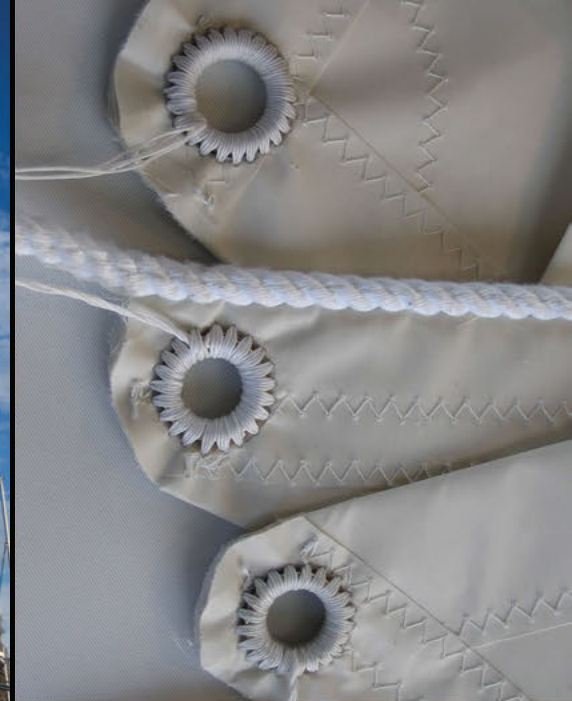




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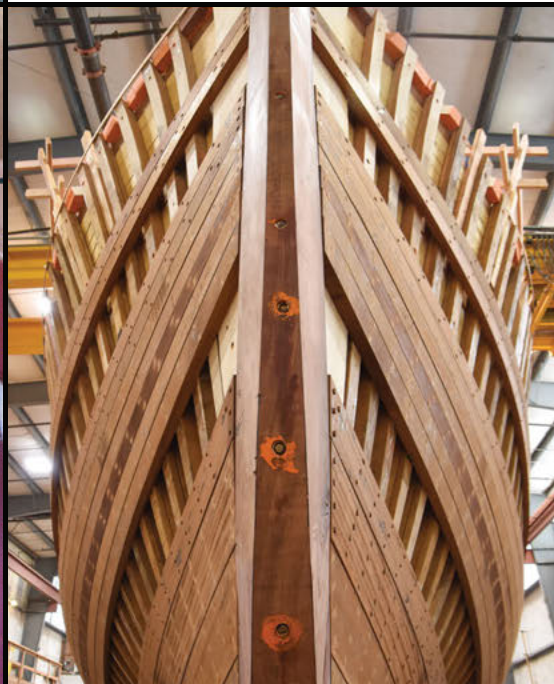
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*SEA LEGS AND ALL - pp.8-11*

*A SHAKEDOWN ON HIS FIRST WOODEN BOAT - pp. 14-15*

*THE GOOD, THE BAD THE ARTIFICIAL - pp. 16-17*

*LEARNING THE ART OF SAILMAKING - pp.18-19*

*ON THE YARD - pp. 22-23*

*ANOTHER DAY WORKING ON THE HARD - pp. 26-29*

*SHE'S THE BOSS NOW - pp. 32-33*

*KNOCK WOOD - pp. 36-37*

*CHEF PREFERS HARVESTS FRESH & LOCAL - pp. 38-39*

*A CANVAS FOR THE WIND - pp. 40-41*

# Maritime Makers: Stories from the shore

The rhythmic ebb and flow of tides, the echoes of seagulls, and the scent of salt in the air create a canvas of memories and stories that have shaped our town. Welcome to the inaugural issue of Working Waterfront, the wooden boat edition, where we delve into the world of those who earn their livelihoods working on the water, weaving together a tapestry of tradition, craftsmanship, and innovation.

In this second edition, we cast our spotlight on a cornerstone of maritime history – wooden boats. These vessels, crafted from nature's own design, have been navigating the waters for centuries, embodying a deep-rooted connection between people and the seas.

Every creak of the hull and every stroke of the oar echoes the legacy of craftsmanship passed down through generations. In the pages of this issue, you'll meet shipwrights, carpenters,

and artisans who dedicate their lives to the meticulous art of building and restoring these wooden wonders. Through their hands, the spirit of tradition lives on, each boat carrying a piece of history as it sails into the future.

But the influence of wooden boats goes beyond aesthetics and nostalgia. We dive into the ecological nuances, celebrating how these vessels can be a sustainable alternative, leaving a smaller environmental footprint than their modern counterparts. We explore the harmonious relationship between wooden boats and our oceans, and how the preservation of this craft can contribute to a more sustainable maritime future.

Flip through our pages and you'll encounter the stories of sailors, fishermen, and coastal communities who depend on these vessels for their livelihoods. Through interviews and

narratives, we'll delve into the challenges they face, the camaraderie that binds them, and the resilience they display in adapting to changing times.

We hope this issue of Working Waterfront is more than a magazine – it's a voyage of discovery, an invitation to celebrate the profound impact of wooden boats on our society and our souls. We invite you to embark on this journey with us, to connect with the individuals who keep these traditions alive, and to gain a deeper appreciation for the craftsmanship and heritage that sail the waves.

In a world where change is constant, the stories within these pages remind us that some things remain constant as well – the beauty of the sea, the resilience of those who work on it, and the enduring allure of wooden boats.







*Pete and siblings pose for a first day of school photo on board the Hyding. San Diego, CA, 1965. From top to bottom: Pete, Paul, Beth, Patrick and David Langley on the side. PHOTOS COURTESY OF PETE LANGLEY*

# SEA LEGS AND ALL

interview by Thais Oliveira

If you ask around for a list of the most influential people in the Port Townsend maritime world, Pete Langley will likely be at the top. Born into the trade of marine manufacturing, he worked in the architectural and industrial hardware industry for 43 out of his 65 years. These days, he is the owner of Port Townsend Foundry. In fact, he and his wife Cathy were recently voted Business Leaders of the Year by the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce.

But who is Pete when he is not playing with fire, building hardware for boats, and bringing up the younger generation to do the same?

