



TAHOE MARITIMES

VOLUME 15 • ISSUE 1 SPRING 2011

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VISIT US

Tahoe Maritime Museum
5205 West Lake Blvd.
P.O. Box 627
Homewood, CA 96141

Truckee Annex
10434 River Park Place
Truckee, CA 96161

(530) 525-WAKE (9253)
(530) 525-WAVE (9283) fax
info@TahoeMaritime.org
www.TahoeMaritime.org

SPRING and SUMMER HOURS

Open 10 am to 5 pm
Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays
through Memorial Day

Open daily except Wednesdays
from Memorial Day through
September 2011

Admission: \$5
free for Museum Members
and youth under 12

Launch into Summer at Tahoe Maritime Museum Saturday, May 28, 2011 – 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.



Please join us on Saturday, May 28, for Tahoe Maritime Museum's "Launch into Summer" annual fundraiser and summer season kickoff.

Wine and catered hors d'œuvres, no-host cocktails and *crusing* auction with many new and exciting items this year.



Watch for your invitation in the mail and be sure to **R.S.V.P early** to Patty Williams at patty@tahoemaritime.org or 525-9253, ext. 102. This can be a sell-out event, and one you won't want to miss!

Many thanks to our sponsors — A & M Marine, Tahoe City Marina and Plumas Bank — for their generous donations to support this event.

Down the Launch Ramp

It is hard to believe but another wonderful summer season at Lake Tahoe is almost at hand. Mother Nature has provided us with an abundance of precipitation this winter and the lake level should far exceed the levels of the past few years. The activity at the museum also continues to reach a high level as we make final preparations for exciting new exhibits, our lecture series and public programs. We look forward to sharing more of Tahoe's Living History with you all.

Staff Update

Please join me in welcoming Jesse Siess Hadley as our executive director effective January 1, 2011. Jesse grew up at South Lake Tahoe and has fond memories of summers on the lake. She received her undergraduate degree in history from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Tom Bredt

and a master's degree in history from The Citadel.

After considering an academic career, Jesse decided to focus her efforts on history museums. She comes to us with extensive experience in many areas including public programming, collection management, exhibit design, and museum management. She has been associated with the Drayton Hall historic site in

(continued next page)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *(continued)*

Charleston, South Carolina, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming and the Sacramento History Museum in Sacramento. Most recently Jesse served as executive director of the Coachella Valley History Museum in Indio, California where she led the opening of the Date Museum to recognize the valley's role in producing the majority of the dates for the domestic market.

At each step along the way Jesse has acquired valuable experience that is already having a positive impact. She and her husband, Craig, now make their home in Incline Village. Welcome aboard Jesse.

Please also join me in thanking Richard Lashbrook for his outstanding volunteer service as our Interim Director from August through the end of last year. In March, Heather Laederich and David (Smitty) Smith left the Museum. We thank them for their contributions and wish them well in their future endeavors.

The Museum has developed such that we offer excellent career opportunities for people with training and experience in the museum field. We are interviewing applicants and will bring two associates on board soon. One position will focus on education and public programming and the other on our collection and exhibits.

Museum Endowment

One of the Board's strategic objectives is to assure the sustainable operation of the Museum far into the future. A key component of this objective is establishment of an endowment to provide a new source of income and complement current sources like member dues and our Annual Fund Campaign. The endowment was launched with a significant donation late last year. The Board has now adopted several new policies that will govern how the endowment is managed. These policies include an Endowment Policy, Gift Acceptance Policy and Investment Policy.

The Finance Committee (Rich Stout, Jeff Peterson, Pattie Watters and I), along with able assistance from Jesse, has conducted a search for an endowment advisor to

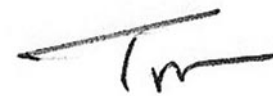
advise the Board on how the endowment should be invested. After interviews with several well-qualified candidates, the Board approved using Nick Rogers and Jim Stephenson with Morgan Stanley Smith Barney in Burlingame, California as our endowment advisors. Nick and Jim also advise the Northern California/Lake Tahoe Chapter of the Antique & Classic Boat Society on its endowment.

We Need You

The Museum has a wonderful collection, exhibits, facilities and a dedicated staff. However, our continued success is critically dependent on your support. We need you to visit the Museum and bring your friends. We need your continued

participation as volunteers. We need your input on new exhibits, programs and ways to better our visitor experience and be more valuable to the community. We need you as members at the highest possible level. We need your continued contributions to our Annual Fund campaigns and would be honored to be included in your estate plan.

