



# Cranberry Chronicle

## Blizzards of Goodbye ~ Karin Whitney

Bruce Henry Komusin, GCIHS Vice President and friend extraordinaire, passed away on Valentine's Day 2015 at the age of 66. This newsletter is a tribute to his personal and institutional legacy.

Bruce's sister, Mary Ellen Lewis, arrived from Florida on Monday, January 26, the week *two* blizzards dumped four feet of snow Downeast. The day Mary arrived, she helped Phil and me move Bruce from Bangor hospital back to his apartment at Birch Bay Village in Bar Harbor. Bruce and Mary were glad to see each other after some ten years. It should have been a long, quiet visit, but the 5:00 commuter boat meant we had to rush.

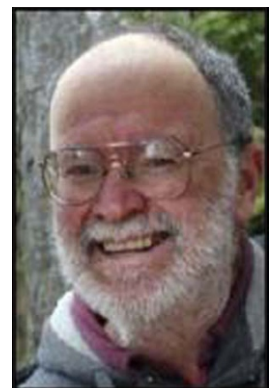
Tuesday morning we woke up to a blizzard on GCI. Wind was howling and snow was blowing in every direction. Snow even blew in through the cracks around the storm door and the front door. I was just starting breakfast when I noticed the coffee maker and toaster didn't work. Oh, no! No power? But how weird because the lights were on! Emera called it a partial outage. I had some power but the appliances, water pump, and baseboard heaters were out. Phil brought in piles of wood and started up our 1928 kitchen wood stove so we could cook with two burners, and he lit the living room wood stove as well. We went to Bruce's cabin for bathroom needs since his house had power.

Then Phil invited Mary to accompany him to the GCI Post Office to experience a real Maine nor'easter. She thought that was a lovely idea, pushed her hat down over her ears, put on heavy

mitten and a thick scarf, and out they went! The photo above captures the scene as they fought their way out to the truck holding onto their hats, with Phil's mail bag blowing back and forth. Mary thought it exciting with the snowstorm, power outage, and cancelled boats. Tuesday night, Phil and I took turns on four-hour shifts to keep the wood stoves going. The good thing was the power came back Thursday. The sad thing was we couldn't visit Bruce until Thursday as all boats were cancelled Tuesday and Wednesday.

For Friday, we'd planned a leisurely visit with Bruce and then supper at the Lucerne Inn before taking Mary to the Bangor airport hotel for her early Saturday departure. Mary and I took the 8:30 boat over with our dog, Toby. Phil arrived at Birch Bay at noon, saying he'd heard a rumor that the boats might be cancelled Saturday because of a *second* storm hitting the coast. When Phil called Ingrid at the General Store, she confirmed the rumor. That meant that Phil, Toby, and I wouldn't be able to get home until Sunday afternoon! That was not our plan.

So now, in order to make the 5:00 boat and Mary's flight home, Phil rushed her up to Bangor after she bade a final farewell to Bruce. I took the 3:30 boat home and started the wood stoves just in case the power went out. Mary will never forget her Cranberry Island experience and her farewell to Bruce.



## GCIHS Board

### Officers

|                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Phil Whitney    | President      |
| Vacant          | Vice President |
| Beverly Sanborn | Vice President |
| Jim Bradley     | Treasurer      |
| Nancy Wood      | Secretary      |

### Trustees

|                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Elaine Buchsbaum        | Tim Dalton     |
| Neal Corson             | Chris Johnston |
| Michael Macfarlan       | Ted Madara     |
| Kitty Pierson           | Jim Singerling |
| Owen Roberts (Honorary) |                |

## Notes of Appreciation

- ▶ The Historical Society wishes to thank the following people for their special support in recent months:
- ▶ **Ted Madara**—For providing financial and logistical support for an interview in Philadelphia with former GCI/SWH resident Winston Sheppard (age 100)
- ▶ **Wini Smart Quackenbush**—For establishing and overseeing [facebook.com/cranberryhouseGCIHS](https://www.facebook.com/cranberryhouseGCIHS) to enable wider distribution of information and events

## Friends Keep Cranberry House Alive.

We are grateful for your response to our new Friends of Cranberry House support program. Your donations show that you value the work of the Historical Society and Cranberry House. You can join or renew with an annual tax-free gift to the society as a Friend (\$25) or Family Friend (\$50) which parallels our previous individual or family membership. But you may be moved to give more generously or underwrite a program you particularly enjoy or propose as a Donor (\$100), Supporter (\$250), Patron (\$500), or Benefactor (\$1000+). Friends help sustain GCIHS and Cranberry House for future generations. Friends also receive discounts on museum purchases and trips, invitations to special events, and our newsletter three times a year. The June newsletter will list all Friends (amounts not shown), unless they wish to be anonymous. A heartfelt thanks to the folks who renewed in 2014. We hope everyone renews in December 2015.

