

Cranberry Chronicle

News of Cranberry House and the GCI Historical Society

Last Run, Oil on canvas, ©2012 by Wini Smart

Wilfred Bunker: End of an Era

By Phil Whitney

I cannot remember a time I did not know Wilfred Bunker. His mother, Aunt Alta Spurling Bunker, was the sister of my grandfather, Elwood Spurling. My grandparents, who lived nearby, were quite close to all the family. We always exchanged gifts at Christmas time. Wilfred grew up in the house now owned by Louise Strandberg. He was the youngest of seven kids — one sister and six brothers. His father was Henry Bunker ('Pa Hen'); his mother, Aunt Alta lived until 1969, always residing with Wilfred and the family. His first wife, Norma, passed away in 1979. My first memory of a boat ride with Wilfred was in the early 1950s, when I was two or three years old. It was a nighttime departure from Cranberry with my mother, and I remember Wilfred lifting me down from the wharf into the old *Bobcat*, his first boat.

Wilfred and Clarence Beal established Beal & Bunker in 1950. The *Bobcat* and the *Malesca* were their first two boats. The *Bobcat* served as the scheduled Mailboat. Wilfred owned her between 1947 and 1963.

The Beal & Bunker Dock was completed in 1952. In the ensuing years, the dock was a busy center of activity, hosting the Port Hole Restaurant, a lobster dealership, gasoline sales, marine supplies, bait shed, and fuel oil deliveries, as well as separate adjacent boat building facilities. Also, the Post Office operated there. A summertime freight boat carried groceries and other supplies daily, and for several years a Chris Craft speedboat, the *Rogue*, was used for special trips. Beal & Bunker operated scheduled ferry service solely to SWH until 1972, before gradually switching entirely to NEH. The business grew steadily, keeping pace with growing tourism in the MDI area. Passenger loads eventually required larger boats.

In 1963 Wilfred built the *Island Queen*, and over the next thirty years the *Sea Queen*, *Sea Princess*, *Double B*, and *Cap'n B*. Barging gradually became a major part of the overall business, as other aspects were phased out.

It seemed like Wilfred lived his business day and night. He was arguably the best boat captain in the area. It was reported he missed only one Mailboat trip in fifty years, (some excuse about a hurricane that day, I think.) When the weather was really tough, he would refuse to take passengers, but go himself with the mail and freight. He received his Captain's license around 1937, and held it until around 2006. Unofficially, he may have been the longest active boat captain in America (approximately 70 years) but I can't prove that.

Somehow, between all the boat trips and marine business, he found volunteer time to serve the community. He was both a Selectman and School Board Member (for several years serving concurrently in both capacities.) He was an officer in the old Rockbound Grange on Islesford, and would carry Cranberry Islanders back and forth on meeting nights. He was always thinking about the future of the islands, and once proposed building a bridge between Islesford and Cranberry many years ago. He operated the "**Movie Boat**" to

the old Park Theatre in SWH in the summertime, carrying large crowds, often in black, pea soup fog conditions. When lobstermen Roland Sprague and Fred Fernald from Islesford were found frozen to death in their boat after a March gale in 1959, he and Elmer Spurling and several other islanders risked their own safety to bring back the bodies which were found near their boat on the beach up in Blue Hill Bay.

Yes, Wilfred Bunker was not only a good neighbor and successful businessman, he was perhaps the best citizen the Town of Cranberry Isles could ever have.



Wilfred Bunker at the helm of the *Island Queen*, 1971.

GCIHS Board

OFFICERS

Phil Whitney, *President*
Bruce Komusin, *Vice President*
Beverly Sanborn, *Vice President*

Jim Bradley, *Treasurer*
Wini Smart, *Secretary*

TRUSTEES

Elaine Buchsbaum	Ted Madara
Malcolm Donald	Kitty Pierson
Charlotte Harlan	Owen Roberts
Vicky Johnston	Leslie Watson
Michael Macfarlan	Nancy Wood

Notes of Appreciation

The Historical Society wishes to thank the following individuals for their special support in recent months:

☛ **Blair Colby:** For spending hours in zero degree weather clearing and burning many downed trees from the severe wind-storms this winter.

☛ **Peggy Hall:** for volunteering to regularly help organize and archive a large backlog of historical materials in the Media Center.

