

# Wooden Canoe Heritage Association

NORTHWEST CHAPTER

## Northwest Chapter WCHA Spring Newsletter

June 2018

**Happy 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Northwest Chapter!** The 2018 Spring Meet, May 10-13, 2018, was a celebratory gathering for the Northwest Chapter, at beautiful Lost Lake in Shelton, WA. With special guests, good friends, beautiful boats and sunny weather, who could ask for more?

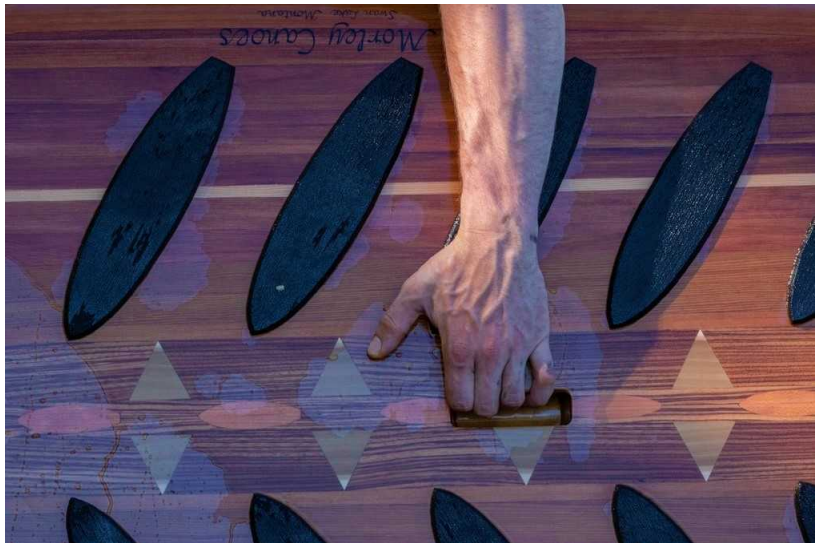
More than fifty people and 20-plus boats gathered at YMCA Camp Bishop for the long birthday weekend. Thursday arrivals set up camp, boated, and helped with camp spring clean-up chores, raking leaves and trails in the main lodge area. The newly remodeled camp kitchen was appreciated by all, with a brand new microwave installed just in time for Friday breakfast!

Special guests for the birthday weekend included **WCHA national president Michael Grace and his wife Tanya**, traveling from Florida for the occasion. Fitting into chapter activities like good friends we just hadn't met yet, the Graces enlivened conversations with canoe and natural history knowledge, shared ideas from other chapters, and offered a broad and enthusiastic perspective on the international WCHA organization and the Assembly meet. Hosted by the Moores and the Duplers, the Graces paddled a variety of canoes, explored the camp's northwest forest, and found common interests with many chapter members. In addition, Michael presented two highly enjoyable programs to the group. Thank you for visiting our chapter, Michael and Tanya! We hope to see you again soon!



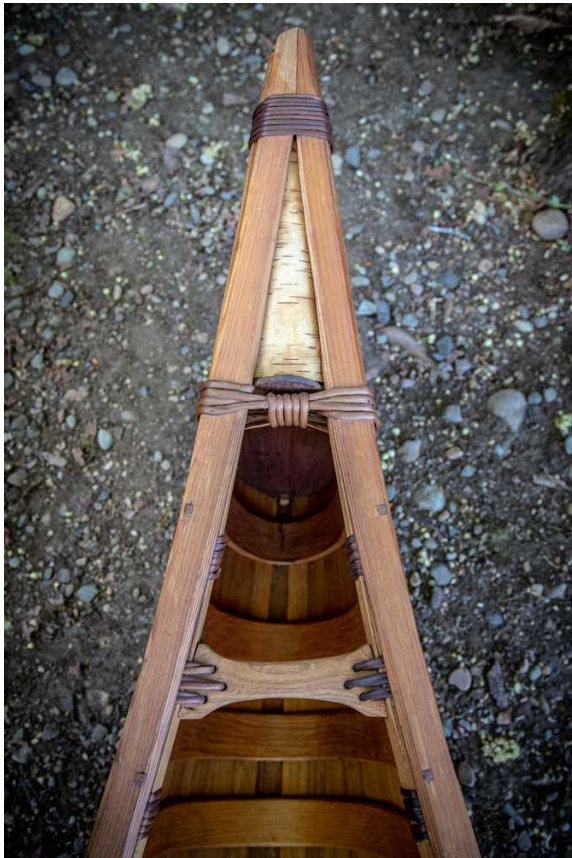
*Beth Arcand Makes a Birthday Wish  
Mike Livdahl photo*

“Meet the Canoes” was the weekend’s first scheduled activity, with the group gathering on the lake shore and dock to admire and hear about the assembled boats, old and new. First launchings included Mikel Moore’s graduation present, a silky-smooth custom Morely paddle board, featuring a glossy schematic inlay of a mountain river, with the snow capped mountains made of inner (green) and outer (white) poplar wood. Mikel’s and Zach Frederick’s paddle boards were popular craft for members to enjoy on the lake.



