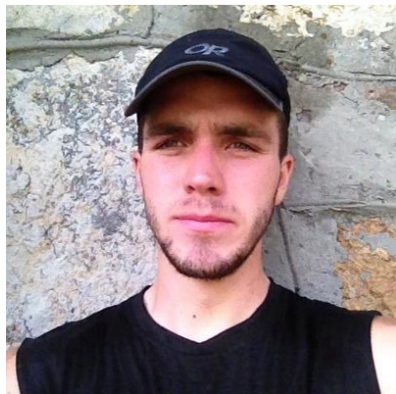


# FOMB Speaker Bios 2016-2017

October 12, 2016

Ranked Choice Voting

Finn Melanson



Finn received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in May of 2014 with a specific concentration in voting systems and their impacts on voter behavior. Since the fall of 2014, he has been involved in the voter education movement around ranked choice voting. The bulk of this work has been done under the banner of the League of Women Voters of Maine and the presentations have taken Finn across the state to high school social studies classrooms, senior centers, chambers of commerce, American Legions, Lions clubs, Kiwanis clubs and other organizations.

On November 8th, Maine voters will head to the polls to weigh in on a number of referendum questions, including Question 5 which will ask voters whether to replace our current voting system with ranked choice voting for federal and state primary and general elections beginning in 2018.

Ranked choice voting lets voters rank their choices based on individual preference. First choices are counted, and if no candidate has a majority of the vote, an "instant runoff" occurs in which the candidate with the least support is eliminated. Voters that picked the eliminated candidate as their first choice have their vote counted for their next choice. In a three-person race, we now have a winner with majority support in the final round of tabulation. In a race with more than three candidates, this process is repeated until one candidate has a majority. Read more about it in [RCV Basics](#).

Ranked Choice Voting will appear as Question 5 on the ballot in November 2016. Vote **Yes on Question 5** to approve RCV for Maine.

The wording of the question as it will appear on the ballot is as follows;

*Do you want to allow voters to rank their choices of candidates in elections for U.S. Senate, Congress, Governor, State Senate, and State Representative, and to have ballots counted at the state level in multiple rounds in which last-place candidates are eliminated until a candidate wins by majority?*

November 09, 2016

**Electronic Silent Spring**

**Katie Singer**



Katie Singer works on public policy with the Electromagnetic Radiation Policy Institute. An investigative journalist, her books include *The Garden of Fertility* (Avery, 2004), *Honoring Our Cycles* (New Trends, 2006) *Honoring Our Cycles in Africa* (2007) & *Electronic Silent Spring* (2014). Her novel, *The Wholeness of a Broken Heart* (Riverhead, 1999) was a selection of Barnes & Noble's Discover Great New Writers Program. She teaches internationally.

Info-Communications-Technologies (ICT) grow faster than anyone can comprehend. Year 2000's total annual Internet traffic amounted to less than one hour of Internet traffic in 2015. By 2020, ICTs could account for as much as 20% of our planet's total energy use. Katie Singer will make electronic technologies' energy demands visible, explain their environmental impacts and present realistic ways to reduce our e-footprints.

Singer's most recent book, *An Electronic Silent Spring*, reports on the legal, health and environmental issues related to telecommunications. Her monthly newsletters and talks present electronics' impacts on climate change, biodiversity, cybersecurity and culture including the impacts of the Internet of Things and 5<sup>th</sup> Generation Wireless or 5G.

[www.electronicsilentspring.com](http://www.electronicsilentspring.com)

Last March, Singer spoke at the University of Oregon's Environmental Law Conference.

<http://www.electronicsilentspring.com/e-lephants/>

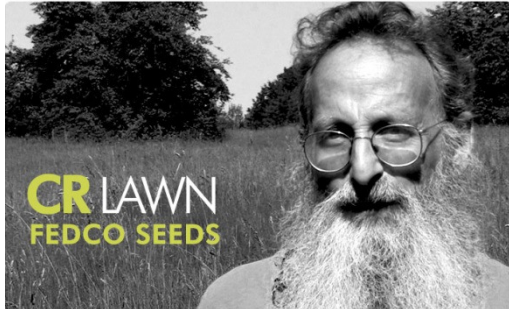
In October, 2015, she spoke about electronics' impacts on wildlife at a conference in California.

<http://www.electronicsilentspring.com/electronics-ecosystem/>

December 14, 2016

## Twisted Genes, Distorted Narratives

CR Lawn



CR Lawn founded Fedco Seeds Cooperative in 1978, a hybrid worker/consumer cooperative based in Waterville, and has worked as a coordinator there since. His series of essays, “Do you know where your seed comes from?” first appeared in the 1995 Fedco catalog. He has composed the Seeds division Section of the catalog and written variety descriptions for many years.

