

Merrymeeting News

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

WINTER 2002

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

Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Support comes from members' tax-deductible donations and grants.

Education

Hands Around the Bay, Speaker Series, field trips.

Conservation & Stewardship

Protecting natural resources through private and public ownership, easements and stewardship.

Membership Events

Paddle tours of the Bay, field trips, conservation meetings, potluck suppers and shoreline clean-ups.

Research and Advocacy

Water quality, data collection, toxics, fisheries restoration.

2002 Steering Committee

Jenn Burns, Brunswick
Frank Burroughs, Bowdoinham
Dee and Clancy Cummins, Richmond
Andy Cutko, Bowdoinham
Steve Eagles, Dresden
Ed Friedman, Bowdoinham
DeWitt John, Brunswick
Kathleen McGee, Bowdoinham
Bill Milam, Woolwich
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Steve Taylor, Bowdoinham

On-Line

<http://knox.link75.org/mmb/fomb@gwi.net>

SMELTS

For most of us, the Bay in the winter is little more than a gray, barren wasteland of groaning ice — a shallow temperate glacier. Once January comes, we embrace the lengthening days with the certain knowledge that the Bay will soon bear life again. Ah, but even during those long winter days, and particularly during the longer winter nights, something truly elemental lurks beneath: smelt.

Smelts (*Osmerus mordax*) are the diminutive cousins of more heralded fish such as salmon and grayling. Like many of their larger brethren, smelts are anadromous, which means they live in salt or brackish water and return to freshwater to spawn. The physical characteristics of Merrymeeting Bay — the direct connection to the sea and to large tidal rivers and rich meandering tributaries — make it an ideal place for smelt, and for smelt fishing. By some estimates, as many as a million smelts are taken each winter from the Bay. Smelt camps provide an important part of the Bay's winter economy, and just as importantly, a local ritual that ties together generations.

Like crocuses in April, smelt camps spring up around the Bay just after the new year, ice permitting. This year, the ice didn't permit in many locations until late January, and continued mild temperatures made for an interesting season. There were reports of smelt camps in Randolph breaking loose and floating down-river, occupants in tow. (Errant shacks occasionally appear on the Bay like plywood icebergs gone astray. My friend Ed and I once lassoed a lost shack and its attendant ice foundation and strenuously hauled it a mile upwind to shore.)

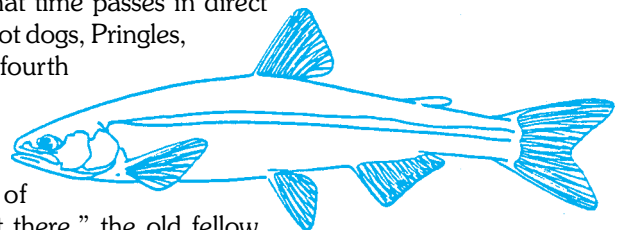
Apparently the warm winter weather made for unfavorable fishing as well.

"Worst season in twenty years," one smelt camp proprietor told me. So with all the ignorance of a flatlander, I hauled my family and a friend to check it out for myself.

The first thing I learned about smelting is that small children should be tethered by a rope to avoid being swallowed by the "race holes" in the smelt shack floor. My three-year old son wasn't particularly fond of this practice, but my wife and I have found it so useful that we now leave him tethered in a variety of social occasions. The second thing I learned about smelting is that it can be very hot. Why mess around with kindling to start a fire when a quart of kerosene will do just fine? The third thing I learned about smelting is that time passes in direct proportion to the amount of hot dogs, Pringles, and beer consumed. And the fourth thing I learned about smelting is that, quite possibly, you might not catch any smelt.

"Caught nine hundred of 'em once, in that camp right there," the old fellow said as he poked his head in our door. My mind quickly turned the numbers around - nine hundred smelts in six hours, one hundred fifty per hour, two and a half per minute, one every twenty-four seconds. And then another thought. What on earth do you do with nine hundred smelts? As we pondered the imponderable, we also mulled over our inadequacies. We dutifully slayed the sandworms, carefully baited our hooks, and patiently watched as the lines danced faintly with the tides. Three hours later, we had nothing.

