

The Bilge Pump

Rocky Mountain Classics

41st Chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society

Fall
~~SUMMER~~ 2001

Rocky Mountain Classics



Maximilian at Grand Lake 2000

Rocky Mountain Classics Chapter of the ACBS



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Rocky Mtn high at Dillon



Nellis' at Grand Lake 2001



Boardwalk to Treasure Island



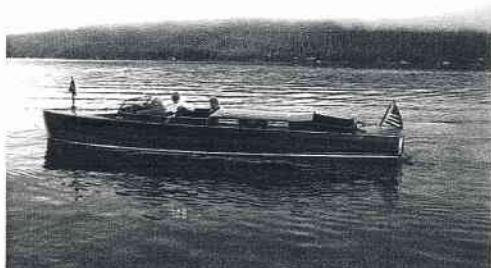
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ABOUT THE COVER

Charlie and Linda Peak's

**"Maximilian"
On Grand Lake**



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

October 20, 2 PM Social & Auction

Uptown Bistro—Frisco

See page 6 for details

'Maximilian'

As told by Charlie & Linda Peak

Destiny...that's what it had to be...destiny.

At 10 years old Charlie spent the summer building a Chris Craft kit boat with his older brother and his Dad. He attended woodworking classes that summer...it was in his blood.

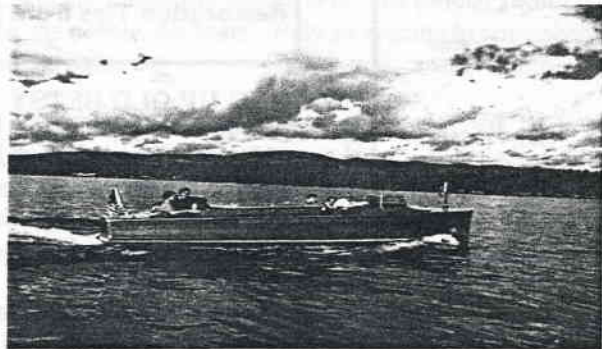
By 1994, Charlie & Linda had been married a few years. They had a 1946 17' Custom named Flipper (that's another story!), but they would sit and look through the Classic Boating magazines hoping to find the one Charlie had always wanted, a 26' triple. But the newlyweds were happy to have Flipper until the day Charlie took the mother-in-law out for a ride and found out what a truly wonderful individual she was. Out in the middle of the lake, 'Flipper' lived up to it's name and flipped over and dumped her and 2 grandchildren into the water. Charlie decided after that maybe he should look more in earnest for a more stable ride.

On a hot summer day in June of 1994, Linda, as she still does to this day, came through for him. He walked in the door one night from work and she said that she had found the boat in Classic Boating...the one he had always wanted. Sure enough, there it was...Boyd Mefford has it and 15 minutes after Charlie got on the phone with him, Linda heard "I'll take it!"

The boat had been purchased by Boyd Boats in 1985 along with another to be converted to ride boats for use on Lake George from 1985 thru June of 1994. Although the boat had originally had an A-120 engine, it was replaced by a Chrysler Hemi. The center section was cut out and a box put over the engine and converted to having 2 seats in front and 2 seats in back to accommodate more riders. The advertisement didn't specify, but Boyd's had hoped to sell it for restoration in their shop.

With the memory of those summers so long ago urging him on, Charlie decided that he would tackle the project himself...and what a project!!

The center section had been discarded long ago, so there was no pattern. Boyd and Charlie searched everywhere. Then out of the blue they found an old Chris Craft carpenter who had made a pattern years before of the center section. Boyd sent Charlie the pieces and then Charlie had to piece the puzzle together again (turned out pretty nice ,too!)



The boat got a cold-molded bottom using a process that Boyd Mefford actually created. The system used was really bullet-proof. He was able to actually hit rounded rocks with little or no damage to the bottom. All of the side planks and covering boards, deck, keel, framework, knees...everything but the stem and forefoot had to be rebuilt. The dash had been destroyed and incorrect gauges installed over the years, so all of that had to be replaced. The power was replaced with a GMC truck block, Corvette top end 350 with a Chris Craft package. They had difficulty getting it propped right, so the second season they finally replaced the transmission with a 1/2 to 1 reduction gear and created the package we hear today.

The project took him 4 years to complete...all of that while still working full-time, having surgery, and remodeling a house (gee, I wonder what they did in their spare time!!) But Charlie said the boat was great therapy...it kept him going and gave him more than he could have imagined.

"Maximilian", Linda and Charlie had their maiden voyage June of 1999 and their first public showing at the Second Annual Grand Lake Boat Show in 1999.

What about the name "Maximilian". Where did it come from? Maximilian was named for Charlie's mom, a little French woman named Clara Maximilian Struble. So that explains the classic lines and stately, almost regal demeanor of this beautiful lady on the water.

