



Eagle Island Journal

A Publication of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

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

President's Message Spring 2023

Friends, it is time to celebrate! Yes, Spring is here (at least at this writing, 6 May, it feels like Spring); Yes, Eagle Island will open June 15 as usual to celebrate 55 years since the Peary family deeded the island to the State as a State Park; Yes, the Welcome Center will greet visitors with a video of the Peary family on Eagle; Yes, the gardens and flower boxes will add visual impact as they have for 110 years since the Peary family invited visitors to their island; and, Yes, the trails will entice visitors to the South Beach for Casco Bay's famous vistas.

But unfortunately, the family's summer home (museum) will remain closed to the public for summer 2023. The Friends' docents will again provide guided 'peeping Tom' tours and, this year, written or recorded annotated guides as visitors walk around the deck and peer into the museum windows. These guides will detail the artifacts and furniture that would normally be visible and the process to be used to renew, preserve, and protect them for their return to the museum.

Disappointing, sure, but this extension of the museum closure, itself, offers Friends a significant opportunity to celebrate. The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island are an infinitesimally small number of people on our globe who have an opportunity to make a significant contribution to a most worthy cause: we can contribute to the effort to keep Eagle Island on the roles of Maine's Historical Parks for the citizens of Maine and for visitors 'from away'; we can contribute to the preservation for future generations of a slice of Peary family history from a century ago, and we can continue the recognition of an American hero at a time when our nation sorely needs to rekindle an American heroic spirit. Let's celebrate that opportunity!

We are fortunate that John Burgess will return as Park Manager. The State has put in motion the actions needed for the deferred maintenance of the museum structure and for the cleaning, preservation, and protection of the artifacts for their future on the island. Much of this work requires professional expertise, and volunteer enthusiasm can add little to the effort. But we can provide financial support, particularly for protective casings and/or treatments that will allow artifacts to be displayed in the museum when it is again open to the public. As the artifacts are treated, protections for each artifact will be determined and we will stand ready to offer the help we can to assure the safe return and display of Peary's polar research and family artifacts. Look for a separate Newsletter when details of this call for support are finalized.

In the meantime, we hope to see you on Eagle Island this summer-to celebrate!

Steve Ingram, President Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

Eagle Island Park Manager's Spring Update

The Peary Museum at Eagle Island will remain closed for the duration of the 2023 season for ongoing renovations and mold remediation efforts by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands. Additional details will be provided at a later date.

The welcome center will be open and staffed with volunteer docents beginning June 15th. In addition to the learning opportunities provided by our dedicated docents, we will be reintroducing the self-guided narrative history tour of the museum and library. Throughout the season we also hope to incorporate more interpretive features centered around the family's gardens and island's diverse wildlife. The trails are set to open July 15th but could be

delayed due to the presence of nesting birds. As always, the beaches, lawns, and picnic areas. will be open and readily accessible.

I am pleased to announce that Assistant Ranger Chloe Kilborn and I are both returning for the 2023 season. This year will mark the 5th season that each of us have worked on Eagle Island. We are excited to welcome you back and we look forward facilitating a fun, positive, and educational experience for all.

See you soon!

John Burgess, Park Manager - Eagle Island State Historic Site

Docent Coordinator's Spring Update

We are always looking for new docents, but right now the need is critical. The pandemic season seriously thinned our ranks, and then when the museum closed, and it became obvious that the renovations would be protracted, it seems that many of our regulars felt that docents were no longer needed. The fact of the matter is that the presence of docents is more important now than in the “good old days” when visitors could casually amble around inside the house listening to their tour wands. In addition to telling the important stories of Admiral Peary and the legacy of Eagle Island, docents now are needed to explain the ongoing work of restoring the physical aspects of this historic site. As we have always done, docents can still enlighten visitors and enhance the experience of a visit to Peary's Promised Land. The work is rewarding, the work place is spectacular, and we would love to welcome you to the docent family. Please visit the Friends website and check out the “volunteer” tab for more information.

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Spring Garden News

As we are every spring, the garden volunteers are anxious to get out to the Island to fill the planter boxes with colorful flowers to help welcome visitors as they climb up the steps to enjoy the spectacular views and to see inside the Peary Family's summer home. We will continue the work in the Historic Pocket Gardens amending the soil, battling the weeds, trimming, dividing, transplanting, and adding more of the varieties of plants originally used by the Peary women, in our efforts to bring the gardens up to their full potential and former glory. We look forward to seeing you on the Island this summer!

Thank you to all of our supporters

Our (all volunteer) work to preserve the Peary Family home, the gardens, and property would not be possible without your generous donations, and we all appreciate your support. Visit our website: www.pearyseagleisland.org for more information on volunteering opportunities and easy ways to make donations.