

# Merrymeeting News

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

## WINTER 2000

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

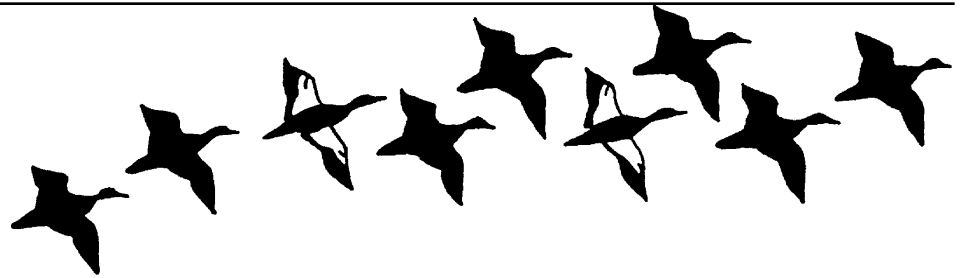
Water quality, data collection, toxics, fisheries restoration.

### 2000 Steering Committee

Frank Burroughs, Bowdoinham  
Dana Cary, Topsham  
Jenn Cost, Brunswick  
Andy Cutko, Bowdoinham  
Steve Eagles, Richmond  
Ed Friedman, Bowdoinham  
Kathleen Kenny, Dresden  
Pat Maloney, Topsham  
Kathleen McGee, Bowdoinham  
Al Mesrobian, Bath  
Bill Milam, Woolwich  
David Phinney, Bowdoinham  
Jay Robbins, Richmond

### On-Line

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



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Feb. 16, Mar 15, April 19 events scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College, Brunswick

May 17 event scheduled for 7:00 p.m. at Bridge Academy, Dresden

All events are free to the public, sponsored by Friends of Merrymeeting Bay.

### MARCH 15 A Working Watershed from 1600 to 1950: Industry & Agriculture on Merrymeeting Bay

*Edward Hawes, Consulting Historian*

### APRIL 19 A Bird's Eye View of the Bay: A Look at Current Conditions & Changes Over Time Using Aerial Photos

*Dave Edson, James W. Sewall Co.;*

*Alan Haberstock, Kleinschmidt Associates*

### MAY 17 Eagles & Ospreys in Midcoast Maine (Dresden Bridge Academy)

*Don Hudson, Chewonki Foundation*

### May 20 Bowdoinham Public Library 27th Annual Plant Sale 9 AM to 4 PM.

For more information call 666-8405

## GREEN POINT FARM

A Christmas card of a few years back features my twin daughters happily picking apples high in an apple tree at Green Point Farm in Dresden. When I heard that the farm was for sale I thought of the 200 or so housing units proposed near the Cathance in Topsham and wondered if this beautiful farm would suffer the same fate. Would my daughters have a chance to play in the orchards and fields of Green Point Farm again or would this

easily developable land go the way of condos and golf courses?

Thanks to the foresight of the owner, Bob Gleason, and the work of the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition, of which Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a part, my children and my grandchildren will be able to explore this land. The 432 acre farm has just been purchased using federal funds from the North American

*con't on pg 5*

## A WARM WELCOME AND THANK YOU TO ALL OUR NEW 1999 MEMBERS:

From Bath: Al Mesrobian, Peter and Sharon Robohm, Stephen and Joyce Wilson; from Bowdoinham: Steve Bernier, Dwight and Heather Blease, Hank Ogilby and Susan Drucker, Nancy Drucker, Pamela Hanson, Henry and Joanie Mitchell, Terry Murphy and David Phinney; from Brunswick: Daniel Atkins, Susan Blair, D. Nagler and C. Brzoza, Beth Bullock, Edgar S. Catlin III, Jennifer Cost, Will Everitt, Louise Gardiner, Paula Greenlee, Chris and Dianne Gutsher, P. D'Alessandro and J. Montgomery, Craig S. and Suzanne Johnson,

Zona King, Joan Llorente, Bill and Paige Mangum, Burnham Martin, Ralph Keyes and C. McKenna, Robert Muller, Richard and Beverly Nickerson, W.G. Pinfold, Priscilla Seimer, Ann Spencer, John and Sherrye Trafton, Jean and Kenneth Walbridge and Elihu York; from Dresden: Jan Goranson, Peter Lincoln, Shirley Watkins, and Keith Reece and Nancy Whatley; from Harpswell: Leon and Kay Ogrodnik, Jan and Clarence Richards, and Charles Woodman; from Topsham: Christopher Dwinal, Kathleen Greer, Michael and Mary Imrie, Lisa Tessler and Mark Ireland, Karen Peterson, Kathryn

