

SUMMER 2014

RiversWest

We inspire people to build and use low-impact boats

News

President's Corner

Sal DiGrande, President

I've been honored to serve as your President since last February. I've always thought of RiversWest as a great place to be, with friendly like minded people, who share the love of small craft. The enthusiasm and commitment

to promote the use of low-impact boats will only make our community a better place to live. We elected a full board of 12 directors and two Advisory Board members. I thank the members who are serving on these boards for the time and energy in working to make RiversWest an even better organization.

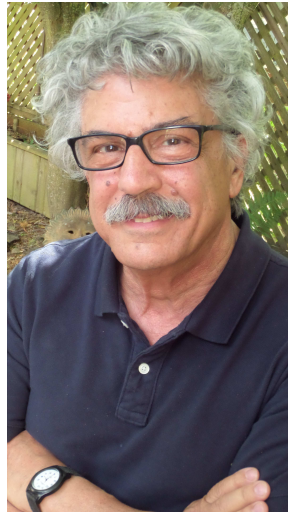
My pledge to you when elected was to work on finding a new site for our club that would have amenities such as running water, bathrooms and heat. Well, most would consider these items as basic, but for us, these would offer luxurious comfort! We've been working with a consultant from Habitat For Humanity, Josh Townsley, who has been a coach to John Bouwsma and myself in the art of fundraising. Based on his input, we have developed a two-year Plan for Growth with the goal of having a new small craft center for RiversWest on safe water.

We have a great line-up of events and classes for this year, including our fourth annual Family Boat Build scheduled for July, our annual swap meet, the second annual Hagg Lake Picnic and Messabout, classes in maritime skills including a planned course on bronze casting and our annual planning meeting later this year. More events that will get our boats on the water are in the planning stages. We do a great job of building and restoring boats. We now need to focus on getting these craft on lakes and rivers so all members will have the full experience using small craft.

We have named Randy Torgerson as our new Class Coordinator. Randy will be moving back to Portland in August. We are looking forward and are very excited about Randy's plans for classes and demonstrations. I ask all of you to welcome Randy and offer your

support in his efforts to expand our instructions in maritime skills. Mike Simmons, who has been our Class Coordinator for many years, resigned this position earlier this year. Thank you, Mike, for all of your work, effort and time you invested in teaching us the finer points of nautical arts.

We recently made a great acquisition of a heritage boat, what is now named the Lake Oswego Boat. Two of these boats were made by RiversWest in 1993. One of them was sold and made its way to a few owners. The most recent owner, RiversWest member Jim Ballou, bought the boat, restored it and in May, decided that he wanted our club to have it back. His offer was more than generous: Thank you, Jim! We now have both boats back in our livery for members to use.



Our newsletter is now published in full color. Stu Whitcomb, our very talented and gifted graphic designer, has reconfigured our newsletter with new graphics in a very eye-pleasing color format. You will also notice that we have added a new feature: The History Corner by Art Wilson. Art will have a running column and byline with the focus on the history of RiversWest. Thank you, Art. RiversWest News has been

expanded to eight pages. This is a leap of faith to better accommodate all members submitting articles and photos for publication. This is your club. We want members to share their experiences with us all.

I'm excited about the future direction of RiversWest. The plan is to devote as much time as we do with shop classes and boat work and spend equal time on using our boats on nearby waterways. We plan to be more engaged in youth programs and community outreach. We urge all members to come forward and submit ideas of programs that you think would be of interest to the membership and the community at large.

I thank the membership of RiversWest for allowing me to serve as your President.



Intel Grants RiversWest \$3870!

Sal DiGrande

The Intel Involved Matching Grant Program gave RiversWest a generous check for the amount of \$3,870 this last May. This grant was given due to the hard working efforts of our Secretary John Bouwsma. John volunteered 380 hours of his time in 2013 making RiversWest an even better organization. The Intel Grant Program is described as follows:

"The Intel Involved Matching Grant Program aims to recognize and motivate Intel employees, globally, to engage in outreach and volunteerism to make our communities a better place to live, work, and play. Its objective is to support employees' giving their time and talent to qualified non profits and non-governmental organizations, in addition to schools. We also wanted to recognize our employees who give generously of their time beyond school-related activities, and give them the opportunity to earn money for organizations that are meaningful to them."

