

The Sou'west Voyage

Norwood Cove Greening Island Southwest Harbor Manset Seawall

Our Lives

Continued from previous issue

Betty Allen

by Susan Buell

How do you know Betty Allen?

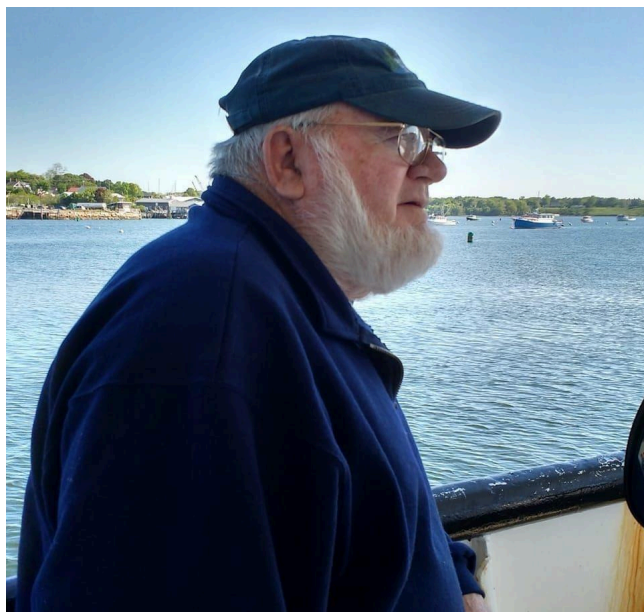
As a young girl growing up in Bernard?

As a young mother of three children, Allan, Lorraine, and Susan, living in Manset?

As a dressmaker, or perhaps through her work weighing and grading 1000's of eggs at her aunt's Beech Hill chicken farm?

As an artist and art teacher?

Or, as the other half of the heart of the SUNBEAM, with her husband, Capt. David Allen?



*Davis T Allen at the helm of the Sunbeam
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Presidents Message

After a difficult string of storms and destructive weather this past winter, I am happy to share some positive news with you! We hosted our first Christmas open houses with the Museum decorated for the holiday season. The two open houses brought many visitors who enjoyed all of the decorations. Our board members are already planning for the next Christmas openHouses.

Over the winter, we had new lighting installed in the Museum so our exhibits will be better highlighted. A false wall in the northeast corner of the Museum has been removed so there is more exhibit space, and several areas have been painted. New anti-slip treads are being installed on the entrance ramp to ensure a safer walkway for visitors.

Your donations have continued to be a great help as we continue transitioning the former church into a Museum. From those donations, we have purchased a new large cabinet for the flat storage of our maps, navigation charts and posters so they are no longer rolled up for storage. And, we have acquired two new exhibit cases.

On behalf of the Southwest Harbor Historical Society, I thank you for your ongoing interest in and support of our efforts!

Aimee Williams

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Displays from our Christmas Open house