Well, life continues for "Max". Next season watch for the addition of a convertible top. And down the road, Charlie would like to give that bright work a new finish...in his spare time. Of course.

For the rest of us, we just sit back and enjoy her caretakers, Linda and Charlie Peak.



the beauty and sound of the boat, and the beautiful people who are

Thanks for sharing!!

At the Helm

Board of Directors

June Moharter	President (970) 884-2954
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Chris Braaf	Shows & Awards (970) 887-2210

Welcome Aboard

New Members

Dave Edwards - Boulder
 Jim Grubbs - Loveland
 Paul & Theresa Gilpatrick - Englewood
 Tom Hiestand - Grand Lake
 Jack & June Greineer— Longmont
 Grant Ellis & Lori Meinert - Kremmling
 Jeff & Beth O'Neill - Englewood

The Boatwright

Restoration Tips from Jack McCarthy



WAKING UP OLD BETSY

I get many calls about this subject. A fellow classic boater finds a beautiful boat in a garage that has spent the last decade just sitting there. The fellow that owned and cared for it the past forty years has passed away and his widow has just sold you the boat of your dreams for almost nothing. You air up the tires and take it home and just can't wait to start on your next project!

NOW IS WHEN YOU HAVE TO DO THINGS CAREFULLY.

1. If the varnish looks great, make sure you wash it down with trisodium phosphate, sand and apply at least two coats of varnish

If you put it in the sun the way it is, it won't last a month before it fails. Old varnish has lost all its ultra-violet filters and the sun will destroy it.

2. The Engine: Before you attempt to start it;
 - a. Remove fuel tank and send it out to be cleaned.
 - b. If the boat has been sitting more than four years, replace the fuel pump and rebuild the carburetor (s).
 - c. Install a fuel filter/water separator. Do not use rubber hoses on the fuel line, use copper or stainless steel. The fuel tank ground on many older boats are via the copper fuel line. This is important.
 - d. Before you attempt to turn the engine over, remove the spark plugs and pour or squirt in a couple of ounces of "Marvel Oil". You can find it at most hardware
- (continued Page 5)**

Editor's Corner

This summer has been a great one for news and happenings. Let's keep it up and keep in touch through the non-boating months, too! This editor feels very fortunate to be a part of this group and has really enjoyed the experiences, new friendships and fun we have shared.

Special thanks to the people who have been willing to make this newsletter so interesting by sharing their stories for each issue. We look forward to future issues and future stories...we have a lot of great people in our club.

Rendezvous in the Rockies.....

The first event of the boating season was truly a hallmark event full of Kodak moments and leaving those who attended feeling extremely glad they had come to Dillon for the first Rendezvous in the Rockies Boat Show.

Let's face it....there are three things that make a perfect boat show...the place, the boats and the people.

The blue skies, the blue glassy water and the green snow-capped mountains in every direction for as far as the eye could see made the place, Lake Dillon, a great place for the show.

There were 22 registered boats and a few who just stopped by to join in the fun. There were Ray & Judy Alden who came all the way from St. Augustine, Florida with 'Le Petite Bateau' a 1946 Chris Craft Special Runabout, Dick Werner with 'Sweet Louise', a 1942 Century Seamaid Triple, from Portland Oregon. There was a 30' 1939 Chris Craft Enclosed Cruiser, '39 Forever' owned by Steve Hurlock of Dillon, big enough for all of us, clear down to a 14' Cosign Wherrey rowing Dingy hand-built by the owner, Bill Kaneer.

The people....well the show drew over 200 people and every attendee left the docks with a smile. Many lucky visitors were able to snag a ride in one of the wooden classics. In case you are unaware, we also have some really great members who really made this show and every get-together a success. The volunteers who sat on shore minding the Ship's Store and the ballot box, the boats who offered rides, the hands on the dock who helped the boats in and out, the willingness to share stories and refinishing tips....and parts! There is a lot of heart and soul in our club, and it truly shines the brightest at these events.

We had one additional thing for this show that was phenomenal. Wayne and Cindy Spaulding outdid themselves in keeping us fed with some delicious food. They served dinner on Friday night a huge spread at lunch on Saturday that they dubbed 'picnic'. There were 2 tables full of meats, cheeses, breads, fruit, salads...nobody went away hungry here! The official awards dinner at the Uptown Bistro was beyond compare. The food, the ambiance, the people, the hosts...truly an evening to remember. And then to top it off a Sunday morning brunch before the final run around the Lake.

The awards, all created by Jean Claggett, were phenomenal and were enjoyed and appreciated by the recipients. Dick Werner won People's Choice, Ray and Judy Alden won an award for farthest traveled, a cute plaque showing a boat being trailered across the USA, and there was a special cup given to Dick for bringing his boat to our Show.

We are sure that all who attended would agree that the Spauldings and the Tordoffs outdid themselves in making everyone feel welcome and able to relax and enjoy themselves.

Great show, great people, great boats, great memories!!

The Boat Wright (cont.)

