



"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

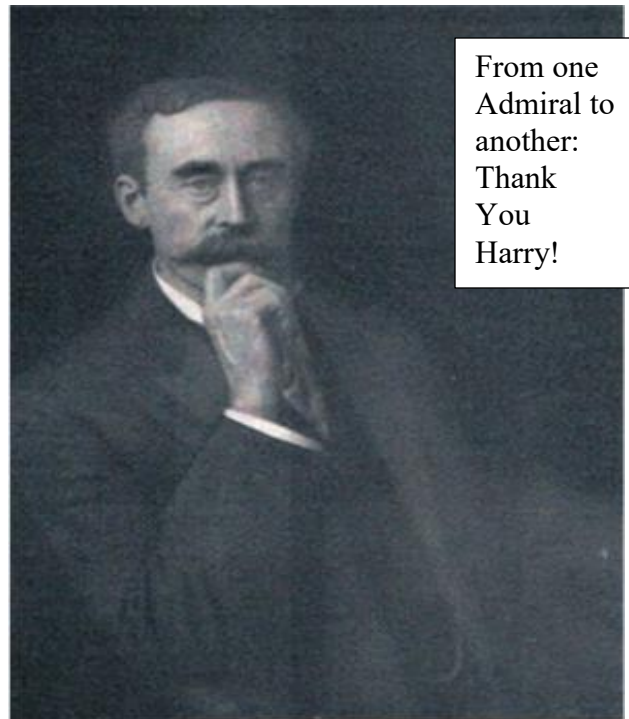
Dear Friends,

Many years ago – so many in fact that I can't remember exactly how many years it has been – my good friends Edna and Ray Harrison invited me to attend a meeting with them. They said I would really enjoy it. It turned out to be my first of many, many meetings with The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island. There I had the privilege of meeting both Ed Stafford and Bert Peary (the grandsons of Admiral Peary) and their wives. From that moment on I was hooked!

The story goes that years later I missed a meeting and found myself elected President. And now all these years later, I am still President of this wonderful organization. However, at 92, with age and mobility challenges staring me in the face, I think it's time to pass the baton to more youthful and capable hands. I want to continue to be involved in the mission of The Friends, but I will be resigning as President effective June 1st with amazing memories, a sense of pride in what as a group we have accomplished, and heartfelt thanks to every former and current officer, board member, and hundreds of volunteers of The Friends as well as to all of our colleagues at the State for their dedicated support and efforts over the years. Thank you everyone!

With deepest gratitude,

Harry Rich



From one
Admiral to
another:
Thank
You
Harry!

Portrait of Peary by Clinedinst

Friends' President Harry Rich Resigns after Nearly Two Decades as President

At the May 22, 2018, meeting of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island President Harry Rich read his letter of resignation.

In response, the Board unanimously approved this motion: That the Board accept Harry's resignation with sincere regret – under the one condition – that he, in turn, accept the Board's designation of Rear Admiral Harry Rich as President Emeritus, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

This brings to a conclusion nearly two decades of Harry's leadership of the Friends during a period of significant growth as an organization and impressive contributions in support of the State of Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands' stewardship of Eagle Island as a State Historical Park and of the Peary legacy as an American hero. The list of projects and improvements to which the Friends, under Harry's leadership, committed financial support, volunteer hours, and technical and professional expertise, include return of artifacts originally in the Peary summer home such as the pianola, furniture, ship's clock, sextant, and Peary's Great Coat; repair and preservation of the East Bastion and supporting stonework; preservation of the stonewall around the north flagpole lawn, construction of the Welcome Center; extending trail work to the southern end of the island with a new picnic site; research, production, and distribution of CD's chronicling Peary's life and love of Eagle Island; production of the audio tour of Eagle Island based on Peary's Grandson Ed Stafford's visitors tours of the island; research, preparation and publication of Eagle Island-Admiral Peary's Harpswell Home, authored by Friends Stephen Harding and Elizabeth O'Connell and, most recently, the designation of Eagle Island as a US National Historic Site. WOW!

How could a small organization under one man's leadership accomplish so much? -"Friendship" – If you could google "Friendship" you would find the following associated keywords: commitment, leadership, energy, perseverance, civility, good humor, and, of course, friendship. Harry has guided the Friends by his example, by his "Friendship". Humility will not let him accept credit for the success of the Friends for the past two decades, but we hope that he can at least sit back and take pride in all that has been accomplished.

Well done, Harry!

Thanks!





