

# Merrymeeting News

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

## WINTER 1999

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

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a 501c3 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

Swan Island Picnic, 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.

#### 1999 Steering Committee

Frank Burroughs, Bowdoinham  
Dana Cary, Topsham  
Andy Cutko, Bowdoinham  
Ed Friedman, Bowdoinham  
Peter Lea, Brunswick  
Kathleen Kenny, Dresden  
Esther Lacognata, Topsham  
Bob Lenna, Bowdoinham  
Kathleen McGee, Bath  
Pat Maloney, Topsham  
Tenley Meara, Topsham  
Bill Milam, Woolwich  
Mark Milam, Bath  
Jay Robbins, Richmond  
Karin Tilberg, Bowdoinham

#### Executive Director

Betsy Ham, Bowdoinham

#### On-Line

<http://www.col.k12.me.us/mmb/fomb@gwi.net>

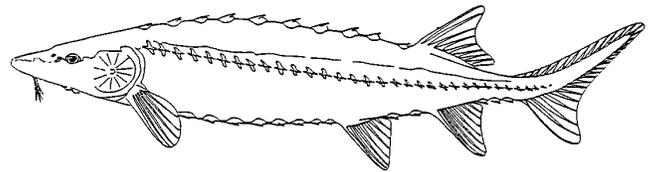
## UNDAMMEDNATION

Friday, January 1, 1999. Unit 11, 8:15 a.m., Unit 9, 8:21 a.m., Unit 3, 8:35 a.m., Unit 1, 8:40 a.m. and so on until the Edwards Dam logbook showed all turbines [except Unit 8 to run the facility lights] shut down. With noise heard round the nation, gates were lowered halting the flow of water into the Dam's power channel.

Legal closing of the Dam sale to the State of Maine occurred December 30th, the formal transfer on Monday, January 4th. Demolition is scheduled for next summer, liberating the lower Kennebec for the first time in 160 years.

It appears that Atlantic Salmon, Short-nosed and Atlantic Sturgeon, Alewives, Stripers, Smelt and others are already queuing up as rumors spread about the new territory beyond the Dam. Words like "manifisht destiny" are being banded about by fish leaders, but on the lips of every fish are the names Steve Brooke and Ron Kreisman, of the Kennebec Coalition, without whom this would not be possible. Thanks guys!

Ed Friedman



*Atlantic Sturgeon*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### Winter Speakers Series Continues

All but the May 19 Speaker Series will be held at the Beam Class Room, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College. The May 19 presentation will be at the Bridge Academy in Dresden Mills. All presentations will begin at 7PM.

#### FEBRUARY 17 KINGFISHERS AS INDICATORS OF TOXINS IN OUR WATER

Oksana Lane, Biodiversity Research Institute

#### MARCH 17 FLOODING ON THE KENNEBEC

Eleanor Everson, Historian

#### APRIL 21 THE FISHERIES CONNECTION:

*MMB and the Gulf of Maine*

Peter Shelley, Director of the Conservation Law Foundation, Maine Advocacy Center Rockland, ME

#### MAY 19 MUD PLANTS OF THE BAY

Barbara Vickery, Director of Conservation Planning, The Nature Conservancy and Andy Cutko, Ecologist, Maine Natural Areas Program.



*Belted Kingfisher*

Come and participate in the Series and enjoy refreshments afterwards. All presentations are free and open to the public. You might even win the door prize! Thank you to the Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Program, Enterprise Farms, and Patagonia for helping to sponsor this Series.

**> FROM THE CHAIR**

So, just how many people can fit into Beam classroom at the Bowdoin College Visual Arts Center? On November 18th I found myself asking that question from out in the hallway. I was looking at approximately 120 captivated listeners overflowing the room [88 seats] as they listened to George Quintal Jr.'s wonderful account of the Benedict Arnold Expedition's attempt to capture Quebec City.

