

# Chebacco

A stained glass artwork featuring a pine branch with two cones and several needles. The background is a deep blue, and the pine needles and cones are rendered in shades of green and yellow. The artwork is set within a grid of dark lines, suggesting a window or a decorative panel.

The Magazine of  
the Mount Desert Island Historical Society

HARBORING RELIGION: MISSIONARIES,  
CONVERTS, AND SOJOURNERS

Volume XX 2019

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The Magazine of the Mount Desert Island Historical Society

Volume XX  
HARBORING RELIGION:  
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2019  
Mount Desert, Maine

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We would also like to acknowledge the Southwest Harbor Public Library Digital Archive and the assistance of Charlotte Morrill and George Soules in obtaining many of the historical photographs that illustrate this issue.





Detail of south  
wall window,  
ca. 1916, artist  
unknown. *Sz.  
Edward's Convent,  
Bar Harbor (currently  
the Bar Harbor  
Historical Society)*

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Detail of Melcher memorial window,  
ca. 1956, designed by Betsy F. Melcher,  
executed by Napoleon Setti of Boston.  
*Saint Mary's by-the-Sea, Northeast Harbor*



## "Moment After Moment After Moment": Cultivating a Zen Presence on Mount Desert Island

By Brook Wilensky-Lanford

"I have practiced Zen Buddhism for almost fifty years, since I was a teenager," said Paul Weiss, "but I don't usually call myself a Buddhist."<sup>1</sup> This apparent paradox is familiar to practitioners of non-Western religious traditions on Mount Desert Island, of which there are many. Their knowledge is deep, and their history long. But they may be wary of labels, which unnecessarily constrain truths that they believe to be universal. For the historian, then, the island's spiritual seekers can be difficult to trace.

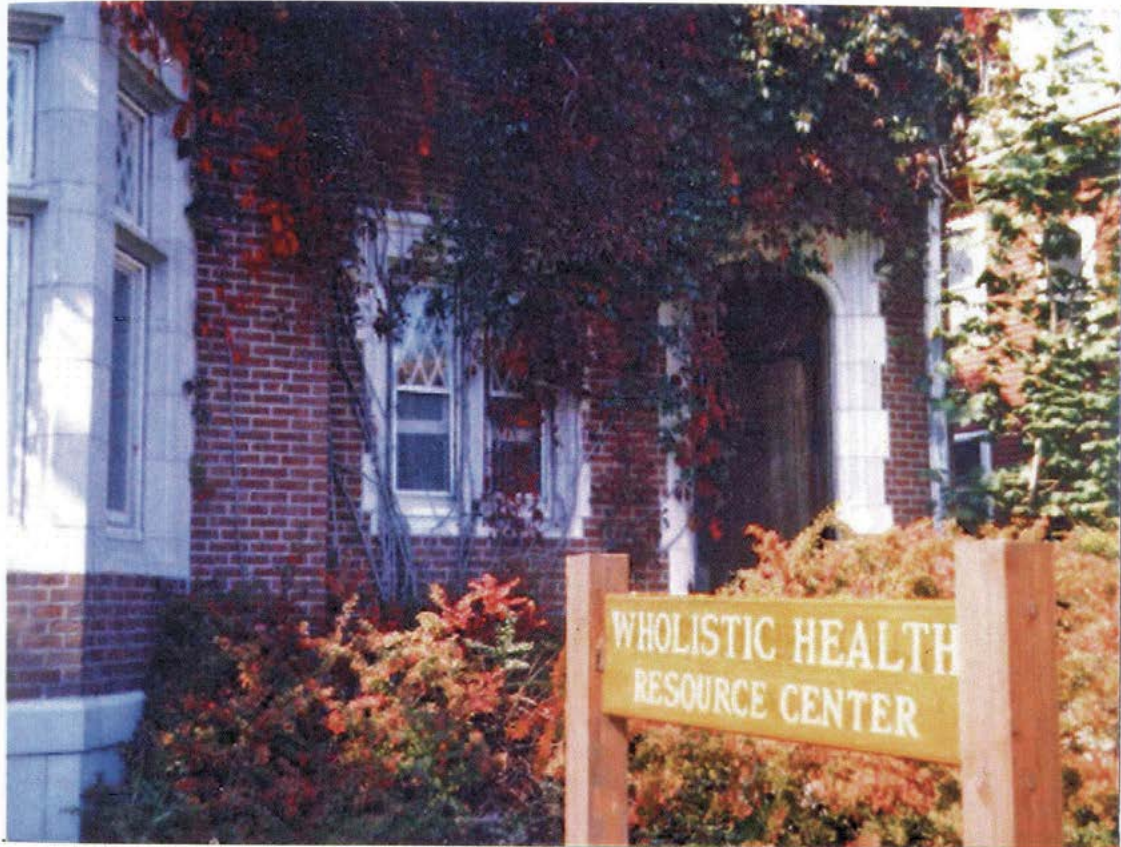
Spirituality has its occasional moments of visibility. In August 1987, several hundred people gathered on Cadillac Mountain, one of the world's "power centers," to celebrate a planetary alignment known as the Harmonic Convergence with chanting and meditation. Park rangers deemed the event "orderly," although Bar Harbor police later reported a loincloth-wearing man wandering Cottage Street claiming he was celebrating "the dawning of the age of the flowers."<sup>2</sup> Many islanders will remember Chris Kaiser, who took days-long shamanic "vision quests" in wild areas of the Park, where the earth "symbolically expressed" itself to those who vibrated on the same wavelength. He invited readers to join him in his 1998 guidebook *The Chakra System of Mount Desert Island*.<sup>3</sup>

