



Waterlines

Winter/Spring 2018

Thelma C Moved to Harbor Exhibit Site Dedication Scheduled for June

After five years of storage while the exhibit design and funding components were completed, the *Thelma C* was moved in October to its permanent exhibit site on a concrete pad on the Harbor Spit, adjacent to the Near Island Channel. A specially designed steel pavilion will be constructed over the boat later this spring, and a set of five interpretive panels will be installed near the boat. The hull will also be freshly painted, and the boat's mast, boom, and rigging will be re-installed. The museum hopes to complete this work by May and hold a dedication ceremony in June, just as the summer tourist season begins.

To prepare the site, a concrete slab was poured in October by the museum's main project contractor, Friend Contractors. In November, once the concrete had cured, the boat was trailered onto the site and set on temporary wooden cribbing. A specially designed steel cradle was constructed under the boat in January by Arc and Spark Welding.

KMM has been working on the *Thelma C* Project since the boat was donated to the museum in 2005. The boat was rebuilt by a team of shipwrights and volunteers in 2012, and a site alongside the boat harbor was selected in 2013 to exhibit the boat. Engineering issues with the steeply sloped site drove a decision to move the exhibit to a more level site closer to the Near Island Channel. The site is owned by the City of Kodiak, and will be leased to the museum.

While the project design has moved steadily forward over the years, funding issues prevented completion of the exhibit until now. With nearly all funding now in place, the museum has commenced a capital campaign to finish the project and to create a fund to maintain the vessel into the future. For more on the *Thelma C* Project, see page 5.



The Thelma C newly installed at its permanent exhibit site on the Harbor Spit.

“Thelma C,” Capital Campaign Gets Underway

\$75,000
\$70,000
\$65,000
\$60,000
\$55,000
\$50,000
\$45,000
\$40,000
\$35,000
\$30,000
\$25,000
\$20,000
\$15,000
\$10,000
\$5,000
\$0

**Thelma C Campaign
Goal: \$75,000**



**Thelma C Campaign
Funding to Date:
\$10,000**

With the *Thelma C* Interpretive Exhibit nearing completion, Kodiak Maritime Museum has launched a final capital campaign to raise \$75,000. The money will finish the project and create a long term sustainability fund which will maintain the boat into the future.

As this newsletter went to press, the fund had accepted \$10,000 in donations from local individuals and businesses.

Previous grant funding from the State of Alaska, City of Kodiak, Kodiak Island Borough, and the National Marine Administration in partnership with the National Parks Service, has funded the major design and construction components of the project.

Several smaller pieces of the project need funding before they can be completed. These include finishing touches on the steel boat cradle supporting the *Thelma C*; refurbishment and placement of the mast, boom, and rigging; painting the boat; and construction and installation of the five interpretive panels.

Major contributors will be recognized with their names embedded in a large, specially designed exhibit panel, which will be permanently mounted near the *Thelma C*. To help finish the project, please contact the museum at 496-0384, or visit our web page at www.kodiakmaritimemuseum.org.

From the Wheelhouse —

After years of planning, on November 8 a crew of contractors, board members and museum staff winched the Thelma C onto a trailer and hauled her from a storage yard on Near Island to her permanent home on the Harbor Spit, adjacent to the Near Island Channel.

Getting the project to that point, with completion set for June, has happened only with the hard work and creative efforts



Thelma C Exhibit moving and cradle crew, November 2017. Left to right, Chuck McWethy, Cache Seel, Toby Sullivan, Stan Duncan, Brian Johnson

of many people, including the KMM Board and a very talented group of contractors. After years of working on the design, raising funds, and getting the necessary permits, the process to actually construct the exhibit site began last June, when the museum signed a contract with Friend Contractors to pour a concrete pad, install electrical components, and build the pavilion. The museum also hired Brian Johnson, of Ocean Bay Marine; Glenn Dick of Arc and Spark Welding, to design and build a boat cradle, and Cache Seel of Seel Construction to help with the cradle and get the mast and rigging in place. Chris Lynch of Kodiak Construction Services has kept the construction process on track as Project Manager., and Sarah Asper-Smith and Christine Carpenter of Exhibit AK put their hearts into designing the interpretive panels. The KMM Board has also had to make some big decisions, and kept the project going.

As Executive Director, it has been a privilege and an education to work with these creative and hard working people.

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Jerrol Friend, of Friend Contractors

KMM Annual Meeting February 2 Maritime Sailing Family Will Speak About Their 10 year Trans-Pacific Voyages



Mike Litzow, Alisa Abookire and their boys, Elias and Eric, board their 45 foot steel sloop. The family sailed from Kodiak in 2005 and returned last year.

