

Cranberry Isles Realty Trust
P.O. Box 4
Cranberry Isles, Maine 04625
www.facebook.com/cirtrust
www.cranberryislesrealtytrust.org

Board of Directors

Officers

Phil Whitney, President
J.C. Camelio, Vice President
Jim Kehoe, Treasurer
Chris Johnston, Secretary

Directors

Peter Buchsbaum
Lindsey Eysnogle
Pablo Ocampo
Dick Pierson
Ken Schmidt
Jim Singerling
Jeri Spurling

Staff

Bill Dowling, General Manager
Ric Gaither, Property Manager
Ben Sumner, Bookkeeper

**CRANBERRY ISLES
REALTY TRUST** 

1" x 4" Mailing Label

Fold

Introducing the Pease Family of Islesford

In April of this year, Jeff Pease and Barbary Caldwell-Pease moved into the CIRT home on Islesford with their family. Jeff and Barbara had been living Kansas City, Missouri for twenty years and decided they would like to resettle in Down East Maine. Jeff is related to Dr. Horace Pease of Ellsworth and had often visited this area while growing up. He introduced Barbara to the region, who immediately fell in love with coastal Maine.

A United States Air Force veteran, Jeff designs circuit boards for clients nationwide and holds six U.S. Patents. Barbara and daughter Sophia have been spending much of their summer building the circuit boards, that Jeff has designed, often assisted by son Johnathan. The other members of the Islesford Pease family are January who has been working at the Cranberry Isles Fisherman's Co-Op store and food truck, plus Tristan who was a student on Great Cranberry and has this shifted over with his school mates to the Ashley Bryan school.

When asked about the transition to life on Cranberry Isles, Barbara said that it was made so much easier thanks to the friendliness and kindness of the community. She credits several people for helping them move furniture and settle-in; provide bread, eggs and other necessities as the family got used to keeping adequate stores on hand. The neighborliness of the island community reinforced the family's sense that they had made the right move for them.



Barbara and Jeff Pease of Islesford

As Jeff was researching rentals he read about the recent development of high speed Internet service to the Cranberry Isles. "Without that, we wouldn't be able to live here" said Barbara, "it is absolutely essential to Jeff's design work and business." She adds that the house on Islesford is wonderful and the unusual application process that CIRT required encouraged them to explore living on Cranberry Isles. Laughing,

Barbara says, "it was the most unusual set of questions she had ever seen on an application, but we just loved it. We knew right away we weren't just applying to rent an apartment, we were involved in a process to become part of a community." Barbara said she and her family look forward to being more actively involved in Island life as time goes on. "Everything about being here has been wonderful; the summer people are so friendly, our neighbors are great, and we feel a sense of community here. It is just what we were looking for."

Jeff, Barb, Johnathan, January and Sophia run a small computer systems and support business, too. They invite you to contact them through Islesford Circuits for advice, repair, parts and consultation with your computer, phone or electronics questions and needs. (207) 669-8193, www.islesfordcircuits.com

CRANBERRY ISLES REALTY TRUST
IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OF
ISLANDERS DEDICATED TO
PROVIDING YEAR-ROUND HOUSING
FOR THOSE WHO OTHERWISE
COULD NOT AFFORD IT.

CRANBERRY ISLES REALTY TRUST



President's Message

There were many transitions during 2017-2018: Longtime Director Owen Roberts passed away last summer. Owen was an original Founder of CIRT, and contributed much time and money in support over the years. Jessi Duma departed last September to pursue higher education goals, and Bill Dowling replaced her as General Manager in January, Melissa Amuso stepped down as Bookkeeper in June, and was replaced by Ben Sumner. Jim Kehoe became Treasurer and J. C. Camelio moved up to serve as Vice President, replacing Peter Buchsbaum who remains on the Board. We saw the departures of Anna Fernald, Jim Gertmenian, Sally Rowan and Linda Lunt. New members included Ken Schmidt, Pablo Ocampo and Lindsay Eysnogle. Rosalie Kell departed the Rice House due to health reasons in January, and Paul Hewes & Sarah McCracken began occupancy in March. The Amuso Family acquired their own housing, departing the Islesford House in October. Extensive renovations were completed during the next several months under the supervision of Paul Fernald, and the Jeffrey Pease Family arrived in April.