## **HOW DID YOU COME TO THIS TRADE?**

My first metal work was done in fourth grade, a picture of a Norwegian Colin Archer ketch. My sister still has it — it was a drawing that I sold at an art show. I was always surrounded by creative and entrepreneurial types. There was always someone in the family manufacturing or inventing. Both of my grandfathers were in the aircraft industry in Los Angeles.

## **TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD.**

I was born in Cave Junction, OR. We lived in Wonder, but the closest doctor's office was in Cave Junction. I am the youngest of seven, five boys and two girls, all around two or three years apart. The story goes that my mom was re-roofing the house when the labor pains started. She called my grandma to take her to the doctor since my dad was out logging for the summer. Well, she went through labor, my grandmother stayed with me, and Mom went back to the house to watch the other kids and finish roofing.

## **HOW DID YOU GET A PASSION FOR THE MARITIME WORLD?**

My parents' first vessel was the Catalyst, which still hauls out here in PT every year. It's a unique yacht, the first oceanographic boat built for the University of Washington in the Lake Union shipyard of Seattle. That was done in 1932 using a Rockefeller grant, meant to keep people working after the depression.

Dad was raised in the San Diego/Los Angeles area around boats, so he decided to get back to that when he moved to Oregon after serving in the Navy during World War II. He retired from logging in 1960, put all seven kids on the Catalyst, and off we went. We cruised from Coos Bay, Oregon,

to Mazatlan, Mexico. My parents owned [the Catalyst] for five years and then went to the Hyding, a bigger 117-foot steel boat that was built for Colonel Hartland Molson in England in 1927. It was used to patrol the west coast during World War II under the name of USS Leader and now is in Oslo, Norway, under the name Grace.

We lived on board full-time, always. If I wasn't living on my parents' boats, it was someone else's I was working on, or my own.

## **WHEN DID YOU MOVE OUT OF HOME?**

I never moved out; my parents left me! They got divorced in 1966 mainly because of the death of my oldest sister. That caused a rift. Dad moved north to Morro Bay, California, and my mom stayed in San Diego. We went back and forth between the two. Both were building boats at the time. I was eight, but everybody else was pretty much out of the 'house' at that point. My oldest brother is 13 years older than me.

## **DO YOU STILL LIVE ON BOARD OR SAIL?**

I don't live on board, no. I own a whole fleet and sometimes sail. I actively sail on the schooner Martha and enjoy interacting with the youth. I love sharing some of the insights and experiences, trials and tribulations of being at sea. Whenever I get a chance to go on Martha, I do. Cathy and I were very active in helping to rebuild it over the years, making parts and pieces. The last time I raced with it, it was for the San Francisco Leukemia Cup in 2019. It was extra special because I then sailed to Morro Bay weeks short of the fiftieth anniversary of the first time I ever sailed there.

## **HOW DID YOU MEET CATHY?**

Cathy: I was cruising in town with my friend Allison Perry, owner of the Silverwater Cafe, in her '56 Cadillac, and I saw this cool old pickup truck. She said, "That's Pete Langley's — I'll introduce you." And that was it! We have been together for 40 years and have four kids (Christopher, Holly, Amanda, and Sam) and four grandkids (Kylie, Sailor, Lillianna, and Cruze). Amanda and Chris live in Morro Bay, Holly is in Kings Beach near Truckee, California, and Sam lives here in PT and is the only one in the marine trade.

### **HOW DID YOU END UP IN PORT TOWNSEND?**

Pete: The first time I came I was around 13, got off a greyhound bus in Seattle, ran to the ferry dock and hitchhiked here all night to surprise my mom for summer vacation. I walked all the way from Anderson Lake Road to South Discovery Road at twilight. It was eerie! The first car coming down the road was a garbage man, first day on the job; he picked me up and dropped me off at Sea Breeze.

My mom and stepfather came here first in 1972 to scope out a place to build a boat and found Holly Manor, the big Victorian house on West Sims Way. They lived in the carriage house and lofted the boat full-size up in the attic. They came to PT every summer for three years between 1973 and 1976, building the Pacific Trader, which I have out here today. That vessel was in the very first Wooden Boat Show.

Fast forward 35 years — this guy stops at my booth at the Wooden Boat Festival and starts telling me how he used to be a garbage man, and his first job was here. Well, I asked him, 'Do you remember picking up a kid hitchhiking early in the morning on your first day of work?' And he did! What are the odds?

### **WHAT DO YOU BINGE ON TV?**

Antiques roadshows, scientific engineering catastrophes, what on Earth or what's not on Earth. The big picture of the galaxy is intriguing to me because we are all part of it. I believe in aliens. They might not look like how we think they do. It would be hypocritical to say we are the only intelligent species in the galaxy. We are probably some of the stupidest! I got my love for science, geology, astronomy, and physics from my dad.

### **YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE?**

"Cat Ballou," 1965, with Lee Marvin and Jane Fonda. We got to meet Lee Marvin after he won the Academy Award for that movie in Cedros Island, California. It was one of those symbolic times in life. He had chartered a boat with paid crew and staff after getting the Oscar and went to Mexico to celebrate. He anchored next to us and had the captain come over and ask my dad if he could meet the owners, thinking we were rich, well-to-do people. When he realized we kids ran the boat, he couldn't believe it. They got in some little tiff by the end of that evening and my dad challenged him and his paid crew to race us — our 117-foot boat against his 60-footer. The deal was whomever won had to pay the other person's fuel bill. We managed to get up and going, they tried to pass, we pushed them out to sea, then turned back towards the aisle. As soon as they tried again, we would push them up on the shore. We won! I have an autograph somewhere on the fuel bill.

### **WHAT'S ON YOUR NIGHTSTAND?**

Spare change and my dad's Portuguese-style captain's hat.

