



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2019

Stone Dock Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



In a bygone day, elegant steamships plied Narragansett Bay ferrying passengers from Providence to Newport and further to Boston and New York or simply on excursions out of the hot city to enjoy a day on the water. These steamships were richly appointed with the finest accommodations, dining and entertainment available. Gentile travelers in their finest attire would stroll the decks on their luxurious

adventures. Our own Prudence Park on the westside was a destination for many of these steamships beginning in 1874 when investors formed the Prudence Land Company to offer a scenic retreat on the Bay. Nothing lasts forever, and the era of steamships came to an end. It was replaced by expanded railroad service and the prevalence of automobile ownership, both becoming the preferred mode of transportation. The steamship era for Prudence Island officially ended on Labor Day weekend in 1918 when the Mt Hope docked here for the last time. This once proud ship, capable of 2,500 passengers, could no longer remain a viable business venture. Today, it's remains can be seen off Bold Point in the Providence River.



Vintage photograph of the steamship at dock.

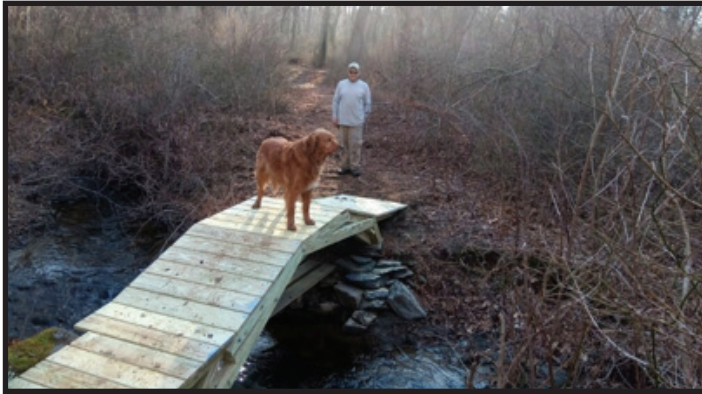


Stone Dock continued on Page 4

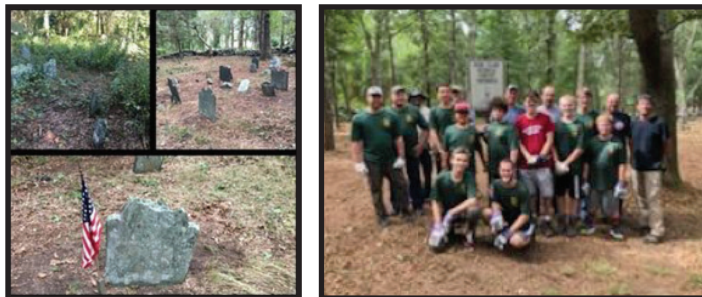
The master of ceremony, Ray Jenness, handing off the mic to Matt Rossi.

Trail Gang News

The Indian Springs trails has been opened by our Trail Boss Brian Weber. This new trail leads from Indian Springs up through the Barre parcel and ends at the intersection of Deer Chase Run and Old Desert Trail. It begins with an engineering marvel, an arched bridge over the Mill Creek.



Once again Troop 13 from Pepperell, MA with scout masters Nathan and Mike Landino were on Island for a community project. This time they tackled the neglected Historic Cemetery. Mike says, "Can't thank you guys enough for picking this project. Kids/Scouts fired up in what we all accomplished."



Troop 13 after a long day's work.

Notes from the Chair



I found myself in the "The Costume Company" on Moody Street in Waltham, Massachusetts. It's tag line, "When you need a standing ovation, call The Costume Company". Well, I didn't need a standing ovation just a period costume for the Stone Dock Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. You see, I'd been talking with friends about the discussions the Board had on the event and they latched onto the Board's discarded idea of period costumes. All the girls thought it would be great fun to dress up and that I should too. So, I found myself on Moody Street in a warehouse of costumes with two wilting proprietors on an extremely hot day in August in a building with no air conditioning. Suffices to say when you're a big guy in a theatrical costume shop, any coat that fits "is" the right period. In fact, the coat I wore was supposed to be double-breasted and they re-sowed the buttons to be single-breasted. Anyway, off I went with a few period hats for both girls and guys and a couple of bow-ties. And you know, it was fun. Hope you had fun as well. Thanks for letting me be part of an organization that does some cool things.

