

Volume III Number II

Don Pollard, Editor

ISLAND ITEMS

The Island Association's management was left up in the air at the conclusion of the July 4 annual meeting.

Andy Pipper and Claude Caponi announced they would be unable to serve the second years of their two-year terms as president and secretary, respectively. Jim Scott expressed reluctance to move from his vice-presidency to the presidency.

Since the meeting, however, the directors have resolved the situation. Jim Scott has assumed the presidency for the coming year and Barney Moosekian has been appointed to the vacated vice-presidency. Barney's wife, Audrey, was appointed secretary and Herb Path continues as treasurer.

The other directors are: Andy Pipper, Herman Hamel, Tom Lott and Gerald Marker.

The husband-wife team of Barney and Audrey also took on the management of the highly enjoyable picnic Aug. 6. The event was not only fun but netted \$860.00 for the association treasury.

Although a rather recent cottage owner, Audrey is one of the Island's genuine old-timers, having been summering here since she was a child.

Barney keeps fit by running and even on week-ends plans on two or three circuits of our domain.

Recently, however, he has found that some Island dogs have developed a certain hostility to human runners.

"I still run but now I have to get up before the dogs do," he complains.

The Island is getting a welcome infusion of younger blood.

Rob and Muggsy Hall, children of Eli Haick and the Bob Fleischers respectively, have bought the Chris Harris cottage, and Bob Marsh, younger son of the George Marsh's, is buying the Pilarowski cottage next door to his parents.

Jack McCartney, older son of Russ and Helena, has taken over the permanent section of the McCartney's former residence by the Canal Dock, and made it extremely attractive.

The Harris's will live in their boathouse while they build a new cottage on the North Channel.

Other new cottage owners this year:

Gustave C. Verhelle, the former Underwood cottage.

Richard Gray, of Union Lake, the Winston cottage.

Thomas Mulroy, of Livonia, the Carlson cottage. (Mrs. Mulroy is Jeanette Carlson's niece.)

Gary E. Woods, Detroit, the Essner cottage.

John P. Shannahan, *Rademaker's cottage*

With their successful pancake and sausage brunch, and various other work projects, the Island Juniors have accumulated a treasury of more than \$500. They plan to spend the money for a water slide at the Big Dock and other equipment for the playground.

Some other achievements of the young people which might set an example for everyone:

They undertook the tedious job of painting the Bog Dock themselves.

They paid, out of their own funds, for replacing the mercury lamp on the playground after it was broken.

The following ends the saga of the long association of the George Brown family with Russell Island.

George who, over a period of 46 years, was "Mr Russell Island" in every sense of the word, was born in Amherstburg, Ont., and orphaned at the age of ten. He went to live with an uncle on Harsen's Island and, as he grew older, worked for various farmers in the Algonac area.

Mrs. Brown was born, Mamie Genaw, in Algonac. They met, as young people do, and, in the year when both reached the age of 20, they were married.

It was seven years later, in March, 1916, that George signed a contract to become Russell Island caretaker. Under the contract he was to receive \$5 a day for days when he worked his team and \$3 other days.

"George wouldn't have had the job except that the sailor the company had planned to hire turned the job down," Mrs. Brown said. "The sailor found the money he had been sending home for his retirement had disappeared so he had to go back on the lakes."

During the first year of the Island's occupancy, the Russell Island Land Co. maintained strict control over all details of the operation.

Mrs. Brown has an illustrative anecdote.

Former Supreme Court Justice W. L. Carpenter, one of the Island fathers, frequently commuted from Detroit on the steamer Tashmo and it distressed him that, when the crowded ship pulled into the dock, the passengers had a closeup view of Russell Islanders of all shapes cavorting around in a great assortment of bathing suits. He thought it lowered the Island's dignity.

"One day there was a big sign on the dock," Mrs. Brown recalled. "It said, 'No one allowed on dock in bathing suit when boat comes in.' For a while after that all the swimmers would scurry away whenever one of the big steamers pulled in."

Mrs. Brown remembers another occasion when the company staged a big promotion to show off its new development.

"The company chartered the Steamer Tashmo and brought up about 800 people they thought might be interested in buying lots," she said. "There was a little real estate shack at the time on what is now the Valassis lot and there were salesmen around to talk to the visitors and serve them coffee.