Admiral Harry Rich President of The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island and Gary Best Regional Manager (Acting) Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Bureau of Parks and Lands, welcome new Eagle Island Park Manager, Owen Blease

Owen Blease – Park Manager

I first laid eyes on Eagle Island in 2012 as a deckhand for Atlantic Seal Cruises, and it was then that I met Zane Wallace for the first time. Zane greeted the captain and me with a warm, genuine smile, and after talking for a few minutes it was clear that he took great care in managing the Island, its staff, and volunteers. “What do I have to do to get a job like that?” I thought to myself. Over the next two summers, I visited Eagle Island daily on the Atlantic Seal and always looked forward to introducing the Island’s history to tour passengers and talking with Zane on the float. In 2014, an Assistant Park Ranger position became vacant, and when Zane offered it to me, I accepted it without delay. My love for the Island grew even deeper as I learned from Zane and found a meaningful place for my knowledge of the environment and boat handling experience. The job was a perfect fit for me and Zane was an excellent leader, mentor, friend, and colleague.

After graduating from the University of Southern Maine as an Environmental Science major in December 2017, my girlfriend and I took a spontaneous trip to Mount Desert Island. While hiking I began telling her about my experiences on Eagle Island and she commented on how excited I was talking about them. I told her that being a Park Ranger was the best job I have ever had, and if the opportunity to become the Park Manager was ever presented, I would accept it without hesitation. When we returned to the hotel, I took a chance and opened the online job bulletin for the State of Maine. When I saw the vacancy listing for the Eagle Island Park Manager position I couldn’t believe my eyes. I submitted my application the following day.

I could not be more humbled, honored, and excited to have the opportunity to support the mission of the Friends of Peary’s Eagle Island and uphold the duties bestowed upon me by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. Zane’s contribution to the Island came from his heart, and I am motivated to continue projects which he helped to facilitate in addition to exploring new ways to improve the visitor experience, protect the coastal ecosystem, and preserve the history and legacy of the Peary family. I look forward to meeting each of you this summer and working as a team to enhance the experience of Eagle Island and celebrate its unique offerings.

Eagle Island Park Manager Resigns

Eagle Island greets all visitors to the Island with a warm welcome as they step onto the float and head up the ramp onto the dock. For the past several years, that welcome has come from the heart and that heart belongs to Zane Wallace, Park Manager. But Zane has resigned as Park Manager to seek other opportunities and visitors will miss his welcome, the Friends will miss him, and most significantly, Eagle Island will miss him.

As Park Manager, Zane has been Maine's Bureau of Parks and Lands' ambassador to Eagle Island, attending to the needs of visitors and to the preservation and protection of the Island. The heavy responsibilities of managing the 17-acre Island, a museum housing priceless artifacts, and the historic preservation of the Peary family legacy are masked by Zane's immediate attention to visitors to assure that each Island experience is memorable.

The Friends will miss his support and guidance in our work for and on the Island. The docents depend on him for safe and reliable transportation to and from the Island in all kinds of weather. He has made himself available whenever docents need assistance or have a question, and he takes every opportunity to express his appreciation for their volunteer efforts. Friends' work parties on the Island have benefitted from his guidance and supervision, and often his pitching in to help solve a tough problem or add extra hands to the effort.

But Eagle Island will miss him most! His unique combination of skills and experiences: seamanship, construction, maintenance, woodlore, management, and conversational acumen have redefined the Park Manager's role. His knowledge of the history of the island and the Peary family complements his concern for the preservation of the Peary family legacy and the Island's buildings and artifacts they left to the State of Maine. Zane has also introduced more modern concerns for protection against invasive species, ecological good practice, and sustainability while advocating for additional solar powered energy to meet the needs of public access. It is fitting tribute that during his tenure as Park Manager, Eagle Island was recognized as a National Historic Site. He leaves with the thanks and appreciation of the Friends for his commitment to Eagle Island and for his support for our mission.

THANK YOU ZANE

The Board Members of Friends of Peary's Eagle Island and the entire docent crew current and past wish to thank Zane Wallace for all he has done for making Eagle Island what it is today. Many good times and laughs have been shared, and countless lifelong memories have been created because of Zane's involvement. He will truly be missed. We all wish him the best of luck with all endeavors knowing there is no task too tall for him.



Among so many other things, Zane oversaw the restoration of the polar bear above and spoke at the dedication of Eagle Island as a National Historic Site below.



