

# Wooden Boats Donated to the Museum

By KAREN SUDOL

**T**wo area fishermen are donating their boats to the Barnegat Bay Decoy and Baymen's Museum because they want the boats to be kept in ship shape condition and because they play a significant part of the area's history.

*The Gail* was originally built 10 or 15 years ago by a well known bayman, the late Owen Ridgeway. Although it was built fairly recently, it still holds a lot of history because it is typical of those he built back in the 1960's, said Thomas Gormley, president of the Baymen's Museum. "The 26-foot boat was designed for traveling through shallow bays because it was primarily used for clamming," said Gormley.

*The Gail* was donated in April by its last owner, Rich Seigel because he didn't want it to be destroyed. He knew the museum would treat it with care. "We

*The Gail and The Melody will be docked in the future Seaport area and provide boating excursions to other points of interest, such as Long Beach Island or Atlantic City.*

explained to him that we'd like to preserve it for future generations to see, and he decided to donate it to us," said Gormley.

*The Melody II*, a 38-foot charter fishing boat, is expected to be donated to the museum in December or January. *The Melody II* was built in 1958 by Peter Cranmer along the banks of Tuckerton and is a prime example of the type of boat that provided a way of life for area charter fishermen. "It's also unique in that it is one of the last wooden charter boats to exist on the coast," Gormley noted.

Capt. Joel Mick of Port Republic purchased the boat from a previous owner in 1980 and for years has used *The Melody II* for his charter fishing business out of Oyster Creek.

However, he is building a new boat for his business and must part with *The Melody II*. Mick said he considered selling the boat, but he was afraid no one would take care of it the way he has done for the last 36 years. "Most people just wouldn't take the time to care for this boat. That would just tear me up . . . that's why I decided to donate it," he said. "At least I know that it will continue to be taken care of," Mick added. According to Gormley, both boats will be maintained very well because the museum wants to show the public how the boats relate to the history of the bay.

Most people don't know anything about the baymen who made their living here. These boats will help shed some light on what they did, Gormley said. As part of the process of learning, the public will be able to tour and ride on the two boats. *The Gail* and *The Melody II* will be docked in the future Seaport area and provide boating excursions to other points of interest, such as Long Beach Island or Atlantic City. "If you want to learn about fishing, there will be fishing trips. If you want to learn about the wetlands, we'll tour the wetlands," Gormley explained.

Gormley would like to believe that the public will be able to tour and go on excursions on the boats in about two more years.



*The Gail* was designed as a clamming boat, able to go into shallow waters.



*The Melody II* is an example of the type of boat used by charter fishermen.