

NORTHWEST
SCHOOL *of* WOODEN
BOAT BUILDING

HULL RAISER

Make a Living, Craft a Life.

FALL 2017



Iron Forge Hemp™ Canvas **WORKWEAR**

Built right means build to last—always has, always will. To stand up to the toughest tasks, we've developed Iron Forge Hemp canvas, an innovative, heavy-duty blend of industrial hemp, recycled polyester and organic cotton. It's 25 percent more abrasion resistant than conventional cotton duck canvas, and the mix of fibers means it needs no break-in and is ready to work on day one.

Claire Ethier planes the edges of new wheelhouse siding at Perpetual Boatworks in Port Townsend, Washington. GARRETT GROVE © 2017 Patagonia, Inc.

Available this August exclusively at Patagonia stores and [patagonia.com/workwear](https://www.patagonia.com/workwear).

Follow [@patagoniaballard](https://twitter.com/patagoniaballard) for updates on our new Workwear store opening soon in Seattle.

patagonia®

NORTHWEST SCHOOL of WOODEN BOATBUILDING

WELCOME TO *HULL RAISER*, a magazine for employers, Boat School alums, and friends of traditional wooden boatbuilding.

Boat School students come from all over the world to learn wooden boatbuilding in an apprentice-style model that creates a smooth on-ramp to employment in boatyards and boat shops. Some students, like Claire Ethier, Class of 2016 and Felicity Ann Intern, stay in Port Townsend to contribute to the vitality of the local maritime economy. Other students return home with a new skill set. David Klco gave up a career in software engineering to learn wooden boatbuilding. He returned home to Michigan to work at Van Dam Custom Boats, one of the top shops in the country. After working on a Dark Harbor in the Large Craft program, Christian Zürcher and Melanie Boillat returned to Switzerland with memories of a great adventure and skills to launch new careers.

That's what it means to "Make a Living, Craft a Life."

When Ann Davison sailed solo across the Atlantic on a 23-foot wooden sloop called Felicity Ann in 1952-53, she was crafting a life on her own terms. Boat School students who worked on the historic renovation of Felicity Ann have been inspired by Ann Davison's story to venture into unknown waters of their own.

Enjoy these stories and share yours with Chief Instructor Emeritus Jeff Hammond, who is helping us catch up with every Boat School alum dating back to the School's founding in 1981. We look forward to hearing from you!

Betsy Davis

Betsy Davis, Executive Director
betsy@nswsb.edu



The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding is a private not-for-profit 501(c)3 educational institution. Our mission is to teach and preserve traditional and contemporary wooden boatbuilding skills while developing the individual as a craftsman.

www.nswsb.edu

This issue of Hull Raiser was produced by Executive Director Betsy Davis, Managing Editor Christa Ayer, Writer Molly Tyson, and Communications & Development Coordinator Christina Cogan. Hull Raiser is published by Phillips Publishing Group. www.phillipspublishing.com.

CONTENTS

4

Coming About

David Klco, Class of 2016, left high-tech to learn traditional wooden boatbuilding. Today he's building high-end wooden boats at Van Dam Custom Boats in Michigan.



6

Shop Talk

A derelict Poulsbo is restored to mint condition in the Traditional Small Craft shop as a 26-foot Top Hat takes shape in the Contemporary class.

7

All Systems Go

See how the Boat School is addressing critical demand for marine systems experience with practical, hands-on two-and four-day Intensives.



8

Felicity Ann

The 23-foot sloop that carried Ann Davison into maritime history is back on the water. Meet some of the people who made it happen.

12

Commissions with Character

Commissioned boats carry more than the hours and materials that go into them. Meet the teams behind four recent builds.

14

Alumni Spotlight

Boat School alums are raising hulls from Sequim to the South Bronx. Read their stories, and share yours with jeff@nswsb.edu.

On the cover: Noah Todras and Misha Bogart, both Class of 2017, install a laminated sapele veneer outerstem to a 17-foot Fulmar sailing dinghy in the Contemporary wooden boatbuilding class. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

Stay Connected

Keep in touch to find out about news, upcoming events, and boats under construction at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding.

Website
nswsb.edu

E-Newsletters
nswsb.edu/contact/enews

Boats for sale
nswsb.edu/allboatsforsale

Facebook
facebook.com/NWBoatSchool or search for "nswsb"

42 N. Water Street, Port Hadlock, WA 98339 • info@nswsb.edu • (360)385-4948

Blog
nswsb.edu/category/all-posts

Flickr
flickr.com/photos/nswsb/collections

Instagram
instagram.com/nswsb or search for "nswsb"

Youtube
www.youtube.com/user/NWBOATSCHOOL



COMING ABOUT From Software Engineering to Boatbuilding

DAVID KLCO (PRONOUNCED “KELSO”) was a senior in high school when he was at a garage sale and picked up an old book that would change the course of his life. It was the 1941 classic *Boatbuilding* by Howard Chapelle. He brought the book home and spent hours studying the detailed plans for building wooden boats of every variety, from flat-bottom rowboats to ocean cruisers.

David grew up around boats on the Great Lakes of Michigan, but his experience was with fiberglass and aluminum boats. “Wooden boats seemed like something out of the past,” he recalls, “like pirates.”

Discovering Chapelle’s book, even all those years ago, was a career-changer. David had already been accepted to the engineering program at Michigan Tech, and he followed through with his plan to earn a degree — he even worked for two years as a software engineer at Garmin, a leading provider of navigation products for cars, planes, and boats. But David wasn’t interested in making a career of it. He was saving for boatbuilding school. In 2015, he was ready. He quit his job at Garmin and enrolled in the Traditional Large Craft program at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding.