Narwhals and Narwhal Tusks

By Diane Friesse

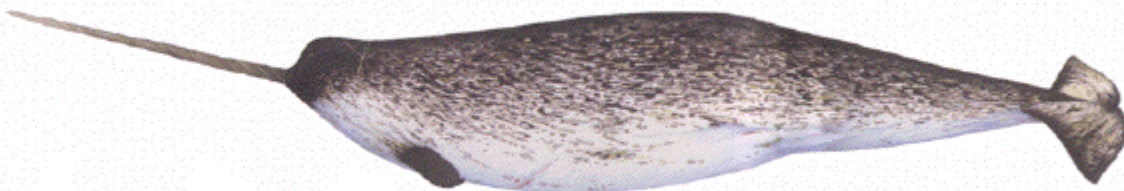
Many of you have seen the Narwhal tusk hanging on the living room wall of the Peary summer house on Eagle Island. Docents have learned from locals who knew the Peary family that at one time there were over a dozen tusks in the house, which Peary brought back from his many expeditions. In fall 2017, I attended a Bowdoin lecture on narwhals by a visiting practicing dentist and research scientist, Dr. Martin Nweeia. The following information is from notes taken that day.

Narwhals currently live primarily in arctic waters off Greenland, Baffin Island and also in northern Russian waters. Scientists estimate that their population today is about 180,000. Inuit people still actively and legally hunt narwhal for their meat and tusks. The latter used for their artistic carvings. Narwhals are medium- sized whales that as adults weigh about 1500 lbs. and they possess a large tusk which pierces though the upper left side of their lips. Narwhals don't have any teeth inside their mouths and no other whale species has a tusk like a narwhal. Male narwhals have a 9 ft. tusk and sometimes a 1 ft. tusk/tooth protruding out the right side of their lips. Most female narwhals don't have tusks, but occasionally a female has been seen with a tusk and likewise an occasional male does not have a long tusk.

Narwhal tusks always spiral counter-clockwise to the left, unlike most spirals in nature and are both flexible and strong. The softest part of the tusk is on the outside and the hardest is inside, where the dendrite protects the nerve that runs down the center of the entire tusk and connects to the narwhal's brain. Scientists at the collaborative international Narwhal Tusk Research group (www.narwhal.org), have learned that narwhal tusks have millions of tubular (openings) that are composed of sensory fibers which form a sensory organ system. Narwhals use their tusks for sensing fish in the water. Inuit who are experts on narwhal behavior and the environment they live in, have observed that narwhal tusks can flex 10 degrees in all directions. Narwhals frequently use their tusks to stun fish, which they then consume. Narwhal scientists who have interviewed Inuit elders, have said that they have never seen narwhals fighting each other with their tusks. The latter was a previous assumption that was never proven and is now considered not valid narwhal behavior.

Other knowledge discovered about narwhals is that their large ears can hear sounds for miles in all directions, like so many other whale species. Narwhals can only hold their breath for about 45 minutes before resurfacing. And their neck vertebrae are jointed like other mammals and not fixed like in dolphins and most other whales. Narwhals can live to be 50 yrs. old.

In the 15th century, ground up narwhal tusks were thought to be an antidote to poisoning, so narwhals were hunted extensively by non- Inuit hunters and the population significantly declined. One final interesting historical fact, is that the myth of the unicorn was created by the Vikings. They found narwhal tusks on various beaches and created stories about an animal with a tusk growing out of its head. As stated earlier, narwhal tusks extend out through their left lips, not out the top of their heads, like the imaginary unicorn.



Invasive Plants on Peary's Eagle Island

Black Swallowwort - *Cynanchum louiseae* - on the beach at EI.

One of the worst invaders on the island.

Photo and article by Priscilla Seimer



The arrival of invasive plants on Peary's Eagle Island is depressing, but not surprising.

An invasive species is defined by the USDA as “non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Invasive species can be plants, animals, and other organisms (e.g., microbes). Human actions are the primary means of invasive species introductions.”

Generally invasives leaf out much earlier than nativespecies, grow and spread aggressively, are hard to control, and often impossible to fully eradicate.

While birds spread some seeds most native fauna don't like invasives.

Our native plants and animals (including the all-important insects) evolved together. When invasive plants take over, this relationship is disrupted, and an ecosystem may be harmed or even lost altogether. Biodiversity is lost.

Invasive species are difficult to control, but it is critical that we do the best we can. Particularly on islands such as Eagle Island, where for much of the year no one is around, giving invasive plants more time to establish themselves.

