

Merrymeeting News

The Newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay • P.O. Box 233 • Richmond Maine 04357

FALL 1996

To Preserve, Protect and Improve the Natural Ecosystems of Merrymeeting Bay.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Support comes from memberships, tax-deductible donations and grants.

Hands Around the Bay

Providing resources for teachers in area elementary schools.

Conservation & Stewardship

Protection of traditional conservation resources through private ownership, easements and stewardship.

Events & Speaker Series

Swan Island picnic, speaker series at Bowdoin College, paddle tour of the Bay, field trips, conservation meetings and potluck suppers.

Water Quality Program

Data collection, analysis and publication.

1996 Steering Committee

Frank Burroughs, Bowdoinham
Kevin Doran, Topsham
Ed Friedman, Bowdoinham
Tad Hunter, Topsham
Esther Lacognata, Topsham
Don and Joan Lipfert, Woolwich
Bob Lenna, Bowdoinham
Pat Maloney, Topsham
Tenley Meara, Topsham
Jay Robbins, Richmond
Vance Stephenson, Brunswick
Karin Tilberg, Bowdoinham
Laura Valentine, Pittston
Warren Whitney, Bowdoinham

Executive Director

Tim Nason, Dresden

FOMB EVENTS & SPEAKER SERIES

RESERVE THE FOLLOWING DATES! All events are free and open to FOMB members and the general public. The Bowdoin College speaker series will take place at 7:00 p.m. in the Beam Classroom at the Visual Arts Center on the 4th Wednesday of the month, September through April.

- September 25 — **Wetlands & Uplands: Protecting Habitat for Ducks & Geese in Merrymeeting Bay** – Lois Winter, Outreach Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 7 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College.
 - September 28 — **Paddle Tour of the Cathance River, Merrymeeting Bay & the Abagadassett Marshes** – Led by Ed Friedman, FOMB Chairman, and Frank Burroughs, Bowdoin College english professor and author of *Billy Watson's Croker Sack* and *Horry and the Waccamaw*. Rescheduled from Sept. 14 because of rain. Route will depend on the weather and participant interest and ability. 8:30 a.m., Bowdoinham Town Landing.
 - October 23 — **Toxic Contamination of Merrymeeting Bay** – Peter Washburn, Staff Scientist, Natural Resources Council of Maine. 7 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College.
 - October 24 — **Conservation & the Cathance River** – Meeting of Cathance River landowners and others interested in the conservation of the river through easements and stewardship. 7 p.m., library room, Bowdoinham Community School.
 - November 27 — **Swan Island: A Rich Historical Legacy** – James Hewat, architectural historian, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and Jay Robbins, Robbins Historical Research Inc. 7 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College.
 - December 11 – **Christmas Potluck Party** – with informal talk about winter activities on Merrymeeting Bay, past and present. Bring main dish, breads or dessert and your own place setting. Beverages provided by FOMB. Time TBA, Bridge Academy, Dresden.
 - January 22 — **Merrymeeting Bay: A Sense of Place** – reading by Frank Burroughs (see Sept. 28, above) accompanied by beautiful slides of the Bay taken by Sally Butcher. 7 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College.
 - February 26 — **Anadromous Fish of the Kennebec River and Merrymeeting Bay** – Tom Squires, Maine Dept. Marine Resources. Life cycle of smelts, shad, alewives, striped bass, sturgeon and salmon and the restoration of this once-abundant fishery. 7 p.m. Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College.
 - March 26 — **Watersheds: Making Merrymeeting Bay's New History** – Ed Hawes, environmental historian. How economic decisions influence the history of natural resources. 7 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Ctr., Bowdoin College.
 - April 23 — **Making Friends with Our Bays** – Joe Payne, Friends of Casco Bay BayKeeper. 7 p.m., Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College.
- Speaker series at Bowdoin College sponsored by FOMB, the Bowdoin College Environmental Studies Program, and the Bowdoin Druids.

PLEASE JOIN US!

HANDS AROUND THE BAY PROJECT GUIDE

ATTRACTIVE LOOSELEAF binders with information about Hands Around the Bay (HAB) have been sent to the 25 teachers who have expressed interest in the program.

