

WINTER 2016

# RiversWest

We inspire people to build and use low-impact boats

# News

## President's Corner

**Sal DiGrande, President**



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 craft 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 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 engaged in a partnership with the Catlin Gable School to build 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

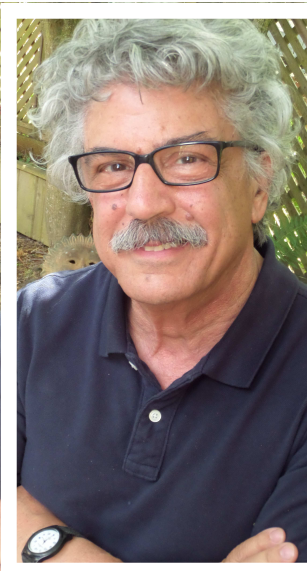
process. It is our desire to expand this program to reach out to more youth within the greater Portland metro area.

For all of you who enjoy reading, you'll be interested to know that RiversWest has a book club. The focus is on books relating to a maritime theme, both fiction and non-fiction. The club has a membership of eight readers with always room for more. The book club is open to all members who would like to share their favorite books with others. We meet 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 sail boats. 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 do feel that the new year will bring new and exciting events and experiences within 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



## **Founding Member, Bob Young October 1, 1924 - November 24, 2015 John Bouwsma**

Bob Young, a founding member of RiversWest, passed away on Nov. 24 after a long bout with lung cancer.



All of us at RiversWest will be saddened by this news. Bob was probably our most stalwart member, one of the founders of the club, for which we gave him an honorary lifetime membership. He remained active with RiversWest right up until the end of his life. He was always very positive about our organization, full of appreciation and praise for what we were doing. He was a great source of interesting stories about the origins of RiversWest, many of which we have published in our newsletters. He was a member of the group who built the Hal Templeton, and he provided photos of it rigged and sailing at the Port Townsend Wooden boat show. He came to RiversWest one Saturday morning a year or two ago, announcing that he had just built another boat! We were quite surprised since he was certainly pushing 90 at the time. He opened his trunk, and it turned out he had built a beautiful model sailboat, radio controlled. We will all miss his enthusiasm and humor.

To read his full obituary, visit:

[http://www.anewtradition.com/obituaries/obituary/12300\\_Robert\\_Stanley\\_Young](http://www.anewtradition.com/obituaries/obituary/12300_Robert_Stanley_Young)

Here is an excerpt: "He loved his family, his friends, the outdoors (mountains, desert, rivers, ocean), LAL the people of the world, and ANY kind of boat."

Crown Memorial in Tualatin, Oregon, has a web page for Bob where notes and remembrances can be left. A Celebration of Life is planned for January (see below). His ashes will be scattered in the Pacific Ocean he loved so much. If you wish to make a donation in Bob's memory, he specified OHSU Cancer Research, Heifer International or Doctors Without Borders.

### **A Celebration of Life for Bob:**

**Sunday, January 24th**

**1:30 to 3:30pm**

**10650 Southwest Summerfield Drive, Tigard**

## **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 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 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**



## Two Boats from Portugal

**Chuck Stuckey**

On a recent trip to Portugal, I noticed several interesting wooden boats. As is true around the world, boats are built to a purpose, and designs evolve to better meet the purpose at hand. If what you need to do is get the Queen of Portugal from one side of Lisbon's port to the other (before the application of the combustion engine to boats and cost is not an object), and you have 20 strong young men to row, you build one of these (below).



If you need to get multiple casks of wine from the vineyards along the upper reaches of the Douro River downstream, through rock-infested rapids, to docks in Porto, you build one of these (above). That long sweep at the stern is hand steered by three men at once to guide the boat through the many rapids on the approximately 80 mile journey. The river is today controlled by several dams with navigation locks, so the boats are now mostly gone, except for a few kept as private toys or museum pieces.



