



Spritsail

Volume 34, Number 2
Summer 2021

A Journal of the History of Falmouth and Vicinity
Published by the Woods Hole Historical Collection



Published by
Woods Hole Historical Collection
579 Woods Hole Road
Woods Hole, MA 02543

Editors
Olivann Hobbie
Leonard Miele

Editorial Board
Mary Fran Buckley
Janet Gardner
Kathy Lanson
Jane A. McLaughlin

Design & Layout
Beth Ready Liles

Contributions to *Spritsail* are welcome.
Typed manuscripts and letters should be
sent to:

Spritsail
P.O. Box 185
Woods Hole, Massachusetts 02543

Website: www.woodsholemuseum.org

ISSN 0893-4541

**Woods Hole Historical Collection
& Museum Steering Committee**

A Division of the Woods Hole Public Library

Chairman
Laura M. Reckford

Vice Chairman
Christopher Polloni

Secretary
Kathy Denham

Treasurer
Don Aukamp

Steering Committee
Becky Sue Epstein
Jacob Fricke
Robert Leary
Beth Ready Liles
Dana Mock-Muñoz de Luna
Charlotte Emans Moore
Maureen Nolan
Martha Speirs
Chuck Verbeck

Executive Director
Deborah Griffin Scanlon

Archivist & Assistant Director
Colleen Hurter

Archives open Tuesday &
Thursday, 9 AM – 1 PM
and by appointment, year-round

Exhibits open June 29 – October 2
Tuesday – Saturday
11 AM – 3 PM

Small Boat Restoration Program
9 AM – Noon

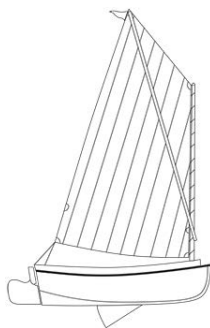
*Woods Hole Public Library Board
of Trustees Representatives*
Rob Blomberg
Vicky Cullen

On the Front Cover: Jewel Plummer Cobb was a renowned scientist, college administrator, and inspirational mentor to minority women. Courtesy Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame. For further information on Cobb and other outstanding women go to cwhf.org.

On the Back Cover: This poster with the film reel and lifeguard chair captures the spirit of the 19th WHFF. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

Contents

From the Editors	2
Jewel Plummer Cobb	3
<i>By Diana Kenney</i>	
30 Years of the Woods Hole Film Festival	9
<i>By Judy Laster</i>	
Carnival Breaks all Records at Otis Air Force Base	15
<i>By Delmar Sherrill</i>	
“O Reason Not the Need”	20
<i>By Olivann Hobbie</i>	
An Appreciation of Steve Chalmers and the Chalmers Family	21



The spritsail is a small boat rig of respectable antiquity used around the world. Its name comes from the sprit, a spar comparable to a gaff, but attached must lower on the mast.

The sprit crosses diagonally to the uppermost corner of the sail, which it extends and elevates. The Woods Hole Spritsail Boat was originally used for fishing and later became popular among local and summer residents for racing and sailing. —Mary Lou Smith

From the Editors

This summer issue of *Spritsail* features three essays about three individuals who were passionate about the projects they pursued to enhance the Falmouth community. Jewel Plummer Cobb was a brilliant scientist and researcher who did graduate work in Falmouth in 1949, Judy Laster founded the successful Woods Hole Film Festival in 1991, and Delmar Sherrill promoted organized events at Otis Air Force Base during the 1950s.

Diana Kenney presents a comprehensive biographical sketch of Jewel Plummer Cobb, an internationally known cell biologist who did major research at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole. Beyond her scientific endeavors, she was a professor and dean at several colleges and universities and the president of California State University, Fullerton. She is remembered not only for her scientific endeavors but for promoting women and minorities in science.

Judy Laster, the founder and director of the Woods Hole Film Festival, writes a fascinating retrospective of the film festival, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Several of the films shown at the festival have been nominated and won Academy Awards. Judy discusses the hard work and effort it has taken to put on the festival and notes the enthusiastic reception it receives from the Cape Cod movie fans who enjoy meeting the filmmakers and discussing the films.

Delmar Sherrill, a longtime resident of Falmouth, has written a three-volume autobiography titled *The Best Years of My Life*. He has given *Spritsail* permission to print an excerpt from Volume II in which he recalls serving as the Personnel Services Officer for Otis Air Force Base. With bold enthusiasm, he organized a carnival for local charities at the Base and enlisted television and film star Art Carney to headline the event. Carney, at the time, was performing in a play at the Falmouth Playhouse.

In "O Reason Not the Need" Olivann Hobbie, the co-editor of *Spritsail*, encourages us to embrace life and to share the wondrous beauty of nature. This is a welcome message as we bid farewell to the isolation we experienced during the 2020 pandemic.

Jewel Plummer Cobb

By Diana Kenney

“I’d like to be remembered as a Black woman scientist who cared very much about what happens to young folks, particularly women, going into science.”

—Jewel Plummer Cobb

In 2020, Agassiz Road in Woods Hole was renamed Jewel Cobb Road, in honor of an outstanding scientist and advocate for women and minorities in science. This honor is evidence of her invaluable contributions to science and her early association with the Woods Hole community.

While the movements for civil rights and women’s liberation were gaining momentum in the 1960s, cell biologist Jewel Plummer Cobb was deeply engaged in cancer research as a biology professor at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. Over the decade, Cobb had perfected methods for culturing patient cells in the lab so she and her collaborators could test the effects, both beneficial and harmful, of various agents on malignant and normal cells. Cobb’s basic research was laying a strong foundation for understanding skin cancer and for developing chemotherapeutic treatments for many types of cancers.