Ruth, Lester and Nancy Steffens, Mike Steitzer and Susan Chadima, and Denise and Sheldon Tepler; from Woolwich Randolph Doak, E. Blaiklock and K. Madden, Lauren Mofford, James and Michelle Rines, and Julie Erb and Herb Thomson; Dennis Purington from Belgrade; Sara Amato from Bowdoin; David McKinley and Leslie Badham from Dartmouth MA; Jim Gill from E. Winthrop; Hilary Neckles from Hallowell; Marcus Parsons from Newton MA; Doug Clopp from Portland, David and Marilyn Tilton from Richmond and Judith and David Falk from Washington D.C..

## 1999 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We welcome your participation on any of these committees.

### Education

1. 1998-1999 Speaker Series completed, 1999-2000 Speaker Series well underway.

2. Hands Around the Bay - Held a "Merry Meeting on the Bay" day last spring at the Chop Point School. Over 220 elementary school children from 10 area schools attended.

3. Website - continued work on our website <http://www.col.k12.me.us/mmb/>

### Research

1. Received \$24,500 from the Outdoor Heritage Fund through the State

Planning Office to "Assess Merrymeeting Bay Aquatic and Upland Habitat Changes Over Time." Study is nearing final phases. Join us at the April speaker series to hear the results.

2. Began a water quality monitoring/testing program at six sites around the Bay. Partnered with Trout Unlimited to monitor even more sites on the Kennebec above Augusta.

3. Developed a proposal for contaminants survey of fine sediments around the bay. Analysis funded [\$20,000] through Surface Water Ambient Toxics Program of Maine DEP. Samples submitted to Maine DEP by FOMB in December.

4. Continued Current Study efforts including attempted completion of 1998 study, initial data gathering with USGS team, type testing of equipment for possible radio transmitter/drifter study with aerial tracking.

### Advocacy

1. EDWARDS DAM REMOVED!!!!!!!  
2. Testified before the State Legislature regarding Toxic Use Reduction, Mercury Reduction and Land Acquisition legislation. (50 M passed by the voters last November)

3. Continued work with the Maine Toxics Action Coalition. Outreach work including informational material to health care providers on the dangers of eating toxic Maine fish.

4. Posted fish consumption advisories around the Bay.

5. Worked with a new river advocacy group: Maine Rivers

6. Co-sponsored a conference on spirituality and environmental stewardship.

### Conservation and Stewardship

1. Continued outreach program to landowners around the Bay.

2. Continued work on easements around the Bay.

3. Protected approximately 100 acres to date.

4. Helped pass the 50 million dollar land protection bond.

5. Worked with Maine Wetland Protection Coalition.

### Membership and Fundraising

1. Published four issues of our newsletter.

2. Night on the Town Fundraising Raffle Completed.

3. Successful first Annual Appeal [THANK YOU!]

4. Merrymeeting Bay Cleanup - All together we have removed over 17,000 pounds of debris from the shores, woods, and roadways over the past four years.

5. Coordinated the local leg of the annual Androscoggin Source to the Sea Trek and incorporated three days of paddling on a segment the Kennebec.

6. Hosted the kick-off celebration of Maine Rivers at Chop Point School.

Winter 2000  
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January, 2000



### 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 Ed Friedman, Chairman 666-3372.

# ANNUAL MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIR

## Y2K Special: The Bay Continues to Fill and Drain on Schedule

As the winter ice finally grips the Bay and our "snow emergency" ends with the arrival of the first few inches, I feel fortunate to sit by the stove and write just a bit on another successful year for FOMB. This issue, full of some excellent writing, a meritorious list of achievements, and a report demonstrating our fiscal responsibility really demonstrates well what we are about. Our sediment samples were collected and submitted for testing, the aquatic vegetation and land use study is well underway, we had a great turnout for our Hands Around the Bay day at the Chop Point School, we've protected more valuable land along the Bay, our speaker series continues to be top notch, and we initiated a rigorous water quality monitoring program. These and our other accomplishments [listed on page 2 ] remind me of a recent advertisement that caught my eye enough to tear out and save. It goes something like this:

**Paint Job:** How to Paint a Fence. 1) Go to hardware store. 2) Buy white latex paint and a good brush. 3) With cold drink in hand, paint.

