# On Deck:

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- All of these goods are on Sail
- Summer Fishing Season

# WORKING WATERFRONT

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# Shipwright spotlight: Mark Stout, Scow Bay Boats

#### **Nick Twietmeyer**

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s one of the early graduates of the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding, back when it was still at Boat Haven, Mark Stout — owner of Scow Bay Boats — has had the unique opportunity to see firsthand how the working waterfront has changed (or not) over the years.

Stout said he's found himself working in the boat yard onand-off since he graduated from the boat school in 1982.

The shipwright took a brief 20-year hiatus from Jefferson County between 1992 and 2012, when he moved up to Homer, Alaska to fix boats there, but a lifestyle change saw his welcome return to the yard.

Since coming back to Port Townsend, Stout has leased a

workspace in the yard where he takes on nearly all manner of work repairing boats. Stout recently renewed his lease with the Port of Port Townsend, so it's looking like he's here to stay, at least for awhile.

Stout had the chance to see how his handiwork has held up over the years

with the return of the fishing boat Indiana to Boat Haven for some repairs to the house.

"It was just right over here," Stout said, holding up an old photo from when he first worked on the boat. "We rebuilt about two-thirds of the hull and the whole aft deck. That was about 1988 or something."

Currently the Indiana is in the company of Dave Thompson at the yard. Thompson said all of the previous work done by Stout on the 103-year-old boat remains sound and had been holding up splendidly despite the vessel sustaining a handful of rock strikes over the years.

Shipwrights, it seems, are not immune to the economic rock strikes of COVID-19. That said, Stout counts himself luckier than most during these unusual days.

"We have plenty of independent workers here in the yard. We're very fortunate ..."

**Mark Stout** 

OWNER OF SCOW BAY BOATS



Mark Stout of Scow Bay Boats handles a piece of purpleheart on the table of his massive ship saw. Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer

"It was alright, at least for me," he said, noting that other larger outfits in the yard were not so fortunate and had little choice but to suspend work for a short time once the pandemic took hold.

Stout said he was fortunate that when restrictions went into place, he had already been working on the Charles N. Curtis, an 80-foot former patrol boat out of Tacoma that is now used by the Sea Scouts.

"They came here in March with plans not to really do that much this year, but that week they got here was when the restaurants closed and the hotels closed," Stout recalled.

After the vessel saw its cash-earning charters fall through with the imposition of COVID-19 restrictions, Stout got the green light to move forward with additional repairs that had, until then, been put off.

"They just said, 'Well, we're going to do this next year, let's just do this now.' And I did a big repair on the inside of the boat for six weeks, so they basically kept me alive," he said. "I'm very grateful for them; they're here every year and you can count on them."

While Stout said he was Scow Bay Boat's sole permanent worker, the very nature of Boat Haven assures that when he needs a specialist, one isn't far.

"We have plenty of independent workers here in the yard," Stout said. "We're very fortunate with all the independent painters, laborers, shipwrights, caulkers, mechanics, welders."

"You either call them up or walk over to their shop."



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# P&T Fabrications innovates houseboat construction

#### **Nick Twietmeyer**

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leeing erupting rent costs and urban sprawl growing ever-denser, some folks are taking to the water in search of some reprieve. But for those who wish to keep their creature comforts, houseboats can be an eye-catcher.

Terry Nowell of P&T Fabrications, has made a name for himself as a houseboat builder in Port Townsend. As Nowell points out, his creations offer people the ability to build a life for themselves on the water, without having to work around the usual space constraints or limbering up with "boat yoga."

"A lot of people want to live on the water but not a lot of people want to live with a pointed head," Nowell said of the restroom facilities often found aboard vessels. "If you move into a sailboat, you're always compromising all your space and economy."

Nowell was first inspired to take on the unique task of blending the lines between vessel and domicile while living aboard a houseboat owned by Rick Oltman of Cape Cleare Fishery.

"He was up fishing in Alaska, I came to town with a contractor buddy," Nowell said. "He let me stay across the street in a Victorian houseboat that was on the dry."

Nowell finished his contract work in town and was later contacted by Oltman for work in Alaska. After working in Alaska for a time, he returned to Port Townsend and took work as a welder for Falcon Marine and later built marine refrigeration systems.

"I was being exposed to more skippers and local talent here," Nowell said. "Basically it gave me an avenue to break out on my own and fabricate for these boat owners and the commercial fishing fleet."

Nowell partnered with Paul Purpura and the two formed P&T Fabrication around 2000.

