terms of time spent were:

Leveling area for Cemetery: removing stones and adding loam.

Shorey Cove Dock: building up the level to decrease flooding.

Main Road: grading and improving drainage.

Carleton Field: destumping.

New road to sawmill area.

New road from Patten cove to the shore.

Destumping a gravel pit by Bonney Field.

Work on old Patten Cove Road.

A report issued by the World Wildlife Fund and the Atlantic Salmon Federation shows

that the disappearance of salmon is happening throughout their former habitat in the north Atlantic. 90% of the remaining population is found in the northern latitudes near Norway, Iceland, Ireland and Scotland.

Meanwhile, on the home front, the Maine Aquaculture Association and three conservation groups were able to get together and agree on developing plans to reduce the number of farmed fish that escape their pens; it was also agreed that any escapes would be immediately reported to the DMR. Concurrently, the Association has received a \$500,000 federal grant which will be used to study and design new ways of containing, marking and managing the fish. So there is some progress being made.

The first hay was cut on June 16.

Project Week was well attended this year - a total of 17 participants. Some trailing work was done, including opening a path to lead to the burial ground from the road. On their own initiative (during their time off!) Thomas Gardner and a friend spent the better part of a day clearing trash from Great Beach - 200 lbs. worth. However, the group's masterpiece is the camp site set up in Mill Field, complete with outhouse.

The burial ground is a very impressive piece of work. It took 4 stone masons 4 days to build the walls. The ground around it still looks raw, but it will soon fill in nicely. Total cost, including design work, legal fees, etc.: \$34,550

The New York Times' Sunday Travel section included a feature by Milbridge resident, Sue Hubbell, which recommends visiting the Beal's Island Hatchery, hiking on Great Wass Island, and dining at the Artist's Café in Machias.

Machias Seal Island tour operators have been able to take visitors to view the puffins. The U.S. Department of the Interior stepped in and issued the captains a special permit, for a fee which caused some grumbling, but at least it got around the impasse with the Canadians.

Two armchairs in the Old Farmhouse which were re-upholstered revealed silver plaques on the back attributing their ownership to: "Jos. Peabody, Salem".

July

Manford Durkee's *Frick-a* was the star of the Jonesport lobster boat races on the 4th of July.

To celebrate Independence Day on the island, the Declaration of Independence was pinned to the boathouse door; John Higgins organized a stickball game; and to top off the day's athletic activities, there was a grand clambake for which Jason Herrick was chef in chief, assisted by George Herrick, Tony Cavanagh, and Ed Harriman. "It was the finest communion of the farmhouse and family that I can remember" says Jason.

Tatiana Papanicolaou and her party of house guests built a much appreciated bridge over a wet section at the end of the Paradise Cove trail.

Army worms were devastating again this year, and a lot of hay was lost. It is very unusual to have them two years in a row.

A new Coast Guard Cutter, the *Moray*, was just commissioned in May, to replace the *Point Hannon*, which was retired after 34 years of service. It will be the new patrol boat for our area. D. Dodge does not think well of her looks, but according to the newspaper report, she's a technological wonder. The new boat, brought a change in the skipper: Gary Moores retired after 31 years of service in the Coast Guard, to be replaced by Rahilly; while, Kenneth Stuart was appointed the new commander of the the Jonesport Station. The Coast Guard has been keeping a mooring in Shorey's Cove for the past year and a half.

Brian Beal of the Beal Island Clam Hatchery has just returned from a year's study in Ireland. He was given a Fulbright award to conduct research on the raising of tiny hatchery reared European lobsters. He hoped to discover whether it would be feasible to grow them in containers in the sea, rather than in the lab, which would be much less expensive. On the whole, his research proved promising, and he hopes to publish his findings soon.

Dr. Beal was not home for long when he was in the middle of a controversy over the recent law enacted by the Governor which provides a commercial license for fishing green crabs: his point is that these crabs are a menace to clams and other mollusks; that they were an accidental introduction, did not exist in northern Maine waters until the 1950's, when they soon became a threat to the clam flats. Dr. Beal feels that the new license will discourage, rather than encourage people to go after this "vermin".

The last sardine cannery is set to close in Lubec, the passing of an era...

Hannaford Bros. which runs a string of supermarkets across the State, including the *Shop'n Save* in Machias, is now Maine's largest private employer, surpassing both *L.L.Bean* and *Bath Iron Works*.

According to the study released by the Census Bureau, Maine citizens are the highest taxed in the nation in terms of local and state taxes relative to personal income. Nationally, state and local taxes takes 11.2 % of personal income; Maine's rate is 14.2 %. These figures may be misleading in that part of the taxes are paid by summer residents and tourists whose incomes do not figure in the calculation.

The Natural Resources Committee and others went on "red alert" upon hearing of an application by *Maine Moorings LLC* for a permit to install moorings in Roque Island Harbor for which they would charge rental fees. The request was put before the Jonesport Harbor Committee which has jurisdiction over these waters, and it was turned down, for which decision we are most thankful!