Please stop by when you are at the lake this spring. We look forward to sharing our exciting future with you all.



Tom Bredt, Board President



Teah Williams, Miles Nored and Noelle Beck represented the Tahoe Maritime Museum aboard a float in the Snowfest parade through Tahoe City on Saturday, March 4, as part of the 30th annual North Lake Tahoe-Truckee Winter Carnival. Earlier in the year, the three toured the museum with Mr. Goggin's 4th-grade class from North Tahoe School.

To Stay Afloat, We Need Your Volunteer Support

There are many ways to support the museum. We have opportunities to suit many interests. You can work the front desk as a greeter, lead tours as a docent, give on-the-water tours as a Ride Boat first mate, or work with children as a school's program docent. Help is also needed with special events, annex open houses, mailings, fundraising and archiving the collection.

For more information, contact Patty Williams at (530) 525-9253, ext. 102 or patty@tahoemaritime.org.

I have been on board since January and I can say that this is an amazing and exciting opportunity. I spent my childhood here in Lake Tahoe and to return here to take over as the executive director of the Tahoe Maritime Museum is a true full-circle in my life. Our family's tiny little Glastron is long gone and pales in comparison to the Gar Woods and others I am working with today, but the essence of how boating on the lake shaped my life is the same story.

For many of us, boating is a part of our life, whether it is how we make our living or how we spend that money we made. The boats, whether a classic woodie or a new fiberglass, take on special meaning and become part of our own histories while at the same time a larger part of the history of Lake Tahoe.

As I lead the museum, it is this special relationship between people, their boats, and the lake that will guide me as I work with the staff and board to expand our public programs, contin-

ue wonderful new exhibits, and increase the museum's presence in community locally and regionally. I have been truly fortunate through my career to have worked at some amazing museums and with some truly talented individuals. I am honored to be here to share with the Tahoe Maritime Museum those experiences and to continue to grow.

Please always feel free to give me a call or send me an email with any questions or comments that you might have of me.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Jesse Siess Hadley

Spaulding library

Members view two of the wooden boats built by area high school students in SWBC's boatbuilding apprentice program.



Members tour Spaulding Wooden Boat Center, Sausalito

On March 26, Tahoe Maritime Museum members were treated to a special guided tour of the Spaulding Wooden Boat Center in the heart of Sausalito's waterfront. Built in 1951, SWBC is a 20,000 sq. ft. working wooden boat restoration facility that boasts historically significant sailboats and focuses on the art of wooden boat building.



On Spaulding's list of historic restoration projects: *Freda*, a 32-ft. gaff sloop, the oldest operational sailboat on the west coast built in 1885 in Belvedere, Calif., by the Stone Boatyard.



Photos: Tom Bredt

Following the tour, members drove to nearby Cavallo Point for lunch in the old Fort Baker artillery barracks built in late 1800s.



ANNUAL FUND DONATIONS

September 21, 2010 through March 31, 2011

Donations to the Annual Fund support the museum's mission of preserving the maritime history of Lake Tahoe, enabling the museum to present exhibits and programs of the highest quality and to offer educational programs for local students and teachers.

ACBS-Northern California/Lake Tahoe Chapter
 Phil and Tucker Adams
 Paul and Bobbi Callison Anderson
 Wes and Patti Ball
 Ed Beauchamp
 Ross and Marilyn Bewley – in memory of Mary Lonergran
 Warren and Darlene Bray
 The Bredt Family Fund at Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation
 Tom and Polly Bredt
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Richard and Nancy Ghilotti
 Joan Gibb
 Ken Gralla
 Tim and Elizabeth Hachman
 Timothy and Judith Hachman – in memory of Bill Murray
 Jared Hein
 Jules Heumann
 Virginia Hind Hodgson and Family-in memory of Ted Bacon
 Melanie Jackson
 Claburn "Ying" and Dougal Jones
 Bill and Tish Kartoizian
 William King and Diane Rowan
 Captain and Denise Kirby
 Richard Lashbrook and Patricia Watters
 Steven A. Lind
 Barry and Jenny Ludwig
 Lani Luthard
 Martha MacLaughlin
 Robert McClintock
 George and Sherry McConnell
 Roger and Joan McGee
 Sam and Susan Mendes
 Arthur and Karen Mennick
 Steve Merrill
 Steven Moore and Kathleen Justice Moore – in memory of Julie Williams
 Donald and Marilyn Morrison
 Dick and Niletta Moreton

