

The “Maine” Event by Jill Fornito

About two hours north of Bangor, Maine, and 20 miles south of the Canadian border is the teeny tiny town of Grand Lake Stream, where every summer, longtime GIC Board Member David Kotok hosts his annual fishing retreat. Affectionately named “Camp Kotok,” this exclusive event brings together a mix of economists, analysts and strategists for four days of recreation in the cellular signal-free setting at Leen’s Lodge. Given that so many of the Camp Kotok attendees have served as GIC speakers, board members and sponsors, this could easily be described as a GIC conference disguised as a fishing trip. I was fortunate enough to have been invited to participate for a second year in a row.

Grand Lake Stream is remote, and [Leen’s Lodge](#) is isolated. You have two options in getting there: the easy and scenic drive from Bangor International Airport or the 30 minute float plane ride from Bangor to Leen’s private dock. Last year, I rented a car and took the drive, stopping first for lunch just outside of Bangor in Brewer at the charming Eagle’s Nest, a little hidden gem that sits on the Penobscot River serving up big beautiful lobster rolls to the lucky few who know of its existence. Continuing on, after an 85 mile stretch (complete with requisite roadside ice cream stand) and after the Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation, you’re almost there. The sign for Leen’s Lodge directs you two miles down a dirt road, the official demarcation sign of having arrived in God’s Country. This year, I chose the float plane, which operates 25 minutes from BGR by [Katahdin Air](#). Soaring only 3,000 feet



above the wilderness in a four-person sea-aircraft, I asked our pilot and the owner of the business, Jim Strang, how long he'd been flying. "Oh, since about 6 o'clock this morning," he quipped. To the East, in the distance we can see as far as Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park and below we spot a single moose trekking along the tree line. After landing smoothly on the surface of the majestic West Grand Lake, moments later we arrived at Leen's private dock, just steps away from the dining lodge.



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The time spent at Leen's Lodge is a gift. And lucky are those who have been able to receive it.



The Author and GIC Member and Sponsor Barry Nobel enjoying a morning lakeside discussion.



Read more of Jill's blogs at the [Global Interdependence Center website](#).

A little about Jill... Jill Fornito joined the Global Interdependence Center in 2008 as the assistant director with a broad scope of responsibilities including organizational and program management. In 2011, Jill assumed the role of director

of operations, focusing mainly on the planning and execution of GIC's domestic and international conferences. Jill was named the executive director in 2017 as she continues to oversee the daily operations of the GIC office, including development, financial administration, program coordination and communications. She is also the author of GIC's Travel Blog.