

The Bilge Pump

Rocky Mountain Classics
41st Chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society

Rocky Mountain Classics

June 2003

\$3.-

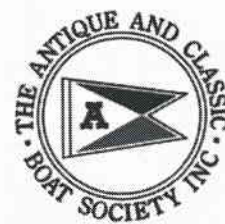


"Firewood", June & Bob Moharter's rare & beautiful Dodge



Rocky Mountain Classics Chapter of the ACBS

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CHAPTER, ENROLLMENT FORMS AVAILABLE;
www.acbs.org



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Quarterly Crew page 7



Hello from the Virgin Islands



Loveland Shakedown Cruise Pg 14

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ABOUT THE COVER
(story on page 5)
Bob & June's *Firewood*

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

June 21, 2003	Alcova Reservoir	Peaks
	contact Peaks	(307) 234-0382
July 19, 2003	Grand Lake	Moores and Braafs
	contact Moores	(303)761-4453
August 23, 2003	Navajo Lake	Moharters,SW mbrs.
	contact Moharters	(970) 884-2954
October 11, 2003	Annual Meeting	The Boathouse (formerly Uptown Bistro at Frisco)
Other events to be announced		

ALCOVA RESERVOIR —JUNE 21

Make your plans soon!! It will be here before you know it. Loads of camping and water!!

This is the first time at this new venue and we are pleased to be invited to enjoy it with the Peaks. Call for directions. Let's make this one a great kickoff to the season.

CALL CHARLIE & LINDA PEAK FOR DETAILS (307) 234-0382

IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE GRAND LAKE BOAT SHOW!!

This year's Grand Lake Boat Show will be held Saturday, July 19th at the Grand Lake Yacht Club. This also Western Weekend at Grand Lake, so there will be lots of things to do.

The docks at the yacht club are all finished this year, and they made it through the winter in fine shape, so they will be ready to show off that beautiful wooden boat that is your pride and joy.

We will have a cookout Friday and Saturday evenings at the yacht club, and on Saturday, the Sailing school will be cooking up some wieners and burgers for lunch.

This year the show falls on Western Weekend at Grand Lake, so you can run or walk in the 5K on Saturday morning, and then go and enjoy the Rotarian's pancake breakfast. After all of that, spend the rest of the day talkin' "wood" at the boat show. If the ladies in the family like to shop, there is plenty of that available too. Sunday is a good day to tour Shadow Mountain Lake and pay a visit to the Islands. Sunday is also the Buffalo BBQ and parade. For kicks, we thought it would be fun to enter a couple of boats in the parade on Sunday and have the kids throw candy to the parade watchers.

Of course, there is also hiking, water skiing, sailing, Rocky Mountain National Park, elk 7 moose watching, fishing and on & on. Grand Lake is always a "Grand Time", so mark your calendars and get ready to join us the weekend of July 19-20. You can visit the Grand Lake website for more information at www.grandlakechamber.com or call me, Bob Moore, at 303-7761-4453. Watch for our registration mail-out in June.

At the Helm

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June Moharter
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(970) 884-2954

Charlie Geuin Vice President
(303) 670-9415

Bill Mumma Secretary
(303) 973-3677

Cathy Green Treasurer
(303) 797-7630

Charlie Peak Director
(307) 358-6754

Steve Carmack Director
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Chip Taft Director at Large
(303) 444-1474

Bob Braaf Membership
(970) 887-2210

Lisa & Morrie Christner Ship's Store
(303) 795-6884

Jeff Waco Safety
(303) 421-3141

Chris Braaf Shows & Awards
(970) 887-2210

Betty Moore Historian
(303) 761-4453

Tom Green Show Coordinator
(303) 797-7630

Welcome Aboard

New Members

Jeff Ecker Pueblo, CO Homebuilt



The following is the story of 'Firewood', the Dodge belonging to Bob & June Moharter. Bob & June were two of the founding members of our Club, and have made outstanding and important contributions to this organization since it's inception.

While this story is about the boat, the story behind the boat is so full and rich that there is no way that words could describe what these two people have meant to the Club and it's members.

Bob leaves a legacy of at least 18 wooden boats given a second chance, and their proud owners, but he also has attempted to share his knowledge with others so that we as members will be capable of continuing what he has strived to promote...a true love of the wooden classics.

Both Bob and June have served on our Board in different capacities over the years and have tirelessly devoted hours and days to 'the cause'

Bob is closing his workshop as you read this, and we hope only the best for both of them as they begin a new chapter in their lives.

Be sure and see the 2003 ACBS directory. 'Firewood' is featured as the proud representative of the Rocky Mountain Classics Chapter.

Enjoy the story of their rare and beautiful Dodge, 'Firewood'.