### **BEST CONCERT YOU HAVE EVER BEEN TO?**

Bob Marley and the Wailers in Maui's amphitheater. The concert was on a Saturday and on Friday, after work, a friend and I were going to play frisbee on the beach down in south Lahaina and saw a couple of Rastafari guys. We invited them over and ended up hanging out all night. We show up at the concert and realize they were the two lead guitarists for the Wailers. We never asked who they were; they never mentioned. We managed to get close to the stage, the Rastas recognized us, told the bouncers to clear away, got down to their knees and played the lead solo to us! The entire place was going nuts! They could not understand why they were playing to these two haoles (laughs)! I still listen to reggae. I am a Parrot Head (Jimmy Buffett fan). We listen to all kinds of music. The Kingston trio, Patsy Cline, Barbra Streisand, Manhattan Transfer, show tunes, Cat Stevens, Neil Young.

I also play a lot of music for fun. Arthritis is making it hard now but sometimes I join the buskers downtown, like Stale Bread Scotty. I love playing with friends. Not in a band, though. I am too independent to do that! My favorite is a five-gallon bucket as percussion, but I have a couple guitars too. Cathy plays the cello and piano; her dad was a musician and music teacher.

### **WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?**

I am well satisfied with such a rich life. Maybe in my list would be to revisit early places and connections, especially in Mexico — Man of War Cove in Magdalena Bay in Baja, where we found a cannon ball fracture in 1963. It would be cool to go back and return it and see the logs of every time we visited. They also figured out what ship the cannon ball came from and it's all recorded there. The tradition there is that port captains are handed down from generation to generation. So, Gregorio, who was my age then, is now the captain.

### **IF YOU COULD LIVE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD?**

A deserted island! I don't mind the people. I think if everybody is on a deserted island together, you are working as a team with a community aspect of survival. I think we've lost that today. Being able to get a space where you can truly see your pioneer spirit unfold. To be able to make or repair something, use your hands, know a trade, be part of something. These abilities seem to be fading fast.

**IF YOU COULD TRAVEL IN TIME?**

I would go back to the Bronze Age, back into the renaissance of what I do.

**DO YOU PLAY SPORTS OR CHEER FOR ANY TEAM?**

I used to be a competitive swimmer and diver through junior high and high school, as I was always around the water. I play badminton now and then. I don't really follow professional sports.

**WHAT WAS THE WORST JOB YOU EVER HAD?**

Offloading a tuna boat that had a brine system failure at sea, so it had about 10 tons of fish in it that thawed out, then refroze after they had the system back up. I remember getting there with rubber boots and slickers on, getting the first part of the frozen fish off and then sinking into what felt like cans of cat food. The bottom was all mushy. I was 16 or 17 in Morro Bay. I worked the fuel dock and when it wasn't busy and when the cannery next door needed extra hands, I would jump in.

“

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*from my customers and employees. I love watching them grow and develop; it's inspiring to see them get enthused and want to take more of the risk, the sheer physical aspect of doing something with our hands.*

”

*The Langley family working together to prepare the yacht Catalyst for sale. San Diego, CA, 1964.*





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*Breezing up (a fair wind). Oil on canvas, 1876 by Winslow Homer.*

# A SHAKEDOWN ON HIS FIRST WOODEN BOAT

by Thomas Mullen

During the summer of '79 I fell in love twice.

First with my now wife of 40 years, and then with her favorite sport, sailing.

That summer I lived aboard her father's boat, a Venture 21, on Lewis and Clark Lake, and I first learned the fundamentals from her.

It would be seven years and three children before we had our own boat, a 1960s Melges C Scow, which is a sort-of glorified surf board. She was called "Argosy," and she was beautiful but a handful for those uninitiated to inland racing.

My brother-in-law, Jimmy, one of the best helmsmen I ever knew, said she looked like a cigar, a really fast cigar.

The first thing I learned about a trailerable wooden boat was that I needed to fill it up with water the night before I went sailing. So I'd lay the garden hose inside the cockpit and walk away for an hour. At first, she'd leak like a sieve but soon the timbers would swell and I could open the bailers the next morning and tow her to the lake, heavy now with the water that would buoy her.

But that was a lesson I learned the hard way.

On her shakedown cruise I was accompanied by Jimmy and his father (my father-in-law), Daryl. By the time I'd let her loose from the trailer and guided her to a dock, I realized she was taking on water, fast.

My mother-in-law, Donna, stood on the dock, pleading with me to take her out of the water. The wind had come up and all the other boats on the lake were coming into the marina.

"The bailers." I promised her. "Once we're under sail, they'll suck all the water out of the cockpit and we'll fly across the lake."

On that, I was wrong.

Once we passed the breakers, I could see that, despite a 25-knot wind, we weren't going to make much headway in the heavy chop.

Jimmy bailed like a madman but with each gallon over the side, the lake returned 10 more.

The waves were crashing over and in. We bobbed like a cork, too laden with water to move forward, rendering the bailers useless.

Not one to let the thought process get in the way of my determination, I wobbled the rudder and trimmed the main as best I could.

Jimmy, 22 at the time, had already become exhausted. My father-in-law, a decent sailor and not one to mince words, let me know his opinion of the situation. With the wind howling, he felt he needed to shout.

"You can't sail worth a damn."

That set me off.

"Then you sell the [expletive]," and I threw the tiller at his body.

It was one more in a succession of mistakes I made that day Argosy's mast dropped 90-degrees as her sail slapped the lake.

The boat knew better than I how to sail and when she righted, we all looked at each other in amazement.

We'd been knocked down in an open boat and yet we three were still standing in her.

By now, she was swamped but a motorboat, from Samaria I imagine, offered us a tow.

Yes, I would like to be towed. But I had a few more mistakes left in me that day.

As we were being pulled back to the marina, I noticed the tow line had fouled so I sprang up on the deck and walked forward.

So my 200 pounds tilted the bow down and with it, all of the water in her. She went down like a trident submarine, diving at what seemed like a fatal angle. Within a second or two we were all floating and when the aft disappeared I yelled for our Samaritan to release the tow line, thinking Argosy was taking the motorboat with her.

But then she breached like a whale - this little bark would not be sunk, not by the likes of me.