“I came to the Boat School with experience as a hobbyist woodworker,” he says. “I wasn’t an expert, by any means, but I was familiar and comfortable with a lot of the tools. But boatbuilding is considered by many to be the pinnacle of

woodworking because nothing is square. Nothing is clear cut. With other types of woodworking, there’s the sense that, if you follow the plan to a T, it’s going to come out. If your angles are right, you’re good. Boatbuilding is a little more mysterious, and that’s a positive to me. If you become proficient at boatbuilding, you can take those skills and apply them to furniture-making or home-building and do some really cool stuff.”

Following graduation from Boat School in September 2016, David was chosen to serve as the School’s 2016-2017 Prothero Intern, a paid apprentice-style experience that allowed him to work alongside Instructor Ben Kahn on *Sea Beast*, a 36-foot Chamberlin-designed motorsailer commission.

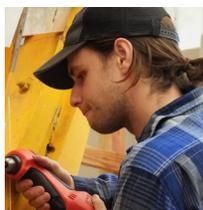
David was the instructors’ unanimous choice for Prothero Intern. “He really stood out,” says Chief Instructor Sean

Koomen. “By the end of the year, he was already serving in an apprentice-style role, almost a co-instructor. He didn’t seem like a student anymore. He has great skills, incredible focus and sense of direction, and he’s super humble. He just has an incredible natural ability for boatbuilding.”

While working as an intern at the Boat School, David applied for a position at Van Dam Custom Boats, a maker of meticulously crafted wooden boats, based in his home state of Michigan.

With a naval architect and a design engineer on

“Boatbuilding is considered by many to be the pinnacle of woodworking because nothing is square. Nothing is clear cut.”



◀ *David Klco cuts a long piece of sapele for the Folkboat build. Photo courtesy of Cheryl Barth Photography.*

Inset: Student David Klco, Class of 2016.

staff, Van Dam has the ability to create world-class custom boats or yachts, regardless of size or complexity. State-of-the-art, computer-aided design programs are incorporated throughout the planning and building process, and metal fabrication and the design and implementation of mechanical systems are accomplished on site. It was a good

fit for the former software engineer.

As a new hire at Van Dam Custom Boats, David is learning the proprietary systems they use in their construction process, and honing his boatbuilding skills in an environment where joinery and structure are never hidden from view, and the wood is expertly fit and finished. That technical and aesthetic challenge is part of the appeal.

“Becoming an expert boatbuilder is a lifetime thing,” David says. “I love that you can always learn to do something better.” ■

Why NWSWB?

“Boat School helped me gain confidence in myself as a craftsman. When I approach projects now, that confidence lets me execute without getting stuck in the ‘what-if’ phase.”

— David Klco, Class of 2016

David arrived at Boat School with a strong foundation in woodworking, but had to learn the techniques and complex problem-solving associated with wooden boatbuilding. The most valuable aspects of Boat School, he says, are the technical skills he learned and hands-on time in a supportive environment.

Technical Skills: “I learned technical skills like lofting, patterning, steam bending, and laminating. These let me tackle any project with a variety of problem-solving tools.”

Job Readiness: “I worked with Instructor Jody Boyle in the Traditional Large Craft and Repair and Restoration programs, and

then worked on Sea Beast with Instructor Ben Kahn during my internship. I learned a lot from them both — not only in terms of technical skills, but also about how to be a positive and productive presence in the shop.”

Hands-on Experience: “I had lots of chances to try things out, mess up, and try again in a supportive environment.”

Range of Projects: A highlight of David’s time at Boat School was working on the Folkboat, a design he’d always admired for its graceful lines and seaworthiness. “When I realized the Traditional Large Craft class was building one,” he says, “I stuck to that project like glue. It’s a relatively small boat that’s done a bunch of circumnavigations. The self-reliance of that really appeals to me.”



Instructor Ben Kahn and David Klco trim and install plugs on the guard of Sea Beast. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

Prothero Interns Make Their Way in the Boatbuilding World

For the second year in a row, NWSWB’s Prothero Intern has received a job offer from a leading boat shop in his home state. In 2016, it was Logan Sampson, who accepted a job with John’s Bay Boat Company in South Bristol, Maine. (If you want to read Logan’s story, you can check out last year’s issue of Hull Raiser in the About Us section of nwswb.edu.) This year’s Prothero Intern was David Klco, who accepted a job with Van Dam Custom Boats, a builder of high-end wooden boats, based in Boyne City, Michigan. This is the best possible validation of the six-month internship, initiated in 2015, which is named for Boat School founder Bob Prothero.

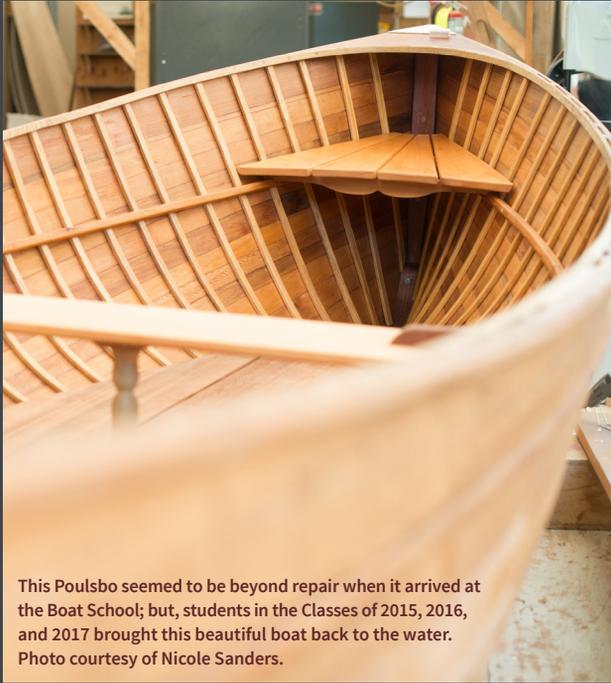
The Prothero Internship is a six-month paid position that allows one Boat School graduate per year to spend additional time at the School honing their skills in an environment that offers increasingly more challenging work, at a faster pace, and with more independence than the more closely supervised work they did while a student. Over the course of six months, Prothero Interns gain a big-picture perspective of a particular build, manage aspects of the project, and work to a more demanding schedule. It’s ideal preparation for students who want to jump from Boat School into challenging work at boatyards and boat shops.