From 1969-1976, Jewel Plummer Cobb was the dean of arts and sciences and professor of zoology at Connecticut College. Courtesy Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives, Connecticut College. Photo by Philip Biscuti.

Yet Cobb heard the winds of change. In 1969, she accepted an offer to become dean of arts and sciences, as well as professor of zoology, at Connecticut College. This meant long hours. She spent mornings in the lab continuing her research, and afternoons delving into leadership work at the college. But it also afforded Cobb a chance to nurture a growing desire and mission: find ways to increase the marginal number of women and

minorities in science. “I moved into administration without any regrets,” she said. “At the time I felt I could make more changes and be more influential.”

Cobb went right to work, establishing a Black scholarship at Connecticut College and a post-baccalaureate program for minorities to prepare them to pursue degrees in medicine

or dentistry. In 1974, Cobb became the first Black woman appointed to the National Science Board, which sets priorities for the grants flowing from the National Science Foundation (NSF). She also helped form the first iteration of the NSF's Committee on Women and Minorities in Science. Cobb chaired the first Conference for Minority Women Scientists in 1975, which produced a highly influential report and "blueprint for change" on the reasons for "our small numbers, relative invisibility, and exclusion from mainstream science."

Cobb published her last scientific paper in 1976, the same year she became full-time dean of the women's division at Rutgers University. Over the next decades, she researched and wrote numerous reports on the underrepresentation of women and minorities in science, and wherever she went she instituted programs to address these inequities. Cobb was appointed president of California State University, Fullerton in 1981, the first Black woman to lead a college west of the Mississippi.

Only the "superior scholar, independent and tenacious, and somewhat hardened by her experience on her way through 'the system'" survives in science, Cobb wrote in an influential 1979 article, "Filters for Women in Science," in the *Annals of the N.Y. Academy of Sciences*. At the time, only 10 percent of scientists and engineers in the country were women. In illuminating the successive "filters" that females (not males) encounter that winnow them out of science, some of the reasons for Cobb's own extraordinary success emerge.



A major mission of Jewel Plummer Cobb as a professor and administrator was to encourage young women of color to pursue careers in science. Courtesy Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives, Connecticut College. Photo by Philip Biscuti.

A Promising Beginning

Jewel Plummer was born in 1924 in Chicago. Her father, Frank, was the first Black man to receive an M.D. degree from Cornell University and her mother, Carriebel, a college graduate, was a physical education and dance teacher. From a young age, Jewel's parents encouraged intellectual exploration, including her father's scientific library. Thus, Jewel avoided the earliest "filters" that girls of her age often encountered: pervasive socialization that they would become mothers and homemakers only, and the idea that math is a "male" subject. "Fundamental to encouraging more women to consider careers in the sciences is eradication of the notion that proficiency in mathematics is a gender-linked characteristic," Cobb wrote.

Cobb originally planned to pursue physical education but fell in love with biology as a sophomore in high school. "It was the first time I ever used a microscope, and I found that wonderful to be able to see things through it that I could not see ordinarily. That was fascinating," she said. An excellent student, Cobb gained admission in 1942 to the University of Michigan, a major research university that had more than 200 Black students enrolled, unusual diversity at the time.



Biology was an early passion of Jewel Plummer Cobb as a student at the University of Michigan and Talladega College. Courtesy Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives, Connecticut College. Photo by Philip Biscuti.

However, at UMichigan Cobb encountered housing segregated by race and rampant social exclusion. The experience was a "disaster for Black students," she said. After three semesters she transferred to Talladega College, an historically Black college in Alabama. There,

she found important mentors, including bacteriology professor James R. Hayden, thereby passing through another filter.

In contrast to her own experience, Cobb later wrote, college advisors often fail to encourage female students to major in science, partly because they know women will have fewer job opportunities in the profession and will earn less. "The sciences and engineering are considered male territories, and as such do not present congenial environments for female students, who are always in the minority, except at women's colleges," she wrote. One possible solution, she wrote, is to provide female freshmen at universities with role models by sending teams of women scientists and postdocs to mentor them for a few days.

Cancer Research

Cobb pursued graduate studies at New York University, where she was mentored by M.J. Kopac and earned her Ph.D. in cell physiology in 1950. Her doctoral research formed the basis for her lifelong interest in melanin (a pigment found in skin, hair, and other tissues) and skin cancer. For her dissertation, Cobb characterized tyrosinase, an enzyme required for melanin synthesis, and tested its use for producing melanin in the lab. Later in her career, Cobb showed that deeper melanin pigmentation protects skin cells from X-ray treatment, providing the first evidence for melanin's ability to protect cells from damaging UV radiation. It is now known that people with light skin have higher rates of skin cancer than those with darker skin pigmentation.



Jewel Plummer Cobb's greatest contribution to science was her invaluable cancer research as a cell biologist. Courtesy Linda Lear Center for Special Collections and Archives, Connecticut College. Photo by Philip Biscuti.

While a graduate student, Cobb spent the summer of 1949 as an independent investigator at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL), in Woods Hole, where she studied the inhibition of cell division in sea urchin (*Arbacia*) eggs. This was an early foray into a research interest Cobb would develop extensively in later years: how hormones, ultraviolet light and chemotherapeutic drugs can cause changes in cell division.