The cold water had cooled my temper but not Daryl's. As we came within a half mile of the marina, he scowled at me.

"I'm not going into port with you," he said. He was too embarrassed to be seen with such lousy sailors, and so he jumped ship and swam to shore.

# the good, the bad THE ARTIFICIAL



This story and photos were created by artificial intelligence text and image generators.



**prompt:** write a column about the impact of artificial intelligence on the maritime industry in 500 words or less.

# Navigating the Seas of Innovation: AI's Impact on the Maritime Industry

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement, artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing industries across the globe, and the maritime sector is no exception. With its potential to enhance efficiency, safety, and sustainability, AI is charting a new course for the maritime industry.

Traditionally reliant on human expertise and manual processes, maritime operations are undergoing a transformation driven by AI-driven automation, predictive analytics, and real-time decision-making. One of the most significant impacts of AI in this domain is the optimization of shipping routes and logistics. Advanced AI algorithms analyze vast amounts of data, including weather patterns, sea conditions, and historical performance, to determine the most efficient and cost-effective routes. This not only reduces fuel consumption and emissions but also improves vessel scheduling, leading to substantial cost savings for shipping companies.

Safety at sea has always been paramount, and AI is bolstering this aspect by providing predictive maintenance and early fault detection for vessels. Sensors and IoT devices equipped with AI capabilities monitor the condition of critical components in real time. By identifying potential issues before they escalate, AI-enabled systems contribute to minimizing downtime,

preventing accidents, and ensuring crew safety.

AI also finds its way into maritime surveillance and security. Smart cameras equipped with computer vision technology can monitor ships, ports, and coastal areas, detecting anomalies and unauthorized activities. This proactive approach enhances maritime security, helping to combat piracy, illegal trafficking, and environmental violations.

Crew management and training are also evolving through AI integration. Virtual reality simulations powered by AI algorithms offer realistic training scenarios, preparing crew members for emergencies and complex situations. Additionally, AI-driven data analysis assists in crew scheduling, optimizing work hours and minimizing fatigue, ultimately promoting seafarer welfare.

However, the AI-led transformation in the maritime sector is not without challenges. The industry's adoption of AI necessitates considerable investments in technology and infrastructure. Moreover, the rapid pace of change requires upskilling the workforce to effectively operate and manage AI systems. Balancing the benefits of automation with the preservation of jobs is a delicate task that demands a strategic approach.

Furthermore, data privacy and cybersecurity emerge as critical concerns. As AI relies on massive data inputs, safeguarding sensitive information becomes paramount. Ensuring that data sharing and collaboration across industry stakeholders occur without compromising security and privacy is a complex challenge.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence is steering the maritime industry into uncharted waters, reshaping operations, safety protocols, and business models. The efficiency gains, safety enhancements, and environmental benefits of AI-driven optimization are promising for an industry seeking to reduce its ecological footprint and adapt to an increasingly interconnected world. As maritime players weigh the potential advantages against the challenges, collaboration among industry stakeholders, technology developers, and regulatory bodies will be key to navigating this transformation successfully.

The maritime industry's journey with AI is a testament to human innovation's ability to transcend horizons. By embracing AI's potential and addressing its associated challenges head-on, the industry has the opportunity to set a course for a safer, more efficient, and sustainable future on the high seas.



# Learning the art of sail making

by Kathy Cruz

One could say that Sean Rankins is a teacher of art and science, but the learning tools in his classroom don't include paintbrushes or petri dishes. And while his instructions do involve sewing machines and needles, don't mistake him for an old-school home economics teacher.

Rankins is a master sailmaker with decades of experience who enjoys teaching his craft to others. He and his wife Inger own and operate Northwest Sails and Canvas, a long-established company that specializes in all levels of sail making design and construction, from traditional sails to modern ones.

The company's canvas shop and office is at 1238 Blaine St. in Port Townsend. The sail loft is located at 42 N. Water St at the Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building in Port Hadlock.

"We moved to this space when the school was getting ready to move down to the water here," Rankins said of the sail loft. "The previous director showed me the space and asked us if we wanted to rent it. We were teaching sail making through the school, so we opened this space up as a classroom and we've been teaching here ever since."

Rankins was never the type to work in an office. He was drawn to the maritime industry from an early age. In 1976, he did an apprenticeship with North Sails, the world's largest sailmaker. He later met Inger in Europe. After visiting Port Townsend, the couple put down roots there in 1989 and raised their son, now 30, in the Victorian seaside town.

"Like a lot of people, it was kind of a pass-through that lasted 30-odd years," he said.

After arriving in Port Townsend, Sean worked for a local sail loft for a time. But then he and Inger started their own label, Northwest Sails and Canvas. They have been in their current location since 2001, serving a diverse client base. Clients are invited to come learn the craft and help make their own sails.

"We have daysailers, racers, offshore blue water cruisers, tall ships, large educational vessels - all types, actually," Rankins said, adding that most of Northwest Sails and Canvas' customers are private owners. "We're small and we don't do any advertising. It's mostly word of mouth from our prior clients, return clients and things like that."

Holly Kays, a member of the crew of the Schooner Martha, the West Coast's oldest working sailing vessel, has worked part-time for Sean since 2003.

"I really appreciate his willingness to educate others and be involved in a wide variety of projects," she said. "He really supports folks who want to sail and learn more about their vessels."

Sean and Inger have found plenty of reasons to remain in Port Townsend.

"The area is so beautiful, and you know, all the people, the friends that we have here," Rankins said, ticking off the reasons why they have stayed. "And it's definitely because we're involved in the marine trades, which sustains us here."





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**Photo: Pete & Cathy Langley, Port Townsend Foundry  
Location: Port Townsend Foundry Student Tour**



# on the yard

by Steve Mullensky

Chad Tichgelaar of Port Townsend and a seven-year employee of the Port of Port Townsend, pressure washes barnacles and other marine debris from the hull of a catamaran in preparation for other maintenance work that will be done at the Boat Haven.