*Mikel Moore shared her Morely Paddle Board  
Mike Livdahl photo*

Another boat launched for the first time was John Lucking’s light little Mac McCarthy-model 11.5’ strip canoe. John told the group that he has plans and forms for a number of strip canoes, including a Bob’s Special, and he would be happy to mentor anyone interested in building strip boats.



*Frank Gunness' Birchbark Canoe  
Mike Livdahl photo*

John also brought “Autumn Leaf”, a small, nimble orange canoe with Northwest Chapter roots. Built originally by Morris Elliott’s Kanaka Canoe company, the boat was owned by Carl Hoth, and later re-discovered by John while in Alaska. John hopes to find a new home for the canoe within the Northwest Chapter.

Frank and Janice Gunness brought their birchbark canoe, built using the John Jennings’ book on Tappan Adney collected designs. The beautifully built boat is a “Malecite” model 14’, 1870 design, using birch bark and white cedar ribs, with thwarts mortised in, pegged and wrapped with locally hand-dug, split spruce roots. The birch bark, obtained from a dealer in Spokane, is imported from Siberia in the sizes needed for a canoe. The spruce root seams are sealed with pitch.

Sandy Dengler noted that their Carlton canoe, with seats newly re-caned, will happily stay in the Dengler family.

Pete Pride brought his 1930 green 15' Old Town 50-#, purchased as a project at Assembly. He noted that it is built on the same mold as their Trapper model, but features thinner ribs and outwales. Dick Cross showed his green mystery canoe (Chestnut? Peterborough?) with reshaped sheer line at bow and stern, elegant pin-stripe, intricate star-patterned caning and butternut decks. Bill Paine brought their red 17.5' Atkinson Traveler canoe with half-ribs, built on the Center for Wooden Boat's Stelmok form. Bill mentioned that he also has a 15' form available similar to the Cheemaun form. Scott Christianson demonstrated a recent project, a 12' spruce pole for canoe poling, with a fitted bronze tip.



*Kurt and Laura Schmidt in 1917 Kennebec  
Mike Livdahl photo*

Kurt Schmidt showed their 1917 Kennebec, his dad's canoe in college, which then sat waiting for refurbishment until the 1970's. After the boat had been moved around the country several times, Kurt began the restoration process, incorporating spruce from their own yard, and thwarts from trees at his grandfather's farm. Michael Grace pointed out unusual details in this boat, including its wide, flat stems—more typical of Morris stems than the more square Kennebec stems, evidence of the sometimes close relationship between the two canoe companies.

Friday's sunny weather drew many people to enjoy the lake for boating, fishing and paddle boarding, as more chapter members arrived throughout the day. After dinner Friday evening, the group gathered in the lodge for special guest speakers.

**“Restoring Fancy Old Canoes”** The first featured speaker for the weekend was Grand Forks, British Columbia canoe restorer/builder and author Mike Elliott. Mike updated the group on the progress of his present book in progress, *This Fancy Old Canoe*, beginning with a discussion of the “two canoe cultures” that led to this second book. His first book, *This Old Canoe*, focused mainly on working canoes, often Canadian, and often Chestnuts, Peterboroughs, Greenwood, etc: built to be used and designed to be repaired easily when needed. The new, companion volume will concentrate on the special features of more complex canoes, often from American makers, and sometimes more recreational in purpose. The book will discuss the attributes and meticulous planning needed to achieve a standard of excellence in restoration, and will have a reference section devoted to design specifications and measurements of many canoe models. Individual chapters will be devoted to specific “fancy canoe” restoration topics such as closed gunwales, long decks, sponsons, floor grates, decorative work, etc.. We look forward to seeing the new book!



