



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of the Bay through:

Education

Conservation & Stewardship

Research & Advocacy

Member Events

Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and gifts.

Merrymeeting News is published seasonally and is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay.

For more information, contact:

Coordinator/Organizer
207-666-1118
fomb@comcast.net



IN MEMORY OF ED BENEDIKT

Ed Benedikt, a former state legislator well known for his environmental advocacy, died Sunday February 8th. Ed was an active member of FOMB monitoring water quality at two Bath sites through last summer. In past years Ed sat on our Steering Committee, acted as Treasurer and also chaired a Water Quality subcommittee. Water quality was a prime concern of his and Ed also sampled water for Friends of Casco Bay in the New Meadows River leading him to form the New Meadows Lake Association and to advocate for cleanup of the former Brunswick Naval Air Station.

Ed was born in Vienna on December 27th, 1930; he was seven years old when Nazi Germany annexed Austria and began to extend its genocidal campaign against Jews. He and his sister, Lucie Benedikt, were brought to England in the Kindertransport, the rescue mission that saved ten thousand children from the Holocaust. Benedikt lived in various foster home placements in England for almost five years and came to the U.S. in 1943.

For most of his professional life, Ed was a naval architect working on the design, maintenance and performance of U.S. Naval Ships. He was a graduate of Drexel University and held a Master's degree in Engineering from Pennsylvania State University.

Ed was very committed to the role of government in helping people. He served on many governmental groups and contributed his time and efforts to political campaigns and to the local, state and national Democratic Party. In 1995 and 1996, Edmund was the Maine State Representative for District 49 in Brunswick.

He liked hiking, bicycling, skiing and – most of all – sailing. He has been a sailboat owner for more than sixty years and spent many happy hours sailing on Long Island Sound and, since moving to Maine in 1989, on Casco Bay. He enjoyed travel and has been in many countries and on all seven continents.

Associate Kermit Smyth of FOMB and formerly the Brunswick Conservation Commission said Benedikt's heart lay in his work with the Brunswick Area Citizens for a Safe Environment [BACSE], which he helped found.

BACSE began in 1991, a time when the base was still very much actively used by the Navy. Using \$350,000 in EPA grants and \$336,000 from in-kind contributions from members — much of that from Benedikt — BACSE has been able to employ professional environmental scientists in researching remediation at the former base.



Photo: Friends of Casco Bay

continued from page 1

In a December interview, Benedikt said remediation efforts at the former base have been effective because of “a remarkable coalition and cooperative effort” by former base commanders and staff, members of the EPA, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, and the town of Brunswick.

“Ed has been instrumental in the progress that’s been accomplished at the Naval Air Station base redevelopment,” said Suzanne Johnson, co-chairwoman of the U.S. Navy Restoration Advisory Board and a member of the BACSE board of directors, in a news release issued in December announcing Benedikt was stepping down for health reasons. “His technical expertise, indomitable spirit, ability to bring people together and the huge time and energy commitment he’s given stand us in good stead to continue BACSE’s efforts to ensure safe civilian use of the property.”

“He was just devoted,” said Kathleen McGee of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, with whom he worked on a number of political issues for 20 years. As a lobbyist in Augusta, McGee said she also worked with Benedikt on other issues including taxes and campaign finance reform. “He cared deeply about environmental health. He worked on that until the day he died,” she said.

McGee described Benedikt as “a very very thoughtful, sweet caring man.” “He thought things through,” she said. “He was very conscious of the repercussions of different environmental issues.”

Ed began the now annual winter snowshoe hike of Peterson Canal in North Bath to call attention to this historic landmark, America’s first canal, coincidentally connecting his two loves; Merrymeeting Bay and the New Meadows Lake/River. Benedikt was very curious, thoughtful and engaged. He was a man motivated to enact some positive change and will be sorely missed.

Ed’s family have asked in lieu of flowers, donations be made to FOMB. We thank them and extend our condolences.

To Donate: Go to www.friendsofmerrymeetingbay.org and click on “Get Involved,” then scroll down to “Donations” and click.