Shawn Mayer of Port Townsend, chef at the Marina Cafe, works at the sink as he preps for Friday lunch service. "We feed the boat haven," said the chef. A stromboli, a rolled pizza, was on the menu for the Friday lunch rush which is generally noon to 1 p.m.



Connor Cunningham of Port Townsend, looks out for traffic as he drives a travel lift to a parking spot. Cunningham has worked for the Port of Port Townsend for seven years.



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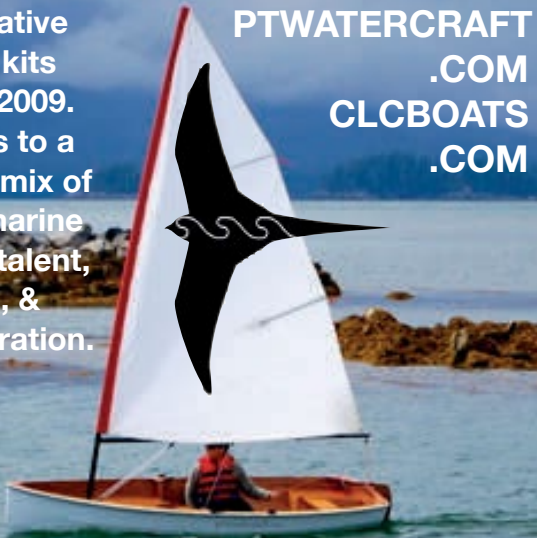


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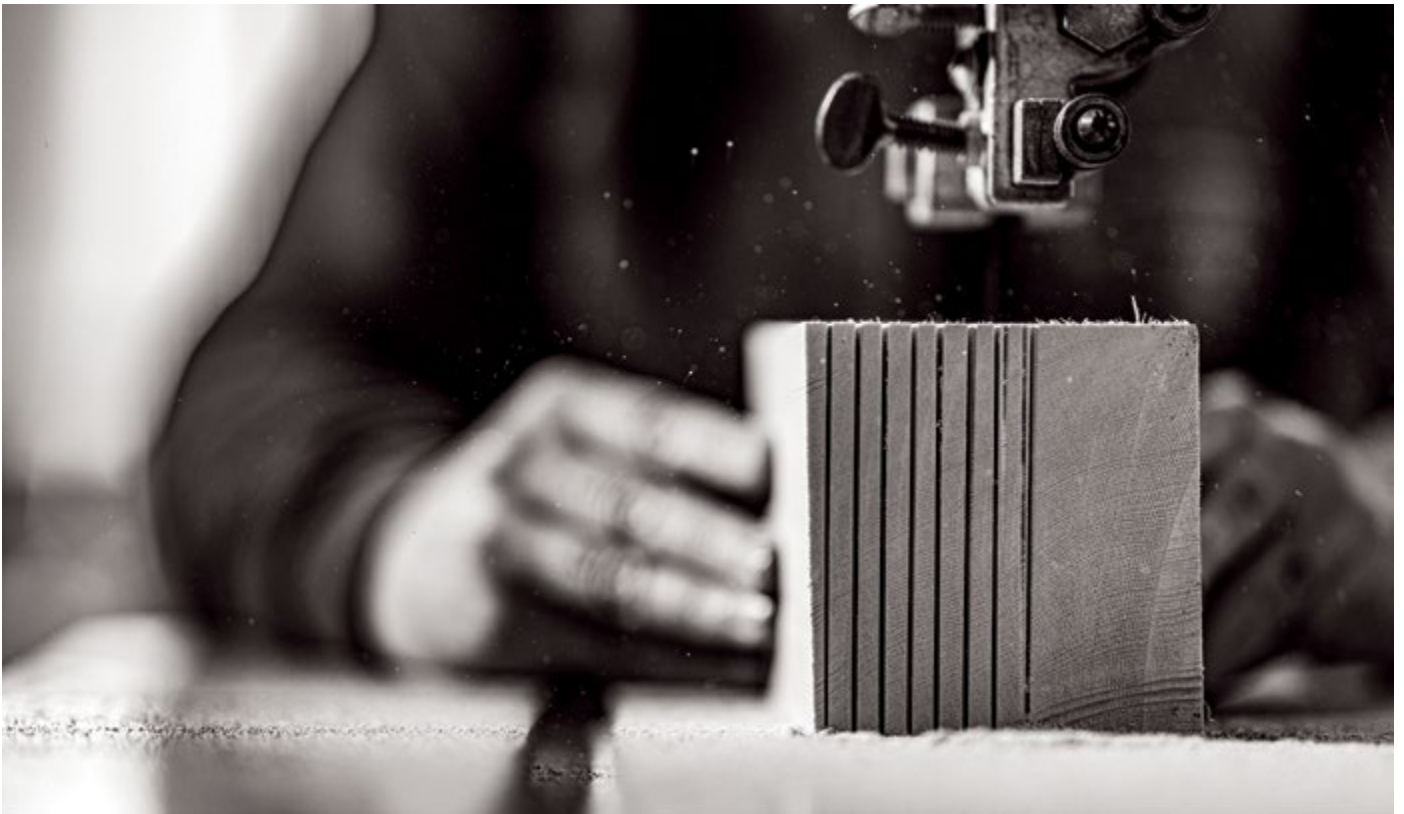
# *another day working on the hard*

by Lloyd Mullen

For the past six years, Ginny Wilson has been honing her craft nail by swede nail at the Port Townsend Boat Haven. Prior to opening shop at the Boat Haven in 2017, Wilson attended the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding in Port Hadlock. Since then, Wilson has been sanding, drilling, and painting her way across wooden boats on the hard.

"Wooden boats are beautiful and they take a lot of love to build a traditional boat. It takes a human being and it takes an eye and they're all different, so every one is different – different curves, different lines, different challenges. It's just constantly changing. It's a craft that has been passed down for hundreds and hundreds of years," Wilson said.

Ginny Wilson takes a block of wood and saws it into swede nails, or wooden nails, that are used to fill holes in a fiberglass or wood hull on a boat. "It's just good practice to try and fill holes with wood. It's better if you're putting it into a similar density and such. It provides better stability than if you were to refasten it. It give it something to bite into rather than just filling it with epoxy," Wilson explained.