Milestones

DEATHS: Wilfred Bunker, 12/29/2012; Virginia Bradley, 1/16/2013

FEATS: Congratulations to Gary Allen on his charity run from Mt. Desert Island to Washington D.C. He thanks all who sponsored his endeavor.

Current Members

Dues of \$15 (individual), or \$25 (family) or any donation of \$25 or more, starts or extends your GCIHS membership for a full year. Members get this letter, 10% museum store and paid event discount, priority reservations to special events and receptions, and (family membership only) a free historic photo of your choice. Memberships help keep Cranberry House alive. A heartfelt THANKS to the following folks who sent their dues in January of 2012 or after.

Alson, Allan & Sue Ann Glaser & Julianna Alson Avery, Richard & Marianne Bailey, Patricia (Heliker-LaHotan Foundation) Bancroft, Alice & Bill Banks, Renita Beasley, E.B. & Lorrie Bennett, Charles & Nancy Bertles, Helen Bileck, Emily Nelligan Bourbeau, Katherine Bradley, James Bradley, Stephen Bryan, Ashley Buchsbaum, Elaine & Peter Bunker, Allison & Mary Ann Bunker, David & Wendy Rackliff Bunker, Louise Bunker, Pauline Butt, Charles Carter, Alice G. & Katrina Colby, Gaile & Arvard Savage Cole-Will, Rebecca (Acadia National Park) Comiskey, Elsa Cooper, James & Joyce Corley, Karl & Mary Corson, Neal & Candace Cox, Richard Craig, Karen	Cranberry Club (c/o Mrs. Lawrie Harris) Donald, Malcolm Donald, Peter (GCI Trust 2007) Dunbar, Charles & Nella Dunn, Eric & Susan (Susan A. Dunn Charitable Fund) Dwelle, Hugh L. & Shirley S. Encarnation, Dennis & Kathryn Graven Fernald, Anna Fitch, Dorothy Peterson Freeman, Robin Fuerst, Richard, Jr. & Joanne Garrett, Sylvia H. Gertmenian, Jim & Susan King Glaser, Michael & Kathleen Glidden, Suanne Goldberg, Mark Grandgent, Gail Gray, Ed & Jane Gulino, Daniel & Jacqueline Guth, Polly W. & John Hall, Margaret Harlan, George Jr. & Charlotte Harris, Nancy Hartley, Holly & Oscar Anderson Heyerdahl, Virginia Ann (Friends of Hitty Newsletter) Hagg-Chapman, Cheryl Hook, Janet A. & Bill Patterson Ingham, Jim & Cathy	Jackson, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Orton P. Jeffries, Mary Beth Johnston, Chris & Vicky Jordan-Fernald Kane, Cap & Annie Eldridge Kinsley, Rona Kneeland, Sheila Komusin, Bruce Kourakos, William La Montagne, Deborah D. Liebow, Dr. Paul Lim, Chong & Judith Little, David & Mikki Jones Lobkowitz, Gillian Macfarlan, Michael D. Madara, Edward S. Jr. & Rosa Linda Marsoobian, Armen & Fulvia McShea, Naomi Methot, Claude & Janice Michalski, Susan Miles, Robert & Nancy Millar, Louise Moore, Caryl (Beal) Moss, Jan Mountain, Ronald P. Murray, Virginia & Family Neilson, Janneke Seton Nevius, Mary Newell, Sarah Newell, Morrison & Johnna Newman, Susan & Jarvis	Oppenheimer, Jonathan & Jennifer Ott, Emiline & Marvin Pierson, Jr., Dr. & Mrs. Richard N. Pinkham, Patricia M. Polshek, James & Ellyn Quackenbush, Fred & Wini Raup, Henry A. Rich, Louise Spurling Richards, Eileen Richardson, Amy & Christina & Steve Mathew Richman, Michael Roberts, Owen & Janet Robinson, John & Barbara Rodiger, Georgiana Rome, Abigail Rome, Dan & Cindy Rose, Dr. Dan & Martha Saltonstall, David Sanborn, Beverly Schmidt, Kenneth Selim, Tarek, Elizabeth, Sarah & Laila, (CDM International, Inc.) Shaw, Gordon & Joy Shoemaker, Paul & Susanne Shorey, Ev & Joan Singerling, Jim & Molly Singerling, Chris Singerling, Abigail	Singerling, Hannah Southwest Harbor Historical Society Spurling, Leslie & Norma St. Germain, Robert & Lucille Stone, Gregg & Lisa Storey, Joan A. Strandberg, Louise B. Sullivan, Richard & Ann Trotter, Mike & Sue Tyrrell, John & Veronica Valenta, Jerry Wallace, William & Lena May Wallace, Debra Ward, Susan & Rodman Watson, Thomas & Leslie Westphal, Gretchen Westphal, Ruth White, Chris & Susan Whitney, Phil & Karin Whitney, Katherine Wilson, James & Jane Wimer, Rodney & Donna Sunday Wood, Cameron & Nancy Yorke, Robert & Judith Zimmerman, Sarah & Steven (Astor Street Foundation)
--	---	--	--	---