After receiving her doctorate in 1950, Cobb received and accepted three prestigious post-doctoral research offers: One at Columbia University, one with the National Cancer Institute, and, most importantly, one at the National Cancer Institute at Harlem Hospital. At the latter, she worked under Louis Tompkins Wright, the first Black graduate of Harvard Medical School. She also established an important research collaboration with his daughter,

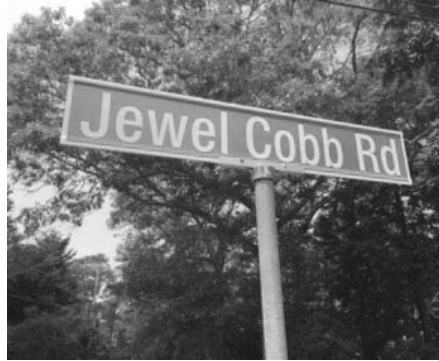
oncologist Jane C. Wright. Cobb became particularly skilled during this fellowship in human tissue culture, especially culturing cancer cells taken from patient tumor biopsies.

In 1952 Cobb founded her own laboratory at the University of Illinois Medical School, where she established the school's first tissue culture facility. Two years later, she moved her lab back to Harlem Hospital, where she resumed her innovative collaboration with Jane Wright. Wright was studying the effects of chemotherapy in cancer patients. In parallel, Cobb cultured cells from the tumors of these patients and studied their response to chemotherapy treatment. "These experiments were some of the earliest forms of translational medicine, as both Cobb and Wright realized that the *in vitro* results might be used to predict beneficial treatments for specific patients and

cancer sub-types,” writes Ellen Elliott of this work. Cobb and Wright made a critical contribution in the early 1960s by demonstrating the effectiveness of methotrexate in treating skin and lung cancer, as well as childhood leukemia. Methotrexate is now used for a broad range of cancers, including breast cancer.

Jewel Plummer married Roy Cobb, an insurance salesman, in 1954 and their son, Jonathon Cobb, was born in 1957. They divorced in 1967. Cobb retired from the presidency of California State University, Fullerton in 1990, and died in 2017.

Cobb’s distinguished contributions to scientific research, education, and inclusiveness did not go unrecognized. She was elected to the National Institute of Medicine in 1974 and received the Lifetime Achievement Award for Contributions to the Advancement of Women and Underrepresented Minorities from the National Academy of Sciences in 1993. She was the recipient of 21 honorary doctorates and was a trustee of several universities and corporations.



The new Jewel Cobb Road street sign.
Courtesy Leonard Miele.

A Woods Hole Legacy

Cobb’s first summer at MBL in 1949 led to a deep connection with Woods Hole, where she eventually bought a second home. She became an MBL Corporation member in 1972 and was named an emeritus member of the MBL Society in 2007. Cobb was an MBL Library Reader for many years, and also served on the MBL Campaign Steering Committee from 1997 to 2000.

About the Author: Diana Kenney is a science writer/editor and associate director of communications at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole. Previously, she worked as a writer and editor at the *Cape Cod Times*. Diana holds an M.A. in History of Science and Technology from the University of Minnesota. She lives in Barnstable.

Thirty Years of the Woods Hole Film Festival

By Judy Laster, Founder and Director

It's hard to fathom that the Woods Hole Film Festival is turning thirty. It feels like yesterday that Kate Davis and I were figuring out how to launch a film festival in Woods Hole. Kate was making her second documentary and had a trailer to screen, and I had just completed shooting a short, quirky spaghetti western in Woods Hole, *Damsel in Dis Tress*. We decided we needed to show our films and that the best way to do that was to start a film festival in Woods Hole. We figured that Woods Hole was the perfect place to hold an event that celebrates the work of independent filmmakers and brings films to a community that is iconoclastic, known for creativity and its worldwide impact in science.

We were summer kids. Like so many people we knew, our families came to Woods Hole because of the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL). Back then, while the scientists worked in the lab, their family members spent the day at Stony Beach and going to the MBL Club. In those days, the MBL Club was the hub for much of the traditional summer activity, such as folk-singing, ping pong, yoga, painting, and Thursday movies at Lillie Auditorium. Brian Switzer, Kate Davis, and I were Club stewards for a few great summers in the late '70s, so we knew how to show films. Or so we thought.



Judy Laster is the founder and director of the WHFF. For 30 years she has been the driving force behind its growth and success. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

Thirty years ago the world of independent film was still relatively small, and few people outside of the filmmakers, their friends, and families knew much about film festivals aside from the big and prestigious festivals like Venice, Cannes, or Berlin. We were not intimidated by the notion of starting a film festival because we knew that our friends in Woods Hole would want to see the films we showed. Since we only had two films, initially, we realized we would need to find other films to round out the program. Fortunately, we knew

other filmmakers, so we quickly contacted them and convinced them to let us show their films in our festival. They agreed, and thus was born the Woods Hole Film Festival.

The first festival program in 1991 was 60 minutes and included four short films (including Robert Stone's *Radio Bikini*, Doug Willis' *Your Face*, and Robb Moss' *The Tourist*), a Kate Davis' film trailer, and a packed audience upstairs in the Old Woods Hole Fire Station. We screened them on a 16mm projector. In those days, the projection format options were Super 8 or 16mm film and VHS tape. 35mm films required large projectors that were only available in commercial movie theaters, and Beta tapes required players that were not easily available. Despite the format limitations, the audience crowded into the screening to support independent filmmakers and to see work they would not otherwise have a chance to see.



Barbara Koppel (left) is a two-time Academy Award winner who was the festival's Filmmaker in Residence in 2011. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

At that time, we had no inkling that each of those filmmakers would still be making films decades later and that some of them would end up being nominated for—and sometimes winning—Oscars.

Given the success of the first festival, we decided to continue. At the suggestion of a number of people in Woods Hole, we reached out to David Kleiler, a film maven in Brookline, Massachusetts, who led the battle to

save the Coolidge Corner Theater (one of the oldest art-house cinemas in the country) from becoming a mall. David knew everyone in the world of independent film and often helped secure films for the Woods Hole Community Association's Winter series. Kate went back to her filmmaking career, and I worked with David, who through his position at the Coolidge helped program the Woods Hole Film festival in the early years. This forged the success and growth of the festival.