Stores. Let it sit for a couple of days. Lay a towel over the Spark plug holes and then turn it over, first by hand and then with the starter. Don't forget to remove the coil Wire. The towel will catch the oil before your face or the Ceiling!

- e. Next, put your thumb over each spark plug hole to see if you have compression. If you don't feel any, look into the spark plug hole (flat head 6's) to see if the valves are working. If not, we would remove the head and, with a piece of wood, gently tap the stock valve down and keep working them until they are free. While the head is off, take it to a machine shop and have it 'trued up'. Install a new copper marine head gasket and torque the head to 60 lbs. On sixes. On sixes, you torque once when cold, next after you have started the engine and gotten some heat into it, and 1st after you have run it about 5 minutes under power on the water.
- f. Change the contact points, condenser, rotor, cap, plug wires and spark plugs.

- g. Replace generator belt(s)
- h. Never start the engine without water so you will know if it picks up on it's own.
- i. Change the engine oil, straight 30 or 40 weight oil. Do not use 10-30 or other multi-viscosity oils or anti-friction additive like STP Slick 50. The transmission on most older boats shares the oil with the engine.
- j. Make sure you use a six volt battery on a six volt system. You will find a voltage tag on the generator or the starter.
- k. Start the engine—watch the oil pressure and check the amp gauge to see if it is charging. It may need 800 to 1,000 r.p.m. for the generator to begin to charge.
- l. Next, do a compression test. Pull coil wire, open throttle wide, remove all spark plugs, rotate engine for 3 pulses on the gauge and write down the reading. They all should be within 10%...90 lbs= fair, 105 lbs= good, 120 lbs.= very good
- m. Always use the highest octane fuel. Check for fuel leaks, water leaks or oil leaks.

If you have any questions, give me a call at 513-941-7281 or Email us at woodenbts@aol.com. We are always happy to help

On the Horizon

Social Gathering & Auction

Join us for lunch on October 20, 2001 at 2 P.M. at Wayne and Cindy Spaulding's Uptown Bistro in Frisco, CO The only business at this event will be the presentation of the President's Cup.

There will be a lunch, laughs, fellowship and boat talk. Bring pictures, stories and something to be auctioned off as a fundraiser. Tom Lange will be the auctioneer. This should be fun!

Please RSVP by October 6 to June Moharter (970) 884-2954

President's Message

It is my pleasure to guide RMC on this portion of our "Cruise". Hopefully, we can find the route to enjoyment for all RMC members by;

1. Planning shows to enjoy boating
2. Planning social events in winter
3. Networking among members all year
4. Sharing our love of boating with others
5. Building friendships

The new officers and the Board are open to your ideas and comments. Please keep us informed so we can make our Club more positive for all.

Many thanks to Bob and Chris Ann Braaf for their leadership these past 2 years.

Have a safe and happy Fall. See you at the Fall Social/Auction being planned for late October/early November.

June Moharter

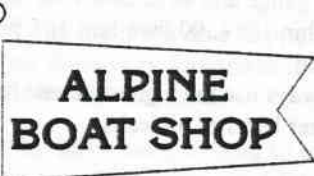
NAUTICAL TRIVIA

What are the only licensed commercial sail-powered fishing vessels remaining in America??

(see answer on back cover)

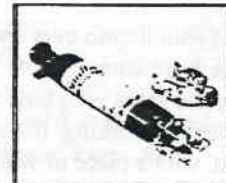
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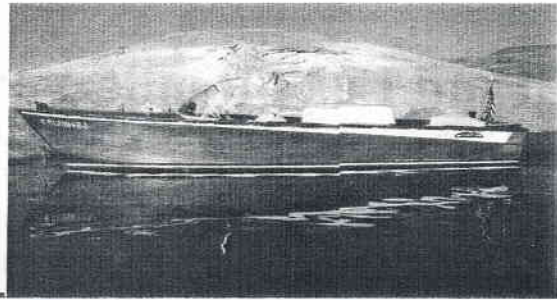
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Quarterly Crew

Dan & Joan Lacy's Amazing Splinter



Splinter actually started life in Louisiana living at the Erikson place on Lake Bisteneau, and for the first part of her life, she was affectionately known as Phinque (fink)

That's how the Lacy's found her back in 1979. She was a forlorn sight hanging there in the Uncle's boathouse just 3" off the water, in disrepair and full of water from the corrugated roof that had long since given up protecting her. Every time it rained (and it rained a lot in that part of Louisiana), all of the water went right into the boat. Dan and Joan were expecting their first child, but knew the boat needed a home so they decided to take it back to Colorado.....which was no small task in itself. They spent hours looking for the boat trailer and finally found it in the woods with several trees literally grown through the trailer frame. Hours of sweat and a chainsaw later, they finally were able to free the trailer, tow it to the ramp and load up their yet nameless boat.