“Our first two Prothero Interns really proved their skills on Sea Beast,” says Chief Instructor Sean Koomen. “Because the interns were seasoned from their year at the Boat School, they could deal with all the complexity of finishing off a boat. We’ve always said that boatbuilding makes good problem solvers, and our Prothero Interns demonstrated that every day in the shop, working efficiently and independently on complex aspects of boatbuilding.”

We look forward to finding out who will be next year’s Prothero Intern, and watching them meet the challenges of this unique learning opportunity.

Shop Talk

NWSWB Students Take on New Challenges



This Poulsbo seemed to be beyond repair when it arrived at the Boat School; but, students in the Classes of 2015, 2016, and 2017 brought this beautiful boat back to the water. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

Old Poulsbo Beauty Gets a Boat School Make-Over

Because the Poulsbo is a traditional Northwest wooden boat design, its restoration was a historically interesting project for the Boat School. This particular boat, donated to the School when it was seemingly beyond repair, was built by the designer himself, Ronald Young, most likely in the 1940s.

“Normally we would take a derelict boat like this, brace it up, take the lines off it, and build a new one,” says Traditional Small Craft Instructor Leigh O’Connor. “But, I thought it would be better for my Repair and Restoration class if we took it apart piece by piece and slowly and carefully replaced each part of the boat. It was all about how do we stage it, how do we set it, how do we pull the shape back to it, and then how do we disassemble it without the whole thing falling apart.”

The 2015 Repair and Restoration class replaced the entire centerline, with a new purple heart keel, purple heart inner stem, and sapele transom. (The original transom was mahogany, Leigh explains, but sometimes you have to balance authenticity with cost.) The Repair and Restoration class of 2016 replaced the oak frames and red cedar planks. At that point, it was basically a new boat, so it was finished by the Traditional Small Craft class in 2017, who installed the breasthook, knees, thwarts, stern sheets, sole, and inwale/outwale, and made a set of 10-foot oars.

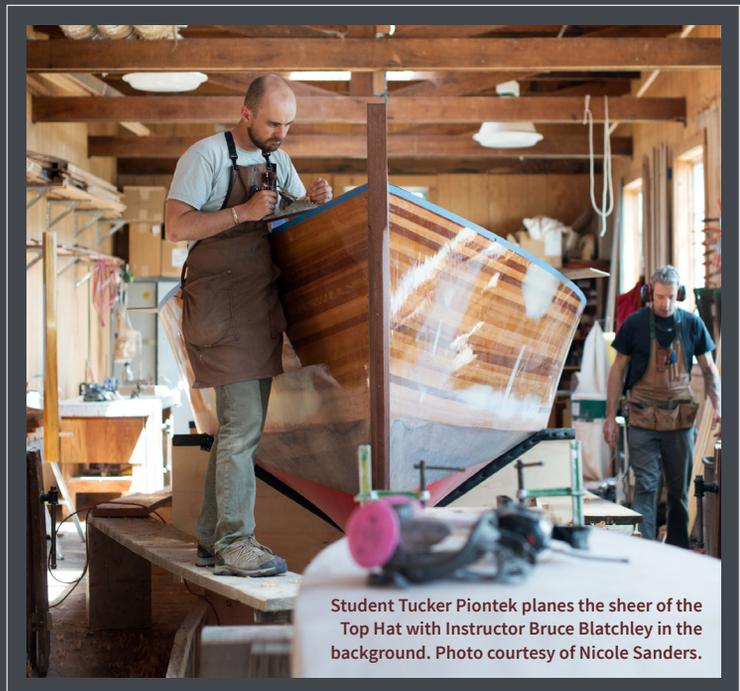
“I’ve been attracted to these boats since I moved out to the Pacific Northwest,” says Leigh, admiring the almost-finished product. “I saw one and thought, ‘that’s what makes people fall in love with wooden boats.’ It doesn’t have a lot of fancy parts and pieces; it’s just a beautiful open working boat. It’s the craftsmanship that makes it beautiful.”

2017 Contemporary Class Tackles the Top Hat Design

Instructor Bruce Blatchley’s Contemporary class made huge strides this year on a 26-foot motor launch, inspired by the classic vee-bottom boats designed by William Hand in the early 1900s. This rendition, called a Top Hat, was designed by Doug Hylan of Brooklin, Maine.

It’s an ideal Boat School project because it aligns with the School’s mission of preserving a classic wooden boat design, and gives the Contemporary boatbuilding students experience in all phases of construction. “We started off on the loft floor, defining the different views in full scale to get the shape of each hull component,” Bruce explains. “We got into lamination, strip-plank construction, plywood construction, and vacuum-bagging the transom to get the shape and provide a layer of live wood on the outside.”

The Top Hat was one of two boats in the Contemporary shop being built on commission for Uly Chen, who stops by once a month to see his boats take shape. “He’s a great guy,” says Bruce. “Uly is easy to work with — and he must like what we’re doing, because these will be the second and third boats we’ve built for him.” Ray Speck’s 2004 and 2005 classes built Uly Chen’s first Boat School commission the Kag, a Swedish-style fishing boat.



Student Tucker Piontek planes the sheer of the Top Hat with Instructor Bruce Blatchley in the background. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

ALL SYSTEMS GO

Chief Instructor Sean Koomen Announces Hands-On Marine Systems Training to Address a Critical and Growing Need

FOR MORE THAN 36 YEARS, the Boat School has focused on teaching and preserving traditional wooden boatbuilding techniques, and on preparing students for work in today's boatyards and boat shops. That's why we offer both traditional and contemporary wooden boatbuilding programs — and why we're excited to announce a new program focusing on hands-on marine systems training, a critical and growing need in the maritime trades.