The Roque Island landing craft, which was bought some 10 years ago from the Canadian Coast Guard, has been rebuilt and renovated, and almost looks handsome (to the tune of \$28,900). The work was done by John Collora in Jonesboro, for which he is so justly proud that the local paper (D.C.P.) ran a small feature with photo. John runs a business called: Rachel Mae Welding and Tugboat Co.

Another new boat business has opened in Jonesboro: the Jonesboro Custom Finish Shop which is situated in the Quonset hut on the north side of Route 1. The couple, Watts & Faulkingham, used to work for Wayne Beal's Shop in Jonesport. Their specialty is finishing up the boats after the hulls have been completed.

The Herricks planted two quince bushes in the orchard behind the Old Farmhouse. Quinces, along with lilacs, were a distinctive component of New England gardens. Though lilacs have remained popular, quinces have fallen a bit by the wayside in this day of kiwi and other exotic fruit flown in from around the world. With the renewed interest in regional cooking, quinces are being rediscovered and are now to be found on menus at fancy restaurants - Manhattan even has one which opened this spring called "Quince"!

Nina Herrick sampled a new blueberry product: blueberry juice. It is being produced by Wyman's, and is featured on the menu of the Red Barn restaurant in Milbridge.

August

Four groups from the Outward Bound/ Hurricane Island program made day visits in late June and July.

On the first weekend of the month, Machias hosted its sixth annual Rodeo at the Downeast Fairgrounds just outside of town.

A 53 foot finback whale washed ashore at the Cutler Naval Base. The animal appears to have been struck by a ship.

A talk given by Sanford Kelley to the Pleasant River Historical Society on the history of the blueberry industry brought up these interesting facts (as reported in the Down East Coastal Press):

- Native Americans early on discovered that burning the fields produced a greater yield. In the early 1800's they sold some of their harvest to people in Bangor and Rockland.
- In 1866, the first blueberries were canned. Canning factories opened in the area soon after.
- The Tabbutt rake was designed in 1882. Other designs have since superseded it.
- The railroad came to the county in 1899, which aided in the shipment of fresh berries to markets.
- In 1928 the first blueberries were frozen.
- Mechanical harvesters were first used in 1960. This has led to the fields being improved by being leveled and cleared of rocks to make them more accessible to the

machines.

Again no osprey nest at Squire's Point this year. The platform there had previously been occupied for nearly twenty years. It is thought that the increased number of eagles is driving out the ospreys. Adding weight to this theory was the report by Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife of one eaglet at the Anguilla nest, two at the Parker's Head nest, and one at Great Head. In addition a fourth pair of eagles was observed exhibiting nesting behavior on Little Spruce.

Ed Harrison and his family have put in a trail leading from the recently restored Carleton Field (a prime new picnic spot with an excellent view, and out of the wind if it is blowing southwest) down to North Beach - a charming elfin walkway.

A beautiful grove of trees below the blueberry patch on the West Shore was thinned out last year and cleared of brush this year. The Vista was once again brush-hogged. Little by little the clearings and non pasture fields are getting the attention they deserve. The next field for enhancement and restoration is Mill Field. The clearing of rocks from some of these areas would simplify the task of brush-hogging them. Head Field remains a problem which requires attention every year. (GGH)

Little River Light is scheduled to shine again by the end of the month, signaling the entrance to Cutler Harbor. It has been dark for twenty-five years. Its restoration has been spearheaded by the American Lighthouse Foundation. The lighthouse was originally built in 1847, and was recently listed as one of the most endangered properties in the state by Maine Preservation.

September

Following the tragic events of September 11, the flag was lowered to half-mast, and remained so until the President declared that the nation's flags could again be raised. On September 13 at noon, family and staff gathered together to ring the Old Farmhouse bell, and to observe a minute of silence in solidarity with people throughout the world.

On September 5 the D.M.R. imposed a quarantine on farmed salmon in the Eastport area and extending into Passamaquoddy Bay in the hope of preventing the spread of infectious salmon anemia. An outbreak of the disease was first reported in April.

Wildflowers recorded mid-September by Ellen Higgins in area around the houses: Yarrow, stiff gentian, butter and eggs, dwarf dandelion, cat's ear, fall dandelion, lance-leaf goldenrod, eyebright, common evening primrose, winter cress, Huron tansy, wild madder, small white aster, silver-rod, red clover, sand spurrey, nightshade.

Down East Community Hospital in Machias, may have to downsize in face of continuing operating losses. Should this occur, there is a concern that the county's medical specialists will leave the area.

The fall bird migration went through early in mid-September because, it was said, of the dry summer which killed off the insect population. Six days of rain and fog held back the final surge; but when the wind shifted to NW here was a big (and exciting) wave on 29 September. Once again the apple orchard, the dump and Squire's point proved the "hot spots" for viewing. Seventy-one species were observed. Rarities included Nelson's Sharp-tailed sparrow, the Stilt sandpiper, the Water pipit and the Pied-billed grebe. (GGH)

The septic tanks were pumped out into a transportable tank. The sludge was spread on to Stump Field to act as fertilizer.

