

**ON DECK:**

> VIRTUAL <  
**WOODEN & BOAT**  
**FESTIVAL**  
SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 2020

- Shawn Miles, Keeping the Port Afloat
- Looking Back: 43 Years of Wooden Boat Festivals

# WORKING WATERFRONT

Looking Back  
**WOODEN**  
**BOAT FESTIVAL**

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AUGUST 26, 2020 PORT TOWNSEND & JEFFERSON COUNTY LEADER  
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# A fleet of fun: Virtual Wooden Boat Festival boasts a myriad of online offerings

**Luciano Marano**

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The first Virtual Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival is chock-full of maritime merriment of every stripe, including demos, tours, interviews and documentaries — many, many hours of boat and adventuring footage, including fascinating stories from the global wooden boat community.

There will be a live master class and eight featured videos on the “Main Stage” with live Q&A sessions afterward. Also, there will be nine other stages that mirror what fans might experience at the traditional festival in person, with fresh, exclusive, on-demand video content never seen before.

Would-be attendees just need a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and internet access for streaming.

Buying tickets is likewise easy, with three distinct levels of access (only one ticket per IP address is necessary).

The “Festival + R2AK Combo Pass” (\$30) grants access to all the festival content and the Race to Alaska movie. A \$20 “Festival Pass” grants access to all festival content except the R2AK doc. And, finally, a special \$15 “R2AK Pass” is available for those who only want to see the spotlight documentary.

Proceeds support the programs and events of the Northwest Maritime Center and Wooden Boat Foundation, whose mission is to engage and educate people of all generations in



traditional and contemporary maritime life, in a spirit of adventure and discovery.

Everything goes “live” Saturday, Sept. 12.

Visit [www.virtualwbf.org](http://www.virtualwbf.org) to learn more, see a complete list of offerings, and purchase tickets.

Access to festival content expires Monday, Oct. 12, but all live, interactive elements take place on the day of the festival. However, the Race to Alaska movie specifically is only available from 7 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12 to 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 13. It will be followed by a live Q&A with the filmmakers.

Read on to discover some of this year’s most notable offerings.

## FILMS WITH LIVE Q&A SESSIONS

“The Race to Alaska – The Movie”

Be among the first to see the feature documentary that immerses you in the engineless boat race up the rugged coastline between Washington and Alaska. It’s a film about the ultimate unscripted personal adventure; the diametric opposite of being

self-quarantined at home.

“The Viking Ship Draken”

A viking ship captain, a graphic artist, and a naval architect reflect on their death-defying adventure aboard the Draken Harald Hårfagre, the largest viking ship in modern history. The Draken reveals truths about building and sailing that were ahead of their time and maybe ahead of ours as well.

“Ceiba: Building a Sailing Cargo Ship in the Jungles of Costa Rica”

Eco-minded about the high cost of traditional shipping, SailCargo, Inc. is building a vessel to carry trade under sail in the jungles of Costa Rica.

“Hitchhiker’s Guide to Wooden Boats”

Take an intimate look inside the world of DIY boating and join Ryan Hashagen and Margot St-Finch on their journey sailing the Willamette River in the USS HAAA, a dory salvaged from near total destruction. Rebuilt with love and reclaimed wood from an old garden bed, the HAAA will prove that even a small boat can lead to big adventure.

“John Steinbeck & the Western Flyer”

It’s been 80 years since John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts took the Western Flyer on their excursion to the Gulf of California. Since then, the boat sank 3 1/2 times before being rescued by the current owner, who created the Western Flyer Foundation to restore the boat to its 1940s glory.

“She Tells Sea Tales”

In this inspiring annual event, hear from women mariners sharing their heartfelt and funny sea stories. This year features Rachael Slattery, Bonnie Obremski, Nancy Erley, Nahja Chimenti, and Kelley Watson as host.

**WHEN: SEPT. 12**

**WHERE: ZOOM**

**TICKETS: [www.virtualwbf.org/purchasetickets](http://www.virtualwbf.org/purchasetickets)**

**TICKETS RANGE FROM \$15 TO \$30.**

**THE RACE TO ALASKA MOVIE IS AVAILABLE FROM 7 P.M. SATURDAY, SEPT. 12 (FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER WITH THE FILMMAKERS) AND WITH VIEWINGS AVAILABLE UNTIL MIDNIGHT SEPT. 13.**

**THE VIRTUAL FESTIVAL ENDS SUNDAY, OCT. 12.**

Continued on page 5

# > VIRTUAL < WOODEN & BOAT FESTIVAL

What did we say when COVID-19  
canceled the 44th Port Townsend  
Wooden Boat Festival?

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- Full-length Race to Alaska documentary
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  - Ask a shipwright
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Brought to you by the same folks who have been bringing you the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival for 44 years



# Meet the mechanic keeping the Port afloat

**Nick Twietmeyer**

ntwietmeyer@ptleader.com

If you've visited the Port of Port Townsend's Boat Haven Marina and Yard in the last 21 years, you've probably come across the work of Shawn Wiles, although you may not have noticed it.

And that's kinda the idea.

As the Port's lead mechanic, Wiles is responsible for all the Port's rolling stock, from lawnmowers to heavy equipment as well as anything electrical, water pump systems and much more of the necessary infrastructure to keep things running smoothly.

"It keeps you pretty busy," Wiles said.

The mechanic paused for a just a moment before adding, "It's a lot."

Stormwater systems, sewers, water, dock power, yard power, heating systems and boilers are just a handful of things the mechanic must keep an eye on.

"All that stuff, you got to keep tabs on it," he said. "Every day you just don't know; don't make any plans."

Wiles said his previous work as a Navy radar technician and an electronics technician for Thermionics Northwest building scientific vacuum chamber equipment primed him for electrical work at the Port.

"That was more cerebral and this is more Neanderthal," Wiles said, comparing his time at Thermionics to the Port of Port Townsend. "It helps having that background for the electrical work we do. Not only do you know how to fix it, but you also know why and how it works."

Arguably, Wiles' most widely noticed impact at the Port of Port Townsend is right in the yard at Boat Haven: ensuring that the Port's 45-foot-tall travel lift keeps running



Shawn Wiles, the Port's lead mechanic is in charge of keeping the massive 300 metric ton lift in working order. *Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer*

on its tight schedule of haul-outs for the vessels that come from near and far to undergo routine maintenance, repairs and retrofitting in the yard.

Touting a maximum lifting capacity of 300 metric tons (661,387 pounds) the largest of the Port's lifts must undergo a constant schedule of maintenance in order to keep up with the demands of the Port's patronage.

"It's a lot of work, but everything is done on an hourly or monthly basis," he explained. "There's gear box oil changes at certain intervals, fuel filters, air filters, every other month we grease the machine, check all the shivs, the cables, electrical connections."

When asked if he has ever struggled with a fear of heights while servicing the nearly five-story tall lift, Wiles didn't hesitate.

"No, I enjoy heights actually," he said. "The logic behind it is I could fall from 50 feet and crush my head, or I could fall



A big draw for visitors to Port Townsend's Boat Haven is the 300 ton metric lift. *Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer*

from 10 feet and still crush my head, so really, it's irrelevant."

If the heavy use of the Port's equipment and infrastructure weren't enough, the mechanic likened the very nature of the waterfront to a constant salt spray corrosion test — another element of his ongoing upkeep checklist.

In the days ahead, Wiles also said he plans to jack up the lift so he and crew could replace four of the lift's massive, 1,500-pound tires. With a price tag of about \$12,000 apiece, and a constant demand for boats coming in to use the lift, Wiles said even changing a tire isn't as simple as well ... changing a tire.

"Everything on the 300-ton is really time sensitive," he said. "There's people that have fishing boats that have to go up to Alaska and you've always got to take that into consideration. Believe me, it's very stressful."

Despite the high demands of the job, Wiles and his crew of seven maintenance staff still manage to keep things moving down at the port. Wiles says, he is in the process of training an apprentice who will replace him when the time comes for him to move on. The lead mechanic is careful to note that he won't be retiring, just "moving on to something else."

Summing up his work with the Port of Port Townsend, Wiles acknowledged that there's always room for improvements to be made, but regarded his years spent at the Port of Port Townsend — fixing things that break and maintaining others in the hope that they won't break too soon — as time well spent and with a good employer.

"There's a lot that goes on behind the curtain down here," Wiles said. "The Port of Port Townsend is a good place to work, it provides a good service to the community."

**Continued from page 3**

## LIVE INTERACTIVE CLASS

"Masterclass with NW School of Wooden Boatbuilding"

Take your understanding of boatbuilding to the next level with a masterclass by Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding Chief Instructor Sean Koomen.

## OTHER FEATURES

"The Art of Rope Making"

Learn about rope making and forging with Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader

the Hardanger Maritime Centre in Norway, one of the biggest conglomerations of experts on the restoration of boats and vessels in the Nordic countries.

"Boatbuilding as a Bridge Between Cultures: Croatia & Bosnia"

James Bender of the Adriatic Maritime Institute tells the amazing story of Peace River Odyssey — using traditional boat building with youth to bridge cultural and religious barriers of warring countries.

"Behind the Scenes Boat Shop Tour with

Sam Devlin"

See the shop where the Devlin boats are built — you won't get this chance often! Plus incredible tours of other boat shops.

"Behind the Scenes with Port Townsend Foundry"

The Langley family has owned and operated the PT Foundry since 1983. Now, Pete Langley takes audiences through his shop and shares some of the colorful history and vast knowledge of local boatbuilding.

Also on tap this year are numerous boat

tours from around the globe, a fun look at the boats being built in the local community during the pandemic and quarantine, and a boatbuilder panel discussion featuring John Welsford, Clint Chase, Paul Gartside, and Michael Storer.

Presentations will be given by festival favorites Lin Pardey, Nigel Calder, and Matt Rutherford.

Contact [festival@woodenboat.org](mailto:festival@woodenboat.org) with questions or search "Wooden Boat Foundation" on Facebook.

# David King, Port Townsend's boat-building mayor

Brennan LaBrie

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Photos courtesy David King

It was the marine trades that brought David King to Port Townsend more than 40 years ago, and it's what has kept him here ever since. Even as he worked his way up in the local trades, helping build up the Port of Port Townsend to what it is today before going on to serve as a city councilmember and mayor, his focus and heart was always on Port Townsend's working waterfront.

King, who grew up in a small town outside of Washington, D.C., never envisioned himself settling down in the Northwest, or, for that matter, settling down at all.

He had attended military school in his youth, which helped convert him from a poor student to a strong one — strong enough to be accepted into Harvard University.

At Harvard he studied government, inspired by his father who worked in government. By the time he graduated in 1971, he knew what his next move was going to be.

"I wanted to build a boat and sail away," he said. "I really had no idea how inconvenient or costly building a boat was, or how. I was completely naive."

He found work in boatyards in Virginia and Maine, where he worked on boats and built a few of his own. He worked in a "have tools, will travel" fashion for years, always looking for the next adventure. Working in the marine trades, King found, was a "passport to living in cool places," especially along the East Coast.

It was during a brief stint in the Bay Area in the mid-1970s, however, that he heard about the Wooden Boat Festival in Port Townsend, a town he'd soon find himself settling down in. King was helping his sister build a house there when he met his wife Alice. The two longed for a quieter, less urban environment, and were attracted to the Pacific Northwest.

King drove back to Virginia to get some belongings, hitched a boat to his truck and drove back to the West Coast, all in one shot.