Priscilla Seimer, HIPP

- Thanks to Ted Elliman, New England Wildflower Society, for some of the information used in this article.**
- Additional information from the United States Department of Agriculture website.**

Gardeners wanted!!!

Could you do this? Of course you can. Come to Eagle Island and join our energetic crew of gardening volunteers. No experience necessary. Eagle Island has some of the most beautiful and historic gardens found anywhere in Maine.

It's fun and rewarding. To know more contact us at

friendsofpearyseagleisland@gmail.com



The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island welcome two new Eagle Island Board members.

Diane Friese

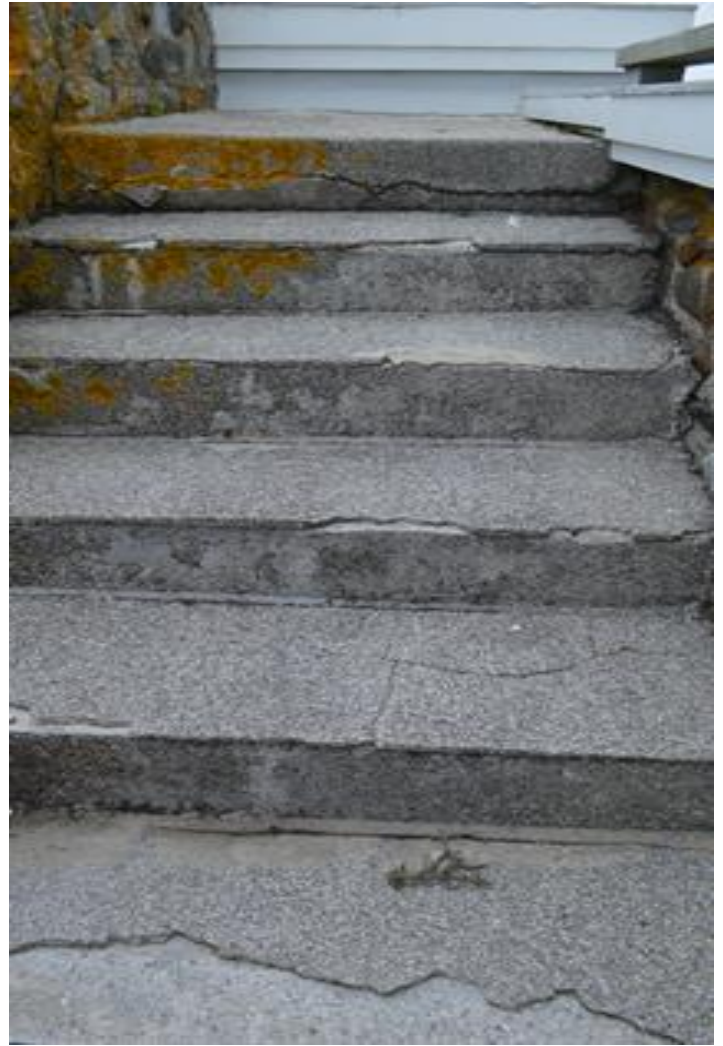
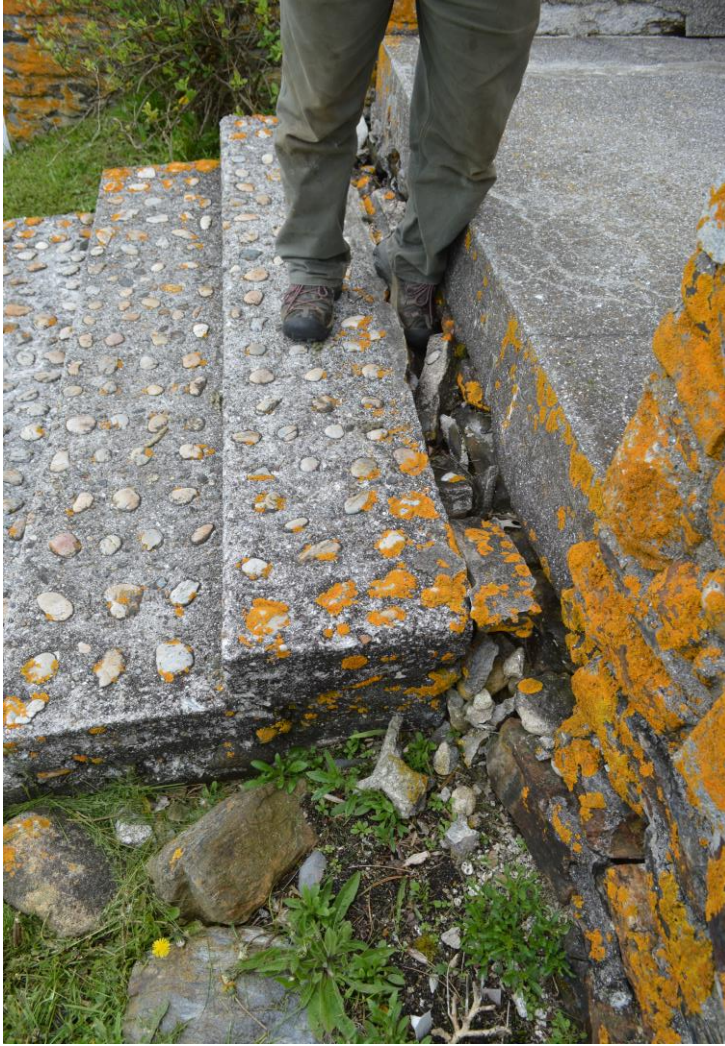
For the past four years, Diane Friese, Brunswick resident, has been an enthusiastic docent on Eagle Island. She calls her weekly docent experience, her “nurturing island day” which she looks forward to as one of the highlights of every summer. She states: “no matter what the weather brings, every visit to Eagle Island is always fresh, soothing to the spirit, a connection to the natural world and a way to meet interesting people from around Maine and the world.” She brings to the Board a commitment to helping preserve the Eagle Island environment and offer new ideas for making the legacy of the Peary family accessible to more people.

