

Island

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wrote, the reversal means that there will be a “likelihood of renewing this arrangement [to use one designated parking space] every year.”

“I am discouraged, upset and bewildered by the situation that my family has encountered with the National Park Service,” Harvey said. “They have a legal right. They own the land. But I feel since they have allowed us to park on their land for so long that they have created a situation that should be grandfathered.”

The one parking space now allocated is better than nothing, the family acknowledges, but it still would not provide the family members the amount and ease of access they had grown used to over the decades.

“The park owns it, so of course they have the legal right to do that,” Harvey’s daughter, Pauline Miller of Orrington, said. “But the moral and ethical thing is that we’ve been doing this all along [and should be allowed to continue].”

“I regret that you are unhappy with the outcome,” Collins said in a handwritten postscript to the letter. “My staff felt that one parking space was a lot better than none.”

An island for family fun

Harvey and her family



Pauline Miller (from left), a teacher from Orrington; niece Alicia Talpey (center); and Miller’s mother, Phillipa Harvey, a retired schoolteacher, make their their way by boat to Norris Island in Frenchman Bay off Winter Harbor recently.

understand that many Mainers would think that anyone who owns an island off the coast has the financial resources to deal with parking or whatever problem might come up. But for them, that is just not the case, they said. The Norris relatives who purchased it back in the 19th century were ordinary Winter Harbor fishermen, and Harvey described the current generation as lower middle class.

“People think because we own this island, we have a lot of money. But we don’t have money,” Harvey said.

Instead, they have Norris Island. Over the years, the fami-

ly has used wood from island trees to build two simple camps there. Instead of wallpaper or a different, more expensive covering, the family has decorated the interior with mounted jigsaw puzzles and family photos.

Family members also lovingly created an “island museum” in the woods, where they have curated the flotsam and jetsam found over the years on the island’s shore with artistic flare. They have cleared dead trees away to make paths, soft underfoot thanks to the carpet of pine needles and sphagnum moss, that lead down to the cold green ocean

where Harvey fishes a line of lobster traps.

“It’s fun whenever we’re down here,” said Keagen Grass, 13, of Brewer, Harvey’s great-grandson. “There’s no TV, so we don’t watch stuff. We have scavenger hunts and play Wiffle ball.”

The island is where the family has made decades worth of happy memories and hope to continue doing so long into the future, but the Harvey family knows that land can be lost. Their 1870s fishermen kin purchased a total of 1,000 acres of Schoodic land, but long ago — perhaps by the turn of the 20th century, Harvey

said — nearly all the rest of the land was sold. Now, only the island is left.

The structures on it are not fancy. There’s no electricity and no plumbing, and the family members have to haul their drinking water with them. The rustic ocean-front gazebo that is the family’s pride and joy only recently had glass put in the windows in order to enjoy the million-dollar views even in blustery weather. One camp building sleeps a total of 16 people, mostly in one room that is littered with beds in a way that is reminiscent of an Army barracks or scout camp. In that room, a stack of dusty Down East magazines from the 1970s waits for someone to peruse the pages.

“I can’t even imagine my life without the island,” Miller said. “We like to share it with everybody, and we just feel very fortunate to have it.”

Schoodic changes

The primary reason that precipitated the park service’s parking changes for the Harvey family is new development on Schoodic Peninsula, according to John Kelly, management assistant at Acadia National Park.

Last fall, the new Schoodic Woods Campground was opened as the culmination of a decade-long effort to protect a 3,200-acre tract of land on the Schoodic Peninsula. The park service said last year that the land in

question had been threatened by the development of a resort, including a hotel, golf course, sports center and luxury villas.

As a result, the popularity of the Schoodic Peninsula, long known as the quieter, mainland portion of Acadia National Park, has been surging. On a recent Tuesday night, rangers had to tell would-be campers that the campground was full, and Frazer Point was busy with visitors fishing off the dock or paddling kayaks in the calm blue water of Frenchman Bay.

“The area that was impacted by the new construction and the trails was the place that we had, as a big courtesy, allowed [Harvey] to park,” Kelly said. “As with other things, the situation has changed. The development of the new bike path and the facility at Schoodic have impacted the location that she was given.”

