

Buy This Table & Support Maine Conservation!

"She was a great environmental journalist, probably the best Maine has ever seen,"



The beautiful table, an important piece of Maine's environmental history, is offered by [Friends of Merrymeeting Bay](#) as a conservation fundraiser supporting our research, advocacy, education and land protection work. The table was bequeathed to our donor in 2016 by one of Maine's premier environmental writers, her dear friend Phyllis Austin. At this table Austin wrote a wide array of articles, her landmark books, ***"Wilderness Partners: Buzz Caverly and Baxter State Park"*** and ***"Queen Bee: Roxanne Quimby, Burt's Bees and Her Quest for a New National Park,"*** and her co-edited volume of essays, ***"On Wilderness: Voices from Maine."***

The table top is a live edge redwood slab obtained by Phyllis in California while attending a writing fellowship. Legs were added by Brunswick, Maine, woodworker Michael Dube circa 2004 and appear to be oak. This table has been valued at between \$8,000-\$12,000. We will consider offers over \$5,000.

Dimensions: 76"L x 29-32.5"W x 29"H. Top is 3" thick

Please contact FOMB Chair, Ed Friedman at 207-666-3372 or edfomb@comcast.net to make an offer. For more information on what we do, check us out at. www.friendsofmerrymeetingbay.org

Phyllis's longtime partner has this to add:

Hi Ed and friends,

I am Phyllis' partner and yes, she definitely wrote many of her articles and books at this very table.

My understanding is that it is redwood and it makes the most sense that she would have found/rescued it while in California on the Alicia Paterson fellowship.

I'm sorry that I don't know any more than that. And I've queried other friends who might know without coming up with anything further.

Phyllis was a great rescuer of woods. I have a pumpkin pine coffee table made from a piece she pulled from a river somewhere near Litchfield and hung on to for many years before commissioning Michael Dube to transform it into the present table. I tell you this so you have a context for her having hauled that redwood slab all the way across the country.

She also hauled wood stoves that she collected from all over the backwoods of Maine. At one time we had 7 wood stoves, including 2 cookstoves.

I'm happy the table will continue to be used for conservation. How fitting!

Best to all on this fine winter day,

Anne





Phyllis Austin Obituary-Portland Press Herald 11/21/2016

Phyllis Austin, prominent Maine environmental journalist, dies at 75

Friends and colleagues say the Brunswick native excelled at her craft by immersing herself in the places she wrote about. *By Dennis Hoey, Staff Writer*



Phyllis Austin, an acclaimed environmental writer who wrote "*Wilderness Partners*," a book about Buzz Caverly and Baxter State Park, died Monday. Photo courtesy Jym St. Pierre

Phyllis Austin devoted her career to writing about environmental news that affected Mainers, becoming one of the state's foremost authorities on the subject by immersing herself in the places that she reported on.

Austin, who died Monday at the age of 75, would spend days hiking the woods, mountains and remote locations she wrote about.

Her colleagues, editors and friends said her knowledge and understanding of the wild places shone through in her work.

“She was a great environmental journalist, probably the best Maine has ever seen,” said Doug Rooks, who served as her editor at the former Maine Times. “She was the most-thorough, the most-dogged and the most-methodical reporter I ever met.”

Austin died at her home in Brunswick, said her partner, Ann Dellenbaugh.

Rooks said that Austin began working as a writer for the Maine Times in 1974 and stayed until the publication went out of business in 2002.

“The material she produced was awe-inspiring. She knew her subjects better than anyone I ever met,” Rooks said.

After leaving the Maine Times, Austin needed an outlet for all the stories she hadn’t had a chance to write. That’s how she met Will Sugg, the editor of an online publication called Maine Environmental News.

Sugg said Austin was a prolific writer, reporting on a wide range of topics related to the environment, from the May 2005 article about Canada lynx getting accidentally trapped in devices set for other animals to a September 2006 story about Roxanne Quimby managing land bordering Baxter State Park as a nature sanctuary. She worked for Sugg from 2002 to 2006.

“A true Maine conservation hero, an exceptional journalist and a great person,” Sugg wrote in a message posted on his Facebook page.

Edgar Allen Beem of Brunswick worked with Austin as a writer at the Maine Times. Beem said her health had been failing for some time. He last spoke with her two weeks ago. She asked him if he would be willing to speak at her memorial service.

“Phyllis was probably the best environmental journalist Maine has ever produced,” Beem said. “She spent more time in the woods and mountains than anyone I have known in my lifetime.”

Her first-hand experiences in Maine’s outdoors produced investigative pieces that were thorough and thought-provoking, Beem said.

Jym St. Pierre of Brunswick, the Maine director of Restore: The North Woods, was a close friend of Austin. He wrote a remembrance that he sent to friends and family on Monday.

St. Pierre said Austin covered the State House for the Associated Press from 1969 to 1973. In 1972, Austin was named the Associated Press’ first environmental writer in New England.

“Phyllis may have reported more stories about conservation issues in Maine than anyone,” St. Pierre said. “It was not just the extensive breadth of issues Phyllis wrote about, it was her approach that stood out. Always thorough in her reporting, she was respected by virtually everyone she covered, whether or not they agreed.”

An avid hiker, she trekked the Himalayas in Nepal and in the Scottish Highlands. Her last piece “On Reaching the End of the Trail” was published in the November-December 2016 issue of AMC Outdoors.

“She told us that would be the last piece she would write,” St. Pierre said.

In the article, Austin talks about her love of hiking and the freak 1984 cross-country skiing accident that nearly killed her.

After the accident – she was impaled by a stick – she kept hiking realizing that her hiking days would eventually come to an end. She had to give up hiking last year after undergoing surgery related to the skiing accident.

“I had already concluded that I could never satiate my love of hiking, no matter how long I lived,” Austin wrote. “The beautiful and rough wild found in the mountains, especially the very remote, won my heart at first sight. That was where I understood my place on earth and where I was spiritually replenished.”

A memorial service is planned for early 2017.

<https://www.pressherald.com/2016/11/21/phyllis-austin-prominent-maine-environmental-journalist-dies-at-75/>

