



Wooden Canoe Heritage Association

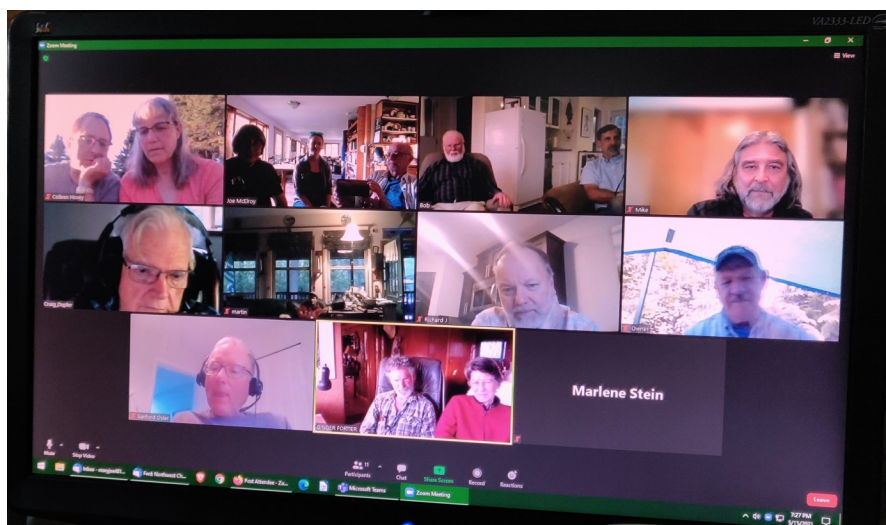
NORTHWEST CHAPTER

Northwest Chapter WCHA Newsletter May 2021

NW Chapter Virtual Spring Meet!

Wow! How very nice to see our friends again, if only on a screen! The NW Chapter's first virtual meeting (May 15), organized by Colleen Hovey, Craig Dupler, Mike Livdahl and Martin Ferwerda, was lightly but enthusiastically attended, and had representatives from Alberta, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

Colleen discussed the upcoming WCHA virtual 2021 Assembly, July 12–15, 2021. An exciting and interesting series of speakers and programs will air 4–7 pm PDT each day, and may be recorded for later viewing. Registration is open now on the WCHA website, with donations appreciated.



Michael Davidson told about the long-awaited re-launch of his beautiful 35' Ed Monk-designed gaff-rigged cutter, Starlight. After re-purchasing his former boat at salvage auction, Michael has spent the past ten years meticulously restoring Starlight to beyond new: a sleek, sturdy, world-cruising vision of marine art. (See more details and photos in this newsletter.)

Mike Livdahl gave three interesting slide presentations, first "The NW Chapter Having Fun"--a compilation of photos from past meets, including Boudi-inspired contests and games, shared fires, meals and carries, and the occasional capsize, all with smiling people and beautiful boats. His second series included canoe details—seats and caning patterns, canoe decorations—prominently featuring Dick Cross and Mike Wooten's canoes—and canoe decks. Mike began with a photo of the "deck shelf" in Mike Elliott's shop (deck patterns and reference examples from many, many canoe makers). He gave a chronological history of decks, showing how early spruce root lashings on birch bark canoes persisted as decorative features of early Gerrish and other canoes, and how characteristic decks can be

identification features. His last feature was “Pretty Pictures”--artistic photos featuring canoes, water, mist and light—all with familiar lovely boats.

Des Winterbottom and Bob Podesta showed Bob's recent project, a complete canoe restoration under Des's guidance that included all nails and tacks, all planking, most of the ribs, and most of the stems. The current owner bought the canoe (maker unknown) from the original owner in Ottawa 50 years ago, and plans to pass it on to her children, along with the family cabin. The owner was in tears when she saw the restored canoe.



Griffin canoe "before"

Podesta photo



Griffin canoe "during"--original planking, parts and ribs in foreground.

Podesta photo



Griffin canoe "after"--ready for new adventures.

Podesta photo



Des's canoe #11 ready for restoration.

Podesta photo

Bob's next project will be a restoration of a boat Des built in 1974; the current owners have had it since 1986. The owners are very attached to their boat, and were thrilled to have the opportunity to meet Des, and have him part of the restoration project.

