

The Horse Shoe Crab

October 11, 2012

Motto: Of Crabs, By Crabs, For Crabs

A Note from Commodore Batchelder

Since the last week of the season, the Club has lost three Honorary Members – Lewis E. Kimball, Jr., William Read Maclay, and Grant Miner Wilson. Together they served the Club in numerous official capacities, but we will remember them most for the strength of their unique personalities, and how they touched the lives of so many members of the Club. In addition to a brief remembrance of each of them, I asked three members to write a more personal reflection. On behalf of the entire Club, we extend our deepest condolences to the families of Commodores Kimball and Wilson, and Honorary Member Maclay.

There will be a celebration of Bill Maclay's life on Saturday, October 13, at 1300 hours, at the Bluff House, 30 Sears Point Lane, Chatham. Lunch will be served, and all members are invited to attend.

LEWIS E. KIMBALL, JR.

The Kimball family joined the Club in 1965. Lew, and his wife Lee, together with their three boys, Phil, Peter, and Matt, set the standard for family involvement in Club activities. Phil and Peter collectively served six years as instructors, and together with Matt, they won their share of silver racing the Kimball's Day Sailer, appropriately named *Gimlet* after Lew's favorite cocktail. In their very first year as members, the Kimball family won the Sailing School Award, the only time in that award's 65-year history that it was awarded to a family. Lee made her mark on the race course, winning the 1971 Ladies Series, and Lew and Lee also won the Sportsmanship award in 1991. Sportsmanship was a byword in the Kimball family, and personified by Lew, ever the gentleman.



Commodore Kimball ready to race at 1974 Luau

Lewis Kimball became Commodore in 1973. Under his leadership, SHYC boasted the finest sailors in Southern Massachusetts, winning the prestigious Commodore Frederick H. Hovey Jr. Trophy in 1974. He also presided over the Sailing School, which he rightly noted was the “heart of the Club.” Commodore Kimball also had the foresight to make sure the Club became a tax-exempt “social organization.” In its application, the purposes for which the Club was formed were aptly stated:

The Club was formed by a group of summer residents of the Chatham area who wished to provide for themselves and others a yachting club in which they could participate in an organized sailing program and fraternize with individuals who were interested in sailing.

Fraternize they did, and the Club grew in membership during the Kimball years. Lew was very proud when, 33 years after he ended his term as Commodore, his son Phil was elected Commodore. Lew became an Honorary Member in 1999, and remained active in the Club through this year. He left the Club immeasurably a better place, for which we are all grateful.

Remembrance by Tom Parker

I had the good fortune of knowing Lew Kimball (“Mr. K,” as I have called him for years) ever since I was a ten-year-old boy, when he arrived as the new headmaster of the school I attended in Virginia. With the three Kimball sons aligning in age with three of the Parker boys, it was not long before our families, both the parents and children, became close. That family friendship has developed and been enriched for just shy of half a century; Parkers and Kimballs enjoyed and shared so many life experiences that long ago I came to think of Lew and Lee Kimball as my second set of parents.

As a schoolboy I loved that in some ways our headmaster seemed to be nothing more a big kid. In Virginia and later in Chatham, Mr. K would join us boys to set off firecrackers or fire at old tin cans with a BB gun, and he always seemed to have as much fun with these antics as we did. Of course, I’m sure he was watching carefully just to keep everything safe, but his watchfulness was so gentle and unobtrusive that I never was aware of a heavy supervisory hand. But the fun extended beyond boyish games to practical matters as well. “Fragile Outpost,” the Kimball’s house on Cedar Street, was an antique farmhouse that needed some TLC, and Mr. K was always welcoming of help from the Parker boys with such projects as shingling or hanging wallpaper. Later, when dinghies and Day Sailers became part of the mix, we learned the fundamentals of boat maintenance, too. With these tasks, instead of his being a kid, he helped us become adults, for he let us wield hammers and paintbrushes on our own. I loved going to the barn behind the house to work on some project. Mr. K. had run a wire from the house to an old refrigerator out there so that when we boys “needed” a break, we could have a cold soft drink. Sometimes, when tackling a project, we messed up: I recall one occasion when, while shingling, we boys had gotten laughing and skylarking a bit more than we should have. When we stepped off the scaffold to admire our handiwork, we saw that the newest row of shingles had a gentle upward curve that would look just fine on a lapstrake boat, but that just wasn’t suitable for the side of a house. We had to pull that entire row off, but Mr. K never scolded us about our snafu. Really, I don’t recall that he ever scolded us – not in Chatham, and not at school. For me, I liked him so much that the mere thought of disappointing him was enough to keep me generally on the right path.

