

# Cobscook Currents

Summer / Fall 2006

*News from the Cobscook Community Learning Center*

## A Piece of the Puzzle – The CCLC's Connection to the Larger World of Folk and Community Education

By Mary Cattani, Co-director, FEAA/IPEA



*The mission of the  
Cobscook  
Community  
Learning Center  
is to enrich the lives  
of local community  
members using the  
arts, the rich social  
fabric, and the  
natural surroundings  
as the medium.*

As a reader of this newsletter you may be asking yourself: What is FEAA/IPEA? It is the *Folk Education Association of America*, also known as the *Institute for Peoples' Education and Action* ([www.peopleseducation.org](http://www.peopleseducation.org)), a national association of which the *Cobscook Community Learning Center* is a member. Alan Furth, CCLC executive director, is a long-time Board member and Co-Chair of FEAA/IPEA. The association brings together a diverse array of adult and community learning centers, including CCLC, across the United States, all of which have been inspired in part by the tradition of Scandinavian folk schools. Folk schools grew out of the ideas of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Danish philosopher, N. S. F. Grundtvig, and drew on his idea of "enlightenment" and "enlivenment of the people."

Today, this lively movement supports hundreds of residential learning centers and folk high schools all over Scandinavia. These institutions are supported by the state, and offer an alternative, or supplement, to mainstream education. Folk schools serve many groups within their communities: immigrants needing to learn the language and culture; young people at a crossroads; women; mature folks making a change of direction in life or careers; and anyone wishing to learn a traditional art or craft.

FEAA/IPEA is connected with this movement in the United States, and has sponsored gatherings, conferences and institutes, and has published a newsletter, *Conversations*, and a journal, *Option*. For the past four years, the association has been in a more dormant state, seeking renewal and a new sense of purpose. We thought it might be interesting to the readers of *Cobscook Currents* to offer updates on recent activities of some members of the FEAA to show the interconnections between our activities in our local area with others across North America.

**The Institute for Human Rights and Responsibilities (IHRR)**, in Galena, Ohio, led by FEAA member David Jehnsen, focuses especially on training teachers and leaders in Kingian Nonviolence, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s nonviolent approaches to social change. IHRR's special project is a long-term cooperation with the Centro Memorial Martin Luther King, Jr., in Havana, Cuba, (CMMLK) where over 600 trained practitioners all over Cuba have learned from Dr. King's Nonviolence Leaders Manuals, in Spanish, and are practicing and training in 74 regions of that country. This infrastructure is being mobilized to prepare faith-based candidates for elections and participation in government. Elsewhere, the IHRR seeks to support grassroots adult education for democracy, and to institutionalize peace and nonviolence research. To learn more, go to: [www.KingianNonviolence.info](http://www.KingianNonviolence.info).

**Camp Sister Spirit Folk School**, in Ovett, Mississippi, led by Executive Director Andie Gibbs, is still recovering from devastating damage caused by hurricane Katrina, and is seeking support in its rebuilding efforts. In spite of the many challenges they face, they continue to operate, offering a schedule of family-friendly, inclusive events, including a mid-summer festival in June, and continue to plan for the future. You can see pictures of the damage to their facilities, and also make a donation at their web site: [www.campsisterspirit.com](http://www.campsisterspirit.com)

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## Returning to the Heartland



I've just returned from a visit to the heartland. I have new family scattered like a constellation of stars in the green ocean of America's Midwest. We traveled a thousand miles across that flat rich soil landscape – driving from one warm welcome to another. I had packed two books for the journey by authors as important to our cultural landscape as prairie grasses to the Great Plains. I carried Aldo Leopold's classic *A Sand County Almanac* and *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*. I took in the words of those two rawboned honest authors and I understood that the "heartland" is a cultural as well as a geographic place of grounding – centeredness.

Aldo Leopold wrote, "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Langston Hughes dedicated his life to creating social change through the arts, but, more importantly, through *access* to the arts. An eternal activist, he wrote,

**"Out of the rack and ruin...  
We, the people, must redeem...  
All, all the stretch of these great green states ---  
And make America again."**

Democracy and social justice require integrity. Challenges to democracy and social justice, exemplified by the LNG assault on the Cobscook Bay region, and revealed in the epidemic of serious prescription drug abuse that is ravaging the families and communities of this region, shout for a need to return to this social and political "heartland." The Cobscook Community Learning Center is dedicated to fostering an environment in which broad social and environmental health and vitality are sustained and nurtured. This includes striving to enliven democracy and the practices of a just society.

