

# Tiny Sailing Ship Carries Doctor On Many Adventures

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. (CP)—The Icebird, a tiny sailing ship that since 1952 has carried 29-year-old Dr. Joseph L. Cunningham, her skipper, cook and crew, on storybook meanderings around the Atlantic.

She's a trim 26-footer, with a five ton displacement. She'll roll a little way with gentle seas, but not much farther with angry ones. Her black hull juts almost vertically about three feet out of water, and her mast towers 30 feet into the air. She's as snug and compact inside as out.

The Icebird slipped quietly into port a week ago, but didn't attract much attention until her presence was broadcast over a radio station during the weekend. Since then Dr. Cunningham's mentality has been debated along the waterfront.

**UNDER QUESTION**

"Man would be a fool to take anything the size of that outside the harbor," a grizzled old timer declared.

"He's got good guts, that's what he's got," replied a big, snaggle-toothed fisherman in a flannel shirt and shapeless brown hat. "I'd sooner cross the ocean in a dory."

But Dr. Cunningham, an amiable bespectacled adventurer with a ruddy face and curly hair, appears quite sane.

He says she's a good little ship for crossing the Atlantic.

He didn't see anything out of the ordinary in undertaking the 1,080 mile voyage to Bermuda alone. He said in an interview Monday it would probably take two to four weeks. It depends entirely on the weather. He plans to leave Thursday and will make no stops en route.

**LONG TOUR**

He had the Icebird built in southern England in 1952, and that fall left Northern Ireland to cross the ocean. He sailed her via Madiera, the Barbados, the West Indies, Bermuda, Newport, R.I., and Halifax to Newfoundland. He wintered among the Caribbean isles and arrived here in the spring of 1953.

Since then he's spent time pushing the Icebird's bow into the crannies of the Newfoundland coastline, but also served 18 months as a doctor at the radar post on Resolute island, between northern Labrador and Baffin island.

Dr. Cunningham was born in Northern Ireland, received his medical degree in Belfast in 1938, served six years with the Royal Navy in destroyers on the North Atlantic convoy run to Britain and northern Russia, and finally made his way to Newfoundland. He is now a naturalized Canadian.

He was a doctor at the hospital in Hermitage for two years before he got the Icebird.

Dr. Cunningham says the worst weather he encountered in the Icebird was when he was sailing from St. John's to Clarendville Nfld., where the vessel was fitted with a seven horse power diesel auxiliary engine for the first time this spring.

**RIDES ON SWELLS**

There were gusts up to 73 miles an hour "but I was able to keep her under sail," he said. With a small 60 square foot jib she rode to the top of each swell and only the top two feet of the crest broke over her.

"She rides the waves like a seagull," he says, "and sails herself nine tenths of the time."

Dr. Cunningham is free to read, sleep or cook in his booklined cabin. "The wind shifts faster than the seas do, and the change of motion over the waves wakes me up."

Navigation is very simple he says, "at school I was very hot on mathematics." He said as long as he could make occasional sightings there was little difficulty navigating a ship moving at about five knots. The best Icebird had done was seven knots.

**MAY RETURN**

This winter he may sail on from Bermuda to take a job in the West Indies, or he may return to Canada to a job on the mid-Canada radar line.

"I love the sea," he says, "and I love medicine. I keep trying to find a job that combines them."

He stays in Newfoundland when he isn't wandering.

"I'm not married. Couldn't sail around this way if I was."

How did he name his ship the Icebird? "It is the smallest seabird wintering in the North Atlantic. They ride out the storms. I thought it was quite fitting."

**MOTHER'S AUXILIARY**

The regular monthly meeting of the Mother's Auxiliary of the 1st Charlottetown troop was held on September 20th at the Holy Name Hall.

The president, Mrs. George Chandler opened the meeting with prayer followed by roll-call. The secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting. The president then called on the nominating committee to bring in their new slate of officers for the coming year. The following being elected: president, Mrs. Alan MacKinnon; vice-president, Mrs. Frank Saunders; secretary, Mrs. Walter Affleck; treasurer, Mrs. Gerald Mitchell.

Mrs. Chandler then handed the meeting over to the newly appointed president Mrs. Alan MacKinnon. It was moved and seconded that the finance committee would in future be called the Ways and Means committee. It was moved and seconded that a penny auction be held at the Holy Name Hall on October 11th at 8.30 p.m. Material for neckerchiefs for Scouts and Cubs were purchased by the sewing committee.

After further discussion pertaining to fall activities the meeting was adjourned. Lunch was served by Mrs. George Chandler, Mrs. Gerald Mitchell and Mrs. Malcolm MacDonald.

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**WINS MUSIC AWARD**

HELSINKI, Finland (AP)—German-American composer Paul Hindemith has collected one of the music world's biggest awards, the Jean Sibelius prize. It amounts to 7,500,000 finmarks (about \$32,500). Hindemith, now 59, went to the United States from his native Germany after the Nazis condemned his music as un-German.

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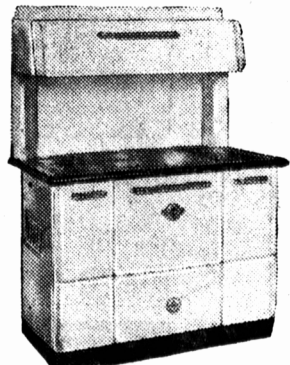


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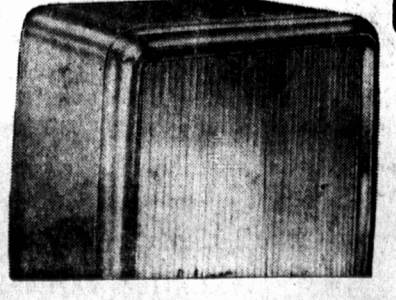
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