

Fall 2017

RiversWest News

We inspire people to build and use low-impact boats



As always, Jim is the one with the biggest smile

Jim Litton Memorial Issue

**We have all been saddened by the passing of Jim Litton,
a former president and very active member of RiversWest,**

on July 16th, 2017



Jim Litton's Contributions to RiversWest



Jim Litton was one of the most popular members of RiversWest because of his friendly, outgoing personality coupled with knowing how to get things done. His technical skills were unparalleled; he was a highly accomplished woodworker, metal worker, tool sharpener, and boat builder. He was also a machinist and had professional experience in metal casting. He made dozens of knives which he gave away to family and friends.

Jim was President of RiversWest during a difficult time, after our move from Oaks Park. By moving so far we had lost a lot of members, but under Jim's leadership we managed to hold things together. He set a great example for those who followed him in that role.

Jim donated many large power tools to RiversWest, as well as lumber and smaller tools when he moved to Rose Schnitzer Manor. Much of this we kept to improve our own shop, the rest we sold to add to our kitty.

Jim's Retirement Home Shop

Over the years Jim Litton has set many fine examples for all of us. His most recent inspiration was to set up a wood shop in the second bedroom of his retirement home.

Jim sold his house moved into Rose Schnitzer Manor several years ago for health reasons. Shortly after moving his health improved, and he began thinking about working with tools and wood again. His apartment had two bedrooms and two bathrooms. He had kept a fine selection of hand tools, his workbench, and a large cabinet to house the tools. All this went out on the balcony. Furthermore, he bought a small drill press and bandsaw which also went out there. He stored a lot of his tools in the second bathroom.

When winter came it was too cold to work on the balcony so he moved the bench and tool cabinet inside, to the second bedroom. He was on the second floor, and he did run into trouble with his neighbor downstairs who objected to his pounding; she pounded back on the ceiling with a broom handle. Even when he was doing a silent activity like sanding she complained about vibrations in the floor. In his usual direct manner, Jim discussed this with the management who told him that as long as he kept it to reasonable daytime hours he could continue. It may have helped that he had developed a reputation for being able to fix anything, and did so frequently for the other residents and for the management. He reglued broken furniture, touched up scratches, and fixed broken appliances. Meanwhile he was also engaged in his favorite pursuit, making knives. Several RW members provided him with materials for this, and he occasionally came down to the Boat Shop to grind the blades on the industrial belt grinder he had donated to the club.

Like all of us, Jim was constantly modifying his shop to accommodate changes in what he could do, wanted to do, and planned to do. His latest plan was to start doing some relief carving. To this end he enlisted the help of some RW members to help him build a small raised benchtop, to bring the work to a convenient height, with plenty of bench dog holes to hold down his work. His enthusiasm for continuing his woodworking, as well as his innovation in figuring out how to do it in such a small space, can serve as inspiration to all of us. Many of us are getting older and are beginning to purge unused items, generally pare down our shops, and prepare for much smaller living spaces. It has prompted at least one RW member, myself, to build a new bench specifically designed to go into a second bedroom in a retirement home.



Jim Litton's Boat

Jim's boat was one of the nicest built at RiversWest. It was a glued lapstrake Sea Bright Skiff, beautifully finished. Jim built the boat He built a beautiful boat, a glued lapstrake Brightside Skiff, without full plans using only the information in John Gardener's book, *Building Small Craft*. He modified these plans by adding length, and he took apart an electric trolling motor and installed it in the rudder for. Eventually he added a sail rig and learned to sail. Mike Simmons remembers sailing with Jim in September, 2012. They launched at the Coast Guard ramp on



Marine Drive and sailed off down the river. However, the wind was virtually nonexistent, and when they tried to sail back they could not buck the current. They managed to sail in place for awhile by going close to shore, but were beginning to talk about where they could land the boat and call someone to be rescued. Luckily another RiversWest member was out on the river that day, Mark Neuhaus, in his newly launched power boat, and he towed them back up the river. Jim's own innovation to this boat was to

take apart an electric trolling motor and incorporate it into the rudder. This way he could power the boat without hanging a motor off the transom, and the power would be efficiently directed whichever way he chose to steer the boat with the tiller.