"You know," said my friend Jonathan, "if we pack it in now we can get home in time to see the end of the Daytona 500."



Atlantic Smelt

LAND PROTECTION

Kennebec River

If you travel down the Kennebec River by boat, about three miles above the Richmond Bridge you've probably noticed an especially nice hillside on the eastern side of the river. Fields near the river give way to open pastures and healthy forest on the hillside. From the opposite direction, on Rt. 27 in Dresden and Pittston, there are equally fine views of the river valley across productive hay fields of the same property. Stunning views, easy access, lots of level or gently sloping land for building sites. A developer's dream. Fortunately, Dick and Lisa Paige had other plans for their property.

Their 145-acre parcel has high quality agricultural fields, forestland, pastures, wetlands, and tidal mud flats that have been rated as highest quality habitat by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. They wanted to ensure that this stunning property would not be carved up into lots in the future, but they also wanted to ensure that the farming and forestry activities that occur there could continue. The Paiges approached FOMB and worked out a conservation easement that met their goals.

The easement allows for continued agriculture using best management practices (as the Paiges do now), forestry under a forest management plan (which they are currently using) and general upkeep of the property. The primary restriction, however, is no subdivision. This large parcel - with open space, forestland, wetlands and significant shore frontage - will remain as one connected piece in perpetuity. FOMB thanks the Paiges for



Palmer Meadow Pond
Photo by Warren Whitney

their generous donation of this conservation easement, and for their foresight in protecting this property.

Palmer Meadow Pond

Nestled in on the east side of Blinn Hill at the junction of Alna, Dresden, and Pittston and located off the south side of the Palmer Rd. is a lovely and long beaver pond known historically as Palmer Meadow. This valuable and scenic waterfowl and upland habitat comprises about 80 acres that drains into the Eastern River. The Palmer family came to this spot in the 1700's from England via Massachusetts. Most of the land has remained in the family since.

In November of 2001 FOMB received a call from the current owners of the pond itself, a large piece of land at its SE corner and a smaller amount on the west shore. The owners were interested in a donation of their property to FOMB if it could occur by year end. After walking the parcel we evaluated it and decided to go ahead with the work necessary to accept it in a short period of time. The primary problem (besides time) was a contested boundary with an abutter. We approached the abutter and proposed a donation on their part that would also encompass the contested area. They were graciously willing to do this and a winning situation was created for all. All would have public access and the title passed to FOMB. Many thanks are due to Roy Farmer, Jean & Otis Dyer,

David Soule, Jr., Ann Beck, Pamela Brackett, Jack Lynch, Lem Brown, & Steve McConnell.

Center's Point

In 2000 FOMB protected a 35-acre parcel of land on one the most prominent geographic features around the Bay - Center's Point. Building on that success, in 2001 an adjacent landowner donated an 11-acre conservation easement, adding to the protected total.

One of the goals of conservation easement work is to connect large blocks of undeveloped land. Such blocks provide larger areas for wildlife habitat, leading to both greater numbers and more species than would be found in an island of protected land surrounded by development. With these two parcels now protected, and with their proximity to the Bowdoinham Wildlife Management Area, such a protected block is close to reality.

The new easement allows for the repair or replacement (with size limitations) of an existing, small, duck hunting camp. Otherwise the area will remain as it is: no subdivision, utilities, residences, new roads or anything else that doesn't currently exist.

While not completely protected yet, FOMB hopes it can build on these successes with other landowners on Center's Point, insuring that the area will remain roughly as it is now, one of the gems of land around Merrymeeting Bay.

Ed Friedman and Warren Whitney

Winter 2002
VOL. 12, NO 1
February, 2002



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 Warren Whitney, Executive Director, at 666-3376.

YEAR END

In 2001 FOMB made excellent headway in all of our focus areas and we began to actively utilize information gathered in earlier efforts to further our goals.

For many of our members land conservation work is the most important work we do possibly because it represents tangible success. For me it is an integral *part* of our mission and one for which 2001 was a great year. FOMB was directly involved in the protection of approximately 475 acres around the Bay, some through easements, some through acquisition and some through donation (see story page 2). Some of this work was accomplished in partnership with groups like the Maine Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, or the Maine Wetlands Protection Coalition, recipient of a recent million dollar Land for Maine's Future grant for land protection in the Merrymeeting Bay/Lower Kennebec area, and some of it was solo.