The Bilge Pump

Newsletter of the Rocky Mountain Classics

Kathy Lange 850 20th St. 702
(303) 447-1738 Boulder, CO 80302
Email: tklange@msn.com

Published quarterly by the Rocky Mountain Classics March, June, September, December
Deadline for copy & ads is 1st of month of publication

Classified Ad relevant to boating interests free to members

Business card or display ads \$25/edition,

“Firewood” Bob & June Moharter’s Dodge

It was the 1998 Fourth of July parade in Bayfield, Colorado. There were horses, antique cars, fire trucks, farm machines, marching bands and one antique boat. The parade was forming and some invited children were seated in my 1042 Chris Craft anxiously awaiting the start. A man came along and stopped to speak with John Schell who was standing along side his daughter, Bonnie, seated in the back of the boat. I overheard the man say to John, “Remember that old wood boat? It’s just like this one, but it can’t be fixed.”

I jumped out of the car with the photo album of the Chris Craft restoration and asked him if it was worse than this one was. He looked at the pictures, and said “I guess you can fix it!” It took several weeks to arrange to see the boat, even though it was only fifteen miles from home. When we finally did get to see it, I couldn’t believe my eyes...it was the burned out remains of a Dodge. It had exploded and burned several years before and had been stored outside under a cedar tree. John Schell knew the owner and arranged for me to buy it. The boat turned out to be a 1935, Model 103 double cockpit runabout...one of only two still existing and badly in need of a complete restoration. The boat was on a trailer made from the factory cradle mounted on a 1932 Dodge truck chassis. The only things salvaged from the trailer were the 18” wooden spoke wheels which were in good condition.

There was little information on Dodge boats available. I did a lot of research through several museums, Dodge boat owners and restoration workshops from coast to coast. I was able to piece together enough information to begin. Everyone I spoke with said that there should be a Marquee Club devoted to Dodge boats similar to the Clubs available for other makes of boats providing a pool of information. That led to the formation of the Dodge Boat Owner’s Association. Please visit the website at www.dodgeboats.org for information on the Horace E. Dodge Boat & Plane Company.

I was able to identify the original green paint formulated especially for Dodge. Through the manufacturer which had discontinued the color many years ago, I was able to locate five quarts still on the shelf at the wholesaler. Four quarts were still usable. The stain color was matched to two Dodges owned by Todd Warner, owner of *Mahogany Bay* in Minnesota.

The boat was completely restored in four years working part-time. I found the other Model 103 had been restored at a shop in upstate New York. That shop shared the information that they had regarding the interior layout. Unfortunately, they had not kept pictures and had only their recollections of the restoration to guide me. With that information and several scraps of seas, covering boards and deck beams I was able to assemble the cockpit layout including seat placement and height. The 1935 catalog I was able to obtain from a museum had the placement of the white oak framing, double bottom planking, hull & deck planking, upholstery type & color, and seat cushion and back fill material.

The original 60 hp Gray Marine engine was completely rebuilt including the babbett bearings. Most of the deck hardware was there and was had it re-plated. The missing parts were replicated by California Classic Boats. The original instruments and Duesenberg steering wheel, although badly burned, were saved and restored. The dashboard was replicated, down to the silver inlay, as original. New step pads were replicated in Hawaii. A cutwater, transom straps and hatch trim were made from a sheet of brass by a friend and chrome plated.

The waterline cover was custom fitted and has a soft lining to protect the finish while trailering the boat. The new trailer was built to fit the boat and fitted with the original wooden spoke wheels and wooden fenders and running boards. It trailers beautifully at highway speeds and has logged over four thousand miles since completed in July 2002.

The boat performs very well and is surprisingly fast, considering the 60 hp engine. It carries four people and planes nicely at our altitude. The name, ‘Firewood’, was hand-painted by club member, expert wood worker and artist, Doug Brown. The painting was meant to look like wood burning...a fitting remembrance of it’s former fate!!

CAPTAIN'S LOG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Boating season has begun and we have fun places to be in our future! It looks like we will have a little more water in our lakes thanks to a white winter.

Our hosts have been busy planning for us so please give them your support by attending these events!!

We all look forward to seeing new boats, our "old" boats, friends (old & New) and , hopefully, good weather! Is that too much to hope for??

Our nominating committee is hard at work getting a slate of officers and 2 board positions ready for your attention. Ballots will be mailed in early September so we can install the 2004 officers and Board members at our annual meeting in October. Bob Moore chairs this committee—thank you Bob and your group made up of Chip Taft, Charlie Simons & Tom Green for your work.

I hope to see many friends (both old & new) at our events. Please make yourselves known by getting your free nametags and wearing them proudly!!

June Moharter,
President

A VISIT FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

A few members were fortunate enough to have a brief but enjoyable morning with Rom Nellis back for a short visit from St. John's, Virgin Islands.

Wayne Spaulding trailered his boat down from the mountains with the help of Bill Tordoff and Lange's joined them to see Rom for a glorious Sunday morning on Chatfield Reservoir. The water traffic was minimal making the boating very enjoyable.

It sounds like Rom & Jen have been extremely busy making their new life on 'the islands'. Rom is doing what he does best...building beautiful things, and Jen is happy in her new job in Real Estate.

They had made the trip back to attend a graduation.

It was great to see Rom again....hopefully next time we will get to see Jen and spend more time catching up!!

VOLUNTEERS & IDEAS NEEDED!!

Ship's Store under new management.