One month later at an equally excellent presentation, listener odds were considerably better to win the monthly door prize donated by the Patagonia Outlet of Freeport. Only a few FOMB members resisted T.V. coverage of the initial U.S. bombing of Iraq to come hear about Toxic Use Reduction and the Public Right-to-Know presented by Steve Taylor of the Maine People's Alliance [and FOMB member] (see TUR article page 4).

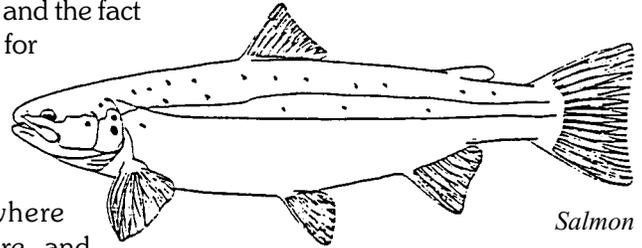
These two examples from our continued speaker series not only illustrate it's high quality but also represent ingredients necessary to create a well developed sense of place. Past, present, and future; the straining of Arnold's men as they moved their bateaus upriver, the fact that we allow companies and municipalities to legally dump

hundreds of thousands of pounds of toxins into this same river, and the fact that we are working hard for a cleaner Bay in the future using information available through Right-to-Know and other legislation. Investing in where we've been, where we are, and where we are going all brings to us a deeper understanding and feeling for the complex Bay on whose shores we live.

Henry Thoreau asked, "Who hears the fishes when they cry?" Gulf of Maine Bioregion poet, Gary Lawless, notes in his book *Caribouddhism* "...that a community is really a conversation, and if you aren't allowing all the voices to be present then the community is out of balance. It can't heal itself until all the voices are present, and no one voice is in control." I would like to think that after 160 years of Atlantic Salmon hurling themselves at Edwards Dam, that as the dam comes down next summer we are finally not only hearing the fishes cry but answering their calls.

I would like to think that as FOMB works to protect lands around the Bay through easements and other means that we are hearing voices of the trees, and of the fields, and of the farmers and the waterfowl and we are listening. As FOMB offers speakers to the community; as we organize clean ups; work with schools through our Hands Around the Bay program; study aquatic and upland habitats, currents and sediments; keep our legislators and community informed and work for change, I hope we are redressing the balance, listening to voices long neglected. Lawless also notes, "As we traveled we talked of how every place has its own messages, visions, teachers, practices." I would suggest these are particularly potent in this special place we call Merrymeeting Bay.

I was talking recently to John Knox, Executive Director of Earth Island Institute which was started, and



is Chaired by, the "Archdruid" of conservation, David Brower. Speaking of projects I'd like to see us involved in, activity levels I'd like to maintain, and comments I've received about a need to focus, John reminded me that, we are focused. "You are focused on the ecosystem," he said. He is right, and while Chair of FOMB I will encourage us to hear all those voices and to listen. Listed in this issue are some of our concrete accomplishments for 1998. Some projects completed, some continued and some begun. We have a strong Steering Committee and Executive Director. I thank them and look forward to working hard with them in the coming year.

In closing, I have three requests of you. First, please don't hesitate to give a call or drop a line to let me know how you think we are doing or let me know of any ideas you might have for us or projects you think we should consider supporting. Second, if you like what we're doing please consider raising your level of membership [we have increased the hours for our Executive Director] and giving three to five gift memberships to some interested souls. The broader and bigger our base the more effectively we can fulfill our mission. Last, but certainly not least, if you don't already, get out each season onto or next to the Bay, take some time and absorb its splendor.

Thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

Ed Friedman

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### **Merrymeeting News**

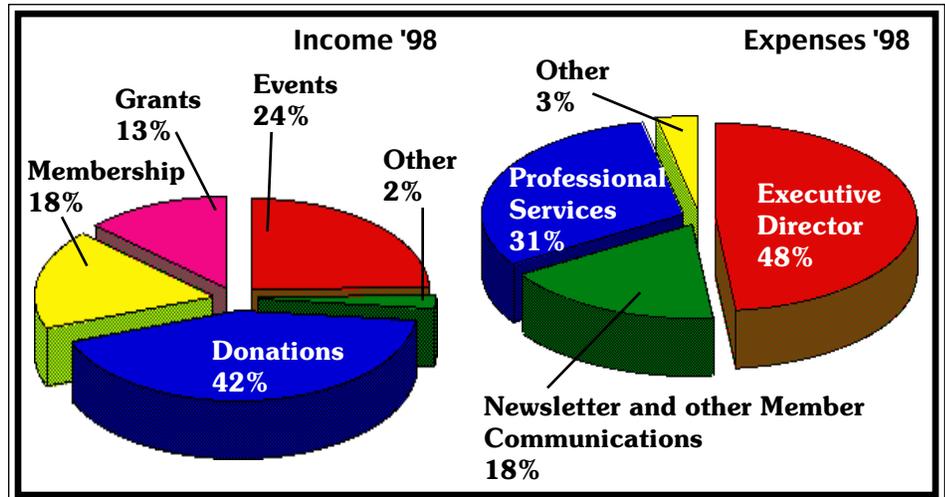
is the newsletter of **Friends of Merrymeeting Bay**, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357, and is published seasonally.

*Merrymeeting News* is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay. For information call Betsy Ham, Executive Director 666-3376.

## 1998 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Conservation and Stewardship

1. Continued outreach program to landowners around the Bay who might be interested in conservation easements. Partners: Maine Coast Heritage Trust and the Nature Conservancy. Funding: Outdoor Heritage Program.
2. Continued work on easements around the Bay (one in Dresden, four in Bowdoinham, one in Topsham, one in Woolwich).



### Membership and Fundraising

1. Swan Island Picnic and Overnight.
2. MMB clean up.
3. Source to the Sea Paddle [local organizer].
4. Four newsletters.
5. Fundraising Auction.
6. Close to achieving membership goal for year.

### Education

#### A. HANDS AROUND THE BAY

1. Two site days on Bay, 10 schools each.
2. Teacher follow up on Spring site day.
3. Teacher ownership of program.
4. Continued work getting 1975 MMB study onto website.
5. Website continues to be improved.

#### B. SPEAKER SERIES

1. Eight successful events held.
2. Sponsorship from the Bowdoin Environmental Studies Program, Patagonia and Enterprise Farms.

### Research

1. Completed guiding report: MMB: An Environmental Review.
2. Formed Scientific Advisory Committee.
3. Defined Research Plan.
4. Stereoscopic aerial photographs [color infrared] taken of Bay in August.
5. Awarded a grant of \$24,500 from the Outdoor Heritage Fund through the State Planning Office to do an "Aquatic and Upland Habitat Assessment of the Bay."
6. Began a study of currents in the Bay.

### Advocacy

1. Completed Merck Foundation Grant designed to educate local citizens on toxic use issues.
2. Posted fish consumption advisories around the Bay.
3. Continued work with the Coalition for a Dioxin Free Maine.
4. Submitted Water Reclassification Proposal for the Kennebec.
5. Testified on Toxic Use Reduction, Mercury reduction and Land Acquisition Legislation.
6. Continued Support of Edwards Dam Removal (YAHOO!).

