

# Merrymeeting News

The Newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • P.O. Box 233 • Richmond Maine 04357

## SUMMER 2003

*To Preserve, Protect  
and Improve the  
Unique Ecosystems  
of Merrymeeting Bay.*

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and grants.

### Education

Hands Around the Bay, Speaker Series, field trips.

### Conservation & Stewardship

Protecting natural resources through private and public ownership, easements and stewardship.

### Membership Events

Paddle tours of the Bay, field trips, conservation meetings, potluck suppers and shoreline clean-ups.

### Research and Advocacy

Water quality, data collection, toxics, fisheries restoration.

### 2003 Steering Committee

Dee and Clancy Cummins, Richmond  
Steve Eagles, Dresden  
Ed Friedman, Bowdoinham  
Kathleen McGee, Bowdoinham  
Bill Milam, Woolwich  
Leon Ogradnik, Harpswell  
Steve Pelletier, Topsham  
Steve Taylor, Bowdoinham

### On-Line

<http://knox.link75.org/mmb/fomb@gwi.net>

## ABBAGADASSETT LANDS PROTECTED

FOMB, in partnership primarily with the Maine chapter of The Nature Conservancy [TNC], recently protected an additional 67-acres of land with nearly a mile of frontage along the Abbagadasset River in Bowdoinham. These acquisitions add to over 500 acres of already protected conservation land along this tributary of the Bay. One 30-acre parcel [Gallant] is split evenly between upland and wetland and boasts over 3500 feet of tidal frontage on the Abbagadasset River and Beals Stream. Bounded on the north by Rt. 24 the parcel contains some beautiful plantation white pine as well as the historic Hall cemetery. The other piece [Peddicord] is approximately 37 acres about 10 of which is wetland and is located on the east side of the river just south of the old mill pond at head tide.

Protection for both parcels was initiated by FOMB with bridge purchase funding provided by TNC until transfer to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife [MDIF&W]. The Gallant parcel will be managed by MDIF&W in conjunction with the adjacent wildlife management area lands it owns to the east. The Peddicord parcel is the first of a number of conservation efforts underway in that area [that use a variety of methods] to be completed. The Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition of which FOMB, TNC, & MDIF&W are all members, will be seeking support from the Land for Maine's Future Program to help complete the projects.

We owe a great deal to the sellers, John and Vera Gallant and Margaret Peddicord who in the face of a good deal of pressure to sell off their respective properties for development decided to ensure the future protection of their land for generations to come. This is vital tidal riverine habitat that could not have been protected without the cooperation of both the owners and our partners at TNC and in the Coalition.

Building protection efforts around these riparian zone conservation corridors is critical to the survival of large numbers of species. It is our riverine corridors that contain the largest percent of biodiversity we have. Home to populations of wide-ranging mammals such as fisher, bobcats and otter the tidal riverine habitat also is home to a multitude of threatened and globally rare plants and provides spawning and nursery habitat to a variety of anadromous fish like the alewives, shad, and Atlantic salmon. To protect these populations for the future, conservation of this critical habitat is essential.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our river corridor conservation initiatives and would like to learn more about the options that would best suit your needs please contact Ed Friedman at 666-3372 or [edfomb@gwi.net](mailto:edfomb@gwi.net).



*A part of the Gallant shoreline*

*photo by Ed Friedman*

## MUSSELS REDEPLOYED

After three years and much frustration we have successfully redeployed caged fresh water mussels [*Elliptio complanata*] in the Kennebec River to fairly evaluate their use as biomonitors of possible dioxin & furan discharges from the SAPPI pulp mill in Hinckley. Past newsletters available on our web site have detailed the methodology [Merrymeeting News, Summer & Fall 2000] and problems we have with the DEP program [Spring 2003]. Our message as we fought this battle with the DEP and successfully lobbied the Natural Resource Committee [NRC] at the legislature was always: transparency of process, outside peer review, and scientific & legal defensibility all of which we thought lacking in the DEP's monitoring program. Even near the very end the DEP attempted to hire a contractor [which they were directed by the NRC to do] who had the least experience [3 past projects-none like this] instead of our suggested and previous consultant Applied Biomonitoring [over 60 projects] who are the leaders in this field.