That is what lies in the heartland of the CCLC. It is nothing less than inviting a return to the things that Leopold would assess as "right" and which Hughes would define as essential for a healthy society. That is the vision and the practice which is opening within the Cobscook region as a prairie spring opens green upon the waiting land.

Thanks to all who have participated in and contributed to the continued growth of this effective organization – this hopeful experiment. Please enjoy this edition of Cobscook Currents and find out more about what is taking place at the Cobscook Community Learning Center.

With hope and conviction,

Alan Furth  
Executive Director



Alan enjoys the natural beauty of the CCLC Campus during a work day on the East Stream Trail, April 2006.

## Home Schoolers Turned Salmon Superstars

By Kate & Paul Jans and Kara McCrimmon

Early in May, the Salmon Superstars met along the shores of the Dennys River and released 180 salmon alevin into the clear spring water. The Superstars, a group of home schooled children between the ages of 8 and 14, have been meeting weekly at the CCLC. With collaboration between parents, CCLC staff, and local conservation organizations, this group has developed its own course of study and received support in hands-on and ecological learning through the CCLC.

This winter, the Salmon Superstars learned all about Atlantic salmon, which are an endangered species and native to rivers in Maine. Their numbers are so low that fishing is no longer allowed. The possible reasons for this decline include over-fishing at sea, habitat loss, power plant disturbances, and pollution. The Superstars studied many of these dynamics which affect the life cycle of salmon. This group is one of many which help to raise and introduce native salmon back into their home rivers. The Superstars used a donated tank and equipment to take care of the salmon for sixteen weeks, starting from the eyed-egg stage.

The raising and release of the salmon was the main goal of the group, though they also studied watershed dynamics. The watershed for the Dennys River encompasses the Cathance and the Meddybemps Lakes and surrounding areas. The group created two types of watershed models. One was a temporary model made of paper, magic markers, plastic wrap, and cocoa mix. Plastic materials were incorporated to show non-point pollution sources. A permanent model was made out of paper mache, clay, and paint. This model will be used for presentations and will be displayed at the CCLC.

The program which initiated the raising of the salmon and educational components for the children was initiated by Dennys River Watershed Coordinator Sheila Huckins. CCLC Staff, plus resource people from local conservation organizations including Jacob van de Sande with Downeast Salmon Federation and Edward Steenstra with the Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery, helped the group with hands-on activities. The Superstars will continue to meet throughout the year and study ecological topics. They hope to raise another group of salmon to release again next year, and invite other home schoolers to join them.



### Reflections on Summer School by Paige Case, Lubec High School Senior

This summer I have been taking a summer intensive English class at the Cobscook Community Learning Center. My teacher is Janice Rice, an English teacher from Shead High School in Eastport. There are three other students in my class, all from surrounding schools. This class is different from a traditional high school class because it is one subject, all day long, for a week and a half. We work for about an hour on one assignment and then have a ten-minute break. We have the opportunity to go outside, do hands on projects that apply to the subject material, and work together in groups. Most students take summer intensive classes as make up credit, however, I am taking this English class as an actual full-credit course. Ms. Rice structured the course so that it could count for a full English credit. Everything is personalized here, so that the needs of every student are met. I have enjoyed being able to go outside and participate in the group as well as get all of my extra work done. I think that these summer intensives are a great opportunity.

## *In the Eye of the Beholder: A Celebration and Exploration of Creativity*

As program director, it has been my pleasure to witness (and often participate in!) the wide variety of art produced and artistic mediums explored in courses and programs. I've enjoyed watching grandparents and grandchildren mold clay together in pottery classes, and I certainly do not tire of seeing someone discover a new capacity, passion or interest while trying something new or being sparked by the skill of one of our instructors.

I believe creativity is a pathway. Stop in and see where it takes you.

In community, *Kara McCrimmon*



Collection of ceramic chairs crafted by Marilyn Alexa.



Raku pottery with horse hair decoration made by Marty Livingstone.