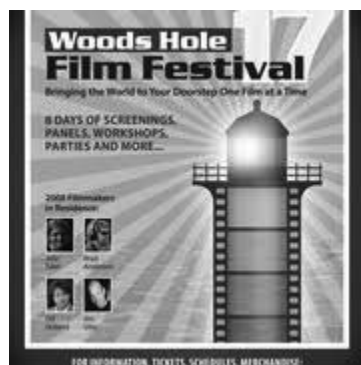
Thirty years ago, the internet as we know it did not exist, and there was no easy way to find films or filmmakers, or for filmmakers to submit their films to festivals. At that time there were a handful of big festivals that existed primarily in large cities. Thanks to word of mouth and media coverage, film-

makers began to discover us, and we started to grow. Our one-hour festival turned into a weekend, then four days, until it became the eight-day, multi-venue event it is today.

Everything changed in 2000 with the introduction of Withoutabox, an online film festival submission platform that enabled us to consider films by filmmakers from anywhere in the world. Withoutabox led to a substantial increase in the number of films we received and in the number of films we wanted to include in the festival. Simultaneously, the world of independent filmmaking was taking

off, especially in New England where a vibrant film scene produced some of the best independent films in the country. Nearly every New England filmmaker had a screening in Boston, so it was only natural that filmmakers also wanted their films to screen at the Woods Hole Film Festival, since that meant showing their films in the summer on Cape Cod.

As the world of film festivals evolved, however, so did the expectation of what it meant to be a “film festival.” We’ve added a variety of programs to round out the festival, including workshops, panel discussions, live music, nightly parties, a vibrant filmmaker-in-residence program, a Kids’ Day, and even screenings under the stars.



Given our location in the scientific community of Woods Hole, we also started collaborating with the science community, expanding our programming to include films about science that aligned with the work taking place here. The festival now includes scientists from MBL, WHOI (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution), and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)

who participate in our post-screening Q&As and panel discussions. In 2016, we launched the Woods Hole Film Festival Film & Science Initiative to create a more formal structure to host programs that connect film and science. This summer of 2021, we will premiere two documentaries produced through the Initiative, representing its next phase.

Approximately 15 years ago we realized that with an eight-day festival screening more than 150 films, it was nearly impossible to see all of the films in that short time. We grew into a year-round organization that included two different screening series: Dinner & A Movie and Film Falmouth. These two series helped to sustain our audience throughout the year and



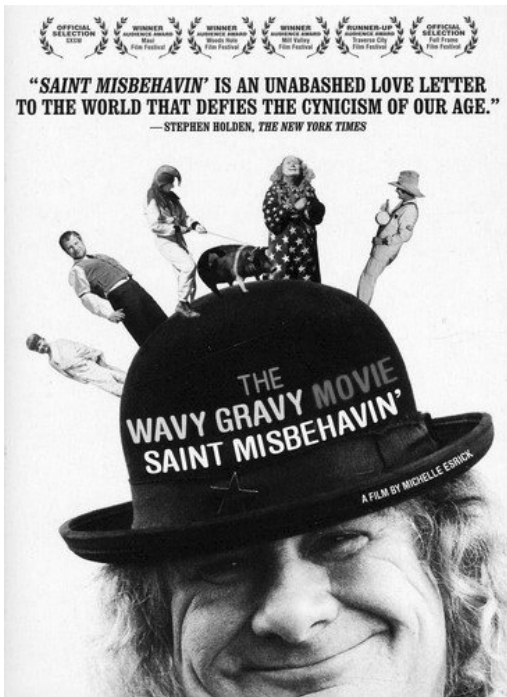
The lighthouse is a fitting symbol for a film festival in Woods Hole. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival;

The 2021 whimsical poster for the WHFF. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

to bring back some of the films from past festivals. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, these two year-round series were growing exponentially.

One of the most memorable screenings, for me, took place at Redfield Auditorium in 2009. The hall was packed, and you could feel the energy from the audience throughout the entire film, *Saint Misbehavin'*. This was a feature documentary about Hugh Nanton

Romney Jr., an American entertainer and peace activist known as Wavy Gravy. Wavy was there and people came from far and wide to see him, meet him, and thank him for his work as a political activist. He was the most warm and generous person and true to his persona as the clown, wearing his red nose and clown outfit to the post-screening party.



Hugh Nanton Romney, Jr., a longtime entertainer and peace activist, in character as Wavy Gravy in *Saint Misbehavin'*. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

The festival is also known for including music, when possible. In 2016 we screened the feature documentary *Revival: The Sam Bush Story*, about the renowned mandolin player and the father of Newgrass, Sam Bush. Sam

came to the festival, only intending to be in Woods Hole as the subject of a documentary. However, when word got out that he was going to be here, local musicians known as The Old Silver Band organized a gig at The Landfall restaurant, dreaming that Sam would play with them. The place was packed to the rafters. Sam sat with the band and played with them for 45 minutes. It was an amazing night.

Another special night for me was in 2018 when we screened the feature documentary *Human Nature*, directed by Adam Bolt. Biologist and film producer Ron Vale organized an incredible panel discussion following the film. The line to get into MBL's Lillie Auditorium was down the street and around the corner; the house was at full capacity—500 people. Only in Woods Hole



Filmgoers climb the stairs of the old Woods Hole fire station to view one of the festival's featured films. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

could a documentary about CRISPR gene-editing be the rock star film of that year's festival.

During the festival week, Woods Hole village is abuzz with people who are excited about a great film they just saw or a wonderful filmmaker they just met. That excitement permeates the town and happens each summer, as if on cue. We have had the opportunity to provide transformative experiences for filmmakers and audiences alike as they converge for a week in an intimate festival setting each summer.