## A WARM WELCOME AND BIG THANK YOU TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Steve and Chris Hansen, Amherst, NH  
 David and Nancy Barber, Bath  
 D. Tarr and B. Beck, Bath  
 Jerry Provencher, Bath  
 Peter and Sharon Robohm, Bath  
 Joyce Stebenson, Bath  
 Leslie Mills, Bowdoin  
 Sarah Amato, Bowdoinham  
 Dan and Kirsten Coker, Bowdoinham  
 Stephanie Dustin, Bowdoinham  
 Fred Haer, Bowdoinham  
 Ottavio Lattanzi, Bowdoinham  
 Henry and Joan Mitchell, Bowdoinham  
 John Walchi, Bowdoinham  
 Vin Skinner, Bowdoinham

John and Kristi Hay, Brewster, MA  
 Daniel Atkins, Brunswick  
 Susan Blair, Brunswick  
 Peter and Margaret Brann, Brunswick  
 David Nagler, Brunswick  
 Edgar S. Catlin III, Brunswick  
 Jennifer and Mathew Cost, Brunswick  
 Hazel Goodman, Brunswick  
 Peter Lea, Brunswick  
 Ralph Keyes and Colleen Mckenna, Brunswick  
 John Trafton, Brunswick  
 Jean and Kenneth Walbridge, Brunswick  
 Elihu York, Brunswick  
 Peter Lincoln, Dresden  
 Ken and Wen Parkhust, Dresden

Shirley Watkins, Dresden  
 Ann and Mike Badham, N. Bath  
 Martha Coles, S. Harpswell  
 Diane J. Williamson, Sabattus  
 Rosi Armstrong, Topsham  
 Kathleen Greer, Topsham  
 Denise and Sheldon Templer, Topsham  
 Rhonda Weaver, Topsham  
 Dawn Wyman, Topsham  
 Marcy Delong, Woolwich  
 Pat Harrington, Woolwich  
 Peter Kent, Woolwich  
 Edward Blaiklock and Kimberly Madden, Woolwich  
 Jim Peterson, Woolwich  
 Ellen Asherman, Yarmouth

## **TOXINS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT: YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW**

Most of us grew up believing in a benevolent government that reflected the will of the people and looked out for the public health and welfare. Many of us still assume that the federal or state government wouldn't knowingly allow us to be exposed to toxic chemicals that might harm us or our children. We believe that companies or the government must be required to test chemicals before they're used in commerce or emitted into our environment. Unfortunately, that isn't the case. Many (perhaps most) of us are being exposed to dangerous toxins without our consent or knowledge.

Sadly, despite all we know about the health effects of certain toxins, the real danger of toxic chemicals is not what we do know (about toxicity, prevalence, or health effects) but what we don't know. Toxic chemicals are approved for use in production (and eventual emission to the environment, affecting our air, water, and food) without adequate testing, regardless of whether those chemicals are necessary or not. You, me, and our kids are all guinea pigs: we simply don't know which toxic chemicals in commercial use today will turn out to be deadly.

In 1984, we didn't have even limited health and safety information on 88% of commercial chemicals. (Toxicity Testing - Strategies to Determine Needs and Priorities, National Research Council, 1984) Through 1987, only 284 of the 50,000 chemicals in commercial use had been animal tested by the government for cancer causation. But of the 284 chemicals tested, over half (144) caused cancer in animals. (Identifying and Regulating Carcinogens, U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, 1987) In 1998, even the most basic toxicity testing information was not available in the public record for over 75% of the highest volume chemicals in commercial use. (Toxic Ignorance, Environmental Defense Fund, 1998)

Asbestos, for example, was widely used for decades, and millions of workers and other citizens were exposed to it. And asbestos isn't the only time bomb that went off after it was too late. It takes an average of 10 years for cancer to first appear in workers after their exposure to benzene, 15 years for vinyl chloride, and decades for other toxic substances. (Occupational Health: Recognizing and Preventing Work Related Disease, Levy and Wegman, eds., 1983) Many people - workers and members of the general public - were exposed to these substances for decades at levels thought at the time to be safe. But there is no proof that there are any safe levels of exposure to chemicals known to cause cancer, and much evidence to the contrary.

