

Quill & Ink

Spring & Summer
2018

The Joys and Challenges on the Road

We recently celebrated our one-year mark since we sold our home in Vermont, along with virtually all our possessions, and began exploring new living environments in places we've long loved. In that time, we've greeted a summer's worth of sunrises over Jay Peak from a cozy retreat nestled into the Cold Hollow Mountains; embraced walkable, windswept village life on a gorgeous snowy island off the coast of Maine; indulged in daily barefoot sunset strolls in the surf on a barrier island off the coast of North Carolina roamed freely by beautiful wild horses; and now find ourselves surrounded by equestrian farms and vineyards cuddled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, a stone's throw from the stunning Shenandoah National Park and the Skyline Drive. We have celebrated other important milestones, too, like a milestone birthday and a milestone wedding anniversary. It has been, by any worthwhile measure, an amazing year.

We have also braved some challenges; we've very sadly lost two beloved members of our traveling household—first Preston, then Murphy. Gone is the welcome-home of two white tails wagging and two rabbit noses sniffing for fresh berries and herbs.

We have also discovered that securing fully furnished, pet-friendly, short-term housing is, admittedly, sur-

prisingly trickier than we'd originally anticipated. Also gone is our longtime, deep, and often automatic familiarity with a community, replaced with uncertainty about not only optimal and alternative driving routes and parking accessibility but also where to find a reputable optometrist, a post office, or a great cup of coffee. Strategizing a practical solution for managing our mail when we move so frequently has proved interesting. And after so many years in New England, we sometimes still find ourselves a bit out of our element. A subtropical climate, for example, offers unfamiliar and distinctive plants and sometimes dangerous creatures, concern about the UV index, and what in the world are hushpuppies?

But if part of our motivation for striking off on this seminomadic lifestyle was to indulge our adventurous spirits, stretch our personal growth, and encourage ourselves and each other to expand our comfort zones—and it was—we feel we're off to a smashing start. While we're leaving ourselves open to the possibility of planting roots once again at some point, for now, we're simply enjoying the ride and all the many lessons it offers.

Thanks for coming along on this journey with us!

—S & C

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Words can't truly sum up the losses of Preston and Murphy, but they taught us many things. **PAGE 6**



FORTY-ONE AND COUNTING ...

Just a few weeks ago, we surpassed forty-one million words edited, and we're well on our way to surpassing six hundred full-length books soon—perhaps before the next issue of *Quill & Ink* is published! Care to share some of your milestones with us? We'd love to hear about them!

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SPRING.SUMMER.2018

Quill & Ink (quill-ink.com) is written, photographed (unless otherwise noted), designed, and published seasonally by ScriptAcuity Studio.

BEHIND THE NAME

The quill represents creativity and self-expression, in the written word and also beyond it. Because the inky octopus utilizes a wide variety of tools in the course of its day and is associated with such attributes as adaptability, flexibility, diversity, focus, intuition, and transformation—among others—it thus seemed a fitting symbol for ScriptAcuity Studio.

A little disclaimer: all thoughts, opinions, expressions, and comments are simply our perspectives.



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A Beach Life

For part of this year, we called the little town of Corolla, North Carolina, our home. Located on a subtropical barrier island cuddled between the Currituck Sound and the Atlantic Ocean, it was, until about thirty years ago, a relatively little-known sliver of coastal paradise. It is part of a two hundred-mile-long chain of similar barrier islands and peninsulas off the coasts of southeastern Virginia and North Carolina known as the *Outer Banks*.

Though it is ever-increasingly commercialized and developed—significantly more so than it was even when we first visited about fifteen years ago—there is a lot to love about Corolla, especially in the sleepy off-season when one may stroll mile after mile of pristine shoreline, often without encountering another person but possibly happening upon a group of the feral horses that call this area home. A popular theory asserts that the horses are the descendants of Spanish mustangs who were shipwrecked off the island's coast in the 1500s. Another contends that the horses' ancestors were abandoned by the Spanish explorers who had brought them here after the explorers' attempt at colonizing this area met an abysmal end. Whatever their origin, they are magnificent creatures and are truly a sight to behold as they roam the beaches and the dunes, nibbling sea grass and docily meandering in the surf.