Charlie Gripp's Big Adventure



RiversWest member Charlie Gripp rowed and sailed his 7 ft. 10 Bolger Elegant Punt "Ash Tray" from Astoria to Willamette Cove in 6 days. He and John Ost built the boat between October, 2016 and June, 2017 in a RiversWest bay. The build included the polytarp sail and oars. He sailed (literally) to Astoria as crew on a friend's Cal 25. He knew what he was involved in coming back. He had previously sailed from the shop to Sellwood and from Sellwood back to the shop before beginning the Astoria voyage. He beached it every night. This was an excellent accomplishment!

Nice Thank You Note from the Family boat Build

to the Big Adventure members,

My family and I recently participated in the family boat build. I would like to express my sincere thanks for your kind efforts on our behalf. My family had such a great time at the event, we all picked up some new skills and particularly my son gained confidence in his new abilities. We were all touched by the selflessness and the great way in which you all have found a way to reach out and share your love of boat building with the community. We all left maybe a bit tired but also proud of our family, our city, and the people in it who are not afraid to share what it is to create something. To have been taught how to make a basic vehicle, a thing that is tied back to the first hollowed logs or stretched skins, is, in a way, profound. So, thank you again and happy building.

The Ooyevar Family



RiversWest Capital Campaign Announced Mark Ramsby and Rick Hendon

Riverswest was formed in 1991 as a membership supported small boat club dedicated to the building and use of human scale, sustainable small craft. Most of our members boats are either human or sail powered, but there also some builders that choose to power their boats with small electric or gasoline power-plants.

In our twenty-six years as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, RiversWest has never had a permanent home. The club started out in donated space at Oaks Park. That provided the group a space to grow for the early years. When that relationship ended, RW found leased space in the Pier 99 building where we are today. RiversWest now has a below market rate, month to month rental agreement in the Pier 99 Building. Bottom line: upon thirty days notice, we can be out.

It's time to find a permanent home. Earlier this year the board authorized Mark Ramsby and Rick Hendon to co-chair a Capital Campaign. Included in that committee are Russ Smith, Chuck Stuckey, and John Bowsma. Later, Art Wilson and Steve Najjar were added to the group as they had great interest in promoting this cause.

Members of that group have met with Brandt Faatz, Executive Director of Center For Wooden Boats in Seattle, who was a treasure trove of knowledge and encouragement. We also met with Susan Spitzer at the Oregon Maritime Museum who gave us some valuable knowledge on the Portland maritime non-profit landscape. We are setting up meetings with Sam Johnson, Exec. Director of Columbia Maritime Museum and ex-RiversWester, Port of Portland, Metro and every park district along the Willamette River. We will explore any possibility that will be good for RiversWest.

Our goal is to find and secure a permanent home for RiversWest. Whether that is through a sweetheart lease or a low-cost purchase, we need to find a home. We are pushing for the best deal that we can get on the best site that we can get. You will receive periodical updates on progress. We want you involved in this process if you want to be!

All of this takes money because we don't want a mortgage. Lots of money. More than we have, but not more than we can raise. We feel that with our RiversWest program, we can attract corporate sponsors, grants and donations from trusts. We are very confident that the \$1M - \$3M required is a very achievable goal.

The first step is support from our members. RiversWest needs you now. Your \$50 annual dues are a bargain. For \$50, you get a shop full of tools, unlimited access to the shop and the other benefits of being a RiversWest member: 10% discount at Crosscuts, Wholesale account at US Distributing, etc. Not to mention hanging around with a bunch of like-minded, interesting people! And don't forget the donuts!

I'm thinking of my monthly donation as tithing to the church of the wooden boat. However you think of it, a donation of \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25 or \$5 is very important! In fundraising, a little donation, on a regular basis is a huge deal. A small donation given monthly over time turns into a significant amount if enough people do it. It also shows our corporate and institutional donors that our membership is committed to this cause.