Kodiak Maritime Museum will hold its Annual Meeting Friday, February 2, at Kodiak College. Museum Staff and the Board will discuss the museum's finances, elect new board members, and discuss current and planned projects.

Current KMM Board members are Wallace Fields, President; Lon White, Vice-President; Secretary, Marty Owen; Treasurer Trent Dodson; and board members at large Jessica Edelsen, Rob Hoedel, Eva Holm, and Deb Nielsen. Three seats are open for election at this meeting.

The meeting will feature a presentation by Mike Litzow and Alisa Abookire, who sailed away from Kodiak in 2005 with a toddler son, Elias, and sailed back in 2017 with Elias and a younger brother, Eric, who was born in Tasmania in 2012.

The family crossed the Pacific three times and the South Atlantic twice, before returning to Alaska from the Caribbean via the Panama Canal. Along the way they visited Australia, New Zealand, Chile, South Africa, and various islands of the South Pacific and the South Atlantic.

Mike Litzow's book about their voyages, "South from Alaska," will be for sale at the meeting.

Light food and beverages will be available at the meeting, and door prizes include KMM hats and a fine art print of the

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KODIAK MARITIME MUSEUM

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Secretary Marty Owen, *Treasurer* Trent Dodson,
Board members: Jessica Edelson, Rob Hoedel, Eva Holm,
and Deb Nielsen,
Board Member Emeritus Peggy Dyson
Executive Director Toby Sullivan

“Night at the Museum,” Knot Tying Party Pulls Kids In

On January 19, dozens of Main Elementary students and their parents learned useful and fun knots from Kodiak Maritime Museum board members, staff, and friends of KMM in the maritime museum community.

The activity was part of “Night at the Museum,” a special edition of Main’s monthly “Family Fun Night.”

Most of the kids who participated came to the event with no prior knowledge of knot tying, but nearly all of them walked out with the ability to at least one knot and we’re pretty sure they all had fun.



A young knot tyer discusses the maritime life with KMM Board President Wallace Fields, while her father looks on. Photo: KMM



Lizzie Baker and her dad, Trailblazer skipper Wayne Baker, work on their clove hitches. Photo: KMM



KMM volunteer Autumn Fox shows the ropes to a Night at the Museum participant. Photo: KMM

2017 Harbor Lights Festival is a Success

In what has become a Kodiak holiday tradition, the KMM sponsored Kodiak Harbor Lights Festival brought an evening of lights, music and community goodwill to Kodiak’s harbor and downtown on December 16.

On a frosty night, hundreds of people walked the floats of Kodiak’s harbors to look at 19 fishing and sport boats decorated with colored holiday lights. A special surprise was an airplane which flew over the harbor several times with lights fastened to its fuselage. The crowd was also entertained at the Kodiak Harbor Convention Center by the St. Innocent’s Academy Choir and a Nutcracker Ballet troupe from Next Step Dance Studio.

Winners of “Best Decorated Boat,” were the Clyde, with 1st Place, the Rubicon with 2nd Place, and the Moondance, with 3rd Place. The boats were chosen by ballots cast by the crowd at the Convention Center. Boat owners were encouraged to decorate their boats with prizes from Sutliff’s True Value Hardware.

The festival began in 2013 as a modification on an old Kodiak tradition of boats decorated with lights steaming through Near Island Channel to Pearson’s Cove, near Fuller’s Boat Yard, and back to the harbor. Inclement weather often caused cancellation of the event.



F/V Red Cloud. Photo: KMM



St. Innocent’s Academy Choir. Photo: KMM

How a Dozen Bristol Bay Double Enders Came Back to Life



*A Bristol Bay double under sail.
Photo: Tim Troll, Sailing For Salmon Exhibit*

From the 1880s until 1951, when the State of Alaska first allowed the use of engines in Bristol Bay, every one of the millions of salmon caught there every summer was hauled into small beautiful wooden boats powered with sails. Hulled with yellow cedar and rigged with masts and booms of Douglas fir, and by statute never more than 32 feet long, they were direct evolutionary descendants of 19th century Columbia River gillnet boats. And because they were pointed at both ends, they became known as “double enders”

The double enders were never fast, but they were stable and big bellied, and it was not uncommon for their two man crews to load them to the deck coamings and safely sail to the tender at the end of the day with six inches of freeboard. Lowered into the water in early summer, fished through June and July and put away in August, they were timeless and ubiquitous in the wide flat world of Bristol Bay for seventy years.

When engines became lawful however, the fleet’s transformation to motored vessels was swift. A few double enders survived as powered conversions, but most were hauled into boneyards and abandoned to the sub-Arctic elements. Old timers told stories about sailing for salmon, time moved on, and by the 1970s,

intact Bristol Bay double enders were as scarce as the three-masted ships that had once hauled them north from the boat yards in Seattle and San Francisco where they were built.