<https://www.fedcoseeds.com/>

Lawn served for 17 years on the Board of Directors of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), with two terms each as Board Treasurer and Board Secretary. He also served on the Common Ground Fair Steering Committee for 10 years and currently writes for MOFGA’s newspaper, “The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener”, and counts the gate at the Fair.

The most damaging allegation leveled against those wishing to label, regulate or ban genetically engineered (GE) foods is that we have been motivated by a hysterical anti-scientific Luddism. Historically, there has been at least a grain of truth to this charge, as some of the less careful advocates on our side of the debate have been guilty of exaggerating and promoting emotional arguments rather than making sound scientific claims.

It is true the relative merits of transgenic technology have been hotly debated by scientists and the general public since before any genetically engineered foods came on the market, and that any scientific or ethical consensus remains elusive.

But last year, when lawyer and ethicist Steven M. Druker came out with his groundbreaking book, *Altered Genes, Twisted Truth: How the Venture to Genetically Engineer our Food has Subverted Science, Corrupted Government, and Systematically Deceived the Public*, his meticulously documented, impeccably logical brief should have changed the debate forever.

Druker carefully constructed his case, point by scientific point, detail upon detail, until it was well-nigh irrefutable. One by one he demolished the myths that have so far sustained the biotech enterprise, at the same time documenting a persistent and pernicious pattern of deception that had originated in high places ever since President Reagan decided to make biotechnology America's technology and spared no opportunity to promote it. Every subsequent administration, including Obama's, followed suit, culminating in Obama signing the so-called DARK Act (so dubbed by opponents and standing for Deny Americans the Right to Know) this summer, gift-wrapped for the Grocery Manufacturers of America and Monsanto of the world. As Druker concluded, “when regulators have an agenda to promote they cannot properly regulate.”

Despite his brilliance in laying out his damning case against genetically engineered foods and their alleged safety (in cogent chapters he explained the nature and measurement of risk and compared the relative risks and safety protocols of altering computer software vs. altering genomes), Druker clung to the naïve belief that if everyone knew the facts about GE and if our opinions were all rooted in solid science “what would collapse would not be opposition to the foods but the foods themselves.” If only the Clintons, Obamas and Gates's of the world would read his book, all we'd need to do is enforce present laws, not pass new ones. Alas, less than a year later political realities have already belied his expectations.

It is worth examining why. Last fall, before the passage of the DARK Act, I concluded my review of his book with a bit of amateur psychology that unfortunately turned out to be prescient: “I've played enough poker to know that the hardest time to walk away from the table is when you've invested heavily in your hand, and it goes bust in the end. Forget the wishful thinking. Read the book, get the facts and then organize!”

**January 11, 2017**

### **Bateaux to Quebec: Life & Times of Ruben Colburn**

**Tom Desjardin**



Photo: Boothbayregister.com

Tom Desjardin holds a Ph.D. in U.S. History and has written several books on the Civil War with an emphasis on Gettysburg. During the 1990s he served as the archivist and historian at Gettysburg National Military Park. He later taught Civil War history at Bowdoin College in Maine where Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin and Gettysburg hero Joshua Chamberlain was a student, professor and president. Experienced in both television and film, Desjardin served as the historical advisor to actor Jeff Daniels for his role as Chamberlain in the films Gettysburg and Gods and Generals. He and his work have been featured on the History Channel, A&E, Discovery, PBS and C-SPAN. He currently serves as the director of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands.

Ruben (or Rueben) Colburn (1740–1818) was a lumberman and shipbuilder in [Pittston, Maine](#) who made great contributions to the American side in the [Revolutionary War](#). His home, the [Major Reuben Colburn House](#), is listed in the [National Register of Historic Places](#). Colburn, took up arms in 1775 when the revolution started, obtaining command of his local committee of safety. To bring local [Indians](#) in on the American side, he gathered the [Abenaki](#) tribes of the St. Francis. Traveling by canoe Colburn led them to [Cambridge, Massachusetts](#) for an audience with General [George Washington](#) at his [temporary headquarters](#). A surprised Washington welcomed them with open arms and enlisted the chiefs on the spot.<sup>[2]</sup>

When informed of a [plan to capture Quebec City](#) under the command of American Colonel [Benedict Arnold](#), Colburn offered his services to the [Continental army](#), complete with scouts, maps, and boats. Arnold was enthusiastic about the new support and wrote Colburn immediately:

*Sir, His Excellency General Washington Desires you will Inform your self how soon, there can be procured, or built, at Kennebec, Two hundred light Bateaux Capable of Carrying Six or Seven Men each, with their Provisions & Baggage, (say 100 wt. to each man) the Boats to be furnished with four Oars two Paddles & two Setting Poles each, the expense of Building them & whether a sufficient quantity of Nails can be procured with you.*