Save The Date – 2019 Upcoming Events

Josie Avery Theater Camp Presentation

August 9th at 1:00 pm at Farnham Farm

After a week of preparation, the Blueberry Patch Players will give a performance at Farnham Farm at 1:00 pm.

Prudence Conservancy Annual Meeting, Ice Cream Social & Silent Auction

August 10th from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm at Farnham Farm

The ice cream is FREE! Catch up on Conservancy projects while enjoying a FREE Ice Cream Sundae. Stock up on Conservancy hats and wears and don't forget to check out our spectacular Silent Auction!

Harvest Festival & Flea Market

August 24th, 11am -2pm at Farnham Farm

The gardeners at the Community Garden will be cooking up some tantalizing veggie dishes from the produce in their gardens. Saugy's and BBQ wings will also be available. There will also be a Flea Market and Silent Auction at the Festival.



J's Story - *By Evie Malm*

Prudence Island community gardeners consider Memorial Day weekend not only as a time to open their cottages but also as the seed package says "after danger of frost is past in spring" is a time to get started planting the vegetable gardens. J Westwell has already jump started the season by planting onion sets and peas. Not only that, he is on top of his game in readying his blueberry patch for its 11th year opening in early July. The bushes, affectionately referred to as "the girls," have already had their first pruning this year. What would have taken J three days was completed in four hours thanks to five islanders stepping up to help.

Those who remember the late Edna Conrad, a retired nurse, have Edna to thank for the blueberry patch. In September of 1991 J was finishing up the fall chores while his wife Ginny was back in North Brookfield preparing her classroom for opening day. It was the week the unexpected hurricane Bob smashed the island with high winds pulling down trees, wires, and leaving the island without electricity. When J noticed that some shingles had blown off Edna's roof, he offered as a neighbor to do a temporary fix. In turn when Edna realized that J had no working stove, she returned his kindness by cooking him a hot meal every day on her gas stove. Their friendship was really sealed when he mentioned he was thinking about developing a blueberry patch up at Farnham Farm. When he wasn't sure if the Farm Board would approve it, she enthusiastically said "Go for it." Initially the board was skeptical. However, when J said he would donate all necessary materials including fencing, netting, posts and plants, they applauded the plan.

By 2004 he had planted he 15 plants; a year later he added 46 plants. Three years later on July 12, 2008, he put up a sign: OPENED FOR BUSINESS from 9-12 noon. He had put \$2,800 of his own money into the project. Opening day he

sold \$74 dollars worth of berries at \$2.00 a box. The end of the first season he donated \$310 to the farm. Fast-forward ten years to 2018 when his total donation over the ten year period to the farm coffers had reached a grand total of

\$21,273.00! His love of farming has gone beyond the blueberry patch. In 2009, after much study and visiting vineyards, he developed with both his daughter and son-in-law a vineyard specifically to produce chardonnay wine. It has continued to be a work in progress. Overall they have had three good years. Every year brings different issues to the grape crop. As J says "In the vineyard as with all gardening, you are at the whim of Mother Nature". The blackberry patch put in three years ago is doing well and will be ready for picking by the end of July. Then there is the relatively new strawberry patch, which would ordinarily have an abundance of berries in late June. However, strawberries will not be as plentiful as expected due to drought conditions and the lack of secure fence allowing the deer to their own picking. J and his son are scheduled to put in the last section of fencing in before Memorial Day.