A NORTHERN SAW-WHET COMES TO RICHMOND



This little guy or gal visited me from about 8 AM till Just before 5:15. My attention was drawn to a group of perhaps 20 bluejays and a like number of chickadees, white breasted nuthatches, tufted titmouse and juncos mobbing something at about 8. Didn't see who they were harassing.

About an hour later I got in my car and what looked like a robin on steroids popped up from between my car and the garage door and landed in an evergreen against the house. There he/she stayed all day. It would let you get up within 3' and just blink. I probably could have picked it up but didn't.

Later in the day a group of perhaps 30 birds, same species as before but without the bluejays, and one male Cardinal, again got all a Twitter about the owl. The birds would fly close and perch then move on. Very curious they were, but not as aggressive or loud as the earlier mobbing. I did get some video of this behavior.

I called Peter Vickery as I always do when ornithological occasions arise. He came by three times during the day. This wonderful photo is his.

What a fun encounter. Made my week.

Jay Robbins

FROM THE CHAIR

FOMB continues to be one of the only environmental organizations acting in a holistic fashion in order to protect our focus area of concern. Research, advocacy, land protection and education with a healthy sprinkle of membership outreach activities continue as a proven recipe for active volunteer involvement (40% of our members for 4,539 hours) and substantive accomplishments.

To the credit of all those who support the organization with their contributions of time and funds, we are celebrating 40 years of innovative, efficient, effective and exciting work. FOMB was first in the region to develop; comprehensive school outreach programs, a No Child Left Inside effort thorough our Bay Days, a diverse speaker series ranging from internationally known environmentalist Paul Watson to local poet laureate Gary Lawless and our diverse Outside! program. We continue to be a leader in research, advocacy, school outreach, critical habitat protection and environmental community involvement.

We conducted a wide variety of research in 2014, some new and some continuing. In Woolwich we went back to Thwings Pt. where European governance of the Bay was first codified and continued our efforts at documenting the site of Ashley's Tavern, excavating the perimeter of one cellar hole and starting on another before bested by time and poison ivy. We expect to return in 2015.

Working in cooperation with Fluid Imaging Technologies (our May program presenter), we are the first to have collected and photographed zoo and phytoplankton from several locations in the Bay. While many consider alewives the base of our food chain, it's really these critters we can't see with the naked eye that form the foundation of biological productivity. Our carp-tagging project got off the ground literally and figuratively last summer as we implanted radio transmitters in a dozen of these invasive fish and began tracking by car and helicopter. Thus far Bay carp behavior is proving anomalous to studies done elsewhere.

Invasive plants can out-compete natives and control measures are most effective when invasives are limited to a discrete stand. The Bay has one stand of exotic phragmites, on the upper Abbagadasset River. Our concerted effort, spanning several years, to eliminate that stand is proving effective.

After going back several times to "tune up" the survivors, reproducing by seed or tuber, each trip has met with further success. This year we spent a few hours eliminating any survivors found and to our excitement, for the first time, saw a major influx of native vegetation covering the area, once a phragmites monoculture!

In late summer we deeded The Archaeological Conservancy (TAC) our final piece of the Dresden Falls archaeology and rare plant site. This property is now 100% owned by TAC with FOMB holding a conservation easement and Maine Historic Preservation Commission a preservation easement. We have put in a small parking area, moved and fortified the gate and, in the spring, will install identification signs. Perhaps FOMB will use the property for our expanding education effort. Aside from our two Bay Days, school visits expanded approximately 400% to just over 80. Our volunteers reached over 1,900 students and 48 teachers in 12 schools. Some of our newer critters visiting kids include a snowshoe hare, ruffed grouse, striped skunk and great grey owl. FOMB's menagerie is not limited to students, scouts and seniors but available for public viewing at the Bowdoinham Public Library.

Our Clean Water Act lawsuit protecting Atlantic salmon and shad in the Kennebec River continues after a favorable decision from the US Court of Appeals. Further, a three year investigation into the health and safety of "smart" electric meters resulted in a December decision by the Public Utilities Commission; long but fraught with errors. The decision is being appealed to the Maine Supreme Court. Those who are studying the issue well consider these meters harbingers of an electronic silent spring. Widespread deployment of the microwave emitting meters takes a growing urban problem of electrosmog, harmful to plants, wildlife and people, and expands it to rural Maine.