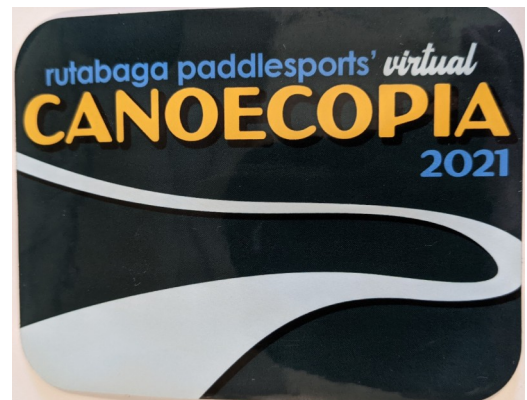


Claude Delisle and Colleen Hovey, Lake Coeur d'Alene, 2015 *Livdahl photo*

Claude Delisle discussed an upcoming project: Steve and Joan Ellsworth are bringing a canoe back with them from California to be given to Claude for restoration. The canoe, a Chestnut Pal or possibly Prospector—it has features of both-- was a wedding present for its original owner in 1985, and will become a wedding present for Colleen's daughter sometime in the future! All in all, how fun for us to get together! Depending on the border, and Covid, maybe we will see each other in person this fall.

More Virtual Canoeing: Canoecopia

Canoecopia, held in Wisconsin in March, is billed as the world's largest paddle sport expo. It always sounded interesting, but Washington is a long way from Wisconsin! However, this year, the event was virtual! I invested my \$15, and what an enjoyable experience it was. Rutabaga Paddle Sports coordinated three solid days of 80-plus speakers and many vendors, with all sessions recorded, so that weeks later, I was still watching talks. Paddle strokes, outdoor cooking, camping gear, canoe, kayak and paddleboard gear, loon research, bear safety, camp music, choosing a guide, specific boating trips, how to read a river—what a welcome change from a winter of glitchy must-watch teams and zooms!



Planning for Canoecopia 2022 is underway, presently expected to be held live in Wisconsin in March, with hopefully a virtual version also. I probably won't be in Wisconsin, but if it has a virtual option, I'll be back for more Canoecopia. Mary Norton

Paddling Connections - by Bruce Baker

I'm fortunate to have spent the most memorable days of my boyhood on our family pond in Michigan. Next to the spillway, there was a weathered 1800s vintage wooden mill which was said to have been used years earlier to saw logs into lumber. Through cracks in the sagging floorboards could be seen what was left of a large cider press. Stored in the mill was the old wooden canoe of my youth, its former livery number appearing faintly on its well worn and age-cracked canvas skin which was coming loose around the edges. The canoe had some broken wood and needed a total restoration. As a kid, I had spent many enjoyable hours in that canoe, exploring the pond and fishing for bass and bluegills. A friend and I would turn it over and get inside the air pocket before righting it and practicing getting back into it without shipping any water.

To make way for a new building, my Dad tore down the old mill. As we stacked the gray weathered siding boards onto a fire, Dad and I briefly considered whether the canoe was worth salvaging. I'd written to the Old Town canoe company in Maine to see what it would cost for materials to restore it. Given the cost, my lack of experience, and my time being consumed by a young family and a need to supplement full-time enrollment in college with part-time employment, a canoe project was out of the question. So, it was with great regret that I slid the old gal onto the raging fire. Looking back, I wish we'd saved it. It would be decades before my adventures with traditional wooden canoes would be rekindled.

In the years since, I've paddled more modern canoes of aluminum, Royalex, and Kevlar, but there's simply nothing like paddling a wooden canoe, especially one that you've built yourself.

Fast forward to my retirement from a career in natural resource management. With the help of books by Rollin Thurlow, Jerry Stelmok, and Walt Simmons, I decided to build my own canoes. Living in southeast Alaska, I did not have access to construction forms for wood/canvas models, so I built my own, one for Rollin Thurlow's 15-foot *Cheemaun* design and one for his 17.5-foot *Atkinson Traveler* design. Rollin provided much of what was needed to build the forms, and I constructed each of them in two mirror



Atkinson Traveler detail. Bruce Baker photo



"Torg" Torgerson & Atkinson Traveler

Bruce Baker photo

image sections, one fore and one aft, so that they could be moved more easily than heavy one-piece canoe forms can be.

