

WINTER 2015

RiversWest News

We inspire people to build and use low-impact boats

President's Corner

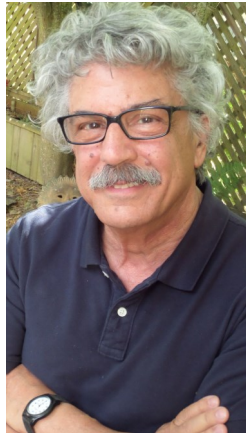


Fellow Members,

RiversWest has served the greater Portland community for over 30 years by encouraging personal involvement in the construction, recreational use and history of low-impact, handcrafted boats. Our involvement in the promotion of marine crafts skills has allowed countless individuals and families to discover the joy and satisfaction of building small craft and using them on the water. RiversWest is in a unique position in Portland because it is the only organization to offer such a wide range of opportunities to learn and share in our maritime heritage.

Our complete wood shop offers the tools necessary for any boat building project. In concert with our shop, we have offered and are expanding our maritime skills classes to include all aspects of boat building, including lofting, boat construction skills and bronze casting. One key facet of our club is the space offered to members to build their dream boat. Bays are available on a monthly rental basis with the added bonus of free and friendly advice given by our knowledgeable members.

In the tradition of community involvement, RiversWest is now engaged in a partnership with the Catlin Gable School to build two Salt Bay Skiffs. This special project will involve a group of students who will assemble and paint these boats as a means of learning hands-on skills and teamwork. Chuck Stuckey, who initiated the Family Boat Build, and his crew of RiversWest boat builders will be there to assist in this process. It is our desire to expand this program to reach out to more youth within the greater Portland metro area.



Sal DiGrande, President

For all of you who enjoy reading, you'll be interested to know that RiversWest is starting a book club. The focus will be on books, both fiction and non-fiction, relating to a maritime theme. The club was introduced at our recent planning meeting, with five members signing up. The book club is open to all members who would like to share their favorite books with others. We'll be meeting about once a month at a location chosen by the member who chooses the book title.

We encourage all members to partake of our regional waters to launch and use their boats. Our annual Hagg Lake picnic and messabout brings members together to share in this experience. We plan for more messabouts in the coming year at different locations in the metro area. You're encouraged to suggest a location. We'll do an e-mail blast and hope many of you can get together for a casual day on the water. You can bring your favorite boat, from kayaks to skiffs to sailboats. Some of our members often allow others to take a "trial spin" on their boats. It's a great way to check out a boat and experience different designs.

We feel that 2015 will bring new and exciting events and experiences for RiversWest. Our club is always exploring new ventures in which we can share our depth of knowledge and culture with our community. We have an active and dedicated membership willing and able to share their skills as it relates to small craft. Our group is by nature friendly and helpful, which makes RiversWest a great club to be a part of!

Sal DiGrande

RiversWest Small Craft Center

Open House: 1st and 3rd 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, our livery of boats, and boat building spaces (which are available for members to rent). You can even browse through our extensive lending library that includes our collection of WoodenBoat 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.



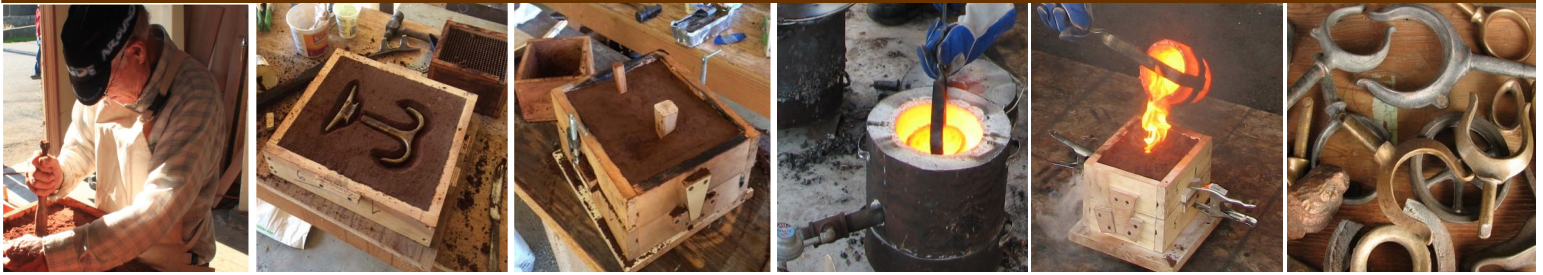
Bay Rentals

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 10 x 23-ft. bays 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



