**Silent Spring Essay Contest**

“Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.”

-Rachel Carson

When I contemplate the beauty of earth, it fulfills me in many ways. It makes me feel that I have a purpose in this world, even when I am seeking to find what that means exactly. It gives me strength to see earth how it is supposed to be seen. It makes me, as a human, more responsible and more alive, and I appreciate my surroundings that much more.

In Castine, we are a unique, historical coastal town, and if it were not for a causeway, we would be considered an island. Sometimes I go biking in Witherle Woods, a local reserve, filled with secret stories from the past. I have witnessed untraveled trails, stonewalls, abandoned remnants, steep cliffs, and radiant sunsets, which cause me to pause and ponder. In these moments, I often contemplate the mysterious beauty, which surrounds me here. My worries go away and I gather strength during these experiences. I believe that these images become life-long memories and it is why Rachel Carson’s quote means so much to me.

Like Castine, but many miles away, is a tropical island much warmer than Maine! When I visited the Bahamas recently, I saw turquoise water, and felt the warm, white sand, and I thought that life couldn’t get any better than that. While I was on a golf cart ride, I soaked up every little blade of grass and tree that I saw; I was so focused on the surrounding nature, that it became hard to pay attention to anything else—it was that beautiful! I am amazed at earth’s creations, so vast and different, and what an impact this has on me personally.

I might not know exactly what my purpose is in life yet, but I do know that I appreciate the beauty of the earth. When I watched the movie *Silent Spring* in class, I was immediately impressed to learn about Rachel Carson. She believed that earth has a purpose, but it is our responsibility to find the beauty within it and respect it for what it is. Within my community, I’ve come to appreciate our authentic 1800’s schoolhouse, the magic of the woods, the beauty of the rocky shores, and the eagles and osprey that fly overhead! This is our beautiful earth—here in our little town of Castine or miles away in tropical Bahamas—and it will continue to provide me with strength as I strive to find meaning and purpose.