Creativity is probably the key to successful land protection efforts. The completion of our Choice View Farm campaign, Pork Point protection, a notably large conservation easement in Dresden and Pittston and the protection of Palmer Meadow Pond all stand out as successes utilizing different techniques.

We have expanded the outreach efforts of our Hands Around the Bay (HAB) program by adding a second "Bay Day" that more than doubles the amount of children we can serve. Our education committee has done a fantastic job of creating curriculum materials that expand on the existing "Bay Day" experience giving it more depth.

In spite of continued and troubling problems with the new state lab in Orono, we have used available sediment data in recent mercury testimony and proposals for eagle work. We have submitted our provisional water quality data to the DEP hoping to affect a Kennebec reclassification upgrade and still outstanding SAPPI pulp mill relicensing. Andy Cutko has taken the lead on utilizing the data from our aerial photography study in an outreach effort on sprawl directed at the different towns around the Bay.

What's in store for 2002? Certainly expect continued efforts in our existing project areas but look forward to some new projects as well. We would like to initiate an oral (and visual) history project that focuses on recollections of those whose lives have been intimately tied to the Bay. We hope to work with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to expand archeology surveys around the Bay. An outstanding goal from several years ago is to complete a current or circulation study of the Bay, which could provide us with a model of where

pollutants, nutrients, invasive species and fish fry tend to drift and or accumulate. We also could define the areas of influence of particular tributaries and the various loads they carry.

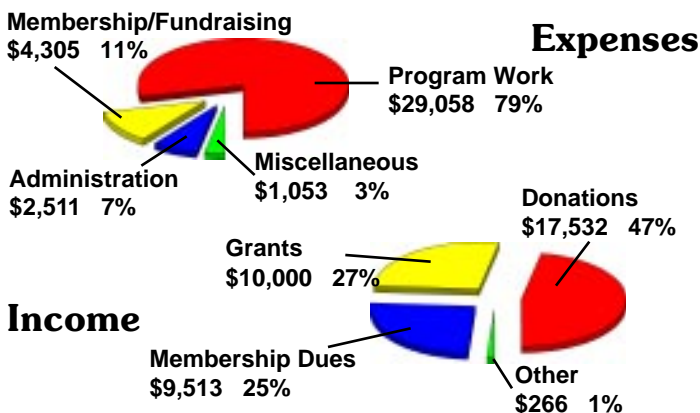
As we prioritize what work to spend our time on, we must consider where we overlap with work others are already doing, and that perhaps they may be better suited to take the lead. It is sometimes too easy to get immersed in the world of meetings with partners at the cost of avoiding our critical work like HAB, meeting with landowners, water monitoring or conducting a research project no one else is doing like the Sewall (aerial), sediment, mussel or current studies. In these areas it is FOMB who can contribute the most to greater knowledge, education, protection and advocacy of and for the Bay.

FOMB has plenty of opportunities for volunteers as we continue our clean ups, water monitoring, boat counts, or begin invasive plant surveys. I think of major donors as some of our most important volunteers. Much of our work, whether providing matching funds for archeological surveys, funding research projects or being able to pay for sample analysis at competent laboratories can be done far more effectively, far quicker, and far more competently if we have the funds to pay out of pocket rather than depend on the often unreliable and certainly very time consuming search for grant funding. Of all the ways in which we can raise money for our work: raffles, events, annual appeals, etc., seeking support from major donors is far and away the most effective. We will attempt to expand this form of support in the coming year so please give whatever you can.

