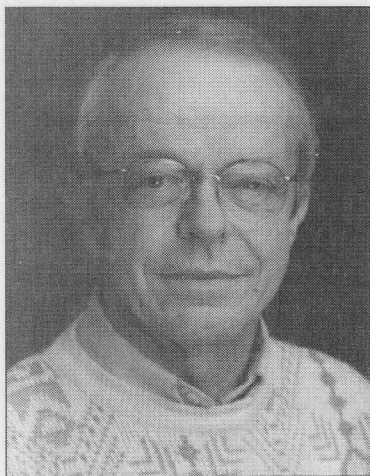


Bonnet Shores

In memory of a friend

Editor's note: Anita J. Langer, chairwoman of the Bonnet Shores Fire District, wrote this column as a tribute to the late Marcel Fortin, who passed away Sunday. Mr. Fortin was the author of the Bonnet Shores column from its inception and also was active in the Bonnet Shores Fire District. For more about Mr. Fortin, see his obituary on page 10-A and an editorial on page 12-A.



Marcel Fortin

I write this column today to pay tribute to a wonderful friend, a great neighbor and a soft-spoken gentleman who will be sadly missed by all of the Bonnet Shores community.

He was a man who had encountered significant medical setbacks this past year; however, he fought harder each time life handed him another crushing jolt. He could often be seen riding his handicapped scooter or on better days walking his dogs with his wife, Carol, beside him. He loved to walk along the cliffs on Col. John Gardner Road taking in the lovely ocean views through the ever-changing seasons of the year. Friends and neighbors would stop to exchange greetings, talk about the latest district event or simply share a moment.

Marcel Fortin was a strong presence in the Bonnet Shores community since he and his wife, Carol, made the transition from summer residents to "year-rounders." He headed the Historical Committee, served as chairman of the Bonnet Shores Land Trust and most recently was our newly elected Bonnet treasurer.

As always, he took his positions seriously and thoroughly immersed himself in the business at hand. His quiet manner belied his strong character and convictions. His enthusiasm and positive manner were contagious on any committee, often resulting in smiles all around. His kind and caring personality was mirrored in his smile – something we will always remember about him.

On behalf of the Bonnet Shores community, I would like to extend our sincere condolences to his wife and family. I also would like to thank you for sharing Marcel with us at all those countless committee meetings. And thank you, Marcel, for all you did for us and for being such a truly wonderful friend and Bonnet neighbor.

You always said that Bonnet Shores was in your heart. Little did you know that you will always be in the heart of Bonnet. Goodbye, Marcel – we will truly miss you!

A lasting contribution

We were deeply saddened this week to learn of the sudden death of our Bonnet Shores columnist, Marcel Fortin. As friend, columnist and member of the Independent family, Mr. Fortin was a warm and dedicated man who enriched all of us who knew him.

As a relatively new full-time resident of Bonnet Shores, Mr. Fortin quickly became involved in the governance of the area through the Bonnet Shores Fire District and the Bonnet Shores Land Trust. He was interested in preserving the village's unique history as much as he was concerned about planning for its uncertain future. A regular fixture as he walked through the neighborhood, he enjoyed getting out and about, visiting with neighbors and savoring the natural beauty of the coastline.

Perhaps his last column, in the March 11 edition, best expressed his philosophy. Urg-

ing residents to fill out a comprehensive plan survey distributed by the fire district's Long-Range Planning Committee, he extolled Bonnet Shore's virtues while warning of its fragility. "It is time we focus on our unique characteristics and act to preserve them," he wrote. "It is time to make things happen rather than watch them happen."

That was his philosophy: Don't complain; get involved. He lived that philosophy every day, and in so doing made his neighborhood a better place to live.

From our perspective, he also brought much to these pages. He had his finger on the pulse of life in Bonnet Shores, and his columns were full of important news for its residents. He also had a love for the area that plainly came through in his columns, which were written with style and clarity. He will be greatly missed.