John has worn many hats since joining RiversWest in 2000. He has been our Secretary for almost 10 years. In addition to this duty, he became interim President for over half a year starting in July of 2013. His energy and participation in the activities of RiversWest is certainly noticed. Find any event and John will be there offering any assistance he can. Being a dedicated wood worker, his skills have come in handy with many of our classes and workshops. When not engaged with our activities, John likes to travel in his Scamp travel trailer. Thank you John for your efforts. We salute you and the long hours you put in with RiversWest.

Hagg Lake Messabout

John Bouwsma



The second annual Hagg Lake Messabout was held on Sunday, June 22. It was organized by our President, Sal DiGrande. This event is clearly gathering momentum; we had a big increase in both attendees and boats over last year. We counted 29 people and 17 boats. It was gratifying to see that we had a good mix of old members, including Bob Young and his



wife Dar, and new members. Bob is one of the founding members of RiversWest, and has been a stalwart supporter of the club throughout its life. The boats included many canoes, rowboats, and sailboats, ranging in size from a small flip-tail folding boat build by John Ost, up to an 18' Stephenson Weekender built by Bruce Goodrich. In between were several Salt Bay Skiffs built at the Family Boat Build (coming up on July 13!), two cedar strip canoes, a Pygmy kayak, and assorted other small sail boats and rowboats. Sal brought along the refurbished Lake Oswego Boat we recently bought back from Jim Ballou, and quite a few people got to row it.

The weather cooperated magnificently. It was sunny and warm but not too hot, especially in the shade of the trees where our picnic was set up. We had reasonably good but slightly gusty wind in the afternoon, though it was very light in the morning. We feasted on hamburgers and hot dogs cooked to order by Mike Simmons and Chuck Bollong, as well as numerous side dishes.



RiversWest Small Craft Center Open House - First and Third Saturdays

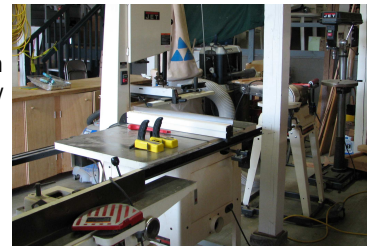
Our boat shop is open to visitors on the first and third Saturday of every month. Stop by in the morning and



have a free cup of coffee and a donut. Take the opportunity to meet the members who are a friendly group of boating enthusiasts. We will take you on a tour of our facility which includes our wood shop, boat building spaces which are available for members to rent and our livery of boats. You can even browse through our extensive lending library including our collection of Wooden-Boat Magazines.

Boat Shop

Our boat shop is equipped with the necessary equipment to build your boat. Many members who are building their



boats at home take advantage of our complete wood shop, saving the cost of renting or purchasing their own tools. Fellow members can provide free advice and helping hands when you need it.

Bay Rentals

Our boat shop is configured with bays that members can use for restoring or building their dream boat. Available for rent on a



monthly basis, these bays, 10 x 23 feet, offer a dedicated workspace with light, electrical power and immediate access to our wood shop. And best of all, there are plenty of friendly and experienced craftsmen available to offer advice on the techniques of building a boat.

When you're a member of RiversWest, you don't need to be a shipwright, own a shop full of tools or have a large space at home to build your dream boat. We have it all.

riverswest.org



A Boat Building Story

Russ Smith



Swampscott Dory

I always thought about building a boat when I retired. I built a stitch & glue kayak from plans from Chesapeake Light craft about 12 years ago. We lived in Mystic, CT in the 60's and belonged to the Mystic Seaport Museum so I thought it would be appropriate to build a boat from the New England area. I liked the lines of the Swampscott dories from that region of the Massachusetts coast. I rowed Seaport's 16ft dory while visiting a couple of years ago and liked the ease of entry and stability. Club member, Steve Najjar, suggested reading John Gardner's Dory book which was very helpful.

