

Friends of Eagle Island, Inc.

Eagle Island - Where History Meets The Future

Issue 4
June 2012



The Wind Has Shifted...Slightly!

You are all probably wondering what has been going on with the Friends of Eagle Island and why there has been little communication over the last few months. We want to assure you that it is NOT because nothing is happening but rather that we could not openly discuss what has been taking place behind the scenes. Our last formal communication was in the Fall when we reported, "Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey has not been responsive to our offer, but the listing agent assures us that GSHNJ has received it. We are unaware of any other offers pending and suspect that we will not hear from the Council until late spring. Many advisors have said that this is not unusual given the weak market conditions."

As time continued to pass, the FEI Board recognized that much more was needed to be done if it was to fulfill its purpose of saving Eagle Island for future generations. They also began to question the overall validity of the sale of Eagle Island by GSHNJ for private ownership. These concerns prompted the Board to hire outside counsel to look into our concerns and to approach GSHNJ on our behalf. Without going into too much detail, we believe, as do our attorneys, that the conveyance of Eagle Island and camp to a private party would violate the intent of the donors. In January a letter was sent to GSHNJ outlining our concerns and stating that we wished to meet with the Council to further discuss how a mutually acceptable solution for the future of Eagle Island might be found. GSHNJ, through its legal representatives, responded that they believed our claims were without merit and that GSHNJ had no desire to engage in any discussions with FEI. Upon receipt of this correspondence, FEI withdrew its offer to purchase and authorized its attorneys to initiate a legal action against GSHNJ.

On June 21, 2012, a Complaint was filed in New York State Court, in Franklin County. Our matter is now in the hands of a judge of that court to decide. The Complaint seeks to compel GSHNJ either to continue to use the property for the purpose intended by the Graves or to convey the property to an entity that will continue the intended use. Our objective continues to be to ensure that Eagle Island remains a recreation and adventure camp for future girls and young women as intended by the Graves. Filing suit was not our preferred course, as it requires devoting resources to litigation that could better be spent on reopening and operating the camp. However, GSHNJ's insistence on selling to the highest bidder without restrictions on the use of Eagle Island and its refusal to engage in discussions to reach an outcome that is consistent with the Graves' intent left us no choice but to file suit.

We will keep you posted as to how the matter is proceeding and will certainly share any information that is or becomes public. To give you some context, ours is not the only matter before a court involving the attempted sale of a girl scout or boy scout camp by a council following, or in connection with, a merger. A number of such actions have been filed in other states, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Idaho. A major victory was won against GSUSA by a council in Wisconsin that resisted GSUSA's demand that it merge. The situation and the facts in that case were not the same as those in our case and in others more similar to our case. A plaintiff victory was nonetheless significant.

Though not a legal matter, it is worth reporting here that the price for the property has recently been reduced from \$3.75 million to \$3.25 million.

It continues to be frustrating that GSHNJ's leadership refuses to acknowledge not only FEI but more importantly that Eagle Island was and is intended for the benefit of young girls and women. We must stay the course! Thank you again for your support both financially and in spirit.

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Photo Flashback!

In the two pictures below Henry Graves, Jr. and Florence Graves are being transported to Eagle Island in the summer of 1938 and are seated in the rear of the *Gwen*, driven by Harold Jones, caretaker, arriving at the Eagle Island service dock for the Dedication Ceremony (gifting Eagle Island to the Girl Scouts.)



Welcome Our New Board Members

At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors, the members voted to expand the Board to 10 Directors and voted in the following members:

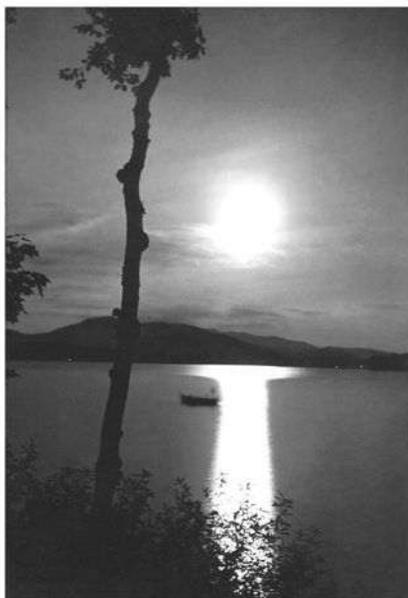
Elizabeth (Liz) Crandall, MD, is a retired physician and a pillar of the Maplewood and Essex County communities. She attended Eagle Island Camp in its early years, before graduating from Wellesley College and Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons. Dr. Crandall built a successful private OBGYN practice after which she became a Medical Director at Prudential and later, the Chief Medical Director at AIG and affiliates. She has been a member of the American Board of Insurance Medicine since 1962, in addition to serving on the Boards of South Mountain YMCA, the Metropolitan YMCA of the Oranges, Maplewood Recreation Advisory Committee, Planned Parenthood, and Winchester Gardens Continuing Care Retirement Community.