The form for the *Atkinson Traveler* I eventually shipped by barge to the late Dick Wagner for use at The Center for Wooden Boats on Lake Union, Washington. The form for the *Cheemaun* I sold to John Bielenberg of McCall, Idaho in 2003. I see in the October 2020 issue of this newsletter that John and his wife have donated the form to the chapter, and I'm pleased to learn that Chip and Matt Asbury recently built their canoe on it.

With the help of Walt Simmons' books and plans for building lapstrake planked canoes, I also built the *Arctic Tern*, a 13-footer using Alaska yellow cedar, western red cedar, ash, and walnut.



Arctic Tern

Bruce Baker photo



Arctic Tern showing snap-on Spray Cover *Bruce Baker photo*



Arctic Tern. Note snaps for Spray Cover.

Bruce Baker photo

These canoes have served me well. When paddling any of them solo, I use a 9-foot Shaw & Tenney double bladed paddle made of spruce, because of its light weight. In addition to hundreds of day outings, I've paddled the *Arctic Tern* from my home in Juneau south across Taku Inlet, down alongside Admiralty Island, and then across the island by a series of lakes and portages, the longest carry being at least 3 miles. I made a detachable portage yoke, and the craft is light enough that I could make the carry with only one brief stop. Million-acre Admiralty Island is known to have an average of one Alaska brown bear per square

mile. With my vision partly blocked by the canoe on my shoulders, I'd periodically yell "Hey Bear" to announce my presence as I followed the densely forested portage trail. By installing a nifty snap-on

Cordura nylon deck with spray skirt that my late wife June made, the *Arctic Tern* was able to handle at least two-foot waves during the saltwater portions of the trip. She rides waves like a miniature whale boat rather than punching through them as many modern kayaks with straight sheer lines do. On the calm island lakes, the deck wasn't necessary.



Sig Olson & Cheemaun

Bruce Baker photo

The *Atkinson Traveler* proved itself on a 230-mile paddle that June and I made with friends down the Teslin River and a stretch of the Yukon River to Carmacks in Canada's Yukon Territory.

The *Cheemaun* has served me well in the San Juan Islands, here in Juneau, and on lakes in northern British Columbia. Standing beside it in the photo is long-time friend and fellow paddler and skier, the late Sigurd (Sig) T. Olson, son of

Sigurd F. Olson of Boundary Waters Canoe Area fame and whose books are familiar to many canoeists. As Sig the elder wrote, "There is magic in the feel of a paddle and the movement of a canoe, a magic compounded of distance, adventure, solitude, and peace. The way of a canoe is the way of wilderness and of a freedom almost forgotten." He might have added that this is especially true in canoes made of wood. Happy paddling!

Related articles by the author:

Paddling the Yukon Headwaters. Wooden Canoe, Issue 83, Oct. 1997

October Canoes. Wooden Canoe, Issue 67, Feb. 1995

Canoe Shop – A Tern for the Better. Wooden Canoe, Issue 25, Winter 1986



Alexandra enjoys the Cheemaun

B. Baker photo

Lake Samish Styrofoam Removal by Joan Ellsworth

Remember our meets at Lake Samish? Our Chapter had nine (9) meets at Camp Lutherwood there between 1994 and 2009. It's a beautiful, natural crescent-shaped lake, just 10 miles south of Bellingham, Washington. Most of the lake's shoreline is lined with homes, most of which have a dock of some sort to provide recreational access to the clean waters. The residents of the area have always volunteered to keep the inevitable litter picked up along our roads and now we are targeting one source of litter that is increasingly becoming an eyesore right on the water. This spring, we are organizing an effort to remove Styrofoam debris from around the lake.

You likely know what Styrofoam is. As a refresher, Styrofoam (expanded polystyrene beads) is the same material used in coffee cups and as cushioning material in packaging. It's lightweight and buoyant, so it's been used in dock construction for many years . . . all those aging docks around the perimeter of Lake Samish, and I'm sure many other water bodies around the world.

So, here's the problem. Styrofoam is made up of small "beads" joined together to form a larger shape. Over the years, Styrofoam used in docks takes a beating from wave action and the bonds between the beads break down. Small pieces of the material come loose, and these pieces can resemble food to fish and birds. If ingested, they can lodge in the digestive system of the animal, causing trauma or death. What's more, Styrofoam debris on the shoreline or floating in the lake is unsightly. Styrofoam gets very heavy when waterlogged and is expensive to recycle, so it's not accepted at many recycling facilities. It takes decades or centuries for Styrofoam to break down, according to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and other sources.

