



# The Island Scene

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## Sonny

Walter "Sonny" Elfers was born on January 23, 1908 in the Stone House on the east end of Kelleys Island right next to Gorchester's. Sonny had three sisters and one brother (Only one sister is presently living). His father was left blind after an accident at the quarry three months before Sonny was born; thus, he never saw this child and those that followed. His family had to manage on a monthly allowance of \$50 plus a \$12 blind pension. As soon as Sonny was able to steer a boat, his father had one built. "I was my father's eyes," he reported. His father, even though he was handicapped, managed to gill nets and fished when able. He was swept overboard during a fierce storm when Sonny was but ten-years-old. The body washed up on the south shore of Kelleys.

During his youth, Sonny worked at many jobs - farming, spraying grapes, making hay, tending grapes, etc. He was employed at the quarry for some time also. He was working as a commercial fisherman when he married his first wife, Mary Martin, an Island girl, who was affectionately called "Tootie" by her family and friends. Sonny and Tootie had nine children (five boys and four girls); all of whom are living today: Wally, Tucky, Toni, Titter, Ben, Bob, Sandra, Warren and Mike. Only Ben was interested in fishing and joined his father as a commercial fisherman. Sonny fished a total of 30 years before moving his remaining family to Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1952. He had intended to commute summers to Kelleys and build nets, but after three years the industry went from bad to worse, so he settled down in Florida working at a marina in Pompano and at Pier 56. He operated pleasure boats for marina members and even took a 46 foot ChrisCraft to the Detroit area all by himself. While in Detroit, he was commissioned to take another boat back to Florida. This started him in the business of transporting boats. He also worked as a captain for the yacht "Sirrah" owned by the Clevite Harris Company in Milan, Ohio.

Mary died in 1980 at the Cleveland Clinic and in 1990 Sonny sold his home in Florida, but continued to spend winters there. He showed me a picture of himself standing in front of an airplane and added, "Oh yes, I also piloted my own planes, and after we moved to Sandusky for the children's schooling, I travelled back and forth to the Island by air." He was instrumental in the formation of the first landing strip on the Island. Son, Warren, flew on his dad's knee when he was about five or six-years-old (He actually flew the plane!); and Wally took lessons. Ben learned to fly from his father. Both Warren and Mike have private licenses.

It was an 180 lb. sturgeon measuring 6' 8" long and 43" inches around.

It was an 180 lb. sturgeon measuring 6' 8" long and 43" inches around. He had been fishing around Middle Island with his son, Wally, William Perruchon, and Carl Seeholzer. Now I really

Sonny showed me a picture from a Sandusky paper, dated around 1954, which showed him and his son Wally standing next to a gigantic fish.

believe it..... the fish were **BIG** in those days!

Sonny's second wife, Nadine Brown, a retired school teacher, taught at both Sandusky and Kelleys. She passed away about two years ago, but they were already divorced at that time.

Sonny shares a home now with his children, Titter, Toni and Mike on the south shore of Kelleys (The Old Nest) and, weather permitting, you will see him taking a daily walk in the morning. Last year he underwent carotid artery surgery and had a pacemaker implanted. But, this has not slowed him down a bit, he still putters around the house, painting, repairing, etc. He is a wealth of information and a very interesting man!

## Upcoming Events

Kelleys Island Invitational Volleyball Tournament -  
Saturday & Sunday, July 9-10.

Tour of Homes & Art Show - Saturday, July 16

Islandfest '94 - Friday & Saturday, July 22-23

VFW Chicken Barbecue - Saturday, July 23



## Are You a Bird Watcher?

The Kelleys Island Audubon Society is welcoming new members. This spring the group engaged speakers and arranged field trips for two weeks. Some of the topics included plants and trees native to Kelleys; and, of course, birds: proliferative, migrating and endangered species. These activities were sponsored by the inns on the island and were very well organized. Interested persons can contact Lori and Pat Hayes at 746-2258 for more information on joining the group.

Raffle tickets are available for a drawing to be held on October 29th. A hand-carved Canada Goose by Award-Winning Artist Marty Soski has been obtained for the prize with the proceeds going to benefit the Society. Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Winner need not be present.

## Condolences

There was a requiem mass at St. Michael's for Bob Golias which was followed by a military ceremony at K.I. Cemetery. The family had requested that friends and family return to the V.F.W. hall where a wonderful buffet was prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary. You will be missed, Bob.

Our sympathy to the family of Virginia Miller who passed away this June. She was reported to be 109 years old.

## All About Coradine ...

A regular contributor to "Island Scene", Coradine Myers is a very special person. If you don't know Coradine, you are really missing something!

