

# The Beaver Beacon



Only Island Publication since King Strang's "Northern Islander" in 1856 — Established January 1955

December 1962



Go to  
the World

**THE SNOW IS HERE:** Like last year, it looks as though we are assured of a white Christmas again. The boughs of the pines are bent with their mantle of snow and already the banks along the roads are growing. This is the time when the kids begin to get eager to cut the Christmas tree and a sharp eye is kept to pick one that is just right.

**WEATHER ANALYSIS:** Vernon Fitzpatrick, local Conservation Officer, has given us the following analysis of our November weather:

Highest Day	November 30th	54 degrees
Average Daytime Temperature		43 degrees
Lowest Night	November 6th	20 degrees
Average Nighttime Temperature		32 degrees


Snow fell on November 22 and 23 with a total accumulation of 2 ".  
Total Precipitation was .71 inches.

**YOUNG HUNTERS:** While Timmy McDonough, age 5, and Jimmy Wojan, age 8, were playing in the back yard of Bud and Skip McDonough's, their beagle pup, Butch, chased a rabbit past them. Tim and Jim took off in hot pursuit, armed with a mop handle and a pocket knife. Leaving a wake of dust and swirling leaves, they gained enough on their quarry to warrant a hefty swing of the mop handle that found the target. The knife, thrown by Tim brought the chase to an end, and two proud hunters came strutting home with meat for the table.

**THE RED COAT'S ARE COMING!** This was the shout as the Beaver Islander rounded the buoy just before deer season. 260 Red Coat's invaded the Island to start the 1962 season with a bang or we should say, several bangs, as 46% of this number met with success. 120 deer were taken, 62 being entlered bucks, 31 adult does, 12 female fawns and 15 male fawns.

**ONE HUNTING ACCIDENT:** The first hunting accident in many years happened this season, and this could be labeled a near miss. Robert Tricker, Jr., aged 16, from Pontiac, Michigan was changing his rifle from his right arm to his left when it discharged. The muzzle was by his face and small particles from the blast imbedded in his face and right eye. The bullet passed through the visor of his cap, which is just about as close a call as you can get. He was treated by Dr. Haynes, then removed from the Island by Coast Guard helicopter to Munson Hospital in Traverse City, for further treatment to prevent infection.

**LOST:** We often hear the words that "you don't have to worry about getting lost on the Island", yet almost every year it happens to at least one hunter. Floyd Fasset, age 54, from Charlotte, Michigan, entered the woods at Iron Ore Creek and had left word with his companion that he would come out at Nomad, later that day. Near dusk he came to the south west side of Lake Geneserath, which is impassable, and waded along the shore until he reached high ground in hopes of finding a trail or road. Darkness fell and he found it necessary to get settled for the night. He built a fire and was busy all night keeping the flames high enough to see to pick up more wood. With daylight he started out again and at 12:45 p.m. he came onto a logging trail,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile west of Wicklow Beach, and was spotted by Phil Gregg, of the search party, who drove him into town and to a mighty hearty breakfast.



YOUNG BUCKS BAG DOES: Two high school lads bagged their first deer this year. Johnny Gillespie and Danny Gallagher brought home the venison, much to the delight of their families.

GAME CLUB: The annual Hunter's Dinner was held on Saturday evening, Nov. 17th. There were 136 chicken dinners sold also \$53.00 in memberships and shoulder patches were sold at the dinner. Following the dinner, three 16 mm movie films of game and outdoor activities on Beaver Island were shown. The Civic Association has copies of the first two films, which are available for showing to clubs and special groups. They also have a film showing accommodations on the Island - hotels, motels, stores, etc. These films have just been sent to Mr. Bruce Meixsell of Pontiac for showing on Dec. 5th at a meeting of The Southern Michigan Council of Conservation Clubs.

The Game Club wishes to thank all those who worked to make the Hunter's Dinner such a success.

The \$25.00 prize for the largest deer shot by a member of the Beaver Island Game Club goes to Wm. J. Donoghue of Detroit, who shot a nice buck that weighed 176 lb. dressed weight.

BIRTHS: On Nov. 16th to Mr. & Mrs. Russell Sartor of Long Beach, Calif. - a 6# 8 oz. daughter, Kem Marie. Mrs. Sartor is the former Kay Wilmont daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Warn Wilmont. Our special best wishes to Kem Marie's great-grandmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Gallagher of St. James on her first great-grandchild.

A daughter, Leslie Jean was born on October 31st to Mr. & Mrs. Roy Bice. Mrs. Bice is the granddaughter of Mr. & Mrs. William Adams.

It's twins - boys - to Mr. & Mrs. Sandy Sanderson of Vienna, Vt. The proud grandmother, Mrs. Sophia McDonough of St. James, was on hand to greet them.