There are several ways you can help mitigate this Styrofoam problem where you do your canoeing:

- If you see pieces of it on your own shoreline or floating in the water, remove it and dispose of it in the trash.

- Consider removing polystyrene from your docks and structures and replacing it with an environmentally friendly alternative. The State of Washington does not allow Styrofoam to be used in dock construction any more unless it is enclosed.

You can check with a local marine contractor in your area for alternatives.



At Lake Samish, we are working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Whatcom County Department of Public Works to sponsor a clean-up effort. We have identified about 15-18 locations where large, derelict Styrofoam pieces exist and we have obtained property owners permission to remove it. A team of volunteers will be moving the Styrofoam to a public boat launch area where it can be picked up and disposed of by our county's Public Works Department.

In addition, we have provided an educational flyer to Lake Samish residents to open awareness about the hazards of Styrofoam litter and what can be done about getting rid of it. Our website (www.lakesamish.org) will also continue to provide information on the issue. Hopefully, once the word gets out, the presence of this stuff will be greatly diminished.

Canoe Shop Projects



Martin Ferwerda is building a new 18' Thompson "Hiawatha" using the original Thompson factory form he restored.
Ferwerda photo

northwest.wcha.org

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Decade of work culminates in ‘Starlight’s’ re-launch: Michael Davidson’s Sailboat by Nick Twietmeyer, from the Port Townsend Leader

As they say, it’s better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. But even sweeter still, and much rarer than comforting platitudes, is the re-discovery of a love previously thought lost.

The story of Michael Davidson and his 35-foot gaff cutter, “Starlight” is one such romance, recovered from the icy grip of fate after nearly being lost forever.

Looking at Starlight today, one need not stare for long before finding the charm that first drew Davidson to her. She has clean lines and an uncluttered deck with beautiful blonde deck planking that catches the sun, harkening to her namesake.

But Starlight has not always been as she was when Davidson first laid eyes on her in July 1976.

Davidson and the boat’s stars first crossed after he sailed into Port Townsend aboard a Cascade 42 he’d built himself. Soon after coming ashore, Davidson found himself in the employ of Chinook Marine and, later, by the renowned Cecil Lange & Sons boatbuilders.

“When I sailed into Port Townsend, I got a job down here,” he said. “We were all fledgling shipwrights, that’s kind of where it started.”

As luck would have it, Cecil Lange’s son, Brian David Lange, was looking to sell his recently completed boat, Starlight.

“She was for sale, brand-spankin’ new and I fell totally in love,” Davidson recalled.

In 1979, two years after purchasing Starlight from Lange, Davidson left Port Townsend aboard his new boat, bound for Oregon waters.

“I went up the Columbia River where I’d launched my first boat,” he said. “Then up the Willamette and to Oregon City. I came out of there, it was 1980 — I had no water tanks — and I’m sitting in the city of Saint Helens.”

Then the mountain blew.

“She was completely covered with ash, so I took a water hose that was on the dock and I went up to the top of the mast and started spraying her down,” he remembered. After he’d cleared the ash from his boat, Davidson made a point to save a few quarts of ash to remember the event.

A friend of Davidson’s was in the process of constructing a pair of water tanks for Starlight, but instead of waiting for the tanks to be finished, Davidson opted to sail while the getting was good.

“They were going to close the river, my water tanks weren’t finished, so I went out to Newport, Oregon ... and my father flew the tanks down in his Cessna 180 when they were done and we installed them there.”

From there, Davidson moseyed his way up and down the West Coast, to British Columbia and down to Acapulco, Mexico, out to the Pacific and around New Zealand.

“I just headed down the coast. I’ve put-in in a lot of different places, places I probably shouldn’t have, crossed bars that I probably shouldn’t have gone in, but everything went just fine,” Davidson said.

On more than one occasion, Starlight saw Davidson through to safety during a full-blown hurricane — once while at sea and another while anchored in harbor.

“The one at sea was off the South Island of New Zealand,” Davidson said. “I estimated it was about between 100- and 110-knot winds. That was Oct. 2, 1981.”