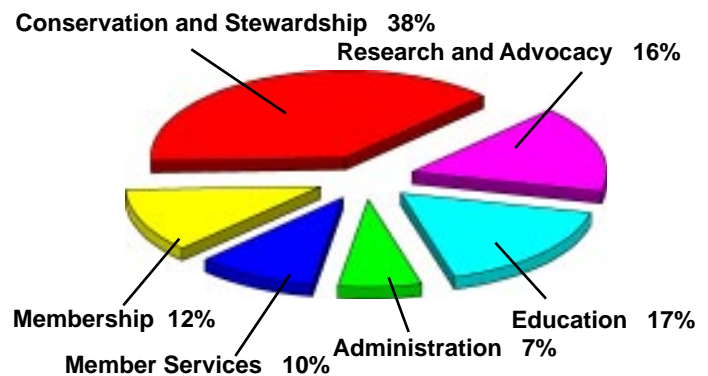
In closing let me give thanks to all of you who have supported our work. Deserving of special mention here are our conservation donors, our steering committee members for their continued service, our many partners (NGO's, state, federal and local agencies), Theresa Torrent-Ellis who, after establishing our successful water quality monitoring program, will turn the reins over to Bill Milam, Kathleen McGee for her unrecognized support of the FOMB and MTAC work for which I received EPA recognition, Will Brune Assistant Director of Land Protection at Maine TNC for always being a ready partner, David Hansen for his continued computer work on our behalf whether for newsletter, posters or web, and Tracy Gregoire, Chair of the Education Committee for her leadership in that area and to that committee for their accomplishments in this last year.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Ed Friedman*

2001 FINANCIALS



HOW THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPENDS HIS TIME



TIDINGS/WINTER

I was standing talking to a colleague, one somewhat taller than myself. We were on the central pathway that runs the length of the Bowdoin campus, from the Old Bath Road to College Street. It was about mid-afternoon in early October, and we were, of course, talking about September 11th. I was speaking or listening, I don't know which; in any event I was looking up at him and suddenly there was a flash of something buff and brown just over his head: an immature red-tailed hawk in a swift, shallow, gliding dive. It skimmed over a low hedge, probably aiming at a squirrel on the far side. It rose from behind the hedge almost immediately, with nothing in its talons, flew heavily into the lower branches of an oak, and perched there. It ruffled its feathers, shrugged its wings, and took a minute or two to settle itself, resembling nothing so much as a basketball player who had missed his first free-throw, and was trying to regroup before attempting the second.

Red-tails belong to the clan of the *buteos*. In England, birds of this clan are called buzzards, and suffer invidious comparison to hawks and falcons. *Buteos* are slow, cumbersome fliers, without any of the compact, aerodynamic elegance of the falcons and true hawks. In the context of the ancient and royal sport of falconry, they are what a garbage truck would be in the context of Formula One automobile racing. A falconer unhoods his bird, releases its jesses, and it flies aloft, to an altitude of three or four hundred feet. When the prey—a duck or a pheasant or a snipe—is flushed, the falcon accelerates with a couple of powerful strokes, like a downhill skier coming out of the starting gate, then goes into its tuck, diving steeply. The whole bird appears to shudder and flex, like a kite in a nose-dive; it may reach speeds of two hundred miles per hour. It strikes its prey with its feet, not attempting to grasp it. I am competent to say that the mere sight of this is enough to take the breath entirely away from a middle-aged English professor, and the fact of it does considerably more than that to the bird in question.

People do fly *buteos*, including Red-tails. You walk into some woods, unhood the bird. It flies up into the low branches of a tree, and then follows along behind you, flapping from tree to tree. Sooner or later you put up a squirrel, and the hawk goes after it. Sometimes it catches the squirrel cleanly and quickly, and it is about as exciting a watching somebody take a book off a bookshelf. Sometimes the squirrel sees what's coming and scampers along the underside of a branch or the back side of a tree trunk, and then you have a very undignified chase, the hawk flapping and hopping from side to side, the squirrel spiraling around the branch ahead of it. In these cases, the squirrel may escape, usually by getting to the ground and scuttling into a hole or brush pile. But surprisingly often, the hawk, clumsy but then suddenly very quick, and implacable as death or a fundraiser from the Friends of Merrymeeting Bay (who will be calling any day now) prevails.

A squirrel is a big animal, in relation to a red-tailed hawk—at least the equivalent of a rottweiler in relation to an average-sized adult—and squirrels, like any rodent, can twist and flex and give you a deeply consequential bite. The one I saw hunting had been bitten nearly to the bone on the middle toe three weeks before. The bite had healed well, but the bird's owner was worried about whether it might become skittish and squirrel-shy. It did not. It simply adapted its technique, as wild Red-tails also

do. It had taken one lesson for it to learn to strike the squirrel with one talon slightly ahead of the other, aiming for the neck and head.