Two cases demonstrate the point. The permissible exposure limit for vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) was set at 500 parts per million (ppm) in 1964 because it made people drowsy. But over the next 20 years we learned more, from belated animal research and cancer which appeared in workers, causing the exposure limit to be reduced to only 1 part per million. In the case of benzene, the permissible exposure limit fell from 100 ppm in 1946 to 1 ppm in 1987.

Probably the single most effective strategy to reduce toxic chemical dangers is public disclosure. In the 1970s and 80s, labor, community, environmental, and public health activists organized a movement to defend the right of citizens to

know what toxic chemicals they might be exposed to through transportation, legal emissions, accidental releases, or other

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*"probably the single most effective strategy to reduce toxic chemical dangers is public disclosure"*

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means. Two years after the toxic disaster at Bhopal, India in 1984 that killed 6,000 people, the U.S. Congress passed the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act. For the first time, citizens began to have access to information on toxic chemicals in their communities, through the Toxic Release Inventory and Local Emergency Planning Committees created by the law.

Over the past decade, Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) and public disclosure of toxic chemical dangers has worked. Toxic chemical emissions in Maine reported to the TRI fell from about 18,000,000 pounds in 1988 to about 8,500,000 pounds in 1995 - a decline of over 50%. (Toxic Release Inventory) That's great news for anyone who breathes Maine air, drinks Maine water, or eats Maine fish. Similar success stories abound in other states. We've seen Right-to-Know and public disclosure work: when citizens are given information, they will use it to protect themselves and pressure companies to reduce toxic chemicals.

Unfortunately, in reducing emissions we've only just touched the tip of the iceberg. The amounts of toxic chemicals that reach the environment through emissions reported to the TRI are only a small fraction of what's out there - being transported on our roads and rails, used in our workplaces, or shipped out for incineration or landfilling. In Maine during 1995, when 8,500,000 pounds of emissions were reported to TRI, 617,000,000 pounds (over 72 times as much) of toxic chemicals were used in production. (Toxic Release Inventory and Maine Department of Environmental Protection, 1998)

There's only one sensible response to this situation: replace toxic chemicals with non-toxic substances whenever and wherever possible. Until last year, Maine had a successful Toxic Use Reduction law to do just that. Between 1990 and 1998 the law caused a 20% reduction in the use of targeted toxic chemicals (and over 50% reduction in emissions). A bill to renew the law passed Maine's Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support, but died in the House after an assault by industry lobbyists. During this Session, there will be another attempt to renew this law.

If you care about your health and your family's health, take a few simple steps. Call or write your State Representative and Senator and tell them you support a new, and strong, TUR law. Stay in touch with FOMB or another organization that can keep you up to date on the progress of the bill. And use your rights under the law to find out about toxic chemicals in your community. A little knowledge goes a long way.

Steve Taylor  
Community Organizer, Maine Peoples Alliance

## YOU CAN SHAPE THIS YEARS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The 119th Legislature is now in session. The committees have been assigned and they are to deliberate 2900 bills. This is an astoundingly high number for our part-time legislature to consider in less than 6 months time. That averages out to over 120 bills a week which is not evenly distributed amongst the committees. Legislators will decide most of these bills based on how lobbyists in the State House educate them on the often times complex issues.

Now, more than ever, citizens need to be involved in the education process concerning our law making. It may surprise many to know that legislators listen to their constituents and wish for their input. It is very difficult for them not to be persuaded by highly paid lobbyists who can afford to be at the State House every day. But legislators also tire of running the gauntlet of lobbyists who stand constantly outside the chamber doors and grab them as they go to lunch, committee meetings and even the bathroom.

Having been a not-highly-paid lobbyist at the State House for a while I have come to know just how difficult it is for those that decide law in our state to be educated on any given issue. I also came to see how important it is for all of us in the state to be involved as much as possible in providing essential information to those that make the decisions that effect us. We need to develop our relationships with our legislators so that they can rely on us as much, or more, than highly paid lobbyists.

