PEOPLE WHO TREAT THEIR CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS LIKE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE IN FOR QUITE A SURPRISE WHEN THEY ARRIVE FOR A WEEKEND AT THE INN AT ROUND POND in the coastal town of Round Pond, about 60 miles NE of Portland, ME. Innkeepers Bill and Sue Morton G’91 do not offer televisions, phones in the room or computer connections at their seaside resort. Instead their guests enjoy afternoon tea, views of the harbor from every room and, on the fourth of July, one of the most unusual holiday parades in the country.

“Their cell phones don’t work here either,” Sue Morton said. “Our guests appreciate it. People see the inn as a place of peace and quiet. Many return year after year.”

Morton and her husband, Bill, bought the Inn at Round Pond in 2002. Round Pond isn’t a pond at all, rather it’s a small village of about 550 people that is well-known for its seacoast beauty, lobsters aplenty and no-holds-barred politically satirical July 4th parade, all of a mile long.

“We both loved Maine,” she said. “We had vacationed up and down the Maine coast. However, when my husband had lost his job and was recovering from major surgery we thought this might be the right time for a career change. It turns out that we love doing this. The people we meet are wonderful. They’re often interested in what we did before we bought the inn.”

Previously, Sue and Bill lived in Groton (MA). Bill worked in the educational computer field, while Sue was a pastoral associate in Concord and involved in Jewish/Catholic dialogue in Boston. That experience attracted her to Assumption’s Ecumenical Institute summer programs. Over several years she earned a master’s degree in theology at Assumption.

“My work as a pastoral associate was very worthwhile and fulfilling,” she said. “I did retreats, spiritual direction, worked with a women’s spirituality group, and presided and preached at Evening Prayer, among other things. I loved what I was doing.”

While the couple had enjoyed their many stays at inns over the years, Sue never thought that owning one was something she would ever want to do. It seemed like too much work. When the Morton’s took over ownership of the gracious inn, built in the 1830s, it was empty and needed to be updated.

“The biggest surprise for me after we bought the inn was that I really enjoy all the work that goes into running one,” Sue said. “We have three suites, but five rooms altogether. The rooms are very individualized. Since we bought the inn unfurnished, we had to start from scratch. We did quite a bit of renovating from the beginning. It never seems to end.”

Something else that continues is Sue’s interest in her guests and theirs in her work as a pastoral associate.

“I’ve had all kinds of responses,” she said. “It has been a very interesting mixture. I’ve had people who have said, ‘I used to be a Catholic,’ and others, who are Protestant Christians or observant Jews, and still others who profess no formal faith; all love to discuss their faith and beliefs. I find that I get to continue my involvement in the Jewish/Catholic dialogue informally. What I have learned is the truth of St. Augustine’s observation, that we are made ad Te, that all people, whether in a religious setting or a secular one, have been made to be ‘towards God.’ I am grateful to the late Fr. Edgar Bourque, A.A., for this understanding of the phrase. At the inn, it has become central for me. I also write poetry, some of which I have shared with some guests, inspiring additional dialogue.”

Open year-round, June to October is the inn’s busy season. The Morton’s get some skiers in the winter, with Camden’s Stow Bowl just 45 minutes inland. In fact, Sue said, skiers can see the ocean and the islands as they schuss down the slopes.

While the harbor views from each room, the enjoyment of afternoon tea and the peaceful ambience remain constant, Sue and Bill continue to renovate and refresh the inn’s three suites, garden cottage and grounds.

“We have pretty much moved along on the issue of smoking,” Sue said. “We were smoke-free from the get-go. Now we have moved to (ban smoking from) the grounds. Also, we’ve had one wedding reception here. Now we’re open to more.”

While you can’t always be certain of the weather in Maine, you can be sure that at Sue and Bill Morton’s Inn at Round Pond, the warm welcome, the dialogue and the renewal are ongoing. If you leave your laptop and cell phone home, they’ll leave the light on.

Sue Morton G’91 / Inn at Round Pond, Round Pond, ME

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By Elizabeth Walker