Bronze Casting Workshop**Russell Smith**

On Saturday, October 19, I had my first experience with bronze casting. Mike Simmons assembled all of the equipment needed, as well as sending information out ahead of time for members to read.

After going over the safety rules, we proceeded to make the molds of something we wanted to cast. Some, like me, chose to use an existing part as a pattern for their first casting. I chose a steel cleat for my pattern and began by packing sand around it in the flask.

Sal DiGrande made a wooden pattern for his project, which came out very nice. Other members were working on several different items as molds for their castings.

Randy Torgerson, the club training coordinator, has had previous casting education and experience, so his input that weekend was very helpful.

On Sunday, we started pouring in earnest and most were successful, at least from a first timer's point of view. Although most of us were satisfied with the results, I felt mine was not quite up to commercial grade. But, it was a very interesting process.

On November 8th we did another pouring session with some new molds and achieved better results.



Three Crater Lake Icons Seeking Adoption

Stu Whitcomb



After ten years, RiversWest is removing the wraps from their most treasured assets—three 39-ft., 60-passenger Honduras mahogany excursion launches.

Built in the 1960s, they hauled nearly a million passengers around Crater Lake, giving them the thrills and the views that can only

be experienced from being on the lake itself. In 2001, the National Park Service retired them and RiversWest became their new owner. We had hopes and plans to put them back in service here on the Willamette River in downtown Portland, all the while maintaining safe and dry storage for them under the I-5 overpass at the end of SE Salmon St. This year, after much deliberation, the RiversWest Board decided it was time to find the right home for each of them.

A view into the past with Dan Pence:

"In the mid-sixties Rudy Wilson, a boat builder with 25 years experience, ran the tour boat operation and Paul Herron (Rudy's predecessor) was back as a part-time consultant. 1966 was the year Paul and Rudy were sick of patching up the odd collection of four little old tour boats the park had haphazardly collected over the years. They came up with an ambitious plan to create a boat building operation on Wizard Island and build four 60 passenger boats. The materials, hardware, engines and tools were delivered by one of the then new Sikorsky Sky Crane helicopters.

The boats would be 39' long, 11'6" wide, with 2'8" of draft, the hulls based on a 1936 William Atkin—a highly noted east coast marine architect—cabin cruiser design. These would weigh 12,000 lbs., carry 60 passengers and run at 17-20 knots with single big 280 horsepower gas engines.

The launching of the *Paul Herron* "brought to a close the boat building project of Rudy H. Wilson who assembled the boat from his own plans at the boathouse on Wizard Island beginning two summers ago." (*Klamath Falls Herald and News*, July 7th, 1968). The National Park Service approved the boat design later that summer (in 2000 the boats received Coast Guard Certification). After the christening Rudy got to work on the second boat, pre-cutting many of the parts from patterns of the first. The *Rudy Wilson*, also assembled on Wizard Island, was launched in August 28, 1971. These first boats cost \$20,000 apiece.

To save time the bare hulls of the remaining two boats, the *Ralph Peyton* (named for the former Crater Lake Lodge Company President) and *Jim Griffen* (the Lodge Company president at the time) were built at Rudy Wilson's new boat works near the Portland Yacht Club. The finished hulls were trucked to the rim, then carried by helicopter down to Wizard Island. Minus the engines, seats, drive shaft and propeller the hulls were still near

the 6,500 lb. payload limit of the logging helicopter in the thin mountain air. In 1983, despite superstition, the *Jim Griffen* was renamed the *Glen Happel*, after the new Crater Lake Lodge President.