Membership Benefits

We continually strive to add members to our organization. Additional people help keep an organization strong and vibrant. Many members volunteer to help out by serving on subcommittees, working on special projects and events, or hosting at the museum, among many choices. Some folks are occasionally fearful of volunteering, believing they will become over-committed. But many have thoroughly enjoyed themselves, once they focus on an area of interest.

Beyond the personal satisfaction gained from volunteer work, membership also has several other significant benefits: The Museum Store offers a 10% discount on all items. Family Memberships entitle you to choose a free photograph from the archives of the Historical Society. Members are routinely entitled to discounted advance reservations at limited seating special events such as historical boat excursions.

Remind your friends, relatives, and neighbors who may not be members to join us and see what they have been missing. (Just receiving the memory-filled Cranberry Chronicle newsletter three times yearly with the paid membership is another great benefit.) Please don't forget to renew your own membership when it comes due. The dues and donations which members generously pay are vital in helping offset our challenging annual operational costs. Your support, and the support of others you encourage to join, allows us to continue preserving the history of the Cranberry Isles, and presenting the wonderful educational and entertaining programs and outdoor experiences we have all appreciated. – Phil Whitney

President's Message

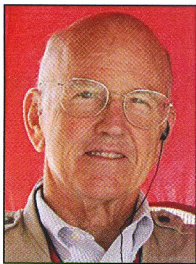
By Phil Whitney

This issue of the *Cranberry Chronicle* is devoted primarily to the legendary Wilfred Bunker, who passed away on Dec. 29, 2012 at age 92. There was arguably no other person who was more representative of the Cranberry Isles over these many years. Wilfred was the 'face' of Cranberry Isles to many generations — reflecting its character, community spirit, good neighbor attitude, and hard work ethic. We have prepared several memorial articles about Wilfred. Included are various photos and paintings depicting his life on the islands and his beloved boating company, Beal & Bunker, which he founded with Clarence Beal in 1950, and which remained a labor of love throughout his life. Time moves steadily onward, and the old timers, the old traditions, the great memories gradually fade away, But I am certain that Wilfred Bunker, and the legacy he left behind, will remain in Cranberry Isles lore for a long, long time.

We've been experiencing a tougher winter weather wise than last. The temperature in the past week has never risen above 20°, and reached down to zero several nights. The wind has remained ever constant. We've received only one large snowstorm, but it was a whopper, 18" totals, but with deep drifts and high winds reaching blizzard conditions. It resulted in many trees blown down in back of Cranberry House. However, the call went out to Blair Colby, and he had everything cleaned up and burned in several days in his usual efficient manner. Between the snowstorm and the bitter cold weather, there was a stretch of much warmer weather, climbing up into the high 40's. The ponds behind Cranberry House are now frozen solid, and the larger pond is perfect for ice skating. The Christmas season was reflected by many colorful Christmas lights displayed on the occupied houses around the island. Cranberry House was decorated with blue lights and candles in the windows. But not having any snow prior to Christmas to accompany the holiday lights was a disappointment to most.

Now that the Christmas season is behind us, and the corner has been turned on the New Year, we've begun looking towards Spring and increasing activity at Cranberry House. We have begun holding a number of subcommittee meetings to focus on plans for the coming season. These meetings, usually held in the Cranberry House heated basement, include operations, publicity,

Continued on right



Meet New Trustee, Ted Madara

"I have lived in Philadelphia all my life. I was involved in banking and real estate for over 49 years, my summers were spent on Sutton Island and currently in Southwest Harbor. I still enjoy the Cranberry Islands, particularly Great Cranberry Island Historical

Society. My wife, Linda and our two children and three grandchildren all enjoy the Historical Society and Museum. For me the people of Mount Desert Island and the surrounding islands make the history that the Great Cranberry Island Historical Society and the other local historical society's are preserving for us and for the future generations, whether "from afar", as I am, or the families that live here year-round. I look forward to my association with the Society and Museum." — Ted Madara

News of Cranberry House and the GCI Historical Society, #25, February 2013 • www.gcihs.org



The Bunker Brothers: (l. to r.) Wilfred, Raymond, and Tud pose here at the first launching of the Sea Queen. Bunker & Ellis designed and built the Sea Queen in 1971 and 1972.

events planning and budget discussions. We anticipate this early planning will insure a successful season.