The binders contain a cover letter, a description of the program, a project guide, project reporting forms, a booklet about Merrymeeting Bay, an FOMB newsletter, and two articles about the Bay written by Bowdoin English professor and noted author Frank Burroughs.

The binders also include an FOMB membership brochure and information about visiting the Swan Island game management area.

The project guide tells what projects focused on the Bay last year and is indexed to show which teachers should be contacted for information about these projects. The guide lists the participating teachers, and gives the name and phone number of their school. Field trips are listed too, showing where they were held and who led them. In addition, a sidebar shows what resources were identified by

teachers that would enhance their Bay-related projects.

The project reporting forms for 1996-97 ask teachers to describe methods, results or findings in the areas of science and math, language and visual arts, and social studies. We also ask teachers to submit curriculum outlines, lesson plans and samples of student work.

The material in the binders emphasizes that teachers decide what projects to work on, what field trips they want to take, and what materials they want to send us. HAB exists to help teachers do what they do best — teach — as they turn the focus of their curricula and field trips toward Merrymeeting Bay.

A guide to community resource people and a guide to public access sites on the Bay are now being developed and will be sent to teachers this fall to be added to the binders. Other materials will be sent as they are published.

Community Resource Liaisons

To ensure efficiency and convenience

when local residents are invited to speak in schools, we have organized a network of FOMB community liaisons. When teachers wish to invite a local resident to speak or lead a field trip, they would contact the FOMB liaison. This way, the local resident maintains contact with one person, the liaison, and does not have to receive calls directly from many teachers. Likewise, teachers have only to call one of the liaisons to arrange a speaker.

We have liaisons in most towns, but do not yet have one for Bath. If anyone would like to volunteer, please do. And if anyone is interested in being a community liaison, please contact us.

Internet Connection

HAB helps teachers enhance hands-on learning in the classrooms, but also promotes the educational opportunities that could be provided by the Internet and the World Wide Web.

FOMB is working with Jim Moulton of Community of Learners to create a Merrymeeting Bay site on the Web that will display information about the Bay and also accept data and other writings from students.

SOURCE TO THE SEA CANOE TRIP ON THE ANDROSCOGGIN

FRANK BURROUGHS, reknowned author and FOMB Steering Committee member, spoke to the 30 paddlers

on the Merrymeeting Bay leg of the Source to the Sea Androscoggin Canoe Trek in June. He praised the current pristine state of the river, underlining the success of environmental clean-up laws. Until the 1970s, industries on the river, including paper companies in Rumford and New Hampshire, dumped untreated waste into the Androscoggin. The river smelled awful. Mounds of foam and sludge and swirls of dye and other chemicals floated into Merrymeeting Bay. Now, the greatest threat to the river may be development pressure as home-builders discover the beauty of the area. Eagles and osprey are commonly seen, as are 3-foot-long sturgeon that jump out of the water. "It won't be long before people rediscover the Androscoggin," Burroughs said. "I don't imagine it can be prevented, but it needs to be managed."

Canoeists and kayakers paddled 9 miles from the boat landing in Brunswick to Butler Cove in Bath, breaking for lunch at Bay Bridge Crossing in Topsham. Gov. Angus King and Ned Sullivan, commissioner of the Dept. of Environmental Protection, were among those who joined the trip. King wanted to emphasize his administration's commitment to protecting the environment,

particularly to eliminating the discharge of dioxin into the river.

Although the river looks pristine and is much better shape than in earlier years, dioxins and hydrocarbons continue to flow into the river from Maine paper mills and other sources. People are advised to limit the number of fish they eat from the river (women of child-bearing age are advised not to eat any fish caught in the river) and swimming is discouraged in a 7-mile stretch below Lewiston-Auburn.

Storm drains in Brunswick and Topsham that flow directly into the river have been marked in an effort to curb dumping of waste oil and other pollutants.

The canoe trip, which began at Lake Umbagog in New Hampshire and ended at Popham Beach, was organized by the Maine DEP with help from many groups along the way, including FOMB and the National Park Service/Appalachian Mountain Club office in Brunswick.