*Nativity scene from
Christmas Open house*

Death Notices

Nancy J (Robinson) Canniff Southwest Harbor/Lodi, NY. 89. Oct 23 2023

Ann Staples Waldron Southwest Harbor/Portland. 84. Nov. 1, 2023

Samuel A. Lawrence Southwest Harbor/Maryland. 95. Nov. 3, 2023

Earl Alley. Southwest Harbor/Florida. 81. Dec 7, 2023

Randall W Lord. Southwest Harbor/Florida. 64. Dec. 13, 2023

Charles E Farley, Sr. Southwest Harbor/Franklin. 79. Dec 14, 2023

Ernie Murphy. Bass Harbor/Southwest Harbor. 65. Dec 16, 2023

John N Crock. Pennsylvania/Southwest Harbor. 88. Dec 29, 2023

Stephanie April Willey-Cast Southwest Harbor. 49. Jan. 4, 2024

Mildred Chalmers Southwest Harbor/Portland. 103. Jan. 4, 2024

Walter J. Norwood, Jr. Southwest Harbor/Bar Harbor. 90. Jan. 9, 2024

Robert G. Seddig. Southwest Harbor 82. Jan. 11, 2024

Amy Moody Gilley. Southwest Harbor/Ellsworth. 52. Jan 14, 2024

James Thurston. Southwest Harbor/Bass Harbor. 83. Jan. 24, 2024

Warren Goodwin. Southwest Harbor. 72. Feb. 4, 2024

Ann Benson. Southwest Harbor. 89. Feb. 7, 2024

Mart Jane Collins Basley Southwest Harbor/Presque Isle. 91. Feb. 7, 2024

Donald Degolyer. Southwest Harbor. 85. Feb. 25, 2024

Evelyn Farley Prest. Southwest Harbor/Brooksville,FL. 83. Feb. 29, 2024

Berton W. Willey. Southwest Harbor. 86. Mar. 16, 2024

Edith R Stanwood. Southwest Harbor. 82 Mar. 23, 2024

John H Carroll. Southwest Harbor/Largo,FL. 86. Mar. 24, 2024

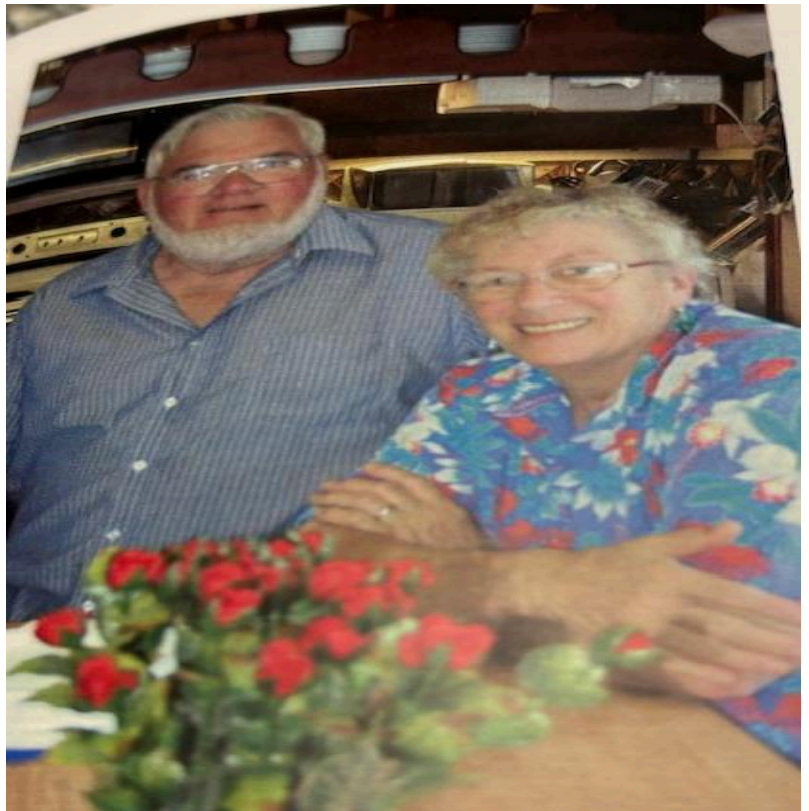
Cont. Our Lives

I had never met Betty Allen until I interviewed her for this article. Betty graciously invited me to her home, the home she shared for over 30 years with her late husband. We sat at her table and talked. I could feel her energy and determination as I learned a bit of Betty's amazing life~

Betty and I toured her house, studio, and barn. I saw many of her paintings, including her portraits of her husband, David Allen, who died October 3, 2022, and her father, Lt. Allan Middleton, who was shot down and killed over North Africa, January 28, 1944. He was a native of Vinalhaven.

In 1936, Betty was born at home in Bernard. Birth at home was the custom at that time. The midwife, Latty Norwood, attended the birth. Betty's Mom was one week short of her 16th birthday. Because students from Bernard had to walk to their high school in Southwest Harbor, her Mom had lived with her aunt in Vinalhaven, and had attended high school there. Betty's parents divorced early on; Betty never knew her father.

Betty described her step-father as a cruel man, who kept Betty from going to church and Sunday School, either at Head of the Harbor or in McKinley (Bass Harbor). He also prevented her from participating in many other activities. Betty told me she had no friends, and that she "missed out on a lot." During Betty's elementary school years, she attended the schoolhouse in Bernard. In eighth grade the students moved to the "consolidated" school in McKinley (now condominiums). Betty played basketball at Pemetec High School in Southwest High School.



Davis T Allen and Betty at the helm of the Sunbeam

When Betty married and had children of her own, she encouraged them to do everything. Girl Scouts, Sunday School, basketball...everything! Betty drove her kids up to Montreal for Expo '67. Betty remembered how she loved having the station wagon "filled up with kids."

In her teens, Betty worked as a waitress and a chambermaid at the Latty Cove cabins. Always hardworking and capable, by 16 she was cooking suppers! Later, at her dress making shop, Betty turned out wedding dresses, did upholstery, and knit sweaters.