The end result was something the DEP could not refuse and was a reluctant sacrifice on our part that we felt necessary to maintaining the project's integrity. FOMB offered to pay for the more qualified contractor [\$10,000] who was now also prepared to do a similar project on the Androscoggin River [in the course of the Augusta lobbying International Paper (IP) had become interested in this technology and asked us if we would assist them if they too tried out the mussels] if DEP paid for the tissue chemistry work



*Kennebec caged mussels overboard.*

*Photo by Mike Barden*

from the Kennebec & IP for the work from the Androscoggin. Dioxin analysis has been costing about \$1,000/sample from the University of Maine at Orono [UMO] and we were looking at 60 samples.

Our becoming a financial partner with both the DEP & IP was conditional upon both groups agreeing to simultaneous release of data from the labs to all partners and the consultant [the more eyes to check it, the better] and also that that any appropriately qualified outside lab be used but not the UMO lab that had a history of questionable data, and the inability to deliver in a timely fashion. To their credit, these conditions were not a big issue for IP who in fact already used an outside lab. They did however prove to be tough concessions for the state but ones that ultimately they acquiesced to. The DEP issued an RFP to a number of labs for all their dioxin work [approximately 350 samples] and found that prices in the outside world were in fact in the \$500-\$700 range per sample all with quick turn around times. In settling on a lab that submitted a bid of \$515/sample the state has just saved about \$125,000 in this year alone, a savings directly attributable to the lobbying efforts of and pressure from FOMB & the Maine Toxics Action

Coalition [MTAC].

Eighteen cages of 20 mussels each have been deployed in a gradient type design starting close to the SAPPI outfall pipe and extending up and downstream. Thirty-six cages of 20 were deployed above and below IP on the Androscoggin River. Mussel collection and sorting efforts were exceptional and so size range of mussels for each river falls within just a 3mm spread helping to keep variability between individuals to an absolute minimum. Cages will be retrieved October 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> and mussels weighed, measured & shucked before sending tissues out for analysis. If you get this newsletter in time and can give a helping hand give me a call at 666-3372.

Thanks to all those who pitched in: Dan Burk, Fred Sargent, Rob Steen, Ed Friedman, Kathleen McGee, Kermit Smyth, Mike & Sandra Salazar, Steve Taylor, Tracy Gregoire, Helen Boynton, David Stuntz, Barry Mower, Judd Thompson, Petey Ambrose, Clancy Cummins, Leon Ogrodnik, Will Brune, John Cronin, Zac Glidden, Mike Langelier, John Reynolds, Tom Griffin, Mike Barden, and especially Trevor Hunt and Scott Kinney for accommodating our crew in their facility.

*Ed Friedman*

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### **Merrymeeting News**

is the newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 223, Richmond, Maine 04357, and is published seasonally.

*Merrymeeting News* is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay. For information call Ed Friedman, Chair, at 666-3372.

## PADDLING BRIEFS

On July 24<sup>th</sup> about a dozen of us met down at Brunswick's Water Street boat launch to paddle the longest section of the Androscoggin River Source to the Sea Trek. Utilizing well some extra time ashore while our return shuttles were set in place, Naomi Schalit of Maine Rivers spoke well of the impediments dams can pose to the restoration of our anadromous fish species and also of the continued struggle between pulp mills who would lower dissolved oxygen levels in the Androscoggin to allow for possible expansion and conservation groups who would like to see oxygen levels rise and mill discharges in to the river greatly reduced or eliminated.

Following Naomi, yours truly gave the crowd more information on the Bay then they probably wanted to know and then we set off down river with a weather eye out for stray thunderstorms. The weather turned out to be great, an overcast in effect to beat the heat as we paddled with tide and wind [a rare occurrence] for most of the 5 hour trip to N. Bath. It was a rare 15-minute segment when we did not have at least 1 eagle in sight and at one point just above Lines Island we sat directly below a mature eagle while about 100 yards to starboard a dozen seals occupied a favorite haul out.

Over the years I've seen many sturgeon jump in the Bay but more often than not it is out of the corner of my eye or catching the last part of their descent. On this trip however I was treated to a full frontal leap, 12 o'clock high as it were and close enough to almost pick out the barbels next to it's mouth.

We all had a great day and wonderful wildlife tour. The river has cleaned up a lot but still has many problems and as Naomi pointed out, the very real possibility of backsliding if our vigilance is relaxed. With your continued support we will do our best to stay on the case.