On November 6th, a son to the Robert Bonners.

To Walter and Marilyn McCauley, a daughter, Laurel Elizabeth, in November.

WITH THE SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN: Judith A. Gillespie, daughter of Capt. and Mrs. John C. Gillespie of Lansing, Ill., is in training at Fort McClellan, Ala. Capt. Gillespie is the eldest son of the late Ket and Mary Ann, as everyone affectionately knew them. Judy heard that Isabelle LaFreniere was at the same base, and immediately looked her up and had a nice visit with her. After finishing training at Ft. McClellan, Judy will go to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, where she will study in the medical field.

LUCK: While playing cards during the hunting season this year, Ben Morganroth held a perfect hand in Cribbage.



OBITUARIES: Robert Rudolph of Jackson, Michigan passed away on Nov. 23, following a serious operation. Mr. Rudolph was the father of Harold "Hoot" Rudolph, manager of the Beaver Lodge.

Word has been received of the death of Mr. George Donat of Charlevoix on December 11th. Mr. Donat was a former resident of Beaver Island.

Mrs. Ellen MacDonald of Memphis, Michigan passed away on Dec. 2nd at the Pt. Huron Mercy Hospital following a long illness. Mrs. MacDonald was the mother of Mrs. Philip Gregg of St. James.

SCHOOL NEWS: The lucky winner of the Gruen Watch was Mr. Lewis R. Yoder of Battle Creek, Michigan.

On December 4th the parents of the grade children met with the teachers to discuss the problems and advancements of their children.

The children are preparing a Christmas program, which will be given on December 19th at Holy Cross Hall at 7:45 P.M.

The High School added a number of indoor games to their collection. Now every one has a chance to play during the winter months, when we cannot get outside to play.

Mr. Moran of the Michigan Conservation Department gave a lecture to the high school and upper grades on the deer herd and wild game, which may be found on the island.

Evelyn Palmer and Carol Ann O'Donnell represented our School for Government Day, which was held in Boyne City. Five high schools were represented. When they returned they gave a report of the day spent there and what they had learned.

CHRISTMAS BAZZAR: The annual Christmas Bazaar was held on December 9th at the Holy Cross Hall. The activities started out with an unannounced signal when the first customer at the fish pond aquired a shrill whistle. A large crowd attended and the Ladies were able to clear about \$115.00.

LATE - LATE NEWS: Mr. & Mrs. Tom Zank, the former Marjorie Gatliff, announce the arrival of a daughter, Cynthia Ann, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  1 oz. on Dec. 10th.

#### CHRISTMAS STORY

As a special feature we are re-printing a true Christmas story written by James S. Pooler, who spent his boyhood days on the island and has served on the staff of the DETROIT FREE PRESS for many years. It is with great pleasure we present on the following pages, WHEN SANTA MISSED THE BOAT FOR BEAVER ISLAND. We feel that those who have never read it will enjoy it and those who have would like to read it again for the message it carries is one we need to be reminded of from time to time.

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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

FOR SALE OR RENT: 6 room house on Harbor. Lot 100' by 440'. Comptly. furn. inc. lineas, G.E. refrig. with lge. freezer. Contact Mrs. Walter Lyons, 7523 S. Winchester Ave., Chicago 20. Telephone Radcliffe 3-4536.

## WHEN SANTA MISSED THE BOAT FOR BEAVER ISLAND :

By James S. Pooler

There's always one Christmas you remember best. This one was when we were marooned on Beaver Island.

The snow came in great gushes early that fall and filled Lake Michigan with slush ice. The mail boat, afraid of losing a propeller, stopped coming over from Charlevoix by early December and we were cut off from the mainland. The daring fish tugs hauled out their last hooks and nets, and soon on all the big horizon around the island there wasn't even the distant smoke of a freighter.

You could look across 30 miles of water to the mainland, across water that looked like ice cream that didn't quite freeze. Sometimes the lake steamed from the cold and you couldn't see across. More often it snowed.

It was a lonely feeling standing on the shore when you could see the mainland as only a dirty little fingernail laid low on the farthest edge of the water. You couldn't go there and no one could come out to you.

Around you a few islands stood darkly in the water - Garden, Hog and Hat and far to the west was High Island where King Benjamin sent dissenting Israelites from his House of David. Isolated more than ever by winter, they made it even lonelier there out in the middle of Lake Michigan.

The old fishermen would come down, too, and look at the lake from which they drew their living. Weatherwise, they would squint at slush and sky and fall into warm arguments on whether the lake would freeze all the way across that winter.

"She's going to be a cold winter," went one school of thought. "The lake'll be friz solid by the tenth of January."