Stained glass suncatcher, made in an early Spring 2006 class taught by Mark Wren.



Tori Orton explores still life in a drawing class taught by Heather Perry.



Examples of student creations during the Spring 2006 Introduction to Pottery course taught by Connie Harter-Bagley.

### **Friars Bay**

The full tide,  
Reflecting a thin edge of moon  
Breaks on granite ledges  
With rhythmic notes  
That rise and fall.

We listen;  
Aware only of  
Each other's silence.

- Joem D. Phillips

Poetry written during a summer 2006 creative writing class.

## **From Forming Clay to Fashioning Learning Experiences: Pottery Field Trips Open the World of Clay and Art to Area Students**

*This spring, the CCLC offered the first of what we expect for be a full slate of field trips for classrooms, home school groups, and others. Letters went out to area educators in April, and by the end of the school year three groups from the Alexander and Pembroke schools visited the Center. What follows are some reflections from the CCLC's resident potter, Kevin Thompson.*

*Kevin, what was the motivation behind opening the pottery studio for field trip experiences?*

The CCLC is committed to creating learning opportunities for people including access to hands-on arts. Most of the local schools are too small to be able to afford to run something like a pottery studio. In our pottery studio, and hopefully studios yet to come, we can work with schools to offer a wider range of learning possibilities. Anyone who has made a pot from a lump of clay will tell you – both the pot and the memories of creating it can last a lifetime.

*How do you think the kids responded to their visit to the pottery studio?*

Enthusiastically. They seemed focused and excited about putting their own personal touches on their pots. The younger kids especially brought lots of items to use as textures on creations. They all clearly wanted to share with one another what they had made. We also received encouraging feedback from the teachers and parents who accompanied the students. They liked that the CCLC campus was fairly close to their schools, and commented that a trip to the studio was reasonably priced. Two of the groups came on sunny days and hiked along our trail and had picnic lunches out by the fire pit during their visit. It seemed they were having a lot of fun.



*What did the kids make?*

They all started with pinch pots – the most basic forming method. Everyone who takes a basic class always starts with a pinch pot. They also had the chance to build boxes and containers using slab construction methods. The fun part was watching them all decorate their boxes with textural items they brought in. The best part was overhearing kids talk about what they would do with their pieces once they were fired and got them back.

*As a potter, what do you think the students got out of doing pottery?*

I think the biggest thing they learned was patience. The ceramic process is not a quick, instant gratification type of thing. Taking a lump of clay and working it into a finished piece requires lots of steps. Plus, you often have to wait between each step and can't rush the process. This art form allows for a broad range of creative expression, yet there are many rules to follow to make sure your finished piece comes out well. There are many lessons to be learned in this process.

*What would you like to share with groups who may be considering a visit to the studio?*

I'd love a chance to work with educators to tailor field trips to fit their curriculum. I can offer a basic introduction to clay or work with folks to help link their experience with the pottery studio to aspects of curriculum ranging from history, cultural studies, creative writing, geology and chemistry. Aside from field trips, I'd like folks to know they're welcome to come in during open studio time to work independently on projects. I'm looking forward to seeing programming and studio resources expand. We're working to raise additional funds, and in the future plan to invest in more wheels (right now we have two) as well as a gas kiln, extruder, and a greater variety of hand tools. One of the ways we're hoping to raise money is with a Soup & Salad Bowl fundraiser this coming winter. We're going to make a whole bunch of one of a kind bowls, and have a big dinner where people make a donation and get to pick out one of the bowls, eat out of it for dinner, then wash it and take it home. We invite anyone who has taken a class to come in and make a bowl or two for that event. It should be lots of fun!

**To inquire about field trips to the CCLC's pottery studio plus other field trip opportunities through the Center, please call 733-2233 or email [kev@theccclc.org](mailto:kev@theccclc.org).**

## Students Create Interpretive Panels, Explore Habitat and More

In 2004, the CLCC had the opportunity to partner with the Quoddy Regional Land Trust and Lubec Consolidated School in a relationship to forward environmental and experiential education at the school while creating a community trail behind the school. The project officially launched in early 2005 when funding support from the CF Adams Charitable Trust allowed for the group to hire a project coordinator.