The Preble Cove Trail on GCI was widened and new bog bridging installed. A Conservation Easement Agreement with Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) was completed, thus preserving the inherited Bruce Komusin Preble Cove beach and marsh area for public use. We also signed up all CIRT houses for Broadband internet service. After due research and deliberation, the inherited Bruce Komusin residence at Preble Cove was placed up for sale this summer. We hope the sale of the property will result in considerable cash reserves, enabling us to purchase one or more suitable affordable year-round rental homes, or possibly some land, as they become available.

I believe I have answered fairly completely the first question listed above at left in red. Regarding the other two questions: CIRT has been quite successful the past several years in constructing new affordable housing on Great Cranberry, and attracting families to fill all the residences. The presence of these folks has helped double the year-round population on GCI from (37) in 2001 to (74) in 2018. The island has shown a new vitality, especially in winter, when it appeared the year-round community was slipping away – no children, an aging population, a closed school, and dark houses in winter all across the island.

Now we have begun to focus our attention more aggressively towards Islesford. For years, Islesford seemed to be the stronger island – stable lobster fishing fleet, more balanced age demographics, significantly higher year-round population. But many on both Islesford and GCI were blindsided recently to learn that informal censuses taken reflected a surprising decline in year-round population, estimated at (50-55) residents in mid-winter. Consequently, CIRT has initiated efforts to assist Islesford to return to relative stability in the off-season. Our level of success will depend on the availability of housing and/or land, the amount of financial resources available, and perhaps most importantly the level of support shown by the Islesford population to achieve year-round stability.

We try to publicize our efforts through our newsletters and our Annual Meeting, and we encourage folks to contact us directly if they have questions, want to verify or dispel the latest rumor, or simply want to offer support in some manner. Sometimes we are involved in sensitive negotiations which limit our ability to publicly share this information until an appropriate time. But we do our best to remain open and transparent, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the economic, social and quality of life factors for both islands. I look forward to working with you to achieve these challenging goals in the coming year.

People occasionally ask me "What has CIRT been doing recently?" or "Why hasn't CIRT done more for Islesford?" or "Why doesn't CIRT publicize their activities?" These are all fair questions and deserve answers. I can first report that CIRT has probably experienced its most active year in its twenty-three year history. We completed the Strategic Planning phase, and have moved into our actual Fundraising Capital Campaign phase for CIRT. An enthusiastic Campaign Committee has been established under the professional guidance of Gary Friedmann & Associates with the goal of raising \$100,000.

*Phil Whitney
President*



The Board of Directors are honored to award Anna Fernald of Islesford a certificate of appreciation for her years of support to the community of Cranberry Isles, Maine. Anna received a bowl made by Marian Baker of Islesford Pottery in addition to the certificate. Photograph: Sarah Corson

**Cranberry Isles Realty Trust Capital Campaign:
Working to support a vibrant year-round island community**

As a resident of Cranberry Isles, I am sure you will agree that finding and keeping affordable rentals here can be tough. When houses come up for sale they are typically priced too high for local people. Affordable year-round housing is so hard to come by that many people end up moving several times in the course of a year. This is not desirable and certainly not practical for a family with young children.

Cranberry Isles Realty Trust (CIRT) was founded in 1996 to combat this issue. We provide affordable housing in order to attract year-round working families. Our board is comprised of year-round and seasonal residents of both Great Cranberry and Little Cranberry islands.

CIRT currently owns four homes and a property for sale on Great Cranberry, and one home on Little Cranberry. All homes we own are fully occupied. We have also assisted a family to purchase a home on Little Cranberry, with protective affordable housing covenants. This year we hired Bill Dowling to serve as General Manager. He brings a broad base of skills and knowledge to our daily operations.