"This is goin' to be one of them winters where she just snows and snows and never sets down to a real biting spell," went the other school of thought.

There was a reason for the argument - Frankie Left and his horse, Queenie! She was a wonderful creature who all summer long did nothing but grow fat in a pasture. But when a winter came when upper Lake Michigan froze solid, Queenie was the horse that grew into the legends they still tell on Beaver Island.

She wasn't just a horse. Queenie had strange gifts such as the endurance of a wolf and a wisdom that went beyond human understanding. She was the island's lifeline to the mainland when the lake froze over. She'd travel 30 miles across the frozen lake to Charlevoix where Frankie would pick up the mail and the most needed supplies and then lope back to the island.

When a blinding snowstorm closed down around them Frankie just threw up the reins and Queenie took her head, which certainly was a clever one. Once she traveled all day and night in a storm in which they couldn't see 10 feet ahead, until Frankie was sure they'd both freeze out there on top Lake Michigan. When she came up on the island it was on the far side and when the storm lifted they knew why. The wind had torn loose a great sheet of ice and with her magic sense Queenie had circled the open water for more than 30 hours.

That's true, whatever the legends that since have grown up to make her a combination of Pegasus and Bucephalus.

The sudden assault of winter that year had brought a tragedy to the youngsters of the island - Mr. Lafferty's shipment of Christmas toys hadn't come across from the mainland before the mail boat stopped running:

No matter how much you stood on the shore and wished for terrible cold weather, the old fishermen would tell you that the lake couldn't possibly freeze over before Christmas. Even that wonderful creature, Queenie, couldn't bring over toys.

Mr. Lafferty had the only store on the island. That's a great, rolling Irish name, "Lafferty," in keeping with all the other rolling Irish names on the Beaver. But if you ever go to the island and the name on the side of the store isn't too weatherbeaten now, look at it closely. You'll see that the first of the family to come to the island was a Frenchman named "La Ferte." But it's "Lafferty" now to everyone on the island, even the man who owns the name.

Mr. Lafferty spread out the few toys left over from the Christmas before and pieced out the thin display with a box of those tiny nickel dolls with thin wire arms that broke off at the first fitting. It was all he had to offer, a few unwanted knickknacks and the whole kit and kaboodle wouldn't make a decent showing under a modern kid's Christmas tree.

But it was enough to set off the talking, the building up and suspense children always create for Christmas. You passed the store window daily on the way to school and watched the disappearance one by one of the bigger toys from the window. You wondered "Who?"

I guess Christmas is always pretty much the same among the kids. The older ones carefully building up the legend again for the younger ones and coming to half believing themselves. And always the rampant skeptic whose work had to be undone.

In our case it was Denny O'Toole, who lived with an aunt who didn't believe in Santa Claus, and he was hit with snowballs and kept well ostracized on the playground. He was a small kid and by two weeks before Christmas had come to standing around the fringe when they were telling the first-graders about "Santa Claus" and he didn't look quite as wise as he had. At least he kept his mouth shut.

But there was no escaping Mr. Lafferty's show window on the way to school. Two weeks before Christmas it was bare. The canny kids noticed too, that the old fishermen were talking around that the Year of the Big Wind in Ireland, Santa Claus hadn't made it. It didn't sound good. Even the littlest ones were conditioned with the idea that with all the tearing around he had to do, Santa Claus could miss the small dot of an island out in Lake Michigan.

What good's faith, though, if you haven't got it when you need it most? He might miss the Beaver, the kids admitted, but he never had. So we went right ahead planning, confiding loudly what we expected and being as good as was expected. But none of the older folks were offering much encouragement. They'd come down, too, and look across the steaming lake to the mainland far away and say it was too bad the lake never froze before Christmas.

We knew we'd eat well. The kitchens were going overtime and the island was full of turkeys. They had a strange way of sorting out their turkeys on Beaver. When spring came the turkeys would come out of the farms onto the single road that led down the island and wander to the thick forest for nesting.

When fall came and the leaves tumbled, the turkeys would come home,

browsing back along the single road. Whatever turned into your farm was yours. Maybe 20 had taken off from your farm and only six came back. You'd reckon that "pneumonia must have got them." At the next farm, where only two started out, 60 might come home. You just had to figure that his turkeys had nested oftener. There was plenty of sharing on the island, and by letting the turkeys decide it saved wear and tear on the mind and arguments.

The turkeys were killed and sized for families. Bread was put out to get stale for dressing. Cookie cutters were traded around among the women to get all the variety of animals possible. The jars in the pantries began to brim over and the best specimens in the cookie menagerie were taken out for special frosting treatment for the tree. Those fine odors of Christmas drifted out on the road where you sniffed them in going and coming.