— *Thanks to Julie Isbill of the NPS/AMC, and Dennis Hoey, Portland Press Herald ("Canoeists Celebrate Rebirth of the Androscoggin River," 6/19/96).*



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Merrymeeting News

is the newsletter of Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357, and is published seasonally. *Merrymeeting News* is sent to FOMB members and other friends of the Bay. For information call Tim Nason, Dresden (737-4282).

The site has been launched and is ready to have material entered into it. Anyone interested in writing material for the site should contact FOMB. We are looking for information about the history, geology, wildlife, plants, fish, hydrology, and other components of Merrymeeting Bay, that is geared to elementary school students. More advanced material may be entered as well. Questions about the technical aspects of the Web site should be directed to Jim Moulton. The computer address of the site is <http://www.col.k12.me.us/mmb/>

On September 28, HAB will be featured at an educators conference called "Tackling Technology." Jim Moulton, Pat Maloney and Ed Friedman will speak at the workshop "Real Teaching/Real Technology."

October 19 is "NET DAY," part of a national campaign to connect school computers to the Internet. For information, contact John Pierce, Maine

Science & Teacher Foundation, 87 Winthrop Ave., Augusta, ME 04330 (621-6350).

Maps Large & Small

FOMB has arranged with the Maine GIS Office to produce a set of colorful, computer-generated maps of Merrymeeting Bay. A wall map 3' wide and 7' tall is available to schools around the Bay. Small maps for students to work on at their desks are also available. Teachers interested in these maps and a presentation by FOMB chairman Ed Friedman about how they were produced should contact Ed (666-3372). In his talk, Ed will also discuss other modern mapping systems, such as satellite imagery and remote sensing. "GIS" stands for Geographic Information Service, and refers to a digital plotting format.

"Hands Around the Bay" art by Sarah Stapler, Bowdoinham.

Hands Around the Bay



A program to encourage educational activities on Merrymeeting Bay and its tributaries.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay

THREE NEW EASEMENTS BEING CONSIDERED

THE FOMB CONSERVATION & Stewardship program, coordinated by Betsy Ham, is considering three exciting easements possibilities. While the locations of these easements are confidential, we can say they would apply to nearly 300 acres of woodland, fields, river frontage and stream frontage. Easements will ensure that the conservation assets of the properties are protect-

ed forever, but that private use and ownership of the land would continue, as will certain development rights.

All three properties have been approved by the FOMB Steering Committee. Conservation plans for each property will now be drawn up as the next step toward drafting easements this winter.

Work also continues on an easement in Topsham adjacent to the state-owned game management area on the Muddy River. The committee will inspect our Richmond easement this fall.

Anyone with an interest in the protection of local conservation assets through

easements is welcome to serve on the Conservation & Stewardship committee.

Anyone interested in discussing an easement for their property should call Betsy Ham (666-3376).

Cathance River Meeting - Oct. 24 Landowners and others in Bowdoinham are invited to attend a discussion of the conservation resources of the Cathance River (7 p.m., library at the Bowdoinham Community School). Topics will be wildlife habitat, scenic views, rare plants, open space and forests, with a special focus on traditional use, private land ownership, and continued economic viability. The meeting hopes to show that conservation easements are the best means to protect these values. The meeting is sponsored by FOMB with help from Maine Coast Heritage Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The meeting is a follow-up to our meeting of landowners along the Eastern and Kennebec Rivers in Dresden, held in June. Conservation easements would help protect the undeveloped west shore of the Eastern River. This remarkable stretch of river is about 7 miles long, extends from the Kelley Road in Pittston to the farmland near Green Point, yet contains fewer than 10 houses.

Conservation Options Booklet

This 30-page booklet is the best introduction to conservation easements and is available from FOMB for \$5. □

SWAN ISLAND PICNIC EDUCATIONAL & FUN

A good crowd turned out for the 3rd Annual FOMB Swan Island Summer Picnic. 38 FOMB members and other friends of the Bay walked the island, paddled around it in canoes and kayaks, took the safari-truck tour provided by rangers of the Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife Dept., and enjoyed the historic and peaceful scenery. James Hewat, Richmond historian, spoke about the successful nomination of the island to the National Historic Register. 20 visitors camped overnight, enjoying a hot dog and baked bean supper, and a song-fest led by Sean Donovan, and then a pancake breakfast in the morning.

