

Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

Message from the President

If you have not already heard, the date, location and agenda for the JHS 20th anniversary celebration has been changed. Instead of a buffet dinner at the Community of Christ Church hall, all members are invited to attend an Open House in the JHS Museum and Meeting Room at 21 Sawyer Square on Sunday, July 23rd from 1:00 to 5:00 PM.

We will provide plenty of appetizers, sandwiches, refreshments and desserts. There will be a door prize given every half hour when the winning ticket holders can choose from local history books, a framed copy of the historic town tax map, luminaries and note cards crafted by Betty Kelley, matted photos of Jonesport landscapes and seascapes, JHS DVDs, lighthouse T-shirts. A silent slide show *20 Years in 20 Minutes* will run continuously. We hope to see many of you there.

On May 27th of this year Rosalie Carver passed away at the age of 92. She was a charter member of the Jonesport Historical Society, joining the first year it was founded in 2003. She was an Officer on the Board of Directors for many years, serving as Secretary from 2004 – 2009 and as Historian from 2004 – 2015. She always enjoyed ending each monthly public meeting by reading a poem she usually found in the *Moose-A-Bec Messenger*, the high school yearbook, reciting it with a flair that would be expected from a substitute teacher for more than 15 years. We have 17 of her recitals in our archives. Rosalie often volunteered to work the sales and promotion table at fairs and bazaars, and particularly liked riding on the JHS fourth of July float to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the society. She was even one of the guest speakers at two public meetings, one recalling decades-old interesting stories, and another telling the history of the Jonesport Wesleyan Church during its 100th anniversary. But her greatest contribution to JHS was scanning 40,000 pages of genealogist Leonard F. Tiibbetts 78 years of research papers. Rosalie and her friend Maxine Stewart spent 7 months in 2010 on the project, scanning about 1500 pages a week. Then working by herself between 2014 and 2016 Rosalie scanned 107 *Moose-A-Bec Messenger* Yearbooks, a total of 9,000 pages. In recognition of all she had done, she was awarded Honorary Life Membership in 2015. In 2023 she was only one of six surviving Honorary Life Members. See page 4 to see photos of her.

Bill Plaskon, President

Summer 2023

2023 Presentations

6:30 PM at 21 Sawyer Square
subject to change

Jul 13 - *Finding Lost Items from Thomas Kelley's Family*
plus *Native American Campsites*
• Billy Milliken

Jul 28 - 1931 Seth Parker movie
Way Back Home with Bette Davis

Aug 4 - movie *The Wreck of the Portland*

Aug 11 - movie (to be announced)

Aug 24 - *History of Weir Fishing*
• Eric Kelley, Jr. & others

2023 Board of Directors

Officers:

William Plaskon, President
Jean Guptill, Vice President
Charles Alley, V.P. Emeritus
Nancy Sawyer, Treasurer
Ashley Faulkingham, Secretary
Eric Kelley Jr., Historian

Directors:

Gregory Campbell
Barbie Cirone
Aaron Dennis
Leland Faulkingham Jr.
Andrew Hutnik
Betty Kelley

Stories about Harold Jacobson

It's hard to know where to start when it comes to any attempt at telling the story of diver Harold Jacobson. Bill Plaskon referred to him in the President's Message of the Winter 2023 *Newsletter*, mentioning newspaper articles for the archives, including "the strange story of the man with his personal submarine." Responding to that, member Etta Abrahams emailed about having bought the Kelley Point Road house that had been Jacobson's, and about his reputation. Invited to rewrite the email for use in this *Newsletter*, Etta and her husband, Herb Greenberg, included additional info. She noted they "can't really be factual about Harold Jacobson and his yellow submarine" due to the many mysteries and rumors involved.

How much of the gossip could be substantiated? JHS member Linda Harvey provided research and links to numerous newspaper and magazine pieces. These pieces provided interesting context, some of it contradicting the Jonesport gossip. Read on, and see what you think.

Etta Abrahams and her husband, professors at Michigan State, bought the house at what became numbered as 193 Kelley Point Road in the summer of 1978 from a New Hampshire woman. Their real estate agent, George Stehl, answering their question about a big patched rectangle of flooring, told them that earlier owner Harold Jacobson had cut the floor because he was going to teach scuba diving into the cisterns in the cellar.