“The seas were coming out of the Antarctic and they don’t make them any bigger anywhere else than down there,” he recalled. “My mast was 55 feet to the top, and when I was in the fetch [of the storm], spray was going across the top of my mast.”

For most folks, sailing through such a storm would be enough to rattle them up. But as Davidson put it, sailing through such a storm “got boring as the dickens.”

“Everything’s relative; you get used to it,” he said. “There’s nothing more exciting than getting shot at and missed. But after a while it becomes relative.”

It’s probably worth noting that Davidson served with the 508th Army Airborne Battalion between 1962 and 1965, during which time he was attached to the Jungle Warfare Training Center in Panama where he taught jungle survival skills to the ranks of Rangers and Special Forces.

For five years Starlight and Davidson sailed together throughout the Pacific, returning occasionally in the winters to earn some cash before venturing out again. Davidson and Starlight’s story continued in similar fashion until the sailor began to yearn for a new endeavor.

Again, Starlight carried Davidson back to Port Townsend, where he outfitted himself with a pair of horses and set out on a different kind of adventure.

“I always wanted to ride long distance on horseback,” Davidson said. “So, I bought two horses, and rode out of here cross country.”

From 1984 to 1985, Davidson journeyed overland across the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, through Oregon’s John Day country, up into Idaho. All told, Davidson estimated he covered some 1,200 miles on horseback.

While traveling, Davidson’s path crossed a ranch in eastern Oregon that called to him. So he bought it and began homesteading on the property.

“It was a helluva deal; 35 grand for 160 acres,” Davidson said. “It was just an amazing place.”

With his time now occupied mostly by the demands of his Eastern Oregon ranch, Davidson realized the time had come to make a difficult decision.

“I had to do something, either continue with the boat or the ranch,” he said. “It was robbing each other to do both, so I decided to sell the boat.”

“I was always sorry about that.”

In the interceding years between 1993 — when he sold Starlight — and 2011, Davidson made the decision to leave his ranch in Oregon and once more found himself in Port Townsend. Shortly after his return, he found that an old friend had been waiting for him.



Starlight sunk in Jackson Cove

M. Davidson photo



Starlight prior to DNR Auction

M Davidson photo

It had been 18 years since he'd last seen Starlight, and Davidson's hair had begun to show a little more gray. A few of the wrinkles on his face had become more defined. But it was she who was now showing her years. Protracted neglect at the hands of her subsequent owner prompted Starlight's early decline into disrepair.

The boat had sank in Jackson Cove, near Dabob Bay, and was re-floated by the Washington state Department of Natural Resources.

Davidson was heartbroken at the sight of his beloved Starlight, but when DNR placed the boat up for auction, there was no question what needed to be done.

"I said, 'I'm going to get that boat back,'" he recalled.

When an acquaintance approached Davidson sharing his intent to bid on the boat as well, he was met with an assurance that Starlight would be returning to her former owner.

"He was looking at the boat to buy and I told him, 'There's no sense in you bidding on this boat, because I'm going to buy it.' And he knew it, and he didn't bid on it," Davidson said.

Thus began a decade of work to breathe life back into Starlight.

Standing in Sea Marine's gravel boatyard, Davidson looks up to his boat and shakes his head in disbelief at the culmination of his efforts.

"I'm still shocked, because when you're working on a boat ... you're just doing little details, you say, 'Oh well, that's what I got done today.' And you go home tired," he said. "But when this boat pulled out of that shed last week, it was like a birthing."

Starlight's restoration included routing away damaged sections of her strip planking and in-laying new planks to re-form her hull shape.



*Ten years in a boat shed. Note bandsaw on scaffolding.
M. Davidson photo*



New spars for rigging as gaff cutter. M. Davidson photo



New decks. M Davidson photo



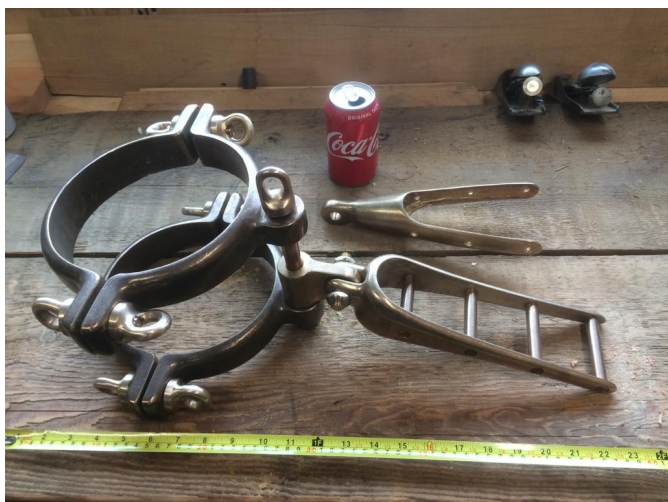
Eye splice for new rigging. M. Davidson photo