Much more common, however, are small, private groups who meet regularly, often for decades, in living rooms and community centers to meditate, practice Reiki, or study the writings of particular teachers. For them, the island itself may not be the object of spiritual veneration, but simply, as one practitioner told me, "the place where I lived when I found the dharma."<sup>4</sup>

For this history, I will confine myself to three groups that are neither headline-grabbing nor completely private. They share a lineage, of sorts, in Buddhist practice. This selection is already an exception to the rule, a small window onto practices that have shaped the island's spiritual landscape for decades, and continue to do so.

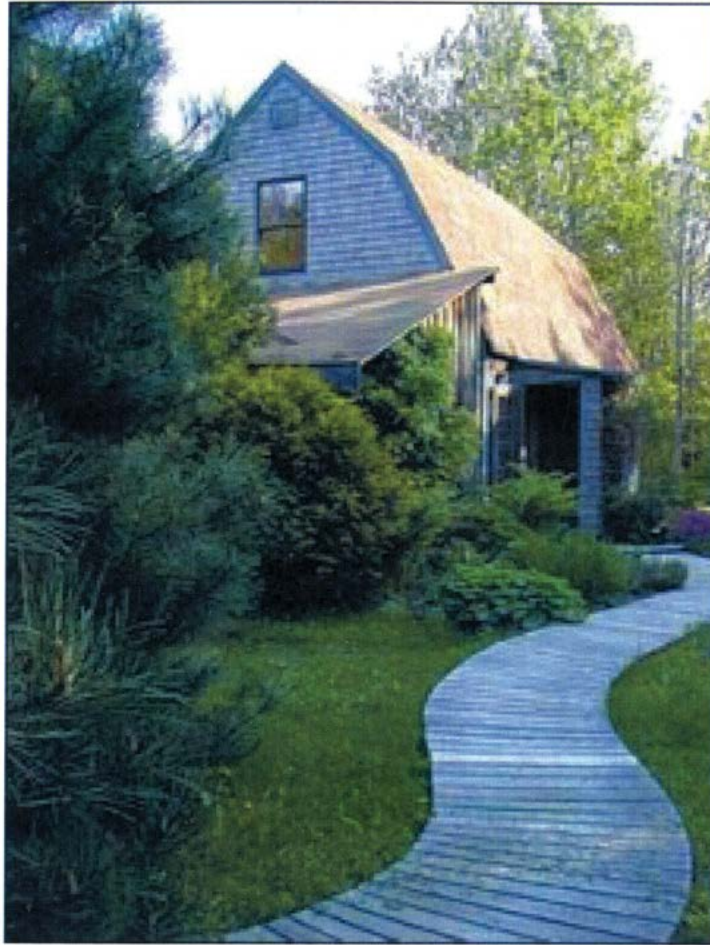
### *The Whole Health Center*

One of the reasons Paul Weiss doesn't call himself a Buddhist is that he does so many different things. Weiss is founder of the Whole Health Center, a Town Hill-based nonprofit organization with a simple goal: to help people work through the spiritual problems that keep them alienated from their true nature of "consciousness and love."<sup>5</sup> Trained as a therapist, Weiss believes that "there is no rigid line between the psychological and the spiritual." By "spiritual," he means a "state of presence," of being aware of the present moment in one's relationships, work, and life. That state of presence, Weiss is convinced, "can be learned, practiced, and taught." And that is exactly what Weiss has been doing for thirty-seven years.



The Whole Health Center in Bar Harbor, 1981-1989

The exterior of 33 Ledgelawn Avenue when it housed the Whole Health Center, from 1981 to 1989. *Courtesy of Paul Weiss*



The Whole Health Center in Town Hill, 1989-Present (2015)

The Town Hill home of the Whole Health Center,  
from 1989 to the present. *Courtesy of Paul Weiss*





A group of students receive ordination as monks in the Kanzeon Zen Center at 33 Ledgelawn Avenue, formerly St. Edward's Convent, in a ceremony known as Shukke Tokudo, circa 1990. Dennis Merzel is in the third row, center, directly beneath the calligraphy on the wall. *Courtesy of Big Mind Zen Center*