Our work has helped strengthen the year-round community in the Cranberry Isles, particularly Great Cranberry. In the last four years, four new families have moved to the island. Its year-round population now exceeds that of Little Cranberry. Last winter approximately 50 people lived on Little Cranberry.

How can we encourage families to move here and stay, to sustain a thriving, year-round community? CIRT has a two-pronged approach:

KAITLYN'S STORY

With CIRT's assistance, my husband, Cory and I were able to purchase and renovate a house on Islesford nine years ago. Living here has allowed us to build and maintain successful businesses and raise our son who will be entering the Ashley Bryan School this year. We are surrounded by natural beauty, a rich island history, and a close community of caring, hardworking and talented people. CIRT has given us the opportunity to participate in and enjoy a quality of life unlike anywhere else."

Kaitlyn Duggan, CIRT Campaign Committee

1. When the Komusin house on Great Cranberry sells, we will use those funds to seek additional housing opportunities with a focus on Islesford.

2. We have launched a campaign to raise \$100,000 which will be used to assist families, wishing to live year round on the Cranberry Isles, with strategies to find and obtain affordable housing. Plus, CIRT will establish a rainy day maintenance fund for all of the CIRT homes.

We feel that \$100,000 is a modest target but it will make a big difference to Islesford. If both summer and year-round residents of the Cranberry Isles embrace this campaign, we can build a stronger community and preserve our quality of life for future generations.

If you would like to learn more about this campaign or get involved, please contact Bill Dowling, J.C. Camelio or Jeri Spurling through, info@cranberryislesrealtytrust.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

INGRID'S STORY

Newly married, my husband Ric and I lived on Great Cranberry back in the early 2000s in a CIRT house. After two years we decided to move back to our native North Carolina. We regretted that decision almost immediately. We missed the island and decided to move back. We knew affordable housing was still an issue on the island but felt sure with our contacts and prior experience that we would be able to find a place to live. We were wrong! The CIRT houses were occupied. We could not afford the seasonal rates of the few houses that were available to rent. I think I called around 15 people looking for housing of any kind, year-round or seasonal. But nothing worked out. I remember thinking to myself, if we can't find housing using a healthy list of established contacts and island knowledge, how in the world would newcomers ever get the chance to live on the island?

We ended up moving to Southwest Harbor and started commuting daily to the island for work. After a few months a CIRT house became available and we happily moved in. Our son started kindergarten soon after.

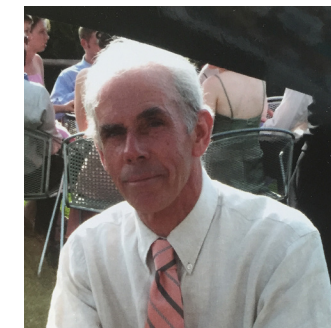
Later, when the two new CIRT homes were constructed, we moved into the one named Pondview, which is incredibly energy and heat efficient. I sometimes joke about how we've lived on the island twice, and in three different homes, but it's only because of CIRT that we've been able to do that and we are grateful for those opportunities.

Our son will start 7th grade next year and we've known for a while now that Great Cranberry is our home. We are actively searching for affordable land or housing to buy so that we can put down forever roots here. The beautiful home we currently occupy can be made available for the next family searching for the quality of life that we found.

Ingrid Gaither, CIRT Campaign Committee

Introducing New CIRT General Manager

Bill Dowling has lived on Great Cranberry with his wife Barbara and daughter Sofie since 1999. He has a strong interest in the growth and viability of the Cranberry Isles community. Bill is a long standing member of both the Harbor Committee and the Planning Board.



He is on the board of the Blue Hill Chamber Music Association and is Treasurer of the International One Design World Class Association. Bill has twenty years experience as a property manager. His main career has centered on fine woodworking, primarily as a harpsichord builder, and cabinet and furniture maker. He currently operates RedBoat

Marine Services, providing wooden boat restoration and the RedBoat Water Taxi. He is a musician, and an active yacht captain. His varied interests include family life, island life, music, sailing and reading. Bill's favorite job is his current one: being Sofie Dowling's father.