In 1973, Tony Jones was a 22 year old Kodiak fisherman who’d grown up in Southeast Alaska and had heard stories about “The Bay” all his life. That winter, after helping put in 10 million pounds of shrimp on his dad’s boat, the Marcy J, he decided to buy one of the legendary double ended sailing boats, and sail it for himself.

The next summer Tony, his wife Annie, and a pilot friend of theirs, Greg Curley, flew to Egegik, on the Bering Sea side of the Alaska Peninsula, to look for double enders. They landed on a pond behind the Columbia Ward cannery, and while walking down a nearby road were accosted by an old man who roared up on a three wheeler. The man was Winn Brindle, the owner of the cannery they had landed behind, and a cantankerous legend in the salmon canning industry. Tony explained their mission and Brindle told them the good double enders were in an abandoned Alaska Packers cannery on the south side of the Naknek River, about 40 miles north of Egegik.

“They’re still packed in Cosmoline,” he told them.

Tony and Annie and Greg flew to the South Naknek cannery and met a man even older than Winn Brindle, an ancient watchman named Louie, who had once been a captain on the tall masted supply ships that had last sailed to Bristol Bay in the 1930s.

Louie knew all about the boats they was looking for, and showed them a dozen almost-new double enders in a warehouse, just as Winn Brindle had described. Although they had been sitting in the warehouse for almost 20 years, they were still brightly painted in the Alaska Packers Association scheme of white hulls with red trim. The last double enders ever built, they had fished only two seasons before being stored away in the late 1950’s. In their forepeaks were the little Primus stoves fishermen had once made coffee on, galley ware that was part of each boat’s equipment list, booms, tillers, and almost brand new sails. It was like finding a fleet of low mileage antique cars stashed in an abandoned garage, with the owner’s manuals still in the glove boxes.

The boats in the Naknek cannery were constructed by the George Kneass shipyard in San Francisco, according to builder’s stamps in the coamings athwart the masts. Kneass boats were known for their quality and attention to detail, and they were built to last, with Port Orford cedar planking and white oak frames, keels, stems, and stern posts. The masts were Douglas fir.

But while the boats themselves were in almost perfect condition, there were two big problems. The boats were pinned to the cannery floor by the joists of a collapsed roof, and the river in front of the cannery had shifted over the decades. Except at very high tides, there was no longer much, or sometimes any, water in front of the dock.

The watchman told them, “you’ll never get them out of there, but even if you do, you’ll never get them in the water.”



*Double ender fleet being towed to the grounds
Photo: Tim Troll, Sailing For Salmon Exhibit*

Bristol Bay Double Enders (continued)

The three intrepid boat hunters flew back to Kodiak and Tony spent the winter thinking about how to get the boats into the water and out of Bristol Bay. Eventually he flew to Seattle and talked to a man high enough in the APA command structure to be able to grant permission to take the boats out of the South Naknek Cannery. The man told him, "If you get me one, you can have the rest."

As it happened, the APA man was not the only other person interested in acquiring one of these floating pieces of history. While Jones's inspiration had come from a simple desire to sail again in one of these beautiful wooden boats, the discovery of a dozen of them, and the subsequent expense of getting them out of Naknek, had made it advisable to find a way to pay for the expanded scope of the venture. He kept running into people who wanted to own one of these floating artifacts of Alaskan fishing history themselves, and so, over the winter, he made arrangements to sell most of them to people in Homer and Kodiak and Seattle.

The next summer, Tony flew back to Bristol Bay with two young helpers and a planeload of equipment- hand cranked Beebe winches, double blocks, cable, coils of line, chain saws, peaveys, and anything else he could think of to get the boats out without getting killed in the process.

They set up camp on an old water tower platform to stay clear of bears, and got to work. After trying one thing and another they got ten of the boats out from under the collapsed roof, off the dock, and into a nearby slough, where they immediately sank. Louie, the old watchman, told them, "They're made of cedar. It shrinks when it gets dry. Let 'em set on the bottom till the planks swell back up." Sure enough, a couple weeks later Tony and his crew bailed them out on a low tide, and when the tide came back in, they floated.

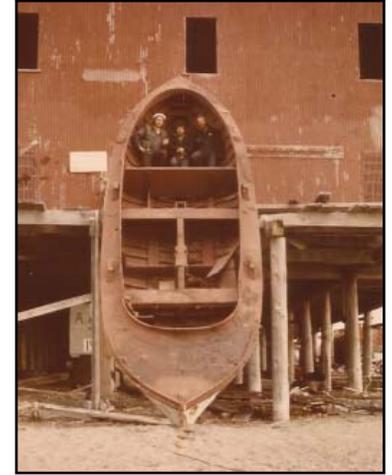
Several of the boats went to Seattle on the deck of the Airdale, a salmon tender owned by fish processor Harold Daubenspeck. One of those went to the man at APA who had granted permission to take the boats out of the cannery. Jones towed the rest behind a double ender retro-fitted with a small engine down the Naknek River, around the corner into the Kvichak River, up the river to Lake Iliamna, 70 miles across the lake to Pile Bay on its eastern end, and on a trailer, one at a time, across the 15 mile Williamsport Road to salt water again in Cook Inlet. Jones and his crew towed the boats from there to Kodiak.