As I grew older, I came to see that Mr. K’s life was always about giving, about helping others or his community. Of course, the teaching profession is all about giving. As a headmaster he always treated us kids with dignity and respect; never did I sense condescension, nor did I have the feeling that student-generated ideas were dismissed out of hand. But it wasn’t just children enrolled his school who

benefited from his generous spirit: Throughout his tenure as our Headmaster, he also served his nation as an officer in the Navy reserve. To his communities he gave constantly. In addition to his “hitch” as commodore of SHYC, he was active in his church, moderator of town meetings in Chatham, and a volunteer with Friends of Chatham Waterways. It always seemed to me that he took on these tasks not out of any self-aggrandizement, quest for power, or boasting rights; these were just the kinds of things that he felt a good citizen did.

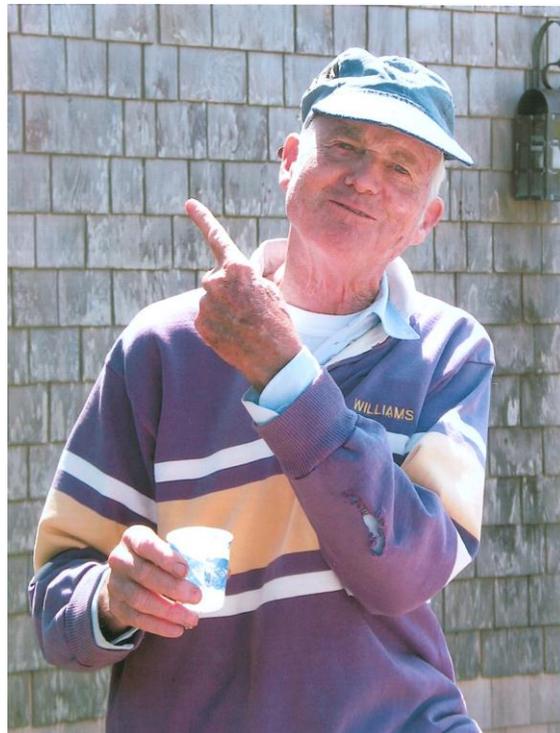
As a teacher Mr. K set a wonderful example. He made learning fun, and he was both a gentle man and a gentleman. As for the day-to-day matters of life, he gave me a valuable model of how to keep things simple – to do tasks yourself, to not be dazzled by brand names or go for the biggest or fanciest or newest. Mr. K had a knack for finding a good deal or identifying a simple, elegant solution to a challenge. He also taught me to enjoy the journey of life, to take the time to appreciate the little things: a good piece of wood for a project, the sparkle of Stage Harbor on a sunny day, music of all types, or cocktails and a home-cooked with family and friends. I try to savor these kinds of things just as he did, and I have learned that they add a disproportionate richness to life. Those of us who had the pleasure of knowing or working with him know just how lucky we were.

WILLIAM READ MACLAY

Bill Maclay, known affectionately in recent years as “Coach,” was a Club member on and off his entire life. His parents, Mark and Marian Maclay, along with his older brothers, Mark, Jr., and David, were four of the 18 original members of the Club in 1932. Bill was two years old at the time, but it would not take long for him to make his mark in the annals of SHYC. Bill, together with crew Andy Griscom, Tiggy Woodland, and Ned Collins, won the Cumming Cup in 1946, which put SHYC in the prestigious Sears Cup finals in Marblehead against the top junior sailors in the country. Bill led the SHYC team to victory in a stunning upset over favorite Corinthian Yacht Club. Fittingly, Bill’s mother was Commodore of SHYC at the time, serving in that role during the war years. The SHYC team was coached by Ralph Evans, who went on to win a Silver medal in the 1948 Olympics. In a fleet race of Catabouts held at SHYC as a tune-up to the Sears Cup, it was Maclay who bested the future Olympian by 45 seconds.

