



Eagle Island Journal

A Publication of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

Volume XXV, Number 2 Fall 2020

“Inveniam viam aut faciam.”
Find a way or make one.

President's Greetings Fall 2020

The Lost Summer of 2020

Summer, 2020, on Eagle Island saw an extended period of some of the best summer weather in recent memory. Unfortunately, the island saw the fewest visitors it has seen in recent memory due to the covid-19 pandemic. The State of Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands opened Eagle Island to visitors July 4th until Labor Day with visitor access to the trails, lawns and beaches, but keeping the Peary Museum, Peary Library, and Welcome Center closed to all visitors.

The Friends suspended the docent program for the summer. But for those visitors who could get to the island, they were greeted with the customary Eagle Island welcome by Acting Park Manager John Burgess. And thanks to John and Assistant Ranger Chloe, Eagle Island was kept in pristine shape and presented itself to visitors as an idyllic refuge from the turmoil elsewhere. The trails were freshly trimmed, the lawns befitting a championship golf course despite the drought conditions, and volunteers helped the Rangers recover the summer pathway across the South Beach from the winter's ravages.

The historic gardens continued their rejuvenation thanks to the tireless attention and expertise of volunteers coordinated by Board member Kim Payne. Other Board members provided marine transport for these gardeners and volunteered to help preserve the pier, the bridge to the composting toilets, and Welcome Center deck and stairway with a water seal treatment. See the full report of garden work elsewhere in this Journal.

Board members did an inspection of the building exteriors and the grounds with John Burgess and noted the following top priority maintenance needs:

- several cedar roofing shingles had been torn off by the wind and the exposed under-roofing will provide only temporary roof integrity;
- batteries supporting the solar electrical systems have exceeded their normal life span and will need to be replaced;
- the North Flagpole Lawn east retaining wall has begun leaning seaward and several cracks have appeared weakening the span of the wall along the east side of the lawn.
- the Library staircase, temporarily repaired a year ago still needs a permanent solution to keep it from separating and becoming unsafe; and
- leaks through the upper parts of that Library stairway leading to the deck have damaged the underpinning supporting access to the deck and will require reengineering.

John noted that many of these items had been identified by the Bureau of Parks and Lands engineering inspection at the beginning of the summer. Friends will work to support the State in assuring these critical improvements get attention. We anticipate we will have more specifics on these projects next Spring.

A new Eagle Island Park Manager has been appointed. Tim Spahr, assumed the position in September. See his introduction elsewhere in this Journal. We look forward to working with Tim to make the summer of 2021 a return to Eagle Island as a “promised land”.

With access to Eagle Island limited this summer, the Board of the Friends of Peary’s Eagle Island has focused its attention on organizational improvements that will serve the island and our membership in three areas. Board Officers initiated a review and redesign of the website with the objective to make it the main communication link among the Board, Friends membership, Bureau of Parks and Lands, and all returning and potential visitors. Information pertinent to each constituency should be easy to access, accurate, timely, and comprehensive. The visual imagery of the island should be worthy of the island itself. And, users will find new conveniences such as donating to the Friends via the secure website and eventually, perhaps, purchasing from the Trading Post using credit card payments.

The Friends membership list is being updated to improve its accuracy, completeness and functionality. Whereas the Website will be our window to the world, our membership list will include recent membership donors, visitors who ask to be on our mailing list, State officials with responsibility for Eagle Island, Peary family members, and other stake holders with an interest in Eagle Island as a State and National Historic site. A membership donation is all it takes to assure you are included.

The Board is fortunate to have an acting volunteer Treasurer with the patience and perseverance to bring best accounting practices and modern software tools to our accounting and budgeting processes. Maintaining the Friends’ critical status as a Federal non-profit organization requires continuous attention to reporting requirements that will benefit from these improvements. The visitor experience will also benefit from the added conveniences of cash-free purchases from the Trading Post on the island and on-island membership donations via credit card. We are still looking for someone to serve as Treasurer for the Friends of Peary’s Eagle Island. Please contact us if interested.

Thanks to all Friends’ Board members and volunteers for keeping Eagle Island in their summer plans as much as the pandemic would allow. Next summer will see the benefits of these efforts.

Although there is no one there to confirm this, we know from past history that Autumn leaves are falling on the island, insulating and protecting the Peary family gardens; that soon Winter storms will bring ice to joust with the rocks on the South Beach; and that Spring will again turn our thoughts to what another summer will bring to Eagle Island.

Until then, stay well, stay healthy, and stay in touch.