Author, journalist, and filmmaker Sebastian Junger participated in a panel discussion titled "Filmmaking and War" at the 2011 film festival. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

In order to produce a festival this large, we work year-round to develop a program that is original in style and sensibility that represents the essence of the Woods Hole Film Festival. We thought that all was going to come to a grinding halt in March 2020, when the pandemic closed movie theaters and other indoor

entertainment venues. However, thanks to The Film Festival Alliance, a national nonprofit organization that helps film festivals establish best practices, we participated in weekly calls with festivals from around the country to determine our available options. March 11, 2020 was the last in-person screening before everything shut down due to the pandemic. The film, *The Pollinators*, had just played to a sold-out audience and we were on target to having our best year-round season yet. Initially we thought that the shut-down would not last too



Stage and screen star Sam Waterston appeared at the 20th anniversary kick-off fundraiser for the WHFF in 2011. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

long, but within a couple of weeks it became clear that we needed to make plans to be able to hold the summer 2020 Woods Hole Film Festival.

Despite the fact that the virtual world was still in its infancy, we were determined to present the 2020 Woods Hole Film Festival as a virtual eight-day event. So we started working around

the clock to figure out how to do it. The previous summer there was no clear technological solution to present an event as large and complex as an eight-day festival with 185 films. Through a lot of hard work and perseverance,

The following list is a sampling of the notable filmmakers and directors who have contributed to the success of the Woods Hole Film Festival.

Barbara Koppel is a film director known for her documentary work. She received an Academy Award in 1976 for Best Documentary Feature, *Harlan County USA*, about a Kentucky miners' strike. In 1991 she won an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, *American Dream*, about a two-year-long workers strike against Hormel Foods. She was the Filmmaker in Residence for the WHFF in 2010.

Gordon Willis was a cinematographer and film director who is best known for his work on the *Godfather* films, *Annie Hall*, *Manhattan*, *Zelig*, and *All the President's Men*. In 2009 he received an Honorary Academy Award for his life's work, which is world renowned for defining the look of the 70s. He is considered one of the top ten most influential cinematographers in history. In 2003 he was the Filmmaker in Residence for the WHFF. Willis moved to North Falmouth, MA upon his retirement. He died in 2014.

Anne Makepeace is a writer, producer, and director of independent films. Her documentary *We Still Live Here*, about the return

of the Wampanoag language, has won numerous independent film awards and premiered on the PBS series *Independent Lens* in 2011. Award money from the film was donated to the Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project and was used to launch a children's language-immersion camp. Judy Laster notes that almost all of her films have been screened at the WHFF and describes Makepeace as "the ultimate independent filmmaker."

Laura Nix is a director, writer, and producer working in fiction and non-fiction. She received a 2020 Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Short Subject for *Walk Run Cha-Cha*. She received a 2019 Peabody Award for her feature documentary *Inventing Tomorrow*. Nix was the 2019 WHFF Filmmaker in Residence.

Heidi Ewing is a director and documentary filmmaker. She received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Feature, *Jesus Camp*, in 2007 with co-director Rachel Grady. This was a provocative film about a charismatic Christian summer camp. Ewing was the Filmmaker in Residence for the WHFF in 2011.

the 29th Woods Hole Film Festival took place on schedule, and included filmmakers from around the world participating in virtual Q&As. It even included virtual musical performances.

Fortunately, our staff and volunteers have been able to work remotely to create an incredible 30th anniversary festival. We never envisioned that this year would be anything less than our normal eight-day, in-person,

multi-venue event, but given the pandemic situation, this year's festival will be a hybrid event, taking place both in-person and virtually, from Saturday, July 31 through Saturday, August 7. All of the 160 films and events will be available via a virtual platform, with some of the films screening in-person with live Q&As.

Regardless of advances in technology or new tools and equipment, a good film festival starts

with a good story. Thirty years ago there was no such thing as digital filmmaking, and the web was in its infancy. Films were shipped on heavy and bulky cores and reels, filmmakers spliced film stock, sound was synched, and there were relatively few film festivals. Thirty years ago, there were no DVDs or VOD (Voice on Demand), no streaming services such as Netflix, no social media, and no DIY (Do it Yourself) distribution and marketing, just film, projector, screen, and sound. Throughout it all, the festival has continued to offer a unique and distinct community experience, and each of the thirty years has left an indelible mark. In 2020 we screened Doug Roland's *Feeling Through*, nominated for Best Live Action Short Film, and *If Anything Happens, I Love You*, which won an Oscar for Best Animated Short Film, written and directed by Will McCormack and Michael Govier. That kind of recognition is wonderful for the independent film community.

As we begin our fourth decade, we don't know what the future will look like, but as long as independent filmmakers continue to tell good stories, the Woods Hole Film Festival will continue to show them.

www.woodsholefilmfestival.org



Gordon Willis, a 2003 Filmmaker in Residence at the WHFF, was considered to be one of the greatest cinematographers in the film industry before he died in 2014. Courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

About the Author: Judy Laster grew up in Bethesda, Maryland, summering every year in Woods Hole where she began showing films as a teenage steward of the MBL Club. She graduated from Bowdoin College and Lewis and Clark Law School and served as a policy lawyer in the Massachusetts legislature. Directing the festival is now a passionate, full-time endeavor for Judy.

Falmouth resident Delmar Sherrill has written a three-volume autobiography titled The Best Years of My Life in which he recalls his military career at Otis Air Force Base from 1954-1957. The carnival story that follows is an excerpt from the second volume of his memoir.