King and Alice pulled into town on the first day of the second annual festival, and were immediately impressed by the large crowds swarming the floating docks of such an otherwise sleepy town.

"There were so many people on the floats that the water was submerging," he said.



David King has spent his life building boats, from small wooden boats to mega yachts. He built the Alice, pictured above, 38 years ago, naming the craft after his wife.

Their first weekend in Port Townsend had its hiccups; their food and beverage cooler was stolen from their Fort Townsend State Park campsite, and their truck towed from its parking spot near Point Hudson. Despite those incidents, the couple knew they had found their new home.

Shortly thereafter, King was hired by Cecil Lange and Son, one of the major players in the Port Townsend marine trades scene at the time, King said. He and Alice bought a home and brought a son, Jamie, into the world a few years later.

After leaving that firm, King went to work freelance in the Port Townsend Boat Haven, which at a time looked much different than the Boat Haven of today.

He founded Port Townsend Yacht Builders, then went on to join Admiral Marine Works as a project manager, working his way up to general manager over time. While there, he helped build the largest boat ever built in Port Townsend — the 161-foot mega-yacht Evviva, which was also the largest foam-core fiberglass yacht ever built when it launched in 1993.

It was during this time that the Port began growing, both out and up. King played a key role in the construction of the three biggest buildings in the Port — all built for Admiral, which grew from 20 to 160 employees during his tenure. When Admiral moved to Port Angeles, he decided to stay in Port Townsend, and started a consulting business.

Admiral Marine went under shortly after their move to Port Angeles, and five of their employees returned to their old space at the Port Townsend Boat Haven, starting Townsend Bay



King is pictured here making his way to the rowing race at one of the first Wooden Boat Festivals. He was running late to the race, he said.

Marine with King in 1999. As chief financial officer, King helped steer the company through the Great Recession, a time when they became a refuge for the many workers being laid off across the port, at one point employing around 80 employees.

"We almost always had a boat under construction," King said, adding that this was not always the case for the businesses in the boatyard.

One contract in particular, a 129-foot sport fishing boat, kept the company afloat.

However, when that boat was finished, their situation resembled that of the other businesses in the boat yard.

"When we were done with that, we had no work," he said. "We decided it was time to do other things."

The men looked to sell the business, but found it harder than they had anticipated.

By this time, King had become heavily involved in local politics. After "disappearing" into his work for 10 years at Admiral Marine, he decided he wanted to become more active in the port and steering it into the future. He put his degree in government to work, serving on several advisory and strategic planning committees over the years. One was the shoreline master plan committee, in which he worked to revive regulations for waterfront development with the goal of preserving as much of it as a working waterfront as possible.

"It's a precious, scarce resource, a shoreline used for diverse economic activity," he said. "We have a very unique thing going here and it's been my pleasure to help work on it."

King joined the board of directors for The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding, the

Wooden Boat Foundation — launched the same year he arrived in town — and the Northwest Maritime Center. King's work on the WBF's board prompted Dave Robison, the founding executive director of the maritime center, to push King to run for city council.

King did so, running unopposed, as he would again during his re-election campaign four years later.

"I've never been opposed in an election, and I'm not bragging about that," King said. "I kind of miss it as an experience I never had. I never had to sell myself as a candidate."

He was appointed as mayor in his second term on the council, during which time he worked on everything from affordable housing to Port Townsend's water systems, and served on the joint board for fire service and emergency services among other committees.

"I was very glad to be a weak mayor," he said, referencing how he took office shortly after the city manager system was adopted in Port Townsend. "You can take on as much as you have an appetite for."

And he did.

"It was a lot of work," he said.

After years of being knee-deep in the marine trades community, King was eager to learn about the many other communities in town, such as the avid equestrian and instrument-building communities that he didn't previously know much about.

But he always had his mind on the waterfront.

"I've always been interested in what it means to be a port in the 21st century," he said, noting Port Townsend's history as one of the premiere port cities of the Puget Sound in the late 1800s.

The marine trades and the culture of wooden



King's most recent project was a canoe, finished last May, that he built from an 1897 design.

boat building had died down by the time he and Alice showed up at that second Wooden Boat Festival, he said.

"Port Townsend, when we got here — apart from the Wooden Boat Festival — was basically turning its back on the water," he said.

That weekend was "the beginning of the change of attitude of the community's relationship with the water," King said.

"I've spent most of my life helping preserve that in the community — keeping the port in Port Townsend," he said.

Not only has he watched the festival grow much bigger than he ever anticipated, but he believes that the town residents, regardless of background, have begun to embrace the town's working waterfront and its importance in the local economy.

"I think Port Townsend has sort of realized its potential in marine trades and being a port," he said.

While acknowledging that Port Townsend's tourism economy helps keep it afloat, King stresses that its working waterfront makes it unique, and hopes that Port Townsend holds onto its roots as a port waterfront and doesn't go the way of regional cities like Edmonds and its condo-lined shores.

He takes pride in the fact that the port's tall buildings were all built by local businesses that outgrew their spaces, such as the businesses he helped run, not out-of-town developers with commercial ambitions.

"Port Townsend has done a good job of not becoming just a place for casual tourism," he said, crediting the Wooden Boat Festival as being a prime example of the "deep," or educational tourism he sees Port Townsend as offering to the world.

Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader

King reckons that he may be the town's first boat-building mayor, but his intention was never to do both things full time all at once. He had wanted to sell Townsend Bay Marine and throw himself into government, but ended up juggling both jobs simultaneously for several years.

His experience working for private businesses, non-profits, government and for himself has given him the ability to empathize with and work with people from all of these backgrounds, he said.

"I'm a moderate," he said. "I'm always looking for ways to get through stuff and get things done."

Townsend Bay Marine was finally sold in 2015 to the Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op, the year that King's term as mayor ended. King decided to put politics and building big boats behind him and focus on hiking the region's many mountains and building smaller wooden boats, something he has done avidly since his days in Maine. He's built sailboats, dories and canoes, his most recent canoe built from an 1897 design.

King still views his career in the marine trades as a "passport" to see cool places. When he first came to Port Townsend, he thought it would be just another one of those places in his travels. In fact, he and Alice initially aimed to find work in the San Juan Islands, a place he found to be "more remote and cooler" than Port Townsend.

However, something about Port Townsend got him to stick around for 42 years, even with "cool" states like Maine and Virginia tempting him. The reason why, he said, is pretty simple.

"This is the coolest place," he said. "This is a great place, it's just a wonderful community."

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# Face of the festival: WBF Director Barb Trailer on travel, grub, and success

Luciano Marano  
lmarano@ptleader.com

Barb Trailer is the longtime face of the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival and a renowned maritime figure in Jefferson County. This year, she undertook the unenviable task of reimagining the beloved cultural calendar staple in a new, virtual format after having spent nearly a decade perfecting it as a destination experience. Recently, she took time to chat with The Leader about her time at the helm of the festival, travel highlights, delicious grub and her own love of all things water-related.

*\*This transcript has been edited for length and clarity.*

**Leader:** What was the first boat you remember being captivated by?

**BT:** I grew up in Minnesota and then Colorado — landlocked. So the first boat I was really captivated by was the WN Ragland, a gorgeous 100-foot schooner. I fell in love with the boat and the whole program, including the captain. Everything about it was cool, fun, adventurous [and] totally changed my life and how I saw the world. I used to volunteer to do the haul-outs just to be around and learn; to this day when I smell sawdust and varnish I think of the Ragland and Grenada.

**Leader:** What's your favorite book about boats and/or sailing?

**BT:** When we were at sea, which was A LOT, I read a book a day, but I have to admit, then and now I read more about culture and places than boats. I am completely in love with culture and history. I love boats, especially wooden boats for their beauty and heart, for the love that goes into them, but it isn't what I read about. Crazy, right?

**Leader:** You are very well traveled, but are there any routes or locations left on your boating bucket list?

**BT:** Yes, I want to go back to Norway and northern waters. I went for a couple days on my way home from sailing in Croatia last year [and] I loved pretty much everything about Norway. It's wild, and gorgeous, it's refined too in a very interesting way. I would love to explore by boat — so much history and incredible scenery — it's remote and wild, everything good! and I would go back to Croatia sailing every year if I could.

**Leader:** What is your proudest accomplishment (so far) as director of the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival?

**BT:** Every single year when it's over and we are doing the dinner with hundreds of volunteers, the amazing captains and staff, we are so full of joy and pride and utter exhaustion — it's wonderful.

We pull off miracles just to get the

festival village built in two days then taken down in one. It's a crazy amount of infrastructure that goes up and then all has to come down and be back to normal in one day.

It has such great energy, people come out of the woodwork to help — it brings out the best community spirit and ties everyone together with a joint purpose.

[There is an] absolutely amazing feeling every year of pride, but [I'm] also so filled with love for all the heart that goes into WBF. It really is amazing and beautiful.

I am also really proud of starting the themes, an interesting new way to think about WBF: through the lens of different cultures and traditions. Japanese boat building was fascinating and this year we were slated to have Croatia as our theme, there is SO much rich history of Croatia all around the Pacific Northwest. I was really excited to showcase the fishing industry at WBF. We have a nordic festival planned, and traditional native ocean canoes — unlimited potential!

It adds a whole new layer of interest to the festival and as a bonus we have made connections all around the world with people doing what we do, celebrating and preserving traditional craft and craftsmanship. I'm fascinated every day.

**Leader:** I understand you were a chef aboard private yachts for some time. What's your ideal underway fare after a hard day of fun and sun on the water?

**BT:** I really love to make food to suit



the day's experience, so it depends on where you are. In the Pacific Northwest or Alaska, where the water is cold, soups are a big favorite of mine [and] fresh baked bread or fresh fish on the grill. In the Caribbean, fresh fish. In Central America and Mexico, fresh fish again, but probably in fish tacos!

**Leader:** I've also read you had great success in selling boats. Any general advice for potential first-time buyers?

**BT:** Start small and simple. You don't need a big boat to have great adventures.



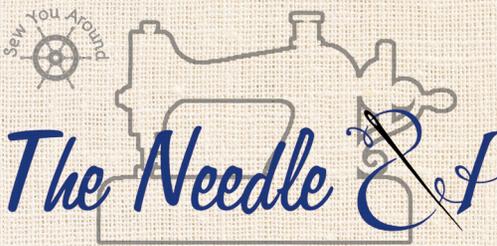
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# Duckworks offers boat supplies, plans, kits for builders tight on space

**Nick Twietmeyer**

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Space constraints often act as a barrier to entry for the would-be hobbyist boatbuilder. It is with this hobbyist in mind that Duckworks and its owner, Josh Colvin, have developed a series of small boat kits and established itself among local boatbuilders as a source for everything they may need to work on their own boat projects, without having to take up space at the boat yard.

“We supply everything you would need — with the exception of wood — to build a boat in your garage,” said owner Josh Colvin. “We’re actually not just selling our parts that we purchase wholesale, we also develop products as well.”

The exception to the “everything but the wood” bit resides in a series of boxes in the lobby at Duckworks’ warehouse. Contained within each of the long, flat boxes, are the constituent wooden parts necessary to build the company’s best-selling kit boat, the “Portage Pram.”

According to Colvin, the stitch-and-glue construction method used to build the Portage Pram lends itself nicely to stir-crazy COVID-19 isolators looking to keep their hands full safely at home.

“It’s a perfect COVID world project,” Colvin said. “It’s small; people have literally built these in bathroom-sized rooms. Realistically, in two weeks someone could be out on the water in it, if they’re going at a casual pace.”

