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## The Coast is Clear

Clear perspectives on the things that make the Seacoast the best place to live

By Brent Becket

Dave looked like Jesus; tall, lean, long hair, beard, easygoing – calm. Lisa looked like a rejuvenated ‘soccer mom’ returning from a day at the spa. She had sun-lightened hair and rosy cheeks. It was clear they had a story to tell and they were glad to tell it.

A year earlier they sold their home, liquidated all other assets, bought a catamaran and with their 13-year-old daughter Nicole and 11-year-old son D.J., they sailed out of Portsmouth Harbor and south to the Bahamas. None of them knew how to sail.

All smiles and enthusiastic, they told me how D.J. had become a great spear fisherman, and Nicole had ‘come out of her shell’ and become more confident and social. They talked about the great friends they made in the Turks and Caicos and how the experience strengthened their family bond. They all became ‘captains’ of the ship and learned something about themselves during their year away from the Seacoast.

Lost in their tales of sunny adventures, and despite the fact that I had just returned from my own year away, I kept wondering why they came back. Viewing their Web site, [www.sailingdreamcatcher.com](http://www.sailingdreamcatcher.com), would inspire most people to pack a bag and head south. After it all, they returned and still declare the New Hampshire Seacoast as the greatest place to call home.

Lisa puts it this way: “The emotion that filled our family as we entered Portsmouth Harbor and cruised past the familiar sights of the light houses, beautiful homes, the old prison and finally landing on the Prescott Park docks was something

very special. No matter how many times we leave the Seacoast, we will always return home.”

Dave agrees and says, “It’s just comfortable here. Like a favorite pair of jeans.” Since their return Dave has started his own company and says they are a stronger, happier family with a greater appreciation for the seacoast area.

I am often asked why I continue to move away from the Seacoast only to return, and I finally have an answer. It is the perspective gained while I am away. It is the acknowledgement that although there are a lot of incredible places in the country to explore, none are as well rounded or have as many options as the Seacoast.

There are reasons we leave and reasons we come back. It is in our nature to believe the grass is greener, the people are friendlier, recreation is more extreme and opportunity knocks louder in other places. The Seacoast is filled with people planning their escape to places they perceive to have something better than what is here.

Clichés are for a reason and when considering the New Hampshire Seacoast, the grass is rarely greener some place else. National media consistently ranks Portsmouth as one of the best towns in the country and New Hampshire as one of the best states citing reasons such as recreation, education, culture, entertainment and prosperity.

MSNBC ranks our region as the second healthiest in the country and attributes that to the endless supply of recreational options. New Hampshire


might be the only state that offers every possible outdoor activity within an hour drive. From chairlift to beach chair, there is not an outdoor activity that can’t be done in New Hampshire.

Surfers in Hampton enjoy some of the best waves on the East Coast, rock climbers hang all over the place, fishing can be done in fresh and salt water, bikers, hikers, walkers and skiers have an infinite number of trails to travel. Medical News Today lists our area as the eighth ‘thinness’ in terms of obesity on a national level because we are one of the most physically active states.

According to Inc. magazine, for performance, which measures employment, income and quality of life, New Hampshire is in the top eight and sixth for future development capacity. At the moment, New Hampshire is the only New England state that is growing, and a government census report ranks Rockingham County in the top 100 wealthiest counties in America. Additionally, drought, wildfires, mudslides or movie-star politicians do not continuously keep us in peril.

A recent report on 20/20 about happiness concludes the happiest people are those living with a strong sense of community. It is impossible to discount the sense of community in any of the Seacoast towns. It was the sense of community that every presidential candidate spoke about while here during the recent primary.

It was also continuously noted that the people of New Hampshire are fiercely independent. This is true. Did you know that our region of the country waits the longest to get married? That we are among the most educated in the country? We vote more than any other state?

Side-by-side comparisons of the Seacoast to other places in the country conclude that not only are we active, prosperous and friendly, but also with the University of New Hampshire on track to be the most environmentally friendly campus in the country, our grass actually is greener. 



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