FOMB has had some presence at the State House for some of the important environmental bills that the Legislature has faced over the years. It is critical that we expand that influence as the quantity of bills escalate. There are three important things one can do: Educate yourselves on the issues, know who your legislators are, and find out what legislators are on committees that oversee issues of important to you.

Two committees that deal with most of the environmental concerns are: the Natural Resource Committee and the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee. Even though most Legislators on the committee are outside of the Bay area, it is still important to keep an eye on them and to provide them with input and information. They will wel-

come your input and hopefully put it to good use.

Representative David Shiah [D-Bowdoinham] is now Assistant Majority Leader in the House and will not be on a particular committee. We are quite pleased and fortunate to have Rep. Shiah in a position of leadership in the House.

At the writing of this article it's too early to know exactly what bills will be acted upon this legislative session. However we do expect that there will be a bill on Mercury Reduction and Toxic Use Reduction (see companion article previous page) as well as a bill to secure more funding for the Land For Maine's Future Program. If you would like more information on these and other potential bills of importance to the Bay call us at 666-3376. If you don't know who your local representatives are call FOMB. The toll free number for all House members is: 1-800-423-2900. The toll free number for all Senators is: 1-800-423-6900.

Please get to know your legislators and give them the support and information they need to better represent us. With 2900 bills to consider they will need a great deal of help and they need to hear from you.

Kathleen McGee, Bath  
As a Steering Committee member and former lobbyist at the State House, Kathleen will be helping FOMB with legislative issues during this session.

## \$24,500 RECEIVED FOR AQUATIC AND UPLAND HABITAT ASSESSMENT OF THE BAY

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay was awarded \$24,500 from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund through the State Planning Office to conduct a study of the aquatic and upland habitat in Merrymeeting Bay. This study will compare 1998 aerial photos (and radar images if available) with photos taken as many as 40 years ago to study changes over time in wetland vegetation and land use (see Merrymeeting News, Fall 1998, page 3). The assessment will give us a good inventory of current conditions in and along the shores of the Bay. It will also show us how land use and the quantity and quality of aquatic vegetation has changed over the years. By comparing changes in land use with the changes that are occurring in the Bay we may begin to understand why these changes have occurred. We look forward to working with a variety of partners on this project including the State Planning Office, The Nature Conservancy, the Maine Natural Areas Program, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Our increased knowledge of the Bay gained from this study will help us better protect and preserve it in the future.

### Your Natural Resource Committee members are:

**Sen. Sharon Treat** [D-Gardiner], Senate Chair

**Sen. John Nutting** [D-Androscoggin]

**Sen. Jim Libby** [R-York]

**Rep. John Martin** [D-Eagle Lake], House Chair

**Rep. Bob Daigle** [R-Arundel]

**Rep. Henry Joy** [R-Crystal]

**Rep. Scott Cowger** [D-Hallowell]

**Rep. David Etnier** [D-Harpswell]

**Rep. Joe Clark** [D-Millinocket]

**Rep. Bob Cameron** [R-Rumford]

**Rep. Linda Rogers McKee** [D-Wayne]

**Rep. Bob Duplessie** [D-Westbrook]

**Rep David Tobin** [R-Windham].

## TIDINGS/FALL

To my untrained and unsystematic eye, the wild rice crop looked better in the Bay this year than it has for quite a while. The ducks corroborated this impression. They stayed around after the huge uproar and heavy toll of the opening day of the hunting season, and were here in good numbers all through October and well into our uncharacteristically civil and serene November. The dozen or so birds I brought home and cleaned were in prime condition, plump-skinned and fat.

The fat of ducks is about the color and texture of butter. A teal in fine fettle might have a tablespoon or two of it; a black or mallard proportionately more. Compared to chickens or domestic ducks, this is a negligible quantity, not even enough to produce significant drippings in the pan. But for the teal or mallard in question, those few grams of fat are as important as the margin of profit is to a C.E.O. They are the bird's cash reserves and its venture capital, built up as rapidly as possible for as long as possible, to underwrite the great investments of energy required by migration. Ducks arrive in a new marsh lean and hungry, and stay there for as long as there is food to replenish them, or until weather or hunting pressure drive them out.