Below: Ginny Wilson of Thorne Boatworks, hammers swede nails into recently epoxy filled holes in the full of a wooden boat at the boat yard at the Boat Haven in Port Townsend Wash. Wilson runs her business with a cooperative at the boat yard named the, Shop Co-op. "We're working on all kinds of boats but primarily and ideally I'm working on traditional wood boats for structural repair," she said. "I do some minor work if it's fiberglass, but I am a wooden boat builder."



Left: Deep Purple rests atop concrete and wooden blocks at the boat yard in Port Townsend.

Right: Mike Cassella-Blackburn sands the bottom of his boat, Deep Purple, on his back with a fender supporting his head.







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# *She's the boss now*

by Thomas Mullen

Lillian Kuehl has finally answered the call of the sea.

She bought her first wooden sailboat from her uncle, David Miller, 10 years ago.

Miller had built it in his backyard in Seattle. It was 31 feet, carvel plank built from Douglas fir on an oak frame with an extra tall aluminum mast and a six-foot bowsprit.

“He made the mast tall because of the light winds around here,” Kuehl explained.

“It was in good shape. It didn’t need any major work but when you start pushing 40, you need some maintenance.

“At the time, I thought I would have a high-paying career and be able to pay someone to do this kind of work for me. I was a marine biologist, working in the aquaculture industry, mostly oyster farms,” she explained.

She landed a gig in New Jersey but when she returned to Washington, she had trouble finding work. So she lived aboard her boat while earning money as a bike mechanic and returned to graduate school.

During that time, she was having trouble with her boat’s alternator so she stopped in to see her cousin, Joe, at Miller and Miller Boatyard in Seattle.



Lillian Kuehl makes her way to work at Boat Haven.

“And he said, ‘anytime you wanna come work for me, I have a job for you.’ I did not take him up on his offer but two years later when I was burned out on academics, I went to work for him.”

That was in 2018. Ever since, she refers to herself as a marine technician or more precisely, a yacht systems technician.

When COVID came the work didn’t slow, but she was unsure of the ethical choice of working on yachts as an essential job so she pursued her master’s again. She finished her thesis, a feeding study on Pinto abalone when they are smaller in size than a poppy seed. Kuehl said she doesn’t believe she will return to work as a biologist - the allure of working for herself, as a yacht systems technician, makes too much sense.

“It’s interesting work and there’s a lot of problem solving - it’s physical and doesn’t completely wreck my body, I hope.

“What’s universally challenging is scheduling. If I were to work on the air conditioner in your car, I’m gonna open the hood and know where it is. On a boat it could be anywhere - every single boat is so unique.”

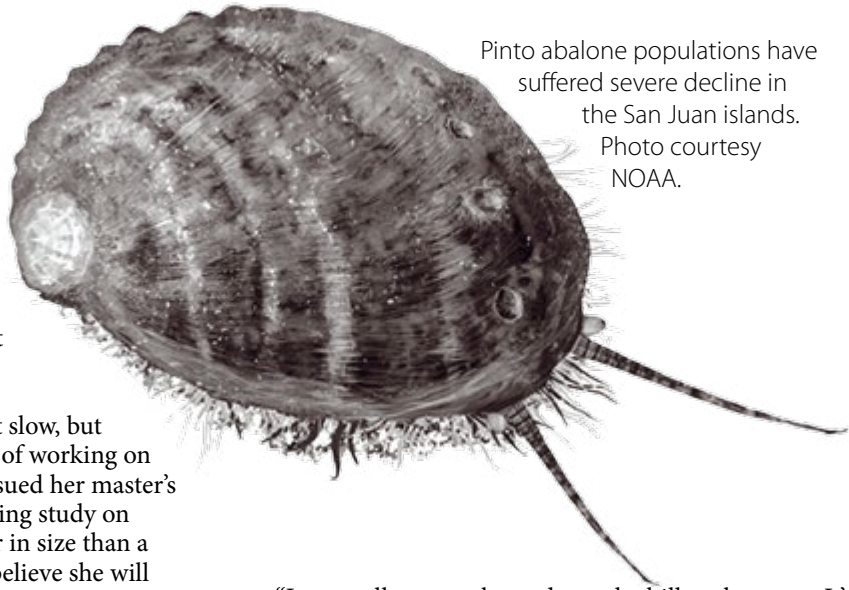
That fact, she said, can make it difficult to know how much time she needs to schedule for any particular job - a problem which is compounded by working on any boat that’s spent time on the water.

“There’s a lot of project creep. You start on one project and another project appears. If I’m installing a water maker and putting a T-fitting on the through-hull and notice the hose is cracked, I’m gonna replace that hose. And if I’m adding a breaker to your panel to run the new water maker, and I open up the panel and see there are other pre-existing conditions, I’m going to talk to the owner about addressing those problems.”

She credits her cousin for providing a work environment where she could learn and master her trade.

“Joe really trusts his workers. He’d send you out on a job and I could call him and ask questions but he’d say, ‘Lil, if I can figure it out, you can figure it out.’”

Kuehl specializes in refrigeration, air conditioning, plumbing and electrical but she keeps an eye toward the sea from her home, just above the marina in Port Angeles.



Pinto abalone populations have suffered severe decline in the San Juan islands. Photo courtesy NOAA.

“I can walk my rowboat, down the hill to the water. It’s on wheels.”

She loves working for herself but admitted to being jealous of a friend who is currently making his way across the Atlantic on a 40-foot planing sailboat.

“But I’ve got my eye out for a 20-foot planer,” she said, and she hopes to sail one on a Race to Alaska with an all female crew.

“My dad invited me to crew for him in 2019 on his custom made, he called it a Miller 27-foot trailerable sailer with a retracting dagger board, until he found out that name was taken.”

In last year’s race she helmed a Chesapeake Light Craft she built herself.

Kuehl meets a client, Duncan Kellogg, aboard his 37-foot Beneteau.