*Mike Elliott in Greenwood Canoe  
Mike Livdahl photo*



Michael and Tanya Grace and NW Chapter Members at Dinner  
Mike Livdahl photo

**“Canoes, Cameras and the Silver King: Early 1900’s Tarpon Fishing from Wooden Canoes in Tropical South Florida”** Our WCHA national president and special guest Michael Grace successfully drew diverse historic and biologic threads together into an entertaining and informative discussion about turn-of-the-century canoes in Florida. His own childhood outdoor explorations in Georgia led to an interest in natural history and on to a research and college teaching career in neurobiology. Retinal research led to the Silver King, the Atlantic Tarpon (*Megalops atlanticus*), a visually guided predator and acrobatic game fish whose eyes have 5 types of color sensors, and are 10,000 times more sensitive to color than those of most mammals. The fish spawn in the Atlantic, and enjoy the warmer gulf waters off the west coast of Florida; large fish may be 60-70 years old, and can weigh up to 300 pounds.

Several of Michael’s interests came together with the discovery of an old book, *The Book of the Tarpon*, which chronicled the efforts of early photographers Anthony Weston Dimmock (father) and Julius Anthony Dimmock (his son), working together in the early 1900’s documenting the ethnography of the Seminole tribe for the American Museum of Natural History. On the side, they went tarpon fishing and alligator hunting from their canoes. From their photographs, the canoes included a 15’ Peterborough, an 18’ wide-board canoe, and a Gerrish or Rushton Indian Girl. Catching and landing 100- 200 pound fish from an open canoe yielded exciting photos of the acrobatic fish leaping high over the boats, and occasionally, photos of the canoe capsizing while trying to get a giant fish in over the gunwale. Included were a photo of Seminoles poling a cypress-log canoe, and many historic photos of gulf-coast bird life. Michael noted that now, only approximately 10% of the birds and alligators the Dimmocks saw are now left in the Florida wilds, and that tarpons are now a catch-and-release fish.



*Janice and Frank Gunness Tee Off  
Dick Howland photo*

**New Canadian Sport Introduced!** President Colleen Hovey convened the group for a brief board meeting Saturday afternoon, then quickly moved on to an exciting announcement. Lost Lake was the place to be that day for the American introduction to the new sport now sweeping Canada: Canoe Golf! Plastic putters and drivers were issued to competitors, who also utilized canoe paddles to move their floating balls towards the marked ring “holes” on the lake. Like conventional golf, the new sport was also compelling as a spectator sport, with the audience watching and laughing from beach and dock. When scorecards were finally tallied,



