

The tall ship L'Hermione docks in Castine recently with music playing, flags flying, cannons saluting, and people cheering.



COURTESY OF DENISE LARSON

Summer

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From Ken Fogelman: I have made Maine my permanent residence since 1999 and have nothing but the deepest affection for my newest love.

That notwithstanding, I have never spent winters shoveling as much snow as I have done, endured ice storms without electricity for extended periods of time, watched cold weather come earlier and leave later than in previous times, or learned to survive seasons filled with mud, tourists and black flies.

Regardless of the costs and struggles, I always smile and look ahead when standing by the bay on a summer's night, listening to crickets which arrive each August, and smelling the pine that emanates from the multitude of trees surrounding me on all sides.

I guess that's what summer truly means to me: the unbridled appreciation of things I love and the reminder that all things in life have costs worth paying. I pay the price gladly and better appreciate the beauty surrounding me on all sides and throughout all seasons when I can stop for more than a moment to breathe in some unfiltered air and watch a multitude of creatures compete for the supply of nuts and seeds I place outside for them on a daily basis.

From Patricia Claus of Orrington: I love summer in Maine as well and there are so many photos of this beautiful state that it is hard to choose, but I will send this one: a perfect summer day off Brooklin, lounging on a white shell beach on Seller's Island after kayaking out from Naskeag Point. Really doesn't get much better than that.

From Denise Larson: [Here's an image of] a practically perfect summer day in the Pine Tree State:

The sight of a tall ship coming into port, the sound of fiddle music, the feel of a steady breeze and not-too-hot sunshine, the fragrance

of food on the grill, and the taste of an icy cold drink while enjoying all the above. Ah, summer!

From Sue Shaw of Castine: My friends and I, who are all in our 60s or early 70s, all love Maine fiercely and enjoy it no matter what the season .. but summer is very special!

We are always up for something active and fun. Our motto is "we are intrepid!" We bike, we kayak, we paint and 'art' in many ways, and will try almost anything. As you can see in the photos, we recently tried the "Come Boating" adventure in Belfast Harbor ... and we highly recommend it! We are looking forward to a zip-line adventure soon. These pictures show us on Great Cranberry (complete with bike helmets, but the bikes are up on the shore), on Monhegan Island for a painting trip, on bikes and with kayaks at Cold Stream Pond, with kayaks on Lake Megunticook, in Belfast Harbor rowing with "Come Boating" and biking on the Sunrise Trail.

The other side of the story

Alas, not everyone has such fond memories of Maine summers. In the interest of fairness (and accuracy), here are a couple of responses that illuminate the not-so-rosy side of the season.

From Zane Puv: To me, summer in Maine means having to move again. It means the lease is up on my lovely winter rental, where I'm lucky to spend 7 wonderful months. But then I have to relocate to some s—hole for the next 5 months, if I want to keep my job and stay in my beloved Maine. I know some people who are tenting — and some have given up and left the state entirely.

And the final word from Paul Sheridan, who headed his email with the word "BUGS!!!!!" before answering the question we posed, 'What does summer in Maine mean to you?': Staying inside.

Bats

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Bangor attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony with his wife, Kathy Childs. More than 20 people joined them, hiking half a mile through the grasslands to view the houses.

Bill and Kathy Childs have enjoyed hiking the trails maintained by the BLT for years and have attended a number of the land trust's nature programs, but it wasn't until recently that they became more involved in the nonprofit organization and started to volunteer.

"We took our first snowshoe trek this winter with the Bangor Land Trust, cleaning out birdhouses," Bill Childs said. "It's kind of like paying it forward for the many wonderful blessings we're all given."

A retired engineer and woodworker, Bill Childs

said he didn't know quite what he signed up for when he agreed to build the bat houses for the Bangor Land Trust. Originally, he envisioned the houses being much smaller.

"Any bat house I'd ever seen is just a simple box hanging from a tree," he said. "I looked at the design, which called for half a sheet of plywood of two different thicknesses, and I thought I might as well make two."

The two bat houses ended up taking him about 80 hours to construct. Instead of using plastic mesh as a surface for the bats to cling to, he painstakingly cut at least 2,000 grooves into the houses' wood compartments.

"I didn't want to introduce plastic into their environment," he explained.

The houses are full of small spaces that enable to bats to move around and regulate their heat.

"Bats are very picky,"

Craven said. "They need specific conditions up here in Maine ... they like to stuff themselves into tiny spaces and huddle together to stay warm."

Childs painted the bat houses with nontoxic latex black paint so the houses could absorb as much heat as possible during the day. And the land trust oriented the houses in the middle of the field so they could get as much sunlight as possible.

BLT board member David Thompson, a resident of Orono, erected the houses, which ended up weighing about 85 pounds each. He placed the houses atop 15-foot poles for two reasons: safety against predators, such as raccoons, and to attract the bats' attention.

"Bats are very curious animals," Craven said. "If things change in their environment, they inspect it. So bats that have been visiting this field for years and years, we want them to come

check these out.

"We don't expect to see any bats in the houses until next spring," she added.

If a lot of bats take residence in the new houses, they'll be easily detectable by the guano, or excrement, they will leave in the field, Craven said. But she also plans to detect the bats and identify what species they are with a special device made by Wildlife Acoustics that records bat echolocation calls and, with a mobile app, makes these calls audible to people.

In the future, Craven hopes the Bangor Land Trust will be able to host public programs about bats at the preserve. For now, all that's left to do is wait for the bats to show up.

The Bangor Land Trust is always looking for volunteers and new members. For information, visit bangorland-trust.org, call 942-1010 or email info@bangorlandtrust.org.

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