

# EAGLE ISLAND NEWS

AUGUST 2016

FRIENDS OF EAGLE ISLAND, INC.

VOL. 6 ISSUE 3



## DAY BACK HOME!

Ellen Gagne

On July 10 close to a hundred supporters of Friends of Eagle Island convened on the island by launch, canoe, and kayak. Alumni, friends, and family arrived at Gilpin Bay, many with spouses, children and picnic baskets. Friends came from as far away as South Carolina, Wisconsin and even Italy representing every decade back to the 1950s.

People spread out around the island, visiting their old haunts. At the buildings they saw beautiful new stairs and birch railings but also noted areas still in need of major repair. Walking around the island on the Lake Path campers and counselors pointed out their old tent

platforms that are still in good condition as they began to envision new generations of campers.

People gathered at the Waterfront to share their stories and hopes for the future. Mimi Harrington and Ginny Hildebrand led a sing-a-long, ending of course with *Green Trees*, *Peace* and *Taps*. They blessed "the Friends of Eagle Island all over the world..." while soaking in views of the lake and Deer Island.

FEI board members and other volunteers were active and accessible. Lori Coleman, Lee Ann Millar, and Steve Reich explained progress and next steps, the biggest of which is drilling a well, beginning in a few weeks. Buz Graves, board member and Graves' family representative, was spotted cleaning green mold off of the Lodge steps. And, Lori was on the phone following up on a lead for repairs.

Additionally, a huge thanks goes out to Wendy



## Alex Loveall's

### Memorial Day Weekend

I'm finally home. And, after 10 years, the weirdest part is that it isn't weird at all. My greatest fear returning to the island was that being there wouldn't feel the same. Eagle Island was my Neverland and I was afraid I'd grown up. I could not have been more wrong. Shrubs grow over old paths and dust covers every surface, but the magic is still there.

Among our ranks were a counselor, summer campers, family campers, and work-weekenders, all sharing memories and songs like old friends; Eagle Island bringing us together as only she can. But the best part was that we got to bring life back to the island. Eagle Island has done so much for all of us and this is our chance to give something back.

For a decade, she has laid dormant, waiting for us to return home. And we have, we finally have.

Cohen and Kathy Gilroy. Wendy has organized the kitchen and plans to keep volunteers fed throughout the summer. Kathy has done so much she needs her own feature, below!

It was a wonderful day that left everyone with a feeling of incredible joy that FEI owns Eagle Island. While much has been accomplished, much more remains to be done. Most visitors felt optimistic that, as a strong and generous group, FEI can reach its goal of welcoming the next generation of campers in 2018.

## FEI IN THE COMMUNITY

In its continued efforts to connect with the community of Upper Saranac Lake, Santa Clara, and the surrounding area, and to gather community support for the approval it needs from the Town to re-establish a youth camp, FEI has provided a number of presentations and an Open Island Event.

### Santa Clara - Community Meeting

On Sunday, May 29, Friends held a casual community information session at the Santa Clara Community Center. Despite a torrential downpour shortly before the start, there was a good showing from the community, as well as supporters of FEI, with a total attendance of about 35.

Paula McGovern and Carole Mackenzie co-presented. Paula handled the introductory remarks, overview of FEI's goals, and the current status. Carole narrated the slide tour of the Island, sprinkling her discussion with camp lore and experiences. Rose Foody, Hannah Grill, and Alex Loveall assisted with notes and explanations; providing a younger alum perspective.

Paula then opened it up for Q&A. The community asked some great questions and gave the team the opportunity to delve into FEI's objectives and to dispel misinformation about what the program would and would not include. Several of the community members in attendance spoke out in strong support of the restoration of youth camping on Eagle Island! We could not have said it better than they did!

### USLA Meeting

Torrential downpours seemed to be a reoccurring theme for FEI as Chris Wubbolding and Carole Mackenzie and others from FEI attended the USLA Membership meeting on July 9th. Similar to the Santa Clara presentation, Chris provided a detailed outline of FEI's goals and objectives while Carole gave an outstanding virtual tour of island to around 200 attendees. There was some time for discussion and the invitation was extended to visit Eagle Island for its first Open Island day the following day.

### Open Island

It was a special day for over 100 people from the local community who visited Eagle Island on July 10th. For many local residents it was the first time to see



the beauty of the island from the inside (not just peering through the trees to catch a glimpse of an old building or tent platform). Most were able to get themselves to the island by personal motor boat, canoe or kayak. Everyone who attended was amazed. And of course the children loved the beach and some went swimming.

