



# THE KATAHDIN SEXTANT

October 2025

**Our mission:** To preserve and operate the Katahdin as a “living museum” for the benefit of our community, region, and future generations.

## Letter from the Executive Director

As this unusually sunny, dry summer comes to a close, we look forward to the upcoming season with renewed enthusiasm. The third phase of our restoration project has begun and the sounds of hammers and saws can be heard all over East Cove. For more on this phase of the project, see page 2.

Just over 8200 passengers cruised with us this year. While that total is down from 2023 and 2024, ticket sales revenues increased by 10 percent over last year. This tells us that we had more ticketed passengers and fewer charter passengers than usual.

Our summer cruise offerings included a new Country Music Cruise, our second annual Pirate Cruise, and the highlight of the year, the Last Log Drive Cruise. The Kate cruised into Spencer Bay this season for the first time in 50 years and it was an amazing experience. For more on this event, see pages 4—5.

We are thrilled to announce that MMM received a grant from the Institute of Museum

and Library Services (IMLS). See page 2 for the details.

In recent years, staffing has been a challenge—especially in the galley. This year we were joined by a young woman named Khulan from Mongolia. Khulan is a student at dental school and came to the states to earn money for school and to improve her English. She took to the galley like a fish to water (ahem) and soon became an important part of our crew. After she returned home at the beginning of September, our own Ashley Bussell took on management of the galley as if she had been doing it all her life! The results were impressive—galley sales increased by 20% over 2024! For more stories about our crew, see page 3.

We are always saddened to hear of the passing of Katahdin supporters. This year we lost Bill Hunter, Cheryl Muzzy, Ross Beale, George McEvoy and our own Ardean Thornton. Ardean had been a fixture at the museum since the

earliest days and she will be sorely missed. We have a tribute to her on page 8.

With the support of anonymous donors, we continued the First Mates’ Club this year, entertaining 251 kids with rave reviews from their parents! We also hosted 10 kids from NREC, 18 students from TCTC in Dexter and a total of 129 for our two school cruises in September. This year Forest Hills School in Jackman participated for the first time, so we’ve now engaged kids from three Maine counties! We want to thank our partners in the educational cruises: Friends of Wilson Pond/MRLT, Appalachian Mountain Club, Piscataquis County Soil & Water Conservation District and Boothbay Sea & Science Center.

This year was the final year for our beloved crew member Ray Giroux. Ray has been a valued employee for ten years and he will be missed.

Liz McKeil, Executive Director



Photo contributed by Mary Robshaw

### Inside this issue:

FINAL PHASE OF KEEP KATE CRUISING CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY	2
CAPTAIN RANDY HONORED	3
MMM WELCOMES NEW CRUISE DIRECTOR	3
LAST LOG DRIVE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CRUISE	4-5
STORIES FROM THE LAST LOG DRIVE	6-7
REMEMBERING ARDEAN THORNTON	8
VINTAGE POSTCARDS	9
2025 CRUISING SEASON IN REVIEW	10-11



# Moosehead Marine Museum

## MMM Awarded IMLS Grant

### KEEP KATE CRUISING CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

LIZ MCKEIL, EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

JENNIFER AUCOIN

BETHANY BEVERLY

STEPHANIE BOONE

KEYTH CARTER

SALLY FARRAND

BOB FREDERICK

JOAN HAWKES

KAY JOHNSON

CHRISTAL LEMOINE

CANDACE MORRELL

JOHN MORRELL

BETSY ROCKWELL

ALICIA STONE

LEA WATT

PETE WHITIN

ROGERS WOOLSTON

We learned at the end of September that we have been awarded a Museums for America Grant of \$112,960 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), an independent federal agency that supports libraries, archives and museums in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

With the help of board member and fundraising

committee member Sally Farrand, we originally applied for the grant in November of 2023. We were not successful in that grant cycle, so we reapplied a year later.

The Museums for America program supports museums of all sizes and disciplines in strategic, project-based efforts to serve the public through exhibitions, educational/interpretive

programs, digital learning resources, professional development, community debate and dialogue, audience-focused studies, and/or collections management, curation, care, and conservation.

IMLS received 458 applications requesting \$90 million and was able to make 62 Museums for America awards for a total of \$13,914,390.

## Final Phase of Keep Kate Cruising Campaign Underway!

Securing the IMLS grant has raised our campaign total to \$1,738,148—just over \$250,000 under our goal of \$2 million. With the generous support of our donors and the hard work of the capital campaign committee, the end is within reach!