Carnival Breaks All Records at Otis Air Force Base

By Delmar Sherrill

The summer of 1956 was one of the busiest times of my life. Col. Hook created the Otis AFB United Charity Fund Committee to address the many requests for donations received throughout the year from local charities. Rather than raising money constantly to help these charities, he wanted to dedicate one week to fundraising, minimizing the time taken away from Air Force business. He invited all the local charities to submit their requests for funds at one time. The base would host a carnival and raffle, and each person on the base was asked to contribute a day's pay. The committee would divide the money among the participating charities. I was appointed to the committee and charged with running the carnival and raffle.

I got right to work—the first order of business—publicity. I contacted the local media and made banners and flyers, but I wanted something that would really draw attention. I wanted to use the Cape Cod bridges. The only motor vehicle access to

Cape Cod is over one of two bridges that span the Cape Cod Canal, the Sagamore Bridge and the Bourne Bridge. They are arched bridges with suspended decks, 45 feet wide and 275



As the information services officer, Lt. Delmar Sherrill greets senior class students from Lawrence High School at Otis Air Force Base. Courtesy Delmar Sherrill.

feet tall. I came up with the idea of a banner announcing the carnival, spanning the tops of both bridges.

Instead of asking the Air Force, I went right to the Army Corps of Engineers, the agency responsible for the maintenance of the canal and the bridges. I told them about the carnival and my idea for banners. They agreed to install the banners but warned that I had better use some strong material to endure the winds over the canal. I knew the canvas I had used for banners at the Statesville theaters would not hold up. I asked if they thought parachute silk would work, and they thought it would.

I drove back to the base and went to see the supply officer. I asked if we had any parachute silk. He replied, "Yes, but you can't have any." I said, "I didn't ask for it; I just wanted to know if we had any on the base." I got in my car and drove over to see the base commander,

Col. Hook. I walked in, saluted, and he asked, "What do you want?" I said, "I've had a brainstorm. How would you like to have banners across the two Cape Cod bridges advertising the carnival?" "Hell of an idea!" he replied. I told him I needed parachute silk, but the base supply officer wouldn't let me have any. Col. Hook responded, "The hell you can't!" He picked up the phone, called the major and told him to give me the parachute silk. He went on to say, "In the future, anytime Sherrill goes to base supply, permission is given today to give him anything he wants."

We had seven raffle prizes to be awarded the last night of the carnival: a 1956 Plymouth convertible automobile; a 14-foot runabout boat with motor and trailer; a round trip to Nassau,



The carnival banner spans the Bourne Bridge over the Cape Cod Canal. Courtesy Delmar Sherrill.

the Bahamas for two; a refrigerator, a portable TV, a hi-fi phonograph and a special mystery prize—a live donkey! One of my ideas to sell raffle tickets did get me in some trouble with Col. Hook.

A few weeks before the carnival, I got a call from the base adjutant, special staff officer to the base commander. He said, "Sherrill, get over here. The base commander wants to see you; he's not happy." I asked what was wrong and he said, "Get over here and you'll find out." I went to see Col. Hook. He asked, "What are you doing today, Sherrill?" I replied, "I haven't done much today, sir." I wasn't going to admit to anything, not knowing what was wrong. He asked, "What did you do in Boston today?" "Oh, that," I replied. "I got an 18-wheeler flat-bed from the Air Installation Squadron and put the car and the boat for our raffle on it, and sent it to Boston. I talked 30 of our men into selling raffle tickets outside of Fenway Park." Col. Hook said, "I just got a call from the chief of police in Boston. You've got traffic tied up everywhere in the city! Don't you do that again." I said, "Yes, sir." I saluted him, went to the door, and as soon as I opened the door, he said, "Sherrill." I said, "Yes, sir?" He asked, "Do you think we sold many tickets?" He loved it.

I had sent the loaded tractor-trailer and a bus carrying 30 men into the narrow streets around Fenway Park to sell tickets before a Red Sox game. Of course, I had no idea the streets were so narrow! We sold lots of raffle tickets! I think over 48,000 were sold in all.

I had to secure some talent as a draw to the event. The comedic actor Art Carney, who played Ed Norton on the television show *The Honeymooners*, was appearing at the Falmouth Playhouse. I talked my way in to see him after his show on Monday night. I told him about the United Charity Fund Carnival and asked him to come Thursday night to cut the ribbon to open the carnival. I said I would send a staff car to pick him up. He was so gracious and agreed to do it. Then I asked if he would like to attend a luncheon with the base commander on Wednesday. I wasn't even sure if Col. Hook would be there, but why not try?

I told Art Carney I wanted to bring in a television station to film his visit as publicity for the carnival. WBZ was the local CBS affiliate



Television personality Art Carney and Colonel Fred Hook pose next to an Otis Air Force jet. Courtesy Delmar Sherrill.

A Model Home in Falmouth

When Delmar Sherrill decided to buy a home in Falmouth in 1955, he and his friend Paul Vosswinkel rerouted a Lockheed Starfire jet they were flying to view the various neighborhoods in Falmouth. Delmar spotted a new home that was being built on Menauhant Road in East Falmouth just two blocks from the ocean. This was the model home for the new Belmar neighborhood that was situated along the eastern shore of Great Pond. Delmar contacted the contractors, the Losordo brothers, with this entreaty: "It's the model house, and I think you'll build it better than you'll build the others. That's why I want it." Delmar proudly recalls that "they built over 100 houses in the Belmar development, and I have the first one." It has been the Sherrill home for 66 years.

that ran *The Honeymooners*, so I was sure they would want to film him on the base. He said that would be OK. I said, "Art, I've got to ask you one more thing and then I'll stop. Did you bring a hat and vest like your character Ed Norton wears on television?" He had not. I asked if he would be willing to wear the outfit if I could provide it, and he agreed. As I was leaving, Art asked if he could bring his co-star to the luncheon. His co-star was 19-year-old actress Lee Remick, who was leaving the next week for Hollywood to make a movie with Andy Griffith. I told him definitely he could bring her, so she came along. Originally from Quincy, Massachusetts, where her father owned Remick's, a popular department store, Lee Remick went on to become a major Hollywood actress.