### U. Saranac Lake Zone Meetings

FEI representatives have also been engaging with the community by attending the "Zone Meetings" and other community gatherings. This is a great opportunity to get to know our neighbors and allows one-on-one time to learn about Eagle Island and the strong organization behind it.

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## ON THE ISLAND!!

### Volunteers hard at work!

It's been an extraordinary summer with so much accomplished towards clean up, stabilization, and safety repairs. Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, our General Contractor Todd Hall, and Crew Chiefs Jim Bowes and Kathy Gilroy, we have much to report. I wish we could list everyone's name who contributed their labor but know that it has not gone unnoticed and we extend a heartfelt **THANK YOU!**

Work began Memorial Day Weekend and has not ceased. There have been over 100 volunteers during the course of the summer. Some have been back for multiple weekends. Ages have ranged from 16 – 72 (or more!). What started with cleaning and inventory continued with much more serious and professional work in carpentry, electrical and plumbing. Shingles have been stained and are slowly being replaced, as has rotten decking, small staircases, railings, and glazing windows. Brush, branches and trees have been cleared from pathways in preparation for well drilling in mid-August. Old mattresses and debris have made their way over to the dumpster on the mainland. There has been a great showing of Pete's former maintenance crew too!

#### Here's a partial sampling of what else has been accomplished so far:

- Mounds of debris hauled off the island including old bicycles, broken furniture, rotted wood, doors and windows piled high under the buildings
- Organization of Carpenter's (Workshop) for our hordes of donated tools!
- Staining thousands of donated cedar shakes
- Window pane replacement, removal of old putty and new window caulking (ongoing)
- Scrubbing and cleaning the inside of all buildings, notably the Kitchen and Dining Hall
- Walk-in Refrigerator is operational
- Mariner Boat House plumbing and (lake) water operational
- Septic System testing with 900 feet of pipe installed to leech field
- Removal of all electrical lines to Adirondack Areas
- Replacement of deteriorated electrical in Main Camp (ongoing)
- Hilltop Platforms refurbished
- Repaired breezeway floor between Family Cabin & Annex
- Obtaining Roofing and structural estimates



## RECENT PURCHASES/DONATIONS



This 1997 New Holland tractor was discovered in NJ through connections and the previous owners Ed and Dolores Kresge agreed to sell it and many of the attachments including log splitter, front loader and backhoe. It was transported up in June and was gently moved to the island on FEI's own barge. This tractor and its accessories will enable FEI to more efficiently dig necessary utility trenches, remove trees and haul just about anything.

A big 'shout-out' to all who have donated tools and especially Tricia Hawley who gave so many that we needed a trailer to take it all to the Upper Saranac Lake.

A GS troop based in Livingston, NJ who aged out donated their remaining funds to purchase a supply of paddles.

While attending one of the U. Saranac Zone meetings a huge supply of excess cedar shakes donated by the new neighbors found a home at Eagle Island. Another local Saranac resident donated a canoe and a small motor boat that has never left U. Saranac Lake so it seemed fitting that it would continue to live on at Eagle Island.



## NORTHERN ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Led by Carol Jackman

The newest FEI committee is already one of the most active; the Northern Advocacy Committee (NAC) assumes primary responsibility for promoting Friends of Eagle Island, (FEI) Mission and developing support from individuals and organizations in and within the surrounding Upper Saranac Lake region. This includes generating awareness of FEI's long-term goals and financial needs. The NAC is an advisory committee to the Board. With Carol Jackman, board member and year-round Saranac Lake resident as chair its role is to:

- Determine annual and long term goals for the committee
- Provide leadership and support to all FEI fund development activities
- Identify, research, cultivate, solicit, and steward donors

Most exciting about this group is how many of our neighbors (without direct Eagle Island connections) have eagerly signed up. The group has met once in person with another meeting scheduled for the end of the month to be hosted by Nancy Howard. Through email and conference calls they are sharing ideas and making connections with great enthusiasm.

## TOURS – PUBLICITY AND INTEREST

A flurry of interest in the future of Eagle Island

A writer and photographer from **Curbed**, an on-line architectural magazine, spent a full day exploring the historic island as part of and research for article on Adirondack Great Camps. Mary Hotaling, local expert on William Coulter architecture, and Carole Mackenzie led the tour. <http://www.friendsofeagleisland.org/media-coverage/>.