Kara McCrimmon, CCLC Curriculum and Program Director, served as the Mowry Beach Project Coordinator for the past year and a half. During that time, she coordinated activities to help students develop the vision and design for a trail and outdoor classroom.



McCrimmon introducing the interpretive panel project to LCS students.

One exciting example of the projects students undertook was the Interpretive Panel Project. Sophomores, freshmen, and middle school students researched, designed and created panels interpreting aspects of the natural and cultural history of Mowry Beach. Topics explored include wetlands, animals, dunes, and interesting finds of the beach. QRLT board member Ukey Santos and McCrimmon plan to construct a kiosk at the beach parking lot to display the panels until more permanent panels are installed following the completion of the boardwalk trail.

Throughout the project students also cleared trail sections, practiced using GPS technology in natural areas management, went on birding and plant identification field trips, and created nature art. They also participated in a variety of conservation activities, including beach cleanups and invasive plant mapping.

Mowry Beach is open to the public and can be accessed at the end of Pleasant Street in Lubec. This 50-acre preserve includes 1,800 feet of shoreline along the Lubec Channel and shrub-scrub habitat ideal for migrating songbirds. Quoddy Regional Land Trust was awarded state funds in 2004 to purchase the property to ensure access for public recreation and environmental education, while protecting and enhancing the wetland and wildlife habitat. QRLT will host a number of community trail construction days throughout the summer and fall. Those interested in helping can contact the Land Trust at 733-5509.

## Reflection Park Honors Former Community Organizer

We were all saddened in February of this year to learn that Jimmy Soctomah had passed away. Jimmy worked as the CCLC's first community organizer from 2004–2005. While at the Center, Jimmy cleared out a patch of alders near our building, motivated by a vision of creating a beautiful picnic area.

Wayne and Lorraine Rice, active CCLC volunteers, led an effort to finish the project Jimmy started. With the help of Hilda Lewis, owner of the Blue Iris Restaurant and Flower Shop in Eastport, and a host of musicians and helpers, a benefit concert was held on June 17th and over \$1,000 was raised for the James Gibson Soctomah Memorial Park.

Over the summer, the remainder of the land was cleared of alders and seeded with grass, and trees and shrubs were planted on the site. In September a beautiful stone waterfall and two stone benches were created during a stone masonry class taught by area master mason, John Viselli. The site was dedicated during a ceremony on September 30, 2006, attended by family, friends, former coworkers, and a formal color guard.



Dedication of the James Soctomah Memorial Park, September 30, 2006.

*Continued from page 1—A Piece of the Puzzle*

**Boughton Place**, in Highland, NY, near New Paltz, is a learning center and multigenerational home based on Catholic Worker Ethics with a deep commitment to peacemaking and to the earth. There are two main learning centers here, the Original Moreno Psychodrama Theater, and the TimeLine Garden Labyrinth. Boughton was co-founded and is run by Claire Danielson, a retired mediator committed to nonviolent conflict resolution, mediation, and “restorative justice.” Monthly meetings explore *Covenants Between the Land and Its Inhabitants*, *Original instructions*, address local land issues, and the Wisdom and Tradition of Native Americans and others who view all life as interconnected. For more, see: [www.boughtonplace.org](http://www.boughtonplace.org)

**Phinney Ecovillage** in Seattle, Wash. is founded by Cecile Andrews, a longtime member of FEAA/IPEA. Cecile is the author of *The Circle of Simplicity: Return to the Good Life* (HarperCollins 97) and an affiliated scholar at Seattle University where she is developing a program of simplicity studies. Phinney Ecovillage is a project to build sustainability and community in her North Seattle Neighborhood with the theme of living simpler, slower, and smaller. The ecovillage sponsors a monthly series on slow life in Seattle. For information, go to [www.phinneyecovillage.net](http://www.phinneyecovillage.net).