On the Saturday after school closed, the kids took the family axes and headed for the woods to cut their own trees. If a kid was too small to drag his home, there always were six kids from another family to give him a hand. It didn't turn out to be as much fun that year as we expected.

The word got around that about all we'd get that year was a beautifully trimmed tree and a lot to eat. There couldn't possibly be much under the tree. So we picked out the best we could, trying to measure a tree in the woods against the size of a room, and progressively got gloomier. In the early dusk we came dragging our trees home, looking again over the slushy lake, the empty store window and not shouting much.

And we passed Denny O'Toole, who hadn't gone to cut a tree because his aunt didn't believe in such nonsense, and wondered if maybe he didn't have the right idea. You wouldn't be half so miserable with no tree at all as with one all dressed up and nothing but empty floor under it.

We sewed the popcorn onto strings, got out the fancy cookies and the boxes of baubles and dressed up the green trees in their finery. Christmas came mighty close then - and dread. There wasn't a small kid on the island that night who didn't go down on his knees even in the coldest bedroom and pray hard.

The day before Christmas came and there were as many kids as seagulls perched on the shore. It was snowing and the lake still was mush ice. We hated to give up and some of us even went up to Frankie Left's barn and there was Queenie in her stable!

The big kids told the little kids that it sure looked like a tough night for Santa Claus. In a snow storm like we were having he could never find the island.

Christmas Eve came and the last loitering youngster left the beach. That's the night you always had the corned white fish for dinner and broke into the Christmas cookies. That's the night when the old stories were told again and at our house Denny Boyle talked so long of the Potato Famine of the old days, how tough things were then, that all the kids knew he was only conditioning us for the disappointment of Christmas morning.

That's the night, too, when everybody trooped off to midnight mass leaving one of the family home to see that the candles didn't set the tree afire.

We went down the long road, past the homes where the yellow candles shone out and made the cold feel stingier. Down through the woods where the light of the lanterns began to take hold and turn everyone's shadow, even the small kids who stuck closest to the lantern, into giants on the snow.

The old magic began to take hold again and those small ones looked up into the snowy night and listened for they all knew that Santa Claus always came mysteriously while they were at midnight mass.

Then we came somberly back, lanterns, long shadows and quiet people in the hush of a snow storm. The candle lights began to swim up out of the falling snow. And we no sooner passed the first homes when there was a shout that began to spring up like a string of firecrackers going off behind us. It was a shout they must have heard over on the mainland. The kids whose homes were farther ahead started running.

I don't think there ever was a Christmas like that one for the kids on Beaver Island, for any kids who had hung on to faith against all reason. They'd never found as much under the Christmas trees. Not ordinary toys. These were things made with the hand and heart. These were the things that grown-up children had remembered fondly from their own childhood and recreated.

The fishermen had made boats, tugs and schooners, and Freddie Martin got one with a clockwork engine. They had made steam rollers, using the wooden corks from their nets for the big wheels. There were toboggans, polished like mirrors, and home-hewn ball bats and the finest baseballs you ever saw wound out of fishing twine.

There were rag dolls made with the art mothers remembered from their own rag doll days. There is no knowing how many old sweaters were ripped up, dyed and knitted into new mittens, bonnets and sweaters. Fur coats re-emerged as a half dozen muffs.

And there's no remembering all the toys they contrived with tin cans for the small ones. Tin cans with waxed strings in them that howled deliciously when they were pulled. And tin cans with their sides half cut out so that they were rocking cradles, just a size for the nickel dolls.

Every one was a toy some parent had prized in the long ago and made with a doubled pleasure. They all had been time-tried and wrought with the affection that one has for something cherished. They couldn't miss.

I think that Denny O'Toole got more than any kid on the island and was deeply shaken in his skepticism. Everybody told him that Santa Claus had left something under their tree for him and he went around collecting baseballs, bats, toboggans and boats. He was pretty mad at his aunt and, I'm afraid, he probably was well along in high school before he lost faith in Santa Claus.

That's why it seems strange today to hear people moaning about not being able to get electric trains or walking dolls or any of the expensive thingamabobs you buy in stores. YOU NEVER BUY CHRISTMAS. YOU MAKE IT --- WITH YOUR HANDS AND IN YOUR HEART.

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CIVIC ASSOCIATION NEWS: Again we remind you that unless you have renewed your membership in the Association, it expires with this issue of the BEACON. It isn't too late to assure yourself of continued copies of the BEACON, or perhaps you would like to give a gift membership to friends or relatives who visited with you on the Island. Just fill in the form below and send with \$3.00 to BICA MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, ST. JAMES MICHIGAN. Gift memberships will be acknowledged with a letter to the recipient sending your Holiday greetings.

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