## Family Boat Build is Six Years Strong

**Chuck Stuckey**

The 2015 Family Boat Build was the largest ever. Thirteen families and groups showed up for the annual two day event, enjoyed the perfect weather, and completed their boats all by mid-afternoon of the second day. The march down the boat ramp and into the Willamette River is always such a joy to see and this year was no exception. We had a family sponsored by the Friends of the Children again this year, and, for the first time, a youth group from the Salvation Army. Watching those young people, so tentative at first, become comfortable with the tools used, reading instructions and slowly advancing a pile of plywood and glue into a real boat is what makes the event worthwhile for most of us. And the sheer joy when they row it for the first time is priceless.

This year we were fortunate to have the support and participation of two leading Portland corporations: Zidell and Greenbrier. I believe their willingness to provide financial support and lend their name to the event is a testament to the value it provides to the greater community, and the hard work of all the RiversWest members who assist with the boat kits. Now, after six years, there are 64 Salt Bay Skiffs, handmade by 64 "families" and hopefully enjoyed on some local lake or river. I am sure the event will continue as I think the community has come to expect it and see it as part of the Portland summer. As one father told me: "I'm glad you're still doing this because I've stopped by for the last several years just waiting for my son to be old enough to help."



# Building a "John Dory"

**Russ Smith**

I have always had a love for boats. Although wood boats require more attention, they have a beauty that catches the eye. I wanted to build my own, when I retired, but couldn't decide on a plan.



The "John Dory" as launched

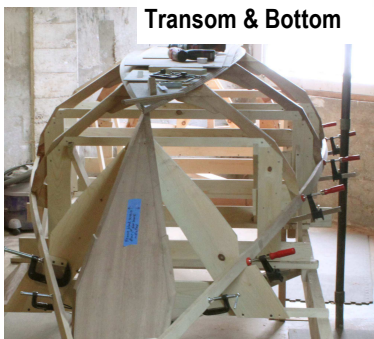
Steve Najjar, a retired professional boat builder in the club, recommended John Gardner's "Dory Book." I chose an Ian Oughtred design called "John Dory," which is similar to the Swampscott style dory in Gardner's book. Being originally from the east coast, I thought this would be an appropriate design.

The boat was not built from a kit, but "stick built" using hydrotech plywood, Doug fir framing, with a little mahogany for the transom and breast hook. I started laying out the frames in my garage in August 2012. Due to temperature concerns, I decided that fall to continue the build in my basement, which has a large exit window.



Frames

The dory has a glued lapstrake construction, with the plank's laps sealed with thickened epoxy. I added bronze screws at the plank ends, fastening them into the stem and transom,



Transom & Bottom



Garboards



Planked and epoxied in & out



Interior done

just in case. I used the 4 stake option and increased all the plank thickness to 9mm with 12mm bottom. The boat was sealed inside and out with System 3 Silverlite coating epoxy before painting.



Basement window exit

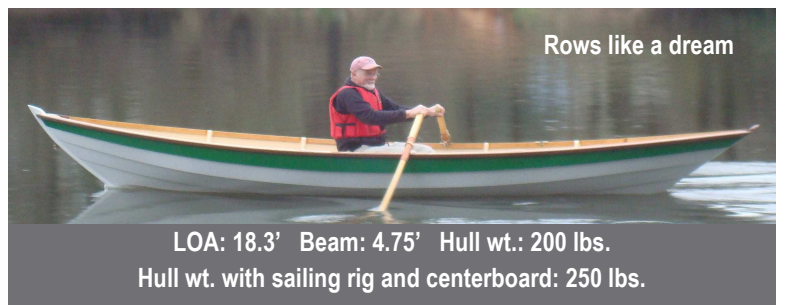
It was a great learning experience for me, since I was never a real woodworker. With help and advice from RiversWest club members, I learned the skills required to build my own boat. I know the boat is no show piece, but I am very happy with the results and she rows beautifully. The centerboard trunk is in place, so my plan is to assemble a sail rig this coming spring.



Christened



Launching



Rows like a dream

LOA: 18.3' Beam: 4.75' Hull wt.: 200 lbs.  
Hull wt. with sailing rig and centerboard: 250 lbs.