Swan Island, 4 miles long, is located

at the upper end of Merrymeeting Bay in the Kennebec River. Many years ago it was the town of Perkins, a thriving agricultural and fishing community, and the site of several huge "ice houses" when ice harvesting was an important economic activity on the river. In the 1940s, much of the island was abandoned and purchased by the state for game management and has been preserved ever since as it appeared then. To visit Swan Island is to step back in time. Several houses on the island are of great historic interest; the Gardiner-Dumaresq "saltbox" house dates back to 1763. The entire island is now a National Historic District.

MERRYMEETING BAY SPRING CLEAN-UP

SATURDAY, MAY 18th dawned beautifully for a spring cleaning of Merrymeeting Bay co-sponsored by FOMB and the Western Rivers Section of the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA). Participants gathered at the Bowdoinham Town Landing where they were split into teams and assigned to work areas. Garbage bags were donated by America Outdoors in Tennessee. International Coastal Clean-up Data Recording Cards were provided by the State Planning Office.

Getting an earlier start, Karen Klein and Anne Hammond left Bath's Butler Cove by kayak and cleaned up Bald Head Neck on Center's Point en route to the Wildlife Sanctuary on Abagadasset Point. Dennis Carignan and Matt Hodges worked in Butler Cove, filling Dennis' pick-up, and cooperating with the Bath Forestry Committee on their inshore clean-up of the property.

On the north shore of the Bay, Pat Maloney, Tenley Meara, and Forrest Dillon worked from the east while Anne Hammond, Karen Klein, and Mike Haskell worked from the west, scouring the Merrymeeting Bay Wildlife Sanctuary on the south side of Abby Pt. There was so much trash that the groups didn't reach the middle before the clean-up ended at 4:30. Dave and Maureen Anderson and Dave and Denise Carter,



Some of the garbage. From left: Steve & Anne Hammond, Mellie the dog, Mike Haskell. Ed Friedman photo.



The MITA boat. From left: Susan Ayers, Ted Scharf, Mike Ray. Ed Friedman photo.

all in the Anderson's sailboat, and Carl Smith and Henry Knoll in Carl's canoe, worked the area around Beach Pt. between Center's Pt. and the Merrymeeting Bay Game Management Area, hauling many bags of debris by boat.

Using a generator borrowed from Steve and Anne Hammond, a Sawzall and hand tools, Ron Franklin, myself, Steve Saucier (IF&W), and BNAS personnel Shannon Thompson, Frank Ballou, and Gary Gotz, removed an upland dump and a collapsed building at the game management area. Timbers were salvaged by Frank and Gary, but the bulk of the material was hauled in the IF&W truck (with the help of Ron's Land Rover and winching skills) to an old cellar hole to be burned later. We left a second building for another day.

The MITA boat arrived at Abby Pt., with Ted Scharf, Susan Ayers and Mike Ray, who had been working at MITA islands on the lower Kennebec and the Sheepscot. The group collected very large debris at Beach Pt. that was off-loaded into the IF&W truck.

On Sunday, Steve, Anne, Mike, myself and Mellie the Dog, picked up trash caches and the middle section along Abby Pt. using a dump truck for tires, scrap metal and recyclable bottles and cans. We used Bowdoinham's dump truck for non-recyclables, and a tractor for lifting heavy tires and pulling the town truck through some mucky sections. All material was accepted by the Bowdoinham Recycling Center for recycling or

tipping at the MMWAC burn plant in Auburn. IF&W covered disposal costs for debris removed from state land.

Despite the low turnout of 22 people Saturday (I expected closer to 60), everyone did a great job and the cleanup was impressive. According to the data cards we filled out, 90 bags of debris were collected, much of it recyclable, and about 70 tires, ranging from antiques to brand new (one was a huge tractor tire). Specific categories of items were plastic soda bottles (72), tampon applicators (47), cigarette lighters (45), plastic foam cups (120), plastic pieces (900), glass beverage bottles (169), 55-gallon drums (7), propane tanks (2), a 3' stuffed bear, and a 4' fluorescent light tube (unbroken!).