## Treasurer's Message ~ Jim Bradley

The Treasurer is cautiously upbeat about prospects for 2015 given the cash balances and cash-generating activity of the first three months. Some of the more significant items generating cash this first quarter are:

**Memorial contributions for Bruce Komusin - \$825**  
**Hazel Stanley Peterson Fund** (Close out from Town of CI) for the Stanley Cemetery project - \$720  
**Friends Membership Program Contributions - \$8,420** (\$770 this time last year)

### Cash on hand in our operating accounts:

\$25,150 (\$11,330 this time last year).

For the most part, this is due to a \$10,000 Morton Kelly grant received in the fall of 2014 for funding

▶ **Tom Powell**—For taking on many of the computer and technical issues once handled by Bruce, and initiating upgrades to our internet and in-house capabilities

▶ **Alan Cowles**—For miraculously appearing and assuming oversight of our websites. (See separate article.)

## Milestones

### Passing:

Bruce Komusin—2/14/15

**Birthdays:** Lewis Marshall Powell 3/6/15, 6lbs. 4oz., the first GCI baby in 6 years!

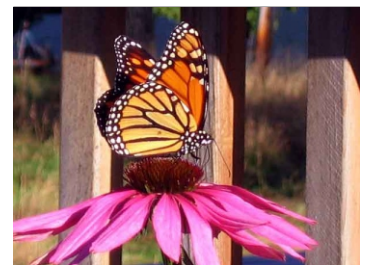
### Transitions:

With the passing of Bruce Komusin, there are many gaps to fill in support of GCIHS. Phil and Karin Whitney are shouldering a lot of extra burdens. Jen Walls is handling the membership list. Anne Grulich is the newsletter editor ([info@gcihs.org](mailto:info@gcihs.org)). **We especially need help with events and at the museum this summer. But GCIHS needs help in all areas from operations to committee work.**

archiving work into 2015, net a \$2,500 payment to the grant writer, and to contributions this year to our Friends Program.

If contributions from new and renewing members continue at a strong level, the prospects for 2015 and beyond are very promising. That is not an insignificant assumption, however, and one we must work on to generate recognition of the importance of membership contributions to the financial viability of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society.

(Butterfly photo by Bruce Komusin 2007)



## President's Message ~ Phil Whitney

This issue of the Cranberry Chronicle is devoted to remembering Bruce Komusin, who passed away on February 14, 2015, after a long, courageous battle with cancer. Bruce was, and perhaps always will be, the heart and soul of the GCI Historical Society and Cranberry House. From the very beginning in 1993, when he was an original founder, to the very end, when he was still discussing future projects while enduring the advanced stages of his illness, he was involved with all aspects of our organization. A lifelong bachelor and early retiree, his primary hobby was the Historical Society and researching the history of the Cranberry Isles, while his primary love was the Cranberry House and all it represented in promoting the quality of life on Cranberry Island.

Bruce was the ultimate philanthropist and humanitarian. He volunteered thousands of hours to various island organizations, but the vast majority involved his work with GCIHS. In 2000, Bruce and Wini Smart established the first museum in the recently vacated Longfellow School. When the possibility arose that the school might re-open in 2003, he donated two acres of forest land for a future museum site. He then spent the next five years working with a small subcommittee to acquire and move the Mountain View Inn to the site. As the vision expanded to include a cafe, arts center, walking trail, gardens, ponds, and two other historic buildings, he became thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the renovations and subsequent operations. The old phrase "he knew every square inch of the property" was never more accurate.

When the Cranberry House opened in June 2008, he immersed himself in providing support for its many activities. Bruce was a technical expert, museum receptionist, archivist, shuttle driver, events supporter, and mentor to new staff. Early on, Bruce served as Treasurer, and in later years was Vice President.

When Bruce was diagnosed with cancer in November 2012, they gave him one year to live. He continued working most every day, enjoying life and the people and activities around him as fully as possible while undergoing extensive treatments. But in late October 2014, during the last movie night, he went home early. No one realized that this would be his last time at Cranberry House. Bruce declined steadily in November and December, but managed to make it through our six-hour Christmas Party. In early

January, he developed pneumonia and left the island – never to return. He lived 2½ years from his initial diagnosis. That was Bruce – he would never give up doing the things he loved most.

Bruce was loved and respected by everyone who worked with him at Cranberry House. He had many, many admirers in the community as well as new friends he made every day among the day-trippers and followers of Hitty. This quiet, self-effacing man had a great affection for humanity in general, and Cranberry Islanders in particular. In a final act of generosity, Bruce willed his two Cranberry Road houses, two acres of woodlands, and two vehicles to GCIHS. I hope you will appreciate reading the articles and remembrances of him in these pages, and savor the memories with the photographs.