The boat was towed back to Denver and besides a battery, 8 mud dauber nests (there was even one in the float bowl!) and a few other minor things, the young family was able to use the boat, which they named "Shannon Marie and Heidi Ho" after their two daughters, again and again from 1979 to 1997.

Then it happened...the nightmare we all have at some point when trailering our boat.....an accident...a terrible accident.

Driving from Grand Junction to Lake Powell in south-central Utah to a place called Bullfrog Marina, Dan found himself driving alone at 11:30 at night on his way to spend the weekend at the Lake with the family who had gone on ahead. It was a perfect night in the Utah desert...stars shining, radio playing, cruise control on he had a mere 20 miles to go....so he wasn't prepared for the coyote that suddenly jumped in front of him in his Blazer with the boat and trailer on behind.

Joan and the girls were waiting for Dan to arrive. As it got later, Joan knew something wasn't right, so she called Dan's brother Dave who is an EMT and Paramedic trainer for the Volunteer Emergency Medical Staff in Utah. Sure enough, an accident had been reported. Joan took off immediately and found him shortly after.

The police reports showed the combo flipped end for end two times and then rolled three additional times before coming to a halt, pointed in opposite directions on the desert floor. They found Dan hanging upside down held out of the glass by only his seatbelt and very disoriented. The Lacy's would later throw a big thank you get-together for all of the won-

derful people who helped save Dan's life that night.

The boat and the Blazer were a total loss. There were pieces of the boat found weeks later with a metal detector up to 1/2 mile away from the crash sight. There were only pieces and scraps of wood left of the boat from mid-ship back and from the waterline up.



Some would have given up, but Dan decided to rebuild. In most cases they only had pieces and pictures. They made their patterns by painstakingly screwing and gluing pieces back together again. They spent countless hours cutting new pieces out of marine-grade wood stock and putting their baby back together. When ask if they ever got discouraged, Dan just replied that it was his therapy....to go back to the sight 4 times in all to collect pieces and parts, and then to watch the boat come back to life from his hands...come back better and stronger than before and crafted with passion.....she became 'Splinter'

So, this writer is really glad that the Lacy family is all together and that they are able to be a part of our group.....oh and how about that boat!!!!



Grand Lake Rendezvous 2001

The first Grand Lake Show of the new millennium was like stepping back in time. The Lake with it's beauty, the historical homes and boathouses surrounding it and the multitude of wooden boats from an era some have forgotten was revived for all who attended the 2001 Grand Lake Boat Show.

The Grand Lake Yacht Club was host to approximately 40 wooden craft on July 21-22. The boats ranged from some great wooden canoes, kayaks and a 28' E scow sailboat to Chris Smith's Sea Skiff and Katie and Charlie Geuin's Cabin Cruiser and all the runabouts. The weather was beautiful and the Yacht Club facilities were great and very appreciated by all who attended. Several of the resident boats attended this show and really added a variety of boats to the display. They brought their own stories, too!! Dr. Al Herrington brought along his Riva...a real beauty and Bob Moore's 'Betty II' drew the crowd in by being on display at the gate...what a great boat!

Bob Moore's 'Inny', just recently completed restoration by Bob Moharter, debuted at the show and received the award for best Christ Craft, presented by Chris Smith.

The People's Choice award this year went to Charlie and Linda Peak's 'Maximilian' and the award for the best preserved, most original boat went to Dr. Herrington's Riva, 'Caroline'

The Yacht Club sold hot dogs, chips, salad and drinks for the noon offering and the members enjoyed a catered meal of BBQ chicken with all the trimmings.

This show, of course, was also our Annual Meeting. Bob Braaf handed over the Presidential gavel to our new President, June Moharter, and all of the nominees were accepted by the membership present. They are as follows;

President	June Moharter
Vice-President	Charlie Geuin
Secretary	Jennifer Nellis
Treasurer	Cathy Green
Member at Large	Chip Taft
Directors	Charlie Peak
	Steve Carmack
	Bob Moore
	Tom Green
	Bob Moharter

The schedule for the 2002 season was discussed and the following dates were agreed upon, so mark your calendars and join the fun next season;

June	Dillon Boat Show
July	Grand Lake Boat Show
August	Navajo Boat Show

The high point of the show for this member was the departure from the docks in preparation for the parade. All of the boats fired up together (that drew some looks!) and then they all motored just outside the dock area, and turned to face the Yacht Club and hovered there for a group picture. Chris Ann wanted us all to move in 'just a little closer' for that perfect picture.... yeah right!! Only a classic boat owner understands the thrill of hearing a multitude of boats rumbling and gurgling in the water. Imagine looking out across the water as far as you can see and seeing nothing but classic wooden boats.....Makes you fall in love with 'em all over again.

See you next year....be there!