In Maine, Red-tails, like many of our other birds of prey, are erratically migratory. Some—usually adults—always winter over, often staying in or near their nesting territory. Some always migrate, although their destination may vary from year to year. Some will migrate in lean years, when there is a lot of snow, and remain in the state in fat years. Although their numbers are fewer, they are easiest to see in the colder months. They normally hunt by sitting in a tree in a semi-open area, and are quite partial to the broad shoulders and embankments of I-95 and the Turnpike.

The one I saw on campus in October seems to have made himself at home, and has hung around all winter. A week or so later I came out of the dining hall and into a great hubbub of crows. They were perched in some pines around a small parking lot, raising holy hell. It took me a minute to discover the hawk. I expected him to be hunkered down in a tree, where the crows couldn't get at him, but instead he was perched on the rear luggage rack of a new Jeep Cherokee. He looked quite heraldic and imposing there, as though auditioning for a role in a commercial.

Since then, I have learned to listen to the campus crows. They are pretty vocal in any case, but when the hawk is around, they get as excited and indignant as a bunch of reporters who have cornered a high-ranking official from Enron. Every now and again one of them will take a half-hearted dive at the hawk, but never close enough to make him flinch. He looks like he has dealt with this contemptible bunch of self-righteous busy-bodies all his life, and knows that all he has to do is stonewall them for a while. When they get bored and go off in search of some other scandal, he can return to the business of gouging the unwary, which is simply how he earns his living.

I like having a hawk on campus, and notice that the college's population of semi-domestic and overnourished squirrels is less in evidence these days—perhaps not much reduced in numbers, but certainly more circumspect in their habits. In January, in broad daylight, our raptor in residence set upon a ring-billed gull, killed and partially ate it in the middle of campus drive. We live in strange times.

It seems to me quite possible that Red-tails, like squirrels, geese, raccoons, skunks, and a good many other critters, are accommodating themselves increasingly to parks, leafy suburbs, campuses, cemeteries (which are, incidentally, much favored by falconers, who, for all the aristocratic pedigree of their sport, have a good deal in common with shoplifters when it comes to the actual practice of their vocation), and other urban and suburban islands. If this happens, I trust it will not alter the one truly breathtaking thing about them. When they hunt, they just sit, then flap off and kill stuff with the absolute minimum of elegance or effort. But when they court, I don't know of many birds that can equal them. It happens fairly early in the spring. You want to see it: a big bird soaring, that suddenly folds its wings in against its body and goes into a headlong plummet. It passes below the tree line, and you half expect to hear an earth-shaking explosion, but then it reappears above the trees, still riding the momentum of its mighty plunge, rising toward a new apogee and another plunge. There is nothing of the bird's usual clumsiness about it, nothing of its usual laborious, ponderous relation to the law of gravity. It is one of those totally out-of-character, defiant, and irrationally heart-boosting things—as though you had just seen Congress reform itself, a pig fly, or the New England Patriots win the Super Bowl.

Franklin Burroughs

Tidings is a regular feature of Merrymeeting News

2001 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Conservation and Stewardship

- 475 acres protected
- Choice View Farm campaign completed (Dresden) - multiple partners and grants
- Two properties on Pork Point (Bowdoinham) - partner with Nature Conservancy
- Palmer Meadow Pond (Pittston/Dresden/Alna)
- Two conservation easements (Pittston/Dresden; Bowdoinham)

- Overboard discharge elimination work
- Cooperative Efforts with Maine Toxics Action Coalition: Fish Consumption Advisories, West Nile Virus, Mercury Amalgam, Pesticides
- Comments/Testimony: SAPPI relicensing; Marinas (Richmond, Bowdoinham); Citizens Referendum; Salmon/Aquaculture problems; Route 1 Corridor; National Energy Policy/Clean Air/ ANWR

Research

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Sediment Data - initial results published
- Boat Survey
- Watershed Nutrient Flow (UNH)
- On going work with Mussels Project and planning for Currents Study