Many thanks to club members John Bouwsma and Steve Najjar for hands-on assistance and advice. Thanks also to club past president Jim Litton for the fir used for framing.



**Building a PT Skiff, part 2 and she's done.****Mark Ramsby****Completing the Boat:**

As of the Spring 2015 newsletter, the hull had been formed and side decks were on. Interior hull glass was applied, most of the filleting had been done and tapes applied to the interior chines.



This boat was a retirement project. I had retired a year and a half earlier and wanted a bigger boat, with power other than my own. I had never owned a boat with a motor.

In May, I applied to enter the 2015 Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival. To do that, I had to name her. My wife and I had kicked around a lot of names. I would like one and she wouldn't and vice versa. I proposed "Mojo" and she wasn't sure. "What's the definition?" Meg asked. Mojo—noun: "A magic charm, talisman, or spell." Mojo it was!

I had to use a photo of the formed hull still screwed into the cradle and explain that July was the target launch date. A week later I received an email from the Festival accepting "Mojo." The excitement soon was tempered by the fact that now I really had to finish her...by the deadline!

I modified a few things: Increased the depth of the sheer clamp to allow a more traditional rub rail. All of the seat-tops were re-made in Sapele and wrapped in 4 oz. glass for strength. Several of the Okume plywood panels were re-cut. White oak blocking was added to support cleats and fittings. A bunch of little details were added to produce a boat that was more to my liking. I wasn't trying to build the lightest PT Skiff, I was building the most durable one, and one that I wanted to look at for a long time.

One of the details was solid Khaya upper coamings. In the kit these are plywood and designed to be painted.

The coamings were laminated on forms to gracefully curve along the deck opening. These were epoxied to the deck after it was glassed, then the deck was painted and the coamings were finished bright.

The boat was progressing, but not as quickly as I had hoped. All those added details took time. As Summer went on, I started to work on the boat to the exclusion of almost everything else. Meg started calling me "the guy that lives in the shop." Not good. Construction continued through early September. Mojo was due at the Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival on the 10th. My original building time estimate of 500-600 hours had turned into 1,200.

I launched Mojo Sept 2 on the Willamette River. We left for PT Tuesday, Sept. 8, and spent the next day on Hood Canal. We arrived at PT Thursday the 10th and arrived at the festival dock about 3p.m. One week and one day from launch to Festival arrival.

**On the Water:**

After just 24 hours under power, I really like this boat. It moves out when you need it to, topping out at 20+ knots, but it's very happy going any speed you want. No "awkward" moments. It's hard to tell when it starts to plane—it just slithers up there and at some point you realize that it is planing. No sticking its bow in the air or any other sort of drama. Mojo is very polite and well-mannered young lady.

The sea water ballast tank is a touch of genius. At roughly 600#, this is a lightweight boat with a lot of windage due to its generous freeboard. In smooth, calm conditions it is a very efficient boat and handles well. When the waves and wind kick up, things change. The seawater ballast tank lets you take on an additional 330#. That sets her down, calms her and makes her very well mannered in rough conditions. It's almost like having two boats in one.



LOA: 18.5' Beam: 6' 2" Draft: 15" Hull wt.: 385 lbs. Speed: 22 kn.  
Engine: Honda 20HP 4 stroke Capacity: 6 people or 800 lbs.



**RiversWest Maritime Skills Program****Randy Torgerson, Education Coordinator**

We have just completed another successful year of the Maritime Skills Program. We had many excellent demonstrations and workshops. John Whitehouse and Dell Hambleton drew a large crowd for the

demonstration "How to Sand/Blend in Epoxy in Preparation for Varnish" and have more demonstrations planned on how to refurbish a Pygmy kayak. Chuck Stuckey demonstrated how to splice double braid which has been expanded into the upcoming workshop "Splicing 3 Strand and Double Braid" which will be led by Steve Mahoney and Chuck Stuckey. We had complementary demonstrations on hand planes by Mike Fesenmeyer and Mark Ramsby, which fed our traditional woodworker. Mike Simmons demonstrated how to leather an oar with his usual skill.