***Bruce, old friend, you will be so terribly missed.***

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Bruce's gradual decline and loss was a major factor in the bleakness of these past few months. In addition, this winter's weather was the toughest in memory. With many storms and blizzards, gale winds, bitter cold, and cancelled ferries, getting anything accomplished was nearly impossible. Every day was spent shovelling and re-shovelling snow. Blair Colby often went days without breaking from plowing. In one memorable week there were four major storms. In late January, Cranberry House ran out of propane. The fuel company was most uncooperative, causing a desperate search for an alternative supplier. When one was finally identified and expressed eagerness to make deliveries to GCI, terrible weather caused repeated delays in barging.

During this time (over two months) electric heaters were rigged up in the basement to prevent the sprinkler system water tanks from freezing and protect the artifacts from frost. But temps still dipped to 39°. Archivist Anne Grulich worked at home to escape the cold conditions. Other workers could only spend an hour in the basement before the onset of hypothermia. Finally, on March 24, propane was delivered. I now know how the early Arctic explorers felt when the first supply ship arrived after an icy winter. We have since been gradually getting back to normal. However, as of this writing, there is still snow everywhere (some in high banks), and the Shaw Cabin is inaccessible. The Whistler Cove Trail normally opens April 1. I suspect it will open a month later this year. One sure sign of Spring—Mickey Macfarlan has crocuses sprouting around his chimney at the kitchen door!



## **Bruce, a Remembrance** ~*Elaine Buchsbaum*

When you live on Cranberry Island as a “summer person,” it slowly dawns on you that a few dedicated people keep things going for those of us who come and go. I love the activities on Cranberry that my family and I have grown to expect: the museum, cafe, fairs, concerts, lectures, and movies.

One of the central people who kept all this going was Bruce Komusin. If he wasn't present at an event, evidence of his input was. At GCIHS and CIRT meetings, at the museum desk, at the library, driving the Cranberry Explorer, managing the technical details of movie night at the Seaside Playhouse, and just being on call for help with anything whenever and wherever, Bruce was front and center. Wherever you went on Cranberry, you heard people say, “Call Bruce!” - ask him if he can do such and such, if he remembers this or that, or if he can fix whatever.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Bruce was his quiet manner and total lack of ego when he helped people on the Island. I haven't met many people like him, who wanted little in the way of kudos and attention. I could hope to be like that but I don't think I am quite that selfless. Many knew him better than I did, but I don't think I could have appreciated him more or enjoyed seeing him more sitting at the museum desk, working the films, or sitting across from me at a meeting of the Board.

We will slowly figure out how to make happen all the things he helped make happen, but it will be very hard to find such a good, kind, and selfless soul as Bruce. He will be missed more than we are even aware of at this point. *Happy journey, Bruce.*



## **Bruce, Faithful Library Supporter** ~

*Ruth Westphal (GCI Librarian 1999–2011)*

When I started running our library in the spring of 1999 I had never operated a computer. Fortunately, there was Bruce. He had the patience to teach me, and others, the ins and outs of computer usage. We had only one computer that summer and I was fearful that I'd damage it somehow.



Around that time, a credit card company relocated near Belfast and offered grants so Maine's small libraries could bring computers into their communities. We applied for and received two public use computers, computer tables, and chairs. Bruce was an invaluable resource, not only in selecting the computers, but installing them when they arrived.

The next year the Gates Foundation awarded us a computer grant plus a laser printer. Bruce saw to the installation of all this new equipment and taught me how to use it. As you well know, if you ever listened to Bruce talk computers you got more information than you really needed, including details like how many megabytes the computers had. He taught me the basics and he was patient with me. Later, when we got a new copier and FAX he was there to help again.

Throughout my tenure as librarian, Bruce was always ready to help with the technical details of grant proposals, and later to creep around on the floor and connect up the new equipment. I appreciated his help so much. When the library received a grant for new carpeting, he helped me box up and move the entire book collection into the Reading Room. This was no small job for Bruce as he carried all the boxes of books out, and then back into the Library.

Bruce served on the Library Board for many years, often as Treasurer. (He loved his spreadsheets!)  
***Thank you, Bruce. We are all enormously grateful.***

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When asked at a library meeting why he chose to live on Cranberry, Bruce responded, “***Because one person can make a difference here.***” Bruce made a huge difference and will be remembered fondly by all. ~*Eileen Richards*

## Birth of a Museum ~ Wini Smart

The year 2000 wasn't a good year for Great Cranberry Island. Many old timers died that year. Historic artifacts were being sold or destroyed. The Longfellow school closed. The last two students had graduated and no little ones were ready to attend. The Bangor newspaper reported in a full page article that Cranberry Island was dying. This made us angry enough for action! In June, Bruce and I discussed the idea of using the vacated school space to create a museum. Bruce, who was treasurer of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society, was in total agreement with the plan.