*Sue Cross Caddies for Dick Cross  
Dick Howland photo*



*Dick Cross Drives out of Water Hazard  
Dick Howland photo*

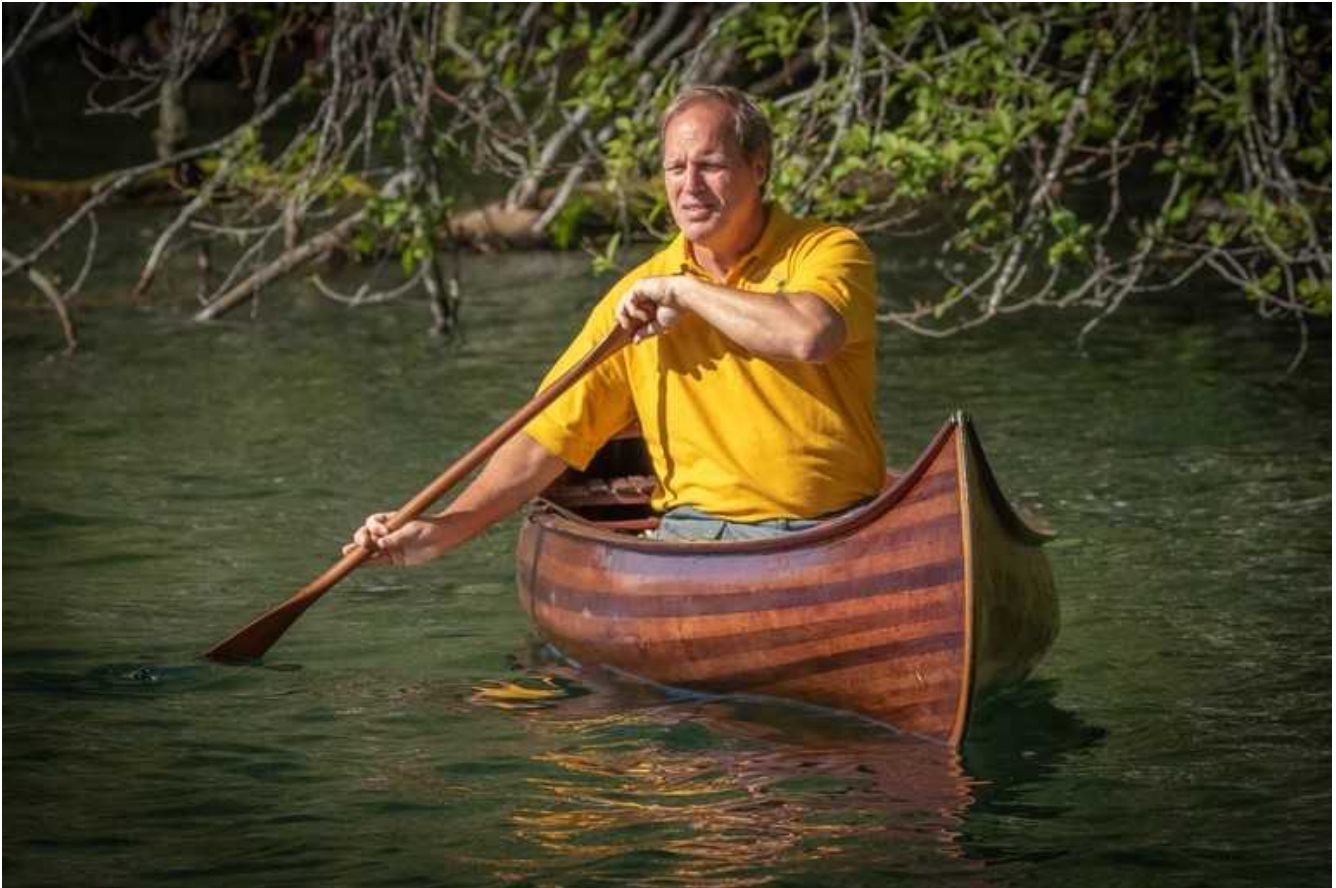


*Pete Pride Sinks a Putt  
Dick Howland photo*

Team War Canoe—whose cooperation, commitment and focus on a common goal overcame their use of a long-decked fancy canoe—emerged victorious in this Canadian sport, narrowly edging out second place finisher Pete Pride. Now that the sport has become international, we look for it in the Olympics soon.



*Golf Tournament Winner Team War Canoe: V & J Heikkila, J & R Cullins, T & M Grace, Z Fredericks & M Moore  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Michael Grace in the Ellsworth's 1921 Willits  
Mike Livdahl photo*

Michael Grace was Saturday afternoon's featured speaker, presenting **"Notes from the Southeastern Willits Canoe Museum,"** a look at a part of the Grace's personal canoe collection of special interest to north-westerners. In possible answer to the question, "What drives a person to Willits madness?" he offered a quote by author E. B. White, "I do not ever recall seeing a properly designed boat that was not a beautiful boat . . ." The purity of line, loveliness and symmetry of the canoes are a beautiful and natural addition to the beautiful natural world. Michael's wonderfully restored Willits canoes include representatives from each of what he sees as three series of Willits boats, with the first early models from 1919, with stems inset into the hulls, and keels that were not full length. One of these, # 6(C)19, was sold to a Willits relative for \$65, while #6(C)21 was first purchased for \$92! Middle series canoes included canoes built beginning around 1922, including his #266, "Platypus," a butterfly-rigged sailing canoe. Later canoes included #679, the 1942 sailing canoe delivered to Michael by Craig Dupler, and #696, a 143 model originally selling for \$125, and shipped to a Minnesota new owner from Tacoma for \$20. Michael's collection also includes Willits accessories of all kinds, including sailing rigs with fin keels, rudders of numerous types, canoe rugs, car top carriers and slat back rests. Chapter members have no doubt added the Southeastern Willits Canoe Museum to their lists of places to visit! (See Michael's article in WCHA magazine #200, (April 2017) for more photos of his Willits canoes and accessories.)



*Sandy Dengler, Ursula & Bill Paine, Beth Arcand: Founding members  
Mike Livdahl photo*

**Saturday evening's barbecued salmon and oyster potluck dinner** organized by Vern Heikkila was enjoyed by all, and was followed by 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary birthday cakes with candles. President Colleen introduced the founding members present, Bill and Ursula Paine, Beth Arcand and Sandy Dengler, who together blew out the birthday candles. Everyone joined in singing "Happy Birthday" to the chapter, with hopes of many more happy birthdays!