Education

- Spring and Fall Bay Days (500 students)
- Merrymeeting Bay Curriculum development
- Resource Directory updated and distributed

Advocacy

- Jet Ski Posters and Handouts
- Began outreach to area towns on sprawl; data from Sewall Report
- Provisional water quality test results to the DEP

Membership

- 300 members
- Speaker Series
- Paddle Series
- Clean Up
- Newsletters
- Web Site Updates
- Trek to the Sea co-sponsor

AWARDS

Several of those intimately involved with FOMB's achievements received recognition in 2001 for their environmental work. Receiving two of the three EPA Merit Awards given to individuals in Maine were Karin Tilberg and Ed Friedman. Karin, a member of our Conservation and Stewardship committee and former Board member was recognized for her land conservation work as Maine Director of the Northern Forest Alliance, a coalition of approximately 40 groups working to protect our northern forests. Ed, our Chair, received the award for his leadership of FOMB, pushing our use of innovative techniques like caged bivalve monitoring to solve real problems, and for his work on toxics statewide with the Maine Toxics Action Coalition. Our Vice-Chair, Andy Cutko, is an ecologist for the Maine Natural Areas Program at the Department of Conservation (DOC). Andy received the DOC Employee of the Year award for his outstanding work on the Green Certification of logging practices and for his constant work on rare plants and habitats in the state. Congratulations to all three of you and thanks for sharing your skills and enthusiasm with FOMB.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARCH 13 **SPEAKER SERIES: THE POPHAM COLONY. BUD WARREN, MARINE HISTORIAN.**
Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College, Brunswick. 7:00pm

APRIL 10 **SPEAKER SERIES: NUTRIENT FLOW IN THE MERRYMEETING BAY WATERSHED.**
Ted Loder, Chris Hunt, University of New Hampshire. Beam Classroom, Visual Arts Center, Bowdoin College, Brunswick. 7:00pm

MAY 8 **SPEAKER SERIES: LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE BAY. GARY LAWLESS, POET.**
Bridge Academy, Dresden. 7:00pm

MAY 14. **BAY DAY AT CHOP POINT SCHOOL, WOOLWICH.**
Hundreds of elementary school students get up close and personal with the Bay. Contact Whit at 666-3376 if you'd like to volunteer.

MAY 18. **MERRYMEETING BAY CLEANUP!**
Saturday at 11:00pm to catch the low tide. Site to be determined after the ice clears out from the shore. Call Whit at 666-3376 if you'd like to volunteer. Bring gloves and mud boots!
Rain date 5/19.

PESTICIDES IN SCHOOLS

There is abundant evidence of the risk toxic pesticides pose to human health. The most vulnerable populations are children and the developing fetus. Most worrisome from a public health perspective are chronic health effects such as cancer, infertility, miscarriage, birth defects, and effects on the brain and nervous system. Neurotoxins have been implicated in the dramatic and frightening increase in autism (200% in California alone in a 10 year period), rates of ADD and ADHD (affecting up to 17% of school age children) and other learning disabilities up 191% in about 15 years.

Many pesticides are potent neurotoxins; that's precisely why they are effective. It is also why they should never, never be used in close proximity to children. Children's brains are developing at an especially rapid rate from in utero through the age of seven and continue to develop through their teenage years. During this critical time of growth children spend a large part of their time in school, and nearly all schools use pesticides regularly. The majority do so unsafely and without notice (only five schools surveyed in Maine give written notification).

More than *one billion pounds* of pesticides are used annually in the U. S. (5-6 billion pounds worldwide). We are deluged by pesticides (and other toxic chemicals) daily. Pesticides are even used in the manufacture of paints, pastes, glues, cosmetics, food packaging, textiles, fabrics, carpets, exercise mats, and many other consumer products. *In 1939 there were 32 pesticide products registered in the U.S.; in 1993 there were 22,000. Pesticide use doubled every ten years between 1945 and 1985.* The use and abuse of these chemicals is unprecedented.