"We rolled that out for about eight years and then Pauly and I dissolved the marriage — if you want to call it that," Nowell said. "I took P&T Fabrication ... and kept it rolling."

Nowell said his first deep foray into the world of houseboats came after he sold one that he had built for himself around 1996.

see **HOUSEBOAT**, Page 11



Terry Nowell of P&T Fabrications has rethought how houseboat barges are constructed, resulting in sturdier, longer lasting boats. Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer







Gus Sebastian of Olympic Boat Transport & Crane has been hauling heavy loads since he took over the business from Julian Arthur some six years ago. Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer At bottom: Sebastian's transport and crane business can take all comers from large boats to aircraft and heavy equipement tires. Photos courtesy Gus Sebastian

# HAVE CRANE, WILL TRAVEL

# Crane operator hauls what others cannot

#### Nick Twietmeyer

ntwietmeyer@ptleader.com

T's an old predicament: You've got something that's way too heavy to lift, and yet it still must be hoisted and relocated somehow.

The solution to this problem, like most problems in Port Townsend, can be found at Boat Haven. Enter Gus Sebastian and Olympic Boat Transport & Crane.

It's hard to miss Sebastian's business, located right in the crook of the Jefferson Street bend, near the Port's moorage

offices. Sebastian waves to passersby while sweeping the sidewalk in front of his business, an affable trait he shares with his predecessor, Julian Arthur, who sold him the business about six years ago.

"I stopped asking how people heard about me around three years ago," Sebastian said, adding that he's been staying busy enough these days that he doesn't have much need to market himself.

Folks around the Port, he adds, seem to know who he is and what he does. And exactly what he does, well, that depends on the day.

Using his truck-mounted crane, Sebastian is able to get to locations and conditions that larger cranes can't. Outriggers deployed from the sides of his 26-ton boom truck provide stability while hoisting. His rig's versatility has allowed for him to keep things interesting by lending his skills to an incredibly varied clientele.

Sebastian's moved it all: hot tubs, sheds, bonsai trees, cabins, boats — lots of boats actually. And in the near future it's likely

see CRANE, Page 6







# Crane: Every day is different

continued from Page 5

that he'll even be helping a local couple install a reassembled gray whale skeleton in their front yard.

Despite the staggering variability of his day-today work, Sebastian said, he actually prefers not knowing what to expect when he goes to work.

"It's something different every day. Different characters, different scenarios, situations — that's what keeps it interesting," Sebastian said. "That's the fun part about it, always something different, you never know what you're going to get."

In fact, Sebastian was getting ready to head up to the Olympics along a Forest Service road to retrieve a minivan from a ravine. The owner's insurance, he noted, wouldn't cover the recovery cost for her vehicle, and multiple towing companies flat-out refused to take the job.

Since acquiring the business, Sebastian added that he's learned to expect the unexpected along with the value of occasionally slowing down and keeping a cool head.

"When I was younger, I would always get into a hurry because I wanted to get things done fast and wanted to make things efficient for the boat owners. But now I'm doing it safe and I want to not wreck my body," he explained.

The owner also said he has developed an eye for balancing the loads he is hoisting, especially boat masts.

"98 percent of my job is making sure stuff stays balanced," Sebastian said. "if you pick too low on a mast, as it comes out it'll go over; if you pick too high, it's too heavy on the bottom. You've got to be right on the money with it."

Sebastian has enjoyed getting to know the tenants and workers down at Boat Haven, adding that the tradespeople and expertise held within the yard are another critical element of what keeps him around.

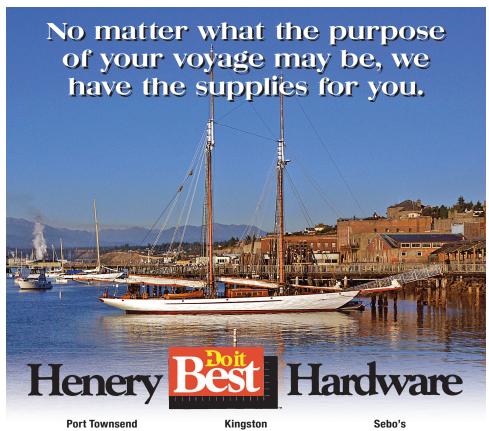
"Everybody down here is down here for the same reason: to do the job right, make the customer happy and have fun at the same time," Sebastian said.

"If you need something from somebody, if you need a favor or advice on how to do something, there's 200 people down here that would love to share their information with you."