**Snow Job:** How to Paint a Fence. 1) Hire a color consultant or decorator. 2) Pick at least 100 different designer shades of white. 3) Do a focus group with neighbors. 4) Decide on at least two colors and mix them together. 5) Meet with a team of fence specialists at a fashionable restaurant. 6) Choose to use only pony hair brushes from Brazil. 7) Agree to paint the fence. NEXT SPRING.

The ad then notes, "Welcome to a place where common sense reigns and lunch is a turkey sandwich...doing it quickly and efficiently, our manifesto."

While Chair of this organization, this place is where I strive to keep us. I continue to try and maintain a vision of what is most beneficial for the Bay, a place we all cherish in our own ways [and as Bryce Muir pointed out the other night at our Speaker Series, is well worthy of sanctification], and lead us to ACT as efficiently as possible in support of our mission and that vision. It has been a pleasure to work with our dedicated Steering Committee and our many volunteers in pursuit of these goals.

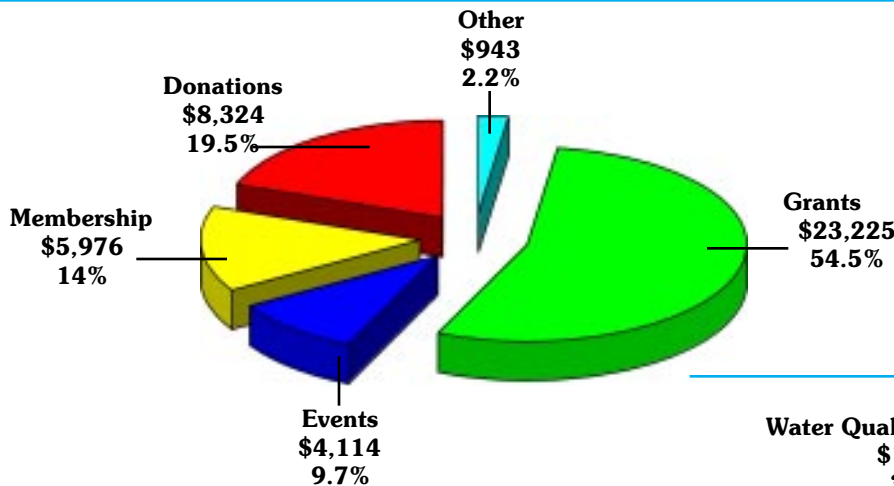
A special pleasure has been to work with our outgoing Executive Director, Betsy Ham, these last three years. While sad to see her go it is good to know that the rivers of Maine will be better off as she takes on her new role of River Advocate at the Natural Resources Council of Maine.

As we begin to look at applicants for our Executive Director position [and may have hired someone by press time] I am very encouraged. Applications that have come in thus far are of a very high caliber. This speaks to me of the excellent quality and characteristics of this organization. There are very few conservation organizations [certainly of our size] with our breadth and with the dedicated membership and officers that we have. For this I thank you and encourage your continued support.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Ed Friedman, Chair

## INCOME 1999

Donations	\$8,324
Membership	\$5,976
Events	\$4,114
Grants	\$23,225
Other	\$943
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,582</b>



## EXPENSES 1999

Executive Director	\$16,925
Newsletter and Membership Communications	\$4,706
Other	\$1,694
Water Quality Testing Kits	\$1,278
Professional Services	\$16,305
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$40,908</b>



## TIDINGS/WINTER

The following was presented as a reading by Frank Burroughs at the January Speaker Series

I have been asked to reflect about Merrymeeting Bay as a place of literary inspiration. It is a topic that invites pretentious nonsense. Here goes.

First, some facts about writers. They are self-involved and self-important, especially when they pretend to be otherwise. They want to be loved, but also to be left alone. They want to be left alone, but also to be sought after. They want to be sought after, but also to be feared. They want to be feared, but also to be pitied. They want to be pitied, but also to be envied. Above all and most achingly, they long to be finally and completely and blessedly understood. But also to remain mysterious, enigmatic, fascinating, and unpredictable, even to themselves.

In other words, they are like almost everybody else, only a little more so.

In fact, writers are so much like almost everybody else that it suggests that almost everybody else is, in the shameful secrecy of his or her own inmost soul, a writer. They just have not yet had the nerve or the folly to confess it publicly.