The owner noted that a potential boatbuilder would also need to purchase a few other odds and ends to complete the boat, but added that Duckworks has its

customers covered there, as well. Epoxy, fiberglass cloth, boat hardware, fasteners, hand tools and rope all line the shelves inside the warehouse and it is for this reason that he has made a name for himself among larger boatbuilders as well, supplying the basic frequent necessities of the trade.

According to the owner, the true magic of Port Townsend comes from the sheer volume of knowledgeable boatbuilders, riggers and other tradespeople whose collective wisdom serves to create a sort of “brain trust.”

The Portage Pram kit, Colvin explained, came as a result of consultation with fellow boatbuilders and Brandon Davis over at Turn Point Design — which uses a CNC machine to cut out the kit’s individual parts.

Another key part of Duckworks’ product development, Colvin said, comes from just getting out on the water and seeing how he can work to improve the small boat sailing experience for the company’s customers.

“It’s a fun company to own, in that when I go out sailing and I say, ‘Gosh, I wish I had something that would do this.’ We just go back and we start developing it,” Colvin said. “If there’s a focus for Duckworks, it’s small boats you can build yourself for cruising and adventure. A very high percentage of our



Duckwork’s owner Josh Colvin stands in front of a variety of rope that his business offers for various maritime applications. *Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer*

customers are actually out there doing stuff with them.”

Colvin added that he and his fellow small-boat sailors enjoy the challenges of sailing in more austere conditions aboard smaller boats. “I always say we’re somewhere between masochists and minimalists. You’re looking for a challenge.”

“Simultaneous to it being difficult, there’s nothing quite like the things that happens when you’re out there on a tiny little boat.”



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# Despite pandemic, work continues on Western Flyer

**Nick Twietmeyer**  
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The boat upon which a tale is set often serves as much a role in the story as the other more-animated cast of characters.

Melville's ill-fated Pequod, Stephen Crane's SS Commodore in "The Open Boat," and the rowboat commandeered by Ralph Steadman and Hunter S. Thompson during the 1970 America's Cup race, just to name a few.

But what happens when the story ends? What becomes of the boats of nonfiction after the ink has dried? In the case of the Western Flyer, the conclusion of the expedition featured in John Steinbeck's "The Log from the Sea of Cortez," was only the beginning of this storied vessel's life, death and hopefully rebirth.

When Steinbeck and marine biologist Ed Ricketts tapped the Western Flyer and her crew to be their primary transport for an expedition down the Gulf of California, the mighty 77-foot fishing vessel was still just in its infancy. Constructed in 1937 by the Tacoma-based Western Boat Building Company, the Western Flyer was designed as a fishing vessel, and fish it most certainly would.

Captained by Tony Berry, the Flyer faithfully carried Steinbeck, Ricketts and their crew some 4,000 miles on

the journey from Monterey, CA down along the gulf of California as the pair collected specimens along the way, before returning home to San Diego in April 1940.

After returning from the expedition, the Flyer returned to its previous duty as a fishing vessel, falling into an obscurity of sorts after it changed hands from the original captain. It wasn't until 1986 that it was rediscovered, operating in Anacortes as a commercial fishing boat.

Unfortunately in 2012 the Flyer sprung a leak and sank and needed to be refloated. The boat sank again in 2013 before being brought to Port Townsend to undergo some much needed repairs. In 2015 the boat was acquired by marine geologist John Gregg and shortly thereafter, Gregg founded the Western Flyer Foundation, for which he serves as president.

Steinbeck's writings on his journey aboard the Western Flyer are often credited with galvanizing the early disciplines of ecology and environmental stewardship, laying a foundation for generations of scientists to come. It is with this impact on the scientific community at heart that the Western Flyer Foundation intends to breathe new life into the boat, that it may once again carry its crew in the pursuit of knowledge.

Charged with leading the restoration efforts of the Western Flyer are Tim Lee and Pete Rust of the Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op. Between the two are some 56 years of hands-on experience repairing, constructing,



Below deck of the Western Flyer, looking forward, while shipwrights have been working to bring the boat back to its former glory. *Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer*

renovating and maintaining wooden boats.

"This time last year, we were framing. There had been some structural work, some of the deck beams were put in, some of the longitudinal stringers, and some of the prep work for what was going to happen when we reframed, had been already done," Lee said.

According to the shipwrights, they and their crew have been working steadily since January 2019. Work had been done prior to that, though spotty funding at the outset caused initial progress to be intermittent.

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“It would be very intermittent and with a really small crew,” Rust said of the early work. “Their startup money was really slow coming in.”

Once the group had removed the cabin from the boat in order to get access to the decking beneath, the crew at the co-op really began to sink their teeth into the project. That is, until a pandemic threw a wrench into the works.

Progress on the Western Flyer was chugging right along, Lee said, with consistent crews of eight to 10 staff working at any given time, now the project has been forced to drop down to about half its previous staffing.

“With coronavirus we’re down to a crew of four, just to keep the expenditures down until we see if we’re into the Great Depression or not,” Lee said before lamenting the fact that because of the pandemic, the project also couldn’t open its doors to visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of the historic boat, something he said he hoped would change as restrictions begin to loosen.

As is often the case in any wooden boat restoration, shipwrights working

to repair one thing will find new problems in a different area of the boat.

The Western Flyer was no exception, after having sunk twice and being left to sit in a slough for several months, the boat was in dire need of some love.

“It was challenging in the beginning to kind of work around so much dirty old rotten boat; getting the old wood out without the boat falling apart.” Rust said of the endeavor.

According to Lee and Rust, the initial plan was to preserve as much of the original wood as possible, but it soon became apparent that their focus on a historical preservation of the Western Flyer was becoming an increasingly tall order. After a decision was made by the foundation to return the boat to a serviceable condition, the shipwrights instead began to focus on replacing the rotten frames, planking, beams and other critical pieces necessary to guarantee the vessel would once again be sufficiently seaworthy for sailing in open waters.

“The boat had to be safe,” Lee said. “That trumped trying to save these

old beams. You’re taking people out onto the ocean.”

As for the question of how long it may be before the Western Flyer can launch again, Lee said too many variables are currently in the way to accurately forecast a completion date.

However, Lee noted, the work never truly ends with a wooden boat.

“[John Gregg] told me that he hopes we work on it until we retire,” Lee chuckled. “Because as soon as it goes into the water, it starts needing maintenance.”

The Western Flyer Foundation is a 501 c3 nonprofit established with the goal of restoring the boat in hopes of offering outreach and education to under-served communities along the West Coast. To learn more or donate to the Western Flyer Foundation, visit [westernflyer.org](http://westernflyer.org)

The Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op has been working diligently to restore the Historic Western Flyer, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer



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# Looking Back: Wooden Boat Festival

**Jane Stebbins**

From its beginning, Port Townsend has been a town beloved by those whose hearts are drawn to the sea.

That love grew in 1977, an era rich with a social free-spiritedness carried over from the late 1960s, and during which young people yearned for a simpler life: Back to the land, and back to the sea.

Port Townsend was then a mill town — not a tourist town — with a population of about 5,000. The marine trades were a tradition in Washington state's oldest waterfront settlement, and they were growing new roots with boat shops at the Port of Port Townsend and near Cape George.

“Port Townsend, at that time, was a cosmic home and refuge for those of us in our 20s who were looking for something more real than the path that was laid out for us,” said Carol Hasse, who arrived as a young sailmaker in 1975. “We wanted to do things, to make things, instead of taking a suggested career path that went something like: Go to college, get a job, get married, raise a family, and then do something fun.

“I was really looking for something I could do and be part of and be proud of,” she added. “It was a time in history, culturally, for a whole nation where anything became a possibility.”

## **BUILT BY COMMUNITY**

The Olympic Peninsula had already attracted young people looking to get far away from such things as the

Vietnam War. Some joined the marine trades, as novices or professionals.

Sam Conner described himself as “just another young hippie guy” when he fetched up in Port Townsend in the mid-1970s. He'd dreamed of sailing around the world, and had been involved in building the 40-foot Moclips, a communal boat project launched in Westport, Washington.

The boat's first port of call was Port Townsend — the boat needed rigging — and Conner and the crew tied up in Point Hudson, then a half-derelict, mostly empty marina.

The interest in wooden boats and offshore cruising had blossomed. The nationwide gas shortage caused by the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973-1974 changed the automobile industry, and sales of recreational boats, particularly sailboats, skyrocketed.

Many old, wooden boats were available to people of simple means.

Many were stripped down, rebuilt and finished by their makers.

But there still were fewer opportunities for notices to learn one of the world's oldest professions. In Mystic, Connecticut, John Gardner, a noted author of wooden boat building, held demonstrations before organizing an annual Small Boat workshop.

“The craft of learning how to do boatwork is so complex, a skilled carpenter would take a year to get a sense of boatbuilding,” said Tim Snider, a technical writer in Connecticut who began wooden boatbuilding as a child, immersed in an artistic family of old-world craftsmanship.

In 1974, he helped John Wilson, a former sailing friend, start WoodenBoat Magazine. The magazine's goal was to provide step-by-step photos and instructions on boatwork. It would prove to be a vital source in the growth of the Wooden Boat Festival here.

Interest quickly built in people who wanted more than lessons on paper; they sought something for their hands. Snider, the magazine's promotions manager, came up with the idea for a new type of gathering; something more than a boat show where people could look, but not touch.

In 1975 and 1976, he scouted East Coast locations, before turning his attention to the West Coast.

On a trip to check out Anacortes in the spring of 1977, Snider received a pitch from Sam Conner about Port Townsend's possibilities.

“The Steel Electric ferry docked by the Town Tavern and Port Townsend looked like Nantucket on a hill when you came up,” Snider said. “I saw Point Hudson and thought, ‘This is the place.’”

Conner readily admitted he pushed for a boat festival in Port Townsend.

“I would love to say it was to save the trades, but really it was just because I was passionate,” he said. “And I needed to make money.”

## **FIRST FESTIVAL**

Conner was determined to organize local craftspeople, and with his partner, Marybelle Kern, reached out to them. With nothing more than a rented electric typewriter and a

Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader

phone, he wrote a curriculum and invited national experts to this new event.

“Nobody had ever heard of Port Townsend,” Snider said. “Once everyone heard of what the festival was going to be, that it wasn’t just another boat show, there was a lot of interest. Serious boatbuilders got involved when they saw the caliber of (faculty) coming.”

It was an instant must-attend event.

Mike Neubauer, who had taken classes in Seattle from the already legendary Earl Wakefield, organized a security team. Ralph Belcher III, then building boats in Seattle, organized a kids’ boatbuilding area, a tradition that continues to this day. Bruce Tipton used his own initiative to produce T-shirts.

## THE ‘BACK FORTY’

Festival activities were centered under tents on the “Back Forty,” now a parking lot. Seminars were held in the building today occupied by Shanghai restaurant on Hudson Street. Point Hudson’s old docks sagged under the weight of people checking out boats.

“The first two festivals were pretty much a whole different kind of thing,” said Richard Walcome, who operates a porthole manufacturing company and is a featured vendor at every festival. “Those first two years were more orientated toward building and actual crafts of building, down to plumbing, engines, electrical.”

The Wooden Boat Festival was held in conjunction with the Wooden Boat Symposium and staged in buildings at Fort Worden State Park.

“It was the first event in history that offered hands-on demonstrations from famous people doing traditional boatbuilding things everyone wondered about,” Snider said.

People not only came to the festival, but often returned.