As for a Wish List, if J could get anything more this year, he would welcome tall bags of white pine needles which specifically have five needles on each branch. He usually brings down 100 bags a year. Having lost some of his sources and spending this past winter winter on the west coast, his inventory is low. If you have a source, it would be a great present to J. In addition, he could use more people weeding and some help in keeping the vineyard mowed.



Karen Miller: Jump Right In and Get Involved - *By Elaine Lembo*

Karen Miller of the Midlands is the newest trustee of Farnham Farm. Long drawn to its beauty, fascinated by its giant ginkgo tree, her association began in earnest when she volunteered to assist with the 2018 production of the Wizard of Oz at the farm's five-day summer theater camp.

Her husky voice and deep-throated laugh belie her compact frame, and the sparkle in her eyes hints at a lifelong and energetic devotion to fun – perhaps with a tad of mischief thrown in. It's all the stuff you'd expect to find in a strong personality from a tight-knight island community like Prudence. In Karen Miller, rest assured, it's all there. She's solid volunteer stock who takes the long, considered view.

Miller is also a New Hampshire farm owner and equine trainer involved in municipal matters in her mainland rural

community. She has the sturdy hands of someone who works with animals, yet there's an aura and sprightliness about her that calls to mind the gossamer wings of Glinda, the Good Witch. Little surprise then that Oz is a personal favorite of hers; it was a key – the other, a passion for costume design -- that unlocked all the rest and led to her new role.

One day this winter, on her way back from the dump, she took time to visit with me at the bow house in the Homestead. She divulged her love of all things related to Halloween and costume design, and how she came to feel so passionately about Prudence, its people, and the Farnham Farm, a critical hub for a range of island interests.

Karen Miller continued on Page 6



Peter Gengler and his drone.

The Man Behind the Drone - *By Evie Malm*

If you were among the guests at the dedication of the Old Stone Dock restoration project, you personally might have been taking pictures or videoing the event with your phone. Others were quick to note what appeared to be a drone flying over the site and capturing the entire scene for posterity. Who was the person operating the drone? He was nowhere to be seen. While you may not have met Peter Gengler, many will know his island home he describes as “the last house up the hill at the Great Wall of Prudence...It is also the house with all the kayaks under the deck.” Those who look at Heard at the Dock on Face Book may have seen a video he made from drone footage from previous years on the island. With a degree in Graphic Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Gengler held jobs in the design field both in New York and later returning to Rhode Island. It was his passion for mountain biking and kayaking and his added love of photography and filming that ultimately led him to owning and developing his drone skills.

The steps leading to drones started eight years ago when some of his kayaking friends and others asked what ever attracted him to mountain biking. He answered their question by passing out several GoPro cameras to bike riders and asked them to wear them and record anything they wanted to along one of their rides. Gengler then made a film from all the footage and showed it on Face Book. People loved it and urged him as a member of the New England Mountain Bike Association to submit the film at a the mountain bike film festival. He did and won the People’s Choice Award. “The feedback loop was so satisfying I was hooked on making hot films,” says Gengler. All that changed a few years later when someone showed up at a kayak festival with high end drone “and the “ aerial movie images totally blew me away,” he added. For the next two years he waited for the costs to go down and the software greatly upgraded.

Because flying gliders was another pastime of Gengler, he found flying the drone fairly easy to learn.

However, he also feels a great deal of care should be applied to flying drones. “So when I’m on the island and flying it’s often on quiet days and I get up to 200-300ft. above our house before I fly around say to photograph the lighthouse.”

Stone Dock *(Continued)*



Aerial view of the Stone Dock prior to reconstruction.

Without a business purpose, the West Side Stone Dock fell into disrepair and winter storms and hurricanes accelerated its demise. But, there was a vision to bring it back and its champion was Mary Lawrence. She spoke of it often and would admonish anyone seen throwing rocks off the dock. While she passed before realizing her vision, her hero would become Matt Rossi. After retiring from years as a crane operator, he wanted to apply his expertise to fulfilling that dream. He approached the Prudence Conservancy about supporting the effort and the restoration began.