September marked the 14th month of continuous drought in the state.

October

The injured raven which had been kept in the barn since March was released on the first of the month and swooped off into the woods.

The operating rooms at Down East Community Hospital re-opened after being closed for almost three weeks, because of an infestation of springtails, small, harmless insects.

Neither the emergency room nor the hospital itself were affected.

Speaking of insects: the cluster flies were especially bad this year on the island, leading to some competitive fly-swatting: "Well, I got 27 just this morning..." Aside from being annoying, they are harmless and are not attracted to food, so they do not spread disease the way other flies can. They resemble house flies, but are larger and belong to a different family, *Calliphoridae*. They are of European origin and probably came over in ships' ballast. Ed is going to have the houses treated next spring. Getting rid of these pests would certainly cut down on the housekeepers' time.

Tanya Pertzoff Wells reported a nice migration of yellow-bellied sapsuckers through the garden over Columbus Day.

A cattle egret was spotted on the island. This is the second reported sighting. Cattle egrets were introduced to this continent from Africa; since their beginnings in the southeastern states not so many years ago, the birds have rapidly adapted and spread northward.

2002

January

January 7. George Lapointe, commissioner of the Department of Marine Resources announced that his department and the U.S.D.A. have ordered the eradication of 1.5 million salmon in seven facilities in Cobscook Bay. This follows an earlier order to remove 1 million fish. This is an effort to prevent the spread of Infectious Salmon Anemia. The federal program was approved in December by the secretary of Agriculture, and has a two year budget of \$16.6 million to fund the eradication,

disinfection, surveillance, and epidemiological programs. All salmon farms in the state are required to participate. Some may apply for compensation, but only if they fulfill certain requirements.

A panel of scientists convened by the National Academy of Sciences has found that the wild salmon that enter Maine rivers are genetically distinct, thereby scuttling one of the chief arguments of the state and the aquaculture industry who oppose the protection of the salmon under the Endangered Species Act.

Several environmental groups, spearheaded by the Conservation Law Foundation in Rockland, are seeking a two year moratorium on new aquaculture sites along the entire coast of Maine. State legislators are taking up the debate and a public hearing will be held in February.

The Open Space Institute, an environmental group partly endowed by the Reader's Digest foundation, has earmarked \$12 million for the purchase of private land throughout New England. The aim is to protect pieces that would link other protected areas. More than half of the targeted areas are in Maine, and most of those are in Washington County. Concurrently, Maine Coast Heritage Trust had a record year last year: either through easements or acquisition, they added to their list of protected property 16 miles of shoreline and 11 coastal islands, of which Jordan's Delight, off Milbridge, is one. Local legislators are concerned about so much land being removed from the tax rolls.

The new town pier in Milbridge has been built using composite materials developed by one of the University of Maine's research laboratories. The composite is a combination of thermoplastics and sawdust, which is light and strong. It is hoped that the new materials will be more impervious to the elements and to sea worms than the usual materials. Previously, wood was coated with creosote, but that method has been banned since the 1980's because of toxicity. More recently, pressure treated wood has been used, but that has come under scrutiny because of its high content of arsenic. It is also not resistant to gribbles (a.k.a. sea worms) which have returned to our waters precisely because they are so much cleaner.

Maine's bald eagles, the largest population in the Northeast, showed a gain of 12% last year, with 266 eaglets recorded. The number of mating pairs in the lower 48 has more than doubled in the past ten years, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife is preparing to remove them from the endangered species list. These figures certainly show an amazing reversal, considering that in 1963 there were only 21 breeding pairs left in the state.

Dutch elm disease is a scourge which wiped out more than 90% of the American elm trees which were the pride of so many New England towns. The Department of Agriculture has done considerable research over the years in an effort to find specimens which are resistant to the disease. They have now identified several varieties, of which the "Princeton" sounds the most promising (and handsome). It is a descendant of those

that are still thriving, forming an allee on Washington Road leading to the university campus.

February

Plans from the Farm Committee for the year:

- Increase the Garden Orchard by adding strawberries, raspberries, both sweet and sour cherry trees, Reliance (cold hardy) peach and Bartlett pear trees.
- Plant 6 sugar maples along the lane.
- Look for a horse that is trained for both riding and driving.
- Raise three flocks of 50 broilers each.
- Purchase 25 Araucana-type laying chickens. (Their eggs are pale blue!). This would bring the laying flock up to 50.
- Raise 3 sets of 2 pigs each.
- Reduce the "Beltie" herd to 3 cows and offspring (which will be used for meat purposes).
- Rent a round bailer for haying for this next season to see how well it works. It is a method that does not require the hay to be completely dry before baling, always a problem in our usually damp climate.
- Continue to work towards producing meat and dairy products organically. It is sometimes difficult to get organic grains for feed in this location.
- The wool has been delivered to the spinners in Vermont, and there should be some blankets available this summer.