Rather than a conventional boat build process with steamed frames I decided to use a glued lapstrake method. I purchased a set of plans from Wooden Boat from Ian Oughtred which is for an 18' model called a John Dory. The stem & frames are Douglas fir given to me by another member, Jim Litton. The transom is mahogany, the planking is all 3/8" Hydrotech marine plywood and the bottom is 5/8" Hydrotech as well. It will be painted inside and out with limited varnished components.

The whole project has been very interesting and I have enjoyed all the new knowledge I have acquired. Steve Najjar and other members of RiversWest have given me much appreciated advice with any problems that arose and there have been some. I hope to have it rowable by this Sept. for the Port Townsend Wooden Boat festival and will work on the sail rig next winter.



Free **PORTLAND WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL** *Free*

Venue: Willamette Sailing Club **JULY 13, 2014** Where: Next to Willamette Park



Book Nook**Stu Whitcomb**

When my wife headed into the bookstore, I called out, "Do they have a maritime section in there?" "Why don't you look and see," she called back and disappeared inside.

I discovered the boating section and I discovered "Dynamite" Payson and his book, *"Instant Boat Building with Dynamite Payson: the fastest, easiest way to build 15 boats for power, sail, oar, and paddle / Harold H. 'Dynamite' Payson"*. Starting with the introduction, I was held captive through to the end of the book; his instructions were pragmatic and simple to follow. It was as if he was standing beside you offering friendly advice, at just the right moment.

From the very first paragraph of the introduction, he set the stage for the amateur boat builder:

"Instant Boats are easy-to-build boats designed by marine architect Philip C. Bolger. Built of plywood, glue, and common lumber, they go together with easy carpentry methods and a greatly simplified method of laying out and cutting the parts when compared to traditional boat building methods. In spite of their simplicity, however, they are fine boats – strong, seaworthy in their uses, and often attractive.

It doesn't matter where you live, or if you don't have access to fine

boat building materials or exotic fittings. Plywood and construction lumber are available everywhere that houses are built, and glues can be bought at most hardware stores or by mail order. People have built these boats in Fiji and Philadelphia, South Africa and South Thomaston, Maine (where I live), and in garages, living rooms, high-rise apartments and outdoors. In other words, you can build a boat – one you'll be proud of – and I'm going to show you how."

A gentle tap on my shoulder brought me back to the real world. Clutching my new book, I headed home eager to study it further...three months later I was building my first sailboat with "Dynamite" close at hand.

Questions regarding the ordering of this book should be addressed to:

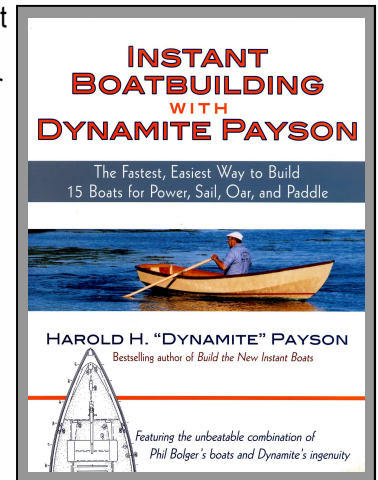
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Share your favorite books with all of us. Contact Stu Whitcomb: 503 292-2847 or stuna2000@yahoo.com

History Corner**When and How Was RiversWest Founded?**

In each issue of the RiversWest News, this column will take you back to earlier events and stories about our club. We will chronicle the successful projects and adventures of our early members and perhaps learn what works and what can be done to make our club a more vital and fun place to "mess about in boats." I hope to do this mostly by the time-honored method of oral history, i.e. interviewing and recording the memories and

thoughts of the members who were there. So, if you have any leads, tell me about them. I am taking names, tracking the people down and, with the aid of my trusty iPhone, recording the words and images.