She made aprons out of grain bags....And at some point along the way, Betty taught swimming and life-saving classes, and made and decorated cakes for special occasions.

As time went by, Betty divorced her husband of 17 years. Eventually she met David Allen on a blind date. David was also divorced and was the father of two boys, Timothy and Michael. They married and were together for 35 years. Betty is quoted as saying: "When I met my husband I didn't know he had a mistress. I soon found out his mistress was the SUNBEAM... and still is."

David was the captain of the SUNBEAM. As Betty puts it: "I've never known David for a minute since I met him without the SUNBEAM being the schedule. That has been our main life. We live around the SUNBEAM schedule."

The SUNBEAM is part of Maine Seacoast Mission. The SUNBEAM schedule revolved around the minister's schedule, and the needs of the people on outer islands. The Allens were on the boat 10 days a month. But, of course, the 10 days were never the same.



Betty Chatting

At first Betty did not work on the SUNBEAM. She would occasionally fill in for the cook. Then she became the hired cook. At that time, she was cooking on a wood stove. (Betty did point out that she was the lowest paid person on the crew) But to say she was a cook does not really describe the role Betty played on the SUNBEAM. Betty herself said: "It's not a cooking job. It's not a teaching job. It's a people job." From reading comments of island folks who came aboard, I know Betty created community; she radiated welcome and warmth. One man from Isle au Haut said, "Eating aboard the SUNBEAM is like spending time with the people of your family you don't see very often."

And Betty's meals were legendary. Betty told me she planned every meal for at least 25 people. Everything was free on the SUNBEAM. Island people would look forward to a break in the isolation of Island living, and come down to the boat for some good cooking and fellowship. (I truly don't think anyone without Betty's energy, creativity, and love of people could perform her culinary fetes.) Scallop Christmas dinners for 50, turkey dinners, making creme puffs for Mr Lunt on Frenchboro, or chocolate cream pie for a dear one on another island. And I guess the cookie jar was ALWAYS full, there was ALWAYS hot coffee, and there was ALWAYS room for more at any meal.

Jack Drake, who was the Superintendent of Maine Seacoast Mission from 1984-1999. He described another one of Betty's many gifts: "[Yes the minister was available, but often] the island people know they could come find Betty. They could have a listening ear for their problem, they knew they were going to be fed...they were going to swap recipes..."

And other gifts... Betty's teaching and her art. Betty said she was largely self-taught. Early on she sat in when Christina Gilley gave art classes to the Girl Scouts. Over the years she attended at least 50 different art workshops (some paid for with scholarships), and watched Bob Ross on TV. In addition Betty taught classes, and provided bed and board for art retreat participants!

On the SUNBEAM Betty taught all sorts of arts and crafts, to adults and children. Among other things, she taught painting and cake decorating.. After school, kids would come on board for snacks, social time, and whatever cool idea Betty brought for them. Betty said she once brought a cake on board that she needed to finish decorating. Of course the kids wanted to learn how to do that themselves. Betty brought the supplies, showed them what to do, and let them at it. Betty also was great at parlor games. After dinner there were card games and all matter of other games that Betty would teach. As she said, she was "the Social/Hospitality Director."

David and Betty retired in 2006. They had one more task... They helped design the new SUNBEAM- Betty said she wanted it to be "friendly." She wanted it to seat 25 people, comfortably.

I'd say friendly and comfortably describes David and Betty's gifts very nicely!

Manset Meetinghouse Museum Hours 2024

We are going to be open more this year than in the past! Hope everyone gets a chance to come see our improvements and displays. We encourage everyone to come visit. We have found Wednesday and Saturday are good days to be open. If you wish to visit and can't on these days, call our phone number and leave a message. We will try our best to open for everyone. Leave the day you called and a phone number, we will get back to you. Open House dates are as followed:
June 5, 12, 19 & 26 Wednesdays from 1-3 PM. July 3, 10, 17, & 31 Wednesdays from 1-3 PM and August 7, 14, 21 & 28 Weds from 1-3 PM; June 15, Saturday from 1-3 PM. June 29 Saturday 10-Noon for Pemetec Alumni and 2-4 PM others July 13, 27 Saturday from 1-3 PM; August 7, 14, 21, & 28 Wednesdays from 1-3 PM. August 10, 17, & 24 Saturdays from 1-3 PM; Pink Flamingo Weekend, July 13 Saturday from Noon-4 and the 14 Sunday from 1-3 PM

Program Updates:

On Saturday June 22nd Kathe Walton Newman will be doing a talk & slide show of Boat Building in Southwest Harbor. This program will be held at 4 PM. Come relive the history of these fine craftsmen.