Peggy Hall, who will return as café cashier this season, has been traveling down from her home near Bangor to help with archiving a backlog of historical documents in the basement Media Center. We also recently hired Anne Grulich, Bill Dowling's sister, who has an extensive resume in museum and historical archiving work. She will assist several days per week with archiving, grant writing, and designing museum displays. We welcome and deeply appreciate the efforts of these two personable additions to our Cranberry House team.

Construction involving the new Affordable Housing Project is resuming around the property. A new phone / power pole at the head of the driveway is scheduled for installation this week, and underground utility lines will be laid the length of the parking lot and access road to the rear of the GCIHS property where the CIRT affordable housing property begins. Later this spring the houses themselves will be built, and hopefully ready for occupancy by new families prior to the school year. We are making every effort to avoid having much construction activity near the Cranberry House as visitation increases heading into summer.

Much is happening this winter around the Cranberry House — many exciting things which look promising, not only for this coming season, but for the long term future of Cranberry Island.

Artist's Note

I've recently finished a series of oil paintings inspired by the Beal & Bunker Mail Boat. Having used the Mail Boat for the 40 plus years I've been coming to Cranberry Island, I'm well aware of how important it is to islanders for transportation, supplies, and of course the mail. I wanted this series to be a tribute to Wilfred, the Bunker family, and their employees for their long time service, help and hard work.

There are presently nine paintings in the series, two are shown in this newsletter. An exhibit of the series is planned for next summer in Rockland. This series was fun to do, of people of all ages riding the boat, with their many expressions, plus the piles of groceries, pets and crammed L.L. Bean boat bags. My only regret was that Wilfred never got to see them, especially the one of him loading the boat last spring. Many of us complain but we couldn't manage to live here without the Mail Boat.

— Wini Smart, February 2013



Loading the Mail Boat, Oil on canvas by Wini Smart, ©2012.

Everyone is glad when warmer weather arrives. It's finally the time of year for both summer and winter folks to make their yearly pilgrimages to their favorite off-island nurseries. Within days all of these flowers will be thoughtfully planted into small or grand gardens alike!

The Mail Boat

By Wini Smart

It's 7:30 in the morning and the last of the men clump aboard the boat, carrying heavy metal boxes or pails of tools, coolers, their thermos bottles, and lunches, while balancing steaming cups of coffee. Other men have already loaded their tools, a chain saw, lumber, wallboard, and boxes of equipment. The boat is full of workmen headed out to the Cranberry Islands. It is standing room only and many men have to find room outside on the open deck. A few women are aboard: cleaning women, gardeners, the schoolteacher for Islesford, and a grandmother who had baby sat for her daughter who lives ashore. Most of the tourists catch a later boat to hike or bike the islands.

The early morning sun slants into the harbor highlighting the clouds of mist rising from the cold water. The boat creates a dark 'V' as it glides through the still water, as another day begins for the Beal & Bunker Mail Boat.

James Bunker is the captain this day, grandson of the founder Wilfred Bunker who, along with Clarence Beal, started the business over 60 years ago. The men work hard on the Mail Boat as they load anything and everything to the top of the cabin. Bags and bags of groceries, lots of freight, flats of flowers, hundreds of bikes, couches or chairs, mattresses, refrigerators, washing machines, piles of lumber, on and on. And yes, bags of mail of course, but that goes inside where it is safe.

On later trips of the day, the boat will be full of tourists and returning islanders. Dogs and groceries go free. Boat bags filled with groceries line the cabin and deck. Passengers need to step

over the squirming dogs, many block the aisles. Small dogs are easier as they fit on a master's lap, expectantly waiting for their courtesy dog biscuit. In the cabin the two islands each have their own seating side, Port is for Islesford, Starboard is for Great Cranberry. We wonder "what if" we sat on the wrong side.