Keith and Sarah Obexer Fields
 Ray and Marlita O'Brien
 William and Diana Osborne
 William and Sheryl Pangman
 Bob and Carol Peters
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 Jeff and Peggy Poindexter
 Trent and Karen Pridemore
 Dorothy Prowell
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 Jim and Chris Reed
 Evelyn Revitt
 Jon Q. and Ann S. Reynolds
 Keith Rogers
 Alan Schinnerer
 Ron and Lila Schmidt
 Kamran and Helena Shamsavari
 Gwyneth A. Sheldon
 Bill and Mary Jo Shepherd
 Mollie Sinclair
 Al and Louisa Smith
 Don and Suzanne Smith
 Randall Smith
 Jo Ann Strande
 The Charles H. Stout Foundation
 James and Lisa Taylor
 Bill Jr. and Nancy Thompson
 Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation on behalf of Alexandra C. Howard
 Jaap Van Opstal
 Dick and Lana Vento
 Richard and Donna Wallrich
 David Wells
 David West and Nancy Plukowski
 B.C. Wheeler
 William and Stephanie Whisnant
 Wayne and Carolyn Willey
 Jeff and Karen Williams
 Bill Yundt
 Bill and Diane Zeundt

Membership

I/we would like to join the Tahoe Maritime Museum and share in the Lake's rich maritime history.

PLEASE CHECK: New Membership
 Renewing Membership
 Gift Membership

FAMILY: \$40 \$100 \$200 \$300 \$500

FRIEND OF THE MUSEUM: \$1,000 \$2,500

Annual Fund

I/we would like to help the Museum's mission by making the following donation to the Museum's Annual Fund in the amount of \$_____.

Thank You!

Tahoe Maritime Museum is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

TAHOE MARITIME MUSEUM

P.O. Box 627, Homewood, CA 96141 • PHONE (530) 525-9253 • FAX (530) 525-9283
www.tahoemaritime.org

Date _____

Member Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

Purchaser Name (if different) _____

Billing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

My check for a total of \$ _____ is enclosed (*Payable to Tahoe Maritime Museum*)

Please charge a total of \$ _____ to my VISA Mastercard

Name on Card: _____

Card # _____ Exp _____ / _____

Signature _____



Photos: Roy Dryer III

Friends get together through the years: (from left) Blustery weather moves last year's lakeside deck party indoors; vintage autos greet Friends at the historic McConnell House; a beautiful setting for a sunset dinner in Marla Bay and (below), Dave Olson welcomes all to a lobster feed at The Logs.

Members and Readers:

We are thankful for all the membership, Friends, Sustaining Friends, Annual Fund and special tours and grant income that comprise our development efforts. The importance of your membership and Friends' gifts cannot be over emphasized. Those gifts make up more than one half of the donated income.

Friends program celebrates 10th anniversary

This year we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Friends Program, founded in 2001 by Paul and Susanne Walker and now led by Rich and Sue Stout. Over the years, support from this group has been essential to our well-being. Friends enjoy a special Friend's Dinner during the summer. Some of the sites have included Vikingsholm, the Schmitt home on the legendary Bourne estate in Marla Bay; the McConnell House built in 1869 on Blackwood Creek, now owned by Marshall and Nancy Kraus; Dave and Lynn Olson's historic 1930 log home on the North Shore, and the Stouts' home with impromptu inside dining on a blustery evening! We look forward to celebrating this event again this summer.

Many of the museum's offerings would not be possible without the support of our members and Friends. Operational support includes: staffing the museum, producing written material, making necessary repairs, moving the boats in and out and providing maintenance. We are also able to ensure the lecture program as well as other public programming, and of course our exhibits.

May 28th Launch Party offers special auction items!

Our Annual Launch on Saturday, May 28, will provide members another support opportunity with bidding on some very special auction items from tour and lunch aboard the 1930 136-ft.

Acania (formerly owned by Al Capone) to a Big Island getaway. The Launch and auction provides significant income for our museum's season ahead. Please plan on coming and having a great time!



The auction item will also be offered at this year's Launch Party.