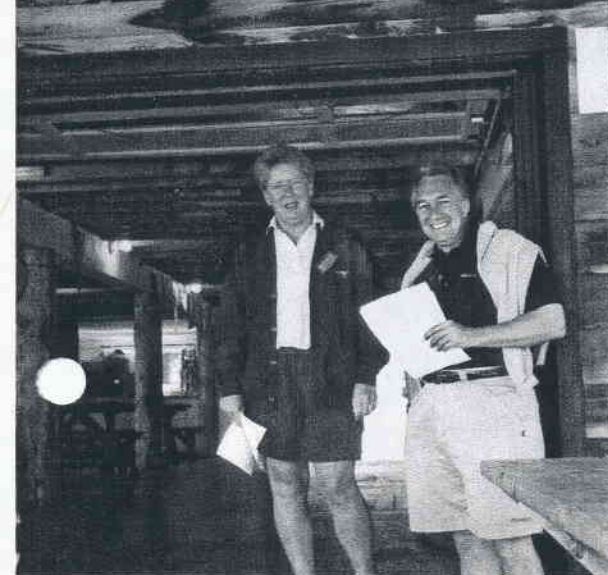
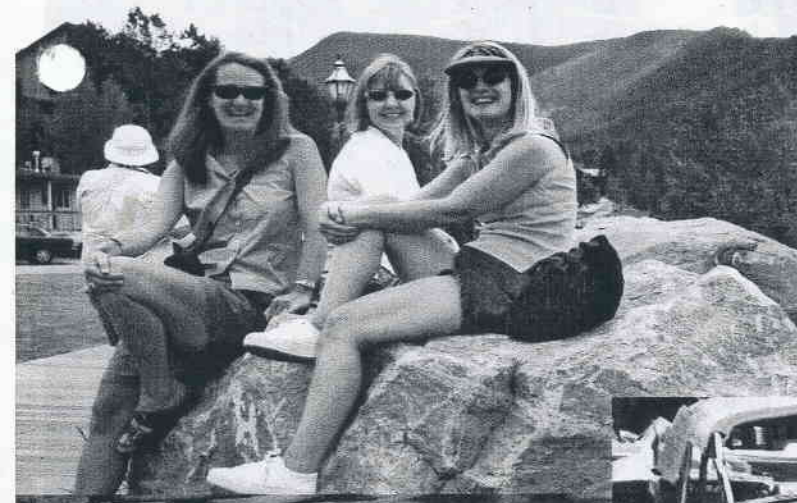


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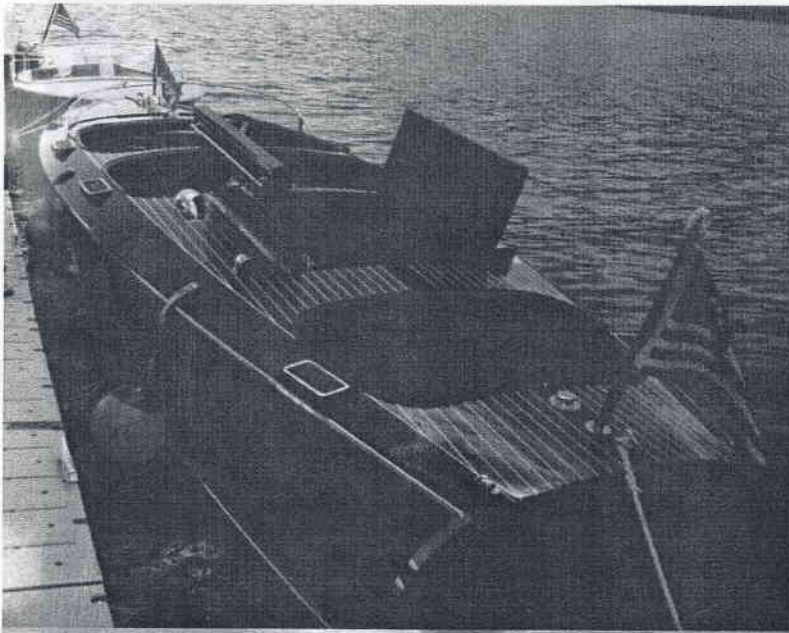
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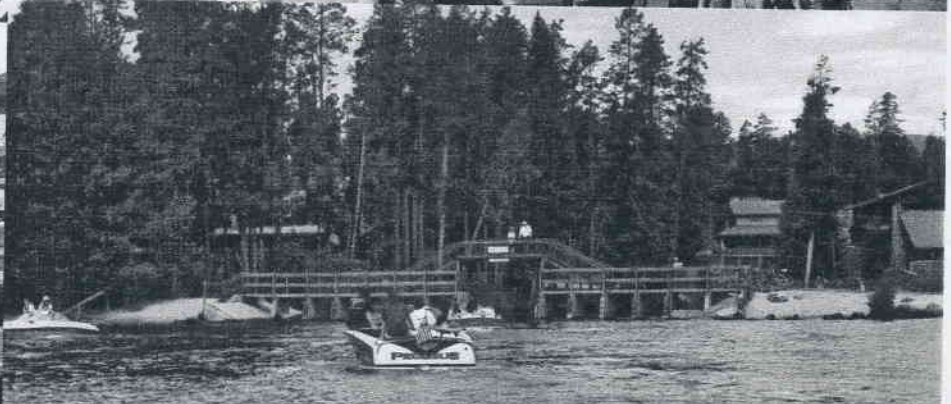
Boats & Folks