The Keep Kate Cruising Campaign committee has several mini-campaigns planned for next year. Kicking this phase off will be an open house at the museum on November 29 to unveil our new sign honoring the original plank owners of the Katahdin. These donors made the Kate's return to the waters of Moosehead Lake possible

after she had been decommissioned by Scott Paper Company in 1976. When we decided to place our Keep Kate Cruising sign in place of the original donor plaques, we commissioned a new sign to ensure that our original donors are not forgotten.

The KKC committee will be adding a new section to our fundraising sign this fall. That leaves just the smokestack empty! We hope there is another major donor in the wings who would enjoy the opportunity to take us over the finish line and have the honor of placing the final section on our sign!



Thank you to B.W. Barge & Crane Service for their expert help in removing Kate's anchor as part of Phase 3 deck demolition.



**THANKS TO YOUR INCREDIBLE SUPPORT, WE'RE \$250,000 AWAY FROM REACHING OUR \$2 MILLION GOAL!**

THERE'S STILL TIME TO DONATE TO THE CAMPAIGN—YOU CAN PLEDGE OVER 3 YEARS OR MAKE A GIFT THIS WINTER.

GO TO [KATAHDINCRUISES.COM/PRESERVE-THE-KATE](https://katahdincruises.com/preserve-the-kate) TO MAKE A KEEP KATE CRUISING CAMPAIGN GIFT SECURELY ONLINE; REQUEST ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM THE MUSEUM BY CALLING 207-695-2716 OR EMAILING LIZ MCKEIL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT [LMCKEIL@MMM8.ORG](mailto:LMCKEIL@MMM8.ORG); SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF THE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE; OR SCAN THE QR CODE ABOVE.

## Captain Randy Gartley Honored with Commemorative Coin

If you've cruised on the Steamboat Katahdin in the past dozen years, chances are you've met Captain Randy Gartley. Originally from Presque Isle, Randy moved to Greenville in 2013. One day, he saw an ad on Channel 19 calling for deck hands on the Katahdin and decided to stop by the Moosehead Marine Museum to learn more.

With a background in fitness and parks & recreation, Randy did not know that visit would launch him on a new course. "I started out as a deck hand on the Kate," he recalled. "I liked it because I didn't grow up doing it. You're never too old to learn something new."

It didn't take long for Randy to move up the ranks. Demonstrating a natural understanding of boats, he began training as an engineer under longtime crew member Pete Noyes. Randy remembered, "I learned a lot from Pete. He worked with me and was very patient."

When a vacancy for captain of the Kate opened in 2018, Randy found himself at the wheel. "I was thrown into the role!" he

said with a laugh. He credits former captain and MMM Executive Director Maynard Russell with showing him the ropes. "I really learned from scratch," Randy said, "but now it's become second nature." Anyone who has cruised with Captain Randy at the wheel would agree—he's a natural.

One of Randy's favorite parts of the job is seeing how excited passengers get. "We provide a service and we want them to have the best boat ride they've ever had," he said. Meeting new people each summer and hearing their stories is a highlight for him and the crew.

This past July, the Katahdin crew made a new friend in Captain Jon "Sideshow" Bradford, Executive Officer of the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, who cruised with his family. Then, in August, Captain Bradford sent a commemorative coin with a note that read, "The enclosed coin is a token of my appreciation for the talk we had in the Kate's pilot house during the Sugar Island Cruise

on July 15th. You and your entire team are a class act. Hope to see you next summer."

For Captain Randy, the gift was a "big honor" for the entire crew. "Getting recognition from Captain Bradford showed a lot about who we are and how we function as a team," he said. "This is why we do what we do."

All of us at the Moosehead Marine Museum thank Captain Bradford for his kind words and recognition—and we look forward to welcoming his family back next summer. As Captain Randy said with a smile, "We'll be looking for him."



## MMM Welcomes Cruise Director Christal LeMoine

In 2025, MMM welcomed Christal LeMoine as our new Cruise Director—but to all of us, she is no stranger.

Born and raised on Swans Island, Christal spent 26 years in real estate before joining MMM in 2022, stating simply, "I wanted to be on the water." That first season, she took on many roles on the crew, including galley assistant and hostess and clerk in the museum and gift shop.

In 2023 and 2024, Christal lived in Montana, but her visits back to Maine in

the fall were perfectly timed—coinciding with the Head of the Lake cruise and vacancies in the galley positions at the end of the season.