The program was developed with strong input from our Program Advisory Committee, made up of employers and business owners from a cross-section of maritime trades. Our first phase has been to develop a series of two- and four-day Intensives on marine diesel engines, marine electrical, marine corrosion, and marine hydraulics. During the second phase, the School plans to develop a fully accredited, six-month Marine Systems program.

To help kick off phase-one, the Washington Department of Commerce awarded the School \$100,000 to develop multi-day, hands-on Intensives targeted to people already working in boatyards. These Marine Systems Intensives will focus on the most common maintenance tasks and problem-solving skills required in today's maritime businesses. We developed these workshops with detailed input from maritime business employers who have a vested interest in the availability of practical, efficient, hands-on training that



As part of the Diesel Engine Intensive, Instructor Walt Trisdale looks on as Drew Mickle practices removing and replacing the engine's alternator and starter. Photo Courtesy of Rick Meyers.

directly addresses their needs. Employees from these same businesses participated in the "pilot version" of the courses, providing immediate and detailed feedback, which we're using to fine-tune the workshops to meet their on-the-job requirements.

Just as we stress workmanship, quality, integrity and hands-on learning in our wooden boat curriculum, we plan to bring the same priorities to our marine systems programs. To ensure that, I am happy to announce that Kevin Ritz is joining the faculty at the Boat School. Kevin ran his own marine systems business in Portland, Oregon, for many years and has taught marine systems classes around the country for the American Boat and Yacht Council

(ABYC) for more than a decade. At the Boat School, he will design and teach a range of Marine Systems Intensives for people already working in the marine trades. He will also work with me on developing a new six-month Systems program. I'm also excited that local legend Walt Trisdale has agreed to teach diesel and hydraulics classes, and is designing unique mockups for hands-on practice.

To house the Boat School's new Marine Systems programs, we are building a 2,000-square-foot mezzanine classroom/workshop in the Hammond Shop, providing a dedicated teaching space for the Systems program. The permit is in hand with construction scheduled for completion Fall 2017. The \$50,000 leadership gift for the project came as a bequest of former board member John Bodger. The gift was matched with \$25,000 support from the First Federal Community Foundation, with another \$25,000 gift from community members Jeanne and Duke Shold. Thanks to all who have supported this effort.

In other news: Check out the July/August 2017 issue of *WoodenBoat Magazine* for an article on lofting that I co-authored with Chief Instructor Emeritus Jeff Hammond. This is the second in a three-part series on the details of transom lofting and construction. ■



As part of the Marine Electrical Systems Intensive, Instructor Kevin Ritz shows the effect of using the wrong gauge wire. Photo Courtesy of Rick Meyers.

"I feel a strong affinity for the Boat School because of its long tradition of teaching workmanship and taking the time to do things right," says Boat School Systems Instructor Kevin Ritz. "I also appreciate the School's emphasis on hands-on learning because it is very powerful to couple theoretical education immediately with hands-on practice. We are designing the new Marine Systems programs at the Boat School with an eye on the craftsmanship, quality and integrity that have fueled the school's educational approach for more than three decades."



FELICITY ANN

One Small Ship, One Giant Community

THIS YEAR, THE NORTHWEST SCHOOL OF WOODEN BOATBUILDING completed the restoration of *Felicity Ann*, the 23-foot wooden sloop that carried Ann Davison into maritime history in 1953 as the first woman to sail single-handedly across the Atlantic.

Hundreds of students took part in the restoration, which captured the imagination of a community of sailors, boatbuilders, and maritime historians who followed each milestone as *Felicity Ann* was taken apart, re-framed, re-planked, and finally trimmed out and ready to sail again.

Jo Abeli, Class of 2015, decided to attend NWSWB after reading an article about the *Felicity Ann* restoration, but didn't realize she would have a hand in it.

"I was impressed that the School was able to bring in such an interesting project, but I had no concept of the time it takes to do such an intensive restoration. I assumed *Felicity Ann* would be long gone before I became a student. I was ecstatic to find out, upon beginning my

boatbuilding education, that not only was *Felicity Ann* still there, but I would be able to participate in the restoration."

As a former history major, Jo recalls how amazing it was to spend an evening reading Davison's book and researching the history of *Felicity Ann*, then walk up the hill the next morning and see the boat itself. The condition of the boat made for

some challenging days for the novice boatbuilders. "One day we discovered that the backbone had twisted over time, and there was no way to get our deck beams lined up perfectly," Jo recalls. "I remember our instructor showing up the next day with a chainsaw and a can of gasoline and thinking for one wild moment that he'd just had it with this crooked little boat. Thankfully, those supplies were for another project!"

"It was so cool to work on a boat with history. So many people have put their own ideas and energy into her. She is very community rooted."

— *Felicity Ann Intern Claire Ethier, Class of 2016*



Uncovering History

Retired Coast Guardsman Frank Brown, Class of 2016, became so interested in *Felicity Ann* that he made her the focus of a required research project at the Boat School. "I've always been interested in

◀ With new frames, planks, stem, keel bolts, deck, house, combings, and rudder, *Felicity Ann* is almost ready for handoff to the Community Boat Project where the rigging, sails, and spars will be completed as part of their maritime skills training. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

Inset: Student Claire Ethier, Class of 2016.

history,” he says, “so when I got the chance to work on *Felicity Ann*, I wanted to know her story.”

In addition to doing library research, Frank made a cold call to Mashford Brothers, the boat yard in Cornwall, UK, where *Felicity Ann* was built and modified for her transatlantic voyage. “They put me in touch with a guy who worked on *Felicity Ann*,” says Frank. “He told me about various things that weren’t shown on the original plan.” As Frank documented in his research paper, those changes included, but were not limited to: installing a pulpit, lifelines, cockpit dodger, and dog house aft to fend off boarding seas; structurally reinforcing the coach roof to support the deck-stepped mast (installed by her first owner); shortening the mast by 6 feet; shortening the boom by 8 inches; and raising the cockpit coamings.