The Historical Society had no home. There was no place to store the documents, photos, or artifacts the society wanted to collect. At that time, all we had were the old photos Bruce and others had gathered. I wrote to the Board of Education asking for use of two empty school rooms. They agreed and only asked us to pay for utilities. Somehow we would make a museum! But how?



Bruce ordered publishing programs and Adobe Photoshop for my computer, then patiently taught me how to use them. Old photos needed to be copied but first the image had to be digitally cleaned and sharpened with the light values corrected. Some photos were full of black spots that had to be removed. Only then would it make a good enlargement.

We made copies and enlargements of the photos and had them

laminated. I painted wooden panels depicting the island's history. A few islanders loaned us antique furniture, shipbuilding tools, fishing gear, old household items, and clothing. We searched the beaches for old rusty artifacts near the location of long-ago boatyards. Bruce made and laminated labels and text. He bought a glue gun to attach the photos to the panels and worked nights getting them ready.

There wasn't much time. We had set an August opening date so Bruce and I worked long hours getting things ready. Steve Bradley, the summer minister, and his son came to our aid. They climbed ladders carrying hammer and nails to install the panels. They devised a method to have the panels removable or interchangeable. One family loaned us their contract carpenter who was a great help. Somehow it all came together. Charlene Allen agreed to be our hostess. Born and raised on the island, she was the perfect person to explain the island's history. We had a Museum!

Grand opening was held August 6, 2000. I don't think Bruce realized how much time he would spend at the museum and what lay in store. He rose to the challenge and spent the rest of his days engrossed in the museum's welfare. Besides being very generous to the Society, he had to wear many hats: grant writer, archivist, computer expert and technician, web master, building planner and supervisor, handyman, printer, book binder, camera man, interviewer, editor, film maker, woodsman, cashier, and host - all while being treasurer and then vice president of the Historical Society.

***There never will be another person as dedicated and faithful to Cranberry House and the Historical Society as Bruce.*** He is, and will always be, sorely missed.



This summer, watch for Wini's book, *Bruce Komusin, His Life on Cranberry Island*, written in appreciation of his dedication and contributions to Cranberry Island, including remarks from other friends and lots of photos.



## The Final Frontier ~ Sarah McCracken (photos and story)

My dog Louie and I go out in the morning and let the ducks out of their box where they are safe from mink. We fill the sheep's bin with hay, replenish grain and water, and then the remaining 23 hours each day are ours. Janice Murch's four sheep and 27 ducks are my only responsibility. Not many people have that luxury, and even fewer want it. It's hard to be idle, especially on an island in winter..

I am 24-years-old and just made it through my first island winter. Without a full-time job to fill my time and entertainment to distract me, I was forced to look inward and deal with my thoughts. Before embarking on winter, I referred to it as my "social experiment." I looked forward to my self-exploration. But self-analysis, an inevitable product of idle time, makes idleness daunting. With few young people on the island, I feared the impending loneliness. "Peace of mind is the final frontier," Blair Colby explained to me.

Last fall, I started seeing a carpenter who also had a dog and was new to Great Cranberry, but the relationship was young and, therefore, volatile. For all I knew, it would be me and Louie alone on snowy evenings reading books and practicing "sit" and "stay." I had a number of plans for my free time. I would practice things I always wished I had time for in the summer, like cooking and sewing. I would fine-tune my health and start a blog. Most importantly, I would try to figure out my future.



Well the carpenter and his dog never left; the snow never stopped falling; and although I didn't work much, I was surprised not to have much free time at all. I studied the teachings of Eckhart Tolle and the Dalai Lama, two men who reached enlightenment through long periods of solitude. I learned how to cook *pad thai*, asked Beverly Sanborn to teach me to hem dresses, and spent many hours wandering in the woods with Jake, Louie, and Merle. We followed tracks, watched sunsets, and enjoyed our solitude together.

I've come to the conclusion that islands are one of the only places left in the U.S. where you can live in a small, strong community. You may live alone, but you're less alone than most people living on the mainland. On Cranberry, you see familiar faces every day who share many of the same priorities as you. With so many people in our mainland towns, we cannot possibly care about everyone without becoming depleted and overwhelmed. Here, we can care about each and every person. We can cooperate and lend a helping hand.