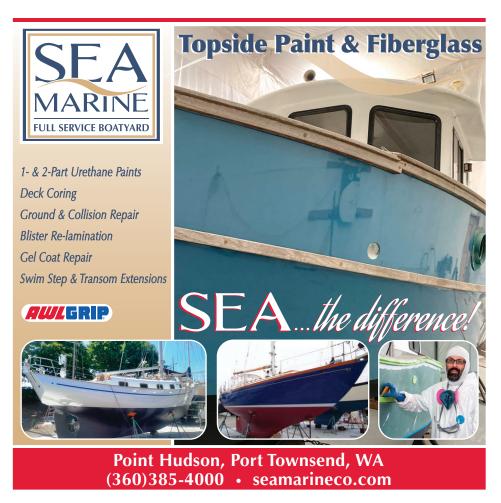
"The money's good but the community's tight. It's a solid group of people and I really appreciate all of them," he said.



Sebastian uses his crane to deliver a shed to a customer. Photo courtesy Gus Sebastian



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## ALL OF THESE GOODS ARE ON SAIL

# Local chocolate maker seeks to ship sourced ingredients the old-fashioned way

#### **Nick Twietmeyer**

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The shipping industry has seen monumental change in the years since cargo was last moved by the wind, but a handful of environmentally minded entrepreneurs are looking to reinvent the way we get goods to consumers.

And Port Townsend could very well be one of the first stops made by such a vessel.

Susan Fitch owns and operates Cocoa Forge, located just a stone's throw from the Point Hudson Marina. Fitch said she has entered into an agreement with SAILCARGO Inc. to ship her imported cocoa beans under sail rather than the more contemporary means of container ship transportation.

Fitch said while the decision would likely come with a modest cost increase to cover her overhead expenses from

a slightly pricier shipping method, there are still more benefits than just the environmental impacts of green shipping to outweigh the costs.

Fitch said she strives for there to be an intent and a story behind all of the constituent processes that go into the chocolate that she makes.



Susan Fitch's chocolate ingredients could be one of the first to be carried be the cargo ship Ceiba. Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer

"I just imagine the stories that these beans could tell," Fitch said, "The other way of shipping doesn't fit with what I do, everything is so hands-on. [This way] I'm not buying beans out of the back of a shipping container; they're very specifically sourced."

Once SAILCARGO has completed construction on the 145-foot Ceiba, the ship will begin its intended task of loading and offloading various goods at ports along its route spanning North and South America.

As Ceiba traverses her route, cocoa beans destined for Fitch's Point Hudson shop will be loaded aboard along with other cargo to be carried in her four holds below deck.

"Our average speed will be slower. However, modern ships, when they get into port, are dependent on fueling up and using infrastructure to lift the containers off, so they're not self-sufficient," said Danielle Doggett, co-founder of SAILCARGO. "In some ports that are busy, these ships can wait up to two weeks in line to use the crane. Because we will not use that infrastructure, we actually will have comparable



Fitch stands in the kitchen of her Point Hudson chocolate shop. Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer

Below: The Cocoa Forge, located near the Point Hudson Marina, is set to have its ingredients shipped via sailing cargo ship. Leader photo by Nick Twietmeyer

times."

Using palletized cargo, Ceiba would be able to load and unload using dockside cranes or the ship's own infrastructure to handle the goods.

Cargo would be subject to customs inspections at local jurisdictions along the route, but Doggett also hoped to see the establishment of special economic zones where port cities would allow Ceiba to offload directly in town. Doggett added that in addition to shipping cargo, Ceiba will carry a crew of 12 and room for an additional 12 guests or trainee crew members.

Fitch said she sees Ceiba and the return to emissions-free shipping as a prime opportunity to continue Port Townsend's historic working waterfront.

"We're in this port town, it's all here, all this infrastructure is here, let's bring it back," she said. "When I first pitched this to

see SAIL, Page 8





An architectural rendering of the completed cargo ship Ceiba. Image courtesy SAILCARGO

Davys Vanegas, a Costa Rican carpenter, finishes the fairing of the inside of Ceiba. Each frame must be perfectly in line with one another so that the hull remains waterproof.

Photo courtesy of SAILCARGO

# Sail: Keeping it real

continued from Page 7

the city I got laughed at ... They said, 'That'll never happen,' I said 'Really? Watch me.'"

The chocolatier said she feared for the future of Port Townsend's waterfront tradespeople before relaying the story of how three-phase power was eliminated from her business — a former forge — despite many tradespeople needing three-phase power to run larger electric motors and higher-voltage equipment.

"What else is going to be down here, another art or trinket shop? It was a working forge," she exclaimed. "If we don't have our trades, I think that we become a facade, we're not real anymore."

