Cobscook Currents Spring 2022







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Cobscook Experiential Program's multi-tiered pursuit of the arts.

Cobscook Currents Volume 18 Issue 1

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Realizing

Greetings to our broad circle of friends, neighbors, and partners:

We write this note to you on the first full day of spring, as we delight in the sounds of spring and the vernal symphony they create. As a Down East Spring Birding Festival committee member just shared, "I'm just in from a walk, where I heard birds singing their territorial song." We are so grateful for this beautiful place we call home and for the dynamism of the changing seasons here.

The theme of this Currents is "Realizing." After "wintering" we are establishing new programs, cultivating new and old partnerships, and reinvigorating our campus as a community center that is welcoming, accessible, and feeds the mind, body, and spirit.

When Somedays Become Todays

As a teaching and learning center, an innovation hub, and a retreat and gathering place for people from near and far we, together with you, cultivate self and community realization. You will see in this issue the realization of expanded leadership. We have hired three new staff members and brought on four new board members. Heartwood Lodge continues as a cocoon for self-actualization and the realization of new projects that emerge when in relationship with other organizations, such as the Zillman Art Museum and Rene Goddess Johnson of Embodied Equity, Inc.

This growth and cultivation exists within a set of 2022 organizational goals that ground us in realizing our mission and values within a long-term sustainable organization: increasing the access and impact of our programs, deepening shared and distributed leadership through governance, increasing capacity and efficacy, fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion both internally externally, and maintaining and strengthening financial viability.

Thank you for your part in making Cobscook a place where hopes and dreams are realized, where our wishes for "someday" become our today.



Kara McCrimmon Co-Director



Daphne Loring Co-Director

We Are Hiring! Co-Director/Development Director

This individual will work as part of a team in an environment of collaboration and shared leadership. The Development Director is responsible for overseeing and ensuring a strategic, dynamic, and effective development function within Cobscook Institute. This person will also act as Co-Director for the entire organization, three Co-Directors share responsibility for the successful management, leadership, direction and guidance of Cobscook Institute.

To learn more about this position please visit **cobscookinstitute.org/jobs**



Cobscook Experiential Program seeks young people who...

- · Want to learn in a small group environment
- · Are looking for opportunities to succeed as a learner
- Are interested in learning more about the community
- · Enjoy working with their fellow students on projects
- · Are interested in traveling
- Want to do something positive in their community

We are currently accepting applications for our 2022/23 School Year! Cobscook Experiential Program is a high school option available in partnership with Calais High School. and is available to all students from Washington County & Peskotomuhkatik. Our fleet of vans coordinates with Washington Academy's bus system to support transporting students to our campus.

Applications may be found on our website: **cobscookinstitute.org/experiential**

Our Team

Staff

Jan Brown Finance Manager **Michelle Cousineau** Executive Associate and Programs Associate Ryan Cross Grounds and Maintenance Associate Daphne Loring Director Partnerships & Innovation and Cobscook Institute Co-Director **Bonnie Lyons** Facilities Manager, Custodial Coordinator & Guest Relations Associate Kara McCrimmon Director, Cobscook Experiential Programs and Cobscook Institute Co-Director Maria McMorrow Teacher, Cobscook Experiential Programs **Dylan Pardue** IT Manager and Communications Coordinator Melissa Rodrick Custodian **Anne Shields Hopkins** Program Coordinator **Damon Weston** Teacher, Cobscook Experiential Programs; Human Relations Steward

Board

Sanna McKim Co-Chair Frank Trocco Co-Chair Brian Altvater Ron Beckwith Leslie Bowman Stephanie Francis Soctomah Alan Furth Mark Hoffman Colby Soctomah Lewey Kevin Thompson

Development Suzanne Bowles Alan Furth Jennifer Kane

Our New Team Members!



Leslie Bowman Board Member she/her/hers

Leslie first came to Cobscook Institute to attend workshops and meetings at the facility and has also documented with photographs several projects including the high school program. Since the mid 1990's she has been an adjunct professor at University of Maine at Machias. Leslie has an ongoing interest in alternative energy and community development.



Colby Soctomah Lewey Board Member *he/him/his*

Colby was introduced to Cobscook Institute by his Uncle, Jimmy Soctomah and took a pottery class in 2004 with family members. Colby is completing a Masters in Counselor Education program with an area of expertise in Family Systems. Colby intends on engaging in clinical practice which focuses on expressive arts to foster a deeper connection within and outside of one's self.



Stephanie Francis Soctomah Board Member she/her/hers

Stephanie is an Art Instructor and Ed Tech at Motahkomigewi Skulhawossol (Indian Township School), looks forward to contributing and learning about the alternative learning environment that is offered through Cobscook Experiential Programs. She graduated from the University of Maine in Machias and worked on Passamaquoddy historic preservation projects. Stephanie and her family enjoy hiking and photography on the weekends.



Brian Altvater Sr. Board Member he/him/his

Brian is inspired by Cobscook Institute's unique way of teaching. He served as Director of the Pleasant Point Health Center and is currently a community organizer for Maine Wabanaki Reach. He is President of the Passamaquoddy Blueberry Company, Co-Founder, and chair of the Schoodic River-keepers and serves on the advisory board for the Maine Commissioner of Corrections.