Frank Burroughs led 3 evening paddles this summer that were sparsely attended but thoroughly enjoyed by those who did participate. The groups explored the Chopp Pt./ Lines Island area, Little Swan and Swan Islands and the Cathance River. These are relaxing times on the river in good company and hopefully next season more of you will unwind with us on a summer evening.

*Ed Friedman*

## FOMB STEERING COMMITTEE SEEKS ACTIVE MEMBERS

FOMB's Annual Membership Meeting will occur – as it does every year – in December. Our Steering Committee and officers are elected or re-elected annually by the organization's membership at the annual meeting: democracy at its finest! We're always seeking new Steering Committee members excited to devote some time and energy to one of Maine's most vibrant and respected volunteer-led organizations. This year our Steering Committee is in more than the usual transition and we will need to replace several members who are stepping aside. We have our usual full plate of research, advocacy, conservation, and various and sundry other activities to move forward, along with some critical organizational development thinking and planning to finish.

FOMB's Steering Committee governs the organization by setting the annual budget and authorizing expenditures, planning our work for the year, guiding and participating in projects, and in general monitoring and directing FOMB's activities. Members participate in monthly Steering Committee meetings and in the work of FOMB's issue and organizational committees (Research and Advocacy; Conservation and Stewardship; Education; and Membership and Fundraising). Expect to spend five to ten hours a month, laugh, work, learn, and get your hands dirty (literally or figuratively). We are an active group not merely advisory and we welcome your participation. Contact Nominating Committee Chair Steve Taylor at 666-8919 if you're interested.

## SPEAR SEDGLEY REMEMBERED

One of Bowdoinham's lifelong residents, Spear Sedgley, passed away on June 23, 2003 at 84 years of age. The Sedgley family resided on the Ridge Road on a small farm. Spear, as a young man, along with his wife, Alicia, purchased a 200-acre dairy farm also located on the Ridge Road, which he ran until the late 1950's.

In 1957, Spear purchased the property on what is now known as Island View Lane. He and his wife ran a sporting motel to accommodate waterfowl hunters. Also located on the property was a trap and skeet field at which many state-sanctioned skeet shoots were held. Spear's guide service was one of the best and some noteworthy names, such as Spike and Buck Dumaine and Steve Powell were among his clients. The Dumaine's were at one time the owners of the Boston and Maine Railroad, and would come by rail and sleep in a Pullman car in Richmond. Spear was also very friendly with George Soule, who was famous as the designer and maker of all of LL Bean's cork decoys. Some noteworthy guides that worked for Spear were Buster Prout, Ron Burrell, and Larry "Bun" Carr.

So another chapter in Merrymeeting's long history has passed. We will miss Spear, who in his later years could not get around on the tidal flats to hunt, but would always offer a helping hand to other duck hunters in need of a repair job for broken decoys, or a rotted sculling float.

Spear supported Ducks Unlimited and was a friend of Merrymeeting Bay.

*Chet Gillis*

*Editors note: Spear's family asked that those wishing to remember Spear in a special way might contribute to FOMB. We received over \$450.00 in his memory for which we thank the donors and his family. E.F.*

## TIDINGS

Twenty five or thirty years ago, sitting out on the Bay and waiting on an October day to dawn on me, I could listen to roosters blaring away from their stations all over Bowdoinham: Brown's Point, Center Point, Pork Point; more faintly, back inland, from the White Road, the Carding Machine Road and from on up toward Richmond. Also from over in Dresden and Woolwich. The voices of roosters, like those of dogs, have a degree of individuality. An attentive person with a good ear and not too much on his mind could have learned, for example, to distinguish between the Pork Point rooster and his colleague over in Dresden. Who knows--it might have proven useful for purposes of navigation on one of those chill fall mornings, when the Bay was socked in by a thick white mist, no more than treetop high but dense as any downeast fog.