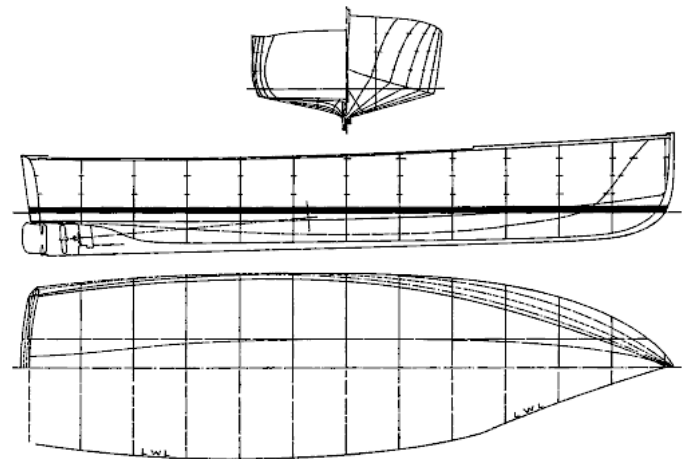
In 2001, the new lodge concessionaire, Xanterra Corporation, decided the old launches should be replaced and ordered new fiberglass tour boats. The four retiring launches were lifted out of the lake in the summer of 2003, overshadowed by the sleek modern—but distinctly less charming and beloved—replacements. The old lake launches were trucked to a boatyard near Newport, to await their fate.

In mid-March, 2004, RiversWest, a non-profit low-impact boating and boat building organization in Portland, which organizes The Portland Wooden Boat Show and has been providing a free demonstration ferry service, heard the launches were available and asked if they could be put to work in Portland for a permanent river ferry service. Xanterra happily agreed to donate the fleet to RiversWest rather than see them destroyed. The best three of the boats are being prepped for hauling to a Portland City yard on the East bank of the Willamette River at the foot of SE Salmon St. The 4th boat, the *Glen Happel*, was found to be unneeded and in poor condition. It will be salvaged for spare parts and useful pieces. This may validate the superstitious.

With the boats fitted with roofs to hold off Portland's winter drizzle and hot summer sun, slowed down to a more appropriate and efficient speed, and innovatively re-powered to protect the river's water, people should be able to shuttle between OMSI, the Maritime Museum, shopping districts and residential areas, the Convention Center, Rose Quarter and historic Oaks Amusement park, all within a 5 mile stretch of river."

(All quotations in this article have been excerpted from "A Brief History of Crater Lake Launches" by Dan Pence, April 2004.)

Anyone interested in these vessels or who would like to offer information and assistance to RiversWest, please contact the officers of the RiversWest Board. Their contact information is located on the last page of this newsletter. (Ed.)



Building a SCAMP

"Would you like to take early retirement?" said the internal work memo. No, I don't think I would, but this definitely got me thinking more about the R topic. As in, when and what would I do? Well, in the January 2011 issue of Small Craft Advisor (SCA) magazine, the SCAMP design was introduced, and the question of what was ultimately answered when results of sea trials of the prototype were published. Other non-boat discussions resolved the when question, and so in early 2013, 8 months into my retirement, I drove to Port Townsend (WA) to pick up a kit for SCAMP #124.

A dry, reefable day sailor. This is what initially drew me to the SCAMP design. My current day sailor is neither, nor will it carry more than two aboard. The possibility of sleeping aboard was appealing as well. I could just fit it into my small workshop, and there was readily accessible building help via an online forum hosted by SCA.

SCAMP is a large 12-ft. sailboat with an offset centerboard, water ballast, a 7-ft. long cockpit, a cuddy cabin (affectionately termed the Veranda by fellow SCAMPers), lots of storage space, and a balanced lug rig. Four adults can fit pretty comfortably in its cockpit (not bad for a 12-ft. boat). It is remarkably stable for its size, but also quite easy to right from a capsize. The design was commissioned of John Welsford by SCA, hence its name Small Craft Advisor Magazine Project. It was envisioned as a micro-cruiser that could be built by an inexperienced builder in a garage, and that would allow shallow water cruising in relative comfort. The design has become quite popular, with sail numbers above 300 currently, and plans and kits all over the



world. Gig Harbor Boat Works has introduced a fiberglass version.