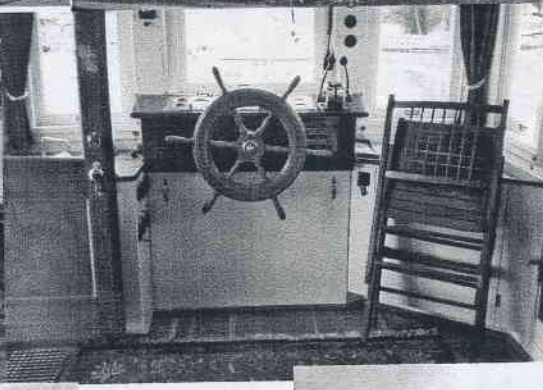
Boats & Folks



Boats & Folks



Boats & Folks



Distant Shores

Treasure Island

RED WING BOAT SHOW @ TREASURE ISLAND

Sea Planes to Submarines..Antique cars to motorcycles to bikes...2 foot model boats to 50 foot cabin cruisers and houseboats, and everything in between...they were all there at the Bob Spelts Land of Lakes Chapter Rendezvous in Red Wing, Minnesota.

This show was a true adventure from start to finish. The week started with day cruises up and down the Mississippi. Several boats participated including our own Chris Smith and Chris and Bob Braaf. They met a lot of people and made some new friends along the way. On Saturday morning, the day began with a gray drizzly rain that threatened to put a damper on the plans for the day, but by the time we got there at 7 AM, it was clearing and the covers started coming off...

There were antique cars, bikes and motorcycles from every era. Todd Warner showed up with 9 boats including a 30' Baby Gar, a Chris Craft Triple, 'Alter Ego' the huge Hydroplane, and a Limousine that belonged to his Dad in original condition with even the original Mohair interior. The great part was that week was the first time it had seen the water in 30 years! There were gentleman's racers, a Falls Flyer (one of my favorites), Tonkacraft, Shepards, Lymans, Elcos, DeWhites, Garwoods, tugboats, houseboats, cabin cruisers, dingys...what an education we got! There were well over 100 wooden boats at the docks and on land. There was a display and demonstration of antique inboards and one of numerous outboards. One of the outboards was off of a captured German boat from World War II.

Demonstration of a restoration in progress was held at 1pm every day for those who were interested, and they had a roundtable discussion and exchange of restoration tips, questions and answers. There were vendors of every kind from antique soda shop stools and counters to custom t-shirt vendors, to vintage advertisement vendors, to a manufacturer of the new improved Ventner... something for everyone. There were daily activates for the kids, rides on the sea plane, the Falls Flyer, the racers and of course rides for everyone on the beautiful runabouts. Ug the Tug was giving rides as well and was one of the most popular because it was so cute. The old swing music playing in the background just added to the relaxed atmosphere and a feeling that we has stepped back in time to an era gone by.

The Ship's Store was a thing to admire. They offered the standard t-shirt with their logo on them, but also had denim shirts, polo shirts, jackets, towels, caps, tote bags, fleece pullovers and a variety of sweatshirts all with either their logo or the ACBS logo embroidered on them. There were also books, pictures, postcards and many other items offered and the place was packed with people for most of the day.

The evening dinner was a great opportunity to meet several of the members of the Club. We were warmly welcomed and asked to return next year. The meal was delicious offering either Walleye or steak with potato or rice side and veggies. Complimentary wine, dessert to die for, a rose for the ladies and a complimentary little wooden boat for each person made our \$30 per person investment well worth the money. There was also a silent auction that evening with donated items drawing bids above the actual value in most cases with all money going to benefit the Club. Door prizes were also handed out to some lucky recipients. All in all the evening was one to be remembered for some time.

We ended our evening with Chris Smith addressing the group and sharing some of his great stories with all of us. He is truly a legend in his own time and we are fortunate to know him and his family.

The Red Wing Show was truly remarkable in the variety and quantity of activity offered to all who attended.

The show, held at Treasure Island Casino on the Mississippi River, will see us again....hope you can join us.



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Brightwork

Hurrahs & Kudos



Received a couple of 'Letters to the Editor' for last issue.. (Thanks for the kudos!)



Thanks to all of the Boat show coordinators. What a great job was done by all of them this year. That quality of dedication is what makes this club so much fun and THEY made our Shows HAPPEN!! Thanks from all of us for a GREAT summer!!

Bob Moore writes: "You did a dynamite job on the Bilge Pump—Great pictures—lots of interesting stories—wonderful layout—very enjoyable. Thanks for a really great job!"