One was Jim Blaiklock, who was building boats in Del Mar, California. He eventually moved here and became a festival volunteer and the Wooden Boat Foundation’s first paid boat shop manager.

That first year, Blaiklock remembers, there was music all weekend, a square dance on Saturday night, no gates and few vendors.

Attendance snowballed.

“We expected 800 people, and 3,000 showed up,” Snider said. “The next year, we expected 3,000 and 9,000 came.”

The symposium aspect did not immediately catch hold, but the event, with publicity in the *WoodenBoat* magazine, lured 200 boatbuilders to Port Townsend in the next two years.

The Festival’s official sponsoring entity, the Wooden Boat Foundation, was created in 1978. The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding was founded in 1979, and continues courses in Port Hadlock.

The Wooden Boat Foundation evolved into the Northwest Maritime Center, which opened in 2010 as a cornerstone for maritime education for schoolchildren and adults, history buffs and recreationalists. Last year, more than 5,400 people attended presentations on seven stages in the area.

“We envisioned back then it would be a year-round thing,” Hasse said in a *Leader* article years ago. “It’s a magical thing, a gift we’ve been able to give our region, instead of a place that is condominiumized with gates and key locks.”

Boaters agree that the overall talent in marine trades here is now unparalleled on the West Coast.

A typical three-day event attracts about 300 boats and

thousands of people; this year the Sept. 11-13 festival was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. A virtual gallery will be posted, featuring select, unique vessels chosen by Northwest Maritime Museum officials.

“I think what is interesting about the boats we are getting this year is that they are from all around the world,” said festival director Barb Trailer. “We have some from Australia, Norway, Croatia, Turkey, and the Pacific Northwest — so far.”

Experts from around the world will check in, including Matt Rutherford, known for overcoming obstacles and being the first person to circumnavigate the Americas solo; Behan Gifford of Mexico, a sailmaker who with his family spends his life cruising the world; and possibly Lin Pardey, who lost his longtime sailing partner, Larry Pardey, to Parkinson’s disease July 27.

“The Wooden Boat Festival has such an amazing group of luminary sailors that love it,” Trailer said. “It’s where people come together to celebrate. We’ll keep that tradition alive this year via zoom.”

An advantage to the virtual festival is that the presentation will be available online for a month, which gives people a chance to see everything offered.

“The in-person festival, there’s way more to do than you can in a weekend,” Trailer said, adding that it will include about 20 presentations from the past few years. “It’s really going to be incredibly similar to the in-person festival, with tons to do, lots of educational presentations, adventure presentations, demos and live talks with the experts.”

## BACK IN THE DAY

The festival has evolved and changed, facing financial and facility challenges. But the dream remains the same.

“The dream market, and that’s what most all of us have been in — go out where there is still a measure of freedom in cruising a sailboat — is still alive today,” Walcome said. “There is still the dream, to get a boat, work on it yourself and sail away.”

Forty years ago, there were no stoplights in Port Townsend, the Town Tavern served a schooner of beer for 25 cents, you could buy a 1930s coffee pot at Aldrich’s, and rent a room in a spacious Uptown Victorian home for \$70 a month.

And, there were boats. Big boats, small boats, commercial boats, pleasure boats. Lots of boats — and boatbuilders.

Today, the city has four stoplights, a glass of craft beer goes for at least \$5, Aldrich’s has gone out of business (but will be in operation again soon), and someone lucky enough to find a room to rent can expect to pay up to \$1,000 a month.

Featuring more than 300 wooden vessels, dozens of indoor and outdoor presentations and demonstrations, a Who’s Who of wooden boat experts and thousands of wooden boat enthusiasts, there’s something to do, someone to meet, or a boat to board at every turn. Expanded a little each year, the festival honors its traditions while inviting energetic debate and demonstration about the latest innovations in boatbuilding, equipment, skills, and adventure.

Tool and building demos, boat rides and a plethora of boats are on display with proud builders alongside to answer questions.

## THE BOATS

Among the oldest boats on display was the 1903 Providence, an 82-foot vessel out of Vancouver, Canada, and the oldest working ship on the British Columbia coast.

The largest, while newer, is the 140-foot Pacdrici Grace schooner, which has sailed off Tahiti, Pitcairn Island, Papua New Guinea, Hiroshima, and Midway Island.

And the Martha, dating back 113 years, is the oldest working sailboat in the Sound and the oldest living flagship of the SF Yacht Club.

People brought everything: Willets Brothers canoes, ketches, racing dories, rowboats, skiffs, cutter rigs, pedal-propellered, cat boats, yawls, dinghies, Nordic folkboats, outboard speed boats (one reaching 60 mph), even a drift boat that has sailed hundreds of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, a dozen national parks and thousands of miles.

Some are working vessels, others were built as hobbies in retirement for relaxing days on the water. Others were painstakingly built by students at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding.

Some have been lovingly kept throughout the decades, while others were found in piles of rubble, rotting in fields and garages, about to be transformed into yard planters, but brought back to life with extensive work over numerous years. Some were built under the sharp eye and tutelage of master builders, others by eye and guesswork. Many include original parts, right down to little light bulbs and hand-carved gimbel cupholders.

Some have interesting histories, salvaged from fires and sinkings. The Gracious Lady was made by the New York Wheeler Shipyard Corp, the same company that built Ernest Hemmingway’s *Pilar* in 1934, from which he wrote “The Old Man and the Sea,” and “Islands in the Stream.”

Even the beloved tall ship, the *Adventuress*, traveled the Strait of Magellan and the Bering Sea, patrolled the West Coast during World War II, a bar pilot vessel off San Francisco, has graced the harbor here.

Many are featured in popular boating magazines, have competed in the 750-mile Race to Alaska, have plied the waters of the Mediterranean Sea or the vast Pacific to the Hawaiian and Easter islands. Some have circumnavigated the globe.

One of those is Pax, the nation’s only 28-foot spidsgatter built 80 years ago and with a long-sought provenance.

Her owner, Kaci Cronkhite, of Port Townsend, said she’s going to miss the camaraderie on the waterfront this year.

“The people, the friends, the catch-ups we do; it’s like a big reunion,” she said. “Just the energy, the buzz of watching Point Hudson come to life, all the boats coming in, heading down with Pax toward Point Hudson — all those things we experience by that little migration we all do in this one little place on the planet. I’ll miss that.”

As director of the festival until nine years ago, Cronkhite would love to see the festival expand to be year-round.

“The opportunity to grow it out — education, racing, showing,” she said. “I thought five years into my 10 (as director) that we’d reached capacity. People were spilling over to Sequim or Poulsbo, or staying only one day because there wasn’t any room. There were 2,000 more people on the floating bridge than other days, and ferries were at capacity.

“This year’s virtual festival is allowing the Northwest Marine Center to expand it to the world,” she said. “My hope is we learn as a community how to do parts of it all year.”

# In the 1970s Port Townsend was a mill town – not a tourist town – with a population of about 5,000.

## Wooden Boat Festival Legacy

**1977** - Wooden Boat Festival at Point Hudson in Port Townsend becomes the first gathering in the United States to focus on traditional maritime skills.

**1978** - Wooden Boat Foundation (WBF) forms.

**1979** - Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding opens.

**1989** - WBF produces written proposal to establish a seaport project at Point Hudson, to include educational and marine trades.

**1999** - WBF steps back, Northwest Maritime Center organization steps forward to take on the project. Later in the year, a property deal is made for the former Thomas Oil property.

**2002** - Site work begins for the NWMC.

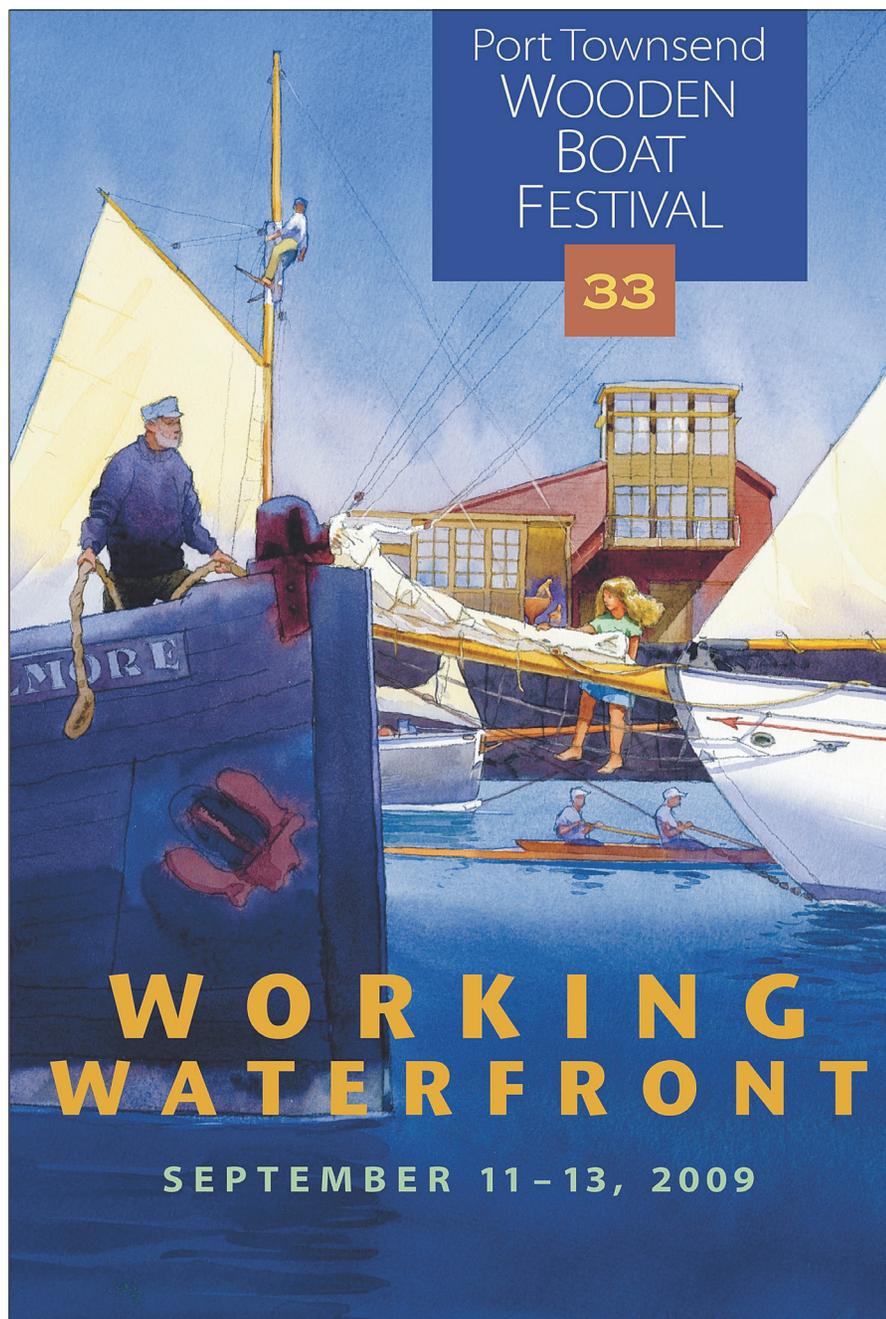
**2004** - WBF merges with NWMC to form a single nonprofit entity.