The directors of CIRT are very pleased to have such a capable, accomplished and dedicated person step into the role of the part-time general manager. In this role Bill will oversee day to day operations managing CIRT properties. Working with the board of directors, he will help devise a sustainable path for the organization, and will act as a public liaison to the community.

**For more information, please contact us at:
info@cranberryislesrealtytrust.org**



A Short History of CIRT

For the past 22 years CIRT has been faithfully serving the Town of Cranberry Isles to promote affordable year-round housing options! In a very natural progression, some families have come, added to the community and gone, some have moved on into their own island properties, and some continue to occupy the 5 rental units that CIRT manages.

The people and families mentioned in the timeline at right have added immeasurably to the life and vitality of our Town in many ways.

- 1995** The Town of Cranberry Isles annual Town Meeting votes to appoint a committee to study year round housing needs for the islands.
- 1996** CIRT conducts its first meeting.
- 1998** (20 years ago!) CIRT incorporates as a 501(c)(3) organization defining its purpose as "to lessen the burden of Town Government."
- 2000** CIRT applies for and receives a \$300,000 Community Development Block Grant, used to purchase the Rice house, move the Kane house to Town land on Great Cranberry and build one new house on Islesford.

- 2001** A modular home is installed on Town-owned land on Islesford adjacent to the gravel pit.
- 2002** Blair Colby begins renting the Kane house, Ginger and Jennifer Cook rent the Rice house and Sonja Moser rents the Islesford house.
- 2004** Rebecca Knowles donates land on Islesford to CIRT.
- 2005** CIRT accepts sealed bids for the purchase of Rebecca Knowles' land and awards the sale to Dan & Cynthia Leif. Funds are used for maintenance projects on CIRT existing rentals.

- 2008** With Genesis Grant funds, CIRT hires a part-time director, Alyson Mayo, and works with consultant, Jim Hatch, to develop a 5 year plan for new programs.
- 2009** CIRT begins a major capital campaign to support land bank and mortgage aid programs. We devise and draft an agreement to aid the Duggan family to buy a year round property with covenants to keep it as a year round property in perpetuity.
- 2010** The Duggan family moves into their own home purchased with assistance by CIRT.

- 2011** CIRT obtains a \$300,000 Maine State Housing Authority Bond.
- 2012** Bruce Komusin Donates land for two single family homes on Great Cranberry.
- 2014** In June, 2 modular homes are delivered and set on foundations on Great Cranberry. In September, the Walls family and Gaither family move into the homes. Mike Justa occupies the Rice house.
- 2015** Sumner family moves into the Kane house. Sue Turbide, a telecommuter moves into the Rice House.

- 2016** Rosalie Kell moves into the Rice House and expresses interest in purchasing it. Eventually, it is clear that she will need to move off island for health reasons.
- 2018** The Pease Family moves into the Islesford house, Paul Hewes and Sarah McCracken move into the Rice house on Cranberry, and CIRT continues with full occupancy of all properties. Now we look to Islesford to make a difference with new projects.

Quoting from CIRT's 5-year plan, written in 2009:
"From 1990 to 2000 the town lost 61 residents, dropping from a population of 189 to 128, a decline of 32%. This decline continued, with an additional loss of 28 residents from 2000 to 2007. From 1990 to 2007 Cranberry Isles population declined by 47% while the population of Hancock County grew by 17% over the same period. Cranberry Isles has lost almost half of its population over the past 17 years. There are some indication that the population may be stabilizing, with Maine Housing actually projecting a slight increase in population over the next five years."

"The other population trend impacting island communities is the aging of the population. From

1990 to 2000 the population of children under 18 dropped by 53%, from 49 to 23. Over the same period, the population of elders 65 or older declined by only 16%, increasing the elderly portion of the population to 28%."

From my own observations, Islesford had a mere 50 residents this winter and I've heard it quoted Great Cranberry had 74 residents. It's time to be proactive to anticipate the aging of our population and to help encourage more who might enjoy island life by providing opportunities to live here.

Jeri Spurling