A representative from the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** will be joining the AARCH tour scheduled in mid-August. This is a great way to show off Eagle Island and our plans for its future. FEI has already submitted two grant applications through the Trust.

Frances Gubler, **Preservation League of NY**, also visited to get to know the island as part of a grant application.

Author Harvey Kaiser is updating his 1982 book, **Great Camps of the Adirondacks**, and was given a personal tour by Lauren Parmington.

**Adirondack Architectural Heritage** hosted a members-only tour of 40 in August led by AARCH board member Howie Kirshenbaum, Mary Hotaling, Michele Racioppi & Lauren Parmington.

**Adirondack Daily Enterprise** published a front-page article following the 'Open Island Event'. The full article can be found on the [FEI website](#).

## GRANTS COMMITTEE

FEI received a \$10,000 matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This matching grant is for the preparation of detailed architectural drawings for many of the historic buildings. These drawing will better guide the architects and contractors when designing, updating, and upgrading.

The Grants Committee dedicated WEEKS in July under the leadership of Michele Racioppi and Tomoko Werbe (Grants Chair) in submitting two major grant applications to New York State, each requesting \$500,000. It was a FULL committee effort writing, reviewing, and documenting the application.

### CALENDAR

**Wednesday, August 17**

AARCH Historic Tour  
(Reservations Full)

**Saturday, August 27 (1-4pm)**

Open Island for Friends

For Reservations:

**On-line:** [CLICK](#)

**email:** [info@friendsofeagleisland](mailto:info@friendsofeagleisland)

**call:** 973-996-8306

## JIM BOWES, CREW CHIEF

“Volunteered” by wife

Jim's wife, Karen 'Surf' Vasko was an EIC camper and counselor in the 70's and early 80's. Jim has a background in scouting, plumbing, building restoration, and forestry. He has even lived alone in a shack on an island (Hawaii)! So when Karen "volunteered" him to stay on an uninhabited island, it seemed a perfect fit.

Jim notes that the historical significance and pristine beauty of the place is really making a comeback. Living in Mariner Boathouse for most of June, he often had the island to himself but loved meeting and working with the volunteers. Jon, Ben, Mike, Aaron, and Hannah each hit the ground running. Days of hard work were often topped-off by sunset dinners on the deck.



Other impressive volunteers included Carole and Steve. They cleared the Waterfront & "traffic circle", and managed to have fun while removing a half mile of overhead powerlines! Then there is Bob Nikola, who was the water skiing instructor in 1965. During all his contributions, Bob kept the crew laughing. Kathy Gilroy came onboard during this time too. Jim reports that Pete Benson continues to be a tremendous asset, and choosing Todd Hall as General Contractor was an excellent decision.

It's exciting to know that Eagle Island is being restored to its former glory and purpose! Jim and Karen live in Fort Collins, Colorado, with their 12 yr. daughter – a future camper/counselor.

## KATHY GILROY, CREW CHIEF

“I guess I was meant to spend the summer on Eagle Island”

Kathy lived in Orange and Nutley, NJ where she was a Girl Scout for 13 years. She remembers bringing home the Eagle Island flyer and every year her mother said they could not afford it. She sold over 450 boxes of cookies delivering them on sled and wagon in hopes of raising the funds, but never got to EI until now!

Kathy had worked for NJ as a Social Worker and supervisor for DYFS before taking an early retirement to stay home with her children, now young adults. As they entered Middle School, she began to substitute teach and eventually earned a teaching certificate and now teaches STEM with a heavy emphasis on Wood Shop.

Kathy has been managing the daily tasks and volunteers, keeping to-do lists and



sticky notes of specific jobs with the appropriate tools and supplies so volunteers of ALL skill levels can make productive use of their time. Her carpentry skills, organization and attention to detail goes unmatched.

She considers it an honor to be living on the Island and is loving the renovation work and meeting so many wonderful people.



### CROWDFUNDING SUCCESS!

Over \$1,700 was raised for much needed new lifejackets. This on-line crowdfunding was hosted by the Adirondack Foundation. They generously host campaigns for nonprofits, charities, and civic groups that support the Adirondack community. Organizations receive 100% of donations.



Back issues of this newsletter can be found on the website.



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