All of her stainless steel fittings were replaced with bronze, sourced through the Port Townsend Foundry. Davidson also cut and shaped a new mast out of a fir pole. She was re-decked and her cockpit was rebuilt.

For his help in the restoration effort, Davidson thanked Brian Hayes, calling him “The best shipwright here in town, both because we’re friends and also because I see his work.”

For his own part, Davidson said some of the work that was done on Starlight was completely new to him, but somehow each task came together throughout the process.

“That’s the first mast I’d ever built, the first boom I’d ever built. It all just came to me, it’s amazing,” Davidson said. “I still am in awe of everything. It’s like it was supposed to be.”



Bronze fittings cast at Pt Townsend Foundry *M Davidson photo*



Ginger varnishes trimwork.

M Davidson photo



Clamping gunwales.

M. Davidson photo



Installing ports.

M. Davidson photo



Perfect fit! M. Davidson photo

After 10 years of work—to the month—and with a crowd gathered at the Point Hudson Marina last Friday, Starlight was anointed with splashes of rum and lowered down to taste salt water again.



Air scoops and winches installed.

M Davidson photo



Hand-carved name with gold leaf applied

M. Davidson photo

It was a baptism of sorts. After being lowered in the slings, it became apparent that a valve was in need of replacement before she could stay in the water.

But, Davidson said, the hard part was over and what remained were only minor tweaks.

As for what he has planned for Starlight, Davidson said he isn't sure.

"I don't want a sail cover," he said simply.

When pondering the question of why he felt so compelled to devote a decade of time and effort into Starlight, Davidson pointed to their history together sailing the open seas and the protection she offered him from the elements along the way.

"I loved her," he said. "She saved my life. Now I've saved hers."

Davidson's eyes welled up just a bit. "That's the way I see it. I owed her."



S/V Starlight , back in salt water at Port Townsend.

M. Davidson photos

WCHA Board Report to the members of the Northwest Chapter

Your international WCHA Board has been working diligently on quite a few different projects. Here's an update . . .

- The new website is up and running! We sure hope you all like it! I am still acting as the volunteer webmaster, but am hoping to pass that job off soon. If you know anyone who would be amazing at it, let me know!
- The new Wooden Canoe Journal has been extremely well received!
- Our financial situation is looking good at the moment. This is due in part to the fact that the website is being managed on a volunteer basis, I don't think this will continue, but the great strides we've made to keep the organization financially viable will no doubt help when we finally hire someone for that position.
- We have been working hard on an advertising fee structure for Wooden Canoe so that we can improve our finances even more, In the coming months you will see beautiful ads for businesses that interest Wooden Canoe enthusiasts, If you know of such a business, be sure to reach out to me so we can approach them. For those of you concerned about how ads will be integrated into our beautiful magazine, please know that your Board and Editor are very aware of the fact that we need to honor the intent of the journal. This will be very tastefully and tactfully done.
- Finally, the biggest thing we've been working on of late . . .our very first Virtual Assembly! Of course we all wish we could meet in person, but the virtual assembly will be a real bonus, especially for folks from our chapter. Many will be able to attend who wouldn't have been able to physically make the trip East. Some things we are working on . . .
 - a virtual paddle-by
 - shop tours
 - a panel discussion with female builders
 - and MUCH MORE!

Be sure to get registered today by going to woodencanoe.org and clicking on the "Register Now" button. Registration is free. We are simply asking for a donation to the organization if you are able.

Speaking of fundraising, here are some options . . .

- add to your purchase at our on-line store. A donation option is built in.
- purchase a raffle ticket (or a few) for our Assembly Quilt. These will be on sale May 22 in the on-line store, and the drawing will be during the Virtual Assembly.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have suggestions, comments or need information. I can't wait to see you all in person again!