A century and a half ago, many of the ducks that fattened on the wild rice of Merrymeeting Bay in October were, by November or December, feeding on the rich gleanings of domestic rice in Georgia and Carolinas. That rice was grown in swamps that had been cleared, diked and drained by slave labor; the fields thus created could be flooded or dried out as the cultivation of the crop required. It was a huge, complicated, and brutal business, producing many millionaires and many bankruptcies. The ducks benefited from the plantations, and the planters benefited from the ducks. The tradition of duck hunting is different in the former rice plantation country from what it is in Maine, but it is as old and as passionate. Indeed, if a disregard for all economic logic and proportion is a symptom of passion, it is more passionate.

To kill a duck on Merrymeeting Bay, you need some kind of small boat, a gun, waders or hip boots, at least half a dozen decoys, shells, a state hunting license and state and federal waterfowl stamps. If you had to buy all these things new, your startup cost would not be less than \$2000.00. But of course most of the gear lasts a long time—the gun and canoe I use are both more than 40 years old, and have pretty well amortized themselves.

Still, I would be embarrassed to say how much the dozen ducks I killed this year cost me—six or eight dollars a bird, despite the fact that this was, by my standards, an unusually good year.

I was down in South Carolina just after Christmas, when the duck season was in full swing there. I didn't hunt, but heard a lot of hunting talk. Although I had grown up in the area, hunting in the old rice fields that had long since reverted to marsh, and knew that the buying or leasing of those places involved a certain amount of money, I was astonished by what has happened to the economics of duck hunting in the plantation country.

The marshes there, unlike Merrymeeting Bay, are not rich in natural feed. The trick was to give the ducks a reason to come to your particular section of marsh. In my boyhood, this was done by "baiting" the ducks—putting out corn or some other grain for them.

It was strictly against the law, but everybody did it, for the simple reason that if one hunter did it, the others had to follow suit, or all the ducks would go to his field.

Law enforcement was erratic; fines were part of the normal overhead. But, about two decades ago, federal wardens started showing up, and things got a good deal tougher. It seemed at the time like a triumph for the average hunter, since it would break the virtual monopoly on ducks in the rice fields. But where there is law, there is a loophole. In this case, the loophole was that, while you cannot hunt ducks over a baited field, you can hunt them over a cultivated field—a cornfield for example. So the big-time duck hunters repaired the old dikes, restored the locks that let the water in and out, and imitated the rice planters. They drained the fields in the spring, got a tractor onto them, plowed and seeded them in corn or soybeans or millet. Come duck season, they flooded the fields. All strictly legal—a surprising number of things turn out to be legal when you are willing to spend enough money.

And the big-time operators see to it that the law against baiting is strictly enforced—they have driven the small-timers out of the market. I asked one of them, who owns and cultivates about 50 acres of ricefields, how the hunting had been so far. "Lousy," he said. "No ducks. Not enough cold weather. And when they do come, they'll just move into wh a t -ever field isn't being hunted. Our problem now is too much food." I asked him what he reckoned the average cost would be per duck killed in Georgetown County, which is where we were. He laughed. "I don't know about average. But I can tell you about myself, and the arithmetic is easy. I've killed one duck this season." And he said that last spring, he'd spent \$25,000.00 repairing his dikes—something he had to do every four or five years. Plowing, planting, and tending his millet was several thousand more. He reckoned the duck he shot cost him about as much as an imported midsize sedan, without too many fancy options on it.