**2008** - Construction of the NWMC begins.

**2010** - The completed NWMC opens at the Festival.

*"It's still a much sought-after dream, being able to outfit and sail your boat into the open ocean. Never was the dream stronger than in the 1970s, when a convergence of factors led to the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival in 1977, the first American gathering dedicated to hands-on learning."*

- Patrick Sullivan, quoted from the 2016 Wooden Boat Festival Program



*The entire fleet bears down on the camera in this image from the downwind leg of the 1978 Festival regatta.*

- Photo courtesy Joe Breskin

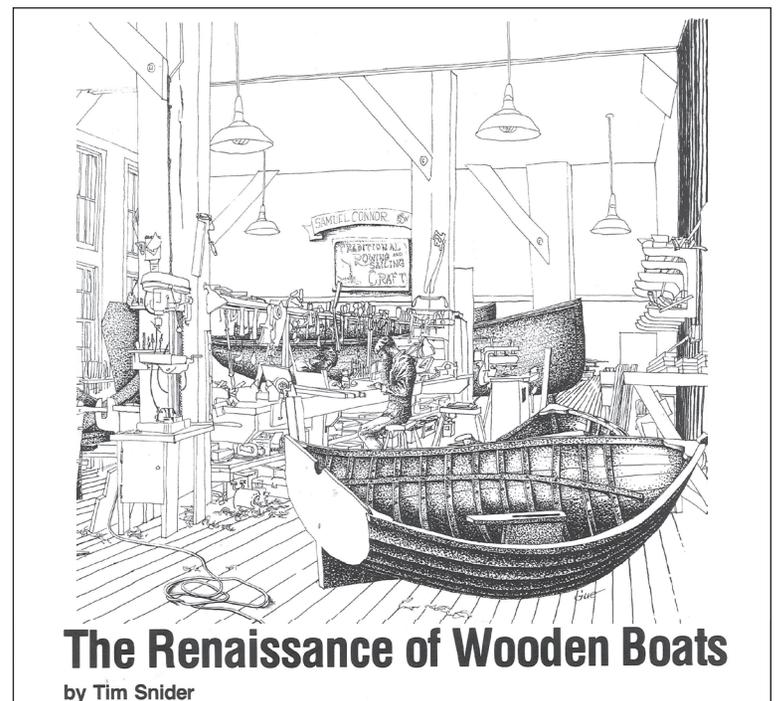
*"Port Townsend, at that time, was a cosmic home and refuge for those of us in our 20s who were looking for something more real than the path that was laid out for us," says Carol Hasse, who arrived as a young sailmaker in 1975. "We wanted to do things, to make things," instead of taking a suggested career path that went something like: go to college, get a job, get married, raise a family, "and then do something fun. "I was really looking for something I could do and be part of and be proud of," Hasse says. "It was a time in history, culturally, for a whole nation where anything became a possibility."*

- Quoted from the 2016 Wooden Boat Festival Program

The marine trades were a tradition here in Washington state's oldest waterfront settlement, and they were growing new roots with boat shops at the Port of Port Townsend and near Cape George.



(Above) Port Hudson Marina fills up on a typical Wooden Boat Festival weekend.



*Sam Connor commissioned Gae (Walker) Pilon to create this artwork of his boat shop at Point Hudson. Connor sent the art to Tim Snider at WoodenBoat Magazine, where it was used in an advertisement for his business. About a year later, it became the artwork on the promotional flyer used to promote the inaugural Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival in 1977.*

# The captain of history

## From Rhode Island to Port Townsend, racing yacht Martha can't be beat.

**Maria Morrison**

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If you change all the wood in a boat, is it still the same boat? The Theseus Paradox, a question dating back to ancient Greece, generates a laugh from Robert d'Arcy, captain of the schooner Martha.

The captain, who joined the Schooner Martha Foundation when it began in 1996, is also the project manager of all restoration projects on the wooden vessel, which happen each winter when the racing season ends for the 84-foot schooner.

"She's been restored, but she's still Martha," d'Arcy said. "She was built as a racing yacht, and as a foundation we decided to honor that and to utilize her as she was intended to be used."

The captain, too, has gone through many changes in his life, but has maintained an unmatched level of passion for wooden yachts and their history.

As for an actual answer to the paradox, d'Arcy thinks it's all a matter of scale. In the case of Martha, which is more than 100 years old, as long as pieces are added bit by bit over the century, the boat remains the same.

### A LIFE AT SEA

Sitting below the deck of Martha, hanging mugs of blue and green cast rainbows onto the mahogany cabin.

The space is large, for a boat, but filled with the necessities of life onboard. Sleeping bags, pillows, and laptop chargers sit amongst finely-bound books on the art of sailing. The watch schedule from the last race hangs, framed, in a place where it can be easily read even by tired morning eyes.

D'Arcy seems as natural a feature of the boat as the wood itself, a well-loved blue hat bearing the sailing vessel's name slung low over his eyes.

D'Arcy describes himself as "young enough to still be here but old enough to have seen the old world a bit." Born in Rhode Island in 1957, d'Arcy is a fourth-generation boat builder. Although he hadn't heard of Martha growing up, he was at the "epicenter" of American yachting and familiar with and a fan of her designer, Bowdoin B. Crowninshield.

In fact, once d'Arcy joined the Schooner Martha Foundation, he made it a personal goal to bring more awareness to Crowninshield's designs, whom he called an "unsung hero of yacht design."

"I wanted to make her strong and safe, tune her up and clean her up to be a testament to his design and prove its efficiency," d'Arcy said.

Before connecting with Martha, he worked at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, the nation's largest maritime museum, as a restoration carpenter and did historical research. Throughout his education, both formally and on the job, d'Arcy's appreciation for the craft grew.

"I really like the design, form, and function of a yacht. What a beautiful creation," he said. "It's in the water, it has to absorb tremendous strains and loads, but it's beautiful."

After being steeped in the history of American yachting, d'Arcy took a momentary break from wooden boats.

"As a young person growing up you think, 'Am I doing this because that's what I've been taught to do or am I doing this because I want to do this?'"

He turned to other forms of adventure, including windsurfing, skiing, and mountain biking. But he just couldn't stay away from the allure of the elegant wooden craft.

"I ended up back in big boats, so I guess it's my choice," d'Arcy said.

### MAKING MARTHA

Walking down the docks at the Point Hudson Marina, it would be difficult for the untrained eye to pick out the oldest boat. Martha, with a gleaming white and teal paint job and sparkling decks, doesn't look like a day over 50. It is only her design, with subtle touches signature to the naval architect who created it, that signals to passers-by that the schooner has spent 113 years in the water.

It's easier to describe what's original on the boat than what has been restored, d'Arcy laughed. The keel timber, laid in late 1906 or early 1907, is Martha's "primary backbone" and has been in the water for 113 years.

Much of the deck framing and all but one of the stringers are just as old, as is the cabin and helm. D'Arcy estimates about 10 percent of the fabric is from the early 1900s, including West Coast fir, oak framing from back east, and Douglas fir planks that came from Blakely Harbor.

Martha was built in San Francisco in late 1906 and finished in 1907. Her first owner, J.R. Hanify, ran one of the West Coast's largest lumber yards, and was a fan of luxury boats. There was an avid racing clique in San Francisco at the time, and Hanify found several other competitive yachtsmen who admired the schooner, which he named after his wife, Martha.

Competing vessels on the West Coast were different from the polished, glamorous yachts of the east, d'Arcy said.

"It was new out here, rugged, rough. There wasn't a whole lot of difference between the workboat and the yacht," he explained. "Glam wasn't in; people were practical."

In fact, the sole difference was whether or not the boat was used for commerce, since the design between the two groups could be identical.

Martha has changed over the years, following the evolution of schooner yacht design. There were many changes in her rigging and sail composition as sail design improved.

D'Arcy called her staysail composition the

"ultimate schooner rig," but aspects of the design are always changeable.

Martha switched hands a few more times, notably going to James Cagney from 1934 to 1943.

In 1968, owner Edgar Kaiser brought her to Washington, and there she stayed.

### LIFE ABOARD

D'Arcy and Martha coming together was perfect timing. He was unimpressed by modern yachts, which placed practicality above style. He was further disappointed that wooden boats were being pushed out to make room for newer options in fiberglass, steel, and aluminum.

"While I accept and understand that modern materials and modern design acumen are very important, it doesn't mean we have to abandon that which was good from our past," d'Arcy explained.

"If we're only going to measure things from investment in to investment out, a boat is not a good investment," d'Arcy said.

"But if we measure things in quality of life, the fun factor, being involved in things you enjoy, a wooden boat is not about how many beans you count at the end of the day, it's about other things."

Those additional merits include continuing a legacy that can hopefully continue for yet another century.

"There's something intrinsically important to me about the concept of 'Design it well, build it well, and take care of it.' Here we are 113 years later, kids are going out and sailing on this boat and having fun and learning skills," d'Arcy said.

The skills that kids learn are not just about sailing, but about life. Living aboard a vessel at sea is like living on your own little planet, d'Arcy said. The crew forms a society, all needing to work together to complete the mission at hand.

"You need a functioning hierarchy and also a sense of society and community," d'Arcy said. This includes conservation of resources like food, water, and fuel, which he noted was not unlike the planet today.

Now, Martha's normal, pre-pandemic season typically begins in early spring, when groups of schoolchildren clamber on deck and learn the ways of sailing. It starts on a Friday, when kids get the first feel of a vessel like Martha: hearing the vocabulary onboard, practicing skills, and handling lines.

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**CURBSIDE DELIVERY Still Happnin'**

One week later, when the group goes out again, the kids are familiar with the nomenclature, running through practiced motions of sailing and applying their maritime knowledge. They get to race, grasping the original helm from the beginning of the century.

Moving into the summer, Martha's focus is directed toward serious racing events. It begins with the Swiftsure International Yacht Race out of Canada in May, then the Classic Mariners' Regatta rolls around in June in Port Townsend Bay. More events follow, with varying lengths and levels of competition.

The race crew is typically 10 to 12 people, who might be dedicated kids who graduated from one of the school programs or seasoned mariners. On overnight races, there must be enough people to man the boat fully on watch while others get rest. The crew uses a rolling watch system, d'Arcy explained, in which one person rotates out every hour. This avoids a completely new, likely tired, crew all changing at once, which leaves room for error as the new lookout adjusts.

## THE LEGACY OF MARTHA

Working on a ship with such a storied history would be a daunting task for a less seasoned captain. People are familiar with Martha all over, mainly from the West Coast but some from much further. D'Arcy recalled a friend referring to her as the "darling of the West Coast," a title that he is proud of.

With an internet presence, d'Arcy said that if someone has an interest, they can find Martha. Especially when she travelled all around the West Coast in 2014, people came out of the woodwork to find her and provide pictures, tips, memories, and stories about the vessel's history.

One person's uncle had owned the boat in the 1940s and provided the crew with amazing photos of the family's trip to the Hawaiian Islands; the schooner in a tropical backdrop of islands in their natural glory 70 years ago. Another was a descendant of Martha Hanify, and gave the crew a canvas coaster made out of the original fabric of the boat.

"There's a lot of neat history we keep gleaning, compiling more and more of her cultural history and identity," d'Arcy said.

On that landmark trip now over five years ago, Martha and her crew traveled down the coast to San Francisco, past Monterey and Santa Barbara, to San Diego, then around the Baja peninsula and into the Sea of Cortez for the winter. The way back took a detour to Honolulu for yet another race

"She has touched so many people and imparted something to each and every one of them in a different way. I realized Martha

Port Townsend & Jefferson County Leader



Robert d'Arcy, captain of the schooner Martha, overseeing a project for Robert d'Arcy Marine Services. *Leader photo by Maria Morrison*

was a lot bigger than just a boat," d'Arcy said. "She's a time machine. You don't own this. You take care of it for your time; you're a steward of it."