Turns out this island is the perfect place to live slow, to live well, and to find peace of mind. Loneliness was the last thing I encountered on the island in the dead of winter. In fact, Great Cranberry is just the place for someone comfortable in their own skin and captivated by life to live and appreciate the quiet without feeling alone.

## Welcome Neal Corson to the Board of Trustees



Neal joined the GCIHS board in 2014. He and Candi became acquainted with Great Cranberry through their friendship with Allison and Fred Hawes.

In 1992, the Corsons purchased their property on Cranberry Road. They now divide their time between their island house and their home in Solon, ME.

Born and raised in Maine, Neal was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1968 at age 21. In 1970, following his graduation from Bowdoin College, he joined the Army where he served as an Infantry officer and helicopter pilot until 1974, when he was elected to the Maine State Senate. From 1975 to 1979 he was a UH-1 "Huey" pilot with the Maine Army National Guard 112th Medical Company–Air Ambulance. Neal married Candace Shusta in 1975; graduated first in his class from the University of Maine Law School in 1979; then established his law firm in Madison, ME, where he practiced until he and Candi retired in 2014.



### Hitty's Café ~ Cezar Ferreira

I learned so much looking out the café window my first year as Hitty's chef last summer.

When I return this year, we'll have more shrimp and grilled salmon on our salads, and more *empanadas*, too! Hitty's can't wait to be part of the fairs, music, and Historical Society events that bring all the painters, writers, tourists, and residents to our beautiful deck during the season.

## Memorial for Bruce

A memorial for Bruce Komusin will be held August 1, 2015, and we'll be celebrating his memory during various events. (See page 11 for Bruce's obituary.)

Bruce is survived by several family members who all live in Florida: sister, Mary Ellen Lewis; niece, Elizabeth Croce and husband Drew; niece, Michelle Rigo; nephew, John Paul Rigo; and great nephew, Connor Croce.

Here Mary Lewis cuddles Connor Croce.



Below are Bruce's parents, Margarite and Henry Komusin; and Bruce with his mother.





## Archives News ~ Anne Grulich

### Bruce – Colleague and Mentor

I only knew Bruce for two years. We were colleagues in the archives. Bruce made a big entrance each morning. Hands full of computers and other items, he would kick the archives basement door open, startling the heck out of my contemplation of an artifact. He'd nod hello, then collapse into the old brown swivel recliner, prop his feet up on the table, flip open his laptop, and continue the work he'd started at home hours before. Sitting engrossed in our separate projects, a loud guffaw would occasionally erupt from Bruce and he'd share a joke, or a YouTube video, or explain the physics behind an intriguing web article.

He was an old-school, minimalist computer programmer who carefully considered every period and every space. He composed his web pages in html code but was fascinated by the latest technology. You can recognize Bruce's archive catalogue descriptions – sparse, except when they're verbose because he couldn't resist including the humor of a story. How he loathed Microsoft. He installed a plethora of public-domain programs in order to avoid using Microsoft software.

Last fall, there were some days Bruce was too exhausted to move from his chair but I could hear him tapping away on his keyboard, so I knew he was okay. In December, when he was too weak to come in, I went to his home and then to Birch Bay to work on the newsletter. He knew his time was short, but his mind was clear and he still wanted to impart everything he could about how and *why* GCIHS did things in a certain way.

Bruce was an engineer. He constructed the GCIHS databases, websites, cataloguing systems, and archive shelf units—always using the least amount of space. He loved the 'tiny house' movement and wanted to build some on GCI. His Cranberry Road cabins rely on space saving cabinetry. While Bruce's personal generosity was boundless - he donated property, buildings, time, and expertise - he agonized over the extra pennies various brands of ball-point pens, file folders, and artifact tags cost the Historical Society. Bruce could fix anything or explain why it couldn't be done. Fiercely loyal or equally dismissive, he quietly held fast to his political and personal beliefs.

With no propane to heat the basement this bitter winter, I worked from home for two months. I got

over my guilty feelings when I read articles like the one in *Working Waterfront* that said on March 5 ice chunks from Somes Sound had lodged in the GCI harbor. The mail boat couldn't get to the dock, but the steel-hulled *Sunbeam* made it out March 6. We held meetings by phone. I installed new software, converted our FileMaker7 Items database to FileMaker13 and went through the 2000+ catalogue images one by one to make sure they were accurate. The result is an archives repository that's more user friendly and web-ready. (Yes, I could feel Bruce over my shoulder – half amused, half appalled at my changes!)