Think, for example, about all the time you spend being not exactly busy and not exactly idle. It can be the time when you are driving the car standing in the check-out line or waiting for a meeting to start. It also can be—and you know it—a time when you are ostensibly working, or listening sympathetically to an unhappy friend. You discover that your mind keeps wandering off into the corner and talking to itself, attending to the world but also following some quirky, random chain of associations and recollections that seems to have no practical relation to anything. This interior monologue goes on non-stop, a truant part of your consciousness that will never sit still and pay attention for more than a few seconds.

Of course when you attempt to do the work you are paid to do, and to be a decently unselfish sort of person, you try to stay focussed; you try to tune out the interior monologue and stick to your business. Some people find this impossible, and have to more or less make the interior monologue their business. And those people are the ones who have to confess publicly, and become writers.

The actual business of writing is a lot harder than it should be. You do not necessarily sit down to it with a high heart or a happy expectation. Inspiration does not come falling from the summer sunsets or the winter dawns. As far as I know, it comes only after a lot of frustrating hours at a desk. Sometimes it goes easily, but over the course of a whole career you are doing well to average one needle per haystack. You want to find it—a small human truth of some durability and utility. There is no recipe or procedure for looking, only endless sifting and sifting, trial and error and more trial and more error. You navigate by the seat of your pants, bassackward.

Merrymeeting Bay is not a different place to me because I write. I certainly do not go to it looking for inspiration. I

find it easy not to think about writing while I am there, and that alone is a good reason for liking it.

I like it best on days that are overcast, gray, muted, and still. That no doubt has to do with a sense of solemnity and expectancy that is in such weather, because sometimes a piece of church language from my childhood will drift into my brain—something like the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him. But it is also and more importantly because I am not the only one who likes such weather. Insects hatch and hover, birds and fish feed, move, and show themselves in a way they never do on bright breezy days. I also find myself feeling very alive and happy in the heavy mists of spring and autumn mornings, before the sun burns through. As the veils of the mist begin to part and dissolve, things take on color. Sometimes under those conditions the water assumes a mild, milky blueness that I have never seen anywhere else. The light does not glint off it sharply but gleams softly, like shaded lamplight.

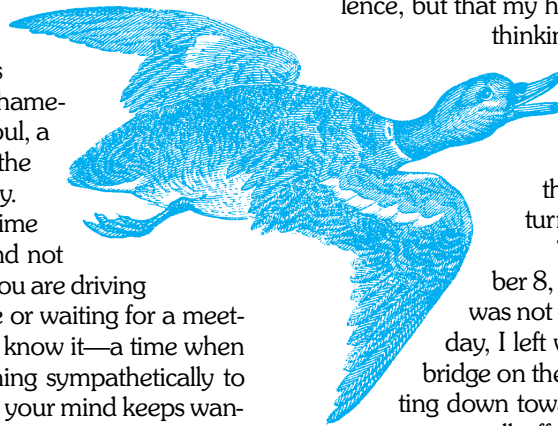
Perhaps at these times it is not that the world is keeping silence, but that my head is. I do not want to be anywhere else or thinking about anything else or thinking at all. I don't need anything except to be where I in fact am.

I do, of course, write about the Bay. I rely on coincidence, accidental associations, things that turn up, the unpredictable twists and turns of events and words.

The second duck season opened on November 8, a Monday. I had had a good first season and was not ready to quit. On the Friday before the Monday, I left work a little early, in time to reach the Abby bridge on the Brown's Point Road just as the sun was getting down toward the tree line. A little beyond the bridge you can pull off the road beside a big pylon that carries the power lines across the river. There was an unfamiliar and battered Toyota pickup parked there. I parked beside it and walked down toward the edge of the water. I did not see the driver until I walked around the massive cement slab that serves as the foundation for the pylon. He was sitting with his back against the slab, his legs drawn up comfortably, facing the marshes where the Abby broadens out into the Bay.

He was perhaps a bit younger than myself, leaner, and considerably more grizzled. He glanced up, said hello, then turned his attention back to the marshes. The tide was low but had turned and was coming back. The rice and bullrushes were lying flat on the mud. The light was failing. I hoped to see some telltale wakes or ripples out in the channels of the marsh, but there were none.