According to Abrahams, local lore had it that Harold Jacobson was colorful, to say the least; that he would borrow tools then include them in his yard sale, that he had ordered a houseful of windows from a Machias carpenter but neither picked them up—nor paid for them. That he had a little yellow submarine he used to search for a scuttled yacht off Jonesport, the yacht chased by the Coast Guard for carrying drugs—and that he'd seen bodies aboard the sunken vessel. That he'd gone down to look at the wreckage of a crashed ICBM bomber off Jonesport before the government salvaged it, and locals said Harold "knew something."

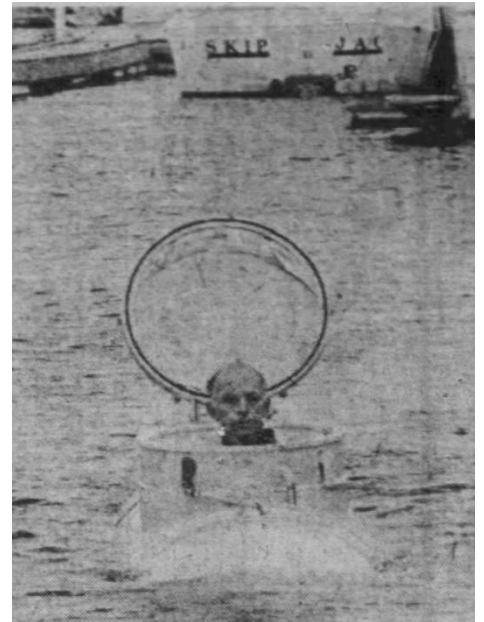
What became of Harold Jacobson? Abrahams says she was told he had "disappeared after telling his girlfriend he was going to IGA for ice cream." When his body was finally found "in the woods hanging from a tree," some said he had committed suicide. "Others said he was murdered." Some thought he'd been killed by a drug cartel. According to Etta Abrahams, "Most people we spoke to back then" said Harold Jacobson had been killed by the Government.

No doubt Jacobson was a colorful character. But what might we learn from a closer look? The following information is from the research of member Linda Harvey, and from *TIME* magazine, *Fishermen's Voice*, *Downeast Coastal Press*, and numerous articles from *Bangor Daily News*.

(Jacobson continued, page 3)



"The big white house on the right, one mile down Kelley Point Road," was summer home beginning in 1978 of Etta Abrahams and her husband, Herb Greenberg, then their year-round home from 2002 to 2020. They added the single-story wing. The two-story part had been Harold Jacobson's home from 1964 to 1969. Supposedly, the big rectangular patch in the floor was because Jacobson had cut a hole so he could teach scuba diving into the cisterns in the cellar.



This AP photo of Harold Jacobson of RI in his one-person 12' mini-sub was taken in Warwick, RI, and appeared in the *Bangor Daily News* of 21 November 1978.

(Jacobson continued)

Harold Jacobson wasn't exactly a Jonesporter. News articles from **1963** have him living in Milbridge and racing stock cars in Cherryfield. JHS member Jean Guptill recalls Mrs. Jacobson as a Jonesport schoolteacher, which may explain why the Jacobsons bought the Kelley Point Road house in **1964**. They sold it in **1969**. In **1971** they were living in Warwick, RI, where Mrs. Jacobson became a junior high teacher.

According to news reports, the 68' British-flagged ketch *Traveler III*, owned by a Saudi and up from Antigua, left Jonesport on 12 June **1978** for New Bedford, MA, and was scuttled by her drug-smuggling crew when approached by the Coast Guard vessel *Yankton*. She went down in 240' of water south of Petit Manan Island. A private salvage effort that year, watched closely by the Drug Enforcement Administration, failed.

That same summer of **1978**, Harold Jacobson opened a submersibles school in Warwick, RI, having bought the teaching business and a 12' one-man mini-sub from its designer-builder, retired Navy sub commander George Kittredge of Warren, ME.