When I returned to GCIHS last week, Bruce's absence was palpable. No door, no jokes, no stubborn insistence on doing things a certain way – no mentor, no ready helpmate, no jack-of-all-trades. No colleague. Bruce, we should pause and drape the place in black bunting, but you'd be the first to say there's too much to do. Every catalogue entry, every web page, every tool in the toolbox echos your voice. *A little bit of Bruce is indeed preserved for the ages in the archives he built.*

As I edit and assemble the articles and photographs for this newsletter that recall Bruce's kind, unassuming, generous nature, I realize he was lucky to have found this island in his later years. I know we were lucky to have had him. In a world seemingly losing its humanity, a gentle person is very lucky to find a perfect niche in life and make such a difference.

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*(Archives News continues page 9)*



## Archives News (cont'd) ~ Anne Grulich

Bruce left many ripples in his wake. We are fortunate to have Tom Powell and Alan Cowles handling the technical aspects of our computer and internet needs in his stead. Tom developed and presented a plan for upgrading our internet and in-house file-sharing capabilities at the April 8 Board meeting. Alan has assumed oversight of our web sites. With their help, we're poised to move forward and share the GCIHS collection with the world in new ways.

Alan Cowles is a new face at GCIHS. Last summer he was a day-tripper, today we rely on him for web support. Such is the magic of Cranberry.



Alan is a descendant of the Hamors of Salisbury Cove. He came to Great Cranberry last September because he had a picture of Sidney Hamor Bunker and three of her descendants and wanted to find out more about her. By happenstance, he met Phil Whitney, himself a descendant of Sidney

Bunker. Phil drove Alan the length of the Island and back, showed him Sidney Bunker's grave in Bunker Cemetery, the house across the street where she lived for more than 71 years, and the GCIHS museum. Appreciating Phil's help, Alan sent in a donation and later took an interest in helping out with the web site.

Alan lives in Lawrence, Kansas. As a physician, he has been in family practice, pediatrics, and urgent care. His other current interests include family history, reforming the Kansas Open Meetings Act and reforming the federal disability programs.

Among other things, Alan is responsible for the new look of the front page of [gcihs.org](http://gcihs.org). All of Bruce's webpages and research remain in tact behind it, only the cover page has been changed.

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### Exhibits, Publications, and Stanley Cemetery

Jessi Duma's agricultural heritage research will be the main exhibit. There will also be a tribute to Bruce in the side room, and a panel describing the 2014 Stanley cemetery restoration project in the reception area. Despite everyone's generosity, GCIHS still owes the Church \$6,000 of the funds they loaned us for the

cemetery project. Before we can proceed with restoring other cemeteries, this one must be paid in full.

Watch the *Mount Desert Islander* newspaper for an article on the summer film festival, consisting of films made by and about Great Cranberry, we're planning as a fund raiser to benefit the cemetery and other GCIHS operations.

Also of note, items from our archives now appear on the Library of Congress website. Look for them at: [www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/oclcsearch.html](http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/oclcsearch.html) using the advanced search term MeCiGCI. We plan to coordinate a similar effort with the Maine State Library online repository this year.

Finally, be sure to read "The Secret Lives of Houses," article by Virginia Wright in the April edition of *Down East* magazine. The Parsonage house concealed-shoes discovery and our ongoing Cape-style house study is the backbone of the article.

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### Reflections for an Exhibition ~ Jessi Duma, Cranberry Isles Americorps Island Institute Fellow

People who spend summers on Great Cranberry are often curious about what life on the island is like during the winter. For me, winter was a season of slowing down. With short days, snow, and lack of propane at the Cranberry House, my life narrowed down dramatically, and became populated with characters like Dolly Bulger, Samuel Hadlock, William Preble, and John Gilley— mid-nineteenth century residents of the Cranberry Isles.

This spring I am preparing an exhibit on Cranberry Isles agriculture from 1760 to 1880, and examining its role in the lives of the early settlers who made their living off the land and sea. While much of my research revolves around numbers of cows and acres of improved land listed in censuses and deeds, it is the personal stories of the people who tended these animals and homesteads that makes it interesting. I am presently searching for images and artifacts to bring their tales to life for the exhibit. So, stop by the Cranberry House this summer--the Bulgers, Prebles, Gilleys and many of Cranberry's other colorful characters await you.



**Bruce Komusin Obituary ~ Phil Whitney**  
CRANBERRY ISLES - Bruce Henry Komusin, 66, passed away Feb. 14, 2015, Valentine's Day, at a local health care facility after a long, very courageous battle with cancer. He was born in Queens, Long Island, NY, on March 26, 1948, the son of Henry and Margarite (Heimerle) Komusin

An exceptional student, he graduated from Carle Place High School, Queens, in 1964 at age 16, having skipped two grades. He studied at the New York Institute of Technology for two years, before graduating from Hofstra University in 1969 with degrees in Computer Science and Engineering. His career was spent in computer programming and design. He first worked for Ontel in New York. He subsequently started his own company with two friends at Freeport, Long Island, NY. After several years he returned to Ontel. He then worked for several different computer companies, including contract work overseas in the Netherlands, Monaco, Italy, and Moscow.