I assumed the man was here for the same reason I was—to see if ducks were using this marsh, and to make his plans for Monday morning. But when we began talking he said no, that he had grown up in Bowdoinham and used to do quite a lot of hunting on the Bay, but hadn't done so for many years. He lived in Bath now, and when he went duck hunting at all, which was seldom, it was down in the salt water, for whistlers and coots and such. No, he said, he'd just got off work, and he had to drive up to Monmouth to see a fellow about a job there, and the fellow had told him there was no point in arriving before seven o'clock. So he had time to kill, and he had come here just to see what he could see.



A few ducks began dropping in, mostly teal, in pairs or in small flocks. We chatted and watched them. He talked about how it had been in his boyhood. Like many teenagers in Bowdoinham at that time, he'd had his first jobs picking peas and pulling beets or parsnips or unearthing potatoes in the fields in east Bowdoinham. It was hard, but he had liked it, especially in the late summer when the bluewing teal started showing up in big numbers. At least it had seemed like big numbers to him, but some on the old timers assured him otherwise, and described how it had been when they were young.

He was like a good many people I have met in this state—he managed to talk and to convey the impression of being taciturn at the same time. I mentioned that there had been goodly numbers of ducks on the Bay this year, and the previous year too, for that matter. He said yes, that his buddies who still hunted had told him the same thing. And when people talk about these things thirty years from now, he said, it will sound like a hell of a lot of ducks, because thirty years from now there probably won't be many left at all. He shook his head and went back to how it had been when he was young, and what those old timers had said about how it had been before that. "Abundance," he said, "just think of that abundance." He gave a slight emphasis to the word, not as though he were showing off his vocabulary, but as though to recommend it for my consideration. And it did strike me, the way he said it: not an abundance of ducks or an abundance of anything. Just that abundance, period.

I needed to get home to supper. He said he'd wait till pitch dark, then head on up to Monmouth. Two days later, in the pitch dark myself, I was hunkered in the same marshes we'd been looking at, downstream from the Brown's Point bridge. Then the sky began to pale and the ducks began coming, and there were a lot of them, many more than I had expected. I went on to have a good morning of shooting, but the best of it, as always, was the tense time of waiting in the dark, the shapes of the ducks and the sound of their wings all around me. It's something like a fireworks

display—you twist your head back and forth, not wanting to miss anything, and find yourself exclaiming to yourself in involuntary whispers ah and wow and oh my.

When I paddled back to the landing, the water was silky calm, the sun was out, and there was a fragile warmth in the air—a final, faint, aftertaste of an aftertaste of Indian summer. I saw a Cooper's hawk flying over, treetop high and wonderfully illuminated, as though the light that reflected up from the water was the element this bold, dangerous-looking bird flew in. That word abundance came back into my mind. When a word is used right, it is because it is used unexpectedly, and the man beside the pylon had used it right. It had sounded like what it meant, the way those fine, full, and rounded vowels filled the mouth. It had embodied what he meant about the past, but also something about the still evening, the lengthening shadows, the piece of time he had before he had to get back into the truck and drive to Monmouth. The word had some sort of satisfying echo for him, I am sure of that.

I don't think I can say anything more about inspiration than that man could. The only difference is that he would know better than to try.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ says grimly unto us that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgement." This is a sobering thought, considering that most of our waking hours are taken up by idle words, spoken or unspoken. But in the same passage he says something else that we need to consider. I am a respectful non-believer, and I believe that it is something that we encounter rarely in ourselves or in others, but that it is one of the things we live for and long for: "Out of the abundance of the heart," he says, "the mouth speaketh."

*Franklin Burroughs*

*Tidings is a regular feature of Merrymeeting News*

## GREEN POINT FARM

*con't from first page*

Waterfowl Conservation Act, matched with private funds from The Nature Conservancy and is now owned by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. The area, which includes 161 acres of intertidal wetlands and provides prime habitat for fish and wildlife alike, will be added to the existing Steve Powell State Wildlife Management Area (Swan Island).

The protection of this farm for future generations to enjoy is indeed a watershed event. Lets not stop with this success! The State Planning Office projects that, if trends continue, that the land around the Bay will be a suburban area before the first half of this century is over. Lets prove them wrong! If you own land near the Bay or would like to become

involved in land protection, now is the time to take action. The development pressure along with land prices on the Bay are increasing, but if you own land on the Bay you are still in the drivers seat. You can control the destiny of your land by voluntarily placing a conservation easement on it that restricts development, giving your land to a conservation organization or making provisions in your will to do so. If you can't afford these options, consider selling your land at a bargain sale (less than the appraised value) or selling an easement. There are now state, federal and private dollars, many of them specifically dedicated to this area, available to make this happen. Although the most valuable thing you will gain from

any of these decisions is the knowledge that your land will be protected forever, you may receive income, estate and property tax reductions as well.

