

Islander's novel tells tale of bitter sailor

BY TIM RIEL

A Narragansett Avenue woman is receiving rave reviews for her novel that elicits an intimate feel for the ocean that only a distinguished seafarer could capture.

Carol Newman Cronin, who sailed at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, is the author of "Ferry to Cooperation Island," a story of redemption that follows a bitter boat captain from loner to neighbor. The book, published in 2020 by She Writes Press, is available at Fuller Gallery and Conanicut Marine.

"A word of caution," said Gary Jobson, president of the National Sailing Hall of Fame, "once you start reading, you won't stop until the book ends."

Set on a fictional island between Newport and Point Judith, close to where the Brenton Tower once stood, the story begins when James Malloy is fired as captain of a ferryboat, and "replaced by a girl!"

With his newfound freedom, which involves bumming around the beach instead of sailing to the ritzy docks of Newport, Malloy discovers a private golf course staked out across wilderness sacred to his dying friend, a Narragansett Indian. In order to stop the development, Malloy must cast aside his nature to work alone by partnering with townsfolk, including the woman who took his job.

"A vivid story about the struggle of preservation versus development, grace against greed," said author Doug Logan. "Anyone who visits a New England island should have a copy of this." Like her first three novels, Cronin said "Ferry to Cooperation Island" garnered inspiration from her hometown. Her first book, "Oliver's Surprise," was set in West Ferry in 1938 before the bridges.

"I love the idea of islanders depending on boats to reach the rest of the world, and I wanted to capture that but in a more modern setting," she said. "That was part of what led me to create my own imaginary island, one



Carol Newman Cronin at East Ferry with a copy of her newest novel, "Ferry to Cooperation Island." A ferryboat, which plays a major part in the book, passes behind the former Olympic sailor.

PHOTO BY PAUL CRONIN

that's as beautiful as Jamestown, but more remote."

After Cronin began writing the first scenes for "Ferry to Cooperation Island" in 2012, she took a hiatus in 2013 and 2014 because to focus on her career. She decided to revisit her imaginary island in 2015 when she was laid off.

Cronin thought the book was finished in August 2017, but instead of publishing it herself, she searched for a company, which led to "two big rewrites" before signing with an agent. Four months later, She Writes Press was contracted to publish the book.

"When I recorded the audiobook last winter, I found two missing words," she said. "Fortunately, we were able to make all those changes before the book went to print this spring, and I'm really proud of the final result."

Cronin, who quipped that she does content marketing and writes magazine articles to "support her fiction habit," called "Ferry to Cooperation Island" her first real adult novel.

"It has several subplots, a much deeper theme and six point-of-view characters," she said.

It does, however, have parallel themes to her first three novels. "They share a water view, boat-savvy characters and a happy ending."

With her books on shelves, and available online through Amazon, Cronin is now focused on promoting her novel. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, her promotional event has been transformed into a virtual tour, including the launch party that was recorded and posted on her website. She also is encouraging book clubs to read the novel and contact her for a discussion.

"I'd love to talk with readers directly."

For her next project, Cronin plans to reintroduce Cooperation Island. A fortunate thing about writers, she said, is that they are still able to create and share their work during a pandemic.

"I'm working hard on a sequel to 'Ferry' that includes some new characters and starts up right where that book ends," she said.

Recent graduates earn scholarships

Two nonprofit organizations in Jamestown have awarded scholarships to former students of North Kingstown High School who graduated with the class of 2020.



SIMMONS



WAGNER

The Rotary Club has awarded its \$1,000 scholarship to Theo Simmons. The award is given annually to the Jamestown senior who graduates at the top of the class that year. Because the pandemic ruled out a traditional ceremony, the scholarship was presented during a virtual meeting with Simmons and Rotarians. Simmons plans to attend Brown University.

"We congratulate Theo on his many accomplishments and wish him the very best," said Ross Harris, the club's president. "We hope this scholarship will help Theo meet the challenges of these times."

The second scholarship was awarded to Caleb Wagner by the Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association. Dubbed the W. Craig Armington Scholarship, the \$1,000 grant will benefit Wagner during his freshman year at Bard College. A fan of painting, art history, film and architecture, he played basketball, soccer and track and field as a Skipper.

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