Steve Ingram, President

Friends of Peary’s Eagle Island Board Members
President: Steve Ingram
Vice President and Treasurer: Nick Knight
Secretary: Lisa Blanchard
Docent Coordinators: Wayne and Gaye Miller
Webmaster: Steve Harding
Gardens coordinator: Kim Payne
Trading Post Coordinator: Marnee Small
Outreach and Communications Coordinator: Diane Friese
Special Projects: Karen Dyer

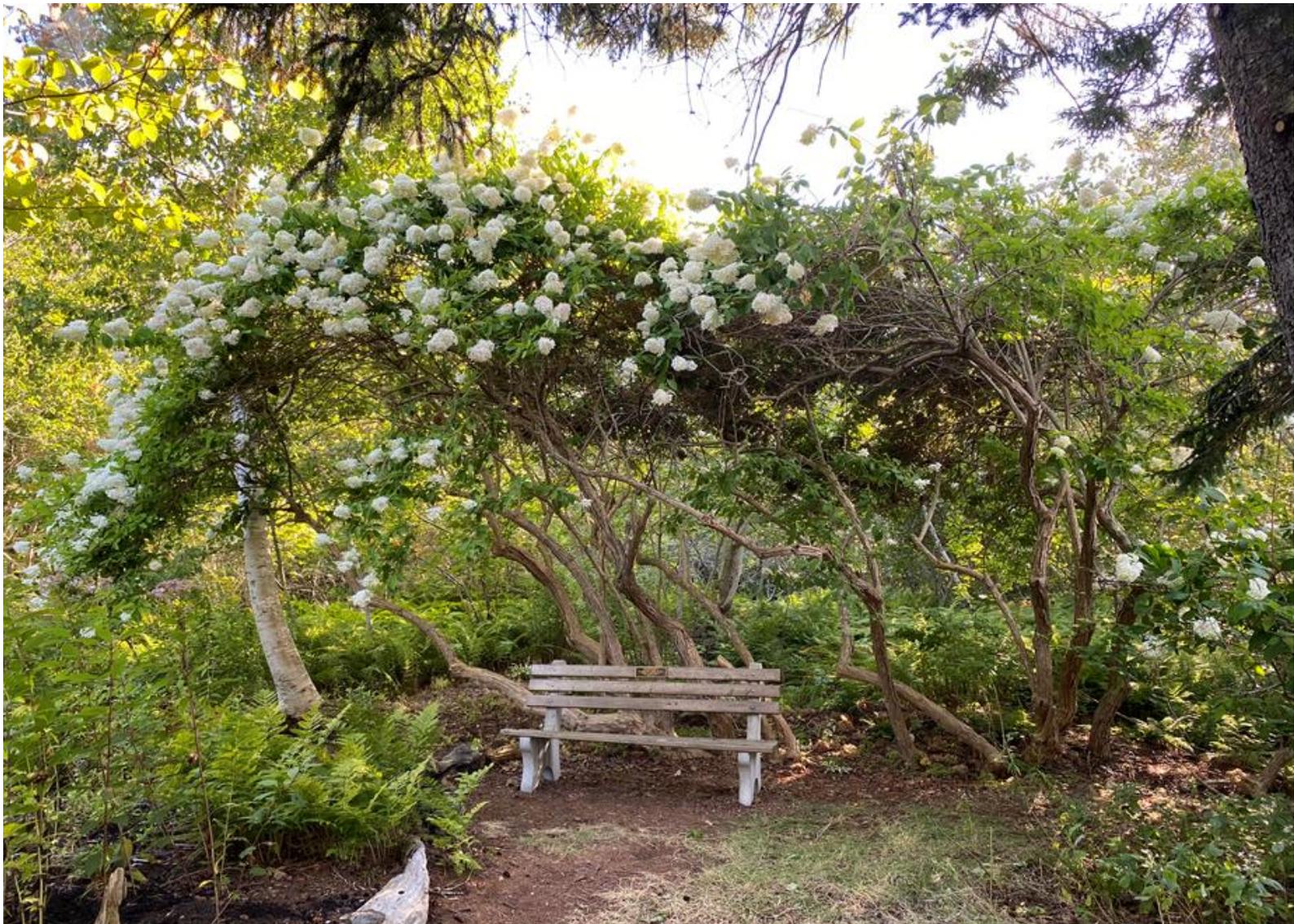
Summer of 2020 Gardening Progress

By Kim Payne

The summer of 2020 was certainly one for the books- social distancing, no large gatherings, and few visits with family and friends. The gardens on Eagle Island, however, paid no heed to the woes of the world and kept growing and blossoming and providing nectar for the birds, the bees, and the butterflies.