Not far from our former home in Corolla is the site of Wilbur and Orville Wright's historic first flight in the curiously named town of Kill Devil Hills. A bit farther down the shore is the site of the lost colony of Roanoke, where more than one hundred English colonists disappeared seemingly without a trace in the sixteenth century and about which much has been written and speculated (the mystery remains unsolved to this day). Still farther south is where Edward Teach, commonly known as the pirate Blackbeard, hid out from and eventually met his end at the hands of the British navy after he ran aground his ship *Queen Anne's Revenge*—itself a captured French ship that he'd renamed.

Whether or not the running aground of *Queen Anne's Revenge* was intentional—as some scholars have speculated—or accidental, the fact remains that the waters off the coast of Corolla and the rest of the Outer Banks are infamously treacherous; more than five thousand ships have been lost to the deep there since the 1526 advent of such recordkeeping! The Outer Banks' unpredictable currents and often brutal waves are attributed to the cataclysmic collision of temperate Gulf Stream waters with the frigid Arctic Currents.

While entrenched in history, the area is also filled with more than four hundred species of

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TOP ROW (L-R):
A feral horse in Corolla; a female mallard at the Whalehead Club; a ghost crab at dusk in Corolla.

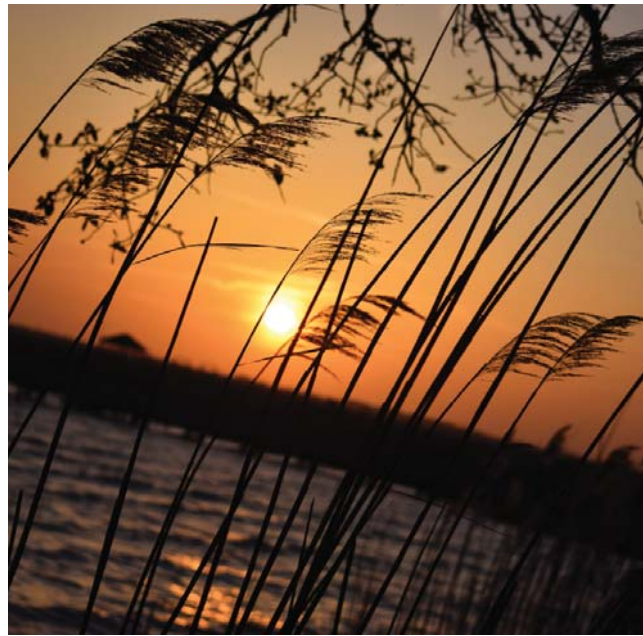
BOTTOM ROW (L-R):
A family of Canadian geese stroll to the Currituck Sound; a great egret at the Whalehead Club.



BEACH FROM PAGE 2

birds, including many different ducks, geese, sandpipers, egrets, herons, warblers, pelicans, woodpeckers, orioles, owls, hawks, eagles, osprey, plovers, and more. It is reported that the Currituck Sound, which connects to the Albemarle Sound, shelters nearly a third (32 percent) of North Carolina's wintering bird population and 6 percent of the birds that travel along the Atlantic Flyway. What a spectacular place to bird-watch and connect with the wonders of the natural world.

It was a longtime dream to live, even if only temporarily, on the Outer Banks, and we were grateful for and gleeful about the opportunity. Will we return? Perhaps. Though ours is a big world with much to explore, the Outer Banks—particularly its remoter areas—has something of a magnetic appeal for us. Barefoot beach walk, anyone? ▀



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Sunset over the Currituck Sound; Canadian geese over the Currituck Sound; Powell's Point sunset over the Albemarle Sound; the Whalehead Club, with the Currituck Beach Lighthouse in the distance.



Small Surprises

On a delightfully warm and sunny spring morning in Corolla, North Carolina, our amazing dog Murphy discovered this little creature on our back lawn.



Puzzlingly, this tiny life-form was all alone in a vast sea of grass and sand, ostensibly trying to make its way to some far-distant water source.