We are lucky to have so many groups working together as part of the Wetlands Protection Coalition that can help guide you in making long term decisions on your land. These groups include the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, The Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gulf of Maine Program, and the Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust. Feel free to contact any of these groups or call Friends of Merrymeeting Bay at 666-3376.

*Betsy Ham-Whitney*

## CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Corporations receive approximately \$40 million dollars of our hard earned tax money each year in the form of public assistance or corporate welfare. Most have to do very little for those funds but ask. Most are multinationals.

After the huge BIW/General Dynamics tax break of 1997, many citizens, consumer groups and legislators started to ask questions. To whom are we giving money? How much? Are the jobs promised materializing and at what cost? What recourse do we have when a company asks for state money, has promised jobs that don't get created and then packs up and leaves the state? Or downsizes? What if the companies to which we give funding consistently pollute or have illegal labor practices? What recourse do we have when a company we underwrite undermines our laws? Right now, none.

There was no easy way to access much of the information needed to answer these questions. The answers we could get were frightening. We were giving away a whole lot of money with little or no accountability from the corporations receiving funds.

In 1998 a bill was passed that would provide the necessary data to answer these troubling questions [set up by Sen. Chellie Pingree] and set up a commission to assist the Legislature in finding solutions. That work has begun and now we are ready to take the next step and firmly address the issue of corporate accountability.

There are several bills before the Legislature this year to address some of these concerns. One bill will provide a "clawback" provision. That is to say that if the jobs prom-

ised are not produced the company must pay back the money received. Another bill requires fair labor practices or the subsidies will not be paid. The bill FOMB has helped shape and is working on through Maine Toxics Action Coalition [MTAC] as well, is the **Environmental Standards Bill: Compliance With Environmental Laws Required for Corporations Receiving Public Assistance**, sponsored by Rep. Bill Norbert and spear-headed by the Dirigo Alliance in cooperation with an environmental working group.

This bill would require that the DEP certify that corporations who are under their jurisdiction are indeed complying with the law.

If not certified in the previous year, they will not receive their public assistance until they are in compliance. If they are out of compliance for 12 consecutive months they will forfeit their subsidy for that year. Corporations that have committed three or more major violations of environmental laws within the past three years will not be eligible to receive public assistance payments for a period of five years from the date of the most recent major violation.

The subsidies received by corporations come from us all. Because of this it is essential that these corporations be held accountable to the public. You and I would be expected to live up to our contracts. Subsidized companies must do the same.

**What you can do:** Call your legislators and tell them you support the **Environmental Standards Bill**, which will likely be heard in the next month. If you would like more information on this bill, and/or would like to testify, please call Kathleen McGee at 666-3598.



## EXAMPLES

- Great Northern Paper (GNP) received \$417,904 in tax breaks and subsidies last year, despite violating Maine's water quality laws for the past six years by exceeding its discharge permits and spilling pollutants into the Penobscot River. Those six years of violations only cost GNP \$37,559 in DEP fines - less than one-tenth of what Maine taxpayers gave the company in 1998 alone.
- Georgia Pacific [GP] received \$859,082 in tax breaks and subsidies in 1998, despite ongoing violations of their air and water discharge permits. For those violations, GP paid only \$37,991 in penalties - less than 5% of what it received from state and local taxpayers as economic development incentives in 1998 alone. Georgia Pacific has consistently violated environmental laws every year since at least 1987.
- National Semi-conductor received \$10,000,000 in subsidies. They are one of the top 40 polluters in the state. In addition, they had promised 1,054 new jobs, created only about half of that which costs us, in the end, \$235,000 per job.

### A FOND FAREWELL

As your Executive Director for the past three years I have learned much from you and owe much to your tireless dedication. Although the time has come for me to move on, I will not forget you or what you have taught me. As the River Advocate for the Natural Resources Council of Maine I plan to put all that knowledge to good use. Fortunately I will be spending nearly half of my time on the Kennebec of which Merrymeeting Bay is an important part. Don't be surprised if I am still asking you for help!