Anne Shields Hopkins Programs Coordinator they/them/theirs

Anne/Annie lives along Kapskuk with their husband and 3 young children. They will be realizing our visions for programming at Cobscook Center in their new role as Programs Coordinator. Annie enjoys eating with the seasons, laughing, creating art and relaxing deeply. They believe in community healing through ancestral truth telling and deep reckoning.



Maria McMorrow

Teacher, Cobscook Experiential Programs *she/her/hers*

Maria became acquainted with Cobscook Institute when she first moved to Washington County in 2012. Over the past decade she has been a regular in the kitchen at Pizza Night and co-leading field trips for Cobscook Experiential Program. When she isn't leading camping trips, Maria can be found playing on the water for fun! She also loves fixing and creating things, especially with yarn and fabric.



Melissa Rodrick Custodian she/her/hers

Melissa currently lives in Perry, where she grew up after migrating from Canada at the age of 2. She is excited by the culture and the social awareness that Cobscook Institute brings to the area. Melissa attended University of Maine and is the founder of the Detainee Advocacy Project, focused on assisting immigrants in custody/ detention in advocating for themselves.

What Makes Us Wealthy?

In March 2022 we participated in the Machias Savings Bank YES! Grants competition; a bold online campaign to highlight social initiatives around the region, resulting in \$25,000 in donations. People were able to vote daily for their organization of choice.

Your passionate response led to a \$5,000 grant which we will use to bring to life the "Somedays" that we have been dreaming up since last November. We are inspired, fired up, and looking forward to more in person interaction as the heat rises.

Watching our community rally was like witnessing an amped up version of what makes us alive with gratitude the whole year round. To us, wealth is not only about money - the resources to drive this mission come from motivation, kindness, moral support, creativity, and connection.

These values, when embodied, become catalysts for a special kind of abundance that makes richness for all of us. Here, in the community, we have everything we need together. Thank you for bringing your part.

From the deep heart's core.

Thank you to our 2021 donors

Julia Drees

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you make everything we do possible!

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Cobscook Institute is essential and much appreciated. We have carefully reviewed this list to include everyone who supported our work in 2021.

If your name has been omitted in error, please let us know.



Singing The Song of Trust

A Heartwood Lodge Retreat Fortifying the Personal Process Towards Decolonization

Even before the foundation was poured or the first wall went up, Heartwood Lodge was imagined as a sanctuary, a physical space to inspire, support, and sustain inquiry and engagement. The Lodge has hosted both large groups engaged in shared learning as well as individuals engaged in independent retreat and residency. The Lodge best meets its mission when it creates space for cross-pollination between those seeking retreat and our campus learning community. As an example, last December Cobscook Institute welcomed René Goddess Johnson, founder of Embodied Equity, LLC, for a month-long retreat.

While immersed in her own deep retreat, René shared her work with our school community by offering an interactive workshop with students in the Cobscook Experiential Program.

Using healing arts, René brings her experiences of being born under the South African system of apartheid and as a Black Queer woman in Maine to her present-day work towards systemic and transformative change in

social and racial injustice. Weaving pieces from her one-woman show with open space for students to reflect on racial and economic injustices, René created a dynamic space for students to enter a conversation about inequality, racism, trauma, and healing. Daisyjo Jones, a junior, reflected, "René created an open and sharing space with lots of options for us students. She's had lots of struggles in her life and shared those stories, but she doesn't let the past weigh her down. She uses her stories to build people up." Zack Bladen, sophomore, shared, "I really liked René's energy. I think it's amazing how she uses her personal story as a foundation for the workshop she led. She's truly inspiring. I hope she comes back."

The power of retreat can be at once deeply restorative and transformative. René shared her experience of her time at Cobscook and finding healing space, within her context of living within a world of systemic racism, violence, and colonization. To understand the healing value of retreat, we have to also understand the context of surviving within this world. This story reveals







the intersection of personal, community, and global well-being. In an interview with program coordinator Anne Hopkins, we gleaned the following about René's experience.

René described her residency/retreat in Heartwood Lodge as "an impeccably timed" chance to seek stillness, and focus on listening deeply to the vulnerability of art making in the wilds of Peskotomuhkatik, Passamaquoddy territory.

As someone who is indigenous to South Africa, having grown up in the dual reality of her indigenous culture, colonization, and apartheid, and also in Maine, as a Black Queer woman, on stolen Wabanaki land, René is acutely aware of the legacy of colonization and sees the work of Embodied Equity as the work of decolonization. Colonization, slavery, and white supremacy have created a world where Black and Indigenous women face disproportionate violence. René and others describe living with this threat as white terrorism: an effect of the white supremacy culture we all live in, resulting in People of Color not being safe existing in the world. This language and framing is intense and that intensity helps make visible how a culture that is built on a violent past and extractive practices, perpetuates harm – often not visible to portions of society. In using this language, we can recognize that this reality is not inherent. but created and therefore it can be deconstructed. In fact, it liberates each of us to imagine we have a role in transformation and healing.

