

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXI, No. 2 (Spring 2021)

THE "STELLA ANN" DONATED TO BHS

A huge thank you to Bennie Pratt Leland Faulkingham, Jr., David Seavey, Robert Johnson, and Joe Leighton. All were greatly appreciated!! More information about the "Stella Ann" will be shared in the Summer newsletter. Please stay tuned!

owned her. We are very fortunate that owner, Benny Beal was in agreement to donate the "Stella Ann" to BHS!! Another huge thank you to Adam Thompson for delivering her and for the men who guided her into her resting space. Rock Alley, Charlie Smith, Jamie Alley, Brent Crowley,



2021 MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Since BHS depends on its members for general funds, we would like to mention that it is now time to renew your membership. Please find attached a membership application for your convenience. If you do not have printer capability, please feel free to send your dues to the address on the application. Thank you so much for your continued support of this most worthy cause!

CONDOLENCES

We wish to offer deepest sympathy and prayers to our faithful member and local historian, Daniel Davis, for the passing of his dear wife, Pamela. Besides being a faithful member, Pamela served as Membership Chairman for a number of years. After resigning from this position, she gladly volunteered to prepare the newsletter for mailing and ensured its timely delivery to the post office once it was ready. Rest assured that Pamela will be greatly and sadly missed by BHS as well as by those of us who knew and loved this dear, sweet lady who was ready and willing to help where there was a need. RIP Pamela.



Save THE Date

**2021 CALENDAR
OF EVENTS ARE
DEPENDENT ON
COVID 19
RESTRICTIONS**

MAY 19TH:

Beals Elementary School 7th and 8th graders will visit BHS for a local history lesson.

MAY 31ST @ 10:00AM:

The Memorial Day program will be live on BHS Facebook page

JUNE 18TH @ 6:30PM:

Movie night at Beals Heritage Center (watch for verification on BHS Facebook wall) This maybe via live on Facebook as well.

JULY 3RD

Moosabec Boat Races will find us selling crabmeat and lobster rolls across from USCG.

SEPTEMBER 17TH @ 6:30PM:

To be announced

Please mark your calendars as we greatly appreciate your support!

STELLA ANN, BENNY BEAL'S RACING LEGEND, COMES HOME

by Nancy Beal

Benny Beal, originally of Beals but now of Jonesport and having reached the age of 88, was barely out of his teenage years when he set about building a small working lobster boat that would become a racing legend. The half-model for the Stella Ann, as he would name the vessel for his oldest daughter, was created by his grandfather, (William) Riley Beal, at his kitchen table on Beals Island where he fashioned a half-model that was the typical blueprint for boatbuilders of the last century.

Beal found space in a large boat shop in Jonesport on the north shore of Moosabec Reach, near the wharf he now owns and, with the help of Ellery Merchant Jr., followed his grandfather's design and produced a 28-foot long, eight-foot-ten-inch wide vessel that tapered to a six-foot stern—not unusual for the fishing boats of the early 1950s. He used the Stella Ann for inshore fishing: lobstering, seining and, as many fishermen did in those days, racing on the 4th of July.

As is customary with the men who make a serious living on the water, after starting out young and small, Beal sold the Stella Ann and graduated to larger vessels and more distant waters, including steaming over 200 miles offshore to Georges Banks to load his tanks with lobster in the Ann Marie, named for his wife. Eventually, he came ashore and established a quahog sales business in which other fishermen in other boats supplied him with product.

While shoreside, his thoughts returned to the Stella Ann. Since she left his mooring, she had passed through several owners and been abandoned in the woods in nearby Addison. He found her there, brought her back to the Moosabec area and, with the help of his uncle, Herman "Junior" Backman, restored the little craft to serviceable order and put her into racing. With a Chevrolet engine built by the master crafter Richard Weaver under the hood, he took on all comers who, for many years, saw only his stern.

Coming home

When Beal finally retired from racing and brought the Stella Ann ashore for good, he had acquired a boat yard of his own in the eastern end of town with a large shop and a Quonset hut-type structure alongside. For many years, she lay there, revered but idled. One day, Beal was asked a question, the answer to which set in motion a chain of events that culminated with her return home last week.



Enter Benny Pratt, Beal's godson.

In his youth, Beal became friends with Malcolm Pratt. They went clamming together and spent time with each other. Beal was 15 when Pratt learned that he was to become a father, Beal requested, if the baby was a boy, that Pratt name him "Benny" after him. Malcolm Pratt agreed without hesitation and, when his wife gave birth to a baby boy, they named him "Bernard" and nicknamed him "Benny." Beal not only gave him his name, he also agreed to be his godfather.