Thank you to all who took part in cleaning up a total of 5,000 lbs. of garbage. Thank you also to the organizations, municipalities and businesses who supported the effort.

Continuing the Clean-Up

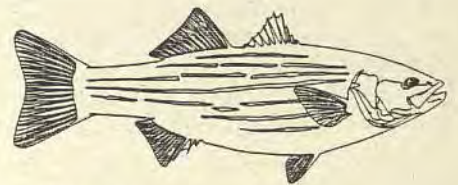
Ron Franklin and I will be working at the Game Management Area on October 5 to remove the second collapsed building on the site. Much clean-up remains to be done on the north side of Abagadasset Pt. and on Pork Pt. If anyone would like to help, please call me at 666-3372. Coincidentally, Oct. 5 is Coastal Cleanup Day and the first day of Coast-week '96. So, please help us out!

—Ed Friedman

WATER QUALITY RESOURCE PROGRAM

Advisory Committee

We are looking for people interested in serving on an advisory committee to the Water Quality Resources Program. Anyone interested in water-related issues, please give me a call: Tim Nason (737-4282).



Striped Bass

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Since January 1996:

- John & Jean Bailey, *Bowdoinham*
- Helen Blagden, *Richmond*
- William & Jean Briggs, *Bowdoinham*
- Robert Bryan, *Ipswich, MA*
- Dana & Marilyn Cary, *Topsham*
- Nathan & Phyllis Chandler, *Bowdoinham*
- Jeff Cotton, Christmas Cove Designs, *Dresden*
- Dee & Clancy Cummins, *Gardiner*
- Kevin Doran, *Topsham*
- Sharon Drake, *Bath*
- Dresden Conservation Commission
- Kay & Richard Evans III, *Bowdoinham*
- Renée Gray, *Dresden*
- Hazel & Leslie Higgins, *Dresden*
- Bertha James, *Dresden*
- Glenn Hodgkins, *Gardiner*
- Nancy & Ben Hunsberger, *Bowdoinham*
- Julie Isbill, *Brunswick*
- Helen Koulouris, *Brunswick*
- Stan & Loukie Lofchie, *Brunswick*
- Pat Maloney, *Topsham*
- Ruth Maschino, *Brunswick*
- Shawne McCord, *Topsham*
- Nels & Betty Nelson, *Dresden*
- Wilhelminé & Fulton Oakes Jr., *Bowdoinham*
- Robert Oliver, *Topsham*
- Sandra Pierce, *Dresden*
- Harry Prout, *Bowdoinham*
- Scott & Karen Silverman, *Upper Darby, PA*
- Robert Steen, *Durham, NH*
- Karen & Robert Stram, *Dresden*
- Galdys Tate, *Bowdoinham*
- Valerie & Lewis Woodworth, *Dresden*

We are pleased to acknowledge the more than 150 individuals and families who are members of FOMB!

FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY

STEERING COMMITTEE - April 1996 - April 1997

- Frank Burroughs, 81 Wallentine Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 666-5979
- Kevin Doran, 5 Brookview Drive, Topsham 04086 729-4791
- Ed Friedman, 42 Stevens Rd., Bowdoinham 04006 *Chairman* 666-3372
- Tad Hunter, Foreside Road, Topsham 04086 729-1544
- Esther Lacognata, 19 Elm Street, Topsham 04086 729-4088
- Robert Lenna, P.O. Box 185, Bowdoinham 04008 *Vice Chairman* 666-8421
- Don and Joan Lipfert, RR 1, Box 650, Woolwich 04579 443-8751
- Pat Maloney, 31 Bridge Street, Topsham 04086 729-8941
- Tenley Meara, RR 1, Box 96, Topsham 04086 725-2738
- Jay Robbins, P.O. Box 9, Richmond 04357 737-2239
- Karin Tilberg, 17 Dunn Farm Road, Bowdoinham 04008 666-5902
- Vance Stephenson, 7 Brookview Drive, Brunswick 04011 .. *Treasurer* 443-3572
- Laura Walentine, RFD 2, Box 422, Gardiner 04345 582-2557
- Warren Whitney, 145 Pork Pt. Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 *Secretary* 666-3376