Following the festive dinner, Claude Deslisle and assistant/model Kurt Schmidt began **the chapter's fundraising auction**, always a source of exciting canoe items and amazing bargains. This year, a silent auction was held for a number of desirable books, including many contributed by Sandy Dengler. With the silent auction closed, the auctioneer team went to work on other items donated by the chapter members, including tools, hand-made gloves and hats, food items, rain gear, and the auction-topping item: personal genealogy research by Phyllis Christianson. With all items sold to pleased customers, the chapter had earned \$1998! Thank you to all who donated and purchased, and to our entertaining auctioneers!

After Dawn Patrol Sunday morning, chapter members lingered over breakfasts, reluctant to pack gear, clean up camp and head for home. Many took last canoe trips around the lake in the sun before loading boats. It's difficult to say good bye to so many friends. We hope to see everyone at Manning Park in September! Thank you to President Colleen Hovey and assistant Claude Deslisle, our special guests Michael and Tanya Grace, and all who made this meet a success. Welcome to incoming President Craig Dupler!





*Sue Cross Enjoys a Solo Paddle*  
*Mike Livdahl Photo*



*Mike Livdahl Enjoys a Solo Paddle*  
*Dick Howland Photo*

## Chapter Meeting:

President Colleen Hovey called a board and chapter meeting Saturday afternoon, May 12, 2018. Treasurer Joan Ellsworth gave a report: we have \$5,034.53 in the chapter account, with this event's auction money to come in, and camping/dinner fees to come in. We need to pay for Camp Bishop, event insurance, and the Graces' airfares. The Bielenberg on-line auction money is still to be collected.



*Mikel Moore, Zach Frederick and Sage Enjoy Lost Lake  
Dick Howland Photo*



*Martin and Rebecca Ferwerda with Briggs  
Mike Livdahl photo*

- **The Fall Meet will be at Manning Park, September 13-16, 2018.**
- Next spring's Meet, after some discussion and interest in Camp Lutherwood, and Cama Beach, will again be at Camp Bishop in 2019. Hopefully we will see the completion of the canoe house!
- **The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary book**, a year-book like collection of color photos and information of the past 25 years of the Northwest Chapter, will be available soon. The book includes photos collected over the first years by Ruth Hoth, and many taken in later years by Mike Livdahl, with program notes on each meet. Meet information and photos were collected by Joan Ellsworth and Mary Norton, with graphic layout by Colleen Hovey. A partial proof was available for viewing at the meet, and pre-orders are being taken.

You and your boat are probably in this book! Don't miss this special publication! Order information will be sent by email as soon as the book is finished.

- Bielenberg donation report:** Last year, John and Joy Bielenberg of McCall, Idaho made a large and generous donation of canoe lumber, books, canoe forms, tools and their #733 Willits sailing canoe to the chapter. To facilitate the sale and transport of the donated items, the board made several decisions: the chapter would accept Martin Ferwerda's offer to utilize some of the wood to build a canoe which he would then donate to the chapter. It can then be sold, raffled or donated by the chapter. The Bielenbergs' canoe forms (Cheemaun 15' w/c canoe form, and Peterborough 16' and White Guide 18' molds for strip canoes,) will be retained by the chapter, and loaned out to interested builders for a returnable \$100 deposit. The remaining items were sold in an on-line auction to chapter members. The Willits canoe was sold to Mark Adams of Reno, Nevada. Scott Christianson purchased the cedar 9', 10', and 12' boards, the remaining spruce, and the canoe "kit" of canvas, ribs, tacks, etc to build the Cheemaun. Joe McElroy purchased the 8' cedar and the bead and cove cedar strips. Thank you to the Bielenbergs for this very generous donation!



*Northwest Chapter, Spring Meet 2018, 25th Anniversary!  
Mike Livdahl photo*

- Chapter Elections:** The new Northwest Chapter president will be Craig Dupler! New board member will be Patra Moore. Thank you to outgoing board members Scott Christianson, Claude Deslisle and Vern Heikkila. Special thanks to outgoing president Colleen Hovey and assistant Claude Deslisle for their work the past two years!

**Remembering John Bielenberg: 1942-2018** John was an enthusiastic outdoors person - canoeist, camper and fisherman, who enjoyed wood-working and built a number of beautiful canoes. A lifelong Idaho resident, he grew up on a family wheat farm, and enjoyed a long career as a high school social studies and German language teacher. He was awarded a Fulbright teaching scholarship, and led multiple student trips to Germany. John will be missed by his many friends and students. The Northwest Chapter is particularly grateful for his thoughtful and generous donation to our chapter. Our sincere condolences to Joy and John's family.