Dawns go on dawning, but I seldom hear roosters when I am out on the Bay now, or anywhere else for that matter, unless I am in earshot of my own. Their crowing, one could say with approximate accuracy, has been with us from the dawn of civilization. It spread outward from Southeast Asia, where jungle fowl were first domesticated, moved northward into China and westward into the Fertile Crescent, then onward to all the shores of the Mediterranean, and eventually throughout Eurasia. It has echoed across the decks of Spanish caravels, Irish famine ships, and the British East Indiamen, and been a reminder of home or hope to the eager, heartbroken, intrepid, fearful, wretched, or merely seasick millions who, voluntarily or otherwise, left old worlds behind them and sailed out toward newer ones, in North, Central, and South America; Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. For centuries, this racket was simply part of the white noise of human settlement, audible from villages, farms, towns, stockades, and mining camps; from around the edges of cities and even from their centers; from lonely outposts on godforsaken frontiers, or from rocky headlands where the lighthouse tenders kept their small flocks, and consoled their solitude with fresh eggs, the neighborly, clucking, scolding domesticity of hens, and the great, brazen, auroral annunciations of roosters.

The usual suspects--the economies of scale, the frenetic pace of high tech life, our growing remoteness, which is both geographical and generational, from agriculture and animal husbandry--have, I suppose, contributed to the silencing of the roosters, locally and nationally. But there must be something more to it, because these same factors have not put an end to vegetable gardens--certainly not in

our corner of the country. And yet a few hens and a rooster are much less trouble than a quarter acre kitchen garden, and they produce for you year-round. The product--a genuinely fresh egg, with its vivid, tumid yolk and a shell that, when boiled, clings to the white like paint to a clapboard --makes its store-bought counterpart look and taste like something synthesized from soy extract, water, and a sickly yellow dye.

And chickens have a great deal else to recommend them. It is easier to say what they will not eat--coffee grounds, banana peels, citrus rinds, and, alas, oversized zucchini--than what they will. Their omnivorousness exceeds that of any household garbage disposal system on the market, thereby eliminating the need for you to purchase one, and saving you money, electricity, and guilt, and, as a collateral benefit, generating a manageably low quantity of exceedingly high quality manure. You feed the excess produce of your garden to your chickens, and feed the excess produce of your chickens to your garden, and thus participate in the great cycle of life.

Individually, chickens tend to be interesting only to children. But a flock of them has its own uncannily familiar sociology--its pecking order, its nattering mother hens and swaggering cock of the walk, to say nothing of the occasional hen who grows spurs, like a rooster, and the occasional rooster who doesn't. From time to time a hen succumbs to the creative impulse, becomes irritable and hard to live with, withdraws to a nesting box and broods in moody solitude, sometimes managing to hatch out a clutch of chicks, a form of pure self-expression.

Roosters are something of a caricature of masculinity, both as masculinity likes to see itself and as it is seen by femininity. Thus, they are chivalric, brave, regal, vigilant, ultra-patriarchal, and ruthlessly punctual. And thus, they are also loud, vain, insecure, inexhaustibly lecherous and illimitably full of themselves. Their resemblance to most of our successful candidates for high political office is notable, although roosters, when push comes to shove, do not normally cave in or chicken out. This explains why hens, while plainly unimpressed, put up with their incumbent rooster, and fails to explain why voters go on listening with credulity to the same old cockle-doodle-do.

And so, my fellow Americans, let us rebuild our



*Rooster*

*Roosters are something  
of a caricature of  
masculinity.*

henhouses, purchase ourselves a few hens and a rooster. The benefits are nutritional, gustatory, educational, environmental, economic, and horticultural. They also embrace our deepest cravings. Christian piety has long seen the rooster--the cock whose bold call banishes the darkness--as a symbol of Christ, which is why we have Easter egg hunts. Pagan carnality has seen the same cock as a symbol of something rather different, but equally central to its program. Taken all in all, the platform of the poultry party addresses our national problems more directly, and acknowledges the longings of a broader spectrum of the American population, from pornographers to evangelists, than anything the Democrats, Republicans, or Ralph Nader have yet come up with.

But as things now stand, the overwhelming majority of chickens in this great nation are buried alive in vast prisons-vile places, full of vermin and stale, fetid air, an atmosphere of squalor and despair, presided over by greed and justified by the bottom line. Was it for this that the first Plymouth Rock rooster proclaimed that it was a new day in a new land, as the sun came up over Cape Cod Bay? Was it for this that our native-bred Bolshevik, the Rhode Island Red, became the very voice of Providence?