The trip is long enough to catch up on the latest island gossip or your knitting, read a book, take a catnap, or just admire the beautiful scenery. A new visitor waits with great expectation to see the quaint islands, while the islanders are just glad to get back to their quieter lifestyle. The tourists stand with cameras ready to capture the darling lighthouse high on a rocky cliff of Bear Island. Others check the horizons for seals or sea birds.

On a clear day the view back to Mount Desert is worth the fare. The blue parade of mountains rises above the water looking like a movie setting. Sleek sailboats pass, their white sails snapping in the breeze. The water is sprinkled with colorful lobster buoys like party decorations. A lobster man may be there pulling his traps, with screaming gulls circling overhead. The local passengers seem oblivious to it all, it is ho hum to them now.

In 1950 Wilfred Bunker and Clarence Beal joined forces to begin a mail boat service, naming it Beal & Bunker. The U.S. Postal contract was to carry mail and packages from Southwest Harbor to the Cranberry Isles. Wilfred owned the *Bobcat* and Clarence had the *Malesca*, named after his three daughters. They pooled their resources and each put up their own boat for use in the business. Wilfred lived on the island back in those years but he moved ashore to make his second wife happier. He lived

Continued on page 5

off-island until his death at the end of 2012.

Beal & Bunker had won the bid for the mail contract over Elmer Spurling. Elmer had taken over the duties for Eber Spurling, who had been doing it for years. Eber had grown too old to continue carrying mail in his small open boat with its single cylinder engine. Mail was brought from Seal Harbor in those days. Anyone wanting to travel to the Cranberry Isles had to hitch a ride with Eber or a fisherman. Wilfred remembers Eber going out into all kinds of weather in that small boat and recalled, "There was more salt water over his sou'wester than I ever traveled over!"

Wilfred and Clarence joined Red McAllister to open a boat yard along the north shore of Great Cranberry Island next to the town dock. There was more demand for travel with summer people arriving daily. The boat yard built their next boat, The *Island Queen*. She was designed by Wilfred's brother, Raymond, to carry more freight and people.

Other boats followed, the *Sea Princess*, (a tour boat), the *Double B* and *Capt B*, (both work boats). Beal & Bunker also had a barging business. At first it was a small scow that could carry only one or two cars. Later they had a large steel barge built in Brewer, with a capacity of four cars or two large trucks. This barge is propelled by the *Double B*.

The town of Southwest Harbor wanted Beal & Bunker to use the Upper Town Dock. To reach shore it was necessary to climb a flight of steps, making the job of carrying heavy freight very difficult. This action by the town forced them to move to North-

east Harbor. The dock in Northeast was easy to drive on to load or unload a waiting vehicle. They have operated from Northeast Harbor for over forty years.

Today the *Sea Queen* stops at Great Cranberry and Little Cranberry (Islesford) to pick up passengers and school children. If called in advance they will stop at Sutton Island and will even drop off a worker at tiny Bear Island, but only at mid to high tide. For years the mail was put in a metal garbage can on the dock at Sutton Island, marked "US MAIL" in bold letters.

The *Sea Princess* has been sold and is still in use as a tour boat. The old *Island Queen* remains in local service but with a different owner, ferrying people from Southwest Harbor and Manset to the Cranberry Islands.

At age ninety-two, Wilfred finally retired. Only a few years ago he took his turn running the boat. If not needed he would still drive to Northeast Harbor to check on things. His son David runs the barge, making many trips a day carrying huge trucks loaded with gravel or building supplies, cement mixers, Bangor Hydro trucks or other large equipment, with a few cars squeezed in. This is the only way people can get their cars moved to and from the islands.

People complain: the fare was raised this year, too crowded, the boat was late. I once said to the captain on a very packed holiday trip, that it was like a cattle boat. He quipped, "yes we are "MOOOving people." All the Islanders should stop to think just what it would be like without the Mail Boat. It is the vital link to the mainland, a life line and certainly a necessity to the Islander's present way of life.



If you were to go back in time to the early 70s you would have ridden with these islanders: (l. to r.) Hildegard Hamm (from Islesford), Tud Bunker, Lewis Alley, Victor White, Charles Rice, Wilfred at the helm, and Harold Stanley.