Frank also talked to John Brooks, who owned *Felicity Ann* in the early ‘60s after she was sold by Ann and shipped to California. According to Brooks, the boat was nearly as Ann had left her, but in disrepair when he took ownership. He had her “wooded,” micro-ballooned the hull, replaced the rudder, and repowered her with the same make and model of British diesel engine. When Brooks heard about the Boat School’s renovation of *Felicity Ann*, he shipped the boat’s original rudder to the School as a historical artifact.

Almost everyone involved in the *Felicity Ann* restoration checked out the well-worn copy of Ann Davison’s book *My Ship Is So Small* in the Boat School library. “When we had questions about different parts of the boat, we could reference back to the old black and white photos in Ann Davison’s book,” says Instructor Jody Boyle. “That was pretty helpful. We have the original plans from Mashford Brothers, but the boat was a little different from the way it was designed in 1939. Ann changed a number of details for her trip. That’s pretty typical. Boats get changed around by different owners over time, just like houses.”

Top: *Felicity Ann* was in delicate condition when she was donated to the Boat School, with the original wooden hull sheathed in fiberglass. Photo courtesy of John Hutchins.

Middle: Jo Abeli and Tatyana Faleolo-Nolan, Class of 2015, replace planks on *Felicity Ann*.

Bottom: *Felicity Ann* is prepped for caulking. During this phase, cotton caulking is installed between the planking seams to stiffen the hull and help keep it water tight. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.





Claire Ethier, Class of 2016, is fairing the hull during the final stages of restoration. “The *Felicity Ann* internship made all the difference for me, because I gained so much more confidence and trust that even if I didn’t know the answer, I could figure it out.”

One of the last to work on the restoration was Claire Ethier, Class of 2016, who was chosen to be the *Felicity Ann* Intern, a paid apprentice-style position that allowed her to spend six months after Boat School graduation finishing the cabin and some of the trim work on the historic boat. The *Felicity Ann* internship led to Claire’s current job as boatbuilder at Perpetual Boatworks in Port Townsend.

“It was so cool to work on a boat with history,” says Claire. “*Felicity Ann* has a lot of character because so many people worked on her over so many years. So many people have put their own ideas and energy into her. She is very community rooted. People care about what happens to this boat. They come to check on her. People are so excited to see her come back to life.”

New Mission

The boat’s restoration at the Boat School was launched thanks to early grassroots fundraising by Penelope Partridge and the efforts of a large team of women and girls. Her final restoration was supported by a generous grant from the Lorber Family Foundation, with a portion matched by the community. The historic boat will join the fleet of the Community Boat Project, an inclusive, hands-on educational non-profit that provides inter-generational maritime education on the water and in its

The Ann Davison Story: Courage, Grit, and Grace in the Face of Adversity

Ann Davison (1914-1992) was introduced to sailing by her husband Frank Davison, a fellow pilot who owned the airfield where she worked as one of very few female commercial pilots in the UK. Frank had always dreamed of sailing around the world and Ann was “... always game for anything new,” so they bought a dilapidated 70-foot fishing ketch called the *Reliance* and started repairing it. As Ann wrote in her book *My Ship Is So Small*, they spent “... two years and too much money fixing her. Debts piled high.” To delay foreclosure, they set sail for the West Indies in the unfinished boat, “hoping the transatlantic crossing short-handed would prove the ship’s value.”

The gamble had terrible consequences. They sailed into a Force 7 storm. After 19 days of incredible hardship, with sails blown out and engine defunct, the ship ran aground on the rocks at Portland Bill, a narrow promontory on the southernmost part of Dorset, England. Ann and Frank tried to reach shore in a life raft, but were swept out to sea. The cold was intense and the raft kept turning over in the turbulent sea. They managed to re-board each time, but Frank eventually succumbed to heart failure, resulting from exposure and exhaustion. After 14 days, the raft finally swept ashore, where Ann fell into an exhausted sleep before climbing a 50-foot cliff to safety. After an inquest to determine Frank’s cause of death, Ann began rebuilding her life.

Determined to pay off the *Reliance* debts, Ann discovered she could make money as a writer and spent what she describes as “a long sad summer” writing about the

shipwreck in a book called *Last Voyage*. Once out of debt, she started saving for a boat of her own and planning a solo crossing of the Atlantic, convinced that facing, tackling, and overcoming fear — which she had also felt about flying — held the key to living for her.

She found work in a boatyard, so she could learn about boats from the bottom up, and lived in an old boat on the yard to save money. On weekends, she took sailing and celestial navigation lessons from a retired Navy instructor named Commander Lund. It was the Commander who discovered *Felicity Ann* in a corner of the Mashford Brothers shipyard outside Plymouth, England. Ann loved everything about the little boat.

“As soon as I set foot on her, I knew she was right and that she was the ship for me,” Ann said. “She was simpatico. She had a slightly aggressive air and the quality, distinguishable but indefinable, that spells reliability; adversity, I felt, would bring out the best in her.”

To prepare for her transatlantic crossing, Ann asked for some changes to *Felicity Ann*, based on advice from Humphrey “Hum” Barton, who had made a solo transatlantic crossing a few years before on his 25-foot *Vertue XXXV*. “No yard could have done more or charged less,” she said of Mashford Brothers, which still operates on the Cornish side of the Tamar Estuary, in a natural cove at the extreme northwestern tip of the UK’s *Cremyll Peninsula*. To finance the voyage, Ann arranged writing contracts with



Felicity Ann is a 23-foot sloop with traditional carvel plank-on-frame construction. She has a purple heart centerline, a sapele sheer strake, and a mix of larch and red cedar planking on the rest of the hull. We made new galvanized keel bolts, but she has her original cast-iron keel. Pictured above are her new cabin roof beams.

shop, which is located on the NWSWB waterfront campus in Port Hadlock.