Since 1981, Weiss has taught hundreds of people, using many tools. He focuses on communication via individual, couple, and group counseling, and emotional recovery work. He helps people work toward body-mind integration using *tai chi*, *qi gong*, nutrition, and body work. He teaches deep awareness through meditation training. All this might not look like what we think of when we think of religion. "I don't have to rush to new or old conclusions about what 'God' is," Weiss explains, "but I may learn to open spacious availability in my

awareness to that underlying mystery."

It was, however, Zen Buddhism that first brought Weiss to Maine. After studying with Japanese Zen teachers in New York and Los Angeles in the 1960s, he heard about Walter Nowick.<sup>6</sup> Wanting to study with an American Zen teacher, he moved to Blue Hill and lived with Nowick for several years.<sup>7</sup> He first came to Bar Harbor for Alexandra Lounsbury, also a spiritual seeker, whom he married

in 1974. Alexandra and Paul spent several years traveling, learning new spiritual techniques, and expanding their family. In 1981, they returned to Bar Harbor and opened the Whole Health Center, in a large brick building downtown. This was before "integrative medicine" was common in healthcare settings, and before yoga and meditation had become ubiquitous. Weiss remembers, "I was the only name under 'massage' in the Bar Harbor yellow pages — and now you see it on every door!"

New as the Weisses' work was to many, Bar Harbor was supportive. The Whole Health Center's family-friendly downtown location teemed with enthusiastic students. "In those days," says Weiss, "I had no trouble getting fifteen people to commit to a [series of] tai chi classes," referring to the exercise series that forms part of ancient Chinese Daoist energy practices known as qi gong. Weiss is convinced that people "of all ages, abilities, and stages of health" can learn from these exercises to relax, "open the heart, allow energy to flow."