"It's important to me to keep our working waterfront, I love being part of it, I love rolling up my sleeves and I'm comfortable being in the trades and near the trades."

Dogget said framing work is currently finishing on Ceiba, and planking is expected to begin shortly. Despite the fact that Ceiba has yet to be completed and carry any cargo, Doggett said she is already seeking more businesses that are willing to sign letters of intent to ship emissions-free through SAILCARGO. By signing the letters, Doggett said she hopes to develop a list of customers whose cargo could fill a second ship.









Arden Moore hauls in a hefty coho salmon aboard the Ocean Belle. Photo courtesy Jonathan Moore

# Summer season a mixed bag for local fishermen

#### **Nick Twietmever**

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ith the summer season now well astern, many vessels of the Port Townsend fishing fleet have returned to Boat Haven to undergo routine maintenance and repairs. The Leader caught up with a few local fishermen to see how the season went for Washington and Alaska.

Joel Kawahara stayed in Washington waters for the summer season, aboard his 42-foot salmon troller, Karolee — based out of Quilcene.

Kawahara noted the added challenge posed by COVID-19 this year when he was looking around for coastal ports.

"The situation in Washington state was complicated by the occurrence of COVID outbreaks here and there," Kawahara said. "The major two ports for the northern half of Washington state were more-or-less closed."

Kawahara said the docks at La Push and Neah Bay were closed to non-tribal access by the Quileute and Makah Tribes as an attempt to keep infection rates down on the reservations.
Kawahara, who
normally uses
Neah Bay in the
summer season,
instead had to
move over to
the Port of Port
Angeles to sell his
fish.

"We didn't start until late June and it was slow at first; in July it slowly began to pick up," Kawahara said, adding that once the fish started

biting, his catch numbers started to resemble a normal season.

There was no way of making up the lack of fish at the start of the season, Kawahara said, but the losses were partially mitigated by slightly heavier salmon and more favorable prices for the fish later on.

Asked why he thought the prices had



F/V Ocean Belle photographed in Alaska during the summer troll season. Photo courtesy Jonathan Moore

had heard that rising costs for meat and poultry have driven up demand for wild salmon.

Kawahara said he

increased,

While better prices were certainly welcome, Kawahara said at the close of Washington's summer season, he was left feeling optimistic about the future return

of salmon in the area as well.

"We watch the salmon returns by looking at the fish counts over the dams in the Columbia River. Fall Chinook and coho this year are coming back in unexpectedly larger numbers, larger than the lack of fishing effort," he said. "Ocean productivity has improved significant amounts, judging by the number of fish. So there's optimism for next year."

Jonathan Moore and his family recently returned to Port Townsend along with their 46-foot Little Hoquiam troller, Ocean Belle, following the close of the summer troll season in Alaska. Moore said his arrival in Alaskan waters was met with some unrelenting snotty weather.

"It was wet and windy for most of the summer," Moore said. "It almost felt more like it used to be. We've been pretty spoiled these last several years; it could've just been back to normal."

Like most everyone these days, Moore said he struggled at times to navigate the uncertainty posed by COVID-19.

"We kind of struggled a little bit to stay optimistic and positive at times because of so much uncertainty with the markets," Moore explained. "My fish are mostly restaurant fish, so we weren't sure how the market was going to work out."

As if foul weather wasn't enough, Moore said he had to stay quarantined aboard the

see **SEASON**, Page 10

# **Season:** Mixed results

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Ocean Belle for 14 days after arriving in Alaska, with twice-daily temperature checks.

While Ocean Belle wasn't setting any records for salmon caught this year, Moore said a consistent stream of coho afforded him another "get-by year."

"We didn't have any huge smashes, but it was kind of a steady trickle," Moore said. "It wasn't a banner year by any means."

For the last third of the season, Moore's wife Laura and daughters Anabel, Arden and Ayla joined him on the boat, which luckily happened to coincide with a break in the weather.

"The weather got really nice in September. It was great, especially when the fishing slowed down; we'd do some half days and go exploring on the beaches and stuff," Moore said.

The captain also gave top marks to his crew while they were aboard the Ocean Belle.

"They did phenomenal," Moore said. "All of them are really helpful and it's pretty great now that they're older too, I can send them back, they run the gear and I don't even have to go back there and supervise anymore."

Moore said despite this season's trials, he still felt more than the necessary level of optimism required of any fisherman.

"Oh, man, let me tell you, next year is going to be really good," he said. "There were a lot of juvenile king salmon in the ocean — a lot — the most I've seen since the last peak, which was 2013 to 2016."