“We are absolutely thrilled about receiving *Felicity Ann*, and forever grateful for the vision of the Lorber Foundation, the craftsmanship of the Boat School, and the community effort that has gone into her preservation,” says Community Boat Project Director Wayne Chimenti. “*Felicity Ann* is the perfect boat for us: small enough for novices to feel comfortable in, yet mighty enough to cross oceans. We take on her stewardship with commitment and joy.”

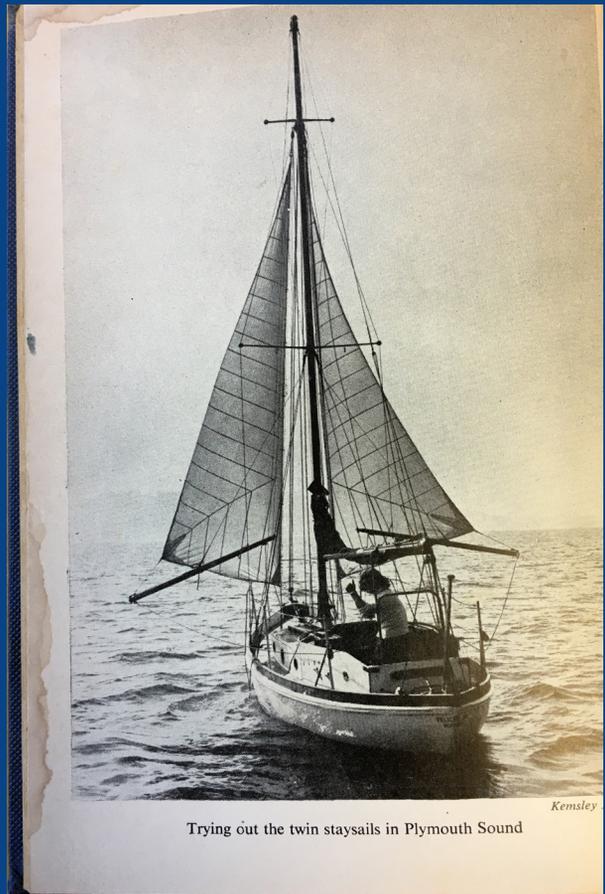
“The *Felicity Ann* project highlights the power of partnerships,” says NWSWB Executive Director Betsy Davis. “The Boat School and the Community Boat Project have different missions and different skill sets, but common values. *Felicity Ann* has a great new crew.”

Felicity Ann made her post-restoration public debut at the 2017 Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival. “The Community Boat Project is also planning to sail throughout Puget Sound next summer with an all-woman crew,” says Director Chimenti. “The crew will stop into as many docks as possible so the public can hear the Ann Davison story of courage, grit, and grace in the face of adversity and see the beauty of wood on water, Boat School style.” ■

the Sunday Chronicle in England and Life Magazine in America, but she didn't want to publicize the attempt any more than necessary until after she had completed the crossing. In fact, she didn't want to practice sailing Felicity Ann until actually setting out on her transatlantic voyage, reasoning: “To sail the boat about before departure and make a public display of my limitations would serve only to undermine my morale.”

Ann departed Plymouth, England on May 18, 1952, and got plenty of sailing practice in the six months it took to reach Las Palmas, her starting point for the transatlantic crossing. Along the way, she made unscheduled stops in France, Portugal, and Morocco for repairs and re-provisioning.

*During the transatlantic crossing, which began on November 20, 1952 and ended on January 24, 1953, the inexperienced sailor faced severe storms with winds up to 60mph and three weeks of dead calm where she had been expecting to catch brisk trade winds. She had a radio receiver on board, but no transmitter, and was out of contact with land for the entire 65-day crossing. According to her account in *My Ship Is So Small*, she spent most of her waking hours at the helm, pulling down the sails and letting the boat drift when she needed to sleep. She finally made landfall at Dominica in a condition she described as “stupid with fatigue,” but with a lasting fondness for sailing and the sailing community, which had supported her so enthusiastically — helping her with advice, encouragement, accommodations, entertainment, provisioning, towing, and repairs before and after the crossing.*



Trying out the twin staysails in Plymouth Sound

A photo from My Ship is So Small by Ann Davison. Kemsley Pictures Publisher Peter Davies, London 1956.

Commissions with Character

You're Not Just Buying a Boat, You're Launching Careers

Building the Handy Billy

Bill and Barbara Litscher were on vacation in the Pacific Northwest in 1999 when they stopped in to visit the Boat School. They were considering retirement, and Bill was tempted to enroll at the Boat School then and there, but family kept the couple in the Midwest. They returned home and bought a 38-foot cutter-rigged sailboat to use on the Great Lakes instead.

A few years later, they moved to a house on Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho and Barbara wanted a powerboat. "I had been slowly working on a Caledonia yawl — emphasize slowly," Bill recalls, "and I said, 'I could build one of those.' Barbara's response? 'I want to use it in this lifetime!'"

Bill and Barbara commissioned a Handy Billy, a design by Harry Bryan, of Bryan's Boatshop in New Brunswick, Canada. The design combines the look of a William H. Hand powerboat with modern technology, for a boat that's seaworthy, fuel-efficient, quiet, and good looking. Their boat was constructed with western red cedar planking over white oak frames on a douglas fir and mahogany backbone, and fastened throughout with silicon bronze screws and bolts. The deck is douglas fir, finished bright.

Q: How did you choose NWSWB to build your boat?

A: We knew we wanted a classic wooden powerboat. We looked into the used market, but we weren't interested in a restoration project. We asked a local builder, but he wouldn't have been able to start for a minimum of 18 to 24 months. Remembering our visit to NWSWB, and how impressed we were with the School, we called to see if they had space in their schedule. They did!