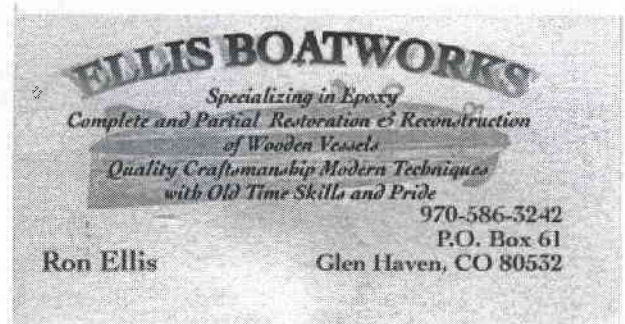
The Ship's Store is looking for member's to volunteer an hour or two of their time to work in the Ship's Store during shows. It's a great way to get to know people...and you can stay cool besides!!

If you have a great idea or resource that could make the Ship's Store even better...we want to hear from you, too!

Let us know when you can help or what you can offer to our Club.

Our Club is growing fast, and we need everyone's help to make it go...

Call Lisa Christner at 303-795-6884



Quarterly Crew

Jeff Ecker's Homebuilt



She features a harsh ride and she won't turn to the right at speed!

I had tears in my eyes when I cleared the no wake area at Pueblo Lake and opened up the throttle. My best early morning dreams were always of being out on a lake in my own wood in-board boat. My wife says she had tears in her eyes too, from when that damn old boat would hit the waves and coming slamming down and reverberate right up her tailbone!

I spotted this old boat in a front yard in South Pueblo five years ago and I gave 1300 dollars for her. It took me a few weeks to get around to picking her up and I have never spent so many pleasant sleepless nights since I was 13 years old and I would dream about goose hunting and how those big old honkers might come flying right over me at close enough range to knock one out of the air with my .410 shotgun. I was just giddy! When my wife saw the old boat her response was: "and for this, you have been losing sleep?"

I used it the first summer in spite of needing refinishing and new upholstery. I had to sort out and learn all the mechanical systems and this was pretty difficult since it is a home built boat. The boat was built by Paul Turner of Pueblo in 1950 from Popular Mechanics plans and I was able to track him down from a boat registration I found in the boat from 1967. Paul is seriously ill and not able to help me with too much information but he has a reputation around town as being some sort of mechanical genius.



The next winter I tore everything off the deck and start refinishing the old boat. I had the seats recovered and bought some vintage looking instruments from Southern California Hot Rod for the dash. I had an automotive elec-

The motor is a 265 c.i. Chevy with a two barrel carburetor. The boat has a reverse, neutral and forward gearbox. Paul even made the wet exhaust manifolds. Paul says that the original motor was a Flathead v8 and he traded that motor for the Chevy motor. This boat is a great water ski puller and pulls much better than my Hondo that has a "souped up" 350 Chevy. I have used the boat for five seasons and often times it was out on the water three times a week. It's real reliable and lots of kids have learned to ski behind it. For two years I had a permit to use it on Prospect Lake in Colorado Springs so I was over there in evenings and weekend mornings. I now live in Pueblo so I have the big lake to use whenever I want. However with the boat's rather flat bottom, it is a harsh ride with all the large waves on Pueblo lake. The trailer is unbelievable heavy and stout and I am very careful about not getting into any emergency braking situations. The car just skids when I have to really stomp on the brakes! The builder; Paul Turner, has a picture of this boat on Minnequa Lake (located in South Pueblo) taken in August of 1951. He told me the family belonged to a water ski club that was hosted by the steel mill in Pueblo. The lake is still owned by CF&I Steel but it's use by the public is prohibited.



This old boat isn't worth much since it isn't a brand name boat but I have sure gotten a lot of pleasure out of it and I'm hoping to show up at one of the antique boat events with it this summer.

(That's a matter of opinion Jeff!! Anything that gives you that much pleasure and gets you on the water is priceless!!)

Jeff Ecker Pueblo 296-1634



The Brass Armadillo Show

ROCKY MOUNTAIN CLASSICS AT THE BRASS ARMADILLO



Saturday, May 3 was a great day....sunshine, blue skies, a great static venue and the first opportunity for us to polish our boats.

Charlie & Katie Geuin arranged for our Club to show on the lawn at the Brass Armadillo in Arvada, and with the help of our boat show coordinator, Tom Green, put together a very diversified group of people and boats to share with the many visitors who stopped by.