In addition to their ongoing projects, new plans from the Natural Resources Committee include the study and inventory of Great Spruce, to be undertaken by Norm Famous, the naturalist, who has worked for 15 years on the main island; and experimenting with planting tree seedlings, in order to encourage the growth of more hardwood trees.

The drought condition continues along the northeastern seaboard, with Maine particularly hard hit. There are at least 700 dry wells throughout the state, and two dozen small hydroelectric plants, many of them connected to paper and wood mills, have been shut down because the water levels are too low for them to operate. There is an additional concern that the rivers will be too low for fish to spawn in the spring.

The New York Times presented a long feature on Belon oysters which grow in several bays and estuaries along the coast, most notably the Damariscotta River. They are not native to these shores, but arrived 50 years ago, when the Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries in Maine decided to take up an offer of free seed from the Netherlands, which was then given out to people with experimental plots. It took a long while for the oysters to adapt and take hold. They require being harvested by hand, and are difficult to ship. At restaurants they charge \$3 for each one. (Editor's note: I wonder what has happened to the oysters that Great Eastern Mussel Farms assured me they had planted for our use near Point Olga?).

The most recent census reveals that young people are steadily moving out of Maine; the exodus reached 22% over the last decade. Meantime, baby boomers (those born between

1946-1964) appear to be moving in to take their place. Maine now ranks fourth in its share of that age population.

48,000 eggs from the National Fish hatchery in Orland have been sent to the *Wild Salmon Resource Center* in Columbia Falls, where they will be incubated. The fish fry will be set out in the Narraguagus River in May.

A new poll reveals 78% approval of salmon farming in Maine, with only 3% in opposition.

Reconstruction of the former Lubec Packing Company is proceeding apace. *North Atlantic Seafoods* which now owns the plant will not be processing fish but concentrating on storing lobsters (they envision a capacity for 300,000 pounds) and providing herring bait for lobstermen up and down the coast.

February 27: the Coast Guard Cutter *Moray* (which is often moored in our harbor) gave chase and intercepted a fishing boat which was fleeing the Canadian Coast Guard which had observed it illegally fishing for snow crab in a closed area in Nova Scotian waters.

A flood tide on February 27. The improvements on the pier in Shorey Cove worked well: although water came over the top of the siding, it drained out without removing the gravel the way it used to. The metal shop was flooded (as usual), but the other workshops were fine.

The lobster harvest last year totaled 48 million pounds, a very good year though not a record.

Boatshops in Washington County have lots of work this year.

March

The eagles on the island have been fed three times this winter. Seven eagles were spotted in the vicinity of Bonney Field, where the offal is put out. An unusual sight!

The Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System has set up a Web site: www.GOMOOS.org where information from ten computerized buoys can be accessed. The buoys monitor visibility, sea surface temperature, wind speed, and nutrient levels, information of immediate interest to fishermen and sailors, but such a record over time will help in the study of climatic changes.

According to a report by the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, the Bay of Fundy area is particularly vulnerable to flooding in general because of its huge tides; the rise in sea level because of global warming will greatly exacerbate the situation.

At the recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, marine scientists presented a grim report on the North Atlantic fishery: over the past 50

years populations of favored food fish (haddock, cod, tuna, flounder) have decreased by more than half, and the decline is accelerating, so much so that certain fisheries may disappear in a decade.

The EPA has released its first environmental report card on the condition of the nation's coastal waters. The overall condition is judged to be "fair to poor", with the Northeast coming in second to last, just ahead of the Gulf of Mexico.

Brian Beal has received a grant from the Maine Technology Institute to pursue his experiments in rearing juvenile lobsters.

The poverty rate in Washington County coastal towns was published by the Washington-Hancock Community Agency. Here are the figures for some of our neighbors: Jonesport, 31.6%; Milbridge, 27.4%; Machias, 20%.

April

A new cook, Lynne Smith, and handyman, Don Parker, started in at the beginning of the month.

A warm winter meant that the ground did not freeze as deeply or as long as usual, so that spring rains could soak into the soil. Water levels have come back up on the island.

No aquaculture bill passed the state Legislature this year, but the Department of Marine Resources will continue to work on their proposal over the summer. The principal difficulty is deciding what role towns are to play in the permitting process. Giving towns veto power on leases would require drawing ocean boundaries between neighboring towns, which would be endlessly difficult.

A late snow storm on the 26th.

The wild turkey season opens on the 29th and runs through June 1. 9,000 permits will be issued this year (7,000 last year), but not every hunter is successful: last year a 1/3 got their catch of a Tom. The current bird population is estimated at 15,000 to 20,000 - amazing, when one considers that the birds were virtually extinct in the state and were re-introduced in the late >70's with a flock of 41 provided by the state of Vermont.

There is now a federal regulation that requires that documented fishing vessels will have a person on board who is a certified safety drill conductor. This person is charged with conducting a safety drill and inspection of safety gear once a month. To this end, a safety course was taught in Cutler, and the reports of even the, initially, worst grumblers was positive. A photo in the D.E.C.P. showed the dutiful students floating in their immersion suits in the sea next to their instructor.