Finally, on Labor Day weekend 2018 after 100 years, history was made again. The Prudence Conservancy, Matt Rossi with A&R Marine and a couple hundred enthusiastic supporters celebrated the completion of that dream. With the ferry Bonner floating nearby, tooting its horn when

Matt addressed the crowd, delegates cut the ribbon and with an offered champagne toast the dock was opened for business. Matt Rossi, in his quiet way, thanked the crowd for the opportunity to restore this landmark for future generations. Nan Brown offered sentiments on behalf of Mary Lawrence, “don’t throw the rocks”.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, the “Bristol Colony Players” dressed in period costumes, tried to recapture the excitement of what it would have been like on another beautiful day 100 years ago when the ferry arrived. It was a proud day to be an Islander. A day when the dock was restored, not for business reasons, but because a close-knit community wanted to preserve its history and our precious little island in Narragansett Bay.



The Herbert C. Bonner steaming by to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the last steamboat ferry landing at the stone dock.

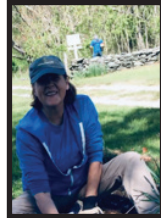


The “Bristol Colony Players”

Around The Farm

Dining Around the World
Holiday Singalong
Blueberry & Apple Picking
Movie Night Pot Luck

First Day Walk & Brunch
Theater & Farm Camps
Annual Farm Cleanup
...and much, much more!



Farnham Farm News

Farnham Farm, under the auspices of the Prudence Conservancy, is a busy place.

According to trustee Priscilla Gill, the Farm comprises a community garden, blueberry patch, blackberry patch, new strawberry patch, vineyard, apple and Asian pear orchards. The Hope Brown Center is available year around for community events. There is no charge for its use if the event is public and no fees are charged for participating. There is a gazebo that features commemorative bricks that can be ordered and inscribed according to individual wishes.

Activities at the Hope Brown Center include weekly Stitch and Chat, first Saturday of the month movie and potluck, Dining Around the World, and meetings of island organizations.

In the summer, the focus shifts to island camps for children. All are coordinated by Katie Bearse. Bearse publicizes, registers children and attends all camps to assist. Monday nature camps are taught by personnel from the NBNERR; Wednesdays, Nicole Antaya runs a series of farm camps. Theatre camp runs five days.

Karen Miller *(Continued)*



The Fitchburg State alumna first came to the island in the fall of 1981, a season she describes as “the time of year of my favorite color – that beautiful straw color.” Friends included Alan and Eliza Bearse, Kathy Flynn, the Armington twins, and others. “I was a drifter but I had wonderful friends who put up with me,” she says. The bonds took hold, the teenagers grew to adults, and Miller continued to return to Prudence to spend time with her pals. Time passed; she also worked in California; there she met her partner, Dan. Together they bought the cottage on the shore road in 2014. There was also of course the farm in New Hampshire, and the horses. Ultimately, a branch of equine physical therapy intrigued her. Miller studied and gained certification in equine natural movement. On a break from it all, during a ferry ride to Prudence early last summer, she saw a poster about the theater camp and that the production was the Wizard of Oz. She was hooked. “This is one of my all-time favorites,” she says. “Katie Bearse, Alan’s daughter, was working on it. I told her I’d love to help. I got a farm sitter.”

Turns out that Miller’s and her father’s favorite holiday is Halloween and she loves making costumes. Several years earlier, she’d donated several containers full of costumes, as well as art supplies, to the Prudence Island School. “We always had a trunk in the family attic that was full of old Halloween

costumes,” she says. “That was a big fun thing for me. My sister hated it; I loved it. As a grownup I still love it.”

Armed with her sewing machine, she headed to the farm, and did whatever she was asked to do. The camp, involving year-round and summer kids, was a hit. “The creativity was just bubbling over and it was absolutely contagious,” she recalls. “To see how quickly they pulled the production together in a week -- the kids did a fabulous job. To take all their energy and funnel it into something really positive is fabulous.”