This tracks with d'Arcy's general view of the world. "Do no harm, and lend a helping hand when you can," he said.

## HIS BUSINESS

Any of the captain's free time is spent on his business, Robert d'Arcy Marine Services. He is the owner and project manager on restorations of classic yachts. The business exists in a "symbiotic relationship" with the Northwest Maritime Center, he said, out of

which the restorations are based.

His current project is a 1938 Danish spidsgatter called Helma. The 26-footer is set to launch at the end of the month after a costly, but wholly worthwhile, restoration. She needed a complete and total restoration, d'Arcy said, and was lucky to have owners who are connected to her legacy and heritage, and willing to make great effort to keep the vessel in the water.

The only original pieces left were the lead keel, some aft wood and part of the side cabin. This is especially unique because most European vessels lost their lead keels to the war effort for bullets. D'Arcy speculates the

Danes must have snuck her up an estuary to spare her.

D'Arcy was surprised when the owners agreed to the restoration, but glad they did. In dollars and cents, the boat might not be worth it. But in cultural significance and design? Absolutely.

## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

New crew members are welcome at all times, and typically join naturally as people elevate to the race crew when they show interest, dedication, and a willingness to learn.

Three young people are living on board this summer, including Mary. Along with keeping up on daily maintenance, they get a headstart on long-term projects. Maintaining Martha takes constant effort, and the workload stays high throughout the year.

While d'Arcy has always been an adventurous person, the 63-year-old knows that he cannot be Martha's primary captain forever. He has been training his future replacement, Captain Kris Day, to someday assume the position so that d'Arcy can retire and enjoy life with his family.

Last year, Day took 50 percent of the trips as captain, and would have done the same this year had it not been for the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Martha is a very important structural part of our lives," d'Arcy said, referring to his wife Holly Kays and daughter Mary. "But the last 25 years of my life went by like that," he said, snapping his fingers.

D'Arcy is in no rush to step away, but will let a timeline emerge as life continues. Laying the groundwork for a transition now, though, will allow the hand-off to be seamless when it happens.

"Whether I get hit by a donut truck or decide to just stay home and plant some flowers, it's all good," he said.

He's not worried about Martha, since she is owned and managed by the foundation, which has a mission statement and bylaws, instead of being left to the whims of a private owner.

"She gets an owner that is as long-lived as she, and that's the foundation," d'Arcy said.

Still, he hopes the schooner spends the rest of her days in Port Townsend, as he plans to.

"Being in Port Townsend is great. There are a large number of people who love the idea of what Martha represents," d'Arcy said, noting the Port of Port Townsend's recent campaign to preserve Point Hudson, the authentic waterfront and two historic districts.

"I'll probably spend the rest of my life somehow connected to the foundation, and I'll gladly spend the rest of my life in Port Townsend."

# Long live the Bronze Age

## Port Townsend Foundry still casting bronze

**Nick Twietmeyer**  
ntwietmeyer@ptleader.com

Manufacturing has seen monumental change over the last century, in most cases eclipsing previous production methods by leaps and bounds both in terms of efficiency and quality. In many ways the methods by which we produce the daily necessities of life have been completely re-written, but in the case of the Port Townsend Foundry and its own specialty bronze work, the old ways are still very much alive.

Standing in the entryway of an unassuming industrial building on Otto Street is Pete Langley, owner of the Port Townsend Foundry and beside him, filling the tables and shelves inside his shop, sits enough bronze to make an Etruscan green with envy.

Anchors, cleats, handrails, hooks, hawsholes and hinges — if it's a fixture on a boat it's safe bet to say Langley has most likely poured molten bronze into a sand form to make it. But the coppery sun of Langley's work doesn't rise and set on the water alone.

From remaking hinges in a historic carriage house to antique cars, Langley has filled orders for the likes of the Navy, Coast Guard and countless others seeking his bronze fixtures from all across the world.



The Navy, Coast Guard and many other clients from all around the world turn to the Port Townsend Foundry for bronze fixtures. *Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer*

"We're in almost every industry," Langley said. "I can help a lot of people with not only the engineering that needs to be done for their parts, but also [explain] why you don't want them to fail."

In 1962, at the age of 4, Langley, accompanied by his six siblings and parents, moved aboard the 76-foot wooden boat M/V Catalyst. A storied vessel in its own right, Catalyst lived

up to its namesake, serving as Langley's early introduction to cruising as he and his family spent the subsequent four years traveling back and forth between southern California and Mexico.

The family later upgraded to a bigger boat and continued their adventure.

"I got to spend 14 years at the beach," Langley said. "That's why I enjoy playing in the sand."

In a simplified explanation: Langley's products are the result of an ancient process by which a pattern set to be cast is placed inside a sand-filled frame called a flask, the sand is tightly tamped to ensure a proper impression of the pattern is achieved before the pattern is removed and molten brass is poured into channels in the sand, filling the void left by the now-removed pattern. The casting is done using two halves known as a "cope" and a "drag" (top and bottom) which are placed together prior to the molten brass being poured. Depending on the needs of the end product and the tolerances requested by the client, Langley offers various concentrations of silicon bronze, manganese bronze, aluminum bronze, white bronze and aluminum alloys.

The staff at the foundry receive specifications, drawings or mockups of an item to be cast and a pattern is then made to the piece's parameters. Once cast, the piece is returned to the



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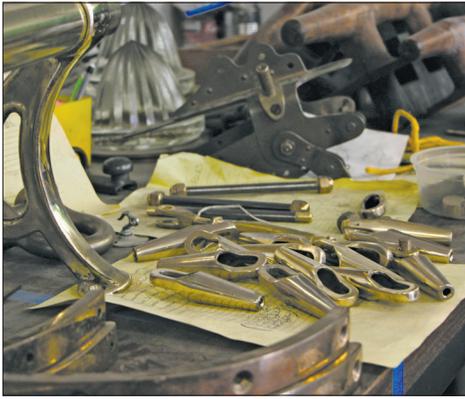
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client with minor adjustments being made as necessary. The finished products are also often cleaned up with a grinder and polished before they are sent home.

According to Langley, the Port Townsend Foundry has established itself as an environmentally friendly operation by seeking out processors which specialize in the recycling and refining of metals, instead of sourcing the raw materials through mining. To that end, Langley said any excess brass bits left on the shop floor or workstations are swept up at the end of each day and recycled, as well.

The foundry's push for more environmentally-friendly practices also benefit the workers. Whereas larger foundries frequently use silica or chemically-bonded sands in their casting, the Port Townsend Foundry instead has opted to use a mix of olivine and bentonite in their sand.

"For what we do, it's very environmentally friendly and it's safe for us," Langley said. "Some of the big production shops all use chemically-bonded sand and silica sand. Silica sand can obviously lead to silicosis and all those other great things."

The benefits of employing olivine go beyond just keeping his workers safe, Langley added.

"The olivine sand has no silica in it, it has trace amounts of nickel and magnesium, but that's the beauty of it — it doesn't fracture the grain size," the foundry owner said. "You can pour 2,000-degree metal on it and it doesn't crack the sand. That allows us to use it over and over again."

As Langley's formative years and boating experience while cruising the seas with his family have informed his understanding of the real world applications and necessities of his handiwork, so too has that experience hewn in him a keen eye for quality, sturdy craftsmanship.

While cruising about 90 miles off the coast of California's Cape Mendocino aboard Catalyst as a child, Langley recalled when he and his family found themselves caught in the infamous Columbus Day Storm. The 1962



Pete Langley, owner of the Port Townsend Foundry, holds up a turnbuckle and toggles for a standing rig on a schooner. At top left, inside the Port Townsend Foundry is a bevy of bronze boat fixtures. *Leader photos by Nick Twietmeyer*

storm remains unmatched by any other West Coast storm of the 20th Century in terms of wind velocity, as well as the 1991 "Perfect Storm," which later inspired the 2000 film of the same name.

"The steering cable broke, which then meant no steering on that boat in 25-to-30-foot seas with a 10-foot wind wave," Langley laughed. "The boat was rolling to 65 degrees, slapping the side of the waves, for seven days straight."

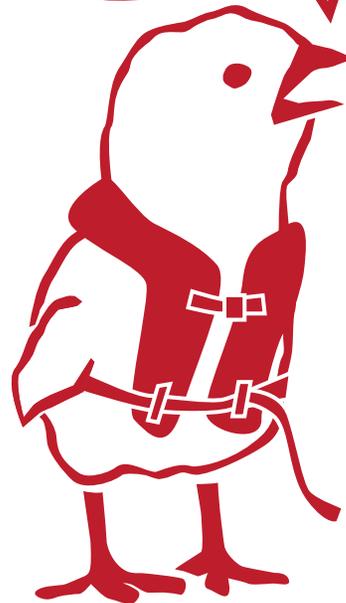
Langley relays the days he and his siblings spent huddled beneath the galley table with survival rations, weathering out the storm, with a beaming smile punctuated by chuckles.

"I can laugh about it now, of course it was terrifying back then," he said. "But that's my own personal experience that you don't want rudders and systems to fail for any reason."

And it is for that reason that Langley said he and his staff pride themselves upon their craftsmanship and, thereby, the reputation of the Port Townsend Foundry.

"We're pretty proud of the fact that after all these years we've not had anything that's been a manufacturing defect failure come back."

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# 'Pocket Yachters' celebrate compact cruising

Nick Twietmeyer

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Many a seafaring man and woman first got their taste of boating at an early age during family outings, often establishing fond memories that later translated to owning larger boats. But an informal group of like-minded seafarers have decided to buck the notion that bigger is better, choosing instead to downsize and return to simpler days and smaller boats.

Marty Loken has been building and restoring boats both big and small since he was a kid, growing up on Marrowstone Island. While Loken has owned larger boats, he said a push in recent years has been made to think smaller when getting out on the water.

"About 10 years ago, a bunch of mutual friends who had small boats spontaneously got together over a beer and decided to start holding a few events on the water," Loken said.

Originally called small boat "mess-about" the excursions, which originally started with three or four boats, quickly began to grow. Loken credited Josh Colvin of Small Craft Advisor magazine with coining the term "Pocket Yachters."

A few years after the Pocket Yachters began messing about, Loken orchestrated the inaugural Pocket Yacht Palooza at the Northwest Maritime Center.

"It quickly became the largest gathering of small boats that



Marty Loken works to assemble a small wooden boat using stitch-and-glue construction. Photo courtesy Marty Loken

we could identify anywhere in the country," he said. "It was mostly a static, on-land display of eccentric small boats."

The 2021 Palooza was on track to bring out the droves of small boat enthusiasts once again, but unfortunately, a

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Port Townsend Pocket Yachters prefer a more downsized approach to getting out on the water and enjoying significantly fewer hassles as a result of having smaller craft. *Photo courtesy Marty Loken*

pandemic blew a gale into those plans and organizers had to make the tough call to cancel the 2020 Pocket Yacht Palooza.

Loken said there's no pretense with the group, which bills itself as an informal collection of like-minded small boat lovers, rather than any sort of formal yacht club.

"The key for the Pocket Yachters is it's free, we don't have officers, we don't have bylaws, we don't have rules, we don't have prices," Loken explained. "We just have fun on the water."

While many of the pocket yachts are indeed made of wood, Loken was careful to note that the group doesn't discriminate against the constituent materials of the compact cruisers.

