

The Bonnet Shores Card Ladies

'The Silent Icons'

Written by Joan Fandetti

In 2009, the Bonnet Card Ladies came into existence . It was organized by Janice McClanaghan out of the love for her mother, Mary Laurelli. Mary left her home in Cranston to move in with Janice. Having played cards for years, Mary Laurelli would soon have the company of new card players. Janice sent an email asking if anyone in the community was interested in playing cards to learn her mom's game ' May I '.

Happily, six ladies responded : Marybeth Murphy, Kay Schenk, Margie Manning, Lee Listro , Mary Laurelli and Janice. The Bonnet Card Ladies were born. In the beginning, these ladies would meet at Janice's house until more and more card players joined in. It became time to move this Thursday card meeting to the Community Center. Weekly, Janice would take her mom wheelchair-oxygen to play her favorite ' May I. ' The group had grown to over twenty players and is still in existence today

Mary Laurelli (deceased) - Mother of Janice McClanaghan was born in Pico, Italy. Mary arrived in the USA at the age of 5. As an owner of the Aborn Pearl Manufacturing, Mary and her husband were jewelry designers. At her age of 42, her husband passed away. Closing that business she became a designer for Coro Jewelry. Later in life, Mary created a new business MV Creations which stands for the family name Mary Vicario. At 52, she remarried her best friend Robert Laurelli. For 17 years, they enjoyed life together until his passing. Mary loved playing cards and needlepoint. She was a great cook, hard worker, great mom, grandma, and great grandma. In 2011, Mary died at the age of 89. Her 'May I' card legacy lives on to date !

Patricia Eaton (deceased) - Pat was a graduate of URI living on Onondaga Road with her husband and son. She was an original card lady. Pat and husband , Herb loved motorcycles. His motorcycle had a sidecar. Together, they would ride all over including a trip from Bonnet to California and back to Bonnet. Pat was a very spirited-woman dying in her eighties.

Margie Manning - Arriving in Bonnet 1974, with her husband and children, Margie instantly wanted to stay because of the beaches and her family love of Bonnet. Her first house was on Wolfe Road. Margie shared that home during the summers with her family for 25 years. In 1992, they moved to Col. John Gardner Rd. where she currently resides. Margie is an original card lady. Her involvement in the community includes Earth Day clean-up, naming her "Earth Lady" in 2002, a memorial ceremony for the URI students that died at Little Beach, and co-author of the Bonnet Ladies Cookbook with Lee Listro and the in-charge Marybeth Murphy. Margie's favorite dish is chicken piccata.

Janice McClanaghan - Arriving in Bonnet the summer of 1950 at the age of three, Janice's father would drive from Providence to Olivo's beach often. Tried of driving, her family bought their first home on Cross Rd. where she lived for 38 summers. The family then moved to Leonard Bodwell Rd where Janice spent six years. In 1994 , her Treasure Rd home was purchased and remains where her family resides. " It's like a family, all growing up together and we all are still friends". Having been asked to replace a Council member that had been transferred was her beginnings of serving a thirteen year tenure as the Chair of the BSFD Council. Janice wanted to give back to the community. She was the initiator of the Emergency Contact List and a Security Detail for Bonnet residents. Janice laments the last six years of

voting issues has destroyed the community she loves so much. It is her hope this community can work together bringing Bonnet Back to the place we all love aspiring for it to heal. Once it is healed becoming what we call Paradise ! Janice has 2 children and five grandchildren. Janice's favorite dish is meatballs.

Marybeth Murphy -Arriving in Bonnet September 30, 2002. Marybeth knew as soon as she came to Bonnet , it would be her family's forever home. Upon retirement, it was decided to make Bonnet home. Having driven by a house with a For Sale by Owner on it was the beginning of the Murphy's residence.

Marybeth purchased the house on the spot. " What's not to love in Bonnet". Her hobbies include cardplayng, gardening, and going to each of the Bonnet beaches. MB enjoys her breakfast visits at the BSBC for her morning breakfast bagel. Marybeth states that she appreciates that "people look out for each other. It's a comforting feeling knowing that!" Marybeth enjoys watching the children getting off the bus that stops in front of her home. Marybeth has two children - son and daughter. She has two grandchildren - a boy and a girl. Her belief is that Bonnet is the perfect place for her and the entire family. Marybeth's specialty is her Irish bread " it speaks for her".

Lee Listro - Arrived in Bonnet 1947 age of 7 years old. Lee didn't have alot of freedom living on Broad St in Providence. There were not many houses in Bonnet at that time, Lee had her freedoms. Her father built the home she presently resides and the little yellow house behind it. Married in 1963, Lee and Paul moved to Bonnet on their 25th Anniversary. Lee played at Jan's house. Newly retired, Lee had time for cards. A memory Lee shared was about Mrs. Boland. Mrs. Boland was 90 yrs old and held her cards under the table. Marybeth calls her " Our Angel In Heaven". Lee exclaimed that she didn't expect the card playing to last this long.