Colburn sped to [Maine](#), making plans for the expedition. Once home, he put his crew to work building the [bateaux](#) and procuring foodstuffs from the local citizenry, many of them [Tories](#) unsympathetic to the patriot cause. He ordered maps and sent three scouts to explore the upper [Dead River](#) ahead of the coming army. Colburn made three trips to Cambridge during August of that year while the crews, under the supervision of his brothers, Oliver and Benjamin Colburn, and partner Thomas Agry, labored to fill the contract. They had only fifteen days to complete the task. Due to the short time frame and time of year, no dried pine was available and he was forced to cut fresh green pine to attach to the oak ribs. According to some sources the heavy weight, slapdash construction and smaller than specified size of his boats added substantially to the agony and rigors Arnold's men endured on their expedition.

When the transports arrived on September 20, 1775, the bateaux were just about finished. With Arnold on the transport *Broad Bay* was a 19-year-old volunteer soldier by the name of [Aaron Burr](#). Both were entertained in the Colburn home for three days until the army moved on upriver to [Fort Western](#). Many legends surround the activities of Burr, but his stay with Reuben and Elizabeth Colburn is well documented. Two divisions remained at Colburn House for a week.

Colburn followed the expedition with a company of carpenters, fixing the flotilla as needed. The army barely made it through to supplies in [Canada](#), and the 600 remaining men led by Arnold later mounted an [unsuccessful attack on Quebec](#). Most of the commanders were captured and Arnold received the leg wound that plagued him for the rest of his days. Colburn and his brothers returned to Pittston, where he continued to build ships and support the American cause for the remainder of the war. Whether Colburn was ever paid by Washington for his boats is also of some dispute. [tispaguin.blogspot.com](http://tispaguin.blogspot.com) [www.centralmaine.com](http://www.centralmaine.com)

**February 08, 2017**

**Talking Fish-Heads**

**Nate Gray, Doug Watts, Ed Friedman**



Photos: [www.centralmaine.com](http://www.centralmaine.com)



[tispaguin.blogspot.com](http://tispaguin.blogspot.com)



[www.pointofviewhelicopters.com](http://www.pointofviewhelicopters.com)

Nate Gray is project leader for the Kennebec Hydropower Developers Group (KHDG) program through



the Maine Department of Marine Resources, Bureau of Sea Run Fisheries and Habitat (BSRFH). He is also on the Board of FOMB. Nate has worked extensively on the Kennebec River and its tributaries since 1992 and been involved in virtually all aspects of the restoration program. He witnessed the removal of Edwards Dam in Augusta in 1999 and has seen the populations of river herring rise from a hundred thousand to over three million with the installation of multiple fish passages and the opening of thousands of acres of historical habitat in the Kennebec drainage. Nate has also worked extensively on American shad restoration in the Kennebec River and was actively involved in the Waldoboro Shad Hatchery from 1992-2007.

Doug Watts is an expert on Atlantic salmon and other migratory fish in Maine. He was a former newspaper reporter specializing in historical accounts and currently is a freelance writer, fishery consultant and river activist. Watts also has been President of Friends of Kennebec Salmon for many years. Watts and his brother wrote the citizens ESA petition to protect the American eel and while the federal government found the petition to have scientific merit, they ultimately decided against listing the eel as an endangered species. Friends of Merrymeeting Bay continues to partner with Watts on state and federal efforts to protect American eel, Atlantic salmon and other migratory fish who are denied access to spawning habitat and or victims of turbine mortality.

Ed Friedman has chaired FOMB for 20 years. He has a broad environmental science background and has worked in glaciology, geomorphology and wildlife biology from the arctic to Antarctica. As FOMB chair Friedman has initiated a number of unique research projects including Merrymeeting Bay Vegetation and Land Use Changes over Time using aerial photography and GIS, Biomonitoring of the Kennebec and Androscoggin utilizing caged freshwater mussels to detect dioxin discharges and locate PCB hotspots and a multi-year Circulation Study of the Bay. Under his leadership FOMB has litigated over Endangered Species and Clean Water Act claims (together with Doug Watts) as well as other disputes typically involving harm to migratory fish.

Ed will act as moderator in the evening's discussion about fish restoration failures, challenges and successes in the Merrymeeting Bay watershed.