Q: What is your favorite feature of the boat?

A: That's like asking which child is your favorite. No fair! We like the whole boat — its classic lines, efficient operation, minimal engine noise, and ability to be stored on a trailer. The high quality of workmanship, best-available materials, and the incredible attention to detail are visible everywhere on the boat. We love the combination of oiled wood, brightwork, and teak decking. The whole thing just makes us smile.



The Handy Billy on launch day.

Q: What was your impression of the NWSWB student builders?

A: What a great group of people! We were impressed with their commitment to quality and detail. Our only disappointment was that we weren't able to spend more time at the Boat School to get to know them better. They obviously take great pride in their craftsmanship.

Q: What would you tell someone who is interested in a Boat School commission?

A: Do it! You can expect a high-quality product, but keep your expectations about delivery realistic. Our build took 20 months, because curriculum demands come first. Communicate well and often. If you are like us, and unable to visit and observe often, the process will be more difficult, but not impossible. It's vital that the School offers such a wide base of instructor experience to work through any issues discovered during construction.

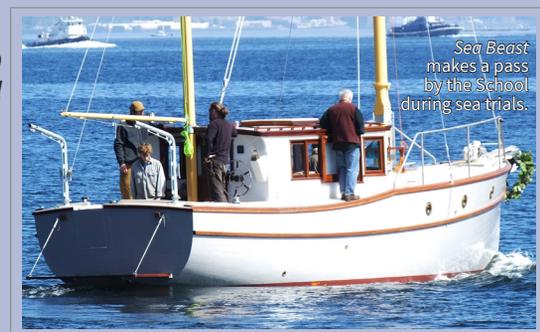
The collaboration between instructors and students, along with the ease of communication with Instructor Bruce Blatchley, gave us the boat we dreamed of. The opportunity to provide a project for the Boat School was also important to us because of the School's mission to preserve traditional wooden boatbuilding skills.

Action · Collaboration in Action · Collaboration in Action · Collaboration in Action · Collaboration in Act

Sea Beast Build

Sea Beast is a 36-foot motorsailer designed by Carl Chamberlin. More than 50 Boat School students had a hand in the three-year project, along with these local craftsmen and maritime businesses:

- Bill Campbell — welding and keel construction
- Sean Rankin of NW Sails & Canvas — sails and rigging
- Ryan and Randy Charrier of Western Workboats — mechanics and plumbing
- Matt Mortensen of Revision Marine — electrical systems
- Edensaw Woods — lumber
- Gwendolyn Tracy of Fine Yacht Interiors — interior design



Chief Instructor Sean Koomen Talks about Building the Dark Harbor 17 ½

The Dark Harbor was a good teaching boat because it was small enough at 26 feet that the students in the Traditional Large Craft program could get through all the phases of boatbuilding. We started by lofting it, then building the hull, deck, and house in six months.

We built the boat with the hull on one jig upside down, and the deck on a separate jig. It might have looked unusual, but building a boat this way is actually very common in the bigger shops because you can keep more hands busy and finish the project more quickly. The students had the deck done before the hull was done. If you do the lofting right, and they did, everything comes together smoothly. But that's definitely where the challenge is — trying to make sure the parts fit together perfectly when you're working with people who've never built a boat before.

The Dark Harbor is a 26-foot daysailer. It's western red cedar on white oak framing, with a mahogany backbone, a teak deck, and spruce spars. We steamed the white oak, then put it in a jig in the Hammond Shop loft to create the oval house coaming. The sails and canvas will be built by a sailmaker who operates from a loft on the Boat School campus. We purchased bronze hardware from our neighbor, the Port Townsend Foundry, which tools, pours, and finishes castings, all in-house.



The Dark Harbor has a distinctive oval cabin and cockpit and a classic keg-built hull, meaning it has a fin ballast keel. Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

The commission is for Boat School Alum Kere Kemp (Class of 2016) who will ship the boat to his home in New Zealand. We agreed on materials and a start date of January 2017, when I happened to be one of the teachers in the Traditional Large Craft program. I had spent the previous year on infrastructure projects and was looking forward to hands-on teaching time in the shop so I could demonstrate what I'm always preaching about in the morning lectures.

Living the Dream

Building the Dark Harbor was the perfect project for Christian Zürcher, who traveled from Switzerland with his longtime partner Melanie Boillat to attend Boat School. For 20 years, he had wanted to study traditional wooden boatbuilding. "I wasn't ready at 17 to

leave Switzerland, so I took an alternate career path into chemistry; but I never lost my interest in boatbuilding."

Avid sailors, Christian and Melanie had always talked about owning a wooden cruiser and sailing around the world. Then he saw a German documentary about boatbuilding. It mentioned a school in the U.S. Pacific Northwest where boats were built in the traditional way. He talked it over with Melanie and they both decided to quit their jobs and study boatbuilding for a year at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding.



Christian Zürcher and Melanie Boillat work on the Dark Harbor's plank spiling with guidance from Chief Instructor Sean Koomen (center).

"In the beginning, I didn't share the dream to be a boatbuilder," says Melanie. "But more and more I liked the idea, and wanted to be part of the adventure. So, I decided to attend the School with him. My first education was as a dressmaker, and more recently I had been working as a merchant in the textile industry. When it came to boatbuilding, I had to learn everything — even how to put screws in wood — but the School takes you from zero to being a boatbuilder."

The 2016-2017 Traditional Large Craft class was tasked with building a Dark Harbor. "The timing was perfect. We could start from lofting and see how the whole thing came together," says Christian.

When they graduated in September 2017, the Dark Harbor was in the finishing stages. Only the interior, systems, and rigging remained. We really want to see the finished boat in New Zealand someday," says Melanie. "She's a little bit our baby and we want to know what happens to her."