"I suppose they sold a lot of lots they say but I didn't see much of the festivities because my youngest daughter Kay had been born in our Island home a few days before and I was still in bed."

As the great depression deepened in the thirties the company gradually withdrew from active supervision of the Island and George Brown took over.

As an inducement for George to stay during the difficult time the company made an exception to its strict prohibition against any sort of commercial enterprise and allowed George to build the small store which was first a grocery and later the Pop Stand. (The original Pop Stand, now the teen's hangout).

During the depths of the depression not more than half the 50 cottages then built were occupied. It was hard going but George, doing all the work himself, with the help of his family, got along.

In fact, the prevailing Island opinion was that George had accumulated a bank account of some size during the Prohibition years.

During that era the Island was one of the easier points to cross the international border. As liquor running became a big business, powerful motor boats frequently lay after dark in the shadow of the Big Lock while Federal boats patrolled the channel.

Island children of the day viewed it as a fine game. They lay on the dock and whispered warnings to the men below when a customs boat approached.

One of the better stories of that time concerns an Islander who an unexpected mid-winter visit to his cottage and found the kitchen high with burlap bags full of Canadian beer.

According to the story the cottager called George Brown to ask if it came? George expressed his consternation and offered to remove the material at once but the Islander replied indignantly: "No, nobody take a single bottle out of my cottage. Just let me know who I owe what."

As the Island emerged from the depression George maintained his position as the "boss of everything". He not only cut the lawns, collected the garbage, looked after pumps and water lines and sold ice and wood he also operated the ferry and the store.

However, after World War II, changing times and advancing age caused him to begin to shed his enterprises and sell first the ferry and then the Pop Stand.

But it wasn't always easy to get out. Mrs. Brown recalls that, with the advent of electric refrigeration, George wanted to close his ice and ice delivery business.

"But several people objected strenuously," she said. "They said they wanted to keep on using ice because the old fashioned ice box was on the Island's charms!"

But George did stop cutting ice in the late 1940's and another tradition passed by the wayside.

However, until the day of his death, George continued to spend part of nearly every day on the Island. He continued to do maintenance work for many cottagers and during the winter maintained a patrol service.

Appropriately -- if that is the right word -- he died on the Island he had loved for so many years. On June 7, 1962, while he was burning brush near the Canal Dock he suffered a fatal heart attack.

Although she doesn't talk about it, Virginia Gillette has achieved considerable success as a writer of short stories and sketches, most on domestic themes.

Since the beginning of the year four of her stories have been published in the Detroit News Sunday magazine.

A longer story of hers which ran as the lead fiction item in the circulation Woman's Day was translated and published in women's magazines abroad.

Virginia likes to name her characters for the members of her own family -- husband, Bill, and children, Suzy, Billy, Sally, Mary and Phil.

She wants it understood that they really did not figure in all the mishaps and escapades in which she thrusts them.

Vital statistics of recent months:

Fred Zick, an Islander for 20 years occupying the cottage next to the Pop Stand, died June 17. Fred leaves his wife, Barbara, and two daughters, Mrs. Linda Cameron and Susan.

Marilyn J. Kroll, 34, daughter of the Roy Krolls and grand daughter the Rich Krolls, died May 23. Marilyn became ill in Naples, Italy, where she was working in the overseas teaching program. Her sister, Janis, died at a tragically early age.

Two years after leaving the Island, Al Henning died in Deaconess Hospital April 5.

Mrs. Lillian Loomis, 88, Hobe's mother, died July 30. Another of her sons, Chuck, was a former Islander, occupying what is now the Mary Todd cottage.

Joseph M. Kretz, of Algenac, who built and remodeled Island cotta over a period of 40 years, died May 2. His wife died only last year.

The Norm Schultes celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at large, memorable celebration at Hof-Grau Hall April 5.

Some younger recent brides and grooms:

It was an all-Island wedding Feb. 17 when Karen, daughter of the Kreighs, married Gerald, son of Mrs. Helen Lazar, in Bethel Bethel Bay Church.

Phil Seth, son of Charley and Thursa, was married April 22 in Pe Lutheran Church to Carol Cosentino. Phil is working for the Campbell Co. Advertising Agency.

Another wedding which should have been listed long ago but was through error:

David, son of the Frank Boyers, and Miss Pat Tews, in Ithaca on 15, 1966. Dave is the first benedict among the Boyer boys.