Well, maybe that is a good deal more than enough. There is something bracing and cheering about the voices of roosters--the falsettos of bantams, or the great clarion call of a big leghorn. In Shakespeare, Old Hamlet's ghost, and other tormented spirits that roam the night, fade away upon the crowing of a cock. In the gospel of Luke, Peter is told that he will deny Christ three times before the cock crows. Peter goes on to do just that, and the sound of that particular rooster on that particular morning must have been as cold and comfortless to him as any sound ever heard by any man on this earth.

To an ordinary mortal in ordinary circumstances, the sound still seems in some way portentous and in some other way deeply familiar, even when we do not hear it often. *Listen up! Rise and shine!* it says to us, and to the sun itself. We need to hear it.

*Franklin Burroughs*  
*Tidings is a regular feature of Merrymeeting News*

## A CAPITAL JOINT VENTURE

In 2000 FOMB led the effort to protect the spectacular Choice View Farm [CVF] in Dresden near the mouth of the Eastern River. Partial funding for the purchase came from the Lands for Maine's Future Board following our successful grant application. Tied to the contribution of LMFB money to any project is the requirement for an archaeological survey by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission [MHPC]. The survey was performed last summer and while no traces of the "Lost Town of Cork" were found the crew did find stone flakes used in tool making that probably dated back 9-10,000 years to the late Paleo Indians who inhabited this area after the glaciers receded [see Merrymeeting News, Fall 2002 available on our web site].

Arthur Spiess, chief archaeologist with MHPC was interested in returning to the site for a more thorough excavation and we were interested in pursuing this as well. FOMB provided \$2500 in match funding to enable the MHPC field crew to work this site for a week in August. We also organized and provided volunteers to assist the MHPC crew and asked the volunteers for a donation to help offset our costs. It was nice to hear from Art afterwards that: **"The Choice View Farm dig was the most successful that we have ever run in terms of public participation, thanks mostly to your scheduling and to the use of 1/2 day time slots. Thank you again for all the logistical support, and the electronic photos from the Choice View Farm dig. My crew and I will look back on that dig with some fondness for years. The volunteer participation worked out as well as we could have dreamed it would."**

We managed to drum up approximately 40 volunteers [ $\frac{1}{2}$  existing members and  $\frac{1}{2}$  not] and signed up about 22 new members. We asked for minimal donations in contrast to the Popham Dig where participants are charged \$400-\$600 or Earthwatch Digs that cost about \$1100/week. The CVF dig actually cost approximately \$9,000 and we hope it will be the first of many cooperative efforts with MHPC as we explore further this aspect of the Bay's history. Almost without exception volunteers had a great time, learned a lot and found further evidence of a Paleo Indian encampment [see accompanying article]. To continue this kind of work we will need to provide matching funds so if you are interested in future capital joint ventures like this, we request and will welcome the receipt of your joint venture capital.

*Ed Friedman*

*Our special thanks to Jim Connolly, Regional Biologist for MDIF&W; the Burks & Coopers for neighborhood catering; & Clancy Cummins, master scheduler. Thanks also to the MHPC staff & associates: Joe Bagley, Bill Burgess, Maxine, Vicki, and Heman Collins, Ryan Dumais, Jim Guillemette, Allyson Hanscomb, Kaare Mathiasson, Harbour Mitchell, John and Eric Mosher, Arthur Spiess, & Liz Troutman. And to our site volunteers: Auta Main, Seri & Wheeler Rudolph, Kathy Sylvester, Brian Hirst, Victor McNett, Linda Heller, James Boyer, Judith Hunnewell, Marji Greenhut, Dianne Gutscher, Pat Friedman, Nicolle Littrell, Valerie Woodworth, Cheryl Yeaton, Kathleen Kenny, Jack Halpin, Liza & Laurel Nelson, Cori Messenger, Ben Kahn, Laura Plourde, Ed Benedikt, Deb & Dan Burk, Ed Friedman, Fran Ludwig, Bob & Diane Weggel, Kermit Smyth, Steve Eagles, Ryan Ward, Candy Kippenbuerger, Bill Milam, Melanie Zimmer, Piers Beirne, Kent Cooper, Henry & Cindy Lamoreau & Larry, Lauren & Doug Kabot.*

## A CHILDHOOD DREAM COME TRUE

*--A Volunteer from Belfast  
gets Down and Dirty at the  
Merrymeeting Bay Dig*

When my friend, environmental writer and adventuress, Pat Friedman told me she was going on an archaeological dig of a 9,000 year old Paleo-Indian site, I nearly dropped the phone. I found myself blurting out, "Can I go, too? Please, PLEASE!"