When Art arrived at the 58th interceptor squadron, I had my car waiting on the flight line, with the hat and vest in it. My staff sergeant, Don Martin, had borrowed the outfit from a funeral director in Buzzards Bay—but we didn't tell Art that. As Art dressed in my car, I asked him to greet Col. Hook in character, as Ed Norton. I couldn't believe I talked him into doing that. We put him up in the jet and made it look like he had just flown in

from New York. He had the familiar "Ed Norton" hat on with my helmet over the hat. He emerged from the jet in character and started talking to Col. Hook as though Ed Norton had just arrived at Otis from the streets of New York City. "Beats being down in the sewers," he told Col. Hook. The base commander loved it.



Colonel Hook accompanies actress Lee Remick and Art Carney at the Otis carnival. Courtesy Delmar Sherrill.

We had our film crew shoot the whole thing. Back then it took two days to develop film for television, so our story would be ready to air on Boston television Friday night, enticing viewers to come to the carnival over the weekend. True to his word, Art Carney came back on Thursday to cut the ribbon to open the carnival, in front of over a thousand people.

I arranged for other talent to perform at the carnival. Billy DeWolfe, an actor from Worcester, Massachusetts, was in a lot of Bing Crosby pictures. He came to Cape Cod in the summer to visit his girlfriend, who was an acquaintance of my wife. Anastasia called his girlfriend and told her about the carnival, asking if Billy would consider making an appearance. She agreed to ask him, and he said, "I'll come but I don't want to do an act or anything." I said, "I just want you to come out, so I can use your name; that's it." He came to the carnival, got up on stage, took off his coat and started doing his act. To get him off the stage, I had to tell the sergeant running the public address system to cut him off—tell him the equipment broke. I had to get him off the stage so people would go back to playing the games and visiting the vendors.



Comedic actor Billy DeWolfe joins Colonel Hook at the carnival.
Courtesy Delmar Sherrill.

The week before the carnival, I called the USO to ask if they had any performers that we could use at the carnival. They looked at their schedule and said they had a USO show going to Thule AFB in Greenland that could stop by for one night.

I went back to the Falmouth Playhouse and convinced actress Carol Bruce, who was performing the next week in Anniversary Waltz, to come on Sunday night and draw the winning raffle tickets.

The carnival was an amazing success. Between the carnival, the raffle and the donations of a day's pay by Otis personnel, The United Charity Fund took in \$98,000.

Col. Hook invited all the recipient agencies to come in for a luncheon and handed out over \$32,000 in donations. The rest went to cover expenses and fund the Otis AFB Welfare Fund, in support of Air Force personnel.

About the Author: Delmar Sherrill began his career in public relations as a teenager in Statesville, North Carolina. He was the advertising manager for a chain of North Carolina movie theaters. He was also the Personnel Information Officer while stationed at Otis Air Force Base from 1954-1957 and the publicity director of the Falmouth Playhouse. He describes his many business adventures in his three-volume autobiography *The Best Years of My Life*.

“O Reason Not the Need”

No need for that white, glowing dogwood
To offer its layered world of blossoms
to our winter-tired eyes---

No need for the sky to flame
into fans of violet, gold, crimson
after the sun has sunk
into the iridescent bay---

No need for the rising full moon,
framed by the dusk,
to mimic the day's splendor
in night's silver--

No need for the hummingbird to dazzle
as its wings beat like wind,
music's pulse in shimmering grace--

No need to bury our faces in lilacs
on this early summer night--
step back—the scent of June engulfs us still--

No need for this meadow--
some hours ago, green grasses waving in sunlight--
to be now ablaze with fireflies
as if stars had kindled them.

We need only to share these extravagances
that make our lives sing.

— Olivann Hobbie

An Appreciation of Steve Chalmers and the Chalmers Family

Steve Chalmers was a valued member of the *Spritsail* editorial board until his retirement from the board in 2020. His wisdom, deep local knowledge, and strong commitment to our editorial goals improved all the issues on which he worked. Over two decades, he and his wife Janet were a dynamic team. They contributed excellent photographs to enhance articles and they consistently improved the layout of each issue. In a tribute to Mary Lou Smith, Janet remembered how Steve's parents, Bruce and Ema Chalmers, were welcomed to Woods Hole by Mary Lou and Paul Smith. Bruce then became a major contributor to *The Book of Falmouth*, a history of the town organized by Mary Lou and published in 1986 to honor the town's tercentenary. Bruce constructed its timeline, adding a new twist by running the chronology backwards.

Upon Janet Chalmers' death, the *Spritsail* printed the following "In Memoriam": "Janet B. Chalmers passed away peacefully on May 30, 2013. She had joined the editorial board of the *Spritsail* in 1990 following the death of her father-in-law, Bruce Chalmers, who was a founding member and guiding spirit of this magazine. Janet carried on his enthusiasm for history, his passion for accuracy, and his ability to master the various stages of rapidly evolving computer software. Janet brought growing skill and creativity to *Spritsail*. She also brought great joy, generosity of spirit, and courage. We honor her; we will miss her."

We also honor Steve Chalmers. He alone shepherded the publication of more than six years of *Spritsails*, keeping and reminding us of the standards set over the years. He had a fine eye for detail and a large library of images to enhance the printed copy. We will miss his institutional memory that began with his father's editorship in Volume 1, Number 1 of the 1987 Summer *Spritsail*. Steve has been our historian, good neighbor, and valued friend.



