
Letters From New England

October 8, 2009

Unattended children...



View from Coast Guard Beach

Little Cranberry Island, Maine



Cranberry Isles

I would be remiss to leave you with a rain-soaked impression of the Cranberry Isles because they are simply beautiful on a sunny day. The best way to see them is by bike, which you can take with you on the mail boat out of Northeast Harbor. I prefer Little Cranberry because you



can ride to Coast Guard Beach in a few minutes and gain access to over a mile of unspoiled rocky sea-shore. A great place just to sit and have a picnic lunch and

enjoy the sights and sounds of the ocean in relative isolation.

Before leaving Mount Desert, I took Ann on a short tour of the Mt. Desert Campground at the North end of Somes Sound. The campground is situated in one of the most idyllic corners of the island. The campground caters to tent camping, but does allow small trailers (less than 20 feet in length) – pop-up campers fit in this category. By and large, however, tent camping



is the norm. Campsites are well-spaced in wooded settings. Many of the sites overlook the water. Spotlessly maintained rest rooms with showers are strategically located throughout the campground.

Many children of all ages come with their families during the summer. Friendships are formed instantaneously. The kids bring their mountain bikes and are able to ride a variety (literally miles) of wooded roads traversing the campground. The roads are hilly and present enough of a challenge to keep the rides interesting. The best part of this camping experience for the kids, however, is “the

dock.” It’s here that the kids spend hours swimming (bring a neoprene top to keep them from turning blue), and catching rock crabs using nets filled with chicken parts purchased at the campground store. The crabs seem to have as much fun as the kids, as they always get tossed back in for another round. The store also sells double-scoop ice cream cones, but they aren’t much good for catching crabs.

In addition to offering a beautiful setting for camping, and a video-free playground for the kids, the campground offers fantastic access to Somes Sound for kayakers. Many’s the summer I spent launching off the dock or the ramp into the waters of the Sound.



Many of the local kayak tours also use the campground as a launch site: especially

for a North-South run down the Sound when the wind and tide are favorable. I never fail to be amazed when a seal pops its head up within a couple feet of my boat and gives me the once over with those huge brown eyes. Loons (appropriately named) also have this habit, but they do it in a much more dramatic fashion – they pop their whole body out of the water in one fell swoop: like a rubber ducky coming up from the bottom of the tub! Then they stare at you with those big bloodshot eyes.

Just before leaving Mt. Desert for New Hampshire, Ann and I stopped at the Town Hall Market at the intersection of State Highway 102 and Knox Road. It’s a popular spot to pick up a sandwich or sub for lunch, or for the trip back home. They make the best tasting and most generously filled sandwiches on the Island. Given the number of young children brought into the store, however, the proprietor has seen fit to post this sign behind the counter: “Unattended children will be given espresso and a free kitten.” Keep an eye on your kids!

Garrett (with Ann)