



**"Inveniam viam aut faciam."
Find a way or make one**

Eagle Island Journal

A Publication of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

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President's Message Spring 2021

We hope this Spring 2021 Journal finds you staying healthy and looking forward to the coming summer. By the time this goes to press and is published more details about this summer may be settled. But at this time the Bureau of Parks and Lands is planning to have the island open to visitors beginning June 15th. The Peary house and Library will remain closed to visitors at least for early summer. The museum was closed for over a year and a half and the damp, island environment has encouraged mold and mildew growth in much of the structure and collection. A major mold remediation program is planned for early summer and the duration and extent of that program will determine when and if the building can be open to the public this summer. For the latest information about the status of this project, refer to the Friends' website, Peary Eagle Island.org.

The Welcome Center will be open to all visitors and the Friends' new introductory video will welcome you with a brief history of the Peary family on Eagle Island in the early 20th century and what the island now has to offer visitors from the 21st century.

Friends' docents will be on hand most days to welcome you to Eagle Island and to serve as your resource for information about the Peary family or about the ongoing preservation work. Friends' work crews will focus on the gardens and trails and, of course, assist with the mold remediation project wherever we can do so with safety for our volunteers.

The preservation of the museum, library and collection will require a major commitment from the State and the Friends. This summer's mold remediation project is the immediate priority. Assuring the integrity of the roof, making the window casings and sills weather tight, and providing drainage away from structures are all projects that inspections have identified as needing attention. We will continue to need your help to do our part.

Our Journal mailing list has close to 1200 names of current and former contributing members of the Friends. However, we have not heard from two thirds of the people on that list in the last three years. We want you all back! We need you all back! Eagle Island needs your TLC more than ever.

As we have alerted all readers of the past couple of Journals, this will have to be the last journal we can send you unless we hear from you that you are still interested in the work of the Friends and in supporting the preservation of Admiral Peary's 'Promised Land'. We want to assure all supporters that your monetary support goes directly to the benefit of Eagle Island. The funds saved by not printing and mailing Journals to those no longer interested can be put to better use to preserve and protect our National Historic Landmark. Please use the enclosed return envelope to signal your interest at least, your donation of any amount if you can, or both.

Ever since Eagle Island captured the imagination of a young Bowdoin student named Peary, it has drawn visitors to its shores and this summer will be no different in that aspect. We may have to adjust to social changes, but the island doesn't and won't. It still commands its place in Casco Bay; the views from its heights and shores are unmatched; and it still rewards the visitor for the trip out in so many ways. We hope to see you on island this summer!

**Steve Ingram
President The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island**

Docent Recruitment 2021

Every season we need to find replacement docents for those who retire from their service to Eagle Island. Because of the suspension of the docent program during the COVID impacted season, we find our numbers seriously depleted this season as we attempt to reboot this well respected and deeply appreciated program. If you have enjoyed your visits to Eagle Island, perhaps you would consider joining our docent family and sharing your enthusiasm for island history and the Peary legacy with future visitors to this wonderful place. You won't find a more rewarding volunteer experience, and you get to spend hours listening to the surf and the singing gulls, surrounded by incredible scenic views of Casco Bay. Visit the Friends website for a description of the docent program and to volunteer to become a docent.

Eagle Island 2021

Tim Spahr Eagle Island Park Manager

In preparation for the June 15 opening of the Eagle Island State Historic Site, Assistant Ranger Chloe Kilborn and Park Manager Tim Spahr spent considerable time removing trash from the island and conducting other maintenance. Both boats are in the water and Rangers Kilborn and Spahr are making routine trips to and from the island. Early this June, professional conservators, one specializing in objects conservation and the other in architectural conservation, will be assessing the Robert E. Peary Summer Home Museum. As is now commonly known, the Museum has suffered a mold infestation and immediate steps are being taken by the Bureau of Parks and Lands to address the issue. Each historic object in the Museum will be evaluated and conservation treatment will be implemented as needed. Although still in the coordination phase, the museum renovation will be a lengthy and time-consuming project. In addition to the historic objects housed in the Museum, an architectural assessment of the building will take place. Over the last several weeks, maintenance crews have removed window boards, windows and doors have been periodically opened as a precursor to the architectural evaluation. As a result of the conservation efforts, the Museum will not be open to the public, but the island will. Bird nesting is going strong with nests located around the Museum building and garden areas thus trails will not be open until July.



Over the last several weeks, Rangers Kilborn and Spahr met with the Harpswell Fire Chief who will be visiting the island to insure fire safety, to conduct an inspection of fire suppression equipment and to review the Eagle Island fire response plan. Rangers also met with post office and transfer station officials to insure long established relationships are maintained. Early in June, Game Wardens from southern Maine Division A will be holding a meeting on the island as an effort to establish interagency relations for further protection of the Museum and historic site.

Rangers Kilborn and Spahr are looking forward to a safe and productive summer. With the Bureau of Parks and Lands making a concentrated effort on the Museum, it is our intent to have it back online with the building and its collection in high standard.

Tim Spahr

Park Manager Eagle Island State Historic Site

Maine Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Bureau of Parks and Lands

Summer Plans for 2021

With hopeful anticipation, and trowels and pruners at the ready, the gardeners and volunteers are looking forward to the summer season on Eagle Island. We will be filling the planting boxes along the stairway and deck with several varieties of flowers using the red, white, and blue Patriotic theme of past summers, and adding more colorful plants along the foundation of the house and in front of the Visitor Center.





Restoration work in the historic gardens along the trails will continue as we strive to remove invasive weeds and add more of the plants that Josephine, Marie, and Inez enjoyed during their years on the Island. An inventory of plants included in Josephine's garden dated 1912, included: peony, hydrangea, foxglove, phlox, hollyhock, and bleeding heart- just to name a few. We believe Marie began her own garden around 1915 and some of her favorites were: canterbury bells, morning glory, lupines, poppy, and iris. The third garden (but first as you head out on the trails from the house) was built around 1946 by Inez, Josephine's and Robert E. Peary's daughter-in-law, Robert E. Peary, Jr's wife. She incorporated some of the same flowers found in the other two gardens, but also included cow parsnip, wild leek, goldenrod, aster, Indian pipe, and Jack-in-the-pulpit, among several others.

Many thanks to all those who help return the gardens to their original splendor.

Kim Payne Garden Coordinator The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

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PLEASE NOTE

As stated in the President’s Message, we are reducing the number of journals we will be mailing out. For those members who make a donation, a printed journal (along with a gift of appreciation) will still be mailed bi-annually. The spring and fall journals will be available on our website <https://www.pearyeagleisland.org/> for those folks who want to keep up with how the Friends of Peary’s Eagle Island support the State of Maine in preserving this remarkable jewel in our backyards. The website is being overhauled to be much more informative and user friendly. Check it out and let us know what you think. Updates will be posted regularly to the website. This year has become crucially important for The Friends involvement to help deal with the mold infestation issue, the ongoing socially distancing, the maintenance of our docent program and more. Also look for more archive photos, garden updates, items for purchase from our online Trading Post, and regular entries from our work crews.

As always your generous donations either sent with our supplied return envelope or through our secure Square account found on the website are greatly appreciated.

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