Mike Carr and his 32-foot gillnetter Miss Melito also just hauled out in Port Townsend after he and his crew of four — including his fiancé Maria Melito — spent the summer fishing Alaska's Bristol Bay.



The Moore family, Jonathan and Laura pictured with their three daughters Anabel, Arden and Ayla. Photo courtesy Jonathan Moore

Bottom: Coho salmon ready for freezing aboard the Ocean Belle. Photo courtesy Jonathan Moore

"It was another really big run; the past six or seven years [Bristol Bay] has had really big runs," Carr said. "They haven't had any disaster years as far as fish returning, except for 1997 and 1998."

Carr added that 2020 wasn't a particularly lucrative year, due in part to the fact that COVID-19 saw a reduction in shoreside cannery staff. With fewer staff to process the caught fish, the company that Carr was fishing for placed a cap on the amount of salmon they would receive.

"We had about a week during the peak of the season, where we just couldn't go and catch all those fish that were out there," Carr said. "You could load your boat up until you



couldn't fit any more fish on your boat, but you wouldn't get paid for them."

While a bay full of fish and nowhere to take it sounds like a commercial fisherman's nightmare, Carr said in those situations he just had to step away and think about the day ahead.



Laura Moore pictured with a hefty catch aboard the troller Ocean Belle during the Alaskan summer season. Photo courtesy Jonathan Moore

"The best thing to do is just go and lay your head down and get some sleep and just look for tomorrow; don't think about what you missed out on," he said. "Don't let your successes get to your head and don't let your failures get you down, there's only one way to look and that's forward."

In similar fashion, Carr said he was looking forward to the next season.

"The only thing that were downers this season had to do with the pandemic. I only see that getting better," he said. "I don't think that a lot of the problems this season are going to carry on into the future."



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# Houseboat: Business helps students get a start

continued from Page 4

The buyer, he explained, was located down in Lake Union and while delivering the boat, Nowell began to survey the other houseboats

"That was my biggest research probe," Nowell said of his visit. "Touring around and seeing what the materials are that they're using to build these boats and how [expletive] a job they all were."

Nowell balked at how many of the houseboats' construction seemed to be an afterthought and often neglected to take into consideration the future life of the vessel. Not one to criticize without offering a counterpoint, Nowell began building his response to the designs he found so lacking in Seattle, and "it just took off like gangbusters."

"I changed the format of how you build hulls," he added. "There's only one centerpiece of steel with two welds below the waterline."

By not hanging individual plates with welds to form the hull, as most houseboat hulls are built, Nowell said his designs were actualized by pressing the sides up from the bottom with the help of the professionals at Seattle Boiler

The simple change to the construction process, he said, creates a sturdier, longerlasting and more-reliable hull.

"There's no welded corner," Nowell explained. "I took out all the welding liability in the projects by doing that."

Nowell said he and his crew can have a 45foot houseboat hull ready for paint in four or five weeks from the start of construction.

The hulls, he added, are all certified by the American Bureau of Shipping and the American Boat and Yacht Council.

In addition to getting certification for his houseboat hulls, Nowell also has to get approval from the city of Seattle on his design plans prior to starting construction. This, Nowell explained, was the result of a recent crackdown on houseboats in Lake Union that stemmed from poorly designed houseboats degrading and polluting the area's waters.

Any hull he designs must not exceed the footprint of an existing houseboat that's being replaced.

"When I build a houseboat for Lake Union, the city has to approve my drawings and I cannot be 1 inch longer, deeper or wider than what exists, and then they have to get rid of



houseboats by P&T Fabrications. Photo courtesy Terry Nowell

the original," he explained. "It can no longer live in Seattle city waters."

Apart from working to replace aging houseboats with structurally sound, longer-lasting vessels, Nowell also actively seeks to bring in up-andcoming welders from the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding, to help him complete the hulls.

"I would find out who has their WABO [Washington Association of Building Officials] certification for 1-inch plate, because that's a really hard test," he explained.

"I would find 18-, 19- and 20-year-old guys and girls and I would offer them a job."

"They've never made that much money before in their entire lives," Nowell added. "I'm serious, a kid can practically come out of high school and burn \$25 an hour."

As for his next build, Nowell said he has been in talks with a client who he expects will give him the go-ahead to start constructing yet another hull sometime in February.

In the future, Nowell said he hopes to build a houseboat that is outfitted for more remote, self-sustained and off-grid living.

"I'm getting more contact now from people in the tiny home industry, because I've been building these tiny homes," he said. "People are really into it."

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