The Card Ladies have become good friends. "When you're absent they always check on each other. Everyone is welcome! Lee giggling states ' We start talking and forget who dealt the cards, who's turn it was, and the order of who dropped the card for 'May !' All were accepted whether a good card player or not." Lee's love of Bonnet runs long and deep. Her freedom to ride her bike, go to camp, learn to swim at the Little Beach and bowl at the beach club made Lee very happy. Lee's parents never worried about her whereabouts as an adult was always present. Lee was a member of the 'Bonnet Girls' consisting of 12 young ladies. Lee's favorite spot is Little Beach. She goes there year round for relaxation. Lee Phelan Listro's statement about Bonnet Shores. "It's a wonderful place to live!"

Etta Merlino - Arrived in 1952 residing in Bonnet Shores for 72 years. Her husband, John Merlino and Etta's father built the first house. Every summer all came to Bonnet adding on to the house until it was finished. Etta explains the family outgrew the house as her family grew. Born on January 5, 1928, Etta's oldest daughter Marcia was 2 years old when her family came to Bonnet. She states we were " attached to Bonnet". Etta says Bonnet was a safe place to take her children for the summers is now a 40 year resident of the Bonnet Community. Etta shared that there used to be beach baskets available for \$ 62.00/year. Baskets were to put clothes in while at the beach. There were shelves where the baskets were left. Etta states "No stealing, really homey". As President of the Women's Club for 2 years, Etta ran events so people can get together and socialize. She organized the dinner dance at Rosecliff, Christmas parties at the Quonset O' Club with the help of Lee Listro. Etta was a Charter Member of the BSFD Golf Club playing every Monday. Every Sunday Etta gets Holy Communion from the neighbor and

good friend, Judy McGinn. Etta was a card player as well playing in the Monday Mahjong card group and the Thursday 'May!' group. Etta candidly states "Vision problems over the last 2 years made it impossible to continue in the card groups". Etta Merlino's statement about Bonnet Shores " New Bonnet people aren't legitimate Bonnet People."

Kay Schenk - Arrived in Bonnet in 2008 as a full time resident. Prior to that, Kay spent weekends and vacation time in Bonnet. As an original cardlady, Kay started her tenure in 2009. Kay is so thankful that she was asked to be a member of the CARD LADIES." I have sung the praise of being a member of the group, many invited to join , some have been bright enough to join." Kay sorrowfully laments over loss of members and joyfully embraces new ones. " We are all thankful to Janice for starting the group and keeping us going all of these years." Kay's statement about living Bonnet Shores, "Bonnet is paradise ." What's not to like?"

Bonnie Dalton - Started visiting Bonnet in 1980. In 1984 she bought her house on Treasure Road. Bonnie has one daughter and step-children. In the beginning, she rented for 4 years. She just loved the neighborhood with these caring people. The first person Bonnie met was John Caparco. John suggested she buy in Bonnet. Bonnie enjoys walking her dog and going to the beach. As an avid reader, she is a member of the Bonnet Shores Book Club. Yearly, Bonnie plants flowers in the barrels at Kelly Beach as a gift to the community. She enjoys working in her garden and is a 15 year card player. Bonnie's family history in Bonnet is now at a third generation level in her grandson. Bonnie's favorite dish to prepare is shrimp scampi.

More Card Ladies - These card playing ladies have joined-in with this original group. Many of these women are weekly card players. Others show up sporadically with the same enthusiasm of the always present ladies. Some are Bonnet residents, others are not. Olga Catalano, Judy McGinn, Carol Ryan, Nancy Iacobucci, Mary Hebert, Wendy Peters, Mary Peters, Linda Gregoire, Genie Mitchell, Stonie Frame and the not to be forgotten our beloved MaryJane Briggs(deceased) Lolly Grello (deceased) Carolyn Boland(deceased)

The ' Silent Icons ' are truly the fabric of this Bonnet Shores Community. Involved in Bonnet for many, many years contributing to the growth and development of what Bonnet is today These cardladies represent exactly what it means to be a Bonnet person - caring, kind, loving!

My reason for writing this summary is to share the words of these ladies and keep their inspiration and contributions to this community alive forever. It was a sheer joy to sit with each of these 'Silent Icons' listening as each shared their part of this story. Each had a smile on her face , eyes gleaming with happiness, love and pride, so forthcoming to share what was important to each of them. How lucky for me to be able to learn and share the card ladies words. These 'Silent Icons' are truly the definition of what our Bonnet Community is.

A Special Thank You to these wonderful loving women. Each of you is truly appreciated !

Dedicated to my beautiful loving mother Helen Fandetti
"You raised me right"

Joanie Fandetti
October 2024