On Wednesday July 24th Dennis & Lyle Dever will talk about Lighthouses and Light keepers along the New England coast. This program will be held at 6 PM.

Membership Dues

Membership dues are structured on an annual basis from January to December of each calendar year. Your dues are an important source of income for our annual budget that helps to pay our bills and having your dues paid keeps our interesting newsletter coming to your mailbox !

Please remember to update our summer and winter address portion. This way you will not miss out on any issues. Those that receive their newsletter by email, remember your November issue is not sent by email. This issue allows you to send in your dues for the upcoming fiscal year. The date above your name indicates your current status. We try to update our list constantly and encourage new members to join. You also can give a gift membership. We also encourage members to view our new website. You will find a list of previous issues of the newsletter there as well.

Website login is www.swhhs.org

Board Officers : Aimee Williams, President, Julie Fernald, VP, Beth Gaiser, Secr, Brenda Albers, Tres.

Board Members: Bernice Klausky, Clifford Noyes, Brenda Lawson, Leslie Watson, Anne Welles, Susan Buell, Damaris Smith and Tim Stanley.

Donations as of March 31st, 2024

<i>Sharon Lawson</i>	<i>Alexandra & David Andrews</i>	<i>Ken & Mary Evans</i>
<i>Andy Cline</i>	<i>Barbara Campbell</i>	<i>Ann Tikkanen</i>
<i>Kathleen Slack</i>	<i>Ben Worcester III</i>	<i>Richard Smith</i>
<i>Jeannie Schmidt</i>	<i>Damaris Smith</i>	<i>Polly Clement</i>
<i>Ann & Leslie Heilakka</i>	<i>John Stanley.</i>	<i>Maxine Carroll</i>
<i>Phyllis Acadia.</i>	<i>Peter Colson</i>	<i>JoAnne & Richard Fuerst.</i>
<i>Eric & Kate Henry</i>	<i>Sheldon Goldthwait</i>	<i>Celeste Sawyer</i>
<i>Ruth Jellison</i>	<i>Pamela Diehl</i>	<i>Jane Kenney</i>
<i>Deborah Dyer</i>	<i>Marty Lyons</i>	<i>Bruce & Susan Manger</i>
<i>Alice Reid Abbott</i>	<i>Patrick & Ellen Mitchell Charitable Fund</i>	
<i>Charles Stanhope</i>	<i>Mary Caulfield</i>	<i>Jacqueline Young</i>
<i>Ann & Lee Judd</i>	<i>Susan Buell</i>	<i>Louise Riemer</i>

In Memory

G. Bernice Klausky – In memory of Wilma Hamblen Turner
Julie & Cecil Fernald – In memory of Nettie Norwood Silva Smiley
Clayton & Denise Strout – In memory of Rachel Garver and Jack Gilley, Sr.
Peter Colson – In memory of Willard Colson
Edwin F. Butler, Jr – In memory of Ralph Stanley
Lawrence Cole – In memory of Carolyn Dolliver
Frances & Charles Johnson – In memory of Oscar, Inez and Emery Krantz
Cynthia Robertson – In memory of Robert Robertson
Aimee Williams – In memory of Edna & George Jellison, Sr and Paul Williams, Sr
Loretta Rogers – In memory of Jack Madore
Edith Stanwood – In memory of Robert Higgins
Lynne Birlem – In memory of Charles "Chip" Birlem, Jr
Ruth Jellison – In memory of Edna Jellison and Jack Gilley, Sr
Sam and Kate Lawrence – In memory of Samuel Lawrence, Sr
Stan Gott – In memory of Sandra Norwood Gott
Brenda Albers – In memory of Bruce Albers, Paul Williams, Sr and Edna and George Jellison, Sr.
Anonymous – In memory of Leverett L. Stanley

Collection Committee Recent Acquisitions

Table Top Tube Radio from Greenings Island, Pin Cushion Doll, Crocheted Apron, Postal Scale, 2 Trunks, A set of Measuring Spoons in a Flower Holder, A Book, "Secrets of North Atlantic Islands" written by Edward Rowe Snow, and a table top display case.

Many thanks to all who have donated items!