Top: Wilfred and Norma Bunker and their children, MaryAnne (eldest), Joyce (middle child), and David (youngest). Family photograph enclosed with their 1952 Christmas card.

Middle: David, barging, using the *Cap't B* to push the *Workhorse*, the steel barge.

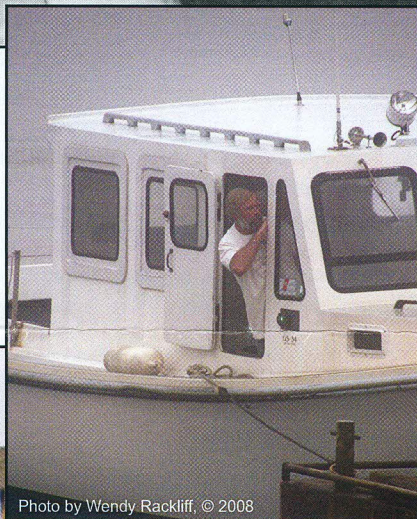


Photo by Wendy Rackliff, © 2008

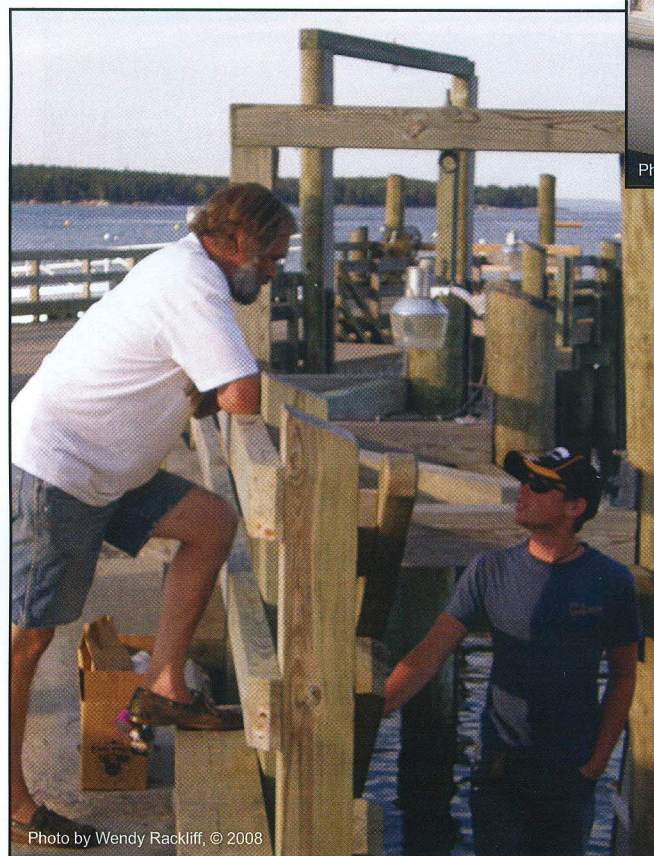


Photo by Wendy Rackliff, © 2008

David Bunker and son, Justin. When Justin isn't working as a deck hand for B&B he helps his father with barging.

Thank You Wilfred

By Gretchen Westphal

Clarence Beal passed away in 1990, and Wilfred in 2012. What's left now but to thank both of them?

Take a moment to reflect on how Beal & Bunker affected you. Were you employed by B&B as a teenager? Did your earnings go towards a college education, or to pay the bills or into a venture of your own? And think of all the connections you've made with islanders or day-trippers. Perhaps one particular day you sat next to someone who would become important in your life.

We are glad of Wilfred and Clarence's vision 60+ years ago, and we are thankful to them, and their families, for the sacrifices they made on our behalf. These days many of us have our own boats to conveniently transport us and our guests to-and-from the island during the warmer months, but let's not forget the service Beal & Bunker provides year-round.

Thank you Wilfred, for your part in establishing and growing Beal & Bunker, Inc. You did well and we wish your descendants, and hired hands, continued success.