Harvey said that other options for continued island access seem hard to come by. The family said it can’t afford to keep its boat at the Winter Harbor Yacht Club, located on Grindstone Neck, and the lack of apparent options is why it is continuing to petition the park service to let the family members have or lease four parking spaces near the island.

“Norris Island, for me, is the way life should be. Norris Island is home,” she said. “That’s what I’m fighting for.”

Haskell

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They hung on like grim death to the stems of the plants as I tugged at them; when I had one ready to drop into the jar, it would twist around and bite me — bite me! — with its nasty little ineffectual jaws.

It’s rare for me to rail against one of God’s little creatures, but the tomato hornworm is now on my short list. Since that traumatic afternoon, I’ve made daily inspections of the tomato patch. I’m still finding one or two hornworms on each turn, but they’re small so I think I’ve gotten ahead of them.

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And the tomato plants, in the lovely, reassuring way of living things, have rallied and seem on track to supply us with an abundance of juicy heirloom fruits after all. We’ll end up freezing or canning a bunch, but first we’ll eat as many as we can, simple, fresh and fragrant. I like to cut them in thick, cool slices fanned on a platter, sprinkle them with a little salt and pepper and pass them around the table. My grandmother in Iowa used to sprinkle her tomatoes slices with sugar and cider vinegar, and although I think that’s pretty decadent, it’s also delicious.

I also adore a fresh tomato sandwich, the simpler the better. It’s one of the few times I demand white bread — not the cheap stuff and not anything artisanal, but a good, solid loaf from the bread aisle. I spread one slice of bread with a little real mayonnaise, add a fat slice of sweet, tangy tomato, grind on some fresh pepper and sea salt, and add the top slice of bread. Cut it in half, put it on a paper plate and go eat it in the back yard. Bring some paper towels to catch the drips. Heaven.

Read more of Meg Haskell at livingitforward.bangordailynews.com.

Medium

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kins describes what she can sense of each spirit that shows up, asking yes-or-no questions and gradually homing in on the right participant.

“I have a gentleman,” Hopkins said hesitantly, standing quietly with her eyes half-closed, a quizzical look on her face. “He is tall. Or maybe ... is he concerned about posture?”

Later, she said, “I have a female. Is she a grandmother? Or like a grandmother? She has a rosary, or she is looking for her rosary. Did she give you her rosary?”

And, dabbing with a tissue, she said: “My eye has been weeping since I started tonight. Does someone here have a connection on the other side with some kind of an eye problem?”

There was laughter, but then someone said, yes, she lost a loved one with cataracts.

In each instance, Hopkins provided more information, a little at a time, to responding group members, eventually fixing one person with

the full focus of the spirit’s message.

“You’ve been carrying a heavy burden,” she told an emotional woman who had identified the spirit as a stern but loving male figure from her past.

“It’s a very heavy burden,” the woman agreed, tears streaming down her face.

“Do you understand that there’s nothing you can do? That you can set this burden down and move forward?” Hopkins asked, still speaking for the spirit. “The best thing is to move forward.”

The woman nodded, wiping her eyes with a tissue. The spirit gave a few more more bits of admonition and advice.

“Now I leave you with his love and blessings,” Hopkins said, and she moved on to the next encounter.

For about two hours, Hopkins held the group’s attention, eliciting more tears and some laughter. The spirit encounters — there were four or five, possibly more — were kindly and compassionate, urging forgiveness, expressing approval, cracking an occasional joke. Everyone went home smiling. They had each paid \$20 for this experience and gotten

their money’s worth.

Group member Jo Anne Horn, 60, of Hampden said she’s been fascinated with the world of mediums and psychics for about 10 years.

“I get personal readings all the time. It’s all very positive,” she said.

Horn has gone so far as to take classes in becoming a medium. She has practiced in her personal life and at spiritualist camps.

“Once I was able to get the name of another student’s dog that had died,” she said. “I described the dog and said his name was something like Skippy or Tippy. It was Skippy.” Another time, “I felt very strongly the image of a young boy coming through. He showed me an orange Adidas sneaker.”

The boy turned out to be the nephew of another student’s boyfriend, she said. The athletic youngster had died at age 12.

Horn belongs to an established church congregation in Bangor but feels no conflict between her faith in organized religion and her interest in the occult.