"We're not a wooden boat group," Loken said. "It's a very democratic philosophy of

appreciating all kinds of small boat designs and not being prejudiced against fiberglass. If it's a great design, it's a great design. What a lot of people really appreciate about the pocket yachters, is that we've celebrated any small boat design that was beautiful and functional."

Especially, Loken added, the designs that lend themselves nicely to camp-cruising.

Last year, the Pocket Yachters organized the Salish 100, a week-long 100-nautical-mile cruise from Olympia to Port Townsend that makes overnight stops in Hope Island, Gig Harbor, Blake Island, Kingston, and Mats Mats Bay.

"You'll see everything and anything ranging from homebuilt kayaks and rowboats to vintage fiberglass pocket cruising sailboats

and everything in between," Loken said, just as long as they adhere to the one semi-unwritten rule of the group.

While the group was set to hold another Salish 100 this year with 135 registered participants, the event was ultimately canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Loken is hopeful that the 2021 Salish 100 will see plenty of cruisers.

While the Pocket Yachters are open to all manner of small boats, one of the few guidelines for participants is that boats remain "trailerable."

"Everybody asks 'What is a small boat?' for the Pocket Yachters, the main defining term is trailerability, or something you can put on a roof rack."

Pocket yachts, Loken says, should be able to be kept at home, in a driveway or a garage, always at the ready to launch somewhere new and enjoy the connection to the water.

"If you only have a weekend, you can be cruising on the lower Columbia River or you can go to Lake Roosevelt or up the B.C. Coast. You can do that without having to take two weeks off to do it in a big slow boat," Loken said. "That's one of the things I've loved, being able to explore some of the most interesting boating destinations, saltwater and freshwater, just by driving there in a few hours."

Speaking to the comparatively exponential simplicity found in smaller boats over their heftier counterparts, Loken said the main appeal for Pocket Yachters went well beyond the markedly lower - and in many cases non-existent - costs of ownership, maintenance, moorage, insurance and annual haul-outs.

"A lot of us grew up as kids in small boats, that's how we got into boating, by fishing, waterskiing, whatever," he explained. "Naturally we all migrated into bigger and bigger boats, and discovered quite often later in life, that the most fun we ever had on the water was when we were kids in a small boat."

"Kits go together with such precision these days, because of CNC-cut parts, everything fits perfectly," Loken said. "It's impossible to get a hull that isn't symmetrical. The finished project can be a gorgeous boat."

Loken also pointed to Port Townsend's active marine tradespeople, boat school, history and culture as being key element in fostering an environment that allows for groups like the Pocket Yachters.

"We are so lucky to be where we are here. Port Townsend has really become one of the centers for small boat building, design and enjoyment," Loken said. "We're absolutely in the right spot, because of the waters we have for small boat cruising and the culture we have here."



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# Maritime community mourns passing of rigging legend

## Brion Toss worked aloft for more than 40 years

Lily Haight

On a still day at the Point Hudson Marina, among the echoing seagull cries and the soft sound of water lapping against boat hulls, it was not unusual to hear the booming laughter of master rigger Brion Toss.

It would ring out over the horizon, and the best place to look for the origin of the jolly sound was up toward the sky.

Toss, a world-renowned master rigger, author, knot expert and lover of wooden boats, died June 6 at the age of 69.

Toss spent much of his life aloft, rigging everything from daysailers to massive square riggers.

When he wasn't aloft, Toss was in Port Townsend teaching, writing, philosophizing and sharing hearty laughs with friends, family and anyone who stopped by his rigging shop, Brion Toss Yacht Riggers, in the historic Point Hudson Marina.

He leaves behind his wife, Christian Gruye and his kids, as well as many friends in Port Townsend.

"What I'm going to miss most is his melodious booming laughter that would come up through the floorboards into



Brion Toss, a Master Rigger, knot-enthusiast, wooden boat lover and maritime legend, died on June 6 at the age of 69. *Courtesy photo*

the sail loft, or echo across the harbor when he was up a mast," said sailmaker Carol Hasse, a longtime friend and colleague of Toss.

Toss' career was born out of an obsession with knots more than 40 years ago.

Born in Kentucky and raised in Seattle, Toss fell into a knot-tying rabbit hole when someone handed him a copy of "The Encyclopedia of Knots and Fancy Ropework."

In a 2015 interview, Toss recalled becoming obsessed with knots until he finally asked himself, "What can you do with these things?"

That led him to rigging.

At the very first Wooden Boat Festival, Toss met Nick Benton. Toss said Benton taught

him the many techniques of rigging as well as how to think like a rigger.

He soon met Emiliano Marino, who now owns the Artful Sailor in Port Townsend. The two rented a loft upstairs at Anacortes City Hall where Marino made sails and Toss made rigging.

The two promised each other they would write books on their respective careers.

In 1984, Toss published "The Rigger's Apprentice," followed by Marino who published "The Sailmaker's Apprentice."

The book, which is now considered the authoritative text on rigging, covers everything from a sailor's most needed knots, to maintaining rigs, turning tail splices and wire eyesplices.

"He was always striving to both innovate and carry the traditional craft forward," Hasse said. "He certainly has an international renown for codefying, through writing and teaching age-old practices."

Toss traveled the world, rigging all types of ships and passing on his extensive knowledge in workshops and classes.

"He brought such levity and creativity to his talks," Hasse said. "He would get people involved. Someone would stand

and be the mast, and another person would be the shroud. It was always something people could engage with."

He valued self-sufficiency in a sailor, and taught skills necessary for sailors who want to be self-reliant on the water.

"He was the consummate teacher," said Kaci Cronkhite, former director of the Wooden Boat Festival, who first met Toss through studying his knot-tying book. "Everything he did, it was not just a business, it was a philosophy of life and rigging tied together."

Beyond that, Toss acted as an instructor to the Coast Guard, among other organizations.

Toss was always pursuing the challenge of designing the ideal rig that would make any boat sail better, faster and safer.

At the 2019 Wooden Boat

Festival in Port Townsend, Toss was inducted into the Maritime Hall of Fame for his work carrying forward the traditional art of rigging.

In his acceptance speech he called for unity among the community.

"He was saying, as rigging splices things together, our action, our words, our energy splices us together," Cronkhite said.

In September 2017, Toss released a collection of life stories about rigging ships in an e-book titled, "Falling."

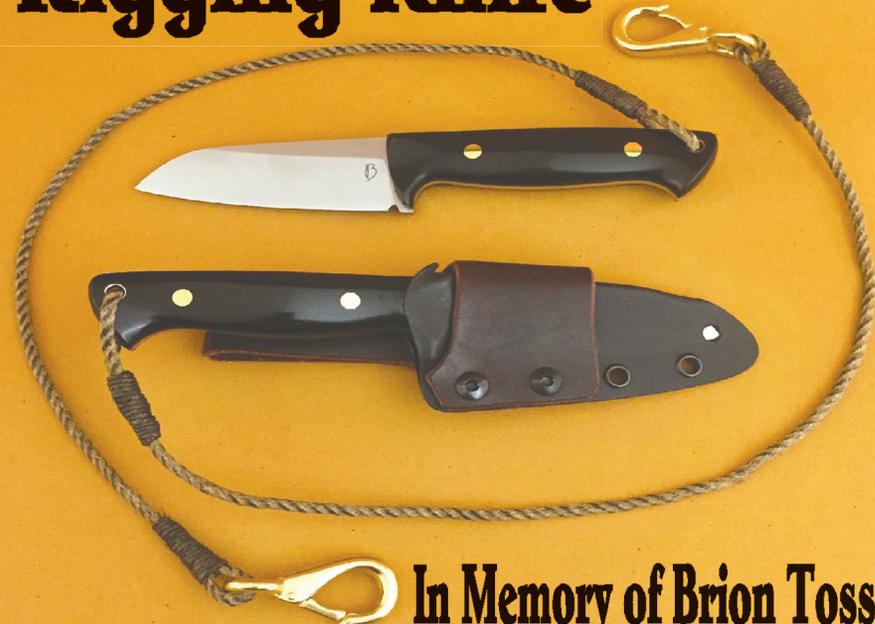
The book features a collection of cautionary tales about working aloft, as Toss reflected his lifetime of rigging. In the stories, Toss's jovial sense of humor is balanced with a reverence for his work and the power of gravity.

"Life is unutterably precious, unbearably fragile, but it becomes flimsy and shallow if your primary aim is to preserve it," he wrote in the final chapter of "Falling." "Risk it. If you huddle in a safe space, you might live longer, but you will not be fulfilled. Risk your life, at some point, to some extent. Do it with enough training and gear that your chances of survival are excellent. But do something that will let you know how close Death is, and how amazing Life is."

Toss' family has created a Facebook page, called Brion Toss Life Memories, so friends and community members can share stories, photos, videos and memories of his life.

*(This story first appeared in The Leader.)*

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# Adventuress Cup to benefit local educational programs

**Nick Twietmeyer**

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In much the same fashion that animal lovers might be dispirited upon seeing a caged bird or one of those ASPCA commercials scored by Sarah McLachlan, those with an affinity for the saltier things in life, will find few sights sadder than gazing upon a stately wooden schooner tied up to a dock day after day.

Given the caveat that a boat moored is usually a boat afloat - and therefore, likely enjoying a better fate than so many wooden craft of yesteryear. In the case of the formidable S/V Adventuress, one look only to

the present state of the 133-foot, 107-year-old vessel, to plainly see that she belongs outside the marina with the wind in her sails, sharing the lessons held therein and inspiring another generation of young seafarers to come.

On Sept. 20, Shilshole Bay will play host to the inaugural Adventuress Cup - A Race for the Salish Sea. Through a partnership with the Corinthian Yacht Club, and using similar concepts as walk-a-thons, participants will have the chance to enter the regatta and seek sponsorship from their friends, co-workers and family members to raise funds for the educational programs aboard Adventuress.

To learn more, or become a company sponsor for the Adventuress Cup, visit [soundexp.org/AdventuressCup](http://soundexp.org/AdventuressCup) or call 360-379-0437.



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# The Life of a Port Townsend Fisherman

## Fifth-generation fisherman counts on sixth generation to take his place

**Brennan LaBrie**

blabrie@ptleader.com

Greg Veitenhans was destined to be a fisherman. His father fished, as did his father, going back five generations.

And growing up in Gig Harbor, Veitenhans was surrounded by fishermen.

“Back then everybody fished,” Veitenhans said. “When I was a kid that’s what you did; either you fished or you were too young to fish or you were too old to fish.”

And so, like many in his community before him, he went right from high school to the deck of a fishing boat. At the age of 18, he joined the crew of a purse seiner fishing vessel — which catches fish using a weighted drag net — and headed off to Alaska.

He quickly fell in love with fishing, even with its intense schedule.

He got used to racing against time and the weather to haul in the biggest load of salmon or halibut possible in the time allotted for catching and delivering the fish. Sometimes it meant 18 straight hours of work, sometimes more than 24.

“In the old days, we’d do 25 hours of fishing, then 12 hours of cleaning up, and someone would still have to drive the boat back afterward,” he said.

In his almost 50 years of fishing, nothing about that has changed.

“You work when the opportunity presents itself, no matter what time of day it is or how you feel,” he said. “If you have the opportunity to work, you don’t sleep. You learn pretty quickly that your own comfort comes second.”

Perhaps Veitenhans’s biggest draw to fishing in Alaska, however, was the state itself.

“When I was a kid I was really struck by how wide open the opportunity was everywhere you looked in Alaska,” he said. “It just kind of captured my imagination.”