**March 08, 2017**

**The King's Broad Arrow: Maine's Mast Trade**  
**Harper Batsford**



[www.fishermansvoice.com](http://www.fishermansvoice.com) from Manning

Harper is Museum Assistant at the Tate House in Portland <http://www.tatehouse.org/>, home of Senior Mast Agent for the Royal Navy in the 1700's. Her presentation will largely echo that of Sam Manning, author of *The King's Broad Arrow* who brought to life a period in history which makes this book valuable, but not simply because you will understand how the shipbuilding industry worked from the 1600s – 1800s. Manning shows what governments were doing, why, and how it directly parallels the twentieth- and twenty-first century policies of nations spending

blood and treasure to ensure they can control the supply of natural resources for their national security. With 1600s Europe unable to supply the big tall masts needed for their navies, Great Britain established a policy of marking trees in New England which were specifically the Crown's, to be cut, processed, and shipped back to England. Without proper masts, the navy could not carry sails to propel their ships—much like the need for oil today.

The Tate House was constructed for Captain George Tate (1700-1794) and his family who had arrived in the Colonies around 1750. Tate served as the Senior Mast Agent for the British Royal Navy, overseeing the cutting and shipping of white pines from Maine to England. This position assured Tate's success, and his status in the community is reflected by the style of architecture he selected for his home. With its clapboards still unpainted, Tate House is one of two residences in Maine with an unusual subsumed dormer in the gambrel roof. As the only pre-Revolutionary home in Greater Portland that is open to the public, the impressive period furnishings, beautiful grounds and herb gardens, and unique architecture of Tate House offer an insightful glimpse at the 18th century and life in Colonial Maine.

**April 12, 2017**

## **Cougar Recovery in Eastern North America**

**Chris Spatz**



Photos: Chris Spatz and Wikipedia. But which one is Chris?

Chris Spatz is a former psychiatric social worker and a director of the Gunks Climbers' Coalition as well as President of the Cougar Rewilding Foundation. He writes and lectures about the natural history of the Catskill Mountains and the Shawangunk Ridge where he lives in southern New York State, and where he caught the spell of the fabled eastern cougar. Spatz has run remote camera surveys at High Point State Park, NJ and in the Shawangunks of New York at Minnewaska State Park and the Mohonk Preserve. Reviewing his survey findings with cougar biology, behavior and their current range, Chris will explain why cougar sightings don't produce evidence, and how restorations of this magnificent predator are imperative for the recovery of critically declining eastern forests. Chris says "I was a bartender, former clinical social worker with a MSW, English major undergrad. It would have been biology, but I sucked at math. Now, I'm a kind of volunteer social worker for pumas." **Bringing Back the Legend!!!**

The [Cougar Rewilding Foundation \(CRF\)](#) is a nonprofit whose mission is to facilitate the recovery of the cougar in suitable wild habitat east of the Rocky Mountains. CRF promotes recovery of breeding populations of cougars through natural recolonization and mandated restorations to the central, southeastern and eastern United States, advocating responsible management in habitat where cougars are recovering. CRF also believes in full legal protection of all cougars living wild east of the Rockies, regardless of origin.

The search for the eastern cougar is one of the great riddles in North American natural history. Despite thousands of sightings from Maine to Mississippi, only a dozen confirmations have emerged east of Chicago during the past generation. The Cougar Rewilding Foundation has conducted remote camera surveys in seven eastern states, investigated years of field evidence and cougar reports, and is featured in the book, Heart of a Lion, tracking the South Dakota cat that trekked to Connecticut seeking a mate.

To help raise awareness for their cause, the Cougar Rewilding Foundation conducts public education programs by preparing cougar education modules and lesson plans, exhibiting at outdoor and conservation events, and giving presentations to interested groups.

CRF also conducts habitat and public attitude surveys, as well as evaluates evidence and conducts investigations in collaboration with wildlife agencies to document cougar presence along their expanding range into eastern habitat.

**May 10, 2017**

### **Dragonflies & Damselflies in Maine**

**Ron Butler**



Photo: [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net)

Ron is professor of ecology at U. Maine Farmington and a biologist with research interests in behavioral ecology, community ecology, and conservation biology. During the past 40 years, he has worked in Antarctica, Newfoundland, and Maine on a variety of projects concerning the ecology and conservation of seabirds, dragonflies, butterflies, and bees. Because of his interest in ecologically important insect groups, Ron presently helps coordinate three state-wide citizen scientist initiatives: The Maine Damselfly and Dragonfly Survey, The Maine Butterfly Survey, and (most recently) The Maine Bumble Bee Atlas. His undergraduate research students work with Ron each summer in Maine on dragonfly, butterfly, and bee ecology, and a number of these students have gone on to graduate programs in ecology or entomology, as well as medical school and other health care programs. In addition to teaching courses in Zoology, Ecology, Entomology, Ornithology, and Conservation Biology, Ron also co-teaches Tropical Island Ecology each May-term in the US Virgin Islands. He has a PhD in Ecology/Zoology, SUNY College of Environmental Science & Syracuse University ([Publication List](#)).

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