The title of this first column is the first question used to get an early member's memory working. The answer you get depends on if they are considered a founding member, or not. Also, it depends on the definition of founding. Is the act of founding holding a meeting of two

Art Wilson, RiversWest Historian

or more members and issuing a paper (i.e. Bylaws) with the title "RiversWest" on it? Or is it obtaining an IRS stamp as a "non-profit corporation?" Or, is it establishing a workshop where small boats can be built and stored, or a boathouse for storage and rental? I heard the year was 1983. However the earliest document I've heard of is the "Articles of Incorporation as a Non-Profit" for registration in Oregon, signed by Bob Young, Bernie Wolfard and Sam McKinney, dated 1991.

So far I have interviewed Bob Young, definitely identified as a founding member, and Dan Pence, who joined RiversWest when he still lived in Maryland and was shown the boat shop at Oaks Park by Bob in the early 1990's. Bob Young and Sam McKinney started The Oaks Park shop. They had worked as volunteers on an historical boat-building project, headed by Sam Johnson, at the Oregon Historical Museum. As that project wound down, they decided they wanted a similar facility in which to continue their hobby.

That's the limit of this reporter's research so far; the quest is to be continued. If you have some input to help solve this mystery, please call: 503-956-5955 or email: wilson.arthur@comcast.net.



The Lake Oswego Boat

John Bouwsma

History

The Lake Oswego Boat was a popular boat used on Sucker Lake (now called Oswego Lake, in the town of Lake Oswego) beginning in the early 20th century. Built around 1923 by a Finnish boat builder in Portland, it was originally made using a half hull model for the design, which a customer brought to the builder. The design appears to be based on the Rangeley Lakes boat as developed in the 1880's for use on the Rangeley Lakes chain in western Maine.

This heritage boat could have been lost to history except for a fortuitous chain of events. An individual from Lake Oswego donated a wooden boat to the Center for Wooden Boats (CWB) in the late 1970's. He said it was the last one on the lake. Dick Wagner, Founding Director of the CWB, estimated the boat was about 60 years old at that time. He took the lines from the boat, painted it and added it to their working fleet. A later visitor from Portland identified the boat as a type his grandfather made in his Portland shop. According to the visitor, a man had come into his grandfather's shop with his half hull model. The man wanted the boat built using the model for the dimensions. He wanted to take it to property just purchased at Skunk Lake. He soon received orders for more copies of this boat by other people with property on Skunk Lake. Eventually there was a fleet of these boats on what became Oswego Lake. The original held at the CWB is the last survivor.

Construction

The boats were built of cedar planks in a clinker or lapstrake design. This method of hull construction is done with overlapping planks which results in a light and strong, yet flexible boat, making them faster and easy to handle. Clinker boats have a long heritage, going back to the Viking long ships. Local materials were used to



build the boat which included 3/8" Western Red Cedar planks over 3/8" x 1/4" steam-bent oak frames.

This is a double ender with fine sweeping lines and a modulated sheer. The stem is a tad higher than the stern. There is a slight hollow at the waterline entrance and stern. The waterline beam is 37-1/2". The keel is a flat 3/4" plank, 1-3/4" at the bow and stern forefoot, and swelling to 6" wide amidships. The flat keel allows the boat to sit upright on a beach or float. With a length of 15' and a draft of only 4", this lightweight boat makes rowing a pleasure.

The Tradition Continues

RiversWest Small Craft Center of Portland, OR built two of these boats in the early 1990's. Using the plans created by Dick Wagner from the CWB, a class was given at the RiversWest Oaks Park shop to teach the art of lapstrake construction. Danish-born Bent Thygesen, a retired Professor of Anthropology and a very savvy wooden boat builder, led the class. One of the boats was subsequently damaged and sold to Jim Ballou, one of the RW members involved in the class. He restored it and recently sold it back to RW, so now we own both of them again.

The Uncanny Canoe

Gary Orehovec

Member Gary Orehovec found this design in Culebra, Puerto Rico, and was so fascinated by the low tech approach that he built one himself. The design was developed locally after the US Navy took over parts of the island as a navel shooting gallery around WW2 and later, leaving behind plenty of used sheet metal roofing for locals to salvage. The boats were used in festival contests to race across Ensenada Honda, which is 1-3 miles across and sheltered from ocean waves. Gary warns that if there are nail holes they need to be pointed out and plugged.