One thing led to another. In fall 2018 Miller was asked to join the board of trustees at Farnham Farm. The Farm, under the auspices of the Prudence Conservancy, is a busy place.

Miller conjectures that her involvement with municipal issues at her home in New Hampshire, and her farming background, led to the invitation to become a trustee.

“The farm has potential to be more, but it takes people,” she says. “It takes volunteers. It also takes interest in what you’re doing, or it won’t have longevity. Is this farm suitable for hay? Are we going to have an orchard? What can it produce? That involves a conversation, excitement and enthusiasm — to be able to really turn it into something.”

She adds: “When you see people passionate about a place — and Priscilla is so graceful — seeing her move around the property, you just know she loves it. And that makes you want to know more about it. That’s where I am — I want to know as much about Farnham Farm as I can and see where I fit. Sometimes you don’t know where you can be effective. And I’m not afraid to try new things. I’m happy to be pointed in a direction. I just have to see what happens with it. And find out more about it.”

As for future generations, the answer resides with the children of Prudence, summer kids and year-rounders alike, Miller feels. “Yes, people come here to be on vacation,” she says. “I understand that. But it’s a valid question: What are ways to get kids involved and caring and passionate about the future?”

She throws out a list of ideas for the Farm: farmers market? Vineyard? Cider press? Plant a tree day?

“I overfill my plate all the time,” she admits, “but I will try to pick the activities I know I can do and be effective in.”



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Prudence Conservancy
PO Box 115
Prudence Island, RI 02872
www.prudenceconservancy.org
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Prudence Conservancy Annual Report

Our Mission: To preserve the unique character and protect the natural diversity and beauty of Prudence Island.

Financial Management

Prudence Conservancy is a private, non-profit organization as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS tax codes. Our finances are audited annually by a Certified Public Accountant retained by the Board of Directors. This auditor reviews and verifies that all donations have been received and expended as designated by the donors or granting organizations, and assesses the fiscal health of the organization by verifying all assets and obligations including pledges of future donations from donors and grant making organizations.

Financial Statement - January 1 through December 31 2018 (unaudited)

Revenues, grants, other support:	2017	2018
Membership	13,440	16,640
Memorials & Bequests	125	300
Donations: Unrestricted	3,286	3,071
Donations: Restricted	25,482	8,170
Other	16,682	13,460
Total	59,015	41,640
Expenses		
Program Services	5,000	0
Operating	3,941	3,738
Stone Dock	0	63,299
Fundraising & Product Expenses	19,214	10,791
Total	28,155	84,905
Surplus/Deficit	30,861	-43,264
Fund Balances - 12/31		
Operating	2,892	2,886
Stewardship	114,231	74,389
Legal Defense	18,076	18,292
Property Acquisition	126,758	128,268
Bequests-unrestricted	63,540	63,552
Farnham Farm	9,540	9,540
Total	335,036	297,927

Audited Financial Statements prepared by Dufour & Schmitt, Ltd., certified public accountants, are available for review at <http://www.prudenceconservancy.org> or at Prudence Conservancy's office



PRUDENCE CONSERVANCY
POST OFFICE BOX 115
PRUDENCE ISLAND, RI 02872
(401) 683-4838
www.prudenceconservancy.org

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Prudence Conservancy 2019 Membership

Yes, I want to join other Islanders who share my concern for Prudence Island's unique environment.

I'm interested in becoming a volunteer with the Prudence Conservancy.

Regular Memberships
 Friend \$25
 Family \$50
 Supporter \$100
 Conservation Circle Memberships
 Patron \$250
 Benefactor \$500
 Protector \$1000
 Trustee \$2500
 Conservationist \$5000
 Other \$_____

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HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR PRUDENCE CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP OR WISH TO BECOME A NEW MEMBER?