

**Getting to Know
Angela Taylor**

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NEFFA
NEW ENGLAND FOLK FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION
NEWS

Fall 2013 – Vol. XXXIX #3

**Same great taste,
now minutes-free!**

Farewell to a friend

~~Message from
The President~~



Maine Summer Islander is 98 Years Young

By Robin Clifford for the Bangor Daily News

This piece about Angela Taylor appeared in the Bangor Daily News. We know Angie as a NEFFA Life Member, long-time NEFFA volunteer, and current Folk Bazaar chair. We are thrilled to learn more about Angie. — Editor

Family lore has it that Angela Taylor weighed nearly 13 pounds at birth. Her subsequent breathing problems were so severe by the time she was 3 that a doctor told Angela’s parents she would die in six months. That was about 95 years ago.

I met Angela last week in a rented house in Islesford, Maine, on Little Cranberry Island. Her two nieces met me and invited me onto a screened-in porch for lunch. Aunt Angela sat in a wicker chair wrapped in a purple-shawl, her beautiful white hair coiled into a loose bun.

I thought, “What an unassuming, quiet woman.”

My first impression missed the mark. The twinkle in Angela’s eye, her ready laughter, colorful stories and flashes of assertive opinion soon shifted my assessment. Angela is a formidable woman.

A seamstress by trade, Angela studied art and dressmaking at the High School of Practical Arts in Dorchester, Mass. — “the most wonderful high school ever.” She recently attended her 75th reunion.

“Did you have any more schooling?” I asked.

“No. No, we couldn’t

afford it,” but she learned on her own and through others, she said. She was an employee for a while, then struck out on her own so she could make her own schedule. She went into business as a dressmaker.

I wondered if she had children.

She quickly responded, “Never married. Didn’t want to. Too independent.”

Independent says it well, but there is more. Angela makes friends easily, rises naturally to leadership roles, is a skilled organizer, an innovative craftswoman and expresses joy with unabashed simplicity.

“All these years I’ve been having too much fun here,” she said. That is also why her family came for an extended visit this year — to see what she was up to.

Back in 1957, Angela was invited for a summer visit and fell in love with an island in Maine where “Everyone is very independent. They all have their own things that they do.” She has returned almost every summer since.

I was fortunate for the presence of Angela’s nieces, Andy and Micki, to learn more about the summer islander. Angela is disinclined to talk about herself, but thanks to them, I learned that



Angela Taylor, 98, reads from a journal in which she has recorded summer visits to Islesford, Maine since 1957

she still walks the shoreline, collecting both edibles and “odds and ends.” I left with a recipe for seaweed pudding and some of the crafts that she sells every year at the annual Islesford Fair, where she runs the beachcombers’ table.

Angela turned the conversation to her talented island friends who taught her things like how to craft a mobile.

“Before Rosamund showed me how to go from the bottom up, I would sit for hours trying to go from the top down! I learned a lot from Rosamund Lord. She roamed the beaches just like Ashley. She has bins of things all sorted, just like Ashley.”

Ashley Bryan, renowned artist, storyteller and puppeteer, is Angela’s longtime island friend, one of several who have offered their homes as a place for Angela to stay. Angela insisted that I visit Ashley with her before I left.

“Auntie, tell her about starting the New England Folk Festival,” said Andy, trying to steer her aunt toward her own talents.

“You were a founder of the festival?” I asked.

“Well, I was part of the workmen from the beginning,” Angela said.

“Auntie, weren’t you president?”

For two years Angela was president of the 70-year-old Folk Festival Association, and she still runs their folk bazaar. Her interest in craft and folk arts, especially the art of found objects, also inspired her to lead a “creative recycling group” in Boston, which she still leads. That group originally met at her local YWCA, an institution that has been a second home to Angela since grammar school.

Through the Y, Angela made lifelong friends, ran



Angela Taylor, 98, and her long time island friend, Ashley Bryan, in Bryan’s home in the town of Islesford on Little Cranberry Island.

programs (“They flew me to California one year for a convention”) and joined an outing club.

“We had a group who danced together, skied together — we did everything together.” One of their ski outings, Micki pointed out, was a trip up the experts-only Tuckerman’s Ravine on Mt. Washington.