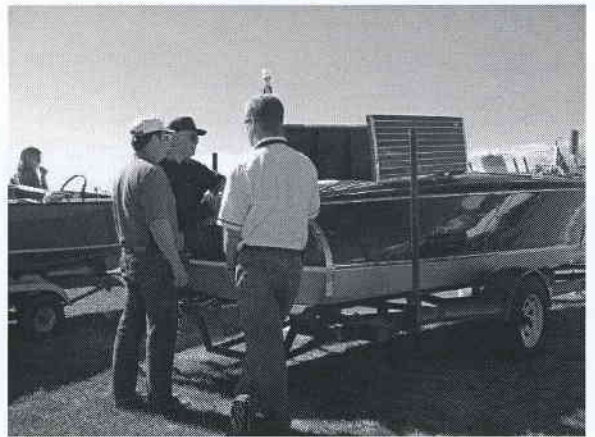
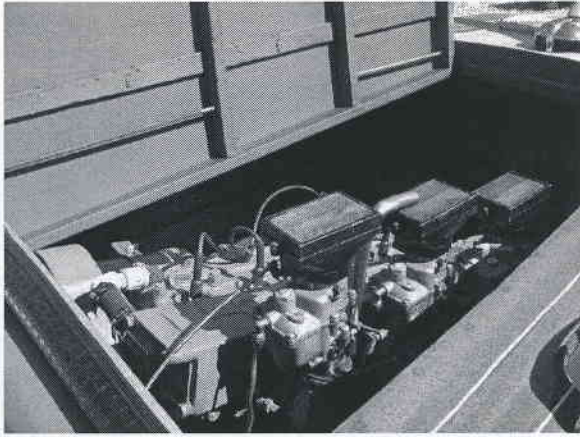


There were a total of 12 boats attending. Everything from the 14' 'Seahawk' to Geuin's 26' Cruiser, 'Jennie May'. There were several new members who brought boats...Mike & Kendra Novick's '55 Survivor', there was 'Worth the Wait', Jim Flint's brought his 1948 19' Seamaid and Bernie & Pam Hobson brought an old friend 'Seahawk'. Jeff Waco brought 'Wonder Years' with it's twin outboards and even brought his Chris Craft Commander outboard to dress up the new fiberglass addition to the Club, Kathy Lange's 'Kokomo'. Morrie & Lisa Christner brought their beautiful Cavalier, 'Finally Floats', there was Chip Taft with 'Round the Bend', Bill Mumma with his classy Century Tom Lange with 'Legacy', and Chris Ann and Bob Braaf's 'Chris' Craft' rounded out the mix.

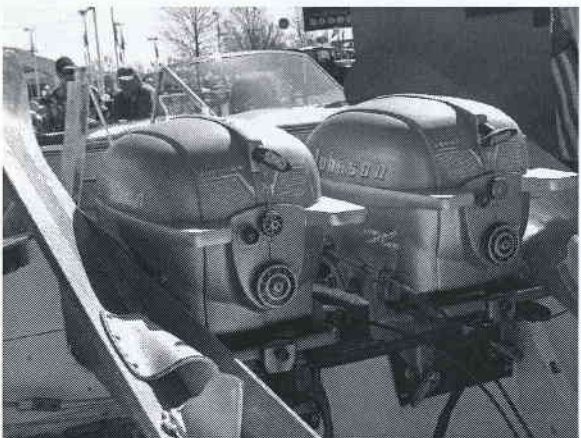
We spent the day visiting and catching up with friends from the long winter and getting ready for the fun summer ahead.

All in all it was a great day in a great place. We hope to invited back again next year.

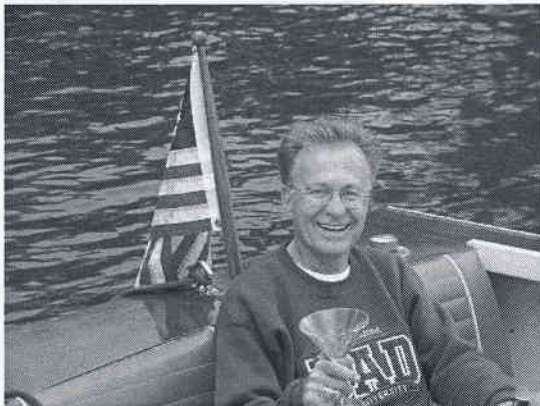




BOATS & FOLKS



BOATS & FOLKS

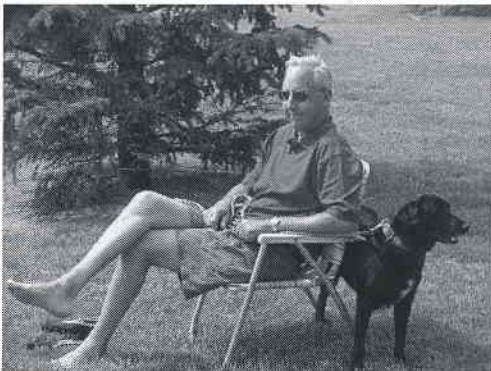
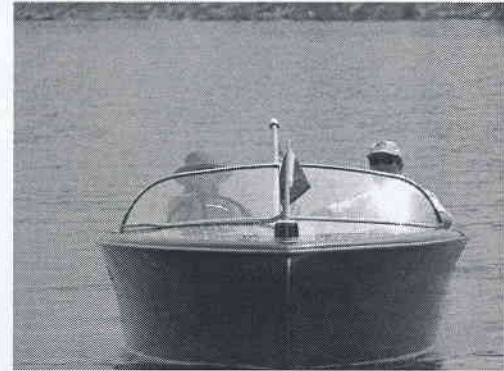
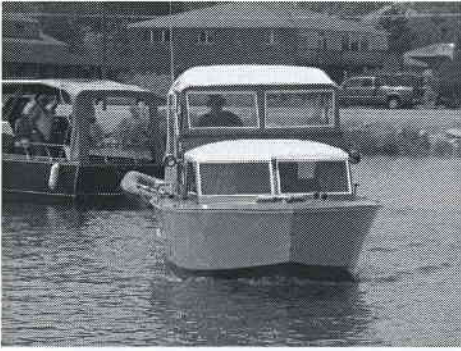