The Weisses also tried to respond to the community's needs. Indeed, perhaps the signature service of the Whole Health Center has been their ongoing weekly support groups. A September 1987 issue of the *Bar Harbor Times* announced the formation of the Center's group based on M. Scott Peck's bestselling self-help book, *The Road Less Traveled*.<sup>8</sup> The other cornerstone of Weiss's practice is the four-day "True Mind, True Heart" retreat he has been leading since 1982, which are equal parts silent contemplation and communication. This unlikely-sounding combination proved popular. In the

spring of 1987 alone, Weiss led four of them. What the Weisses didn't teach themselves, they would invite others to teach. Soon, however, a routine invitation turned into something else altogether.<sup>9</sup>

The Weisses asked Dennis Genpo Merzel, a Zen monk with whom they had both practiced in Los Angeles, to lead a meditation retreat at their center. Merzel, who was leading such retreats all over the U.S. and in Europe at the time, agreed. Once Merzel arrived in Bar Harbor, says Weiss, "he expressed a desire to move his family here," and set himself up to teach. The Weisses offered to share their building, 33 Ledgeawn Avenue, with him. But, "after a few months," says Weiss, "he told us that he had too many people who wanted to practice with him, and that there was no room for us."

Merzel seemed to want to be the town's only representative of Buddhism. Paul stopped leading his True Mind, True Heart retreats, and the Center's support groups went on hiatus. Although Alexandra Weiss remained a student of Merzel, the Weisses wanted to maintain the bustling variety of spiritual practice they had fostered for seven years. By 1989, they had made the painful decision to leave downtown, and settled into the space the Whole Health Center still occupies in Town Hill, a wood-shingled home tucked back from the road and surrounded by trees, perhaps trading centrality for coziness.

### *Kanzeon Zen Center*

Meanwhile, the 1917 Jacobethan Revival building at 33 Ledgeawn Avenue that had been the Whole Health Center, and was originally built as Saint Edward's Convent, underwent yet another transformation. Merzel renamed the building Kanzeon Zen Center and eventually attracted a couple dozen young men and women to join this *sangha*, or community.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes

they called it "Hosshinji," after a Japanese Zen monastery that was among the first to welcome Western students, in the 1920s.

They lived together and studied the dharma in a "formal and intensive" way.<sup>11</sup> In 2010, Tamara Myoho Gabrysch remembered her Bar Harbor practice as "very traditional-style *sesshins* [silent meditation] with all the trimmings." Those "trimmings" included the familiar *zazen* (sitting) in *oryoki* (silence), and also *kyosaku* (service) and *daisan* (one-on-one instruction). Gabrysch remembered that initiates would sometimes go through a three-month *ango*, or monastic practice period, with a "free day" every nine.<sup>12</sup>

The curved wood lines and stained-glass windows of the former convent gave this new Zen community a traditional backdrop, albeit one borrowed from another tradition. The sangha set up an altar of the Buddha, and placed black meditation cushions in rows in the empty, red-carpeted rooms. Merzel took the idea of lineage and hierarchy seriously. The second American 'dharma successor,' or trainee, of Taizan Maezumi, Merzel proudly hosted Maezumi Roshi at Kanzeon. They posed, grinning, in their formal robes in the backyard of 33 Ledgeawn. Merzel passed on this same sense of hierarchy he had learned to his students. After taking initial vows, they were encouraged to shave their heads, symbolizing the letting-go of worldly attachments. Some were eventually ordained as monks. Members of a Japanese Soto Zen mission to America visited in 1991, and reportedly declared of Kanzeon that, "This is true Zen here, just like Dogen Zenji's first monastery."<sup>13</sup>

In point of fact, however, any outpost of Buddhism in America is already an adaptation on tradition.<sup>14</sup> For one thing, traditional Zen Buddhist sanghas in Japan did not ordain women. Within its traditional parameters, Merzel's practice varied widely. Sometimes everyone would get to study one-on-one with Merzel every day.<sup>15</sup> Other times, they would do group meditation for weeks with