Metamorphosis

Sal DiGrande

Metamorphosis: How A Perfectionist Copes With Restoring A Wooden Boat and Survives To Tell The Tale.

My dream project was to build a beautiful stripper boat from clear cedar with inlaid hardwoods. An artistically crafted boat that would focus on form and also be functional. Yes, this dream boat would do more than just float in my imagination, it would actually float on water! And it would only take a few months to build, of course! At least that's what I told my wife. And where to build this? Well, the back porch just off the dining room is just waiting for this project. I'd start in May and have the boat in the water by July. Strip, glue, glass and varnish; piece of cake. Ah...more like hardtack. Imagine the reaction I got from my dear wife: "Absolutely not!" she stated. I guess she didn't share the vision floating in my head.

Boat Builder's Lament

What visions makes us dreamers,
Mortals that we are, reality confronts,
As shoals impede the shore.
Call upon the captain, steer a course fair.
Plot for safe harbor,
In craft of that floats somewhere.

Go to plan B. Buy a stripper boat, restore it to my exacting standards and presto, I'm soon to be floating in my dreams and on water. The boat was found in Victoria, B.C. It had the basic requirements of being of cedar wood stripper construction using oak frames. It was basically sound but definitely needed to some restoration work. Evidently the previous owner thought that painting the white oak keel blue would look cool. And, the white pine thwarts and the whole inside of the boat were painted in a not so attractive, very off-white color.

Okay, the boat is at home. But where to restore it? The back porch? You know the answer to that. So, where do I find a sheltered place to do my restoration? It won't fit in my garage. My neighbor quietly disappears into a gray fog as I'm selling him on the virtues of loaning me his garage. Alas, another rocky shore was quickly impeding my course. But wait! My trusty Nautical Almanac may have the plot for a safe course. In navigating the dusty pages of my almanac circa 1993 (aka my memory), I seem to recall meeting a few very nice gentlemen at Oaks Park. They were doing a demonstration of nautical craft during a holiday weekend. And, they said, we build boats and will help you if you



need to build your dream boat; just join us. I deferred due to a demanding career but now I was ready and able to climb aboard. But where? I had no name of this club. So, on to a better almanac, the internet. Within an hour of plotting the charts of Google, RiversWest was discovered. The lighthouse on the shore was within reach. To my pleasant experience, the group of guys at RiversWest were just as friendly and nice as the two gentlemen I met over 20 years ago. And, they had a bay available to rent and a complete wood shop. What more could any boat builder ask for! I needed the bay for only a few weeks, a month at the most, but let's make it two months just to be sure. I'm only going to remove the blue paint on the keel, strip and varnish the thwarts, repaint the inner hull and I'll be done. I start in November and will be out by late December, of course! Well...more on that later.

How could removing blue paint on a relatively small area take over a month? It can, trust me. And, I'd still be there stripping and sanding and bleaching and sanding and varnishing and sanding and laying multiple coats of varnish had not a wise gentleman come to my rescue. Steve Mahoney saw me grinding away on the bottom of my boat, looked at me with somewhat puzzled eyes and stated carefully "Sal, whatever you do, don't let perfection get in the way of completion." Uh? How could he say such a thing? This is my boat, it must be perfect. "But Sal," he would plead, "it's the bottom of the boat you're working on." Gee, really? "No one will see it when on the water!" he declared. But I'd know how it would look; it must be perfect! I then consulted with my wife on what this gentlemen said about my project and, with her with infinite patience, wisdom and clarity, exclaimed, "Are you nuts! It's the bottom of the boat. No one will see it." "But I'll know it. It must be perfect, it will haunt me forever unless it's perfect!" I exclaimed. Well, after cracked and bleeding fingers, and February just around the corner, I was somewhat forced to see the light. Okay, time to flip the boat over. →