Karen Dyer

I am Karen Dyer, one of many who have always longed to live in Maine and after a lifetime of residency in Massachusetts moved to Brunswick in 2011 to retire. That's when I discovered the joys of being a docent on Eagle Island, welcoming and describing the history of the Island and of the family who spent their summers living there to the islands many visitors. It is magical, it is historical, it is peaceful and beautiful and it was the summer home of America's great explorer, Admiral Robert Edwin Peary. As a new member of the Board of Eagle Island I look forward to bringing to a greater public knowledge of this special place in Casco Bay.

Announcing a major project for The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

This year FOPEI hope to be working with the State of Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands to restructure and resurface the steps leading to the house and library. An obvious safety hazard, these repairs require immediate attention before further deterioration increases the safety issue and adds to the cost of repairs.



The staircase has undergone several repairs from its original 10 step staircase made of poured concrete with stonewall siding. The cement wall on the perimeter of the library roof also has some severe cracks allowing water to infiltrate the wooden ceiling below it.

Admiral Peary was a Civil Engineer whose interests and research placed him at the frontier of structural concrete composition and its uses. His library, with several volumes of books on this subject, gives testimony to his profession. He would expect the use of the most modern materials available. The mortar will be adjusted to match, as closely as possible, the original mortar used but now weathered from more than a century of exposure to Maine Midcoast weather.

After a personal review by representatives from the Historic Commission and the General Services Office, a decision will be made on how best to proceed. The work is currently planned to be completed in three in phases.

Your donations will help us afford this necessary project this year.

Thank you for your contributions to The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Can any of our readers remember this building on Eagle Island, its history, and what it was called?

This building was referred to as “The Igloo”

It was the first ell added to the original house in 1906. During the expansion of the house in 1912, the ell was removed from the house largely intact. It was attached to the rock face on the east side of Eagle Island just behind the house and served for many years as a guest house. Never having heat or electricity, the Igloo was a rustic yet exciting place to spend an evening with the Atlantic Ocean crashing just a few feet below the deck.

More photos like this can be found in the Images of America series published by Arcadia Publishing. “Eagle Island Admiral Peary’s Harpswell Home” can be found at most local bookstores, online where books are sold, through our website, or by contacting us through our email address at friendsofpearyseagleisland@gmail.com. All proceeds from the sale of the book help The Friends of Peary’s Eagle Island keep Eagle Island a place people want to visit again and again.

A SHOUT OUT FOR VOLUNTEER DOCENTS

We are signing up docents for the 2018 season. The Friends sponsor the docent program for Eagle Island. A docent is a guide, ambassador, greeter, and a friendly face to those who are visiting Eagle Island. The time commitment is by individual preference. Some work three or four days a season, others have a day a week scheduled. No experience necessary, training is provided.

Contact us through this email address: friendsofpearyseagleisland@gmail.com. You’ll be glad you did!

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