Bruce first came to Great Cranberry Island in the early 1990s and was so impressed with the beauty and small town lifestyle of the island that he eventually purchased about 20 acres of land from close friends Dot and Andy McSorley. During the next few years, he built an impressive cottage overlooking Preble Cove with beautiful views towards Southwest Harbor. He became deeply interested in the history of the Cranberry Isles and the year-round sustainability challenges facing the Town, especially focusing on, at that time, the rapidly declining year-round population on Great Cranberry. In 1993, he became a Founding Member of the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society (GCIHS) and eventually became its Vice-President for many years. He immersed himself in historical research and preservation of historical artifacts and documents, even though the society initially had no museum to display these materials. When the Longfellow School ceased operations in 2000 due to lack of students, he joined forces with GCIHS President Wini Smart to establish the first museum on the island in rented vacant school spaces.

In 2004, the possibility arose that the school might re-open and would need the museum rooms back. The GCIHS Trustees began searching for a new museum home. Bruce seized the initiative and donated two valuable acres of land, fronting on Cranberry Road. That act of generosity led others to donate, enabling

excavation of a full basement and the purchase by GCIHS of a large building of historical significance, the former Mountain View Inn Restaurant. Over the next four years, Bruce helped supervise moving the building to its present site, and renovating it, as visionary ideas developed, to include the historical museum, cafe, upstairs program and arts center, public restroom, media and archiving center, landscaped lawns, gardens and woods, and a beautiful nature trail through the woods to Whistler Cove Beach. With the encouragement of friends Phil and Karin Whitney, he moved to Cranberry Island in 2005 to make his permanent home there. This move enabled him to work continuously year-round on the renovations. The facility, known as Cranberry House, opened its doors in June 2008. Bruce, who was extremely detailed-oriented, knew every detail of construction and every operational aspect. The property quickly became a center of community activity with thousands of people visiting, and represented the beginning of a resurgence of the community as a vibrant place to live and work. Bruce was an everyday presence on the property over the next seven years, summer and winter, and thrived on greeting visitors while relating stories of island history, especially of noted author Rachel Field and her fictional storybook doll, Hitty Preble. He especially enjoyed helping host the many programs and events held over the years at Cranberry House, and will be fondly remembered for providing technical support for movie nights at the Seaside Playhouse in the Arts Center.

His generosity, kindness, and spirit of volunteerism extended well beyond the boundaries of Cranberry House. When he moved permanently to Maine, he bought and renovated a small house and adjoining cabin nearer the center of the island. He moved into the small house, and rented his shorefront house and cabin at lower affordable housing rental rates, to enable more people to live year-round on the island. He volunteered to serve as Treasurer on the Library Board, was a member of the Town Planning Board., and the SWH Historical Society. In his spare time he provided free assistance with computer problems to many frustrated island residents.

In 2012, recognizing that the sustainable future of Great Cranberry Island lay in having affordable housing available, he donated another acre of land behind Cranberry House to take advantage of bond money which the State had designated for constructing new affordable homes on the outer



## Bruce Komusin Obituary *(cont'd)*

islands. Even though diagnosed with advanced stages of colon and liver cancer, he courageously oversaw the construction of two houses, and lived to see two families with four school-age children happily occupy these homes.

His final two seasons also saw him volunteering to drive the new Cranberry Explorer golf-cart shuttle service, which GCIHS and Cranberry House operated. He was reported to be a wonderful tour guide, enthusiastically relating to first-time visitors the wonders and history of the island paradise he loved.

Humorously nicknamed by some friends as the Island Philanthropist, he leaves behind a huge legacy of positive achievement in the community, and wonderful examples of good island neighborliness for others to follow. Bruce will be missed so very, very much.

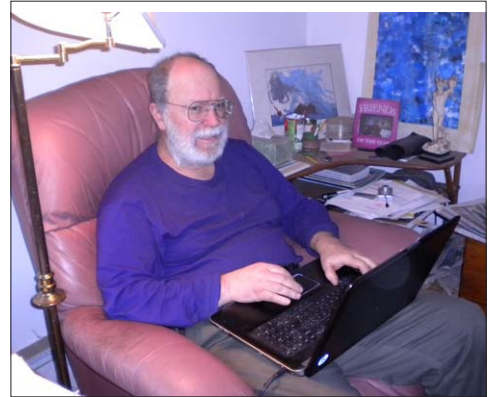
Bruce is survived by: his sister, Mary Ellen Lewis of Venice, FL; niece, Elizabeth Croce and husband, Drew, of FL; niece, Michelle Rigo of FL; nephew, John Paul Rigo of FL; great-nephew, Connor Croce of FL; special friends, Phil and Karin Whitney of Great Cranberry Island and Wini and Fred Quackenbush of Southwest Harbor; and many, many Cranberry Isles friends.