Bob & June Moharter write; "The newsletter looks GREAT! You and Tom (I'm sure he helped a bit!!) did a super fantastic Job!!



Special thanks from the Club to all past Board of Directors members. We have appreciated your service in the past and wish you all 'Happy Boating' with our Club for years to come.

Thanks too for all the kind calls. Hope we can keep giving you a newsletter you enjoy.



Scuttlebutt

By the time you receive this newsletter, two of our members will be hundreds of miles away. The Nellis', Rom, Jen and Paul are moving to St John's in the Virgin Islands. We hope to get a Christmas card and hear from them from time to time...Any communication will be shared with the members...

Best of Luck and we hope you find happiness in all you do.

LET US KNOW THE LATEST WITH YOUR PROJECT TO BE FEATURED IN THE NEXT ISSUE!!

UPTOWN



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Navajo Rendezvous

Navajo Lake Boat Show & Poker Run

The show was held at the Navajo Lake Marina on the South end of the lake. The marina owners welcomed us BIG TIME! They provided radio and newspaper advertising, moved several boats to give us their best slips for public viewing, free coffee, a cash prize and a great place for our boat show to be held.

The weather was perfect, although a bit warm by afternoon. About twenty boats participated along with members who did not bring boats. The Sky Ute Lodge and Casino provided us with secure parking for the boats, rooms at a reduced rate and a fine setting for our Saturday evening meal and morning breakfast meeting held on Sunday.

The poker run was a fun event again this year with trophies given out at dinner. First Place went to Charles Anderson, Second Place to Bob & Chris Braaf and Last Place was awarded to Charlie & Katie Geuin. Voting was brisk for People's Choice, with 120 ballot in the box by day's end. The trophy and cash prize went to Charlie & Linda Peak for their 1929 Chris Craft 'Maximilian'. Runners up in close balloting were Chip Taft with his 1940 Chris Craft, 'Round the Bend' and Mark & Karen Zempel with their 1892 Whitehall, 'Maine'.

The event was not without incident. Who forgot to put gas in their Cavalier? Which barrel back captain broke a windshield climbing back in after untangling a rope from the prop? Which show co-coordinator must have been in the sun too long and backed his car into the lake too far? We'll never tell, but everything turned out well, with gas provided, no prop damage and the car drying out after a few days in the sun.

Everyone had a good time at this late summer event to close the boat show season. We'll do it again next year.

Over the Stern

A look back

It was Friday night and the plans for a weekend of boating were all set. Sometime during the night he remembered....she had made plans weeks before to attend a town festival on Saturday, but she hadn't said a word when he announced the boating plans.

So the boating was put on hold and they spent a great day together at the festival promising each other they would go boating on Sunday.

The next day was Father's Day. They slept lat (7:30!), had a leisurely breakfast and then decided to take the boat someplace close since it was getting late. So out they headed for the Reservoir with mild anticipation of just being on the water.

They rolled into the Reservoir about 9 AM but were turned away at the gate because a season pass was required for weekend use. He just sat there disappointed and finally turned around silently and drove away. Disappointed and feeling defeated, she suggested that they try another lake about half an hour away. As they headed north, they realized they were headed in the direction of the town where they had purchased the boat. The man they had bought the boat from hadn't seen it since the day Dad's boat left his driveway for good, or so he thought. It was decided that even if he didn't get on the water that day, the son would see Dad's boat again on that Father's Day.

As they pulled up in front of the house, Burt and Mar-

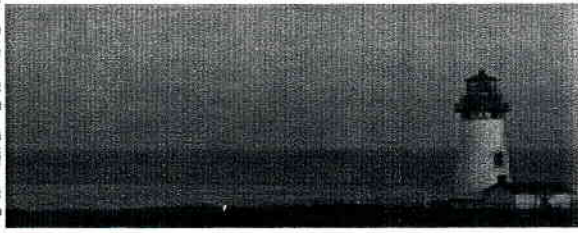
tha, now in their '70's, were already halfway out of the door having seen the boat with it's flags flying come around the corner. Burt grabbed the new owner's hand and shook it hard, slapped him on the back all the time smiling from ear to ear and saying over and over 'look at Dad's boat, just look at Dad's boat!'

It had been nearly a year since they had first met Burt and Martha. Burt's dad had just passed away and the boat had to be sold for lack of a place to store it. A piece of Burt went with that boat the day it pulled away. Martha remarked that Burt's dad was smiling and would be pleased with the care and love the boat was receiving.

They stood and reminisced for a while longer, told a few stories, shared a few hugs...then it was time to go. As they started to pull away, Burt grabbed the driver's arm and looking through tears just said 'Thank You, really, thanks'

That Father's Day they did get on the water, but the pleasure was multiplied by the warmth of knowing that just a few extra minutes and a few extra miles could make someone else's day so complete.

Seeing the boat that day brought father and son together again for one brief moment on that Father's Day.