Laura Neal's reminder of the meaning of Zen.  
Courtesy of Laura Neal



no individual instruction at all. When students joined Merzel on trips to Europe, "One could never tell what the next sesshin would be like!"<sup>16</sup> For three years, the Kanzeon Zen Center sangha persisted as an ascetic practice in the middle of downtown Bar Harbor. In the early 1990s Merzel, who was married, was discovered to have had inappropriate sexual relationships with some of his women students.<sup>17</sup> After many uncomfortable conversations, the community grew increasingly divided. By February 1991, Merzel had permanently left town, along with many of the sangha members he had brought to the Island. They took a cheerful photo on the steps of 33 Ledgelawn, their shaved heads wrapped in hats and scarves.<sup>18</sup> For 33 Ledgelawn, the rest was literally history: the building was purchased by the Bar Harbor Historical Society in 1997, and currently serves as their museum space.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the Whole Health Center continued to flourish. The nonprofit Center operated with a small board of directors; the only full-time employees were Paul Weiss and Bettina Dudley, a biologist and poet who moved to the Island in 1994. That year, they offered their True Mind, True Heart retreats again. In 1996, they re-started their support groups, and continued to invite outside Buddhist teachers to lead meditation retreats.

In recent years, Paul Weiss has seen a surging demand for "spiritual but not religious" groups on the island. The pace has changed, and distraction increased. Over the years, he explains, by way of example, he has shifted from teaching tai chi classes to qi gong because it is

easier for beginners to find an entry point, and doesn't require week-to-week commitment. In this new era, however, one of Paul Weiss's many students has carved out her own way to practice Zen Buddhism on Mount Desert Island.

### *True Nature Zen Sangha*

If you had told Laura Neal when she first moved to Mount Desert Island in 1990 that she would become a Zen monk, she might have laughed. "Never in a million years," she told me, "but no one can predict the future." Neal worked for decades as a personal fitness trainer and exercise teacher before opening her Bar Harbor yoga studio, Cattitude. Raised Catholic, she knew that theism of any kind, mono- or poly-, was "not my path." But "I am the kind of person who when I am interested in something, I grab on and find out everything I can."<sup>20</sup>

Which is what happened when a Whole Health Center meditation retreat sparked her interest. She didn't have the means or desire to move or away from the island to pursue dharma training, so she explored on her own. In 2007, she encountered the book *Mindfulness Yoga*, which described an integration of "asana," or yoga poses, and "dharma," or Buddhist wisdom.<sup>21</sup> This struck an immediate chord with Neal. Practicing yoga, she started to be more aware of her mind, "the way we gravitate toward poses that are pleasurable, and avoid ones that are difficult." Neal realized she had been keeping mind and body separate, and that she didn't need to: "It changed my teaching dramatically." She began studying dharma with the author, Frank Jude Boccio — mostly by phone, since Boccio lived in Arizona.

Looking for more, she found an online Buddhist seminary, then called the Five Mountain Zen Order, where she earned her master's degree in Buddhist doctrine and was certified to teach Zen in the Korean lineage of Zen master Sung Sahn.<sup>22</sup>

In August 2011, one of Neal's teachers traveled to Bar Harbor to ordain her and give her the dharma name "Bonyon," which means "original nature." Now, she leads a small group of Zen practitioners called the True Nature Zen Sangha.

Although it is traditional for sanghas to echo their leader's dharma name, Neal is adamant that True Nature is an open, accessible "community of practitioners ... that could go on without me." The sangha met at Neal's yoga studio until it closed in 2015, then on the College of the Atlantic campus for about a year, followed by two years at the Bar Harbor Congregational Church. Every year, Neal offers sangha members the opportunity to take vows in a public ceremony; they state their intention, among other promises, to live truthfully. "They get a cool Buddhist name and a thing to wear around their neck," Neal says. "But you can of course live by those principles without those things."