While I have done other woodworking projects, I have never built a boat before, so having access to the online forum, the knowledge of the folks at RiversWest, and availability of a kit meant I could envision being successful in building a SCAMP. But, just in case, I started with a minimal investment by building the spars first. I built a birds mouth mast (16 ft.), and solid boom and yard from sitka spruce. This went well, especially with John Bouwsma's help with the mast glue-up.

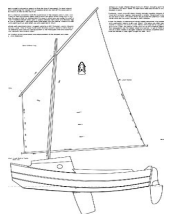
So, in February 2013, I drove to Turnpoint Design in Port Townsend and picked up a pile of marine plywood that had, through the magic of numerically controlled machines, been turned into a pile of SCAMP parts. Most parts are of 9mm Okoume plywood, except planks, cabin top and deck, which are 6mm. The builder needs to supply a minimal amount of wood for cleats and other miscellaneous items. I also bought the foil kit consisting of centerboard and rudder halves already shaped to a foil.

Craig Bryant

SCAMP is built right-side up, with the bottom supported by a building jig (which comes with the kit) that establishes the correct bottom curve. She is plywood lapstrake, with internal bulkheads and a flat bottom. All wood pieces are coated in at least 3 layers of epoxy, usually before they are installed to save time. First, bulkheads are glued to the bottom, and to the vertical seat longitudinals or to the stem. The centerboard case, sharing part of the starboard seat front, is done at this time also. Then, planks are added, seat tops, sole, deck, and cabin (veranda) sides and top. The hull is then turned over for bottom glassing and painting. Then, once more upright for final bits (coamings, etc.), painting and rigging.

Since I don't work on her build during the summer (outside projects take precedence), it has been slow going, but always enjoyable. Somewhat like going on a sailing cruise, just as much of the fun is the getting there as the being there.

I have reached the bottom glassing and painting stage, and hope to launch ANNIE B in Spring or early Summer 2015, so that I can get some sailing time in—I hope to bring her to the annual Hagg Lake event. If any readers are contemplating building a SCAMP, feel free to contact me at craigb@riverswest.org—I would be most willing to talk to you, show off my build, and offer advice. Also, you can see more details of my build at my blog at <http://craigdbryant.weebly.com/>.



A Simple Small Boat Dolly

Chuck Stuckey

My wife has an 18-ft. pulling boat that she likes to row on Fairview Lake. To get from the parking lot to the water's edge, I had to unhook the trailer and push it the 50 yards to the water—not fun. The dolly you see here made it easy. The first part was finding two good quality bike wheels (bigger wheels make for easier rolling). The Community Cycle Center on NE Alberta Ave. has a thing they call salvage Sunday. At the time set (I think it's noon) you show up with your own hand tools, and they make available old bikes they cannot use and let you take what you want. You pay by the pound—my two wheels cost \$4. Be sure to get the bearings and axles

with the wheels. The distance between the wheels is the beam of the boat plus a few inches extra. Two short pieces of angle iron are drilled to fit the axles and securely attached to the end of a 2 x 4, followed by two squares of plywood angled to match the hull shape and you're almost done. I used carpet scraps to protect the hull and provide a bit of friction. We have not needed to strap it down to the boat: she simply rolls along easy as you please. The little odd stick is to prevent the whole thing from turning over before you get the boat loaded. I paid only for the wheels...the rest is garage scraps.



RiversWest Maritime Skills Workshops for 2015

Randal Torgerson, Class Coordinator

We have almost filled the 2015 workshop schedule, which shows how many members are willing to share their boat-building experience. We have left a few dates in the fall open to repeat workshops, if there is demand. We have several workshops that are a continuation of workshops from last year, many repeats from previous years and a few new ones. We have set the attendance fee for half-day workshops at \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members and for full-day workshops at \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Youth members can attend for free when accompanied by

a parent or guardian or with the consent of the instructor. We have also expanded the demonstration schedule for 2015. Demonstrations will take place on the first and third Saturdays at the boat shop between 10 and 11 AM, although they could run longer. There is no fee for attending and no sign up. Just show up and enjoy.