Maclay took his sailing prowess first to prep school, and then to college at Williams, where as a senior he won the McMillan Cup for the Intercollegiate Championship. Once again he defied the odds and beat the heavily favored team, this time the Naval Academy, by spotting a favorable SW wind shift before anyone else did, tacking into it and weathering the whole fleet (wonder where he learned to look for a SW shift?). Bill’s win over Navy was ironic, because after graduation from Williams, he enlisted and served on a destroyer before being transferred to the Naval Academy to teach sailing. As a LTJG, Bill sailed with the Navy 44 *Swift*, winning first-in-class in the 1956 Newport-Bermuda race.

In the 1980s, Maclay rejoined SHYC and assumed the role of “Coach” to one and all. Boardsailing was his new love, and he helped teach the finer points to George Clements, Zander Gryska, and other enthusiasts, who went on to win trophies for the Club in that class. Coach Maclay was also an unofficial advisor to many a youth at the Club, always available for a word of encouragement. He and Drew Carlson would frequently meet for breakfast at 0700 hours at Larry’s PX, and Bill was also there with a piece of good advice. He greeted everyone with a hearty smile and a drawn-out “How *are* you,” and if you were really lucky, he would punctuate his greeting with a quick blast from his bosun’s whistle. Bill was made an Honorary Member in 2004, and was a fixture both on and off the water. He will be greatly missed, but his legacy will live on in the life lessons he taught to so many of us.



“Coach”

Remembrance by Andy Griscom

Sailing came naturally to Bill, and he learned his craft from his mother, Marian “Marmie” Maclay, an excellent sailor in her own right. She taught Bill to sail in the *Susan*, a tiny sloop dating to about 1890, in which Marmie herself had learned to sail. *Susan*’s hull was only about seven feet long but the bowsprit plus elongated boom in the style of that time added another six feet. The Maclay Family was instrumental in the founding of the Club, but also in its expansion. Bill’s older brothers, Dave and Archie, were active Catabout racers in the late 1930s and 1940s, and Marmie served as Commodore from 1942 to 1946. In 1964, Marmie became the first Honorary Member of the Club, an honor bestowed on her son Bill exactly 40 years later. These two generations of the Maclay Family helped build a Club of members who loved to sail. In fact, it was Dave Maclay who said at the 1951 Annual Meeting at the Club that membership “should be open to anyone who desires to sail.” Bill was the last surviving member of this very talented group of sailors.

Bill spent all his life encouraging young and old alike to get out on the water and sail. He often transported kids to regattas, especially windsurfing regattas. Like a pied piper, Bill led a group of sailors going to Pleasant Bay for the Chatham Regatta by first sailing around Morris Island and then helping portage all of the club 420 sailboats across the sand spit at Lighthouse Beach. For many years he was active in promoting the annual Luau, and was famous for organizing huge games of “Capture the Flag” on Harding’s Beach at a time when it was mostly covered with sand. For over 30 years he was an active volunteer in a group of civilian sailing-safety officers who worked with the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, teaching the midshipmen and women to sail and race the Academy yawls. Bill believed strongly that these activities taught the beginnings of leadership, responsibility, and boat handling, all essential skills for future naval officers. He also as a very desirable and entertaining crew member regularly accompanied several yachtsmen who enjoyed exploring the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador in the summer months, and this last July, despite increasing poor health, managed with an old friend to make his 40th such cruise.