We had two excellent workshops on tool making, where the students built wooden spokeshaves, spar gauges and wooden block planes. In the spring, the tool making workshop will combine the previous two workshops in to one where the students

will have a choice to build a new wooden spokeshave, spar gauge or wooden block planes, or complete theirs from previous workshops. We will also have a repeat of the popular workshop on making a boat-building slick and a new workshop on how to make a scratch awl.

Mike Fesenmeyer produced a very fine set of oars in the Oar Making workshop. We try to have either an oar making or paddle making workshop every year. 2015 was oar making, so in 2016 we would like to have a paddle making workshop, and we are looking for an instructor. If you think that you would like to lead a paddle making workshop please contact us at [education@riverswest.org](mailto:education@riverswest.org).

The bronze casting workshop is always exciting with many successful and not so successful castings. We are trying to organize a bronze casting workshop in cooperation with the Barbey Maritime Center at the Columbia Maritime Museum for the spring and we will provide more information as it becomes available. This workshop will be led by Sam Johnson who has previously taught bronze casting at RiversWest, Center for Wooden Boats and the Wooden Boat School.

Workshops are typically on the second, fourth and occasionally the fifth Saturdays of the month in the spring and the fall, with no classes during the summer or winter. Half-day workshops are less than 4 hours and full-day workshops are more than 5 hours and can run two days. If you would like to lead a workshop we would like a least a month notice to prepare, organize and advertise. The fees for workshops consist of an attendance fee depending on full or half day, member or non-member, and a material fee to cover the costs.

Demonstrations are on the first and third Saturday of the month at 10:00a.m. and usually run an hour, but there is no time limit. We are very flexible on the demonstrations and would like at least a week to advertise. Demonstrations are always free and are always appreciated.

***If you have questions about an upcoming workshop or demonstration or want to lead a workshop or demonstration, please see me on the first or third Saturday at the boat shop or email me at: [education@riverswest.org](mailto:education@riverswest.org).***

**RiversWest Workshops & Demonstrations for Spring 2016****Randy Torgerson**

| DATE           | WORKSHOP / DEMO | CLASS                                | INSTRUCTORS                   |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| April 9, 2016  | Workshop        | Tool making: Planes / Spokeshaves    | Randy Torgerson               |
| April 23, 2016 | Workshop        | Splicing: 3 Strand / Double Braid    | Steve Mahoney / Chuck Stuckey |
| April 30, 2016 | Workshop        | Making: Tyvek lug sail               | John Ost / Mike Simmons       |
| May 7, 2016    | Demo            | Seat caning                          | John Whitehouse               |
| May 14, 2016   | Workshop        | Making a Slick                       | Mike Simmons                  |
| June 4, 2016   | Demo            | Build a S. Pacific Sailing Outrigger | Dick Dewey                    |



### 2015 Boat Building Retrospective

**Stu Whitcomb**

Catlin Gabel School Boat Build Summer 2015



Newt Kayak Fall 2015



Scamp Winter 2015 & Fall 2015



Weekender

Spring 2015



John Dory

Winter 2016



Cosine Wherry Mod Autumn 2015



PT Skiff

Spring 2015 & Winter 2016



A 2015 Retrospective of boat building projects highlighted in the RiversWest News during this past year.

For some very interesting reading about these member built boats, go to [www.riverswest.org](http://www.riverswest.org). Look for the issue date shown on the photographs above.

Two exceptions to the member-built boats are the Catlin Gabel & Family Boat Builds, which were all kitted and mentored by RiversWest members.

Family Boat Build

Summer 2015





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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 all RiversWest educational programs  
Right to vote for officers and board members  
Access to RiversWest boat shop and space rentals  
Invitation to all RiversWest boating and social functions  
Discounts at Crosscut Hardwood

Please return the following with your check to the address above,  
or sign up online at [riverswest.org](http://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.