May

The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has recommended an increase in any-deer permits for the next season; however no permits will be issued in eight districts in

northern and eastern Maine, where the deer population was very adversely affected by the severe winter of 2000-2001. The loss, state-wide, that year was 50,000, representing 18% of the population.

Doug Dodge has constructed a float for the Patten Cove dock which will make launching the kayaks a lot easier.

The third floor of the Farmhouse has been renovated: a bathroom put in and dormer windows to provide more light and ventilation. It is now quite livable.

According to state records, only four new cases of HIV have been reported in Washington County in the past five years. This figure is not accurate according to some who work first hand with such cases. The reason that the numbers are not reported is that many of the patients choose to be tested out of state.

May 20 - latest lamb count 23, with more on the way.

Gus, the gander gave up the ghost. He had been a widower for sometime, and was terribly lame. A long-lived fowl, he was, but I don't think we'll miss him too much as he was quite an aggressive pest at times. Tom and Jesse found a bargain in the fowl department and ordered an assortment of 10 geese (African, Chinese, Toulouse and Embden) and 15 ducks (Cayuga, Rouen, Peking and Runner). They also decided to try out the Araucana chickens, of which we now have 18 hens and 2 roosters. These unusual birds lay pale blue eggs, and are originally from South America. These additions will certainly add an international flavor to the barnyard!

A long piece in the Wall Street Journal described how the forests of the Northeast have recovered, so much so that 70% of the land that was forested in 1600 is forested today. The comeback started in the mid 19th century, as farmers moved away to more productive lands in the Midwest. Concurrent with that remarkable increase, has been the increase in wildlife: not only the ubiquitous white-tailed deer, but moose, beavers (almost extinct in the area at the end of the 19th century), bears, coyotes, skunks, etc. The wild animals are now vying for some of the same real estate as suburban residents and are becoming a problem. Susan Gardner, for instance, no longer enjoys taking her dog for walks in the countryside around Hamilton, Mass., for fear of coyotes. Lyme disease carried by deer ticks has become a real concern in the entire region.

May 23 - A federal Judge, Gladys Kessler, reversed her decision taken a month ago which had imposed extreme restrictions on New England's groundfishing industry. The ruling had been contested by both fishermen and conservation groups. Her new ruling represents a compromise but still adds further restrictions to what is already in place. The reason for her decisions is that she believes the National Marine Fisheries Service is violating federal law by not being more aggressive in stopping overfishing and accidental catches.

The U.S. Senate has agreed to appropriate \$16 million in funding to assist the groundfish industry in Maine and New England.

Dan Stevens of Casco Bay has developed a hot sauce recipe, which in addition to the traditional ingredients of chili peppers and spices, includes Maine blueberries and seaweed. He calls it "Blue Flame". It sells for \$5.99 for an 8 ozs. bottle, and is available from the W.O. Hesperus company's web-site.

June

Ten bags of wool were delivered to Charlotte, Maine to be woven into blankets.

A Hereford bull was rented for the summer.

Acadian Seaplants, which is based in Nova Scotia, wants to expand into the Moosabec area. The harvest season runs from May 15 to October 1. The work is done from an outboard at low tide. Rakers can collect as much as a ton an hour, and are paid \$26 per wet ton. As it is now, the seaweed will be collected in West Jonesport and trucked to New Brunswick, but if there is enough product the company will eventually consider building a processing plant in Maine. The company representative claims that there are strict quotas and regulations to prevent the rockweed from being depleted. It seems to me that the potential for damage is considerable and the benefits are small.

The bird banding team was back for five visits this year. This was their seventh consecutive year. E.M.C.I. provided the funding.

Bluebirds were nesting in the birch grove in back of the Mansion House and they produced four chicks. They are a colourful and welcome addition. George Herrick thinks they feel more welcome now that he has discouraged the nesting of English Sparrows which otherwise overwhelm them. A Fox Sparrow and a Broad-winged Hawk were additions to the Island's bird list this year.

The lupine was especially beautiful this year. The patch that was planted in 1996 has quadrupled in size.

A big snake in the garden: 27 inches long!

First hay cut June 20.

George Herrick gave a presentation about the island and its history to the Roque Bluffs Community Club.

Carter Newell is conducting a study, funded by E.M.C.I., of the waters off Roque Island Harbor. This will add to the arsenal in our defense against aquaculture leases. And a real threat it is: *NorWest Fin Fish* has applied for a lease which would be in that vicinity. A committee of R.I.G.H.C. members has been put together to do further research, legal and otherwise.

John Higgins and George Herrick interviewed two men, who replied to an ad in the local newspaper, about their recollections of life at the Ed Kelley camp on Lakeman's. John is doing further research and will be writing up an account of the fishing camps.

July

A heat wave on 3rd and 4th of July: 99 degrees at Roque! Everyone took to the sea, which crept up to a temperature of 55 degrees.