The Family wishes to express their sincerest thanks to the staff at Birch Bay Village, Dr. Brooks and the Oncology Staff at MDI Hospital, and the volunteer Hospice personnel for their outstanding support and kindness during Bruce's illness.

Memorial services will be held August 1st on Great Cranberry Island, with interment at Preble Cemetery, which overlooks Cranberry House and the new Affordable Housing homes.

Those who desire may make contributions in Bruce's memory to the Great Cranberry Historical Society (Cranberry House), P.O. Box 12, Cranberry Isles, ME 04625; or Cranberry Isles Realty Trust (CIRT), P. O. Box 4, Cranberry Isles, ME 04625. Arrangements in care of Acadia Burial & Cremation Direct, 248 State St., Ellsworth. *Bangor Daily News Maine, Feb. 19, 2015*

*(Photos on right taken by Bruce's friends over the years.)*



**Great Cranberry Island Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 12**  
**Cranberry Isles, ME 04625**

**Order & Membership Form Instructions:**

Copy this page, including your address mailing label, right.  
 Fill in the quantity & subtotal of the item(s) you want.  
 Add your desired level of Friends participation.  
 Indicate 'Newsletters by Email' if you prefer.  
 Add donation(s) to any Cranberry House Sustaining Fund(s).  
 Make check payable to GCIHS for grand total.  
 Mail using the enclosed pre-addressed envelope.

| Item                       | Price                | Q'ty  | S.Tot |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Balsam Pillows, 6-in. wide | \$10 ea., 3 for \$25 | _____ | _____ |

**VIDEOS** (DVDs in USA format)

|   |      |       |       |
|---|------|-------|-------|
| Interview & Fishing with Wesley Bracy, Jr | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Interview of Ada Rice                     | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Interview of Charles Wadsworth            | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Moving Cranberry House, Nov. 16, 2004     | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Great Cranberry Island: Hitty's Home      | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Manset Ribbon-Cutting, May 15, 2003       | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Ralph Stanley and Friends, music          | \$16 | _____ | _____ |
| Carrie Richardson of Big Cranberry play   | \$14 | _____ | _____ |

**PUBLICATIONS**

|   |      |       |       |
|---|------|-------|-------|
| A Cabin in the Woods                        | \$24 | _____ | _____ |
| House Histories of Great Cranberry Island   | \$32 | _____ | _____ |
| Cranberry Road                              | \$22 | _____ | _____ |
| Winter: The Other Season                    | \$22 | _____ | _____ |
| If It Were Yesterday... GCI Coloring Book   | \$17 | _____ | _____ |
| Boatdog Bess                                | \$22 | _____ | _____ |
| Hitty Preble booklet & flat wooden doll     | \$27 | _____ | _____ |
| The Construction of Road "I-95"             | \$ 8 | _____ | _____ |
| The Fairies, a poem suitable for framing    | \$ 3 | _____ | _____ |
| Contributions For Cranberry House 2004-2008 | \$ 7 | _____ | _____ |
| Riding with Tud, interview Mar. 18, 1993    | \$12 | _____ | _____ |
| An Interview with Tud Bunker, Oct. 1992     | \$ 8 | _____ | _____ |
| Interview with Ralph Stanley                | \$ 8 | _____ | _____ |
| GCI Maine Artist Sketchbook by S. Michalski | \$20 | _____ | _____ |
| A Taste of Cranberry art of Susan Michalski | \$12 | _____ | _____ |

TOTAL FOR ITEMS \_\_\_\_\_

**Friends of Cranberry House Form**

Renewal for 1 year, due in December (choose one)

Friend (\$25), Family Friend (\$50), Donor (\$100),  
 Supporter (\$250), Patron (\$500), Benefactor (\$1000+) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please exclude my name from year-end Friends list \_\_\_\_\_)

**Donation to a Fund**

(Fill in one or more category  
 to help sustain  
 Cranberry House.)

- Events \_\_\_\_\_
- Operating \_\_\_\_\_
- Endowment \_\_\_\_\_
- Stanley Cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

Total of Order Form Items (from left side): \_\_\_\_\_

GRAND TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Please send future newsletters as:

\_\_\_ E-mail only. Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Printed copy

**Mailing**

Please complete if your name or address has changed from your  
 printed label, and provide your email address here:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name & Addr \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_