In February 2025, Christal officially returned to MMM as Cruise Director. In this role, she enjoys planning and organizing events, such as charters, group bookings and dance cruises aboard the Katahdin.

"I enjoy all of it," Christal says. A true "people person," she loves interacting

with guests and helping them have an enjoyable experience both at the museum and aboard the Kate.



# Moosehead Marine Museum

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## Last Log Drive Anniversary Cruise

On July 12, 2025, the Steamboat Katahdin took a historic trip back into Spencer Bay. This was her first trip back into the bay in fifty years. This day is an example that dreams do come true. With a lot of hard work and fun at the same time, we were able to get together a cruise with the men who had worked on the old log drives who were still alive and able to show up and celebrate the last log boom ever towed across Moosehead Lake.

The crew at the Museum was monumental in organizing this day and getting it ready to go. My contribution to all this was contacting as many of the men still alive who had worked on the old log drives right until they ended in 1975. As you can see, this was fifty years from the time that the boat was there for the last log drive.

In preparation for this, in June during our Shakedown cruises, we took the Kate into Spencer Bay on a dry run, just to make sure that everything would work and everyone knew what we were going up against going in there. After turning around and preparing to head home,

we went a little bit off course and we actually struck bottom. After all the preparation and time we'd all put into this, myself as Captain thought, "Well that's the end of that. [MMM Executive Director] Liz is going to say, 'After beating this thing on the bottom, there's going to be no more trips to Spencer Bay.'" I could not have been more wrong. We had saved the track going in. Liz said, "As long as you can ride on the track that we came in on with no issues, we shouldn't have any issues coming back in here in July." I went from kicking myself in the seat of my pants to being extremely ecstatic about what was about to take place.

On the day of the trip, July 12, 2025, we had a perfect day. No wind, clear skies. The crew at the museum had T-shirts made for each and every man that arrived, commemorating what had taken place fifty years ago. Once we got everybody on board, we handed out twenty-seven shirts to twenty-seven of the best men I have ever worked with. At that point, we had men from the old drive and many other folks along just to see and enjoy what was going to take

place... because today we were going to make history. As the men came aboard, some were limping. Most of us were shuffling our feet, moving along as old people do, not believing that fifty years had passed.

Well that didn't last too long. Something extremely special happened. This crew of old men—most of them hadn't seen each other in fifty years—started telling stories and laughing and having a good time. All of a sudden, these old men were young again.

We cruised into Spencer Bay. Thank God we didn't hit anything. Once we were in the bay, right off the mouth of Roach River, we slowed the boat and swung around, pointing to the south. At this time, the river drivers who were on board came to the pilot house and read a list. Each of the men in the pilot house read six names from a long list of men who were watching from the clouds that day. Once this was done, a wreath was tossed over the boat's stern in memory of all these guys who weren't with us today. As these names were read, one of the men named Herbie Clark, preparing to read the names on his list, took a moment and said, "I

worked with every one of these guys."

To say this was a special day would be an understatement. I believe that Luke Muzzy who was with us in the pilot house, said it best, "This trip was almost spiritual."

Then we departed and headed back down the lake. The pilot house—thank God it's not like this every day—turned into a live performance of Saturday Night Live. Upon tying up, the crew from the Museum had got together—I did not know this was going to happen—and as the men were leaving the boat, each one was given a medallion with a picture of the Kate on the front and an inscription on the back, briefly explaining what this had all meant. We then gathered the crew on the fantail of the boat for what is now a well-known photograph of twenty-seven of the last living log drivers.

Following this, the entire crew, along with their spouses and families, proceeded to 133 Lily Bay Road for what can only be described as one great party!

—story by Katahdin Captain and Last Log Driver, Rocky Rockwell



Photo courtesy of Moosehead Lakeshore Journal

**THE LAST LOG DRIVE  
50TH ANNIVERSARY  
CRUISE**

JULY 12, 1975  
JULY 12, 2025



New York Times article from September 19, 1976—  
"Last Log Drive in US Floating to End in Maine"



Men in boats collecting loose logs from log booms—July 1975



Katahdin crew from October 1973—Hank Breau,  
Walter Gary, Betty Morrell, Fred Munster, Butch Tupper



The Katahdin during the Scott Paper era.  
Her upper fantail had been removed for logging operations.

# Moosehead Marine Museum

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**AS PART OF OUR “LAST LOG DRIVE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CRUISE” WE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF COLLECTING FIRSTHAND STORIES FROM THE LAST LOG DRIVE ERA — WRITTEN BY THE LOG DRIVERS THEMSELVES. WE ARE PROUD TO SHARE A SAMPLING OF THEIR STORIES HERE.**

THE FULL “*STORIES FROM THE LAST LOG DRIVE*” BOOKLET  
IS AVAILABLE NOW AT THE MUSEUM BY DONATION.