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# knock wood

By Marci Peterson

To ward off past mistakes and prevent future ones we “knock on wood,” then look for something made of wood to tap three times with our knuckles.

As a marine surveyor and shipwright consultant, knocking on wooden boats has been Lee Erheart’s job for 35 years.

When I met Lee I stood in the shadow of his six-foot-four-inch frame as he beamed a smile.

His blue eyes immediately outshone that smile, projecting a trustworthy heart and something else that I would soon discover.

As fellow sailors, we talked about the boats we had owned and lived on and some of the same people that we know.

We drove to the boat yard for a short demo of Lee’s profession.

“I’ll just go get my tools,” he said.

Thinking the tools of his trade might be larger, I asked if he needed any help.

“No thanks,” he replied and returned with a cloth bag about the size of a tool box and lifted it up into the cab of his truck.

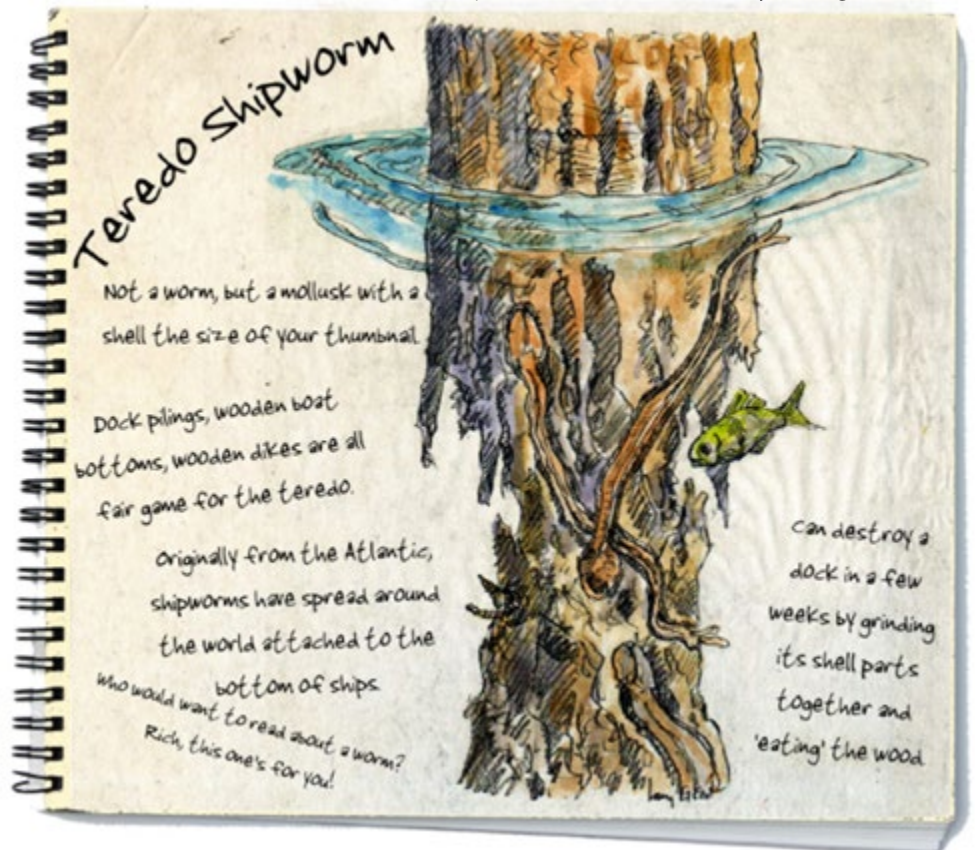
“That’s all of them?” I asked.

“That’s all,” he said, and I began to think that Lee was always smiling.

On the way to the boat yard, I asked Lee why he had chosen his line of work.

“Forty years ago,” he began, “I sailed my 48-foot ex-Norwegian fishing boat Havorn into Seattle after spending seven years out in Polynesia. Two of those years were in New Zealand building wood and fiberglass boats.”

The incessant work of the teredo shipworm. *Illustration courtesy 48 Degrees North.*



He paused and glanced at me with that smile.

“I bought the boat in Norway in 1965, rebuilt it Romdalen, and slowly sailed to San Diego where I worked in a small shipyard for six years,” he continued.

“Wow,” I said out loud.

“The Havorn and I have been together for so long people think the boat name is my last name. It’s like a marriage, me and the boat.

“Maybe I should consider counseling to see if there is a way out.”

Upon entering the boat yard, Lee recognized some boats he had worked on, and many that did need it.

“How does it feel to be here right now?” I asked.

“I’m part of the action,” he said.

A certain glint in his eyes betrayed the passion he has for his work and it hasn't dulled after 35 years. We stopped at a large boat that needed a lot of repair.

"We use our five senses to understand what condition the boat is in," he said.

He found some weathered planking, went to get his tools to lay out for me, and began to explain their uses. To my eyes, they appeared to be a few hammers.

"We must be able to hear the boat," Lee said.

"The methodical process of tapping or sounding out a wood hull leaves a lot of room for interpretation. A proper hammer is essential to make a sound wave through the thickness of the wood," he said.

He picked one and demonstrated by tapping the hammer, springing back and sounding a high pitch.

"This is good, solid dry wood," he said and then went a bit farther down the plank.

"Rotted wood produces this low, flat, dead sound that we're hearing," Lee then placed his fingertips near the tapping hammer.

"Vibration and other movement can be felt through the sensitivity of the fingertips. The visual inspection is having your eyes focused on the spot where the hammer is tapping. Training the eyes to see subtleties and being able to identify and recognize that what we see is an art.

"Aside from hearing and seeing it, you can even smell fungi rot!"

"Its odor is unmistakable, like fresh mushrooms." As we passed the aft to inspect the other side of the hull, we noticed a wet spot underneath it. Lee inhaled deeply. "Diesel fuel - that's not good."

We happened to see a couple pieces of wood from the hull. Lee picked them up and pointed to one that had indentations on it, tinged with a white substance.