Because of the prevalence of these toxic chemicals, and the dangers they pose, we have a right to know what chemicals are being used around us, and where. This is fundamental. School boards, parents, teachers and, indeed most of us, believe that if the EPA registers a chemical, it is safe. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Of the 87,000 chemicals (including pesticides) registered today, less than 5% have been tested, and of those virtually none have been tested for anything but their toxicity (how much it takes to actually kill a 160 lb. person) or, if lucky, to see if they're carcinogenic. As well as being neurotoxins and carcinogens, many of these chemicals are also endocrine disrupters, and immune suppressants.

This is not only a health issue; it is an economic issue as well. The cost of developmental and learning disabilities both from a health perspective and cost to communities for special education is high

and getting higher. The loss of income from those disabilities can be dramatic and the damage to quality of life incalculable.

Prevention is always less costly than cure.

Pesticides are used routinely in Maine schools. A report issued by the Maine Department of Agriculture concluded that at least 75% of our schools use pesticides regularly, nearly all without notification, some illegally. Because of the toxicity of most pesticides, because children are particularly susceptible to the harmful effects and because pesticides do not breakdown indoors, and are still toxic outdoors, we should be eliminating the use of these chemicals in this setting except when a documented human health emergency is imminent (which is rare).

What can we do? The Maine Toxics Action Coalition (MTAC), of which Friends of Merrymeeting Bay is a part, has requested the Board of Pesticides Control adopt a statewide rule for schools that would:

- Eliminate the use of the most toxic pesticides
- Require schools implement an Integrated Pest Management Program
- Use only least toxic pesticides and only when there is a documented human health emergency
- Require Universal Parental Notification: written notice to parents each time a pesticide would be used, what the pesticide would be, and health effects.
- Notices posted in schools 72 hours before and after application.

There is strong support among parents and teachers for these points to be implemented. In a statewide study of schools done in Maryland by the University there, 80% of parents and 76% of staff wanted written notification when pesticides were used. The alternative that the pesticide industry is pushing is a "registry" whereby people who wish to be notified of applications can sign up ahead of time. The problem with this approach is that it supposes you are already well educated on the subject. Ignorance of the health effects, which is often the case, does not protect children from the hazard. Only consistent education will provide the protections necessary and Universal Notification is a step toward both education of hazards and enforcement of the law.

MTAC is circulating petitions to citizens who are concerned which will then be submitted to the Board of Pesticides Control to show support for the rule change. Please contact Kathleen McGee at 666-3598 for a petition or more information.

Kathleen McGee

CHILDHOOD DISEASES

Pesticides have been implicated in the rise in many childhood illnesses including cancer, reproductive problems, immune deficiencies, learning disabilities and others.

In children 0-4 years old:
 53 % rise in brain cancer
 37 % rise in soft tissue cancer
 32 % rise in kidney cancer

In teenagers 15-19 years old:
 128 % rise in non-Hodgkin lymphoma
 78 % rise in ovarian cancer
 65 % rise in testicular cancer
 30 % rise in bone and joint cancer
 29 % rise in thyroid cancer

The number of children in special education programs increased 191 % from 1977 to 1994.
 Some researchers suggest that ADHD may affect as much as 17 % of all school-aged children.

Data from National Cancer Institute (1973 - 1995) and Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility

IN HARM'S WAY

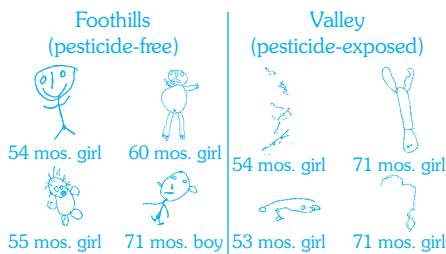
During February FOMB, in cooperation with the Maine Toxics Action Coalition (MTAC) and Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility (GBPSR), distributors for area elementary schools and public libraries the GBPSR report entitled *In Harms Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development*. This report analyzes the voluminous and sometimes confusing scientific literature dealing with the intersection of environmental chemicals and child development. It is only in the last few years that we have begun to grasp the potential health effects (see Pesticides in Schools article on page 6) of even the slightest disturbances during this critical period of growth.

In Harms Way makes a complex body of scientific information accessible to health professionals and to the scientifically literate general public. FOMB is pleased to make this information available to those in our area. Our children are our future.