## “Picking the Rear on Roach” by Steve Cole

As the summer went on, we were assigned to clean up the wood on the shores of the rivers and the lake. We had cleaned up Lazy Tom Stream shortly after we had driven the wood down into Roach River. However, we didn't start on Roach River until probably the 1st of August. A crew of about ten arrived at the dam at Kokadjo about 5:00 AM

and there was a bateau there waiting.

Not knowing any better, I was at the front of the bateau as we launched it just below the dam. I think the crew behind me had it planned, and I was walked right off the edge into the river first thing and came bobbing up in the foamy water about 100 yards

downstream. The crew was standing there with the bateau having a good laugh. I was wet from head to foot but everyone else was wet at least to the waist within an hour. We picked the wood off the shoreline and put it back into the river and the crew on the bateau picked away at any jams in the middle of the river. It was hard

work but the crew were always fun to be with. We finished the first day about halfway down Roach River and completed it to the mouth of Spencer Bay on the second day.

## “Let's Deliver a Pickup Truck to the Capens” Author Unknown

Apparently sometime in the past the Katahdin had done some damage to the dock at the Capens on Deer Island. It had been decided by someone that a pickup truck should be delivered to Capens to make up for the dock problem. We moored the Katahdin at the dock at Greenville Junction and an older Ford pickup truck was loaded into the Katahdin using one of the pallet

trucks that Scott Paper had for moving wood. We also loaded some blocking and planks which we planned to use to get the pickup truck off the Katahdin when we arrived at Capens. No one had thought too seriously about how we were going to get the pickup truck from the deck of the Katahdin down four feet or more to the dock.

When we arrived at Capens, we moored the

Katahdin parallel to the old dock and realized that the dock was not wide enough to get the pickup truck down a ramp onto the dock. We turned the Katahdin and moored her at the end of the dock. We proceeded to build a ramp from the cargo door on the Katahdin down to the dock using blocking and planks. The crew then decided that we would draw straws to see who was going to

drive the pickup off the boat onto the dock.

As I remember, Robbie Bartlett got the short straw and after taking a few deep breaths, proceeded to drive the pickup down the ramp. About halfway down, the ramp started to collapse and went somewhat sideways but fortunately, the pickup truck landed on the dock. We picked up the planks and the blocking and headed for Greenville.

## “A Day in the Life” Excerpts by Steve Brown

Life aboard the Kate during the cleanup year of 1976 had some nice perks in between the hard, wet, and dirty work of finding lost pulpwood that had been forgotten about for years. Traditionally, in past years when picking out a spot, we would go deep into it, becoming quite friendly with the infamous Maine flies and lurking leeches. We kept salt on board the boats to get the leeches off us when attached. Sometimes when the Flatlanders got too close to us while taking photos, we would toss the bloodsuckers at them and enjoy their reactions at encountering such a creature.

We had bunk beds on the second level of the Kate, as one got to the top of the main staircase. Mine was in the left corner facing the front of the boat. I shared a bunk with Pete Carpenter. I had the top bunk. There was not much headroom on top, and I bumped my head a few times by sitting up too much while in a half-asleep state. Walter Gary, Captain and boss, slept in the Captain's quarter next to the pilot house. Butch Tupper, second in command, had the next room to himself. Every

morning Walter would start the day by yelling to everyone, “Time to wake up, you burr heads.” Lying in the bunk one could smell the coffee and breakfast that Gus, our cook, was preparing in the tight galley of the Kate.

The week would start early Monday morning at the old Scott Paper warehouse at the Junction at the site of the current Kelly's Landing. We would load up supplies from the warehouse and food needed for the week onto the Kate. Walter would start cruising north as the crew was doing various tasks on the boat and helping peel potatoes for the cook. Gus, our cook, was an old school logging camp cook who performed miracles in the tight space he had to cook and bake in. The menu was traditional logging camp: baked beans, hardy meals, fresh baked goods such as doughnuts, bread, cookies, desserts, all wonderfully delicious. Eat all you want but eat what you take. While cruising north on Moosehead towards our job sites for the week, Gus made his doughnuts. When they came out hot, everyone stopped whatever they were doing, headed to the galley, and

ate too many doughnuts. The Kate would lean galley side, and it was the only time in the Kate's history where there was probably no one steering the boat...