The Beacon

She was 6 years old when I first met her on the beach near where I live. I drive to this beach, a distance of 3 or 4 miles, whenever the world begins to close in on me. She was building a sandcastle or something and looked up, her eyes as blue as the sea. "Hello", she said. I answered with a nod, not really in the mood to bother with a small child. "I'm building," she said. "I see that. What is it?" I asked, not caring. "Oh, I don't know, I just like the feel of the sand." That sounds good, I thought, and slipped off my shoes. A sandpiper glided by. "That's a joy," the child said. "It's a what?" "It's a joy. My mama says sandpipers come to bring us joy." The bird went gliding down the beach. "Goodbye joy" I muttered to myself, "hello pain", and turned to walk on. I was depressed; my life seemed completely out of balance. "What's your name?" She wouldn't give up. "Robert," I answered. "Robert Peterson." "Mine's Wendy....I'm six" "Hi, Wendy". She giggled. "You're funny" In spite of the gloom, I laughed too and walked on. Her musical giggle followed me. "Come again Mr. P.," she called. "We'll have another happy day"

The days and weeks that followed belonged to others: a group of unruly Boy Scouts, PTA meetings, and an ailing mother. The sun was shining one morning as I took my hands out of the dishwasher. "I need a sandpiper," I said to myself, gathering up my coat. The ever-changing balm of the seashore awaited me. The breeze was chilly, but I strode along, trying to recapture the serenity I needed. I had forgotten the child and was startled when she appeared. "Hello Mr. P.," she said. "Do you want to play?" "What did you have in mind?" I asked with a twinge of annoyance. "I don't know, you say" "How about charades?" I asked sarcastically. The tinkling laughter burst forth again. "I don't know what that is." "Then let's just walk." Looking at her, I noticed the delicate fairness of her face. "Where do you live?" I asked. "Over there." She pointed toward a row of summer cottages. Strange, I thought, in winter. "Where do you go to school?" "I don't go to school. Mommy says we're on vacation." She chattered little girl talk as we strolled up the beach, but my mind was on other things.. When I left for home, Wendy said it had been a happy day. Feeling surprisingly better, I smiled at her and agreed.

Three weeks later, I rushed to my beach in a state of near panic. I was in no mood to even greet Wendy. I thought I saw her mother on the porch and felt like demanding she keep her child at home. "Look, if you don't mind." I said crossly when Wendy caught up with me "I'd rather be alone today." She seems unusually pale and out of breath. "Why?" she asked. I turned to her and shouted, "Because my mother died!" and thought "My God, why was I saying this to a little child?" "Oh," she said quietly, "then this is a bad day." "Yes," I said, "and yesterday and the day before and—oh go away!" "Did it hurt?" she inquired. "Did what hurt?" I was exasperated with her, with myself. "When she died?" "Of course it hurt!" I snapped, misunderstanding, wrapped up in myself. I strode off. A month or so after that, when I went next to the beach, she wasn't there. Feeling guilty, ashamed and admitting to myself I missed her, I went to the cottage after my walk and knocked at the door. A drawn looking young woman with honey-colored hair opened the door. "Hello, I'm Robert Peterson. I missed your little girl today and wondered where she was." "Oh yes, Mr Peterson, please come in. Wendy spoke of you so much. I'm afraid I allowed her to bother you. If she was a nuisance, please accept my apologies." "not at all—she's a delightful child, I said, suddenly realizing that I meant what I had just said. "Wendy died last week, Mr. Peterson. She had leukemia. Maybe she didn't tell you." Struck dumb, I groped for a chair. I had to catch my breath. "She loved the beach, so when she asked to come, we couldn't say no. She seemed so much better here and had a lot of what she called happy days. But the last few weeks she declined rapidly. She left something for you..if only I can find it. Could you wait a moment while I look?" I nodded stupidly, my mind racing for something to say. She handed me a smeared envelope with MR. P. printed in bold childish letters. Inside was a drawing in bright crayon of a yellow beach, a blue sea and a brown bird. Underneath was carefully printed: A SANDPIPER TO BRING YOU JOY. Tears welled up in my eyes and a heart that had almost forgotten to love opened wide. I took Wendy's mother in my arms. "I'm so sorry," I muttered over and over, and we wept together. The precious little picture is framed now and hangs in my study. Six words—one for each year of her life that speak to me of harmony, courage, and understanding love...a gift from a child with sea-blue eyes—who taught me the gift of love.

NOTE: This is a true story by Robert Peterson. It serves as a reminder to all of us that we need to take time to enjoy life and each other. "The price of hating other human beings is loving oneself less" Life is so complicated, the hustle and bustle of everyday traumas can make us lose focus about what is truly important or what is only a momentary setback or crisis. There are NO coincidences! Everything that happens to us happens for a reason. Never brush aside someone as insignificant. Who knows what they can teach us.

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it for I shall not pass this way again.

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