Every Wednesday, the True Nature Zen Center gathers, for sixty minutes in the summer, ninety in the winter. They do sitting and walking meditation, and Neal concludes with a teaching. She wears her robe, but "not the big long one." Formal practice is important. "I take ritual seriously, I take my vows seriously," but simplicity is the goal. And to keep coming back to awareness of the present moment. Neal finds that people often misunderstand Zen as "tuning out." "People talk about their 'moment of Zen' or how they 'get their Zen on.'" But Zen as Neal practices it is hard work. Students learn to "study the self to forget the self," exactly in order to tune *in* to the world around them. "My students tease me that I answer every question with 'Just this.' What is Zen? 'Just this.'" She says it so often that she got a vanity license plate, "JST THS," as a reminder.

Like Weiss, Neal "rarely uses the term Buddhist," preferring to describe herself as a dharma student. She still has weekly *koan* sessions with her teacher. He lives in Ames, Iowa, so they use Zoom, the online

meeting platform. "I know, it's wild, these twenty-six-hundred-year-old traditions being accessible this way. But it is 2018. We no longer have to climb up the sides of mountains to access this dharma."

Most of Neal's students are year-round island residents. Because she knows that everyone is "just trying to keep it going" in the busy tourist summers, the sangha used to meet less often then. In 2018, though, Neal took the summer as a challenge, digging into the writings of "ancient Chinese masters" in weekly meetings at Town Hill's ArtWaves community center. Summer is the perfect time for learning to "keep the mind," as Neal puts it, "moment after moment after moment."

The summer meetings made for some awkward moments. One Wednesday, two out-of-town women showed up, enthusiastic but inexperienced. Some time into the sesshin, the doors opened and there were two men with cameras — the women's husbands, eager to document their wives meditating on vacation. Neal asked them to stop: "I told them, 'This is kind of like church, right?' And they said, 'Well, we won't use a flash!'" Neal laughs. She realizes that Zen meditation may not look "like church" to some. After all, at ArtWaves, "they also offer Zumba classes." It is important, however, that people realize residents "do all sorts of things that are unrelated to other people's vacations!"

Buddhist practice always has and always will adapt itself to the culture at hand. "And in America our culture is capitalism, so things get commodified." However, when dharma becomes an "industry" selling people the perfect body





Detail of "The Visitation," ca.  
1908, Mayer & Company,  
Germany. *Holy Redeemer*  
Catholic Church, Bar Harbor



and mind, there is a "real danger" of meditation practices being misused. Neal runs her sangha on voluntary donations, per Buddhist tradition.<sup>23</sup> And she still operates her own business, as a personal fitness instructor, specializing in "corrective exercise" for older people and those with health conditions.

She brings her Zen training with her to work. "It's not about: 'I used to run marathons.' It's about: 'you're eighty years old, how is your body now.'" Moment after moment after moment.

In 2016, after twenty years of continuous meetings, Paul Weiss's Monday night support group disbanded. Several long-time members withdrew. Weiss's longtime colleague Bettina Dudley died suddenly. It seemed to be the end of an era for the Whole Health Center.<sup>24</sup> Weiss does not want to retire, because he loves what he does. But, as he puts it, "I feel my inner life shifting toward doing nothing!" For now, he is not succeeding. As Laura Neal puts it: "Paul works harder than I do." He is reaching into new areas, including environmental awareness, neuroscience, and the "radical and challenging" teachings of Jesus.<sup>25</sup> He has started a new support group. It may not last twenty years, but that is okay. No one can predict the future. "It has always been important to my own spiritual practice," Weiss explains, "not to be to ego-ically attached to what I do." The Center will evolve to meet the needs of the moment, as it always has. What is Zen? Just this.

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*Brook Wilensky-Lanford moved to Bass Harbor with her parents, Sheila and Henry, at age two, and graduated from Mount Desert Island High School in 1995. The author of Paradise Lust: Searching for the Garden of Eden (2011), she received a B.A. in Religious Studies from Wesleyan University, an M.F.A. in Nonfiction Writing from Columbia University, and is currently pursuing her PhD in American Religious History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She was not at the Harmonic Convergence, but does remember seeing Halley's Comet at Back Beach.*