Julie Williams

1946 ~ 2011

Former Museum board member and officer Julie Williams passed away on February 8, 2011. Born on July 11, 1946, in Utah, Julie later moved, making her home in California. Julie was on the Museum's board in the 1990s until 2001 and served as president and secretary. During her tenure as president, she led negotiations with California State Parks that resulted in an agreement allowing the Museum to build and occupy its first home at Sugar Pine Point State Park.

Julie was a passionate wooden boat enthusiast and was most proud of her skills as a boat captain. She owned several important boats including a Chris-Craft barrel-back *Ajax*, the one-of-a-kind raceboat *Comet*, and a Dart runabout *Afton*, named after her daughter. A frequent exhibitor at Tahoe Yacht Club Foundation's *Concours d'Elegance*, her boats were recognized with several first place awards. She can be seen driving *Comet* in Roy Dryer's poster for the 1999 show.

Julie was also successful in business, owning a home furnishings company in Palo Alto with her husband, Tom, for many years. She is survived by her husband, Tom, and daughter, Afton.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Tom and her family as we mourn her loss.

Tom Bredt



DEVELOPMENT NOTES

Patty Shanahan Williams

Many exciting things are in store for the Tahoe Maritime Museum and I am very much looking forward to a summer full of activity.

In the winter months, with the museum buried under exponential amounts of snow, we have been hard at work, gearing up for the season ahead. As the wind howled and blizzards came through, I would head to the post office and feel that our museum is alive and well, as your renewals continuously arrived, right on schedule. With gratitude, I would open the envelopes and see your generosity. Your kind notes, and anecdotes that came with many of the mailings would often make my day. Thank you.

We had some great off-site events this winter.

In January, members enjoyed a visit to the Auburn, California shop of Tony Brown and Sabina Pellissier, to view Tony's fine work on the restoration of *Miss Tahoe*. In March, 35 members met in Sausalito for a tour of the Spaulding Wooden Boat Center and then joined for lunch at Cavallo Point. (See page 3 and for more information about the center, visit www.spauldingcenter.org.)

Did you know that you can upgrade your membership at any time? If you are not yet enjoying the Ride Boat benefit and our special members events, you can upgrade now to take advantage of the

boat ride and the many other benefits this summer.

Do you work for a corporation that has a matching gift program? Often companies will match your charitable donations!

Have you moved recently or changed your email address? Please notify us so we can update your information. We want to be sure you don't miss any of our exciting announcements.



Sabina Pellissier

On January 22, award-winning boat restorer Tony Brown and Sabina Pellissier hosted museum members for a tour of their Auburn, Calif., workshop and update on *Miss Tahoe's* restoration.

This record year for snowfall should bring the lake up nicely for boating this summer. Here at the museum, we are scheduling exciting lectures and adding more member events and public programs. It is our goal to give back to you for all you have given to us. We welcome your suggestions, and hope you choose to engage in all that the museum has to offer in the months to come.

RENEWING AND NEW

FAMILY MEMBERS

Renewing and New Members from September 21, 2010 through March 31, 2011

\$500 to \$999

Michael Griesmer
Timothy and Judith Hachman
Dave and Annette Jorgensen
Steve Merrill
Gerry and Carol Parker
Karen Sloss

\$300 to \$499

Bruce and Gail Adair
Tom and Chris Banks
Ed and Kathleen Boissiere
Joe and Leslie Bronzini
Larry and Donna Gralla
Michael and Betsey Husted
Claburn "Ying" and Dougal Jones
Vic and Carolyn Riches
Duane and Theresa Rustad
Richard and Donna Wallrich

\$200 to \$299

Bud and Heidi Bensley
Warren and Darlene Bray
John Campodonico
Ray and Kathy Holstead
Richard and Lynn Kelson
Ellen Killebrew Graves
Don and Sylvia Leutz
Lani Luthard
Nancy Mathews
Sam and Susan Mendes
Covert and Beth Murphy
Bob and Carol Peters
Bert and Cheryl Sandman
John and Christine Sells
Wes and Janet Selvidge
Wayne and Carolyn Willey

\$100 to \$199

Philip and Tucker Adams
Phil Ames and Sherry Levi-Ames
David and Jenny Antonucci
Wes and Patti Ball
Ron Barraclough
Gordon Barrett
Steve and Kathryn Bonney
Tom and Laura Box
Arthur and Jean Carmichael
Rod and Barb Carpenter
Franc and Adrienne Casey
Lee and Sandy Chase
Will and Soni Clark
Dr. Dan and Sue Clark
Charles and Louise Crosby
Stefan and Mimi Cummings
Dick and Matilde DeLuna
Robert and Elizabeth Devlin
Bob and Barbara Dolton

MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 21, 2010 through MARCH 31, 2011

Renewing and New SUSTAINING FRIENDS \$2,500 and above

Tom and Polly Bredt
Doug and Pam Elmore
Virginia R. Furth
Richard and Susanne Stout

FRIENDS - \$1,000 to \$2,499

Jim and Virginia Balsdon
Tom and Dottie Batchelor
Dan Best II
Bill and Fritz Briner
Steve and Cheryl Caplan
John C. Couch
John and Cheryl Cox
Joe and Nancy Critchfield
Herbert and Sisi Damner
John and Marilyn Dougery
Jens and Debbie Egerland

Charles and Sandy Eldridge
Keith and Sarah Obexer Fields
Rich Fisher
Clyde R. "Buzz" Gibb
Joan Gibb
Dode and Betty Hall
Herb and Barbara Hall
John and Mary Ann Hopfenbeck
Tom and Martha Hughes
John and Jacque Jarve
Bryte and Brenda Johnson
Bill and Olga Keever
Marshall and Nancy Kraus
Richard Lashbrook and Patricia Watters
Steven A. Lind
Barry and Jenny Ludwig
Gordon and Jeanie MacAulay
Don and Brenda MacLean
Roger and Joan McGee

Kevin McGuire and Debbie Larsen
Jon and Sonja Perkins
Jeff and Linda Peterson
John P. Phillips, M.D. and
June Dunbar, M.D.
Kirk and Julie Pumphrey
Dan Putman and Kathy Williams
Jon Q. and Ann S. Reynolds
Donald A. Rhoades
Marion Robotti
Bill and Pamela Sagan
Ron and Lila Schmidt
Bill and Mary Jo Shepherd
Martin Smith
Ned and Carol Spieker
John and Cathy Stannard
James and Lisa Taylor
Bill Jr. and Nancy Thompson
Bill Watson-Thunderbird Lodge & Yacht

Malcolm and Mary Ann Dunlap
Chet and Ingrid Eccles
Paul and Elizabeth Eisenhardt
Dave Ferrari
George and Melodee French
Jack Green
Steve and Jan Hamill
Robert Hennessy
Steve and Jeanette Humphreys
Ed and Marcie Hughes
Ted and Iren Jenny
William B. Johnson
John D. Jorgensen
Greg and Micki Joseph
Robert and Betty Joss
Jack and Jeraldine Kahler
David Kastanis
Nick and Teresa Kromydas
Jimmy and Anne Lane
Reg and Laurie Lormon
Alan and Lisa Matthews
Roland and Bonnie Medel
Art and Karen Mennick
Buff and Cindy Miller
Steven Moore and
Kathleen Justice-Moore
Larry and Kathy Nelson
Richard and Shirley Oliver Connors
Thomas and Cynthia Pearson
Chuck and Maddell Pheil
Garth and Kathleen Pickett
Bruce and Sheri Pohle
Trent and Karen Pridemore
Dorothy Prowell and Derrick Scott
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Reuel Sutton
Hank and Joan Upton
Brian Van Camp
William and Stephanie Whisnant
David and Mary Lou Widdifield
Bill and Diane Zuendt

\$40 to \$99

James and Ginger Andrasick
Bernie and Carol Atkinson
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Russ Ballati
Ed Beauchamp
Bill and Nancy Bittner
Lee and Nellie Blakemore
John R. Bradley
Doug and Carolyn Brown
Pat Butler and William Means
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Jim and Tracy Caviola
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R.C. Dahl
Marji Dunn
Nancy Orrell Eaton

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Max Fairon
Allan and Yjordis Frostrom
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Ken Gralla
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Jay and Louise Murphy
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Mimi Otto
The Carol Paden Family
Paul M. Palk
William and Sheryl Pangman
Iris Pera
Jeff and Tiffany Pogue
Clay Prescott
Allan Ramsey and Jane Murdock
Gerard and Joyce Raney
Harry and Dee Richardson
Brian and Michelle Robinson
Tim and Laura Robinson
Keith Rogers
Scott Sheldon
Ken and Bette Shutt
Randall Smith
Thomas Smith and
Rebecca Niven
Walter Smyth
Richard and Hazel Stone
Edie Swift
Dave and Shauna Triano
Lewis and Vicki Van Blois
Carol Van Etten
Don Veihmeyer
Warren and Karen Wagner
Jeff and Karen Williams
Terry and Diana Witzel
Milt and Eirene Wong

What is going on at the museum?



