

# Discovery

## While It's Still Dark Outside

by Cathy Stackpole

It is quiet and dark at 5:30am when I pull into Ferry Beach. The color on the horizon is just starting to appear, the darkness giving way to the sun below the horizon. I walk up to the Beach, drawn there really, and snap a picture before I go into the kitchen. The colors and the beauty make room for me to take a deep breath. This morning I think about the book, "Like Water for Chocolate" and set an intention to create magical food full of love.

The quiet, the darkness and the beauty cause me to feel into this day with more intentionality. Ferry Beach is more than a job to me. I have developed many friends and acquaintances here. Through the pandemic I have had to shift my thinking from waiting until this is over, to being present for each day. It is not over, it may never really be "over" and we may never go back to what we all were before.

I wonder if there were staff in 1918 at Ferry Beach who were just waiting for that pandemic to wane and for life to go on as it was. Being an Executive Director of a not for profit for most of my professional career, I didn't ever cook as part of my job duties. I peeled wallpaper in the battered women's shelter, held and changed crying babies, moved big black trash bags of everything a family owned, and sat on the floor with a woman who was crying amidst the ruins of her life, her kids clothes shredded by her abusive husband. Actually, I cried with many hurt women and children.



When you work for a not for profit, you just do what needs to be done: put on a suit and go talk to a funder about the good work you are doing, call a business and ask for a donation of food or diapers, give what seems like a million speeches to Rotaries, and other service clubs, train police, medical professionals and college students. At the Girl Scouts, I schlepped groceries to camp and visited benefactors in the hospital.

So this morning and this summer, I have been cooking, mostly breakfast by myself, but helping with lunches and dinners. The day is just starting as I turn the lights on and then go through the kitchen turning on machines that will cook and heat the food and clean the dishes. Like checking lobster traps, I go through the routine, pulling out all of the needed supplies for breakfast for 75. *(continued page 3)*

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**AND MORE!**

## Board Meetings

Ferry Beach board is moving to a once-a-month format that will include a board meeting and at different times of the year, also what we call a "Committee of the Whole." The board meetings are open to the public.

Board meetings will be the 3rd Thursday of the month on Zoom. They will begin at 6:30 and usually last no more than 90 minutes. There will be a time during the board meeting that members of the public can ask questions or share information with the board. The board reserves the right to close a board meeting if information of a sensitive nature is being discussed. The board will also move to a Committee of the Whole meeting on Thursdays if there is not need for an official board meeting. The Committee of the Whole meetings are not open to the public.

If you would like to attend a board meeting online, please send a note to [director@ferrybeach.org](mailto:director@ferrybeach.org). You will be sent a link to the zoom meeting. We ask that you mute until the open portion of the board meeting.



## BOARDwalk: Universal Love, Radical Hospitality and Universal Acceptance!

by Marty Burgess, Board President

Universal Love, Radical Hospitality and Universal Acceptance! These are banners of Ferry Beach. Our mission to renew the spirit of universal love is the foundation of our community. Radical hospitality is our welcoming the other, both stranger and longtime friends. We invite groups and individuals who appreciate our mission, campus, and conferences. This is at times a challenge to our commitment to provide the space to renew one's spirit! Today I am focused on Universal acceptance.

Universal acceptance is active. It is a level of acknowledgment and clarity of the reality of our situation. It does not mean that we agree or like the reality. It requires us to tolerate difficult and /or unpleasant conditions for the benefit of ourselves and the community. As Ferry Beach practices Radical Hospitality, Cathy and staff have faced many risks to the wellbeing of the community. Over the past summer along with many years of our past, the community has faced disruptive behaviors resulting in the decision to have people leave the campus and at times to never return.

Universal acceptance requires us to set limits. It was, and is, a demonstration of universal love in action.

Universal Acceptance is being aware and recognizing the diverse opinions, lifestyles and behaviors of our membership. Many of these we collectively support, others we are neutral on, and a number of them we are opposed to. It is the last group that consumes much of our collective anxiety and energy. For example, our current circumstance – COVID – Cathy and staff have educated themselves gathering current information and using the science available to make the best decisions possible for the safety of the Ferry Beach Community. Not everyone agrees with universal vaccination, mask wearing and social distancing but the decision to have everyone on campus follow these guidelines help us navigate COVID challenges.

This summer, Ferry Beach had outbreaks of COVID nearly every week, resulting in shortened stays and stricter guidelines for those who stayed. I am very grateful for the many individuals and families who appreciated the clarity and acknowledgment of these concerns. For those who had to stay home or leave early, sit in quarantine, sadness and kindness were not mutually exclusive. I am sad you had to leave and grateful for your willingness to act for the good of the community. I am very grateful that the recovery has gone well for our community.

