

SODUS POINT'S colorful ferry boatman, Auxiliary Coast Guardsman and former Fire Chief for 14 years, George Helfer, is known to hundreds of cottagers and vacationers as a practical joker and a teller of tall stories.

However, there's one tale which he delights in telling about a joke which he played, which is really a true story. It seems that one Summer he had a passenger who often crossed between the mainland and one of the islands via the Helfer ferry boat. Each time she was accustomed to knit during the trip.

One day Captain Helfer started asking questions about her knitting and she replied laughingly that she bet she could run the boat better than he could knit. Whereupon Helfer turned the tiller over to the woman and proceeded to take the knitting from her hands. He sat down in the stern of the boat and knitted steadily all the rest of the way across the bay!

So delighted was the woman passenger with the clever way the tables had been turned on her, that she requested the Captain of the ferry boat to repeat the same performance on the following weekend, when she expected several guests, whom she planned to meet and take across on the ferry.

When the appointed day arrived and the guests came aboard, as soon as the boat was squared away on its course across the Bay, the obliging Captain began needling the woman about her knitting. She threw out the challenge about being able to handle the boat better than he could handle the knitting and the Captain put on his knitting act all the rest of the way across the bay, much to the astonished amusement of the guests.

Since then he has taken a bit of ribbing about his knitting, but he stoutly maintains that he can knit as efficiently as he can handle the ferry boat.