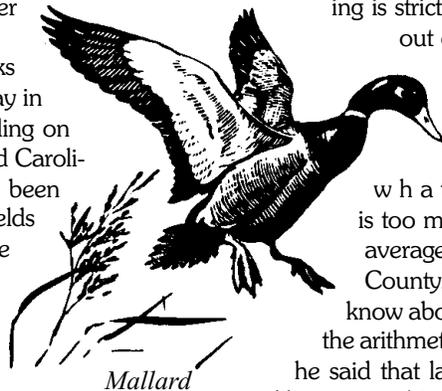
I'm not sure what the moral is. The most obvious one is that duck hunting on the Bay is not simply a great privilege, but a great bargain as well, even if you don't factor in the quiet beauty of those dawns, the things you will see when you sit still out there long enough, and the great deliberate inhaling and exhaling of the tides through the marshes.

A more complicated moral has to do with the economy of nature and the human economy. The natural one is balanced on what Thoreau called "the thin, inelastic plank of famine." The duck's few grams of fat are all the provision it has. The human economy insulates us from the natural one and has its own iron laws. Hunting and gathering, the basic activities of our species for most of its history, have more and more become extravagant luxuries. As they do so, they lose all capacity to evoke either our old relation to nature, or our more recent and local traditions, handed down like heirlooms, of hunting as a sort of semi-sacred recreation, with its own protocols and seasonal observances.

Even in Maine, I see fewer and fewer young hunters in the marsh, and have the sense that something whose value is inversely related to its cost is slipping out of our history.

Frank Burroughs

Tidings is a regular feature of Merrymeeting News



**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED AT THE AUCTION:**

Including all of our Steering Committee members old and new and Phill McIntyre, Jean Parker, Bob Dale, Rosi Armstrong, Liz Webster, Kate Cutko, Alex Poliakoff, Carl Smith and Susan Drucker. Thanks for the fine music provided by Jim Chard, Beth Revells and Ken Thompson of the Windy Ridge band. Thanks also to Ann Vershbow and the rest of the staff at the Bowdoinham Community School, the Bowdoinham Recreation Department, the Bowdoinham General Store for donating cups at the last minute, Reed Party and Paper, Enterprise Farms, Welch's Orchard, Ben and Jerry's of Freeport and a big thanks to all of you who attended and bid high and often.

**VOLUNTEERS WANTED IN THE SCHOOLS**

We would like a volunteer in each town who can communicate with teachers and staff about FOMB's Hands Around The Bay program. Contact us at 666-3376 for more information

**WELCOME NEW AND THANK YOU OLD BOARD MEMBERS**

A sincere thank you to our retiring board members who have served us long and well: Don and Joan Lipfert, Steve Hammond and Warren Whitney. We will miss you but hope you stay involved!

A warm welcome to five new board members: Andy Cutko from Bowdoinham, Peter Lea from Brunswick, Kathleen McGee from Bath, Bill Milam from Woolwich, Mark Milam from Bath. Welcome also to Dan Stockford who will serve as our new Conservation and Stewardship Committee chair. We all look forward to working with you this year.

**FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY**

Steering Committee

- Frank Burroughs, 81 Wallentine Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 ..... 666-5979
- Dana Cary, 1052 Foreside Rd., Topsham 04086..... Treasurer ..... 729-4945
- Ed Friedman 42 Stevens Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 .. Chairman ..... 666-3372
- Kathleen Kenny, River Rd. #1105, Dresden 04342 ..... 737-2511
- Esther Lacognata, 19 Elm St., Topsham 04086 ..... 729-4088
- Robert Lenna, P.O. Box 185, Bowdoinham 04008 ..... 666-8421
- Pat Maloney, 31 Bridge St., Topsham 04086 ..... 729-8941
- Tenley Meara, RR 1 Box 96, Topsham 04086 ..... Vice Chairman .. 725-2738
- Jay Robbins, P.O. Box 9, Richmond 04357 ..... 737-2239
- Karin Tilberg, 9 Main St., Bowdoinham 04008 ..... 666-5902

Conservation & Stewardship Coordinator:

- Dan Stockford ..... ?????????

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