Once work started in terms of moving the pulpwood, there was much more throwing the pulpwood onto the land to be trucked away as it was not going down the Kennebec anymore. We would load up the last of the pulpwood into small booms, load our rowboats and steel boats, then load the wood into a special made Barge. The “Barge” was emptied by hand on to the holding area on land, and the cycle would begin again. The *Dorothy* would haul the Barge most of the time. I do not think Gus could cook enough calories to make up what we burned up.

Once the day was done, we headed back to the Kate. We would jump into the lake to clean off and eat dinner as a communal group. There were always fun conversations on just about everything. After dinner, there was down time. Reading, playing cards (nickel/dime poker and cribbage), fishing

and hanging out on the back deck taking in the scenic beauty of Moosehead Lake while listening to the loons and admiring the night stars.

By that time the Kate was showing her age, being held together by duct tape, pine pitch, and prayers to keep her afloat. Those prayers were eventually answered by all the love the Kate received during the years to follow.

As the years progressed, I began to gradually realize what a unique adventure I had experienced during my time on the Scott Paper log drives. I am forever grateful for growing up in Greenville, which prepared me for my time on the log drive and beyond. Whenever I think about those years of working on the drive I always have a smile on my face.



Booming out in Spencer Bay—wrapping the boom



The Dorothy

# Moosehead Marine Museum

## In Loving Memory of Ardean Thornton, 1933-2025

**ARDEAN THORNTON WORKED AT THE MOOSEHEAD MARINE MUSEUM FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS, GREETING PASSENGERS, CASTING THE BOAT OFF AND GIVING TOURS OF THE MUSEUM. SHE WAS THE HEART OF OUR ORGANIZATION. ARDEAN LOVED THE KATE, AND SHE CAN NEVER BE REPLACED. WE WILL MISS HER.** ~MMM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LIZ MCKEIL



### Meet Ardean Thornton, our Museum Docent

from the Fall 2019 *Katahdin Sextant* Newsletter

One of the friendly faces you will find around the MMM is our docent, Ardean Thornton. Ardean has been working with the Kate since passenger cruises began in 1985. Executive Director at the time Bev Walker approached both Ardean and her daughter Jackie to ask if they might consider a summer job on the Katahdin. Ardean agreed, and now, 34 cruising seasons later, the rest—as they say—is history.

Originally from Lincoln, ME, Ardean and her family relocated to Greenville in 1978 when her husband Lewis was transferred by the A & P Supermarket to the Greenville store. Ardean had taken a job working with the hot lunch program at the Greenville School, when Bev Walker noticed her skills with people and accounting. In 1985, Ardean began her time at the MMM as a clerk in the museum and gift

shop. Her role has certainly expanded over the years. When an unexpected vacancy arose in the Executive Director role, Ardean rose to the occasion and even briefly filled those “shoes.” Now, 34 seasons later, Ardean has finished her second summer as museum docent. As docent, Ardean greets visitors and offers tours through the museum, sharing many historical treasures from the region.

Much of the information Ardean shares daily with visitors are gems that she herself has learned through the years. However, on any given day you can enter the museum and find Ardean with her nose in a book, still excited to learn anything she can. “I love the history,” she said, “and I love people, and I love the Katahdin.” With this combination, Ardean’s role to the museum and our visitors is invaluable.

## Vintage Postcards from MMM Collection

*A selection of vintage postcards acquired by MMM in 2025, now part of the museum's collection.*



*Katahdin I* was built in 1896 at Shipyard Point, near the present site of Kelly's Landing in Greenville Junction. The first *Katahdin* was built with a wooden hull. In 1913, she caught fire near Sandbar Island, south of Mount Kineo. She was run aground by her skipper and burned to the water's edge. None of the crew were harmed. Divers have located and retrieved relics from the wreck of the first *Katahdin* – some of these are on display in the museum.



An unidentified steamer (possibly the *Louisa* or *Priscilla*) in the East Cove at the present site of the Moosehead Marine Museum during the Coburn Steamboat Era, circa early 1900s.



The steamer *Marguerite* on Moosehead Lake in 1925. The *Marguerite* was built in 1902 by Henry Sawyer for Mr. VanBrunt. Mr. VanBrunt sold the boat to the Coburn Steamboat Company in 1905.



The steamer *Marguerite* picking up passengers at the Mt. Kineo wharf. The *Marguerite* is recognizable for having an eagle with spread wings mounted atop her wheel house.