One to three gardeners were able to make weekly visits out to the Island beginning mid-June and made great progress towards bringing the historical gardens back to what we can only imagine was their former glory. We weeded, thinned, deadheaded, transplanted, rebuilt stone borders, and continued to amend the soils in all three gardens and also along the house foundation.

In Josephine's garden we added a new bleeding heart, Jacob's ladder, irises, and foxglove, all plants identified to have been in her garden at one time. With John and Nick's help, we pruned away a few cherry saplings and some branches from the large spruce tree next to Josephine's 100 (plus) year old hydrangea. This minimal amount of trimming opened up the space remarkably well allowing for more sun and more space for this magnificent specimen to continue to flourish.



Marie's Garden is dominated by a large white birch tree which has made much of this garden quite shady and the sun loving plants are no longer fairing very well there. We transplanted a few irises to the sunnier garden by the Visitor Center and are hopeful they will once again blossom in their new location. We cleared the weeds from the lower part, uncovering peonies, lilies, foxglove, and raspberries to name a few, and rebuilt the stone border along the path by the tool shed.



Inez's garden continues to do well benefitting from previous season's efforts and the bright blue hydrangea is an eye-catching centerpiece entering the garden area. The Century plant also bloomed this summer as well as the roses and the peonies. We added a few irises to this colorful little garden.



During the first gardening effort this summer, we cleared and expanded the bed along the foundation and adjacent to the Library steps, prepping it for new plantings next spring. We are hoping to add a white climbing rose variety named after Josephine – The Mrs. Robert E. Peary Rose – to this bed.

The focus of our last trip out to the Island this season was the small garden on the right side of the visitor center. We cut out the dying (and caterpillar-infested) cherry and sumac saplings, raked up the pinecones and stones and to our delight and surprise, found the best soil on the island! We transplanted one day lily and several iris tubers from other beds and will add additional plants next spring.





Many thanks to Lisa, Karon, Annette, Joyce, Nick , Steve, Ranger John Burgess, and Assistant Ranger Chloe, for all their help and we are all hoping that next summer will be even more productive and allow for a more “normal” season on Eagle Island with the return of the docents and volunteers.

Stay well, and see you next year!

Kim Payne

Introducing Eagle Island's New Park Manager Tim Spahr



Last July, Tim Spahr was hired as Park Manager for the Eagle Island State Historic Site. At that time, he was employed as a Game Warden Sergeant for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. As a result of him being hired as Park Manager, Tim retired from IF&W to pursue his new position. Tim has a life-long interest in the preservation of cultural sites particularly those on islands. In 2016, he formed a citizen science partnership between the Brick Store Museum and the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust. The Cape Porpoise Archaeological Alliance was founded to conduct archaeological analysis of Cape Porpoise Harbor and its twelve islands where archeological sites are threatened by global sea level rise. Tim, has published several professional papers to include one in the Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology regarding the discovery and excavation of an 800-year-old dugout canoe. Tim lives in Kennebunk with his wife Elizabeth who is a professional Master Gardener and owner of Village Yoga of the Kennebunks. His daughter Emily is an Emergency Veterinary Technician in Seattle Washington. Tim holds degrees from College of the Atlantic and Harvard University and is a veteran of the US Coast Guard.

Thanks.
Tim Spahr
Cape Porpoise, ME 0401

From the Archives



This is a photo of Admiral and Mrs. Peary's bedroom. The Admiral's coat hangs on a coat rack in the corner. The coat is now preserved in a beautiful glass case, an example of some of the work the Friends' does to preserve and protect the house and its contents.



This is the clothes wringer that is currently in the kitchen on Eagle Island. The EI-117 label is from when the State of Maine documented all the contents of the house. More photos like these can be found in the Arcadia book, "Eagle Island Admiral Peary's Harpswell Home". Published in 2017, it is part of Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series and can be found at most bookstores.

******* FOPIE 2020 News *******

Thank you for your continued support of The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island. As you can see in the President's message, much needs to be done on Eagle Island. The Friends' involvement with these projects is only possible due to your continued generous support. As a reminder donations in ANY amount can be made through our secure Square account found on our website pearyeagleisland.org.

A special THANK YOU! for all who donated to the memory of Friends' President Admiral Harry Rich.

The Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum has a new exhibit, "Kayak". It can be viewed online and has amazing videos including instructions on how to roll a kayak. Beautifully done and shouldn't be missed.

We look forward to 2021 as a time when we can all visit Eagle Island safely and enjoy this beautiful site in Casco Bay.

Stay Safe and Be Well

The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island
P.O Box 43
Bailey Island, ME 04003

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bailey Island, ME
Permit No. 2