Thanks to our supporters, Steering Committee and staff for making FOMB accomplishments possible.

Respectfully, Ed Friedman, Chair

A REMEMBRANCE OF BRUCE DICKINSON, BY JAY ROBBINS

Bruce E. Dickinson (1946 – 2014), late of Richmond, spent his entire life within a rock's throw of the Kennebec River. A true river rat, Bruce descended from the legendary Merrymeeting Bay Preble and Parks families. Fishers and ferry-men all. Bruce was always happiest when out on, in or upon the water, for there was adventure and true beauty.

Years ago, Bruce and a first mate took a small boat and went looking for an ice flow to ride. After securing their boat and climbing aboard their new craft, they set out for Merrymeeting Bay. Well, someone ashore spotted them and alerted the Marine Patrol. The long and short of it was that Bruce, as Captain of the vessel, was ticketed for operating an unregistered watercraft. In Court they told how that they were not in distress, as evidenced by the fact that they were seated in lawn chairs and smoking cigars when the MP pulled alongside. The Judge laughed and dismissed the case.

On another occasion, during a long frigid open winter, Bruce decided to test himself. He strapped on his ice skates in Augusta and skated all the way through to Brunswick. Can one imagine a more glorious day on Merrymeeting Bay?

His family says "Bruce had many interests, he loved the outdoors, being on the river and traveling, as long as it was no further than Bowdoinham." "Bruce's love of the River was a huge part of his life. He sought out the adventure and always noticed the continual changes he encountered on each trip. Every season held interests but winter was his favorite. He always looked forward to hiking around the Island, checking ice formations in the Bay and of course hopping ice cakes. Bruce had his first boat at the age of eight. From that time on, The Kennebec River, Swan Island and Merrymeeting Bay were treasured times for him that held lasting memories."

Bruce's daughter feels these poems characterize her father.

*The Song of the River
Ends not at her banks,
But in the hearts
Of those who have loved her.
{Buffalo Joe}*

*The first river you paddle
Runs through the rest of your life,
It bubbles up in pools and eddies
To remind you of who you are
{Lynn Noel}*



Although not a FOMB member, Bruce generously requested donations be made in his memory to us. We received over \$1,000 from and offer thanks and condolences to, the following donors [listed in no particular order]: Donna & Andre Dionne, Judith & Richard Baker, Andrea Kincer, Michelle Snowden, Linda Gray, Judith & William Debray, Jay & Lisa Robbins, Linda & Curt Lebel, Buell Miller, Sylvia & Harold Averell, Janet & Darnell Trott, Tamara & James Leavitt, William Waters, Barbara & Peter Vickery, Marjorie Rackliff, Dorothy Wallace, Joyce & Max Pinkham, Christine & Alton Wilson, Marjorie Adams, Eunice Sargent, Judith & Jack White, Martha & Ron Emmons, Jennifer Umerhind, Jane Frost & Lloyd Ferriss, Michael Buker, Lee Damioli & Denise Jasmine, Janice & Richard Ashcroft, Marcia & Mark Schools, Sarah Lancaster, Gail & Nolan Harrison, Yvette Dickinson, Tracy & Dana Tuttle, Tonia & Lawrence Laliberte, Andrea Rossignol and Prudence & David Brown.

More photos of Bruce may be found on our web site using *About the Bay/Merrymeeting People* tabs.

THOUGHTS FROM BORIS ...

In 1975 Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (FOMB) began its mission to preserve, protect, and improve the unique ecosystems of Merrymeeting Bay. Since inception, FOMB has managed to preserve more than 11 miles of shoreline by securing conservation easements, purchasing land, and helping other organizations to protect land. We continue to make great advances in providing lasting wellness to the Bay.

My service on FOMB's steering committee began in February, 2014. Learning about the holistic approach FOMB takes to our mission has provided a wealth of knowledge to aid my future public and nonprofit work. With active participation of 160 volunteers and financial support of more than 380 homes, our organization succeeds in water quality monitoring and other research, advocacy for those creatures without a voice, education in and out of the classroom, and conservation of shore and uplands. The members who run, organize, and maintain FOMB are loyal and ready to make decisions for the benefit of the Bay and for future generations.