Where did it come from? If there were a clutch of hatchlings nearby, where were its siblings? Was it perhaps snapped up by a foraging seabird, fumbled, and fortuitously dropped squarely into the tiny patch of the planet we occupied at that time?

However it arrived, it was clear it needed a bit of assistance.

We gingerly offered it an empty blueberry container, and it eagerly scrambled into it all on its own, tiny scaly legs already maneuvering expertly to find purchase in its temporary transport pod.



Along with the ever-adventurous Murphy and Gili, we piled into our vehicle and journeyed about a mile to a charming little pond inhabited by other turtles. At the water's edge, we gently reopened the blueberry container and patiently waited for our new little friend to discern its next step.



It tentatively peeked over the side, assessed its surroundings, and cautiously clambered out. It took a moment to get its bearings, swiveling its miniscule head and balancing on a blade of grass with its wee claws.

All at once, it scurried over and plunged right into its new pond and made itself at home!



Without a background in herpetology, we could not venture a guess at our new little buddy's species, although a friend suggested it might be a *Pseudemys concinna*—known colloquially as a *river cooter*—a freshwater turtle native to this part of the country. If so, this little charmer may very well live a nice long life—river cooters can live forty years or more!

Best wishes and good luck, little friend! ▪



Before the Banks

Before fulfilling a decades-long dream of moving to the Outer Banks, we fulfilled another decades-long dream by cozying up for a blustery New England winter on an island off the rugged and dramatic coast of Maine (we wrote a bit about this in our Fall '17 / Winter '18 issue of *Quill & Ink*). Mount Desert Island, home to Acadia National Park and other stunning landscapes, has a rich history that includes the Wabanaki as well as French explorers and missionaries, involvement with the American Revolution and World War II, and more. Though millions of tourists descend on this 108-square-mile island every year, it in fact only has a year-round population of just over ten thousand. It has stunning, remarkable natural beauty and is a place we've returned to together again and again over the past fifteen years—and far longer for us individually.

Having historically always lived in places requiring us to drive everywhere to access goods and services, we relished living in the little village of Bar Harbor, in which we could stroll to virtually anything we needed, often via the popular shore path that hugs part of the edge of Frenchman Bay.

The seemingly ubiquitous T-shirt shops and souvenir establishments standing shoulder to shoulder throughout the tiny town were closed for the season, and what remained open maintained the village's warm and steady heartbeat. While *quaint*, *precious*, and *charming* often come to mind for many when thinking of the off-season Bar Harbor, what struck us as even more fitting

were—even in the icy, bone-cracking chill of winter—*warm*, *community-oriented*, and *vibrant*. It is a place that, through its good-natured optimism, cherishing of simple pleasures, and willingness of its residents to champion one another, cheers itself and its inhabitants on, reveling in the natural beauty all around it and encouraging its people to lift their faces toward the sunlight that first shines there—at least part of the year—before anywhere else in the country. Within days, life-long islanders were calling out to us on the street by name, smiling and offering hugs and invitations to their homes.

We absolutely, unequivocally loved it. ■

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BELOW: Bass Harbor, on
Mount Desert Island.



More Octopus Sightings

You might recall from a previous issue of *Quill & Ink* that we were giving away the last of our official ScriptAcuity Studio T-shirts. The good news is that the last of the shirts have found homes. Behold! SAS's octopus mascot continues to make its way around the country, from the West Coast to the East Coast, from the south to the north, and around the world!

Here are some of its most recent sightings. Clockwise from the top left:

John Kurgan, founder of Hungry Goat Recording Studio, collaborator with Sting, and man-about-town, in Bar Harbor, Maine.

Jane Caron, senior economist extraordinaire, on Zugspitze (the highest mountain in the Wetterstein), near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

GG Gagne, part-time Southern belle, in Kissimmee, Florida.

J. Tully Watson, CEO of JT Watson Financial (www.jtwatsonfinancial.com), in Santa Monica, California. ■



Always Remembered

There are very few words that can describe how we felt losing both Preston and Murphy a week apart at the beginning of June. Many of you already know the details about the circumstances and hard decisions, and we won't belabor those here. Suffice it to say, we never know how long we have with those we love, so let us always take time to cherish those important to us, and love them fiercely. ▀





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