**GIVING TUESDAY IS DECEMBER 2, 2025!**

PLEASE JOIN US IN RESTORING THE KATAHDIN AND SECURING HER LEGACY ON MOOSEHEAD LAKE.  
YOUR SUPPORT IS MUCH APPRECIATED!



# Moosehead Marine Museum

## The 2025 Cruising Season in Review



Crew members Hayden Tillison and Bill Nye get the life raft ready for rescuing "Oscar" during the "man overboard drill" at our June Shakedown cruise.



Volunteer AnneE Holden and Executive Director Liz McKeil display MMM's trophy presented by the Town of Greenville for "Most Creative" float in the July 4th parade.

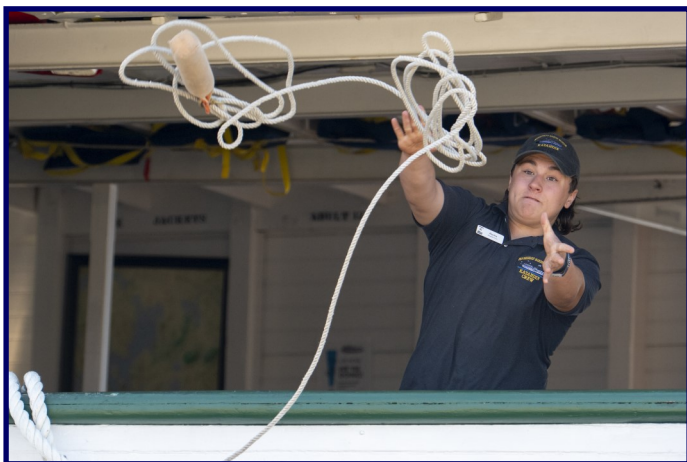


MMM debuted our "mini-Katahdin" float at Greenville's annual July 4th parade. She was built by Virginia "VA" Jones, painting & embellishments by AnneE Holden, and special effects by Matt Kane. Photo courtesy of Moosehead Lakeshore Journal.



Crew members Ashley, John and Christal at our August Pirate Cruise.

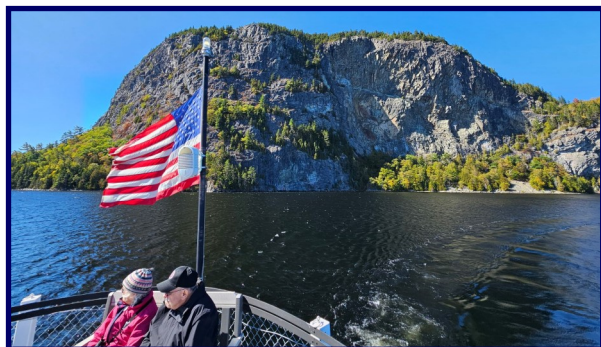
*Thank you for a great cruising season!*



Crew member Hayden Tillison throws the line as the Kate approaches the town dock.



Crew member Ray Giroux gives an engine tour during a day cruise.



The Katahdin at Mt. Kineo during our Head of the Lake cruise.



Kate photographed from the Toe of the Boot during the Head of the Lake cruise. Thanks to Bob Macri for this photo.



Captain Rocky Rockwell and a child passenger “driving” the Kate. As part of our First Mates Club, each child receives a free wooden mini-Katahdin to paint and assemble, plus a Katahdin-themed fun activity workbook and an opportunity to pilot the Kate!



Maine Woods Explorers campers aboard the Katahdin for our Sugar Island cruise.

Photo courtesy of AMC Maine Woods Initiative.

**MOOSEHEAD MARINE MUSEUM**  
**P. O. Box 1151**  
**GREENVILLE, ME 04441**

MOOSEHEAD MARINE MUSEUM

12 Lily Bay Road  
P.O. Box 1151  
Greenville, ME 04441

Phone: 207-695-2716  
Email: [info@katahdincruises.com](mailto:info@katahdincruises.com)  
[www.katahdincruises.com](http://www.katahdincruises.com)



### **Targeted Giving “Wish List”**

New Camera System for the Katahdin—\$5,000

Screen for Owl Labs Meeting Camera—\$1,899

UV Filtering Museum Shade—\$1,500

Oil Pump for Kate’s Engine—\$900

Replacement Cartridges for Life Rafts—\$150 each

Katahdin Deck Chairs—\$350 for 10 (we need 70)

For more information and specific item costs, please contact Liz McKeil at 207-695-2716 or [lmckeil@mmmk8.org](mailto:lmckeil@mmmk8.org).