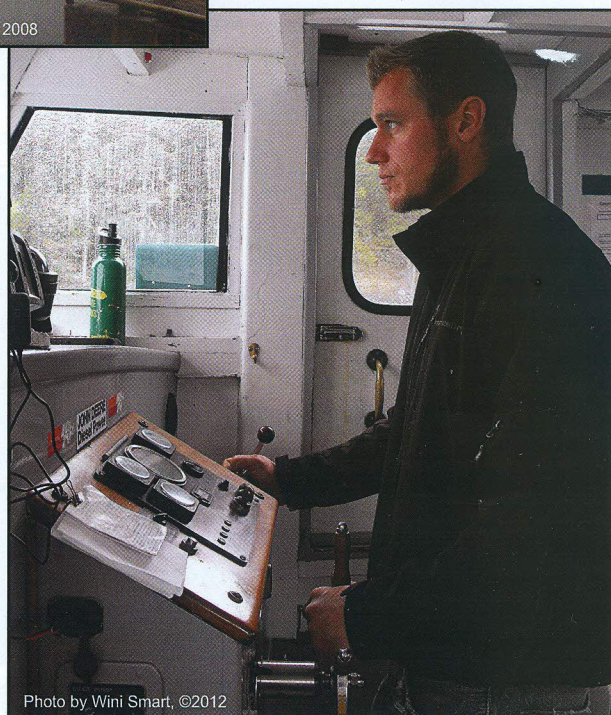


Photo by Wini Smart, ©2012

David's eldest son, James, is a captain on the Mail Boat.

Movie Boat Memories

By Phil Whitney

The Movie Boat has not run to SWH since 1972. The Park Theatre in SWH ceased to exist in 1979. But surprisingly, reminiscences of both often surface in conversations among adults on the Cranberry Isles old enough to remember. Wilfred Bunker began the tradition of taking islanders from both islands to the movies in the late 1940s. The boat ran during the summer season, normally on Tuesday and Saturday nights. In the early days, prior to television arriving in Eastern Maine in 1953, the crowds were a mixture of adults and young people. In later years, most of the passengers were youngsters looking for an evening of entertainment away from "the rock." The first Movie Boat was the *Bobcat*, which was smaller than the next generation *Island Queen*, built in 1963. Although I rarely took the Movie Boat from Cranberry, I would occasionally catch it going in the other direction after the show. The boat was often very crowded, and generally everyone was in a festive mood. In those days, boats weren't equipped with radar, GPS, or even, before 1960, two-way radios. Captains relied solely on compasses and their intuitive experience at sea to navigate through the blackness and all-too-often fog. Travelling on the boat was quite an adventure, especially in tricky weather conditions. We never lost faith in Wilfred's abilities to reach the destination safely.

In those days, the ferries landed at the Lower Town Dock in SWH, which was a very busy place for Cranberry Island traffic, especially at Mail Boat time during summer days. The Movie Boat was no exception, and the eager passengers would climb ashore, make their way over the wharf, and most would walk the 3/4 mile uptown to the business district. Islanders didn't own as many vehicles back then, and walking was routine. It took 10 to 15 minutes to make the trek. Businesses around the waterfront included the US Coast Guard Base, Beal's Lobster Wharf, Man-set Marine Supply, SWH Boat Corp., and a bowling alley. The crowd traversed the length of Clark Point Road, passing through the residential area, before arriving at the business district. There were two showings in the summer at the movie theatre, at 7:00 and 9:00 PM. The boat would arrive early enough to allow time for the walk up town, and perhaps visit Jim Theodore's Variety Store (Clark Point Rd.), Carroll Drugstore (Main St.) or another business in town before the first show began. Many businesses stayed open on Saturday Nights, before the era of Ellsworth shopping malls.

Howard Robinson was the long-time owner of the Park Theatre. The theatre was located at the intersection of Clark Point Road and Main Street. It seated about 300 people, and did not have a balcony. It was never known for its architectural beauty, either inside or out. But some great memories were made on the movie screen (and perhaps in the back rows of the darkened theatre.) Joe Trafton was the projectionist and Mildred Palmer often held down the ticket booth in the small lobby. Tickets normally were 25¢ for kids, 50¢ for adults in the 1960s. Movie posters of coming attractions were displayed in the lobby. Patrons would then proceed through the swinging doors into the small inner lobby, where there was a popcorn machine and

small candy counter. A turn to the left led down into the seating area. McEachern & Hutchins Hardware now operates there in an entirely new building. The old theatre was demolished to make way for changing times.

When the movie was over, everyone would trek back down to the dock in darkness, possibly stopping quickly to pick up an ice cream or candy bar. When home destination on GCI or Islesford was finally reached, the 'night on the town' was complete.

Today the Park Theatre is gone, the Movie Boat is gone, many of the SWH businesses are gone, and the boat captain is gone.