Benny Beal's *Stella Ann*, piloted by Dean Alley, was the big winner at this year's 4th of July lobster boat races on Moosabec Reach. Doug Dodge competed in one of the races and came in second.

Ellen Higgins ordered 2 white oak and 12 maple saplings. One maple was planted along the road to fill in the allee, and the other trees were put in around the new Burying Ground. Watering the trees has been simplified by the use of the new water container sacks that one sees around young trees nowadays. More saplings need to be planted around the old cemetery to replace the trees that are dying.

Lost two ducks on the pond, possibly to a mink. The ducks and geese have been transferred to the barnyard, where they look quite comical waddling around.

Two raccoons were trapped and disposed of.

John Higgins drove the *Loon* out to Machias Seal Island on a calm day. It took him 40 minutes.

An architect came to the island at John Higgins' behest to draw up a proposal for a museum building.

Ed Harriman has decided to retire, after five very productive years. His even-tempered personality and practical style brought much needed stability and calm to the whole operation. The major projects accomplished under his aegis were the manager's house and the Burial Ground. He was very keen to implement a forestry management plan, and that will finally be getting underway this fall. He and his wife, Gloria, have added so much to the island: they will be missed! They have agreed to stay on until a new manager is found.

August

Doug and Amy Dodge resigned, which was quite a blow, as we were counting on them to help with the transition to a new manager.

Downeasters did very well in the Winter Harbor lobster boat races, August 10.

It was a good year for raspberries. The blackberries that were planted did not survive.

Members need to be reminded to keep their dogs on a leash when in the area of the farm. One dog chased the sheep who broke down part of a fence; and another killed one of the rabbits.

The sheep barn is being re-shingled and a new cupola built. The picket fence around the garden of the Old Farm House was repainted.

Hay production was 2300 bales (there were no army worms this year!)

The State's "wild" (i.e. low bush) blueberry crop is expected to be about 27% below last year's production. Damage from last year's drought seems to have been the chief cause of the lower yield. Roque's blueberry patches were also not at their best this summer.

September

11th of September: the tail end of hurricane Gustaf brought stormy weather.

There were good reports about the horses. Parker and Reebok are the only two that can be ridden as Hey Boy is now too old. They will look for another one for next year. One of the two milk cows was sold; another will be bought next year.

In 1998, when it became apparent that the wild sea urchins were being depleted by overfishing, R.J. Peacock's of Lubec started an urchin hatchery. The idea is to produce young urchins to sell to urchin farms. The man behind it is Hank Stence. Many of the techniques were learned from the Japanese, with some modifications to respond to the requirements of downeast urchins.

Jonesporters approved a Community Development Grant which will provide \$400,000 to cooperating towns. The money will be used to build crab-picking buildings, now that Federal legislation will not permit crab-pickers to work in their kitchens the way they did traditionally. The Ismails, again, were the ones who helped push through the grant application. Before, the regulations took effect in 1997, there were 192 license holders; there are now only 36 county-wide.

Federal officials will contribute \$2 million towards the purchase of a 22,000 acre conservation easement from the International Paper Co. The land is along the banks of the Machias River and the purpose is to preserve the habitat of the wild Atlantic Salmon. The total cost for the project will be around \$20 million with the rest of the money coming from state and federal governments and from private sources.

Charles Monks found a bat attached to a fly paper strip in the barn. After some research, it appeared to be a female Long-legged *Myotis*. Jesse put it in a cage and was nursing it back to health.

While picnicking on Double-Shot, a guest of Tim Herrick's, Brian Gillespie, threw a stone across the channel at high tide from one part of the island to the other.

The search for a new manager is proceeding well with numerous responses to the advertisements, including some from outside the state.

October

A contract has been signed with *Hawkins & Manchester* to harvest some of our forest. This first year, the harvest will be small and concentrated in the area on the west shore near Bonney Field which has an infestation of spruce bark beetle. Teresa Davis, the consulting forester, will be overseeing the work. It will be a combination of select and clear cutting. There will be no cost to us; and indeed in future years we may make a small profit

While straightening out the linen closet at the Mansion House, Cauley Lukens came across a pillow case with a name tag, marked "G.P.G. 1939". Interesting to reflect on how careful the previous generations were in their housekeeping.

Nannette Herrick spotted a Wilson's Storm Petrel off of Great Head. This was a first for Roque Island. He was probably blown off course by a recent gale, as they are seldom seen close to land.

On the eagle front: both the Anguilla and the Great Head nests produced an eaglet. There is a new nest on Little Spruce.

The Herricks found a trove of *Coprinus comatus*, colloquially known as "shaggy-mane", in the equipment shed. This is quite an ugly looking mushroom, which is delectable to eat.

Meetings were held in Bangor and Augusta about the reclassification of waters around our archipelago to a higher level of conservation protection. Norman Famous submitted papers in favor and testified at the second meeting. As expected there was opposition from aquaculture interests. A ruling is expected in a month or two.