Ed Friedman

Drawings of a Person

by Yaqui children (by age and gender)



Illustrations are those by Mexican Yaqui Indian children drawn during a study of the effects of pesticide exposure on neurological development. The study was conducted by Elizabeth A Guillette, PhD, University of Arizona. Illustrations used with permission. From: *In Harm's Way*, GBPSR, 2000

FRIENDS OF MERRYMEETING BAY
Steering Committee

- Jenn Burns, 6 Aspen Dr., Brunswick 04011 725-5319
- Frank Burroughs, 81 Wallentine Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 Secretary .. 666-5979
- Dee and Clancy Cummins, RR1 Box 112, Richmond 04357 737-4175
- Andy Cutko, 555 Browns Point Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 Vice Chair 666-3162
- Steve Eagles, 123 River Rd., Dresden 04342 737-8023
- Ed Friedman, 42 Stevens Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 Chair 666-3372
- DeWitt John, 4 Oakland St., Brunswick 04011 729-5881
- Kathleen McGee, 32 Wildes Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 666-3598
- Bill Milam, 107 Brushwood Rd., Woolwich 04579 443-9738
- Steve Pelletier, RR1, 9 Jesse Rd., Topsham 04086 725-0083
- Steve Taylor, PO Box 231, Bowdoinham 04008 Treasurer 666-8919

Conservation & Stewardship Coordinator:

Dan Stockford, 712 Carding Machine Rd., Bowdoinham 04008 737-2709

Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator:

Bill Milam, 107 Brushwood Rd., Woolwich 04579 443-9738

Executive Director:

Warren Whitney, 145 Pork Point Road, Bowdoinham 04008 666-3376

Thank you to David Hansen for designing this issue of MMNews.

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

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS.

- \$15.00 enclosed for individual membership. \$20 Family
- \$30 Smelt \$50 Alewife \$100 Striped Bass \$250 Salmon \$500+ Sturgeon
- \$ _____ enclosed as an additional tax-deductible donation.

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

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SALMON SPECIAL

Many of us have felt confident our remaining wild Atlantic salmon contained unique characteristics. We also were very concerned about threats to these populations from toxic runoff related to blueberry and cranberry growing, poor farming, and forestry practices, aquaculture problems like infectious salmon anemia and genetic dilution from escaped farm fish, and over fishing. In February of 2000 FOMB submitted testimony in favor of listing these Atlantic salmon populations as endangered species, something Governor King and most of those in the above industries opposed. In November of 2000 the salmon listing was approved. On January 7, 2002 the long awaited National Research Council/National Academy of Sciences review of salmon genetics was released. The following paragraph is excerpted from an article written for Castings, newsletter of the Maine Council, Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) by John Burrows, Maine Coordinator, ASF.

"On January 7, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) panel on the Status and Future of Atlantic Salmon in Maine released their initial report on salmon genetics. They concluded that Maine's remaining wild Atlantic salmon are truly in fact Maine salmon and not the by-product of past stocking.

Governor Angus King and U.S. Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins requested the \$500,000 NAS study so that we would have "a thorough, clear, and independent evaluation of salmon genetics." The NAS report was authored by 13 scientists from the United States, Canada and Sweden is the epitome of "good science." They concluded that the Gulf of Maine Atlantic salmon are "clearly distinct genetically" from European fish and genetically different from Canadian salmon, despite the presence of non-native hatchery and aquaculture fish in Maine rivers. Interestingly, the panel also found considerable genetic divergence among the different populations in Maine's eight endangered salmon rivers." The Kennebec and Androscoggin rivers also contain genetically distinct salmon populations that have not been protected.

Ed Friedman

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

FOMB is starting its fourth season of water quality monitoring, and we need your help! Contact Whit at 666-3376 or fomb@gwi.net if you're interested in testing water quality once a month, from April through October, on the Bay or one of its tributaries.

We're also taking part in an invasive plant survey of the Bay this summer. We'll need volunteers who are interested in walking along the shores of the Bay, cataloging the location, type and density of invasive plants. Let us know if you can help!



FRIENDS of MERRYMEETING BAY

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