**For Sale:**

Old Town 18' Guide model 1960's sailing canoe, in good condition. \$800. Located in Issaquah, WA. Contact Merrill E. Kleinmann. [mkleinmann@comcast.net](mailto:mkleinmann@comcast.net)

"Autumn Leaf" 16' canoe built by Morris Elliott's Kanaka Canoe Company, Maple Leaf, BC, about 25 years ago, and formerly owned by Carl Hoth. A light, responsive canoe. The owner would like to see the canoe remain in the Northwest Chapter. \$1,000. Located in Nampa, Idaho. [paddle907@gmail.com](mailto:paddle907@gmail.com)

**Northwest Chapter Fall Meet  
September 13-16, 2018 Manning Park, British Columbia  
See you there! Remember woolies and toques!**



*Claude Deslisle Paddles the Guinness Birchbark  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Ursula Paine and Patra Moore  
Mike Livdahl photo*



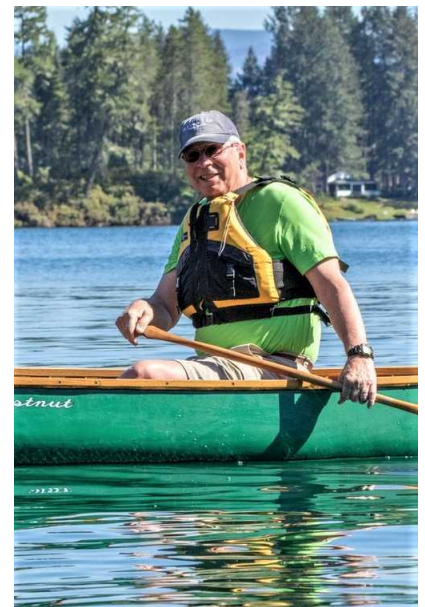
*Pete Pride Tries out "Autumn Leaf"  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*John Lucking  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Mikel Moore  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Pete Bristow Enjoys Lost Lake  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Barb Dobree  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Spring Meet at Lost Lake 2018  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Sharon Lucking  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Bob Moore  
Mike Livdahl photo*



*Courtney Codrington, Ray Arcand, Red Galvin  
Mike Livdahl photo*

**www.woodencanoe.org**

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## President's Message:

A little over twelve years ago, I took our new Atkinson Traveler to work one beautiful day in September. After showing it to a few coworkers during the day, I headed south to Camp Dudley and my very first visit to the NW Chapter of the WCHA. It was easily the best weekend I had enjoyed in quite a few years. When I got home late Sunday afternoon I gushed to Sue that "I just spent the weekend with a bunch of people just like me." Since then we have missed only a couple of meets, although one of those was due to a massive breakdown of our Subaru on the way to Manning. Our chapter's meets are definitely the highlight of our spring and fall. I know many of you feel the same way.



*Sue Parker and Craig Dupler in Atkinson Traveler  
Mike Livdahl photo*

Now I have to say that I think there is a streak of ornery humor in the club that I did not expect. Colleen isn't just a tough act to follow, for me it is virtually impossible. I mean I was the nerdy kid who didn't go to the proms back in high school or even go out on a date until I was a sophomore in college. And, part of this job is a kind of social director. Surely you must be joking! But, I'm sure we can roll with it and have a lot of fun. We may even get some tech or toy things worked on along the way.

For those of you who weren't able to join us at the spring meet this year, you missed a good one. WCHA international president Michael Grace and his wife Tanya were our special guests, but they signed in on our chapter's "new member" registry and we got the distinct impression that we have not seen the last of them. Our chapter is a special one in the WCHA world. We and our occasional guests from other chapters have known this for a long while. But now I'm afraid that the entire rest of the WCHA around the continent and across the planet will soon be hearing that message as well. I suspect we will have more folks from afar dropping in on us from time to time.

We will still be celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> year this fall at Manning Park, although we probably can pass on the birthday cakes this time. I mean four was really a bit much! We are still working on the program, and if there is anyone who has a presentation, talk, or demonstration that you would like to share with the group, this fall or at any time, please let me know. Please don't hesitate to contact me with that, or any other ideas or suggestions. You can reach me at [craig.dupler@gmail.com](mailto:craig.dupler@gmail.com).

Finally, thank you for the honor of letting me serve you for the next two years. I'm sure it will be nothing but fun all the way.

Craig Dupler

2005 Atkinson Traveler and 1936 Old Town 13' 50# AA