The Beach field was mowed and several large boulders were removed to make that operation easier in the future.

Two ship's logs from Joseph Peabody's ship *George* were being auctioned at Skinner's. They covered voyages from Salem to Calcutta in 1823-24 and 1830-31 under Captain Samuel Endicott. George Herrick put in a bid for \$4000, but did not succeed in acquiring them. He will try and find out where they are destined, and see if we could get a photocopy.

The electric line to the main barn was replaced.

Beal's Island is going to experiment with leasing parts of a clam flat, allowing each clammer to seed, tend and harvest his section. The mastermind behind this innovative approach is Dr. Brian Beal, who recently secured a grant from the National Science Foundation to work on improving marine industries.

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced that federal agencies will provide close to \$1 million to the Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission for further monitoring and research to be done in collaboration with the National Marine Services. Meantime, this season, fewer than a dozen wild salmon returned to the three rivers where federal officials count them!

November

The woodcutters have been setting up shop down near the Patten Cove dock. They have brought over a lot of equipment on an old ferry boat (which used to service Campobello), which is what they will also use to transport the lumber. The outhouse by the old camp has been rebuilt; the old shed has been tidied up, and they brought over another bunk house.

There has been a precipitous decline in the lobster catch in Long Island Sound, which started in 1999. Possible causes may be poisoning from pesticides which were sprayed to combat mosquitoes bearing the West Nile virus. Or it may be the unusually warm water which is the result of several hot summers. Lobsters' thermal limit is 69 degrees, and both in 1999 and this year the temperature was above that for considerable periods. Research is continuing.

A long article in the New York Times described the damage caused by the exploding population of white-tailed deer in the central, southern and eastern parts of the country. Because they eat so many shrubs and seedlings that they are severely affecting the ecology of the forests by stripping them of native vegetation and eliminating niches for other wildlife. Their effect on the vegetation of islands in Maine with a high population can be quite dramatic: hardwood and softwood trees (except spruce) cannot regenerate; native herbaceous plants and wildflowers are replaced by barberry and honeysuckle. Gerry Levigne of the Maine I.F.W department recommends that island deer be kept at a level below 20 per square mile.

There is a plan afoot to turn the former Navy station in Cutler into a residential drug treatment center.

The R.I.G.H.C. annual meeting was held at The Country Club in Brookline. It was decided that voting rights for members would start on their eighteenth birthday; but that the right to use the houses independently would not be granted until their twenty-first birthday.

George Herrick has had two copies made of the 1st volume of the Guest Book, and very handsome they are. This way the original can be preserved from further wear and tear.

A new manager, Bruce Patterson, has been hired. The advertisements brought in over a hundred responses! Initial interviews were conducted with seven applicants, and final interviews on the island with three of the candidates. Mr. Patterson's previous job was

managing a family island in Georgia, where he was for seven years. He will start in on December 14th. He is 47, married, with two grown children.

Matt (Twig) Largess came to the island while Nina Herrick & Andy Schoettle were visiting over Thanksgiving. Mr. Largess specializes in the research of old groves and forests. He was particularly interested in examining the beech forest, and the very old spruce specimens near the ice-pond. He took a number of core samples, using George Herrick's instrument. It is similar to a very long, skinny cork screw, which enables you to extract a reed like sample across the radius of the tree - thus displaying the growth rings.

During a walk down to Patten's cove, Nina Herrick and guests found a kayak, which had been swept ashore. Thrilled with the idea of salvaging the craft to add to the fleet, they hurried back to announce their discovery, only to find out that it was one of the island's that had blown off its perch during a storm. All the more determined to rescue the craft, they returned with bailers, and removed it to higher ground to be picked up later by the tractor.

December

The results of the national election, which returned a Republican majority to Congress, put Maine's two Senators in influential positions: Senator Collins will now have the Chair of the Government Operations Committee, and Senator Snowe will regain her Chair at the Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee, that will control legislation regulating fisheries off the coast of Maine. In the State elections, the Democrats are ascendant. Governor-elect Baldacci will be inheriting a billion dollar shortfall in revenues, which does not bode well for the State. In fact the State assessor recently addressed the Washington County Budget Committee: not only are property taxes going to go up, but shorefront property is going to bear the brunt of it as those land values have increased dramatically.

The Down East Community Hospital had an operating loss of \$1.2 million this year. The new C.E.O., Wayne Dodwell, has announced a restructuring plan that seeks to strengthen the financial and clinical performance of their services. This will involve the elimination of 20 positions, roughly 10% of the staff.

The R.I.G.H.C. committee which was put together to combat the application for an aquaculture lease has been working very effectively. The committee consists of John and Nick Higgins, George Herrick, Chris Cutler, Jud Fisher, Ari Gregg, Gretchen Smith and Ben Alexander. An attorney, Jamie Kilbreth, has been advising them in addition to Norm Famous, the naturalist. The situation at the moment is at a stand-still: Jorn Vad, a Norwegian contractor, working on behalf of *NorWest Fish Farms*, has applied for a lease on a 14 acre site in the area between Lakeman's and Anguilla, on which to have salmon pens. However, the application is not complete as he is required to have two separate sites, and the second site has yet to be surveyed. It is also rumoured that he may have given up on the project and gone back to Norway. If this is the case, it will at least give

us a little more time to try and get the waters in that area reclassified, and thus protected from such operations.