As a senior of the Mount Ararat class of 2014, the completion of a capstone project was required. Armed with a passion for science and mathematics, service with FOMB was an obvious opportunity. Sarah Cowperthwaite, a fellow steering committee member, coordinated with the committee and after a selection process I began my service. Our organization's efforts in both research and education were of keen interest to me. I wanted to see kids learn about the Bay and I wanted to take an active role in researching Merrymeeting Bay.

During the winter months of 2014 I shadowed Tom Walling, another steering committee member, as he taught elementary school classes about Merrymeeting Bay and the creatures that live there. These classes, led by enthusiastic and experienced volunteers, aim to get children excited, because continued generations of people who care about the Bay are necessary to sustain this important resource.



Pileated Woodpecker. Photo: Ed Friedman

In spring and summer months, water samplers are trained to collect and record dissolved oxygen, conductivity, E. coli, and fecal coliform data. Not only did I get to participate in this ongoing work, but I also was given sampling responsibilities at four locations along the Androscoggin River. In addition to field work, I assisted volunteer coordinator Kermit Smyth with sample processing in the Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Lab where our equipment is set up. Since 2003, our sampling data strongly indicate the Androscoggin meets DEP's Class B standard for water quality. The continued collection of these data support a proposed river upgrade from class C to class B. This river upgrade would do great things to maintain the health of the Androscoggin and Merrymeeting Bay because it prevents any backsliding in water quality.

As a high school project I could not have asked for more. I presented to my peers what I learned about our organization, as well as the scientific knowledge I gained from water sampling, and the results were spectacular. Being involved in this organization has opened my eyes to a new world of opportunity. Beginning in January, I will be leaving the organization to pursue a double major in applied mathematics & computer science. I hope one day to return to the public sector where I can use my skills to aid in the kind of work Friends of Merrymeeting Bay accomplishes. - Boris Clark

Ed. Note: Boris has moved to NYC to continue his studies. We thank him and wish him well. FOMB reserves one Board position for a student. Please contact Ed Friedman if you know any likely candidates.

2014 TREASURER'S REPORT

While each year is different, 2014 was noteworthy for some large expenditures drawn in part on receipts from previous years. Staff and the carp study were two major expenses whose income did not show in 2014 but were largely funded from previous grant income. Our archaeology expenses for professional services 7K were the largest expense for professional services however we received over 5K in donations towards this program. Keeping this in mind, FOMB was indeed a non-profit organization last year: income of \$49K was shy of \$76K in cash outlays resulting in an operating loss for the year.

Combining cash in the bank with mutual funds invested with Calvert Social Investments, FOMB's total pool of liquid funds at year-end was \$245,564 of which \$42,000 is restricted in our land stewardship account. We had carried part of the Houdlette parcel as a land asset for several years. In transferring this \$172K parcel to The Archaeological Conservancy, our net asset value dropped back to its typical cash value.

As usual, most of our expenses [60%] went to staffing but nearly all staff time is attributed to various programs. We continue to spend very little on administration costs [5%] and fundraising [7%]. As always, FOMB maintains focus on projects directly benefiting the Bay. Members continue to get a big bang for the buck supporting us.

Respectfully Submitted, Nate Gray, Treasurer

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Income - \$48,728 | Expenses - \$75,818 |
| Membership - 39% | Programs - 88% |
| Annual Appeal - 33% | Fundraising - 7% |
| Grants - 17% | Administration - 5% |
| Other - 11% | |

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Media

Print: (Over 17 articles-US & Canada) Atlantic salmon, Outings, Archaeology, Speaker Series, Education

Volunteers

Approx. 4,539 volunteer hours (550 days)
161 volunteers

Grants

\$13,400: Education, Research,

Membership

398 households (64 new members)
Speaker Series - (298 people)
Outside 2014 (Paddle Series & Walks - 125 people)
Newsletters - 4

Outreach Presentation

Maine Maritime Museum Cruises & Paddles
(80 participants)