I plan to stay involved with the Friends as a volunteer for the Conservation and Stewardship Committee. Don't hesitate to call me about conservation easements and other forms of land protection. I would love to hear from you.

Thank you for a great three years!

*Betsy Ham-Whitney*

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

Annual Appeal donations continued to be generously made this fall. Overall we raised \$8,314 (including stock donations) with 84 members generously giving to the fund. Thanks to all for making the annual appeal a tremendous success (see the fall newsletter for other generous donors): David McKinley and Leslie Badham, Tim Belcher, David Cumiskey and Sarah Conly, Sarah and Allen Findley, Dean and Peg Parsons, George and Sue Sergeant, Tim and Sue Shepard, David Shiah and Karin Tilberg, Gladys Tate, and Peter and Barbara Vickery.

### FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY

#### Steering Committee

- Frank Burroughs, 81 Wallentine Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 Secretary .. 666-5979
- Dana Cary, 1052 Foreside Rd., Topsham 04086..... Treasurer ..... 729-4945
- Jenn Cost, 6 Aspen Dr., Brunswick 04011 ..... 725-5319
- Andy Cutko, 555 Browns Point Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 .... Vice Chair ..... 666-3162
- Steve Eagles, 14 Beech St., Richmond 04357 ..... 737-8023
- Ed Friedman 42 Stevens Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 ..... Chair ..... 666-3372
- Kathleen Kenny, River Rd. #1105, Dresden 04342 ..... 737-2511
- Pat Maloney, 31 Bridge St., Topsham 04086 ..... 729-8941
- Kathleen McGee, 643 Browns Point Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 ..... 666-3598
- Al Mesrobian, 909 Middle St., Bath 04530 ..... 443-5833
- Bill Milam, 107 Brushwood Rd., Woolwich 04579 ..... 443-9738
- David Phinney, 93 Bay Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 ..... 666-3311
- Jay Robbins, P.O. Box 9, Richmond 04357..... 737-2239

#### Conservation & Stewardship Coordinator:

- Dan Stockford ..... 737-2709

#### Hands Around the Bay Coordinator:

- Pat Maloney (see above) ..... 729-8941

#### Special Events Coordinator:

- Jean Parker, 82 Island Drive, Woolwich 04579 ..... 442-0982

#### Executive Director:

- This Space Available ..... 666-3372

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

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

#### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS.

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

- Renewal     Gift From:

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

## ICE IN

In watermelon light coating the treetops and sifting down to the waters surface, I stand transfixed. Dry cold in my nose biting like fiery habaneros bursting on my tongue. Awake! My senses are awake and at attention. Hands shoved deep into oversized gloves, feet embraced by layers of wool, leather and gore-tex, a hat never snug enough on my ears which are so cold they're hot.

The wind is a vehicle driven far too fast, leaving a trail of scattered pine tips, branches and small tornados of snow in its wake. I know what it must feel like to tattoo ones face- needles of wind on my cheeks, nose and forehead. It is cold. It is beautiful.

Abbagadasset Point gives birth to the emerging full moon. In the confusion of winter light the stark white of the moon contrasts starkly with tropical tangerine, pomegranate and plum colors of the setting sun. All of it glistens in competing washes of glow upon the ice.

The ice that has hoppedscotched and peek-a-boomed about the Bay for weeks is now not only in, but growing faster than health care rates. Each day I walk to the Point and each day the Bay-scape dramatically changes, one scene more beautiful than the

next, from serene to surreal. The variations of aqua blue I'd never seen before on the Bay, a gray that matches my mood at times, a Prussian blue washed deeper than any of my inadequate watercolours, shift with the hours, days and ice.

A waterfall of shelf ice tickles over the rocks as the tide pulls toward the sea. Like the Humpback whales, there is an intricate song and it changes through the day in its exposure to sun, wind, tide, moon and temperature. One can never tire of this for all its variety, rich texture and surprise.

Watching the ice move in and out on the tide is like viewing my own heartbeat. It is wondrous and comforting. There is an added comfort in knowing that what I'll see when I gaze out, even when my mind is jumping and settling like fleas, is the ubiquitous ice in its constancy. It is my touchstone.

In these days of environmental degradation, children lost to their fears, joyless work and endless debt; in these days of corporate based consumerism, greed, mindless TV and corrupt politicians; in these days it is a rope to a drowning man to breathe in the piercing cold, be soaked in colours washed by winters light and be enveloped by the symphony of ice.

*Kathleen McGee*



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