The landscape reminded him of Puget Sound, although much more vast and unpopulated, which he loved.

“The natural beauty is gorgeous, it’s breathtaking, and it’s so wide open,” he said. “There’s trees and mountains and hardly any people, even now. At that time it was kind of still a wild frontier. It’s a lot tamer now.”

When that first summer of fishing ended, Veitenhans knew he’d be back. He returned the next summer, and bought his own boat in the meantime. He purchased the boat, a troller called the Dorothy, at age 19 with his earnings from the previous summer and some help from his grandma. The boat was docked in Mystery Bay, where Veitenhans would one day dock his boats.

When Veitenhans drove up to see his boat, he realized why it had come at such a cheap price. It was old, rotting and full of holes, he remembers, so much so that he had to nail plywood patches onto the hull to keep the water out. He recruited his brother to help him take the boat back to Gig Harbor for repairs, and the two took off on one sunny February afternoon.

Shortly after departing Port Townsend, a large wake sent the mast and rigging tumbling down. And by the time they neared Gig Harbor, the sun had set and the two men had



Greg Veitenhans has been fishing for almost 50 years, primarily in Alaska. Every summer, he fishes for halibut and salmon in Alaska, taking his sons Henry and Joey with him. Photos courtesy of Dana Edmunds

to navigate their way through the darkness — and snow — with only a compass; no map, no chart.

Veitenhans learned his lesson — never leave the dock without a flashlight or chart — and the Dorothy got patched up enough to take Veitenhans out off the coast of Washington for a few years to save up for an Alaskan fishing permit. He eventually secured one, and has gone back to Alaska every year since.

He’s also fished up and down the West Coast for salmon, halibut, sardines, and squid, among other fish. Alaska has always been the go-to, however.

“You can go to Alaska broke and you know you’re gonna come back with something. But you go to California broke, you may never come back; you may not have enough to even get home on,” he said.

Still, home for Veitenhans remained western Washington. The weather played a big role in that. While he said he loves the long summer days in Alaska — perfect for 20-hour fishing shifts — the gloomy, rainy and cold winters got to him. And so he decided to, as he put it, “opt to just take the best of Alaska and leave the worst,” coming home to Washington after each summer.

However, the Gig Harbor he knew so well was changing in front of his eyes, and he didn’t care for what he saw. In the mid-’70s, the old fishing town was rapidly developing and becoming a destination for wealthier residents from Tacoma and other regional cities.

“I could see the handwriting on the wall,” he said. “It was less and less a fishing town and more and more a doctor and lawyer and yuppie town. And I just didn’t want any part of it, so I moved.”

He went looking for a new home around the Sound, preferably a town more in touch with its working waterfront.

He landed in Port Orchard, keeping his boat in the shipyard there, before the cheap land values in Jefferson County led him further north. He bought a house on Marrowstone Island that sat not far from Mystery Bay — an ideal place to moor his boat.

### EXPANDING THE FLEET

All this time, Veitenhans was growing his business. Dorothy was replaced by bigger trawlers over time.

And then, after around 20 years of trolling for fish, Veitenhans purchased a 58-foot purse seiner, The Mystery Bay. He was thrilled to return to his first love — purse seining, which he says is far more exciting than trolling.

In purse seining, he explained, you don’t have to wait for fish to get hungry and attack the bait. You may get zero fish, or you may get 20 pounds, but it’s the risk that makes it more fun than catching one fish at a time.

The Mystery Bay was lost to the Pacific Ocean on a return trip from squid fishing in California, and it’s replacement, the 56-foot Barbra B, sees yearly action in Alaska to this day. Veitenhans also owns a 70-foot sardine fishing boat currently in Alaska.

While working in Alaska one summer, Veitenhans hired his future wife, Ava, as a crew member. She had come from California to become a fisherman, and the two clicked while working together off the coast of Ketchikan.

“She liked the lifestyle, and we ended up liking each other,” he said, adding with a laugh: “I think she liked fishing long before she liked me.”

After working on his boat for several years, Ava took to the skies to scout for sardines and found a new passion, eventually becoming a commercial pilot.

### THE NEXT GENERATION

The couple had two sons together, Henry and Joey, and it wasn’t long before the two boys were joining their father on the fishing boat.

Henry, now 20, first accompanied his father to Alaska at age 8, and has done so every summer since. Joey, now 18, began fishing at 10.

At first, the Veitenhans boys were under the impression that they’d be going off for a fun family vacation with their dad, before realizing that it entailed hard work in the wet, cold Alaska weather. The following year, they were onto his scheme, but were still game to come along to fish.

The Veitenhans men fish halibut in Alaska in May and June, then stick around for salmon season for the remainder of the summer.

At the end of each summer, when Joey and Henry would return to school, Veitenhans would begin the long offseason of maintaining his two boats and repairing all the nets they hold. These tasks, he said, keep him busy all winter and spring.

“I’ve never been able to say I have nothing to do,” he said. “The minute I bought that first boat I’ve had something to do.”

He does find time, however, to fish for shrimp in the Hood Canal — just for sport.

"I go fishing to rest up," he said, adding that by the time summer rolls around, he's excited to put aside his maintenance work and return to the water.

Veitenhans' passion for fishing remains intact, but at age 67, he sees retirement on the horizon. He even has a retirement plan in place: his children. His plan is to sell them his two boats and have them take over the business, ideally by the time he hits 70.

"I've got them both convinced that that's their future," he said. "I'm working on both of them right now, getting them thinking about stepping in."

And Veitenhans said both sons have expressed interest in the opportunity. Joey is now a full-time fisherman off the coast of Washington, while Henry is studying International Studies at Willamette University in Oregon and is on a two-year ROTC campus scholarship to be commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army in 2022.

### CHALLENGES OLD AND NEW

In 2017, Veitenhans and Henry built a steel boat together, which they entered in the annual Race To Alaska as Henry's senior project.

The two men, with the help of several of Henry's high school friends, rowed and sailed the 25-foot sharpie to Ketchikan in 10 days, securing 12th place.

Two years later, they did it again, this time with a different crew including Joey, finishing 19th.

Veitenhans said those races rank up there with his biggest challenges in his fishing career.

"All my fishing experience gave me wherewithal to handle that, I think," he said. "It was a lot of things to pull together,

but I had a lot of help."

Veitenhans may plan on giving up fishing full time, but he knows he can't leave it behind — he just loves it too much. It always keeps him on his toes, he says.

"There's always a challenge, there's always something more that you can do ... keeping the boat working, the crew working, trying to find fish and catch fish, trying to improve your operation."

"The constant change keeps you interested," he added. "You're not doing the same thing everyday, every year."

The encouragement of Veitenhans to his sons to become fishermen was not what he heard growing up. His father had echoed many in Gig Harbor at that time that there was no future in fishing and had even quit for a while before rejoining the trade. Veitenhans said that all the fishermen in his family felt this way at one point, and he knows better by now.

"Fishing is cyclic," he said. "When it's good you make hay and when it's bad you just hunker down because it never stays the same. When it's good it's gonna get bad; when it's bad it's gonna get good."

And that volatile element of fishing is what keeps Veitenhans from being able to fully say goodbye to the trade.

And, if everything goes to plan, he won't have to anytime soon.

"I could always get a job with Henry and Joey; I can make them take me," he said. "I don't think they'll throw me off, I hope not. As long as they still owe me money, I don't think they can."



Greg Veitenhans and his sons Henry (left) and Joey (right) stand by the boat they rowed and raced as part of the Race to Alaska in 2019.



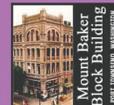
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# Northwest Maritime Center classes take a new tack into the virtual realm

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Under normal circumstances as the days of summer near their end, the Northwest Maritime Center would be readying to welcome droves of visitors from near and far to experience the second-largest celebration of wooden boats in the world.

This September, though, as with so many other cherished events across the globe, the Wooden Boat Festival along with much of the Northwest Maritime Center's programming has been forced to go virtual.

Jake Beattie, executive director for the center, said since the pandemic has taken hold across the world, it has become increasingly clear that the center's main focus would need to shift from hands-on instruction to a more distanced approach. And shift it most certainly did.

"Like everyone else, this has been a time fraught with change and challenge," Beattie said. "We're essentially an organization

that delivers experiential education and experiences in a lot of different ways. We gather people in groups for education and celebration and that just can't happen right now," he said. "The stuff we've traditionally done, the 44th Wooden Boat Festival, the Race to Alaska, we can't do our school programs, summer programs, we've been not doing a lot of what we normally would do."

In an effort to keep a distance while teaching less hands-on courses, the center has begun offering virtual radar classes as well as classes on tides and weather. Fully embracing a digital medium, Beattie said, has allowed the center to engage more adults looking to learn more about the practical applications of radar, weather and tides.

"A screen is a screen, whether it's a radar screen or a computer screen," Beattie said, before noting that while it may not be ideal, the virtual programs will likely be something that the center can continue to offer, even when things begin to return to some semblance of normalcy.



Like so many other organizations, the Northwest Maritime Center, had to rethink its educational program strategy as a result of COVID-19. *Photo courtesy of Northwest Maritime Center*

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“I’m not sure I can say [virtual classes] are better — as schools are learning, despite their best efforts, online learning is just not as engaging for people as in-person instruction. You can’t teach sailing through a screen; you really have to go out there and do it. You can talk about concepts of things but you really have to go out there and have your hand on a tiller and a sheet and feel the boat.”

Just like so many of us, Beattie said the center is looking forward to the days when it can return to regular programming and, in preparation, is continuing to lay the groundwork

to cultivate its maritime educational programs within high schools throughout the region, including adding another section to the Port Townsend Maritime Academy, an educational partnership with NOAA and Highline Public Schools.

“We’re doing a lot of projects that are more forward-looking,” Beattie said of the center’s work to secure grants for its future educational programs. “When you can’t do anything, you can certainly plan for when things are better.”

While the Northwest Maritime Center has certainly felt the squeeze

of the COVID constriction, the executive director said the center will not be going anywhere and will continue to serve the Port Townsend community well into the future.

“We’re still here, even though our doors are mostly closed. We can’t wait for them to reopen again,” Beattie said. “We’re a community organization, here to serve, so if there are uses for our spaces that people have that might help us as a community get through this, have them give me call.”

“We’re part of team Jefferson County.”



Liam Crist-Dwyer assembles a small boat called a “Portage Pram” using the glue-and-stitch construction method. Photo courtesy of Northwest Maritime Center

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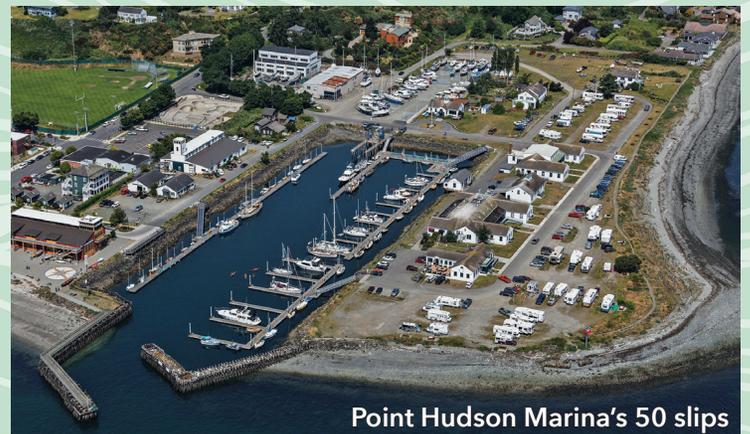
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