*Acknowledgements: Grateful acknowledgement is made to Paul Weiss and Laura Neal, and to the following individuals for their generous support researching this history: Henry Lanford, Ann Davis, Rollin Stearns, Bob Pyle, Richard Sassaman, Kristen Moulton, Peggy Fletcher Stack, Sheila Wilensky, M. J. McIsaac, Judith Cox, Rebecca Brugman, Sarah Vekasi, Timothy Smith, Tim Garrity, the Jesup Memorial Library, and the Friends of Island History newspaper archive.*

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1. This and all quotes from Paul Weiss are from personal communication, August 4, 2018, unless otherwise noted.
  2. The summit of Cadillac Mountain was one of several "power centers" worldwide that drew believers to celebrate the beginning of a new age of peace and harmony on August 16 and 17, 1987. Five to seven hundred people held hands in large, concentric circles and "sang, talked, and meditated." See: "New Age celebrated on Cadillac," *Bar Harbor Times*, Thursday, August 13, 1987; "500 Celebrate Harmonic Convergence," [Police Beat], *Bar Harbor Times*, Thursday, August 20, 1987; "Harmonic Convergence" photo by Tom Hindman; *Bar Harbor Times*, Thursday, August 20, 1987.
  3. P. Chris Kaiser, *The Chakra System of Mount Desert Island: A Guidebook* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1998). Many were devastated when Kaiser was found dead in Hamilton Pond, Salsbury Cove, at age 57, on June 27, 2004, which can be read in Becky Buyers-Basso, "Missing Man Found Dead," *Mount Desert Islander*, July 1, 2004.
  4. Eschewing their own real estate is by no means restricted to Buddhists on the island. Jewish groups meet weekly in people's homes; the closest synagogues are in Bangor. A Quaker meeting has met regularly since at least 1973 in spaces including Northeast Harbor's Neighborhood House and the Bar Harbor Congregational Church.
  5. "Holistic Health Center is 30," *Ellsworth American*, June 24, 2011; Paul Weiss, "Compassion, Integration, and Healing: The Psychological and Spiritual Work of the Whole Health Center," The Whole Health Center, accessed January 3, 2019, <http://thewholehealthcenter.org/compassion-integration-and-healing/>.

6. Surry-based Walter Nowick (1926–2013) was well-known both for his Zen practice and his support of young musicians. He founded Moon Spring Hermitage in 1971, where he taught until 1985. The center still exists as the Morgan Bay Zendo.
7. Alexandra and Paul Weiss divorced in the mid-1990s; she returned to her maiden name of Lounsbury and died in 2012. "Alexandra Lounsbury," Obituary, *Ellsworth American*, August 2, 2012. <https://www.ellsworthamerican.com/obituary/alexandra-lounsbury/>
8. "Scott Peck Study Group Offered," *Bar Harbor Times*, Thursday, September 24, 1987.
9. "Zen Workshop, Retreat Offered," *Bar Harbor Times*, Thursday, September 10, 1987.
10. Document 1987017021, Registry of Deeds, Hancock County, book 1673, 661. Physical descriptions of Kanzeon are based on photographs like those posted by Big Mind Zen Center in the public Flickr album "Kanzeon Memories," *Bar Harbor Jukai*, Flickr.com, [https://www.flickr.com/photos/kanzeon\\_zen\\_center/247435609/in/album-72157594234144669/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kanzeon_zen_center/247435609/in/album-72157594234144669/) Added September 19, 2006.
11. "Tamara Myoho Gabrysch Interview," *Sweeping Zen*, September 18, 2010. <http://sweepingzen.com/tamara-myoho-gabrysch-interview/>
12. Several Kanzeon members went on to higher ranks in Zen. Tenkei Coppens now leads the Zen River Center in Uithuizen, The Netherlands.
13. For a broader account of these adaptations, see David McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
14. "Koan" is a form of dharma study that involves contemplating apparent puzzles, the stereotypical example of which would be "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"
15. "Tamara Myoho Gabrysch Interview," *Sweeping Zen*, September 18, 2010. <http://sweepingzen.com/tamara-myoho-gabrysch-interview/>
16. Merzel repeated this pattern in Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, where he resigned from his Center at the urging of Zen leaders in 2011. For details, see: Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Utah Zen master admits affair, leaves center," *Salt Lake Tribune*, Feb. 25, 2011; Kristen Moulton, "Zen teachers are livid Utah colleague in sex scandal still teaching," *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 10, 2011. In his 2016 autobiography *Spitting Out the Bones: A Zen Master's 45 Year Journey* (Big Mind Publishing), Merzel does not mention Bar Harbor, but does admit he misused his power as a teacher: "I slept with women students to whom I was sexually attracted and they to me and then lied" (41). And he acknowledges that "It is not as if I wasn't warned or given good advice and even brought to account on this very issue back in the early '90s" (48–49).
17. Document 1991015627, Registry of Deeds, Hancock County, book 1894, 068–069.
18. Document 19086, Registry of Deeds, Hancock County, book 2694, 503.
19. This and all Laura Neal quotations come from personal communication, August 15, 2018, unless otherwise noted.
20. Frank Jude Boccio, *Mindfulness Yoga: The Awakened Union of Breath, Body, and Mind*. (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2004).
21. Now part of Buddha Dharma University, <http://www.buddhadharmauniversity.org/>
22. "Zen Meditation," ArtWaves, accessed January 3, 2019, <https://www.artwavesmdi.org/product-page/zen-meditation>
23. "Obituary: Bettina Dudley," *Ellsworth American*, October 5, 2016. <https://www.ellsworthamerican.com/obituary/bettina-dudley/>
24. Flyer for "Conscious Loving Presence: A Radical Look At the Teachings of Jesus," a workshop conducted on December 10, 2018 at the Whole Health Center.

