



What's New at CTC?

A Huge Thank You!

Merry
Christmas

ANNUAL PARKING PERMITS

We will be sending out the 2018 stickers in mid-December. Please remember to affix your sticker to your car in early January.

SNOW REMOVAL

John Wilkinson, CTC bus driver, is offering personal snow removal services at the Route One Lot. If you would like to have your vehicle cleaned off after a storm, John can help! If you are interested, call John at 671-8305 for more information about his services.

Free Boat Days

12/9 and 12/16

**December
Birthdays
Bo Ramsey - 12/15**
Have a good one!

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In an era of “it’s all about me,” how heartening to discover that people still jump to help when help is really needed. That’s what this story is about. It began unfolding on November 15, around 6:30 p.m.

The Chebeague Transportation Company (CTC) had just returned from its regular 15-minute run to Cousins Island. Two weeks earlier, CTC’s ferry, the *Islander*, had been hauled out for inspection and routine maintenance, expected to require about a month. In the meantime, CTC was using the *Merrymeeting*, on loan from the Maine Maritime Museum as its backup vessel to transport residents, school students, workers and the occasional emergency rescue. This backup arrangement was known around CTC as “Plan B,” and it had worked smoothly in the past.

That night, the CTC crew discovered problems with the *Merrymeeting*’s port engine. Coast Guard regulations prohibit passenger vessels from operating if propulsion is lost, and the *Merrymeeting* was taken out of service. Her captain, David Etnier, showed up soon after to offer CTC whatever assistance he could provide. With the *Islander* and the *Merrymeeting* both out of commission, “Plan C” – a backup plan that had never been tested – suddenly had to be instituted. Would it work? Normal life on the island depended on it.

Five years ago, CTC signed an agreement with Casco Bay Lines to provide backup service in an emergency. The call went out; CTC had no boat. By 9 that evening, Nick Mavodones, the Casco Bay Lines’ operations manager, was rounding up a crew and readying the *Bay Mist* to head to Chebeague to take over CTC’s regular schedule. By 6:30 the next morning, the big *Bay Mist* towered over Chebeague’s Stone Wharf, ready to haul commuters, school children, and the regular flow of passengers and freight.

For the next three days, Casco Bay Lines crews staffed CTC’s 11 daily round trips, landing and loading the *Bay Mist* on floats, not wharves as they were accustomed to. In all, five Casco Bay crews were deployed, and islanders greeted the new faces with enthusiasm and welcome. Between runs, CTC employees offered the crews the use of their island cars to explore Chebeague. The mother of a CTC captain showed up each evening with dinner for the hungry crew.

In the meantime, a decision had to be made: Repair the *Merrymeeting* or race to complete essential maintenance on the *Islander*, now sitting at the Royal River Boatyard in Yarmouth. The *Islander* got the nod, but the repair and maintenance list was nowhere close to completion. And a Coast Guard inspection of major repairs then had to be conducted. With boatyard owner Alan Dugas’ blessing, relaunching the *Islander* became priority number one. Mechanic Anthony Norton and three boatyard employees deferred work on other boats and crawled all over the *Islander*, performing mechanical and electrical repairs until 8 p.m. two nights in a row. A week and a half of work was completed in two days.

CTC captain Matt Ridgway moved to the boatyard; captains Jeremy Ames and Amanda Campbell, scheduled for days off, joined the team, pitching in to help maintenance director Mary Todd and her helpers Alisha Jones and Colleen Franke, complete exterior painting and other tasks. Everyone had one goal: Get the *Islander* back in service on Saturday.

But what about the Coast Guard inspection? Throughout the service interruption, Ridgway had kept the Coast Guard informed. Now he had a question: Could the inspection be performed on a Saturday morning? That and a little wet paint in the *Islander*’s main cabin, was all that was standing in the way of a return to service. Happily, the answer was yes. Inspector Mark Morrisey arrived, the *Islander* passed, and Ridgway steered the ferry down the Royal River toward home.

On Chebeague, the *Islander*’s return was greeted enthusiastically. CTC is about to build a replacement for the 32-year-old *Islander*, which will then become the backup vessel. That will eliminate the need for mutual assistance agreements with Maine Maritime and Casco Bay Lines. But it won’t erase the memories of the week that CTC needed friends – and discovered it has lots of them.

Author Susan Q. Stranahan of Chebeague Island is a journalist and author, and a member of the CTC Board.