Primary Partners

Friends of Casco Bay
National Environmental Law Center
The Archaeological Conservancy
Kennebec Reborn
Avian Haven
Maine Coalition to Stop Smart Meters
Bowdoin College Environmental Studies
Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Endangered Species Coalition
Fluid Imaging Technologies
Stantec Consulting
Androscoggin River Alliance
Maine Maritime Museum
Department of Marine Resources
Bowdoinham Public Library
Maine Historic Preservation Commission
Maine Land Trust Network
Department of Environmental Protection
Patagonia Outlet, Freeport
Chops Point School
Environment Maine
Brunswick TV 3
Merrymeeting Arts Center

WE NEED YOU! PLEASE SUPPORT OUR IMPORTANT WORK

FOMB Leadership

Our accomplishments are due to the hard work of dedicated volunteers, especially those who serve on our committees. If you want to get involved and serve, please contact the committee chair or coordinator. We always welcome member input and we'd love for you to join us!

Steering Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair (Bowdoinham)
Nate Gray, Treasurer (Freeport)
Tom Walling (Bowdoinham)
Steve Musica (Richmond)

Education Committee

Betsy Steen, Co-Chair, 666-3468
Tom Walling, Co-Chair, 666-5837

Conservation and Stewardship Committee

Chair Vacancy

Membership and Fundraising Committee

Nate Gray, Chair, 865-9377

Research and Advocacy Committee

Ed Friedman, Chair, 666-3372

Coordinator/Organizer

Interim Coordinator: Kathleen McGee

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • PO Box 233 • Richmond, Maine 04357

Membership Levels

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000+ Sturgeon | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Striped Bass | <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Smelt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$750 American Eel | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Shad | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Wild Salmon | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Alewife | |

Name _____

Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Send information about volunteer opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like a sticker |

\$7 Enclosed (optional) for a copy of *Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Land Owners* [\$5 for book, \$2 for postage].



Thanks to Will Zell from Zellous.org for newsletter layout.

2014 Accomplishments continued

Education

Two Bay Days (377) students) 9 schools
School Visits (81 visits, 1934 students, 48 teachers, 12 schools)
Non-School Visits (145 people)
Web site updates

Conservation and Stewardship

Dresden Falls/Houdlette Conservation Project easement completed
Dresden Falls property transferred to TAC
Additional easements in progress
Continuous landowner outreach
Ongoing stewardship activities
Monitor all easement & fee properties

Research

Assisted MDIF&W with bald eagle breeding/nest surveys
Archaeological probe of Dunlop/Maxwell/Fawcett
Water Quality Monitoring – 26 sites
Thwings Pt. Archaeology Dig
Plankton Survey
Carp Tagging Study
Phragmites Maintenance

Advocacy (postings, letters, testimony, etc)

Lawsuit-Atlantic salmon CWA
Healthy Rivers/Healthy Gulf promoting safe fish passage
Smart Meters
Posting Fish Consumption Advisories



Friends of Merrymeeting Bay
P.O. Box 233
Richmond, ME 04357

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
ORGAINIZATION

PAID

PERMIT NO. 1
Dresden, ME

Printed on Genesis Writing. 100% Recycled, 100% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine-free.



Photo:Wikipedia

of habitat and host plants. Sadly, providing host plants in Maine cannot make up for destruction of winter habitat by illegal logging in Mexico. Yet, I'll continue to toss milkweed pods into the field, and hope.

- Judith Clarke

MISSING MONARCHS

Some time after moving to Dresden in 2004, I heard from a neighbor that the field behind our house used to be full of milkweed and butterflies. Apparently, repeated mowing had virtually eliminated the milkweed and the butterflies were now fewer. I assume he must have meant Monarchs.

That began my campaign to make the property as butterfly-friendly as possible, especially for Monarchs: the field would be mowed no more than once a year and I would try to repopulate the milkweed. Every fall, I threw armfuls of milkweed pods into the field, hoping to recreate what my neighbor had seen. In the garden, I planted monarda, butterfly bush and Echinacea.

Now, ten years later, the field is full of milkweed. Last year I saw one Monarch, this year, three. I realize this precipitous decline is widespread, mostly related to loss