Another example, closing the dining hall in the afternoons for cleaning and keeping it closed overnight helped the staff be ready for the next meal. Having the space clean before serving help keep us all safer. *(continued page 5)*

## Kindness

Thank you to those who have visited and continue to support us. Donors, members, coordinators, workshop leaders and so many others have come to Ferry Beach this summer. Your presence alone is critical to our ability to function. Without you there is no us – so thank you so much for including us in your plans!

This summer has been challenging for staff and volunteers. With many new year-round staff starting this spring, we have had a lot on learn-as-you-go moments. We have asked conferees to help out where they can, and they were happy to do so.

We are grateful to those who showed us kindness and support, and understand the frustrations that arose through the summer. We are hopeful that next summer will be easier for all of us. In the meantime, please continue to be gentle and kind while we do our best to serve you!

## Did You Tell Us About Your Visit?

If you visited Ferry Beach this summer, you would have received a survey from us a few days after your visit. These surveys are important, not only to Ferry Beach staff, but to conference coordinators who put together programming each summer. If you did not take your survey – please email [bjohnson@ferrybeach.org](mailto:bjohnson@ferrybeach.org) for a link. Be sure to reference the conference you attended! We would love your feedback.

## While It's Still Dark Outside

by Cathy Stackpole (continued from page 1)

I was too tired yesterday from my other duties to prepare for this morning, so I am here at 5am: pan up several pounds of bacon, par-cook potatoes for home fries, steam spinach that I will squeeze water out of to put in quiches, baking off the shells so that they may cool before I gather all the ingredients for the filling. It is work that is concrete, different from other administrative duties that often seem like just planting seeds with staff, with funders, with a possible new resource for a workshop.

It is work that feels tangible and sure in a world still reeling from COVID. I can produce food people eat and get immediate feedback. I don't know what the future holds, but I can be intentional with this breakfast, just now, in the dining room, while it is still dark outside.



## Seeking Online Auction Donations!

We are seeking donations for our online auction taking place on **November 12th from 6:30-8:00pm!** Do you have an idea for a donation or have something you would like to contribute? Email our planning committee at [auction@ferrybeach.org](mailto:auction@ferrybeach.org) or fill out the form located at [ferrybeach.org/auction](https://ferrybeach.org/auction). All items planned for by November 4th.

This year we will be fundraising in the **SUSTAINABILITY** area of our mission. **We hope to raise \$17,500.** Sustainability areas we hope to improve include: Improving human resource capabilities by investing in software and tools to help automate our operating needs; HVAC and insulation improvements to reduce energy use; Reducing the need for plastics and disposable items by improving infrastructure on campus

Please help us reach our goal this year by contributing to our auction and plan to join us on November 12th to take part in the festivities and have your chance at some really great items!

## COVID Miracles

by Brian Johnson

I had made it through the pandemic unscathed. I received all my vaccines as I became eligible, masked in public settings, refrained from large social gatherings, and held off travel plans until it was safe to do so. But when the BA.5 variant came through this summer I had met my fate. I woke up one Monday morning with a scratchy throat. I normally wouldn't think much of that as I had an air conditioner blowing in my face all night and my throat usually is scratchy because of that... but Cathy had text the night before stating she had tested positive. I thought I better be safe and check... and to my surprise I saw two solid red lines.

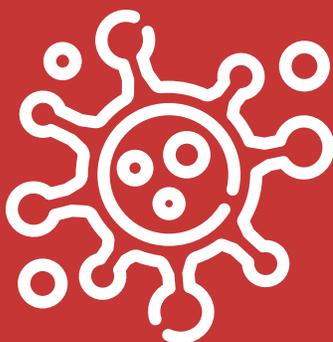
While quarantined I had plenty of time to binge watch TV. I found an interesting series of mini documentaries on Netflix. Each episode was about a half hour and covered broad and interesting topics. I ran across a fascinating episode from 2018 about the threat of a global pandemic.

It was amazing to see the perspective of our pre pandemic selves evaluating what we thought we would excel at and where we thought we would fail. One thing that fascinated me were the magical vaccines that were being developed using new technology. These vaccines can be rapidly engineered to train your body to fight off any virus using DNA. Traditional vaccines take much longer to create and require the use of dead virus cells. We were lucky that this tech was already in motion so it could be quickly (relatively) deployed when COVID hit. The vaccine worked out and proved the new technology on a global scale. It is an amazing advancement that will save lives from many forms of illness in the years to come.