We aspired to create a safe space for René in a world where it is not a given. She shared that being in a rural space, within the cocoon of Heartwood Lodge and the Cobscook campus, was healing and allowed for a body that has been assimilated to white terrorism to open



towards awareness and a peaceful experience of personal choice. The refuge allowed for a spiritual opening to hear her authentic thoughts and feelings away from the conditioning of colonialism and to find clarity.

A significant component of René's work with Embodied Equity is in facilitating processes and practices that support people in shedding the legacy of colonization and white supremacy culture by getting out of their heads and into their bodies and hearts. René's work recognizes that ultimately we all need to enact self care to be well and honest within ourselves in order to enact change.

René's residency was an opportunity for her to research and apply skills for self care, a practical and careful approach to expanding the toolbox of nurturing and accessing deep self knowledge. The safety of Heartwood Lodge created space for René's listening prowess to strengthen. The deep quiet resulted in an opening to spirit strength. Reflecting on her retreat, René said, "Going up there was just coming to 'the clarity.' I was like, 'I need the clarity of what's happening to me, because it has to be simpler than what I'm seeing. It just has to be, I know it is." This is a theme for her work in this world, to expand beyond the conditioning of supremacy, and develop the tools and practices to access self knowledge and to cultivate healing of our spirits, bodies, and minds. The practice of deep listening rejuvenated and refreshed René's creative practice, providing Abenaki Land, where she lives, with the most honest version of herself, essential to being in relationship with the land and her path of working towards decolonization.

To engage with Embodied Equity visit: embodiedequity.online

Differentiated learning offers students opportunities to learn in ways that meet their interests and learning styles.

This winter, students were able to pick from a variety of creative practices to empower their artistic voice. They were able to focus on Pottery, Drawing and/or Music. Each artistic pursuit offered art pathways this winter. Multiple pathways, and multiple ways to demonstrate engagement and skill-building. This allows our students to enter learning where they're at, engage in creative practices that are meaningful to them, and celebrate their growth together!

Empowered Creativity

a Collaboration with Zillman Art Museum

By Kara McCrimmon

Last October, Cobscook Experiential Program (CEP) traveled through the lower Penobscot River Watershed, from Orono to Belfast, for a learning expedition on regional history and culture through the lens of the river. As part of that learning journey our students visited Linda G. and Donald N. Zillman Art Museum University of Maine (ZAM) and enjoyed a tour with executive director and curator George Kinghorn.

That visit was the catalyst for what's now a year-long project with ZAM; Amber Roth, Assistant Professor of Forest Wildlife Management at University of Maine; and Cobscook Experiential Program.

"I was interested in learning more about you because I loved the kinds of questions you asked when you visited," said George on a March 16th visit to Cobscook. "And then I heard about your model of education from your teachers, and when an opportunity came up in the university to work with a community partner, I knew exactly who I wanted to work with – you!"

During the spring semester, students are working to curate an exhibit on the work of Walter Rich, a renowned Maine artist known for his marine and bird illustrations. ZAM has a selection of those works on loan, and CEP students are writing the captions that will accompany each work in the exhibit. That exhibit opens to the public on May 20th and will be on display in Bangor through August. "This project is profoundly exciting to me as an interdisciplinary educator," says CEP director Kara McCrimmon. "Students will be writing short pieces that will be on display in public describing an artwork featuring a native Maine bird. This is a language arts, art, and biology project all rolled into one!"

In addition, students worked with museum educator and artist Rochelle Lawrence to create their own relief prints of Maine birds. Students researched Maine birds, picked one to illustrate, carved their images on linoleum blocks, and printed images over the course of a two-day workshop. "This project had several steps, which gave me an opportunity to focus on the details. It was a drawing project, and it was also a carving process. And unlike drawing or carving, this wasn't a one and done project. With printmaking we could make more than one piece, and each time we could look deeply and think about the details. It really helped me think about the story of the piece, which I really liked," described senior Emrys McDonald.

The community will be invited to view student prints, which will be on display in the Commons lobby from mid-April through May. "The carving process was really satisfying," says junior Owen Leavitt. "I'm really happy about how my loon turned out."





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Creating responsive educational opportunities that strengthen personal, community, and global well-being.

INTERGENERATIONAL

Garden Potlucks Fridays 10-1 pm - Starting in July Crafting at Cobscook August 17th - 20th

FESTIVALS

Down East Spring Birding Festival May 27th, 28th and 29th Summer Birding Festival August 13th and 14th Apple & Arts Day Saturday in October, Date TBA

POTTERY

May-June Courses Intensive: June 11th & 12th July-August Courses September-October Courses

cobscookinstitute.org

for registration information.

TWEENS & TEENS

Art Club Thursdays at 2:30 through May 19th Outdoor Skills Camp July 11th - 15th Art Camp July 18th - 22nd Downeast Teen Leadership Camp July 25th - 29th River Camp July 29th - August 12th

PROJECT ROOM

Open Art Studio Tuesdays & Fridays in June Drawing the Figure Tuesdays 3 - 5 pm in June

YOGA

Mindful Flow Slow Flow Masterclass