**The Level Green Institute**, in Ithaca, NY, is headed by Pat Haines and fosters social, economic and environmental justice through collaborative initiatives in education and the arts. Level Green has been involved in such projects as designs for green buildings and a green campus/community, in collaboration with Cornell University. They’re also working on Eco-Hostel, envisioned as a multi-site facility cooperatively owned and managed, providing low-cost lodging options, on-going eco-tourism training and educational programs around sustainability issues. Pat draws on over 30 years of community-based planning and a lifetime involvement with education and social change. You can get in touch with Pat at: [levelgreen@kaxy.com](mailto:levelgreen@kaxy.com)

**The Catalyst Center for Popular Education and Research** in Toronto, Canada, is a non-profit which supports workplace democracy through worker co-ops. Their mission is to celebrate and promote innovative learning, popular education, research and community development to advance positive social change and to provide a forum for critical thinking and collective learning. Catalyst supports research by those who do not traditionally have access to research monies and infrastructure and draws strength from diversity. By identifying the connections between our struggles, we can take collective action towards positive social change. They offer a range of courses and programs on community change, participatory learning and democracy, storytelling, and offer consulting services in program design, workshops, program evaluation, etc. Chris Cavanaugh is the founder and director behind the multitude of activities and initiatives sponsored by the Center. For more information, go to: [www.catalystcentre.ca](http://www.catalystcentre.ca)

**Highlander Education and Research Center**, originally known as the Highlander Folk School, is located in New Market, Tennessee, and has been engaged with social activism, labor action, and civil rights in the South since it’s founding in 1932. It was founded to serve as an adult education center for community workers involved in social and economic justice movements, and since then has been a major resource in such movements as the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960’s. Today, Highlander serves Appalachia and the South with programs designed to build strong and successful social-change activism and community organizing led by the people who suffer most from the injustices of society. Highlander helps activists to become more effective community educators and organizers, informed about the important issues driving conditions in communities today. Their programs in Spanish and English focus on civil and human rights, immigration policy, criminal justice reform, international peace and solidarity, youth leadership and racial, gender and sexual discrimination, among others. For more information go to: [www.highlandercenter.org](http://www.highlandercenter.org)

**The John C. Campbell Folk School** in Brasstown, NC, is located on 300 acres in a beautiful valley in the mountains of western North Carolina. It offers visitors a chance to experience a special blend of history and art in those surroundings. It was founded in 1925 with the mission to improve the quality of life of the local people by education, and to preserve and share with the rest of the world the wonderful crafts, techniques and tools that the mountain people of the area used in everyday life. Today, the John C. Campbell Folk School offers a range of arts and crafts instruction in an atmosphere of living and learning together. See their broad program offerings on their web site: [www.folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org)



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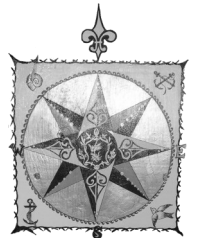
Thanks to all who helped with the **East Stream Trail Project**. Many came out on a clear April day to create a new stretch of trail linking the CCLC's East Stream Trail with Maine Inland Fish & Wildlife's Dennison Point Trail system. Visitors to the trail will experience a beautiful variety of habitats, including a stretch along the tidal East Stream, spruce/fir forest, ledge hilltops, old cedar stands, and hardwood patches. Trail maps are available at the CCLC office, and all are invited to hike this beautiful addition to the Downeast Trail system.



Members of the Regional Medical Center—Lubec HealthCorps team lend their good energy and hard work to the trail project.

**Message from the CCLC Board President...**

As we prepare to send out this newsletter, it is my pleasure to announce that we have two new Board members to bolster our ranks and help with the work of moving the CCLC forward. Stephanie Bailey, who has been associated with the CCLC as a project coordinator, has decided to join with us and we look forward to her input. Clint Tuttle also joins the CCLC Board. Clint was a founder of the Washington County Boat School and currently teaches boat building at Washington Academy, one of our area high schools. Stephanie and Clint, welcome onto the CCLC Board.



Special thanks go to everyone who responded to our final capital campaign. **With your help we successfully raised the funds necessary to move forward with construction of the CCLC Commons.** Without your help and that of everyone who has been so generous with time and financial support, this major addition to the CCLC campus would not be possible. The contract for the Commons Building on campus has been signed and construction will begin shortly. Buildings Etc. has won the bid and will be on site to start ground work in early August with the prospect of having the building up by the end of the year. This will double our classroom capacity and add a great common room and commercial kitchen to accommodate future events.

We will be looking for volunteers in the future to help shingle and paint the new facility so keep your tools ready and come and join in the fun.

Sincerely,  
 Jim Miner  
 President of the Board