To get a description of the workshops or demonstrations, please go to:
www.riverswest.org/workshops.html.



2015 Workshop Schedule

- February 28 Bronze Casting with Michael Simmons
- March 14 Knots 101 with Steve Mahoney
- March 28 Wooden Spokeshave and Spar Gauge with Michael Simmons and Randy Torgerson
- April 25, 26 Oar Making with Randy Torgerson
- May 9 Scale Model Making with Art Wilson
- May 30 Lofting the Herreshoff Dinghy Part 3 with Steve Najjar
- June 13 Steam Bending with John Whitehouse
- June 27, 28 Handcut Dovetails with John Bouwsma
- Sept. 26, 27 Wooden Block Planes with Randy Torgerson and Michael Simmons
- Oct. 10, 11 Birds Mouth Spars with Craig Bryant
- Oct. 24...TBD Oct. 31...TBD Nov. 14...TBD



RiversWest Annual Planning Meeting

John Bouwsma

Our Annual Membership Meeting, attended by 23 members, was held on November 22, 2014 at the Rose City Yacht Club. There was a lot of enthusiasm and lively discussion. Several main directions emerged for the next year.

One goal that emerged was that we need to increase our membership. We expect to do this by placing our brochures in businesses and public buildings, contacting lapsed members to renew, and through publicity at the Portland Boat Show, Family Boat Build, and any wooden boat shows we can attend during the course of the year. In addition, our expanded Workshop Program is very likely to attract new members.

Related to this is our desire to increase our outreach to the public. Public outreach, and especially education, is one of the main purposes of RiversWest, according to our bylaws. Randy Torgerson has taken over and expanded the Workshop Program, with workshops and demos scheduled throughout the next year.

We have had some issues in the shop with inappropriate and, in some cases, unsafe use of the machinery, and broken machinery that was not reported. We all agreed that we need to have written procedures for each machine that give safety rules, and the proper way to set them up. Once this is in place, we will certify members to ensure that everyone understands these rules and procedures.

There was general agreement that we need to continue all the events we held last year and even add some, especially more on-the-water activities. This would include the Portland Boat Show, where we will have a large booth, the Family Boat Build, the Hagg Lake messabout, and the Spring Swap Meet. We have been approached by the Catlin Gable School and agreed to provide kits and mentors for them to build two Salt Bay Skiffs in four days in their shop. This will happen in March.

On top of all this, we will now be publishing our newsletter four times a year.



An Encouraging Note

Bob Young, RiversWest Founding Member

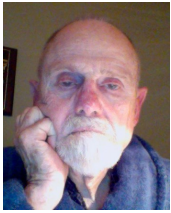
To RiversWest Shipmates:

Sorry, but this ol' guy cannot attend this important meeting (Annual Planning Meeting). I'm OK, but time and bones are tired (they are now 90). I so appreciate the newsletters and being informed about the progress and ambitions and accomplishments that we founders had in mind. There are would-be boat builders out there.

With respect, Bob Young

(Ed. Note: Bob Young and Sam McKinney, both founding members, shared the same birthday. See the next page.)



Samuel Donald McKinney: Oct. 1, 1927-Dec. 13, 2006**Art Wilson, RiversWest****A Celebration of the Life of a RiversWest Founding Member**

"Take the adventure, heed the call, now ere the irrevocable moment passes! 'Tis but a banging of the door behind you, a blithesome step forward, and you are out of the old life and into the new!" Thus advises the old sailor, Ratty, to Mole in Kenneth Grahame's book, *The Wind in the Willows*. It's the written answer Sam McKinney's wife, Gail Broderick, placed on his desk when he requested permission to make his trans-continental voyage in a small boat across the USA. This "voyage" took four years of Sam's life and three boats (named Gander I thru III). Gander II, a heavy dory-style boat, got stuck in the mud of the Missouri River and left for salvage. It was not "A Solo Navigation around the World" like so many of his heroes made (and I might add, mine), i.e. Joshua Slocum, Harry Pidgeon and Victor Dumas. But it was, "My Everest, Climbed." All of this wonderful autobiographical material is chronicled in the second section of his fourth book, *Sailing Uphill, An Unconventional Life on the Water*.