MS-CRC
ZWODEN
STAKUDS
DZALZ
JOMEKOR

2ND ANNUAL LAKE LOVELAND
"SHAKEDOWN CRUISE"



Loveland, Colorado
May 31st - June 1st 2003



LOVELAND SHAKEDOWN CRUISE

&

FAMILY FUN DAY

PAGE 13

The day began with gray skies and drizzle, and our four truck supply caravan drove through a downpour but there was the promise of sunnier weather on the horizon...and Loveland got just that on Saturday, May 31 on Lake Loveland, Mother Nature treated us all to the perfect nautical day.

Lake Loveland was brimming full with water up to the park lawn at North Shore Park. Sunshine peaked out early and warmed the many boaters and guests who attended this year's Shakedown Cruise. There were 17 boats attending this year, some classic cars and even a classic sailboat. Among those attending were Jaimison's with 'Lucy', Hobson's with 'Sea Hawk', Novick's with '55 Survivor', Bill Tordoff with 'H2O Dancer', Richard Ball with 'Ball Four', Jim Grubb with 'Miss Betty Lou', Wayne Spaulding with 'Pegasus', Christners with 'Finally Floats', Langes with 'Legacy', Ecker with his Homebuilt, Braafs with 'Chris' Craft', 2 different Cruisers,, and a visitor who wants to become a member from Loveland, Beard with their beautiful Resorter & Charlie & Linda Peak brought *Maximillian* sporting a new convertible top. The newest addition to the Rocky Mountain Fleet was Jim & Rhonda McGaughy's new 1968 Chris Craft ski boat, last year of the mahogany planked boats. There were only 10 of them made that year!! They were able to debut their pride and joy at Loveland, broken hand and all!!



We were very fortunate this year to be joined by a member from the Dixie Land Chapter, Jim Kierns. He was working in Denver, and had heard about the Shakedown and decided to join us. Jim and his wife, Judy, are from Union Missouri, and Jim spent the day mingling with our members and enjoying some Colorado hospitality. We hope he got enough boating and invited him to join us again in Grand Lake since he will still be working in the area in July. Jim was a pleasure to have and was presented with an event t-shirt and copies of the last three issues of our newsletter to enjoy. We hope to see him again in Grand Lake.

Many members came without boats just to join in the fun. There was plenty to eatall attending were offered donuts and coffee Saturday morning, and then huge meat and cheese trays, veggies and loads of food brought in by our members for lunch. There was a lot more food

than even that crowd could eat!! Jimmy Buffet and the Beach Boys joined us for the day and had many singing or just keeping time to the summer sounds...it really set the mood for the day. Late afternoon the rain began again catching many unprepared, but it didn't last long, and soon we were all docked safely at the Ball's docks enjoying the wonderful view from their veranda and sipping on refreshments of our choosing. Boats were coming and going all afternoon and evening with load after load of riders enjoying a cruise around the lake.



Dinner was BBQ, corn and more wonderful offerings from Linda Brown and ice cream and the best brownies any of us had ever had from Wayne Spaulding served up in style by Lu Ball in their summer house and adjourning back to the veranda on the lake. We all enjoyed the company, the music, the food and the sunset and rides once again resumed after dinner.





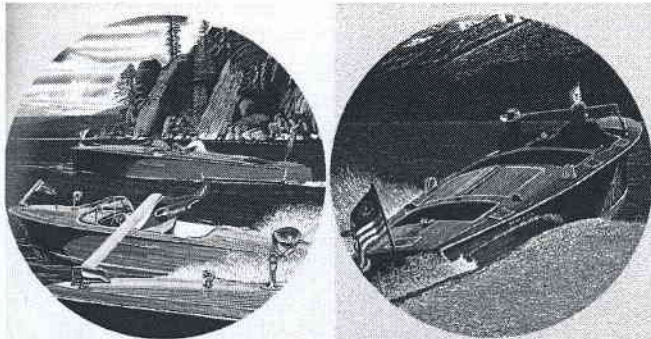
SHIP'S STORE



Were you at the last event and want a souvenir? Did you miss it and wish you hadn't? Not too worry! You can now catch all the action with this **Boating Days CD** of all the weekend's events. No more wasted time, money, film developing and trips to the photo store. Print your own photos at home from this CD with over 260 pictures! Introductory CD-Loveland Shakedown Cruise 2003 including BONUS material from Grand Lake Fall Weekend and 2003 Denver Boat Show.
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 Order now, deliver now.....\$15