The documentary had predicted that a global pandemic would completely obliterate the world economies into something unrecognizable (almost something apocalyptic). Don't get me wrong, the pandemic has done some serious damage to our economies but nowhere near as bad as we thought it would. We are limping along, and things aren't great, but they are far from wiped out as predicted.

We are all angry about this pandemic. Angry it is still dragging on... Annoyed about the disruptions it has caused in our lives... Frustrated not knowing when it will finally be over and things can return to normal! Those are all valid feelings, but we cannot change where we are. What we can do is reflect on the good that has come out of it to make our negative feelings feel a little less negative.

Despite all the arguing, defiance, ignorance and stupidity in the world, humanity is making it through the pandemic, and we will get to the other side with new tools in hand and lessons learned. Will we remember these lessons when the next pandemic comes (hopefully not in our lifetime)? Will we do better or worse? Time will tell but in the meantime I am grateful. I am grateful to have been vaccinated with this new technology and have had a very mild covid case because of it. I am grateful to have been able to keep my job through the pandemic and discover the flexibility of remote working. I am grateful that the economy has held itself together enough where I can still reliably get my groceries, household items and do the things I like to. I will also be grateful when it is declared over and things can return to the way they were when this documentary was filmed (or at least something closer to it). In the meantime, be kind to each other and try to remember to find the good in everything!



### COVID and Ferry Beach

We have built our COVID-19 policies and guidance around information provided by the US CDC, State of Maine CDC, and other research based sources throughout the pandemic. At this time, our policies and procedures will remain in place as they are despite any changes in guidance issued by the US CDC.

For our most up-to-date COVID policies and guidance, please visit [ferrybeach.org/covid](https://ferrybeach.org/covid)

## BOARDwalk

by Marty Burgess (continued from page 2)

Changes to the Murray room is another example where the community benefits while a few had to accept the change and disappointment they did not have the same access. I am grateful for the universal acceptance of such changes by members. Food service has seen several changes as well. There are many discussions about such changes. Disappointment, fear, and being worn out by the stress of the pandemic is evident in everyone. At times this stress shows itself in loud voices, insistence to have accommodations, and claims we are not 'inclusive' by making exceptions to guidelines.

Understanding that staff shortages not only impact Ferry Beach activities, but also all our interactions with vendors and the larger community. Supply chain, food costs, and many other difficulties have seen us at the highest stress levels. Impatience, outbursts, disappointment expressed with anger and blame have become common occurrences. The staff have performed very well under the stress. Members have been disappointed by changes and the evolving limit setting required to provide a space to renew our sprit of universal love.

There are many people, ideologies, and behaviors we can and do support. There are some we cannot. Universal acceptance is recognizing reality in as clear a way as possible. It is not unusual for staff, typically Cathy, to tell someone they cannot stay due to their behavior. This is never easy, or pleasant.

As in all large communities we encounter behaviors that are problematic. Some, like destruction of property, vandalism, leaving biological waste where it shouldn't be, drinking in excess, smoking on campus, parking violations, use of unauthorized space, and so on, require staff recognition of the behavior and for them to take appropriate action for the benefit of the larger community.

I am very grateful for the many comments in support of the changes and policies. Knowing where the limits are helps us to have confidence in our community. Freedom lives in the reality of restrictions. Universal Acceptance works in two directions – from the self and from others. Collectively we recognize the need for governing rules and guidelines. As we make these decisions, face disappointments and experience stress keep universal love in the forefront. Show grace under pressure. Experience gratitude.

# JOIN US IN THE SUMMER 2023 SCHEDULE



June 9-18 **Profound Treasury Buddhist Retreat**

June 19-24 **Work Week**

June 24 **Annual Meeting**

June 25-July 1 **Youth Camp**

July 1-5 **Family Fun Holiday Weekend \*NEW\***

July 8-14 **RE Week**

July 15-22 **GAYLA**

July 15-21 **ChoralFEST**

July 29-August 5 **Family & Friends**

August 5-11 **Circles of Life**

August 11-13 **Maine AFG AI-Anon Convention**

Aug 13-19 **Circle of Music / In Company of Women**

August 20-25 **Sacred Circle Dance Camp**

August 27-30 **The Beach Getaway**

August 25-September 1 **Quilting by the Bay**

September 1-4 **Labor Day Weekend**



[ferrybeach.org/2023](http://ferrybeach.org/2023)