Caring, kind, generous, compassionate, enthusiastic, faithful, friendly, reverent, full of joy, loving wife and mother, all describe Coradine. That, however, is just a hint of Coradine's specialness.

Along with husband, Lee, and son, Ronnie, the Myers family retired from Independence, Ohio to their south shore "The Turning Point" home in 1975. Always active in community activities, they really enjoy parties and celebrations, and Christmas at the Myers Coradine's delectable dishes happens twice a year.

are favorites at Island potlucks. The southeast sunny dining room in their home is filled with cascading hanging plants and blooming flowers which flourish under her care. A cup of hot tea or cold lemonade awaits visitors in the cheerful dining room.

When Coradine was six years old, she was experiencing a progressive hearing loss, and while a Cleveland teenager she became totally deaf. She attended Alexander Graham Bell School for the deaf and then on to East Tech High School. As Coradine told us in her last column in the June issue, Zonta awarded its first scholarship to Coradine to attend Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. After graduating in the top 10% of her class, she returned to her alma mater in east Cleveland to a position teaching home economics. After eight years of teaching, Coradine and Lee were married, and that ended her teaching career. You see, in those days, teachers could not continue to teach if they were married.

Lee operated an auto towing and repair service in Cleveland for many years and also was a dealer for outboard motors. The children carry on their parents' commitment to a kind and loving world. Bob is a Lutheran minister and wife, Mary, is a registered nurse in Roselle, Ill. They are Kelleys Island neighbors at "Timothy House". Son, Bill and wife, Judy, live in Olean, N.Y. where Bill is an engineer. Coralee, their only daughter, teaches at Zion Lutheran School, along with husband, John Leimer, in Westwood, N.J. Ronnie, the youngest son, is familiar to Islanders as the gentle man who raises and lowers the flag in the Downtown Park, employed by the Village under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Christmas at the Myers' happens twice a year. For a week every July, all the children are together on Kelleys Island. There are nine grandchildren. A Christmas tree is decorated and names are drawn for the gift exchange, with the restriction that each gift must be hand-made. The next day carols are sung, they have a traditional dinner and share their gifts. What a joyous occasion! And such delightful gifts: childhood pictures framed, a little wooden lawnmower, a model of their home, are but a few. But the best gift of all is the love and pleasure of their family being together.

Yes. Coradine Myers is a very special person, and to be her friend is to be blessed.

By Kellee Sandersun

## The Main Team (Cont'd)

by Jessie Martin

The year was 1936. The Kelleys Island's famous baseball team - none other than the number one MAIN TEAM - had a game after game. Unfortunately, I don't have exact days months for some of the games played. I do know that sports reporters were clamoring for stories. One by the name of Ed Ways with the Sandusky Star Journal wrote in a "down-home" style of unrhymed couplets, usually pitting the Main Team against the Sandusky Sailors or the Sandusky Eagles. One such report read:

"Got t' git out t' th'ball park this afternoon....Woodn' miss that game between th' Kelleys Islan'rs an' th' sail'rs.....f'r ennything,.....an' we still think th' islan'rs is goin't' win.....If y' dis'point us Charley Martin....we're off y' f'r life."

Another reporter wrote "Kelleys Island, regarded as the best amateur team in this part of the state, will face the Sailors Sunday. The game will be played at Medusa Park, 5:00 P.M.

Still another reporter wrote about three island weddings that took place in one week: that of Mike Durket to a Cleveland girl Bert Corthell to Maurine Brown; and Oscar McKillips to Mary A. Hughes. He wrote:

"It was reported that Oscar McKillips is the first of the trio. For some time Oscar has been seen with Mary Hughes, and his getting married is supposed not to make much difference, but it did. Oscar was unable to play ball during the week of his marriage, which was due to too much excitement on his part."

Did the Sailors win the game or did the Main Team live up to its reputation? Next issue you'll learn the answer.

### COUNCIL NOTES - June (These notes are unapproved by Council.)

Kyle Paine withdrew his request for rezoning.

Council renewed year-round nursing service.

Friday, July 15th at 2:00 p.m. Public Hearing for Gorchester rezoning.

Appointments to the Design Review Board:

Bill Minshall; Ann Sennish; Barb Schadle

## K.I. 5K and 10K Runners

(This race took place on Sunday, June 12th. There were 462 runners.)

Danny, Michael & Rosalyn Ahner	Amy & Andy Holme
Jess & Jason Weitzel	Omar & Dante Zettler
Phil Bickley	Tom & Marcia Kilbane
Katie Finnegan	Jen Wilson
Rita Eaton	Josh Van Orman
Brian Clepper	Richie Mayher
Reed & William Vetovitz	Brooks Jones
Charles Border	Tom Corogin
Kevin Kadlec	