A must have for any boater's haven or for that hard-to-buy-for wooden boat enthusiast. These absorbent **sandstone coasters and trivets** feature four different classic/antique wooden boat scenes. Very classy! Useful and a great conversation piece.
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Perfect for boating fun! **Baseball caps and visors** available in White, Blue, Tan, Red
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 Phone: 303-795-6884, fax: 303-730-9600 or email to: ebiz@ix.netcom.com. (Add \$3 shipping per order unless specified otherwise)

JUNE/JULY SPECIAL: Take \$7.04 off
ANY red, white and blue item in
honor of Independence Day.
not (Does not include Special Show
Shirts)

GRAND LAKE SHOW SPECIAL, July 19-20, 2003

ORDER NOW

Order your Grand Lake Show Polo to let everyone know where you've been! Each high-quality polo features club logo on left front. "Grand Lake, Colorado 2003" is embroidered on the left sleeve and "Your boat name" is embroidered on the right sleeve. These keepsake shirts are by order only. Please specify size and color from the list above. Fax your order to: Lisa Christner 303-730-9600 **before July 9, 2003.**

Name: _____

Boat name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Shirt #1: Size: _____ Color: _____ Shirt #2: Size: _____ Color: _____

Shirt #3: Size: _____ Color: _____ Shirt #4: Size: _____ Color: _____

TOTAL # OF SHIRTS: _____ x \$34.00 EACH = \$ _____ due at pick up.



Trading Dock

Buy, Sell & Trade

BOAT FOR SALE

**1956 Correct Craft, 16' Rocket Skier, needs engine, setup for V-8 \$950 OBO

CALL Ruben Cortez (307) 742-4716

FOR SALE...1961 19' Chris Craft Continental, 283, V8. 200 actual hrs. All original except 1 refinish. 3rd owner, in clean dry storage from 1967-2000. Purchased from original owner. \$16,950. 10% discount to club member before March 2003.



FOR SALE

1960 Chris Craft 18' Continental
**283 Chevy Borg Warner Velvet Drive

**Original paperwork and pictures available to purchaser

Project boat...restoration needed
\$2,000

Call Chuck Clark 303-841-9335
Parker, CO

FOR SALE Private long gun collection
-Call Tom 303-447-1738

1967 21' Century Coronado

Project w/all structural and hull work and all chrome plating done Bu.ick 401 engine needs rebuilt. Complete trailer included. New, correct seat cushions. Needs deck finished and complete refinish. Has optional top.

\$12,000 firm.

Call Steve Carmack 303-457-4903

WANTED

Your Favorite Recipes for *Club Cookbook*
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Or

Lisa Christner (303) 795-6884 — Ship's Store

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The Rapids Lodge



*Affordable,
comfortable &
cozy*

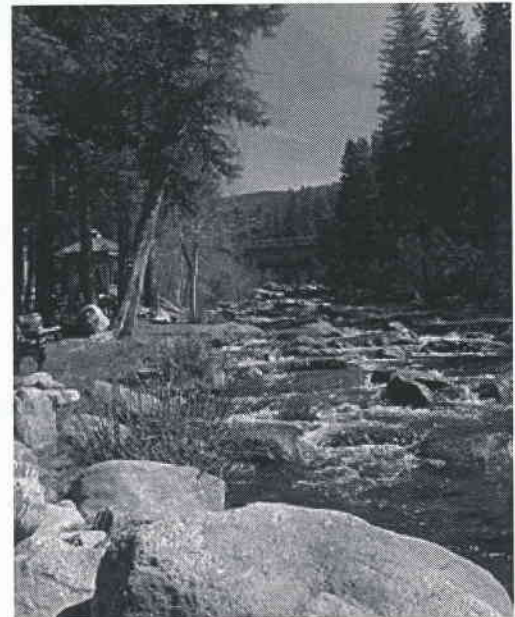
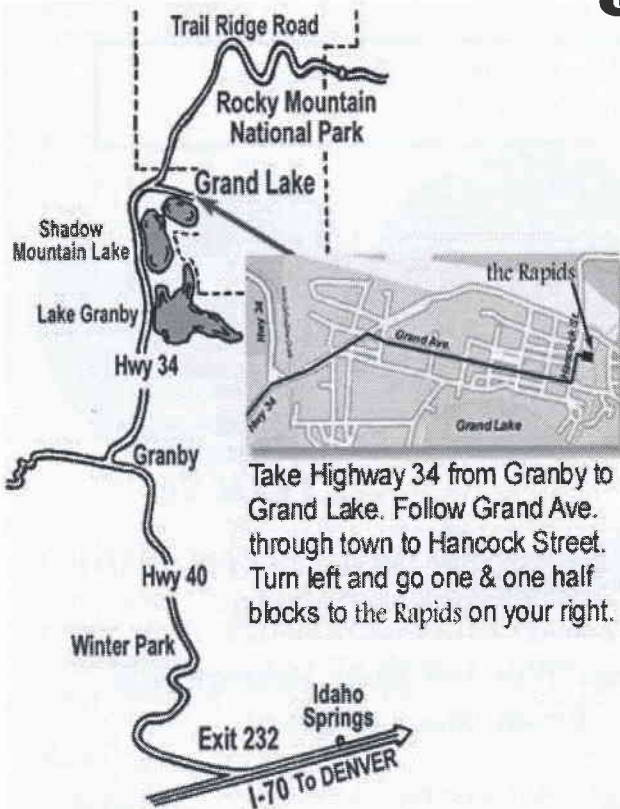
*Gourmet Dining
Unbelievable menu*

The Historic Rapids Lodge & Restaurant on the Tonahutu River

**Guest Rooms, Suites & Condos
All available Winter/Summer**

Our goal is to maintain the "family owned & operated" tradition of The Rapids while offering affordable quality for our guests lodging & dining experience. We hope you'll come see us soon!!