I had always wanted to do something like this since I was a little girl growing up in upstate New York. At that time, there was an important excavation of a Mohawk "castle" that was taking place near my Grandparent's farm. Alas, I was too young and inexperienced to know how to get involved. Now about a week before my 34th birthday, I was finally getting my chance! As a performer and writer, the dig held additional significance to me to provide inspiration for a theatrical piece I had been developing about Penobscot dancer, Molly "Spotted Elk" Dellis. The opportunity to dig into the earth and somehow connect with Molly's ancestral roots felt too exciting to miss.

On an ultra-muggy Wednesday morning and under a cross-looking marbled gray sky, Pat and I weaved through a trail in an expansive farm field overlooking Merrymeeting Bay. I had never been to this area before and from its natural beauty alone, I could see why the Indians wanted to camp here.

We were warmly greeted by Art Spiess, whom I couldn't resist referring to as "Maine's Indiana Jones." Art briefed us about the site's background, introduced us to the rest of the team--comprised of staffers and another volunteer--and showed us some of the artifacts found at this site! "We're not looking for pottery, here" he cautioned, "Chert, flint and jasper stone shavings are what we're after." I have never even heard of chert or jasper!

Art was the epitome of patience as he addressed my barrage of questions about anything and everything pertaining to this dig and all other digs in the state since the beginning of time! Art then handed me a pair of his very own gloves and put us to work!

Work--I could hardly believe my good fortune! Not only was I being allowed to touch the ancient treasure-laden soil, but to screen it and pick through it. I hadn't been this happy to get dirty since I was about eight years old.

I started working with staffer Ryan Dumais finishing



*A good time was had by all*

*Photo by Ed Friedman*

digging up a remaining section of one of the corner quarters. He warned me we probably wouldn't find anything--we didn't. I still loved every non-eventful moment of it. The anticipation alone was fortifying.

Next, I ponied up to Maxine Collins, an industrious and very fit-looking woman of 70 who has been working digs for years. I was hoping my overly enthusiastic puppy-like energy wouldn't disrupt--or annoy--Maxine's quiet, diligent focus. She was breaking ground on a new, apparently well-stocked corner. Lucky for me, she accepted my assistance.

Within minutes, Maxine and I made a discovery--a jasper tool! It was one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen. I felt rich! I wanted more. Maxine was an artifact magnet--she found several other pieces of chert and flint stone shavings. We discussed how women seemed especially suited for archaeology--that famed intuition of ours coming in handy to make discoveries.

Unfortunately, the weather had other plans for us. A thunderstorm was quickly brewing over the bay and casting angry glances our way. I was ready to ride it out, but apparently digging is not nearly as fun--or productive--when the dirt becomes mud or when you're struck by lightning!

So, after exchanging goodbyes with our fascinating new friends, Pat and I set off, climbing up through the layers to find our way back to the present and our "normal" lives. No lightning strikes, but still charged up and changed forever by this incredible adventure. Thank you Ed, Art, Friends of Merrymeeting Bay and of course, Pat!

*by Nicolle Littrell*

**SPEAKER SERIES: OCTOBER-MAY**

Here are our Season Starters:

Keep your eyes peeled and a space vacant on your refrigerator for our postcard with a detailed schedule.

**October**

Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Dept.

*-MMB Research Update*

**November**

Beginning with Habitat

*-ME Natural Areas Program*

**WANTED: YOU!**

**Committees**

FOMB has several standing committees we would like to strengthen. With your participation we can do this. Our committees are: Research & Advocacy, Conservation & Stewardship, Education, and Membership & Fundraising. The last two could use the most help. Committees typically meet as needed but rarely as much as 4 times/ year.

**Donations**

Please don't let the fact that your membership is not up for renewal or that you've not received the annual appeal prevent you from sending FOMB [your favorite organization!] a donation anytime of the year. Just a few examples of costs to help you write that tax deductible check: analytical chemistry for sediment or tissue samples: \$250-\$1000.00/sample; speaker series: \$800; archaeological dig: \$2500; water test kit: \$250; land: \$40-300,000. While some organizations and institutions have overheads as high as 60% you can rest assured that over ninety cents on each of your dollars goes to work here at FOMB.