*Colleen and Charlie, Manning 2018
Livdahl photo*

Colleen Hovey

WCHA Vice President

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Enter the Virtual Assembly Canoe Paddle-By: Deadline May 31

REVISED PARADE OF CANOES

Deadline date changed to May 31, 2021

The Assembly Paddle-By & Salute, and the Tour of Notable Canoes on the Green are highlight activities for many Assembly attendees. For our virtual Assembly this year, we're putting together an activity called a Parade of Canoes.

You can participate in the Parade by sending in a video and written story, or photo(s) and a written story of your canoe.

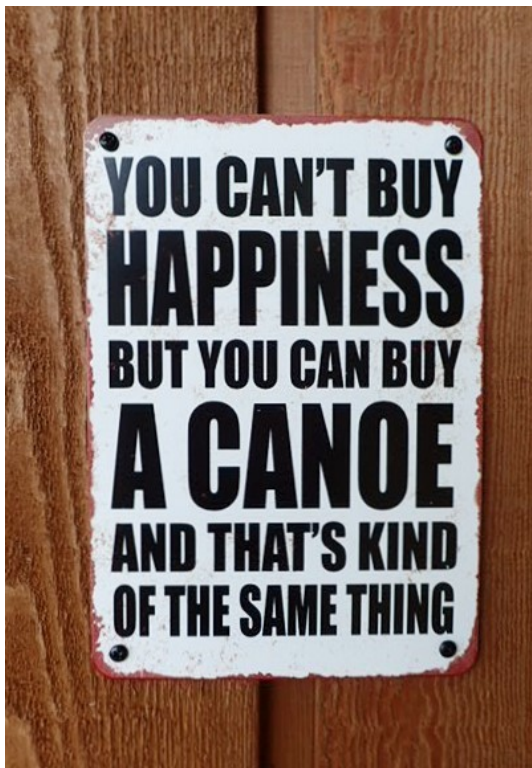
To help with your story include information such as,

- Your Name, Location, and Chapter if applicable
- A description of your canoe
- What are it's unique features i.e. age, manufacturer, build records, history
- Interesting facts about the canoe
- Maybe why it is an important canoe to you

We have 55 minutes allotted for the Parade so we are asking you to please adhere to the following criteria.

- The video and the story must not exceed 45 seconds. It can be shorter, but 45 seconds is the maximum time to show your canoe and tell your story
- Videos must be in MP4 format (I can likely help with this)
- Photographs must be in JPG format (I can likely help with this (Colleen))
- Written stories can be part of your submission email, a text document, word document, or open-office format

REVISED DEADLINE for submission is May 31, 2021 (this gives my Daughter and I some time to put the stories and photos/video's into a recorded presentation for review by the Assembly planning committee).



Please email your photos, video's and stories to WCHAprade@gmail.com

President's Letter:

It was September of 2005. Our new Atkinson Traveler, which was two years in the making in our single car garage in NE Seattle, had been launched a couple of months earlier. I had taken it with me to work on a Friday, and was headed out from there to attend my first encounter with the NW Chapter. I wasn't quite sure what to expect. When I arrived home from that outing to Camp Dudley late Sunday evening, my announcement to the family while grinning quite broadly, was that "I had just spent the weekend with a bunch of folks just like me." I don't think we have missed a meet since then, except to say that like everyone else, I have missed seeing everyone at our meets. It seems like forever since we last gathered some twenty months ago.

So it was that when Mike Livdahl suggested we have a virtual meet, and Colleen quickly jumped in to organize it, we just had to do it. It was a small group that was able to join in this past Saturday, but my how big the smiles were. Everyone was feeling just so happy for that small bit of connection. I know I speak for the whole chapter when I said that we need to see everyone together in one place again, and that it can't happen soon enough.

With any luck, we will have a meet at Lone Duck #2 once again this coming Fall. It is too early to say that for certain. The pandemic is still raging in some areas. The border is still closed to tourist traffic. And, B.C. Parks has not yet decided to reopen their facilities. But, we are hoping that will all change in time for us to go ahead.

In the meantime, continue to stay safe and healthy. Toasting everyone with a glass of wine: here's to getting us all back together again soon!

Craig



Sue Parker and Craig Dupler, Camp Bishop 2018

Livdahl photo