Christian and Melanie may return to their previous occupations; but, first they will look for work together as boatbuilders. "We don't know if we will find jobs in Europe with this experience, because it's a different education system," says Christian. "We will have to be a bit lucky to be able to show our skills, but that's our plan: Travel to different boatyards and check out the opportunities."

ion · Collaboration in Action · Collaboration in Action · Collaboration in Action · Collaboration in Action

Hacker Build

The Hacker 21-foot runabout build is another great example of NWSWB's collaborative approach to boatbuilding:

- Coastwise Marine Design's Antonio Salguero — design
- Jim "Kiwi" Ferris of Edensaw Woods — lumber
- NWSWB students — hull, interior, and exterior
- Tim Lee and Maggie Day of Port Townsend Shipwrights Coop — varnish and upholstery
- Lance Warren of LAW Enterprise — hardware
- Walt Trisdale — systems installation
- Suzi Clinefelter of Mystery Bay Sails and Canvas — boat cover



The Hacker '21 was originally designed by John L. Hacker (1877-1961), a pioneering naval architect and leading builder of wooden runabouts.

MAKE A LIVING



CRAFT A LIFE

Earn a 12-Month
AOS Degree

TRADITIONAL OR CONTEMPORARY
WOODEN BOATBUILDING

ENROLL NOW

CLASSES BEGIN IN OCTOBER

42 N. WATER STREET, PORT HADLOCK, WA 98339
NWSWB.EDU • INFO@NWSWB.EDU • (360)385-4948

ACCSC
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges

Photo courtesy of Nicole Sanders.

Alumni Spotlight



Evan Miller
Class of 1992

Owner, Designer, Builder
Lost Mountain Design, Sequim, WA
www.lostmountaindesign.com

Boat School Instructor Ray Speck was attending a gallery walk recently when he came across the beautiful marquetry and inlay artwork of Evan Miller. After 21 years in the high-end yacht industry, Evan is doing custom design of “just about anything made of wood,” from high-end yacht interiors to artistic sculpture to fine furniture, through his company Lost Mountain Design.



Karen Naulty
Class of 2016

Retired Coast Guard, Boatbuilder
Volunteer for Rocking the Boat, South Bronx, NY
www.rockingtheboat.org

Karen retired from the Coast Guard in 2007 after 27 years of service. Following graduation from Boat School in 2016, she spent two months as shipwright-in-residence at Rocking the Boat, a South Bronx non-profit that fosters youth development through wooden boatbuilding, environmental science, and sailing. Next project: renovating the drift boat in her Port Townsend shop.



Tom Nolan
Class of 1983

Owner, Founder, Licensed Contractor
Island Shelter Company
tom@islandshelter.com

Tom graduated with a degree in international politics, but he was drawn to woodworking. NWSWB gave him the skills and confidence to buy and restore a house in Tacoma, which led to founding Island Shelter Company, specializing in unique, quality-crafted homes, but also boat restoration, even totem pole placement in remote areas of the San Juan Islands. His lead carpenter is Doug Peckman, Boat School (Class of 1982).



Julia Hechanova
Class of 2016

Boatbuilder
Dolphin Club
www.dolphinclub.org

Julia practically grew up at the Dolphin Club in San Francisco, where her parents introduced her to traditional wooden boats like *Baggiani*, a 1948 Whitehall that became the model for a Whitehall the club commissioned from the Boat School. Today Julia is working in the Dolphin Club Boat Shop, helping restore and maintain the historic boats in their livery. “I didn’t know how much I’d learned at Boat School until I started solving issues by myself,” she says.



Brian Morford
Class of 2016

Construction Foreman
Don Tankersley & Co.
www.dtcportland.com

Brian left his work as a commercial carpenter superintendent in Seattle to develop his skills as a master craftsman at NWSWB. Today he’s working with Boat School alums Sheffield Edgerton (Class of 2013) and Frank Comeriato (Class of 2016) for Don Tankersley Construction on a Robert Oshatz-designed residence that is full of curves, framed with Douglas fir, and finished with Alaskan red cedar, Alaskan yellow cedar, and sapele. “Building this house is like building a boat,” he says. “I couldn’t have landed a better job.”



Shawn Huston
Class of 2013

Boatbuilder
Emerald Marine, Anacortes, WA
www.emeraldmarine.com

As a member of the Big Broderna crew, Shawn finished second in the 2017 Race to Alaska, a grueling event for wind, paddle, and oar-powered boats. Off the water, he works at Emerald Marine, a wooden boatshop in Anacortes, WA, that does restoration, repair, interiors, yacht joinery, and boat furniture.

WOODEN 41st BOAT FESTIVAL

PORT TOWNSEND

SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2017



WOODENBOAT.ORG
photo by Irving Mortensen



42 N. Water Street, Port Hadlock, WA 98339

PRSRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Seattle, WA
Permit No. 1

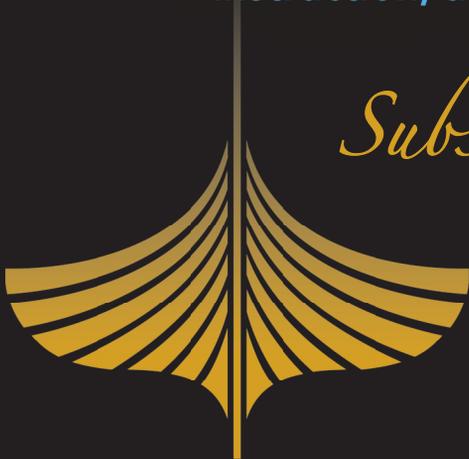
WoodenBoat

THE MAGAZINE FOR WOODEN BOAT OWNERS, BUILDERS, AND DESIGNERS



Whether you are rebuilding, repairing or starting from scratch, *WoodenBoat* Magazine will be there to offer advice, instruction, and encouragement.

Subscribe today



1-800-877-5284
www.woodenboat.com