Metamorphosis, continued

Now to just strip the paint off the thwarts, varnish, paint the inner hull and voilà, I'm done! Oh my gosh, what plans these mortals make. Hey, I'm no Shakespeare but boy did I need his magic touch. Words not to get the project done but words of comfort to steer me through the shoals of my project. When removing 30 year old screws that secured the thwarts, one must be prepared for broken and stripped heads. Difficult but not impossible as I just tore the thwarts off the boat. Great, now I just made a pile of painted firewood. The inner hull was now fully accessible, so on to a few coats of white enamel. Now for new thwarts made from Alaskan Yellow Cedar; nice but adding another month to the project. And the varnishing. Lucky for me one of the kind gentlemen from RiversWest advised me of a varnish that doesn't need sanding between each coat. After laying down eight coats, I guess I was ready for the final two finish coats. It looked good, but if one comes within two inches of the surface of the thwart, finds the correct light reflection, and stares carefully, one can see tiny imperfections on the varnish. Dam, and I was doing everything possible to make it perfect. Should I start over? Should I buff down the flaws, microscopic as they were? Should I consult with Steve? My wife? My dog? Well, no. I just didn't have the heart to hear again, "Are you nuts!"

I'm done! Only a few short months later it was time to cast open the bay doors and let the light of day shine on my dream boat. Amazing how a planned short restoration of only a few weeks can stretch into seven long months. It must be the Einstein time dilation theory of special relativity. Let's see: Time slows down relative to the speed of ambition of one dreamer boat builder. Among the crowd of gawkers came the accolades of, "Wow," "Nice job," "Looks great," "Beautiful!" Nice to hear but alas, there I am, gazing down at the keel and knowing in my heart, it's just not perfect. I can see it, the blemish on the

Sal DiGrande



oak keel, the infinitesimally small bit of blue paint that no matter how much I sanded, it never came off. And horrors, under the dazzling Oregon sun the imperfections on the varnish glared at me with the intensity of my third grade teacher after a poor showing in spelling.

I'm over my restoration angst.

I'm now enjoying my boat as is. A labor of love that transformed a somewhat neglected, 30 year old boat into a craft that I'm proud of. Yes, proud. When I gaze at what I accomplished, it comes to me that it's not just my project, but a RiversWest project. It was a collaborative effort of friendly advice, of members picking up a scraper and tackling that blue paint, of a member offering me his bay for a few short months, of years of accumulated knowledge distilled into one more project. What a wonderful experience that was. What is even more amazing, it all started with two very kind and friendly gentlemen I met over 20 years ago. Thanks to both of you. You are also part of my boat.



Maritime Skills

Randy is in the process of returning to Portland. Sal asked him to forward his wish list so that we might see what ideas he has in store for us.

For the Shop: Tool making, bronze casting, oar/paddle making, painting/varnishing/finishing and wood turning.

Boat building projects such as traditional lapstrake, glued lapstrake, strip building, skin on frame, stitch and glue are all possibilities...bring in your own boat and get help and more advice than you would ever want!

Randy Thorgerson, Class Coordinator

Randy's shop ideas extend from tuning up your outboard to building a traditional work bench.

He imagines a one month project of consecutive weekends building a boat in one of the bays, maybe a strip canoe or ??

For the Classroom: Lofting, rope work, canvas working, basics of boat electricity, boat building war stories and boat handling.

2014 - 2015 Class schedules are not yet finalized, but should be ready for distribution in September.



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RiversWest Small Craft Center Inc.

P.O. Box 13782, Portland, OR 97213

Membership Form

RiversWest is a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to encourage personal involvement in the construction of small recreational wooden craft and their accessories.

Membership Benefits:

Members receive the RiversWest newsletter

Access to RiversWest boat shop and space rentals

Access to all RiversWest educational programs

Invitation to all RiversWest boating and social functions

Right to vote for officers and board members

Discounts at Crosscut Hardwood

Please return the following with your check to the address above,
or sign up online at riverswest.org

New member Renewing member Change of information Additional donation

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____ Day/Cell phone _____

Youth (17 and under) \$30 General Membership \$50

Donations: \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Annual dues and donations to RiversWest qualify for tax deductions. Ask your tax advisor.

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