Call for reservations today!!



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Brightwork

Hurrahs & Kudos



McGaughy's have their boat home now. Except for a broken hand, all is smiles at the McGaughys. Look for them at all of our events this summer.



Thanks to Lisa & Morrie Christner for taking on the Ship's Store this year. Let's all see if we can help them in any way we can.



We've heard that Moharters have put their house on the market. We hope that RMC will always be home.



Thanks to Katie & Charlie Geuin for their wonderful job of running the Ship's Store these many years. We appreciate the time and effort they put forth to make it a success.



Rumor has it that the Ship's Store has some surprises in store for us this season!!



Thanks to Tom Green and Geuins for the great job at the Brass Armadillo. It came together fast and fun was had by all.



Many thanks to all who helped make Loveland Shakedown Cruise such a great success. Let's do again next year!!



Congrats to Jim McGaughy on his 'Purple Heart' Award at Loveland!! Ask Jim for the details!!

For Safety's Sake



COAST GUARD SAFETY CLASS

Jeff Waco, our Safety Director, provided a Coast Guard approved Safety Class to members of the Club on May 10, 2003. Jeff comes to us extremely well qualified for both off-shore and inland training. He has been training safe boaters for many years and shared many stories with all who attended the safety class that day.

About a dozen members attended the class that covered a wide range of basic boating rules, terms, dangers and tips. Everything from the different types of hulls of boats, to proper safety equipment required by the Coast Guard on different boats, how to tie different knots used in boating and the correct way to maneuver waterways big & small.

Everyone who attended left the class with something they had learned. No matter how seasoned the boater, we could all learn something we didn't know about safe boating, and Jeff was there to answer everyone's questions.

Lunch was served prior to the class, and a test was given at the end of the class. Tests were graded and participants received their completion certificates along with their test scores in the mail.

We all appreciated the opportunity Jeff provided to us, and encourage all boaters young and old to make time to attend this important class when it is offered next year. If anyone desires more information on possible classes available now, please contact Jeff Waco at 303-421-3141.

LOVELAND SHAKEDOWN CRUISE (cont)



The day was recounted as we viewed the pictures taken that day. There were action shots and still shots...boat shots and people shots...all for us to enjoy all over again.

Richard & Lu Ball and Jim Grubb were recognized for providing the beautiful venue for this fun event with framed hand bills sporting our Shakedown Cruise event logo. Linda Brown was also recognized for the massive amounts of great food she provided for our enjoyment.

The evening was truly magical. Balls kept the music and the drinks going on the veranda with 2 fires knocking the evening chill off of the surrounding air, torches flickering, and boats taking everyone out for after-dark cruises. One member recounting

that evening said that the sense of peace they felt cruising the lake after dark was something they had never felt before. That 's what it is all about, isn't it??"

As the crowd started breaking up for the evening, some members went home, some slept in motels, and several pitched a tent in Richard & Lu's back yard overlooking the lake. Ball's opened their home to all of us for the night to use restrooms...what a couple!!

The next morning we were treated to glassy water and Canadians. Unzipping the tent to drink in the beauty of the day, one member decided to take a canoe out to enjoy the peace of the morning. Soon everyone was stirring, so breakfast began. Breakfast burritos were prepared to order and everyone present hopefully got their fill of the great green chili!! The morning paper included an article about our day on Saturday...truly a tribute to Richard getting the word out.

Boats came and went throughout the morning, but started loading out close to noon. Hobsons showed up late that morning, and were able to get *Sea Hawk* out for a short time before it started blowing and raining. We hope they will get more boating time in next time.

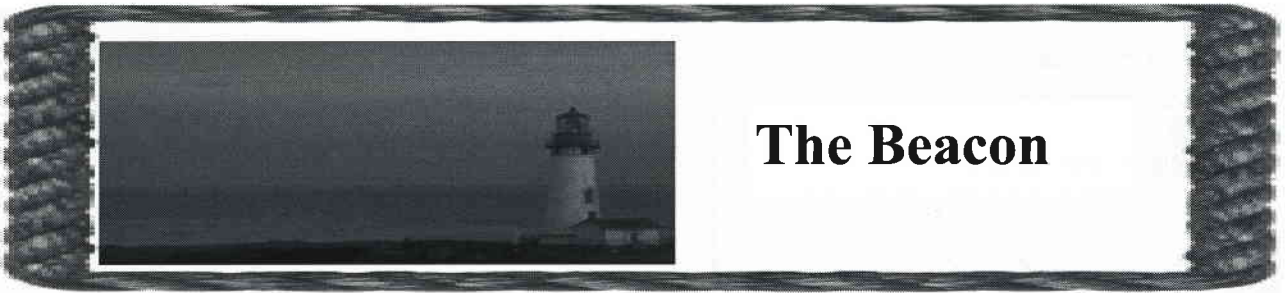
Balls and Grubbs were exceptional hosts and we are so fortunate to have them allow us to share their beautiful lake. We hope we can do it again next year.