**Treasurer**

Our current treasurer Steve Taylor will be stepping down at the end of this year after his several years of outstanding work. We **need** a replacement. If you are handy with accounting skills this could be you. Please call Steve at 666-8919.

**FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY**  
**Steering Committee**

- Dee and Clancy Cummins, RR1 Box 112, Richmond 04357 ..... 737-4175
- Steve Eagles, 123 River Rd., Dresden 04342 ..... 737-8023
- Ed Friedman, 42 Stevens Rd., Bowdoinham 04008..... Chair ..... 666-3372
- Kathleen McGee, 32 Wildes Rd., Bowdoinham 04008..... 666-3598
- Bill Milam, 107 Brushwood Rd., Woolwich 04579 ..... 443-9738
- Leon Ogrodnik, 13 Hawthorne Ln., Harpswell 04079 ..... 725-4935
- Steve Pelletier, RR1, 9 Jesse Rd., Topsham 04086..... 725-0083
- Steve Taylor, PO Box 231, Bowdoinham 04008..... *Treasurer* ..... 666-8919

**Education Coordinator:**

Tracy Gregoire, PO Box 231, Bowdoinham 04008 ..... 666-8919

**Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator:**

Bill Milam, 107 Brushwood Rd., Woolwich 04579 ..... 443-9738

Thank you to David Hansen for designing this issue of MMNews.

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

**MEMBERSHIP LEVELS.**

- \$500+ Sturgeon     \$250 Salmon     \$100 Striped Bass     \$50 Alewife
- \$30 Smelt     \$20 Family     \$15.00 Individual
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed as an additional tax-deductible donation.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

RR# OR STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN / STATE/ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

\$6.00 enclosed for a copy of **Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners.** (\$5 for the book, \$1 for postage)

- Renewal     Gift From:

## APPROPRIATE LAND USE

Some of the best farmland in Maine is found along side the Bay in East Bowdoinham. Much of it is a light sandy silty loam, the product of thousands of years of alluvial deposition by the Kennebec. While not very good at holding nutrients it is from the point of view of soil structure an ideal growing medium and one that until recently has been actively farmed. Some of these fields have been in transition or decline for a number of years since one of the bigger and youngest farmers left the area and some of the older farmers have either retired or reduced the size of their operations.

Last year a new and hopeful face appeared on the scene. David Vose of Blue Sky Farms in Arizona came east to evaluate the area for expansion of his operation. David is an organic farmer of relatively large size [for Maine] with established markets in New York and Boston. He specializes in the growing of an assortment of rugged specialty greens often known these days as mesclun mix. No crop is in the ground longer than approximately 18 days. Because of the intense heat in Arizona most farmers have summer land they use up north usually in Washington or Oregon. Since David's family is from and still in Maine he decided to give this area a try. At the least, it would be a shorter haul to market.

Last year was mostly devoted to field prep and weed control and his first crops were produced this year with many varieties trialed, experiments tried, kinks worked out, and

relationships built. David has purchased the "Carrot House" of renowned "Carrot King" Harry Prout sometimes also known as "The Prince of Parsnips". He will be erecting a new building on the site for equipment storage, washing, packing and cooling.

Much of the land that FOMB has played a part in protecting ends up owned by the State and managed by the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife [IF&W]. A certain amount of this land is agricultural land and has been leased by the department to farmers. We have for the last few years actively encouraged the department, funding agencies like the Land for Maine's Future Board, and even the legislature to encourage and give preference to IF&W leaseholders using sustainable or organic farming methods as these are far more in keeping with both the IF&W mission [and ours] and make a lot more sense especially when farming adjacent to the Bay.

Last year we put David in touch with IF&W and provided further encouragement to the department. We are happy to report that IF&W has entered into a long-term lease with David for all of the State fields along Pork Point Road in Bowdoinham. Thanks are due to Jim Connolly, Ken Elowe and Gene Dumont of IF&W. We wish David lots of luck in the area as he joins existing farmers like the Goransons, Economou, and Rackleys in producing something on this land far more appropriate than more houses.

*Ed Friedman*

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