In October the first floor of the museum was completely rearranged with the pier structure rotated 180 degrees to make way for a new winter exhibit.

While the ground might be covered with snow, the staff, board, and volunteers of the museum have been thinking about nothing but our summer plans and getting ready for a wonderful summer.

A Gar Wood Summer

There is much going on, but some highlights include our upcoming exhibit that

will focus both on the story of Gar Wood boats and the local institution of Obexer's Boat Company, this year celebrating its 100th anniversary. As the research continues, some truly unique and amazing stories about both Jake Obexer and Garfield Wood and the boats he made have come to light. The museum's exhibit committee is truly looking forward to sharing those in the exhibit.



(Above) *Redskin*, the museum's rare 1915 Canadian race boat, is readied for her exit to make room for our second *Redskin* (below, right), an award-winning 1956 racing hydroplane. Also joining the new display was *Vent d'ete* (Summer Wind, far left), the museum's 1915 sailboat with lapstrake wooden hull.

Staff Photos



Miss Tessa, the museum's 1930 Dodge runabout, joined *Whiskey*, a 1935 20-ft. Gar Wood Utility, the oldest know to exist.

The museum's Gar Wood runabout *Miss Tahoe* has been at Western Runabouts receiving new varnish as she is getting ready to be placed on exhibit soon. *White Smoke*, the Sea Lyon from the Pope Estate, will be serving as the museum's ride boat as *Miss Tahoe* serves her role as a key artifact in the exhibit. *Miss Tahoe* will also be making an appearance at the Lake Tahoe *Concours d' Elegance* where the marquee class this year is "Gar Wood - the gentleman's runabout." This certainly will be the summer of Gar Woods in Lake Tahoe.



While we are planning for this summer, we are also looking towards the future. The museum is in many ways a hidden treasure that certainly needs to be shared with more visitors and potential members. As the staff and board look at the best ways of achieving this, moving towards more programming and therefore reaching to all the various communities around the lake, we want to give them reason to buy into the museum, and bring them into our museum family.

Jesse Siess Hadley



As I have done more and more research on Garfield Wood, in the midst of all the wild stories, legends, and exploits attributed to the man, I can say for certain one thing that is true: he lived life to the fullest. It would be hard to argue that his boats are not a physical manifestation of that.

This article gives a bit of background on the man who is behind Gar Wood Industries, Inc. which built "America's Smartest Boats." Knowing the man will hopefully give you a greater insight into understanding the way in which he built the boats that will be on display here at the museum this summer.

Jesse Siess Hadley

Gar Wood

More than a Boat Maker

Garfield Arthur Wood (b. December 1880 - d. June 1971) was more than a boat maker; he was an inventor, a family man, a thrill seeker, and a millionaire. He was the first man to go more than 100 mph on the water, at one point held more patents than any other American, and when he passed, he had successfully invented an electric car. These are just a few of his many accomplishments.

The eldest of 13, Garfield Arthur Wood was named after two presidents and started working at a very young age. He was born in Iowa to a family that did not have much. All the children were expected to help out. His father was a ferry boat worker on Minnesota's Lake Osakis and many legends surround how this affected his eldest son. According to some Gar Wood tales, the fact that his father lost a race because he ran out of gas led to the beginning of Gar's almost insatiable desire to race and win. If nothing else, it can be verified that his work ethic started young and also inspired his inventor's streak.

Gar Wood never went to college and never studied engineering formally, however it was clear that he had a firm understanding of engineering principles. It was not until he

(continued next page)

GAR WOOD: More than a boat maker
(continued)

was 30 and living with his wife, Murlen, in St. Paul, Minnesota, that Wood came up with the invention that would change his life and the course of American garbage disposal.

One day Wood was watching a delivery driver unload a ton of coal from his trunk. As Wood watched the man shovel the coal, he decided there had to be a better way. He went home and drew his idea for a hoist. He took it to an engineering professor at Northwestern University who said it would simply not work, that the design would not give enough pressure to raise the weight of coal.

Wood did not believe the professor. He went home, conferred with his wife and together they decided to use their \$200 life savings to take out a patent and create the hoist. Not only did it work, it exceeded the weight-lifting capacity he had expected. This same hoist would eventually be used in dump trucks around the world and what would make Wood and his wife millionaires.