Also because of the Y, Angela met her friend Robin, the one who introduced her to Little Cranberry Island.

Starting that first summer, Angela kept a journal every year. Andy retrieved the journal from inside the house in order to jog her aunt’s memory.

Angela browsed through musing, “One year we saw the most beautiful northern lights ... One year Robin was in the hospital, Rosamund came to check on me ... I missed one summer because of no bus fare; the next year I rode a bike ...”

“You rode your bike to Maine? From Boston?” I asked.

Angela shrugged. Evidently, it was no big deal.

“Auntie, didn’t you lead bike trips?”

“Oh, I used to lead trips for AYH (American Youth Hostel). Sometimes I rode to Maine with the outing club,” she replied.

Generally amazed, I later followed the intrepid Angela to Ashley Bryan’s house, admiring the strong hands that gripped her walker. I puzzled over what it was about Angela Taylor that was strikingly uplifting. Ashley illuminated it for me. He looked up from his conversation with two other visitors when Angela walked in, his face lit up, and he introduced her triumphantly:

“Angie is 98, and she’s a child!”

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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The NEFFA Nominating Committee is seeking interested (and interesting) people to join us on the NEFFA Board of Directors. We have several positions for Director and one position for Nominating Committee, to be elected at the Annual Meeting at the next Festival.

This is an ideal opportunity for anyone who has ideas, skills, or energy to help ensure that the New England Folk Festival continues to be an important part of our life. NEFFA's goal of preserving folk traditions is overseen by the Board of Directors, composed of elected and appointed members.

We currently are looking to fill the positions of Vice President, Treasurer, three Directors, and one Nominating Committee member. Please consider volunteering yourself or any of your NEFFA Friends to fill any of these seats. Board members are expected to chair, serve as a member of a committee, or take on another responsibility.

If you - or anyone you know - are interested, please contact your friendly neighborhood Nominating Committee member:

Bruce Randall: melismata@hotmail.com
Mac Sloan: sloan@medevelop.com
Audrey Knuth: audreylk24@gmail.com

70th Annual New England Folk Festival
April 25-27, 2014
Mansfield, MA

Fire Destroys Historic Hall in North Yarmouth, Maine

Wescustogo Hall, a former grange hall repurposed into a community center, burned to the ground on the evening of August 30th. The local contra dance had regular dances in this hall, which, since its construction in 1959 has been the home for scouts, bean suppers, and innumerable celebrations.

The fire originated in an area that housed electrical panels, but no official cause of the fire is likely to be determined. The hall was unoccupied at the time, and there were no injuries.

The town had recently allocated money to improve the building, including installation of alarms and a sprinkler system. There is community support for a new structure, but there are no concrete plans at this time.



Beware of Imitations!

NEFFA Techno-Textile
design in Amsterdam



*Our motto: “NEFFA, the
New England Folk
Festival Association: oft
imitated, but never
copied... or duplicated, or
something like that.”*



In Memoriam

NEFFA is mourning the loss of Liz Tyler, who served in the Program Committee for the Festival. What follows is her death notice that was created by her family and friends.

Elizabeth Tyler, mother of Maeve Tyler-Penny, wife of Robert Penny, and sister of Barbara, Michael, and Kathleen, died on Monday July 15, 2013, as the result of injuries sustained in a car accident on July 6. Liz was born on April 6, 1963, in Monroe, Connecticut. She moved to Boston to go to Wheelock College, where she earned a BA in early childhood education in 1985. Liz earned an MA in clinical social work from Smith College in 1998, became an LICSW, and saw clients at South Shore Mental Health, North Suffolk Mental Health Association, and the Rice Center at the Boston Institute of Psychotherapy.

She became involved with Boston’s international folk dance community, where she danced with the Mandala Folk Dance Ensemble, sang with Divi Zeni, and helped coordinate the Folk Arts Center session of Pinewoods Camp. In these and other ways, Liz was a strong presence and contributor to the folk dance village.

Professionally and personally, Liz helped many people through hard times with her deep empathy tempered by realism. She had a talent for pointing people in a direction that would help them and was compassionate about their limitations. Liz was drawn to an enormous range of interests, including singing in many styles, folk dancing, hiking, travel, cycling, and knitting, always with a strong cup of tea within reach.



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