Conservation & Stewardship Coordinator:

- Betsy Ham, 145 Pork Point Road, Bowdoinham 04008 666-3376

Hands Around the Bay Coordinator:

- Pat Maloney (See above) 729-8941

Special Events Coordinator:

- Jean Parker, Hockomock Island, RR 1, Box 1785, Woolwich 04579 .. 443-0982

Executive Director:

- Tim Nason, 15 Alexander Road, Dresden 04342 737-4282

HELP US REACH 200 MEMBERS

ONE OF OUR GOALS this year is to reach an average membership level of 200. Since actual membership numbers fluctuate during the year, to maintain an average of 200 we need to sign up even more. To help reach our goal, we have mailed brochures and letters to landowners in Richmond, Dresden,

Bowdoinham and Woolwich. We will do mailings to other towns as appropriate lists become available.

We will also be handing out membership flyers at our speaker series and other events. Flyers and a poster could be posted at town offices, stores and other public places on the Bay. A cable television PSA is being considered.

We welcome your ideas for increasing our membership. Please call or write.

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, P.O. Box 233, Richmond, Maine 04357

ANNUAL DUES \$10.00. Renewal

\$10.00 enclosed for individual membership. \$20 Family

\$30 Contributing \$50 Supporting \$100 Sponsoring \$250 Sustaining \$500+ Benefactor

\$ _____ enclosed as an additional tax-deductible donation.

NAME _____

RR# or STREET ADDRESS _____

TOWN / STATE / ZIP _____

PHONE _____

\$6.00 enclosed for a copy of **Conservation Options: A Guide for Maine Landowners.** (\$5 for the book, \$1 for postage)

UNUSUAL PLANTS FOUND ON MERRYMEETING BAY

OUR AUGUST 3 "Mud Walk" on Brown's Point with Dr. Barbara St. John Vickery of The Nature Conservancy was one of the standout FOMB activities of the summer.

More than 30 members and friends walked slowly out into the mud at low tide to discover wild rice, arrowheads, sedges and rushes growing in great profusion. Then as the group moved toward a rocky ledge, many species of rare and endangered flowering plants were found. In one particularly auspicious spot, about seven or eight of these rare species were found growing together. Although they are small and generally covered with a light coating of sediment, they were nevertheless the subject of much excitement and close scrutiny.

With names like Parker's Pipewort, Long's Bittercress, Mudwort, Pygmyweed, Water Pimpernel and Estuary Monkey-flower, these intricate little plants grow on



rocks in a layer of sediment only several inches deep. They are submerged in heavily silted water twice a day, and dried out by the sun at other times. Usually the water that submerges them is fresh from the rivers, but sometimes saltier water from the ocean mixes in. To top it off, the rocks these plants grow on are scraped by huge chunks of ice all winter as the tide moves them back and forth. Somehow the little plants survive this ill-treatment, making them another reason why Merrymeeting Bay is such a special place.

We cannot thank Barbara Vickery enough for leading us on this journey of discovery into our own backyard. A good time was had by all, and the event was proof that the little things we overlook or take for granted may actually be the rarest and most unusual.

Yes, we hope to offer the "mud walk" next year. Notice will be given, but let us know if you have a special interest in the rare plants of Merrymeeting Bay. □

FUND RAISING EVENT NEEDED

TO CONTINUE our programs and the staff position of Executive Director, we need to embark on a major fund raising effort this fall. Our goal is to raise \$3,000. Can we do it?

Among the ideas that have been proposed:

- a year-end solicitation for donations;
- the sale of note cards, guidebook, or calendar;
- the sale of a Christmas product or other seasonally appropriate item;
- a raffle;
- a silent auction.

We invite your comments and ideas — and we invite members to help organize the effort in whatever form it takes.

If you have experience with fund raising drives, or have ideas for a product that could be sold or raffled, or if you have items or services you would donate to a silent auction — please let us know.

Call Tim Nason, Ed Friedman or Jean Parker soon! □



FRIENDS of
MERRYMEETING BAY

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Forwarding and address
correction requested.

Special Events & Speaker Series

See page 1.

Bulk Rate U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 1 Dresden, ME
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