The remaining turkeys were harvested. They were able to keep the weight at 14 - 16 lbs. After processing over 300 birds, Tom Nelson cut himself and had to go to the Machias Hospital emergency room to get three stitches. Six ducklings were also harvested: the three Rouen weighed a little over 3 lbs. each and the three Pekins weighed about 5 lbs. each. They required a lot more work to pluck than the turkeys.

Six of the nine sheep on Little Spruce were brought back to the island. The remaining three chose to stay on the island, refusing all attempts to lure them onto the barge. Those three along with the ten on Lakeman's still have to be retrieved.

Teresa Davis (the forester) came to the island to oversee the start of the wood harvest.

The farmhouse continues to burn a great deal of wood. The old furnace sprung a leak, which Plumber Dave sealed, but it still gobbles up wood at a rate of more than a dump truck load a week. By contrast the one in the Monks' house used about 1/3 as much per day.

The hay supply should be adequate for the winter.

A new butcher will have to be found as Bruce Worcester is getting out of the processing business this spring. In the future, this may mean having to transport the animals some distance.

The compost pile was put away for the winter in the new squash patch. Fencing the compost pile to keep the chickens out has been an improvement.

Northern Sky News, a new monthly publication which focuses on environmental issues in New England and the Maritimes, had a long article on the dramatic change in land ownership that is occurring principally in Washington County, where International Paper is divesting itself of most of what it owns, around 40,000 acres. People are coming in and buying large swaths from which they cut the timber in order to get an immediate return, and then divide the land to resell it for development. There have already been some substantial conservation easements brokered, specifically on land bordering the Machias and Dennys Rivers, but inevitably there will be a substantial change in the landscape and its use.

Bill Monks and his family were in the Mansion House for ten days over Christmas. There was a "Nor'Easter" that brought in 10' of snow. They had an old-fashioned Christmas: cut their own tree, decorated it with popcorn & cranberries & paper loop garlands; had the home-grown Dickensian goose (actually two!) as their feast. Despite the snow, they were able to get down to the Beach, a wonder to see in the frost, and to Patten's Cove, where they examined the woodcutters' set-up. Along the way they passed some of the new

cutting: “it is a change, but necessary”, said W.F.K.M.

2003

January

A temporary boat man/ handy man has been hired. The new manager will be starting in towards the end of the month.

The woodcutters have started their work in earnest. They took one load off as a test run to determine what logistical problems they might encounter. They have completed the clear cut by Bonney Field and done a lot along the ledges toward Bonney Point. At this time they are stockpiling above Bonney Point and will soon start putting the wood down at Patten’s Cove.

No wood has yet been cut for this year’s island projects, as the staff has been short-handed.

A snowy season: by mid-month two storms had come through with no thaw in between.

Maine’s groundfishing fleet is about to receive \$1.79 million in federal monies to compensate the fishermen for lost days at sea, which were caused by the tightened regulations imposed by a federal judge last May. 146 vessels will be receiving benefits. An additional \$281,000 is allocated to reimburse buyers and sellers at the Portland Fish Exchange.

Two colloquialisms picked up in the local press: a ruffed grouse is known as a partridge, and a woodcock as a timberdoodle.

In November, a speaker at the Milbridge Historical Society, Phil Harriman of Cherryfield, recounted the glory days of fishing on the Narraguagus when salmon fishing had its hay day starting soon after WWII up until about 1960. People came up from Boston and New York to stay at the Narraguagus River Inn in Cherryfield and fish the nearby pools where they would catch 12 to 20 pound fish. In stark contrast is the tale of the recent anglers, who bid \$500 plus on E-bay for the opportunity to cast their line in a salmon pen near Bar Harbor. There were six lucky (?) anglers who went out on January 5th. They brought in 99 fish in three hours, each weighing between 20 and 35 pounds. The fish themselves were brood stock, which were too large to go through the processing equipment. Will this activity (I hesitate to call it sport) become a new way to attract tourists in the dead of winter?

A New Hampshire research scientist has used an underwater video camera to see how effective lobster traps are in catching lobsters. Evident on the film, was how clever the lobsters were: only 6% of the lobsters who entered the trap failed to find their way out again!

The last part of January was unusually cold and snowy along the eastern seaboard. The *Peabody* was anchored at Patten's Cove. No ice over Shorey's Cove, but a lot around the dock at Roque Bluffs. The animals were hunkered down: milk cows and horses in the barn, beef cattle under the barn. The only ones out on occasion were the sheep, and the ducks and geese.

Bruce Patterson, the new manager, started in on the 23rd.