We encourage you to keep the RiversWest Capital Campaign in mind for your year-end giving. Invest in yourself; invest in your passion; invest in RiversWest. Donations can be made by check through the mail or credit card through the website. Please designate "Capital Campaign" on your donation. If you want to donate in a different way, please contact one of the committee members and we will make it happen if it is possible.



Charlie Ehm's Accident

RiversWest member Charlie Ehm, of Pond Boat fame, took a fall about a month ago and broke his back in 4 places. This left his legs paralyzed. However he has been aggressively engaged in physical therapy and has made significant progress. He is now able to stand up by himself, though he can't balance or walk as the muscles in the backs and sides of his legs are not yet responding. Charlie's philosophy is "hope for the best but prepare for the worst." Thus he is thinking about how he can rearrange his house to accommodate the possibility of life in a wheelchair, and so that he can continue his woodworking and boat building. He is already planning to lead a team of disabled people to build a Salt Bay Skiff at the Family Boat Build next year. Many RW members have offered to help with his rearranging when he decides what he needs to do. The doctors are not predicting how far his recovery will go, but we are all, as Charlie is, "hoping for the best." Here is Charlie tying lumber on his car to build a wheelchair ramp.



Dave and Sam Dunlap's Launch

This boat was built by Dave, Sam and Ben Dunlap at the 2016 Family Boat Build. The addition of the sailing rig took a year, assisted by RW members John Ost, Charlie Gripp, Randi Whipple and Steve Mahoney. In the fall of 2016 Dave, Sam, and John cut out the parts for the rudder, leeboard, and spars, poured a lead insert in the rudder blade, primed and painted the topsides, and Sam shaped the mast. During



the summer of 2017 Charlie and John assembled the parts and shaped the yard and sprit boom, strengthened the frames with gussets, primed and painted the bottom and tung oiled the inside and spars. Randi made the sail and John rigged the boat with input from Steve. The 40 sq. ft. leg o mutton is on a sliding gunter with rope jaws, as illustrated in Dave Nichol's "Traditional Small Boat Sails. The spars are built to the guidelines given for the rig in Ian Oughtred's plans for his John Dory. The boat was launched on Oswego Lake, and sailed beautifully!

John Ost

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.

Annual Planning Meeting:

November 4, 1:00-3:00

Location: TBD



Membership Renewal Changes for 2016**John Whitehouse****NOTICE:**

If you have not yet renewed your membership, this would be a great time to do it!

The membership fee for adults remains at \$50/year.

Two new items this year:

1. **We are asking everyone who uses the shop to sign a liability waiver.**
We may have your signed waiver, but we still need the membership payment .
2. **Memberships will now run from the first of the year and expire at the end of the year.**
Your payment will keep your membership current through the end of the year.

Many people renew at the Annual Membership Meeting in January. Membership entitles you to the use of the shop, the opportunity to rent a boat-building bay, group activities, reduced-rate classes throughout the year and discounts on purchases at Crosscut Lumber and other shops.

**Make checks out to RiversWest Small Craft and mail to:
RiversWest Small Craft Center, PO Box 19234, Portland, OR 97280**

RiversWest Annual Planning Meeting

Save the date: November 4th, 1:00-3:00

Many important topics will be discussed, including any you want to bring up!

We need you to become involved in determining the future direction of the club!

Volunteer Opportunities at RiversWest

If you are looking for a way to become more involved in RiversWest, here are some ideas:

1. We are looking for an Education Coordinator to organize classes and workshops. Randy Torgerson has been doing this for several years and needs to move on. This should not be hugely time consuming but will have a big impact on RiversWest's visibility in the community, and our ability to serve the community.
2. Newsletter Coordinator: Stu Whitcomb has been doing this for at least 10 years, but for health reasons he will not be able to continue. John Bouwsma is standing in for now, but we need a permanent person in this position. There will few constraints on your creativity w/r to layout, and the articles and photos will be provided by others.
3. We still need volunteers for the Family Boat Build. You do not have to know everything about boat building, or even about the Salt Bay Skiff. Mostly we need people who are interested and willing. If you are helping a family with a question you can't answer, there will be lots of other volunteers ready to answer them. Mostly you will just need common sense and a friendly demeanor.