Meanwhile, the 25' two-man sub *Deep Hope II* was built by Hope Industries of PA specifically for helping raise the scuttled ketch. In **1979** company owner Jack Hope brought this sub and his 18' one-man *Deep Hope* to the area. Jack Hope hired Harold Jacobson to oversee this salvage attempt, and to run Hope's two-man submarine. Jacobson stayed with friends in Sullivan. But reportedly he was at the salvage site infrequently, and Jack Hope fired him. A local newsman, perhaps quoting Jacobson himself, showed a picture of the 18' Hope sub on a trailer at the USCG base in Jonesport and reported that it was latest of three owned by Jacobson of Jonesport. In any case, this **1979** salvage attempt also failed.

In **October of 1980** an FB-111A bomber on a training mission out of NH crashed and sank in the waters off Jonesport, killing both airmen aboard. The Navy launched a search and salvage attempt, which had only small successes that autumn. Then the Air Force contracted with Hope Industries, which began to search for wreckage in **December of 1980** using the two-man, 25' *Deep Hope II*, manned by Harold Jacobson and his Sullivan associate Phil Buteau. But long before a bomber missile was recovered the following summer, Harold Jacobson had vanished.

On **26 May 1981**, Harold Jacobson disappeared from where he was staying with friends Charlene and Phil Buteau in Sullivan. Charlene went to a grocery store that afternoon and came home to find him missing. In **August 1981**, three months after Jacobson's disappearance, a missile with dummy warhead was recovered from the crash site, brought in to USCG Jonesport, and taken away on a flatbed by the Air Force.

It was in August of **1985** that Jacobson's body was found in a cedar swamp not a mile from the Buteau home in Sullivan, and identified by dental records. He had been known to suffer "severe headaches" from a stockcar crash in Cherryfield years before that had fractured his skull. His death was ruled a suicide.

Harold Jacobson led a colorful life. But it may be useful to consider the timeline and to weed out the gossip from the reality—even if it doesn't really explain the patched floor in the house on Kelley Point Road.

—SMEJ



The two-man, 25' long *Deep Hope II* built by Hope Industries of PA in 1979 specifically for owner Jack Hope's salvage of the scuttled ketch *Traveler III*. Photo by Hope Industries (PA), published June 2010 in *Fishermen's Voice*.

Lost: The Location of Emery Farnsworth's Store

by Sharon Josephson

Years ago, long before I knew Jonesport at all, my late 2nd cousin Leonard Tibbetts, genealogist and Jonesport historian, told me that on special family occasions in his youth he was sent to Emery Farnsworth's store to get Turner Centre ice cream. It turns out he told the same story when Donnie Woodward and Bill Plaskon recorded an interview with him shortly before his death in 2008, and Donnie commented that it was a long way from the West Jonesport home to Emery Farnsworth's store. Leonard replied that he could get there quite fast on his bike—and he may have meant his Indian motorcycle.

Donnie evidently had known the location of Emery Farnsworth's store. JHS member Mark Edwards is researching Farnsworth family history, but as yet has no firm info on the store.

Do you know where it was?



Rosalie Carver: Interviewed 3/11/2004



Rosalie and Arlene Hutnik at the 1st Sawyer Building Open House



Rosalie reciting a poem at a 2006 Public Meeting



Don Woodward, Rosalie Carver, Pam Smith, Gloria Feeney, Harry Fish



Rosalie celebrating her 80th birthday



Barb Plaskon, Rosalie and Arlene Hutnik at a JHS promotion table

**Membership Form (Q)
2023**

Please print all information clearly. Use a separate form for each person. Membership is 5.00 per year per person.

Name _____

Maiden Name (optional) _____ **Phone (required for ID)** _____

Mail Address _____

Town _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

E-Mail _____ **Contact me about volunteering**

\$ 5.00 **2023 Membership**

\$ _____ **2024 Membership (\$5.00)**

\$ _____ **2025 Membership (\$5.00)**

\$ _____ **Tax Deductible Donation**

\$ _____ **Total Amount**

Make check payable to *Jonesport Historical Society*

**Mail to: Jonesport Historical Society
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Jonesport, ME 04649**

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