So where do boats come in?

So where do boats come in? Wood did not make his fortune off his boats. They were his love and his hobby. He was quoted as saying "I had worked darn hard for years trying to make money and be useful to the world, so I decided to play with boats."

In 1916 he bought his racing boat, *Miss Detroit*. When he went to visit her at the Chris Smith & Sons Boat Company in Algonac, Wisconsin, he decided to buy a large share of the company as well. Chris Smith and Gar Wood were an excellent team, with Smith's knowledge of wood-working and Wood's engineering ability. Together they would eventually start the *Miss America* dynasty of boats. Smith and Wood worked together for about five years before Smith left to focus on pleasure boats while Wood was captivated with racing. Wood would go on to win the Gold Cup and the international Harmsworth Trophy nine times.



With 18 men in the cargo bed, this truck demonstrates the lifting power of Wood's patented hydraulic hoist which would eventually be used in dump trucks around the world, making Gar Wood and his wife millionaires.

Racing was not all that mattered to Wood. He was a family man and from written records, it is clear that his wife, Murlen Fellows, was a silent but influential partner in his work. In an interview with her after she watched him race *Miss America X* past their home on the river in Detroit, she said "He believed in the adage that an easterner who marries a California girl will have good luck all his life. It worked."

Murlen is also credited with giving him the two teddy bears that raced with him until he retired from racing in 1933. Wood attributed his luck with safety to the bears. When his boat *Miss America VI* crashed, the bears were rescued and fitted with their own lifejackets made of cork by Murlen. They had one son, Gar Wood Jr., who watched most of his father's races and was his biggest fan.

The Gar Wood residence in Detroit at the Grayhaven Estates was a local landmark, sitting directly on the river. Gar Wood, of course, had a lavish boat house; however it was more often his airplane that was housed in it. Wood loved to fly from his different office headquarters and homes.

The mansion has marble statuary, an in-ground pool in the basement, and a huge ballroom. It was a happy place until 1948 when Murlen passed. With the loss of his wife, Gar Wood moved permanently to his Florida home on Fisher Island. The Detroit home is no longer there.

Gar Wood stopped manufacturing boats in 1947. Many attribute it to the post-war market for boats; however, his wife was ailing terribly and it cannot be far from imaginable that his attention was taken



Wood's "good luck" bears, with cork lifejackets made by his wife Murlen, were always aboard with him until he retired from racing in 1933.

by caring for her. His other industries — the hoists, school busses, trucks — were run in factories overseen by many crews, but he always personally oversaw the boat manufacturing. It was his own personal keen eye for detail that he felt made his “America’s Smartest Boats.”

“...he was Tom Swift, Jules Verne, Frank Merriwell with a little bit of Horatio Alger thrown in.”

Detroit News Obituary, 1971

Wood passed away in 1971 in Florida, days before Detroit was having a celebration of the anniversary of his first win of the Harmsworth Trophy. In the *Detroit News* obituary, George Van wrote "If he'd announced at that time that he was going to take off for the moon, his faithful following would have believed him implicitly. To the public, he was Tom Swift, Jules Verne, Frank Merriwell with a little bit of Horatio Alger thrown in." Detroit had lost a favorite son. It was also noted that he had his teddy bears with him at the time of his passing.

While this is just a very brief look at Wood’s amazing life, there is much more to be found in Tahoe Maritime Museum’s upcoming exhibit where we delve deeper into his racing history, his unique contributions to boating, and his legacy at Lake Tahoe. To truly understand Wood, one must see his boats in person. The quality, care, eye for detail, and speed were all aspects of Wood’s personal touch. He lives on through his boats.

Selected Sources: *Gar Wood Boats: Classics of a Golden Era*, by Anthony S. Mollica Jr.; “Gar Wood: An Old Sea Dog up to New Tricks,” by John Fix in *Popular Mechanics*, July 1967; *Gar Wood: The Beginning of a Career*, by Fred Farley.

2011 Lecture Series Events

Refreshments: 5 p.m.
Lecture: 5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Members: \$5,
Non-Members: \$8



June 9, Thursday

State of the Lake: UC Davis Research and Education Programs at Lake Tahoe

Heather Segale, education and outreach director for the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, will share the latest information about the state of Lake Tahoe. Hear about the most recent lake research on clarity, invasive species and climate change. UC Davis also operates two small science education centers in the Tahoe Basin. Take a virtual tour of those facilities and hear about all the programs available to residents of our region.