Sam uses the first person voice to tell the story of his voyages of re-enacting Vancouver's search for the Northwest Passage and Grey's exploration of the Columbia River. This style makes the story personal and autobiographic. And Sam reveals things about himself that most nonfiction authors would eschew. Sam is constantly amazed at the steadfastness of the officers and crews of the ship's launches in performing their surveying and charting duties. In the face of all the hazards posed by savages, uncharted waters and the privations and the risks of foul weather in an open boat, "they did their duty." He expresses doubt about his own fortitude, were he one of them. Yet he repeatedly points out he is a risk taker and has always been one, as he describes in chapter one, *A Boy and A Row Boat, of Sailing Uphill*.

Professionally, Sam was very much a risk taker:

- **Author:** He published four books (one in two editions) and numerous articles on experiential education.
- **Boat Builder:** Over 100 boats his wife, Gail, recalls.
- **Experiential Educator:** He co-founded the Northwest Outward Bound School in 1964 and was the founder of the Portland State University Outdoors Program. He led mountain climbing tours on Mt. Hood and summer canoe and kayak tours in the San Juan Islands, British Columbia Gulf Islands and Western Vancouver Island.
- **Historical Journalist:** Two of his book titles celebrate bicentennials of maritime exploration. In *Sailing with Vancouver*, he travels the Juan de Fuca Strait, Puget Sound and the Northwest Inland Passage between Vancouver Island and the British Columbia mainland to chronicle all the landing sites on that last British Admiralty search for the Northwest Passage. In *Reach of Tide, Ring of History*, he revisits the landing sites of the Columbia River exploration by Captain Robert Grey's ship's launch on its bicentennial in 1992.

- **Newspaper Reporter & Publicist:** During and for eight years after his journalism training at the University of Oregon
- **Professional seaman:** He graduated from the Maritime Training School on Catalina Island, CA and served on the SS Devereaux as an Able Body seaman at the end of WW II. Later, stints of maritime service helped pay the tuition and board bills while in journalism school.

But these are just the dry facts of Sam's professional life. Sam mentored many people: Mike Houck of Oaks Bottom and Ross Island Conservation fame, and Robin Cody, a student and author of *Voyage of a Summer's Sun* and similar tales, to name a few. Sam was a solo voyager on most of his trips, but he also had several close friends among the membership of RiversWest, who shared in his joy of voyaging. Jim Gillis was companion and tow car driver during the Gander II portion of the trip on the Missouri. Bob Young was his companion on several trips to Barkley Sound. Bob and Sam developed a close bond (they share the same birth date) and remained very close friends through over forty years of boat building and short voyaging trips together. It was Bob who lent me personal, autographed copies of *Sailing Uphill* and *Bligh*, including his addendum about events cited in the autobiography.



Samuel Donald McKinney

So henceforth, on every October 1st, let's get together and cheer the birth of two RiversWest founders, Samuel D. McKinney and Robert "Bob" Young with this toast:

"So we beat on, boats against the tide, borne back ceaselessly into the past."
— F. Scott Fitzgerald, concluding sentence in *The Great Gatsby*

Comments by Art Wilson:

1. Two excellent *Oregonian* articles on Sam (also provided by Bob):
 - a. Obituary in Metro section, December 22, 2006
 - b. Celebration in the Living section, "Of Sam and the River," August 7, 2007
2. Sam always was in a hurry to complete a task. To him, writing a bibliography is to an author like the effort of creating a fine varnish or paint finish on a boat is to a shipwright. The point is to get it (the boat) in the water! He would apologize for this deficiency in the Acknowledgments section at the beginning of his books.
3. *Sailing Uphill* is the best of Sam's three autobiographical books and a recommended read. Buy it for your permanent maritime bookshelf!



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RiversWest Small Craft Center Inc.

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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

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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