Bill's charm and ability to make friendships are legendary and he was an important attendant at many weddings, especially those of the several children of former Commodore Frederick D. King and his wife (and Honorary Member) Wendy Howes King Terry. He could walk into any yacht club and know someone. He was noted for his frequently exotic clothes and his confidence in sailing his sailboard while ferrying himself in full dinner regalia, sometimes holding a paper bag of groceries (and shoes), and often accompanied by his springer spaniel. One favorite animal was not only house-broken but yacht-broken, and when the right time arose would ask to be let out onto to the trailing sailboard to relieve itself. Over the last 10 years Bill has been constantly sailing Stage Harbor in his black Day Sailer, aptly named *Crash* because of an unfortunate collision with a back hoe that was digging a hole at his family home on Sears Point. Bill quickly and sloppily repaired the gaping cavity with fiberglass but it was not pretty. Bill could often be seen sailing in all manner of weather; his mantra was "You should always accept whatever King Neptune has to offer." It is a great loss to us all who will no longer see that battered boat sail by and will no longer enjoy Bill's company.

GRANT MINER WILSON

Grant Wilson was very successful at business, but his real Midas touch was with the many charitable organizations he supported over the years, none more generously or passionately than Stage Harbor Yacht Club. Grant, and his wife Helene, were the consummate hosts, opening their magnificent home overlooking the Oyster River and Nantucket Sound on numerous occasions for Club events. They hosted the very first All-Member cocktail party in 1987, and for the last quarter century, continued to lend a hand to help support the Club.

Grant served three years as Commodore (1995 to 1997), and under his leadership, the Club had many firsts. The first Optimist Regatta was held in 1995, and from that beginning, with just 17 boats, the event has grown to such a level that the Club now caps registration at 100 boats. A new Junior membership category was added in 1996, which helped build the Club's membership base with younger members. Grant also helped lay the foundation for a smooth transition from Chief to Drew Carlson as Sailing Master, which happened while he was Immediate Past Commodore in 1998.

Grant's involvement in Club affairs did not end with his term as Commodore. To the contrary, he made himself available to succeeding Club leaders, and was always available for advice. For example, when the Club was considering purchasing the abutting fish pier from Mark Simonitsch, it was Grant who provided helpful behind-the-scenes advice, and spoke in favor of the purchase at the Special Meeting held for that purpose. Grant and Helene became Honorary Members in 2005. Grant's vision for the future, and his ability to form consensus, has helped put the Club on the solid footing it enjoys today. His untimely death is a great loss to us all, and we mourn with his family.

Remembrance by Commodore John Forger

"Fair breezes down the bay," as we mourn the sudden passing, and celebrate the extraordinary life of former Commodore Grant Wilson, a wonderful friend and leader who provided very sound advice amongst numerous other attributes to the Stage Harbor Yacht Club.

Grant and Helen came to Chatham in the early 80's. One of my earliest memories of the Wilsons was an attempted sail to Nantucket with several Chatham couples which ended as a fogged in weekend in Stage

Harbor. While the voyage to Nantucket never came to fruition that weekend, it was hardly a dull time. The weekend turned out to be one of the earliest of many adventurous and fun times spent with Grant.

The Wilsons have always been extremely generous opening their home to countless Stage Harbor events. Memories flood the mind from cocktail parties to auctions to rubber duckys in the pool with Chief and his starting gun, to intimate dinner parties with close friends. I relish these memories, far too numerous to elaborate on or mention them all.

Grant made his mark on Stage Harbor Yacht Club, as he did with several other organizations, with generosity, class and dignity. Always a gentleman, he lived his life to the fullest (most recently culminating his latest adventure, "Five year around the world cruise"), while always contributing his smile, friendship, knowledge, time and means to the Club.

Grant may be gone, but he will never be forgotten. He lives on through Helene, Grant Jr., Kirsten, Sarah and all of his beautiful grandchildren. The Stage Harbor Yacht Club Family salutes Grant Wilson, for the full and meaningful way he lived his life, and for the same way in which he contributed his infectious zest for life and fun to our Club allowing us to share in his life lessons and experiences. He will truly be missed as a member of our family. God bless Commodore Grant Wilson and his family. Fair breeze down the bay.



Grant and Helene Wilson receiving Honorary Membership from Commodore Bainbridge, 2005