One of those boats is now in Homer at the Kachemak Bay Wooden Boat Society. The boat went through several owners in Kodiak, including St. Innocent's Academy, before going to Homer, and now fully restored, sails regularly in the summer .

Another is in Seattle, at the Center for Wooden Boats on the south end of Lake Union, and regularly takes passengers sailing on the lake, helping visitors understand the historic connections between the west coast ship building industry and Alaska's fisheries.



Tony Jones and Andy Povelite, 1978 Photo: Tony Jones



Tony Jones and crew in South Naknek 1977. Photo: Tony Jones



Andy Povelite in his double ender, late 1970s. Photo: Lacey Berns

According to Jones, the boat went to Lake Union when he and the Center's legendary founder, Dick Wagner, struck a deal in which the Center got the boat for free, and Jones got a tax write off and permission to sail the boat whenever he came down to Seattle. Jones never took Wagner up on the offer, but now says he intends to visit the Center next fall and sail the boat again, forty years after pulling it out of the warehouse in Naknek. Unfortunately, Wagner will not be on hand for that; he died in April 2017 at the age of 84.

A single one of the boats Jones brought out of Naknek in 1975 remains in Kodiak. Originally purchased from Jones by fisherman Andy Povelite in 1977, the boat was used as a holding skiff for many years by Andy and his wife Kay at their setnet site in Uyak Bay. Povelite died in 1993 and Kay eventually sold the fish site and the boat. It remains in storage in Bells Flats and has been maintained, but its

Thelma C Boat Cradle Designed for Support and Longevity

The Thelma C will be supported for many years to come by a specially designed cradle which is designed to allow the entire bottom of the boat to be maintained and painted as required.

The Thelma C cradle consists of two long steel pipes along the hull on which five supporting pads are attached, which hold the hull in place. These pads can be slid fore and aft along the rails to allow access to any part of the hull. The rails themselves are supported by steel pylons which are bolted into the concrete exhibit pad.

The idea for the cradle came from Brian Johnson, of Ocean Bay Marine in Seattle, who worked with Glenn Dick of Arc and Spark Welding in Kodiak to work out the details. Inspiration for the innovative design came from the experiences of other maritime museums in the U.S. and Europe, who had discovered that the cradles supporting some exhibited boats made sections of the exterior hull inaccessible for maintenance.



*Contractor shipwright Brian Johnson cribbing the Thelma C prior to installation of a permanent steel boat cradle.
Photo: KMM*



*Thelma C Boat cradle before installation of support pylons.
Photo: KMM*

Boat exhibit cradles must support their vessels safely, provide enough pressure at key points on the hulls to keep the boat frames from sagging, and provide access to the hulls for future maintenance.

In the the 1960s, when many historic wooden boats began to be exhibited in museums around the world, boat supports were designed primarily for safety, so the boats would not topple over, but little consideration was given to future boat maintenance or support of the boats interior framing. The result was that some historic vessels began to deteriorate because the rotting bottoms of the hulls could not be accessed, or because the boats were not supported sufficiently and their interior framing began to fail.

When KMM began thinking about the cradle for the

Thelma C a few years ago, we talked extensively with shipwright Brian Johnson, who had led the team which rebuilt the boat in 2012. We also consulted with Nathaniel Howe, the Executive Director of the Northwest Seaport in Seattle. Both men had extensive experience in the design and construction of supports for boats on exhibit, Johnson though his shipwright career of and Howe through his experience as a young marine historian working on the Vasa, a 17th century Swedish warship which was on exhibit in Stockholm.

The Vasa was launched in 1628 and sank on her maiden voyage with the loss of early her entire crew, in full view of spectators on shore, including the King of Sweden. She was raised in 1961, restored, and put on exhibit, but in the years following, the hull deteriorated but could not be repaired because the supporting cradle was in the way. This cautionary tale informed KMM's thinking as the cradle for the Thelma C was designed.

The Thelma C galvanized steel cradle is designed to last for decades with little or no maintenance.



*End view of port side cradle support pipe rail.
Photo: KMM*



Thelma C cradle, showing a pylon attached to the rail supporting the hull. Photo: KMM

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The KMM Board extends a sincere thanks to all our 2017 members and our new and renewing members for 2018.

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