Thanks, Wilfred, for the memories.

A few more memories . . .

Annie Alley (GCI) remembers when the Movie Boat ran every Tuesday and Saturday evening. You could ride the boat (10¢/round-trip), go to the movies (50¢) and get a Coke (5¢), all for a grand total of 65¢. Some moviegoers walked up town, but Wilfred had an old hearse, which others would pile into to get a ride uptown. Annie also remembers the time Wilfred fell overboard. The cove was choppy and Wilfred was putting the boat on the mooring. Someone must have seen him go over because they pulled the line in and there he was. He was alright,

but like many islanders, he couldn't swim.

Gaile Colby (GCI) remembers that "Uncle Wilfred was always game to going somewhere to do something, and movie night was a big deal." But she remembers the vehicle as being a paddy wagon, not a hearse. When Wilfred moved off-island, she thought that "we all would surely perish because he did everything."

Anna Fernald (Islesford) and her husband, **Warren** didn't have an off-island car when they were first married, so the only way they could have a date night was to go with the boat-load of moviegoers. "I was always a little embarrassed that we could never go on a date alone. But, I also recall that the *Island Queen* had a little space down below where it was dark and there was always a little cuddling going on, during the boat ride back from the movies. Beal & Bunker had their own dock with a restaurant. Wilfred would stop there on the way back so we could get a snack. That was great!"

She goes on to praise him by saying that "Wilfred was the 'captain of captains' as far as she was concerned. One day when my kids were away at boarding school, the day for them to go back was not a good one, but Wilfred was going to take them anyway. I trusted him. The kids told me later that the weather was so bad that he fell to his knees at the wheel."

Wilfred also was instrumental in running boats for Grange meetings and for the weekly card parties, one week on Islesford, the next on Great Cranberry. He and his wife Norma often attended those gatherings together. He was instrumental in keeping the two islands connected. After Wilfred died my daughter Karen said that he was the "bridge between the two islands".

Carl Brooks (GCI) remembers the time that he and his aunt were heading out of SWH with Wilfred on the *Malesca* . . . in a hurricane! This would have been in the fall of 1956 or 1957. Carl recalls that when they were passing by the Coast Guard Station they could see the rocks at the bottom of the ocean while in the valleys of the swells. But, Wilfred got them safely home!



The Bobcat was one of the boats used to transport moviegoers to Southwest Harbor.

Great Cranberry Island Historical Soc.
PO Box 12
Cranberry Isles, ME 04625-0012



Bruce Komusin
PO Box 132
Cranberry Isles , ME 04625-0132



Newsletters by E-mail

Our colorful, printed newsletters will be mailed out as usual this issue. But to save both expense and natural resources, we'd like to use e-mail as much as possible. Each printed newsletter costs us more than \$2 to print, fold, stuff, seal, and mail. Since we send three newsletters per year, this amounts to a substantial portion of the annual membership fee — money we would prefer to use to enhance our Cranberry House programs and events.

So we'll also e-mail this issue to members whose e-mail address we know. You'll receive it days before your printed copy, and can read it on screen (saving paper and ink), or print it out if you wish. The file format (.pdf) is industry-standard.

Please consider receiving **ONLY** the e-mail version of the newsletter. If you so choose, you'll help us reduce our expenses. Call us and/or indicate so on your next membership form. If you've recently renewed, contact us at (207) 244-3682 to supply an e-mail address.

Membership Form Instructions

- 1) Copy this page, including your address label, above.
- 2) Indicate your desired level of membership renewal.
- 3) Add donation(s) to any Cranberry House Sustaining fund(s),
- 4) Make out check for GRAND TOTAL, payable to GCIHS.
- 5) Carefully print your e-mail address to receive special notices.
- 6) Indicate if you wish to receive future newsletters by e-mail, to save costs.
- 7) Mail your completed form and signed check to:
GCIHS, P.O. Box 12, Cranberry Isles, Maine 04625

Membership Form

Membership Renewal for 1 year (choose one)

Individual (\$15) or Family (\$25) _____

Donation to a Fund

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

- Events _____
- Operating _____
- Endowment _____

GRAND TOTAL: _____

E-mail to receive infrequent notices, or the newsletter

Please send future newsletters as

☐ E-mail only, to save costs ☐ printed copy

Mailing

Please complete if your name or address has changed
from your printed label, above.

Name: _____

Address: _____