Benny Pratt, born on Beals Island, moved to Jonesport at the age of five. After high school, he went to Maine Maritime Academy, sailed on ocean-going tug boats for 10 years after graduation, then spent 25 years as a college facilities manager. He eventually

retired and settled in Morrill outside of Belfast, and renewed contact with Beal and his family.

When Pratt learned that Beal had permanently hauled the Stella Ann out of the water and that she was languishing in his boatyard, he asked him what he intended to do with her. "Probably burn the damn thing" was the reply. That answer inspired Pratt to resurrect his management skills and find a good home for the old vessel.

The Beals Historical Society, with an adjunct building that already housed a boat built by legendary Beals boatbuilder Harold Gower but had room for more, and an eager BHS president in Carol Davis became the solution to Pratt's quest and, with his godfather's blessing, he began planning the boat's return to its origin.

Last week, Adam Thompson's boat hauling truck and a handful of men organized by Moosabec lobsterman Rocky Alley combined forces to load the Stella Ann onto Thompson's hydraulic hauler at Beal's boatyard and trail her over the bridge across Moosabec Reach to Beals and to the old schoolhouse property where the BHS building is located. There, with just inches to spare above and around the little old boat, Thompson backed up to the door and, inch by inch, using hydraulic and human power, slid the retired speedster into her new and permanent home, approximately a race course from Riley Beal's kitchen table where she was first conceived.

(Included in Alley's crew of men who steadied and helped roll the Stella Ann into the Beals Historical Society adjunct building were his son Jamie, Charlie Smith, Leland Faulkingham Jr., Brent Crowley, David Seavey, Robert Johnson and Joe Leighton. Sources for this story included an article in the May issue of Commercial Fisheries News entitled "One more run for the Stella Ann," a telephone interview with Benny Pratt, conversations with Beal's family, and local lore.)

Beals Heritage Center



Beals Historical Society Membership Application

Please check one: ☐ Renewal ☐ New

Name(s) as you wish it to appear on membership card and member roll on website:

(Please type or print clearly)

Your mailing address: Street or Post Office Box: _____
City: _____ State _____ ZIP: _____

E-mail address: _____

Type of membership (Please review all types and check the one that applies)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Annual | \$10 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Life | \$200 one-time payment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple Annual | \$15 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple/Life | \$300 one-time payment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/65 Annual | \$5 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior couple/65 Annual | \$7.50 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$5 annually |

Over and above dues, I wish to donate _____ for __operating expenses, __building fund, or __ endowment fund. Receipt and membership card will be sent to you.

Instructions: Please print, complete and mail this application, together with tax-deductible check or money order payable to Beals Historical Society to:
Membership Chairperson, Beals Historical Society, P.O. Box 280, Beals, ME 04611

Annual memberships are for the calendar year and expire Dec. 31.

UPDATE ON BRICK ORDERS

Typically, personalized bricks are placed in time to have them set by Memorial Day. Upon trying to place the order, I learned that there will be a delay on receiving them as the website says the material will not be available for 131 days. The order will still be placed, but will be on hold at the factory, so there's still time to order if you are interested. Thank you!

BEALS HERITAGE CENTER FUNDRAISING DRIVE BUY A PERSONALIZED BRICK PROGRAM

The Beals Historical Society offers the chance to be creative in personalizing a brick for your favorite person, pet, place, event, occasion, or simply something that is near and dear to your heart. Purchasing a personalized brick will enable the continuation of the brick patio, and/or adding your favorite Veteran to the Veterans Monument Park Area. The Veteran's 4 x 8 brick consists of the Veteran's rank, name, branch of service, war served in and years served.

Your purchase of a personalized 4x8 cinnamon colored brick with black filled lettering for \$85 is a tax-deductible donation or you may wish to purchase an 8x8 brick for \$125. Purchasing the 8 x 8 brick gives you an additional line or instead of the line you may purchase a logo for an additional \$10. Price includes shipping.

YES! We'd LIKE TO RESERVE A PERSONALIZED PERMANENT BRICK.

Please check one of the following:

☐ Patio ☐ Veterans Monument

☐ Check here for 4x8 brick for \$85.00 (standard block lettering included).

☐ Check here for 8x8 brick for \$125.00 (add an additional \$10 for a logo)

Please engrave your brick as follows:

For a 4 x 8 brick use three lines with 21 letters including spaces and for an 8 x 8 brick add use four lines.

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO:
BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ATTN: Treasurer, PO Box 280, Beals, ME 04611**

Thank you for your contribution!

Name: _____ Phone: (_____) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____ Amount Paid: _____

For further information or suggestions with a design for your personalized brick, please contact Carol Davis at (207) 497-2675 or email cfDavis44@yahoo.com.