The Challenges of Being a Ship's Carpenter on a 70 yr Old Vessel

Jim Spitzer

I have been a fine furniture maker and renovator as a hobby for over 40 years, a member of the Guild of Oregon Woodworkers, and a member of Rivers West for a couple of years. I have no desire to build a boat, but I go down to the water every Wednesday as a member of the crew specializing in duties as the ships carpenter on the 75 year old Stern-wheeler Steamer Portland, the home of the Oregon Maritime Museum in Portland.

The hull and the main deck house that contains the machinery are steel, however all window frames and doors as well as the houses on the cabin and Texas decks and the Pilot house are wood. The upper three decks, including the pilot house roof, are wood protected by a system of fiberglass mesh and resin called All-Deck. Failed chalk, paint, and Bondo repairs eventually reveal underlying rot that can no



longer be disguised by paint. A moisture meter shows moisture intrusion. The following pictures show a sample of our challenges, and why we can always use more volunteers.

Here is about 30 feet of the 32 foot main mast. Note the rotten wood in the foreground. About 10 pounds of the top of the mast including metal fitting and cap came crashing onto the wood deck and its All deck coating. No damage to the deck. Fortunately the museum was closed. Further inspection of the mast revealed extensive rot where moisture entered through longitudinal cracks.

A passenger on one of our cruises was a very experience boatwright from Port Townsend. He kindly drew an excellent plan for fabricating a new mast from glued and scarf jointed quarter sawn fir

boards. Likely too costly and labor intensive for the museum and its one skilled carpenter.

The next photo shows some of the facia outboard of the deck rail stanchions with a half round decorative feature removed. The All Deck resin coating and rails were installed some twenty five years ago...after the Museum acquired the derelict boat from the Port of Portland for \$1.

The caulking around the base of many of the stanchions and some deck areas. Many screws fastening the stanchions were wasted. Much structure had to be replaced, much System 3 Rot Fix and epoxy paste was used, and Chuck Stuckey introduced the author to 3M 5200 Marine Sealant for sealing the base of over 75 stanchions. And we decided that after 25 years we should renew the coats of All Deck on the top three wooden decks.

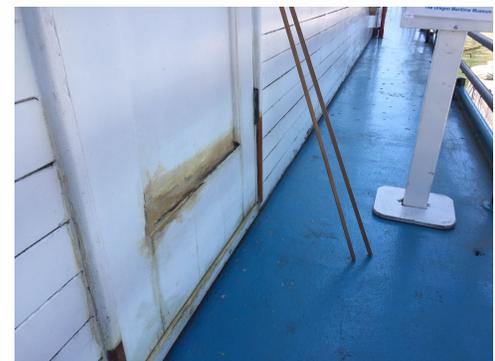


The next photo show an areas of rot removed from

a door and the lower part of a door frame. In one door extensive rot was routed out and a board is ready to be fitted in place using System Three epoxies. Another door and frame required rot to be removed. Areas were then built up with epoxies, and new molding sections were fabricated.

Likely all of the engine room window frames need refurbishment, or perhaps replacement if the rot in the lower rail of the first window is typical.

The reader is probably getting as tired as the author just thinking about all that has been done and needs to be done to maintain this old boat. And I don't even deal with the machinery and all of its complexities. But anyone who visits this piece of 19th century technology, sees the quiet movement of 26 inch pistons with a 9 foot stroke, and hears the loudest, most melodic and plaintive sound of her whistle echoing off the west hills knows that this piece of maritime history must be preserved.



RiversWest Board

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president@riverswest.org
Treasurer & Web Mgr: Craig Bryant
treasurer@riverswest.org -
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Auxiliary Board Members:
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Michael Simmons

RiversWest Small Craft Center Inc.
P.O. Box 19234, Portland, OR 97280

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 _____

E-mail address: _____

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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