“It’s never scary,” Horn said. “But when these random thoughts come into my head, especially when I’m quiet, I know those are Spir-

it.”

Bunny Barclay, 67 of Holden said she has consulted Hopkins several times recently “to ask some specific questions about some specific people.” Barclay feels most people have had some experience with the spirit world, though they may not recognize it. “I think we all have the ability if you want to develop it, if you stay open and receptive,” she said.

Hopkins, who grew up in Ashland, runs a business called Light and Love Readings out of her home in Brewer. She offers individual and group consultations, classes and workshops as well as “gallery” demonstrations such as the one at the Filibuster.

Hopkins tuned in to the spirit world about four years ago, after a series of deaths in her family.

“It was trauma that brought me to this place,” she said.

When she learned that her beloved mother-in-law had been seeing a medium before she died, she sought the medium out for solace and closure. She has found both, she said, in ongoing communications from her mother-in-law and others on

the “other side.”

“This started out being for me, about healing myself,” she said. “But then I was like a sponge, I wanted to learn everything I could so I could help others the way it helped me.”

She has never encountered a malevolent spirit seeking to inflict emotional or spiritual pain, she said. She believes life circumstances distort human personalities and relationships, that the death of the body strips away evil and restores clarity and compassion to the spirit. That’s why the messages she channels are unfailingly positive and kindly, and why people in pain seek her out for guidance, resolution and reassurance. She doesn’t mind skeptics, so long as they’re open to the possibilities she offers and not just trying to prove her wrong.

“Everyone should be skeptical,” she said, so they can see with their own eyes that her practice is not built on deception.

“I just do what resonates with me,” she said. “It’s all just simple and common sense. It’s always positive and always loving. People feel different when they leave. They feel better.”

Curves

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cia — close to her heart. Her “Nana” Patricia was mother and grandmother to her, and loved her unconditionally. Pat’s death from cancer the same year as her husband’s sent us all reeling, but especially Jessica.

Jim and I had promised Pat before she died that we would keep track of Jessica and her sister in foster care so they would not disappear into the system’s abyss. We kept that promise, and did much more. And after we had lost Jim, too, I eventually made Jessica my own.

I was prepared to miss Jim on Jessica’s wedding day. He and I had been through a lot with this child, and it was such a hallmark day, distinguishing her bumpy teen years from her bright future.

It also is natural to remember our own weddings on someone else’s wedding

day, and so many happy memories of that time in my life flooded over me.

But I was totally unprepared for the pervasiveness of Jim’s spirit and how strongly I felt him with me.

He was there. I could feel the joy of his spirit and took it into my heart where I held it close to me. Cheryl could feel it too. And the sadness for having lost such a special person was overridden by the love he had — and has — for us.

I wish Jessica’s great-grandparents and Jim could have been with us physically, whole and healthy and celebrating this special day with us in a more traditional way. I wish Jessica had not had to go through all of those painful years in foster care and lost so many people she cherished at such a young age. And I wish Cheryl’s wedding day next year could include her parents, who both died from cancers, not just her stepmother.

But we cannot change some things, can we? We learn to accept them and live

with them as they are, and sometimes they make us sad or at least color our joy.

Even with all of that going on in the background, in the end, Jessica said to me in a private moment before we all parted ways, “My wedding was perfect, Momma.”

Perfect may be a stretch. The outdoor ceremony had to be moved indoors; Jessica’s best friend could not be matron of honor as planned due to complications with her pregnancy (a beautiful and healthy baby girl has

been born); and the wedding cake came to us with its decorations in a box. Thankfully Ryan’s mother used to make wedding cakes and was able to decorate the cake.

I could make a longer list of what didn’t go right, but in the end, none of that really mattered because so much DID go right. As I think about my daughter’s and my new son’s special day, I have a warm glow in my heart, for those who were there in person, those who were there in spirit, and everyone who

made their day “perfect.”

As a longtime employee of the Bangor Daily News, Julie Harris has served many roles over the years, but she now has her dream job as community editor. She lives in Hermon with her four Brittany dogs: Sassy, Bullet, Thistle and Quincy, who keep her busy in various dog sports. She was widowed at age 51 when her husband, Jim, died of pancreatic cancer. Follow her blog at curves.bangordailynews.com.



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