## *Corrigenda and Errata*

In Volume XIX (2018)

On pages 17 and 18, Charles W. Eliot is said to be the great-grandfather of Richard Paine. Actually, Charles W. Eliot was the grandfather of Richard Paine's wife, Ellen Eliot Paine.

The photo on page 64 was misattributed to Nikolai Fox. The photograph should have been attributed to Lois Stack.

Richard Estes' portrait of Madame Yourcenar on page 135 is reversed.

The caption for the photograph on page 138 by Grace Frick titled *Marguerite Yourcenar with Three Portuguese Sailors* should read:

The figures in the photograph are (left to right): John Reynolds (2), John Reynolds (1), Madame Yourcenar, and John Ward. They are standing in front of the Manset fishing house on the Stanley Fish Wharf, which was used to keep accounts for buying lobsters and for selling gasoline to the boats.

In Volume XII (2011)

On page 22, the assassination of Henry IV of France is said to have occurred in 1604. Actually, Henry was killed on May 14, 1610.





Charles-Gustave Housez (1822–1894), "Assassinat d'Henri IV et arrestation de Ravaillac le 14 mai 1610."  
*Courtesy Wikimedia Commons*

Following page: *Otter Creek Hall*







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Cover design by Rebecca Hope Woods based on Jennifer Steen Booher's photograph of a stained glass window in Saint Saviour's Church, Bar Harbor.



Chebacco silhouette adapted from a photograph by Len Burgess for the Essex Shipbuilding Museum.



Our magazine, *Chebacco*, is named for a type of boat built in the eighteenth century in Gloucester, Massachusetts and nearby towns. In 1762, Abraham Somes, his wife, and four young daughters sailed in a Chebacco boat to make their home in Somesville and become Mount Desert Island's first permanent Euro-American settlers.

We invite you to voyage through the histories of Mount Desert Island in this contemporary Chebacco.



Published annually by the Mount Desert Island Historical Society, Mount Desert, Maine



The mission of the Mount Desert Island Historical Society is to foster meaningful engagement with the histories of Mount Desert Island.

Visit [www.mdihistory.org](http://www.mdihistory.org) to:

- Become a member
- Check our calendar of events
- Find resources and links on the histories of Mount Desert Island

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