June 23, Thursday

George Whittell, Jr. and the Thunderbird Lodge and Yacht

Bill Watson, Thunderbird Lodge manager and curator, presents the fascinating story of George Whittell, Jr. and his famous lakefront estate and yacht.

July 21, Thursday

Behind the Exhibit: Gar Wood’s Tahoe Legacy

Museum staff share the research and stories behind the newly-installed Gar Wood exhibit. Find out more about the man behind the boats; about Lake Tahoe Gar Wood dealer, Jake Obexer; and what life at the lake was like at the height of the Depression. Also learn about upcoming exhibits and programs the museum has lined up.

August 25, Thursday

Tribes, Timber & Tourists: A Journey into Lake Tahoe History by Dave Antonucci

Tahoe has 165 years of recorded history that has seen a number of eras come and pass. Beginning with the Washoe Tribe, we learn about their idyllic life at Tahoe. We then move through time by visiting eras that cover exploration, exploitation of forests and water, early 20th Century tourism, ornate estates for the wealthy, land development for second homes, the rise of casino style gaming and the struggle to preserve the Lake.

September 8, Thursday

Lake Tahoe History in Photographs

Peter Goin, University of Nevada Regent and Foundation Professor of Art, presents the evolution of Tahoe through a series of astounding images from the past and present. Author of several books on Lake Tahoe, Peter shares the unique history of the lake through images from past and present.

Many thanks to The Weekly for their generous donation of advertising support for our lecture series.

TAHOE MARITIME MUSEUM

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2011 MUSEUM CALENDAR

June 4, Saturday - Truckee Annex Open House

June 9, Thursday - Lecture Series, 5:30 p.m

June 23, Thursday - Lecture Series, 5:30 p.m.

July 2, Saturday - Truckee Annex Open House

July 21, Thursday - Lecture Series, 5:30 p.m.

July 29 - 30, Friday and Saturday

ACBS South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic at Tahoe Keys Marina, South Lake Tahoe, Calif. The museum's Sea Lyon boat, *White Smoke*, will be featured at the show.

August 6-7, Saturday and Sunday

Tahoe Maritime Museum will partner with other Placer County museums to be part of the 2011 Heritage Trail. To learn more, visit www.theheritagetrail.blogspot.com

August 12 -13, Friday and Saturday

Tahoe Yacht Club Foundation's Concours d'Elegance at Sierra Boat Company, Carnelian Bay, Calif. The marquee class this year is "Gar Wood - the Gentleman's Runabout" fitting wonderfully into our new Museum exhibit. *Miss Tahoe* will be featured at the show.

August 15, Monday

Gathering of Gar Woods at Obexer's Marina, Homewood Calif.

August 25, Thursday - Lecture Series, 5:30 p.m

August 27, Saturday - Truckee Annex Open House

September 1, Thursday - Lecture Series, 5:30 p.m

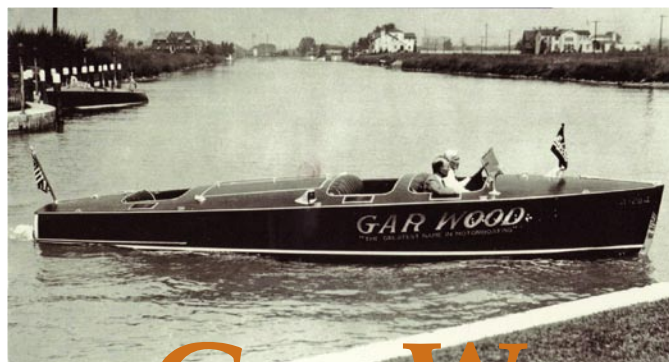
September 8, Thursday - Lecture Series, 5:30 p.m

September 10, Saturday - Truckee Annex Open House

September 24, Saturday - Truckee Annex Open House

October 8, Saturday - Truckee Annex Open House

For the most up-to-date schedule of events, visit www.TahoeMaritime.org or call the Museum at (530) 525-9253, ext. 0.



INSIDE

Garfield A. Wood at the wheel of a 1930 28-ft. model 28-55, the first Liberty V-12 powered 28-footer produced by the company.

Gar Wood More than a Boat Maker

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The **Tahoe Maritime Museum's** mission is to stimulate an interest in and an understanding of Lake Tahoe's rich maritime history through the highest standards of historic preservation, innovative interpretation and public education,