Woods Hole Historical Museum

579 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543

(508) 548-7270

whhmdirector@gmail.com

woodsholemuseum.org

Museum open June 29 to October 2, 2021
11 AM to 3 PM, Tuesday through Saturday

Archives open year-round, Tuesday & Thursday, 9 AM to 1 PM

Admission free, donations welcome

Guided Walking Tours:
Historic Woods Hole, Tuesdays at 10 AM
(July-August) and by appointment

Special Exhibits 2021:

"History of Woods Hole," Gallery One

"Left Behind: Clues to Life in the Past on
Cape Cod," Gallery Two

"Honoring Jewel Plummer Cobb," Hallway
banner

Campus:

Bradley House, built in 1804, features galleries
with changing exhibits, a permanent scale
model of Woods Hole circa 1895, a collection
of ships in bottles, our offices, and archives.

Swift Barn Small Boat Museum houses an 1890s
Woods Hole Spritsail Boat, a Herreshoff
12 ½', a Cape Cod Knockabout, a Woods
Hole Chamberlain Dory, a 1922 Old Town
canoe, a Mirror dinghy, and many boat models
and maritime artifacts.

Yale Workshop, 1890s workshop of Dr. Leroy
Milton Yale, Jr. who summered in Quissett.
The Workshop includes original and representative
tools, fishing gear, maps, books, etchings and
artifacts appropriate to Dr. Yale's varied interests.

Penguin Shed, where children are welcome to
climb aboard Cape Cod Knockabout Penguin,
practice tying nautical knots, and pulling
block and tackle rigs.

Walsh Rambler Rose Garden features a few of the
hybridized Walsh Ramblers that are in full
bloom June and July.

Visit woodsholemuseum.org for a full list of programs and events.



Falmouth Museums on the Green

Home of the Falmouth Historical Society

55-65 Palmer Avenue, Falmouth, MA 02541

(508) 548-4857

info@museumsonthegreen.org

museumsonthegreen.org

Museum open July 1 to October 9
10 AM to 2 PM, Thursday through Saturday

Guided tours upon request
Members, Children under 13 and Active
Military FREE

Research library open Tuesdays and
Thursdays, 10 AM -2 PM or by appointment

Historic Walking Tours of Falmouth:
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday,
10 AM, \$5 per person.

Historic House Tours of Falmouth:
Thursday through Saturday, 10 AM and
2 PM, \$10 per person.

2021 Exhibits include:

Falmouth: Changing with the Times:
A Snapshot of Falmouth History

"Cash, Credit or Eels: Early Business in
Falmouth"

"The Road to the Vote: Women's Suffrage"

"Hail to the Chiefs: Past Elections in
American History"

Katharine Lee Bates: Scenes from "America
the Beautiful"

2021 Programs include:

August 12, 4 PM: Katharine Lee Bates Fest
(held virtually)

August 13, 10 AM: Children's Teddy Bear
Picnic (held in-person)

September 22, 5 PM: Heritage Award
celebration, honoring Penelope Duby,
Margaret Gifford, Barbara Kannellopoulos,
Sharon Nunes and Pamela Rothstein

Visit museumsonthegreen.org for a full list of programs and events.



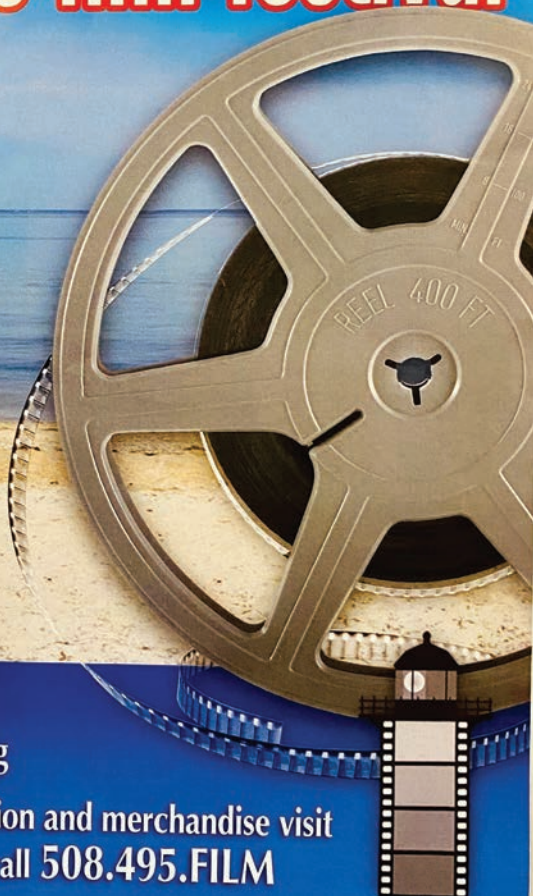
WOODS HOLE FILM FESTIVAL

Center: Hugh Nanton Romney, Jr., a longtime entertainer and peace activist, in character as Wavy Gravy in *Saint Misbehavin'*; Left: A still from *Jesus Camp*, the controversial documentary screened at the festival by co-directors Rachel Grady and Heidi Ewing; Right: A still from *The Most Dangerous Man in America*, a documentary/political thriller about Daniel Ellsberg and the *Pentagon Papers* that was screened at the festival in 2008. All photos courtesy Woods Hole Film Festival.

Saturday, July 31 through Saturday, August 7

the 19th annual

woods hole film festival



Tickets on sale June 30, 2010
info@woodsholefilmfestival.org

For tickets, schedule, information and merchandise visit
woodsholefilmfestival.org or call 508.495.FILM