"These are from teredo worms. They enter bare wood spots along the waterline from a rope boarding ladder chaffing bottom paint and leave calcium deposits. That's this white stuff."

He picked up the other piece.

"This piece is older. The calcium has disappeared."

A surveyor, he explained to me how he is called into action.

"For someone buying a wooden boat. And for all current owners, they need to be inspected every three to five years for insurance purposes. And I always include them in my survey, creating a trusting relationship and helping them understand more about their boat. I love sharing what I know.

"The first survey I did was scrawled longhand on letterhead and rejected. I was confident that I had done a good job of finding the problems with the boat. I was devastated. The reason it was rejected didn't have anything to do with what I'd found or hadn't found on the boat. Instead, I learned about survey reports and the need to organize my observations into a readable format."

He paused, "with lessons comes wisdom."

"I like that," I replied.

He smiled again.

"Well, I'll be teaching a survey class this fall and looking for possible students."

Lee Erheart has been an accredited marine surveyor since 1992. He specializes in bigger, older wooden boats of all kinds. If you are interested in Lee's upcoming marine survey's class this fall.

He can be reached via email at [leehavorn@gmail.com](mailto:leehavorn@gmail.com) or by telephone at 206-789-7043.



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# *Chef prefers harvests*



Jack Amon outside of Marx Bros. Café in 1979.

by Kirk Boxleitner

Given Port Townsend's connections to the self-described "Last Frontier," including the Northwest Maritime Center's annual Race to Alaska, it's perhaps not surprising to hear that Anchorage chef and restaurateur Richard "Van" Hale has connections to Washington state's historic Victorian seaport.

"My son Michael owns property in your neck of the woods," said Hale, who first opened the doors of the Marx Bros. Café with his business partner, Jack Amon, in 1979. "And I have some good friends who live in your area," he added, referring to writer and artist Corky Parker.

While Hale does his fishing in the waters off Port MacKenzie, rather than Port Townsend Bay or Puget Sound, he knows just as well as the folks at Key City Fish how much it matters to harvest seafood as fresh and as locally as possible.

For the Marx Bros. Café's menu in Anchorage, Hale's suppliers include Sagaya, Favco, Inc., and 10th and M Seafoods, all based in his hometown, although he does deal with the Rhode Island-based Hook to Fork to secure his customers in-demand delicacies such as Maine lobsters.

# *fresh and local*

Otherwise, Hale remains religious about serving seafood like coho salmon fresh, not frozen.

“As such, halibut is only available on our menu from March to November,” Hale said. “We don’t start serving Copper River king salmon until May.”

While Copper River salmon is 11% fat, Hale touted Yukon king salmon’s 33% fat as one of the reasons why it’s his favorite, and just as he warned against overcooking fish, as he asserted that the ideal halibut should be “a little bit glassy.” So too did he note that certain seafoods simply “can’t be cooked right” if they’re frozen first.

Hale can speak with some authority in this, since he started working at his dad’s restaurant in San Clemente, California, when he was only 13 years old, before starting his first restaurant of his own at the age of 19.



Growing up on the soft-sand beaches of the Pacific Coast familiarized Hale with the sea, but it was his military service during the Vietnam conflict that further honed Hale’s cooking skills, while acclimating him to a colder climate.

Hale became a culinary specialist in the U.S Coast Guard, but rather than shipping off to French Indochina, he found himself cooking for a crew of 200 on board an icebreaker vessel, making do with limited supplies to feed his hungry shipmates, while they lent aid to stranded oil tankers and sought out the shortest route through the Northwest Passage, the Arctic sea lane between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

It’s easier to look back fondly on such hearty labors from the distance of his 76th birthday, which he recently celebrated, but Hale insists he’s always loved the ocean, even if the home he’s made away from “the lower 49” doesn’t afford him the warm shores he was raised with.

“I love the water, and I love fishing,” Hale said, before repeating to *The Leader* what he told *Alaska Business Magazine*. “People ask when I’m going to retire, and I say, ‘Why?’ I’m enjoying life. I want to work. It keeps me going, (and) it keeps me young.”







Lacey Capel and Nat Urbina use a light table to lay out patch details on a sail. They use this to build in webbings that hold the corner piece in place. It is part of the UV chafe protection. *Photo by Steve Mullensky*

## A canvas for the wind

Port Townsend Sails celebrates its 45th year. The business is renowned for crafting offshore Cape Horn-worthy cruising sails. They specialize in custom blue water offshore cruising sails.

Left: Megan Hudson stiches a pattern for the corner of a red sail for leather chafe protection. According to Hudson, all corners are covered for both UV and chafe protection. *Photo by Lloyd Mullen*

Right: Allison Wood examines a Genoa sail before leeching the edge to release its shape. "Snipping the leech edge releases the shape to allow the sail to fold the tabled edge," Wood said. *Photo by Lloyd Mullen*

Below: Hawaiian Cheifitan sails lie stacked at Port Townsend Sails. The Chiefitan began her life in Lahaina, HI. Her maiden voyage took her to Tahiti. In 2005 she joined the historic fleet in Grays Harbor. *Photo by Steve Mullensky*



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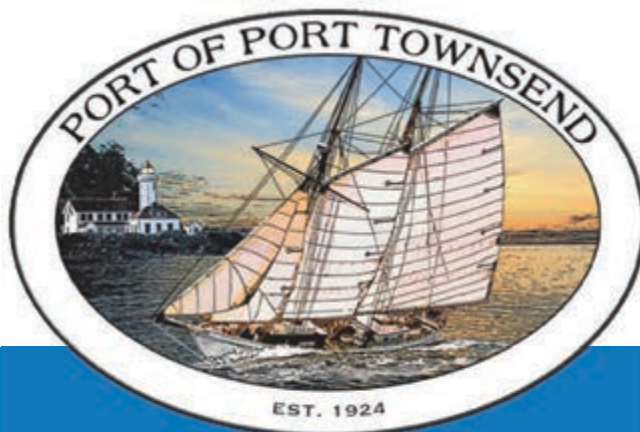
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