Henry D. Graves, Jr., L.C.S.W., (Buz) is the great-grandson of the donor of Eagle Island, now practicing individual family and group therapy in Connecticut. His counseling focus is with youth ages 12 to 25 who have emotional, psychological and psychiatric issues. He has also served as Director of alcohol and drug abuse agencies' counseling and outpatient services and managed a detoxification unit and a court Delinquency Intervention Program. He was voted Volunteer of the Year for the State of Connecticut and has chaired the Youth Service Advisory Board, the Social Services Advisory Board, and the Drug and Alcohol Awareness Committee of Ledyard, CT. Mr. "Buz" Graves has also received many awards from the Veterans of Foreign Wars for his work with youth. He has spent the past 60 summers in the Adirondacks and shares his love for the mountains and lakes with his family present and past and grew up hearing stories of his great grandparents and Eagle Island. He now has a small camp on Bass Lake near Saranac Lake.

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Chris Hildebrand, is a graduate of Gettysburg College and a longtime New Jersey resident who retired from Verizon as a Communications Technician in 2003. A camper at Eagle Island Camp from 1955 to 1959, she was in Waterfront Units, Tripper and Mariner where she earned the prestigious Skipper rating. In 1960 she was a CIT at Sea Pines camp in East Brewster, Mass., where she was responsible for a cabin of campers, taught sailing and worked on sailboat maintenance. She returned to Eagle Island Camp from 1961-1963 as a Mariner counselor. In December 2006 Chris initiated the Eagle Island Camp alumnae group with her sister Ginny Hildebrand, (also an Eagle Island alumna). Working with the GSCGEHC council staff, she reached out to find Eagle Island alumnae, and helped lead fundraising for capital improvements at Eagle Island Great Camp as well as the 70th anniversary commemoration and subsequent successful alumnae reunions. She has been an invaluable member of the FEI family as Communications Director.



Annual Fundraising Drive

FEI strongly encourages its Friends to renew their support now by contributing a minimum of \$25. Contributions can be easily made through our newly updated web site www.friendsofeagleisland.org (click on Annual Contribution) or send your check to: Friends of Eagle Island P.O. Box 245 Livingston, NJ 07039. Your much needed contributions will allow us to continue our battle to ensure that Eagle Island is saved, continues as a camp, and that its historic buildings are preserved for generations to come. In the meantime, the Board is looking into potential events to bolster our finances, as well as scheduling regional reunions/meetings of our many Friends. Stay tuned!

*Moonlight Trail on the Water at EIC
Photo taken by Nancy Hale*

How you can help!

To quote Chris Hildebrand, "Stay Strong, Stay Connected". **Reach out and find alumnae, Organize a fundraiser, Donate.** Last year "Take a Hike" for Friends of Eagle Island yielded great financial support and was well attended. If you have a fundraising idea along with some time and energy to organize, let us know. Our story is strong and the need great. Contact us at lparrington@friendsofeagleisland.org.

Next time you connect with old friends, find out if they are supporters of FEI. There is a Camp Eagle Island group on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/campeagleisland/>), many of whom are not yet affiliated with Friends of Eagle Island. We would like all of those Eagle Island supporters to be on our e-mail lists and become supporters of our efforts to save Eagle Island. People should e-mail all their friends and ask them to contact us through childebrand@friendsofeagleisland.org, to receive a copy of our newsletter and become active supporters.

A contribution acknowledges your support for our cause. Link: <http://friendsofeagleisland.org/become-a-member.html>. FEI is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

*"You can't control the wind -- you can only adjust your sails"
...Well, we have adjusted ours...please help by sending your donation today!*