All in all the *Shakedown Cruise* was a wonderful time to be remembered for a long time. We hope you will join us next year for the event that isn't a show, but a family fun time with boats and friends. See you next year!!

(May 29 & 30th...Mark your calendar now!!)

CONGRATULATIONS to Wayne Spaulding. He received the **AMBASSADOR AWARD** for sharing his time and his boat with so many.





The Beacon

OMANI TATE— HIS WINDWALKER

In January of 2002, we released a beautiful Lady Eagle south of Boulder near Boulder County Parks & Open Space Land.

She was found just east of the release site under a power line that was still vibrating from the impact that grounded the injured bird with a fractured ulna and radius in her wing.

The man who found the mortally wounded eagle was a Native American, Nick Conda—Yellow Hands. Hours after her arrival, Nick became a familiar and well-received guest and comforter of the eagle. His polite and gentle manners gave him access to “his” Lady Eagle any time he visited.

I remember the day when I took Omani Tate to Dr. Lee Eggleston for surgery in the middle of a snow storm. Usually, I never travel to Colorado Springs during a storm because of dangerous road conditions. However, I knew that Nick was praying for both of us, and this gave me confidence to continue the journey. The surgery went well and upon my arrival home, Nick was waiting for both of us to learn of the outcome of the surgery.

During the next 12 months, Nick visited “his girl” several times a week. He offered her gifts, he fixed prayer ties on the trees outside the clinic. Often I gave him the space and privacy to spend time alone with the bird because I knew that the two of them had a special connection that needed to be cultivated.

In time, the cool steel pin that was inserted into the fractured bone was removed and Omani Tate was moved into our large aviary. It was a great day, and as usual, Nick was there. He continued to visit her, offered gifts, smoked his special pipe, and paid respect to the Holy One. He began to tie black, white, yellow and blue prayer medicine bundle on the trees outside the flight cage now. Nick was always welcome. He never imposed and he was always respectful of all the birds he met.

There came a day when I realized that Omani’s wrist joint was not as mobile and flexible as it should have been, and my heart sank. Something needed to happen to let this eagle fly again. Nick often visited the territory of Omani Tate and her mate had been occupying for many years. He knew that her mate was still waiting and hoping for her return.

Never have I given anyone the permission to do what I allowed Nick to do. To me it felt good and right, and for Nick it was a ritual of respect and determination. We would see Omani return to her home and her mate. Several times each week, Nick went respectfully into the cage and set a goal for “His Girl”. He gently began to move her through the 108-foot cage from one perch to another. With his help, persistence and optimism, she began to improve and her joint limbered and became flexible and whole again.

Nick chose the location of Omani’s release. On a beautiful January day in 2002 we began our journey of this great day. As I removed the bird from her transport cage, I handed her to Nick. His joy was immense and as he finally held her in his arms, she looked up at him and the connection between the man and the bird was so clear. “I will never forget you Girl” were the words he said as he set her free.

We stayed for a long time afterwards; we participated in his rituals, burned sage, smoked the pipe and drank a blessed drink he offered us as we prayed. We watched her move around the trees across the valley. It was a perfect and peaceful day as we left the area. God was with us.

The following day, Nick burst into the office with a face shining of joy and pride as he announced the sighting of “His Girl” and her mate flying together. “So, Nick”, I said, “how do you know it was your bird that flew with the male eagle?” “I know it was her, because she still had a droop to her right wing when she perched, and I saw the white feather on that injured wing.”

“All true” I said to myself. “You can’t fool an Indian.” And ‘more power to the eagle that waited for his Lady for one whole year.”

The magic went then. I tried to bring Nick back to participate in future projects, but somehow he faded away. This bird was the highlight of his life and a turning point on his path to his future. I remember when Nick first came to visit the eagle he was recovering from an accident and a painful leg injury. He could only walk with a cane. On the day of release Nick walked towards the end of the plateau where the terrain dropped down to the valley like a new man. Both the bird and the man healed their wounds together.

It was one time, one eagle, one clear and perfect day that brought us together for a bittersweet, short and precious moment. All that happened after Omani’s tragic fall was good and right and it ended in a perfect day. Little in our lives lasts forever, but these treasured moments will be remembered forever. May our two eagles soar together in blue skies for a long time to come.

This article was reprinted with the permission of Sigrid Ueblacker, founder and president of ‘The Birds of Prey Foundation’ Tom & I had the privilege to work as volunteers for her amazing organization. For more information go to www.birds-of-prey.org

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