



The Southwest Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society

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Fall 2004

THE BOW

We had another great Ride 'n Show on Lake Conroe on June 11-13, at the Del Lago Resort. Please go to our web site at www.southwest-acbs.org to view the pictures. Our third and final Ride 'n Show for the year is scheduled for August 27-29, at Lake Lewisville. The agenda looks great and includes a Southwest Chapter board meeting on Saturday from 10AM to 12PM at Sneaky Pete's. We will be hosted for dinner on Friday night at the Peterson's and lunch on Sunday by the Van Guilder's, and there will be a lot of great boating in between. This event has been well attended in the past, and I hope you will make plans to attend this year. I have been promised by our North Texas members that we will not have any snow this year. If you have any questions, please call Lowry Matthews at (972)294-0654.

In addition, the **Heartland Chapter's 11TH Annual Boat Show** is scheduled for September 9-12. You can get more information on the show by going to www.howardclassicboats.com or by calling Brent Howard at (918)782-1855. Dick Peterson is planning to attend, and I hope others from the Southwest Chapter can attend and support our neighboring chapter at this great show.

The **2nd Annual Chris Craft Classic Drive-In** will be held October 8-10 at the Lakewood Yacht Club. All antique and classic boats are welcome! Activities will include cocktails and dinner and a Drive-in movie at Lakewood, cruises during the day and dinner at the Kemah Boardwalk. Anyone with an interest in antique boats is welcome.

For more information, contact John McCutchen 972-788-1000 or jmccutchen@chriscraftdrive-in.com

Finally, our annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the **Austin Boat Show**, which is planned on Lake Travis from October 22-24. We will elect officers and one director and need to confirm chairmen for our various events. After several years of spectacular work in coordinating the boat show at Keels and Wheels, Chris Dorflinger has decided to take a well-deserved retirement—

just like Rickey Williams. However, just like the Dolphins, we have some really big shoes to fill. We have no more important position in the Southwest Chapter. If you have interest in any of these positions, please let me know.

Ed Ueckert

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER FALL '04 CALENDER

LAKE LEWISVILLE 8/27-8/29/04 DALLAS LOWRY MATTHEWS

RIDE 'n SHOW

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER DALLAS ED UECKERT

BOARD MEETING 8/28/04

ANTIQUA CAR &

BOAT SHOW 9/18/04 HORSESHOE BAY SCOTT REICHARDT

CHRIS CRAFT DRIVE- SEABROOK JOHN MCCUTCHEN

INN 10/8-10/10/04

AUSTIN WOODEN AUSTIN ED UECKERT

BOAT SHOW 10/22-10/24/04

SOUTHWEST CHAPTER AUSTIN ED UECKERT

ANNUAL MEETING 10/23/04

HOUSTON BOAT AND HOUSTON PAUL MERRYMAN

TRADE SHOW 01/??/05

EUTHANASIA

It was a sad time in the Stanfield household. I looked in the mirror, took some pills of encouragement and realized that there are things I will never get done. Then I did something about it.

Yes, I have one less boat (well, that was before I took delivery of my “new” Coronado!). It is more convoluted than that. It seems my impressionable years were the late 60’s. *My wonder years. Bewitched, Flipper, Bullit, Century Arabians, Shelby GT-500s, Hemi Roadrunners, and the Chris Craft 26’ Cutlass.* I was 12 to 14 years old and couldn’t drive. Yet I read many magazines (I’ll ignore the cheap seats!)

During the Viet Nam War and before the full affect of safety in transportation, style was creative and spontaneous. Skirts were short, the cold war was in full swing, and the public was looking for comfort anywhere they could find it. Flippant, maybe, but designs were authored by an individual instead of a committee. Designers were experimenting. Harley Earl, Bill Mitchell, Richard Arbib, Raymond Lowey, and others designed consumer products. People were looking for relief. The public needed to vent. Those things I fixated on during my Junior High years (remember when 7th and 8th were called that?) stayed with me. Perhaps I should have been doing something academic, but I was reading boating and car magazines. Years later I got lucky.

Yes, I was one of the fortunate few to realize part of my childhood dream of acquiring my dreamboat(s). Of course, the subject of this article was barely floating, and the twin engines were in boxes. But she was restoreable (isn’t everything including that ragged K car at the end of the block? I use that word a lot). I lived on her. I drew pictures of her. I appreciated all of the curves in her transom. Tumblehome transom like no other contemporary. A cheap (Cavalier) boat drawn exquisitely. Silly, isn’t it, for an adult to behave this way?

Upon relocating from Houston to Ingleside in ’92, I arranged to give her away, but then chickened out. On again and off again, I vascilated. I hired “Bob” and paid \$500 to move her to Ingleside, parking her in what later became a rent house. She rotted. Mosquitos grew. Neighbors, for some reason, cut me slack. The house was empty a lot. Tenants came and went. Cash flow receded. I finally looked in the mirror and bought a chain saw.

Half-way through the gut-wrenching process (it *really* got me, as attachment is one of my weaknesses), I took photographs of the hulk. I was amazed that the beauty of lines and proportions were still there even though the dying skeleton was sagging on her trailer. I started wondering (almost like thinking and a dangerous feat in itself ... right up there with riding motorcycles).

If that pile out by the street was a “recognizable” classic, would I have behaved differently? If she was a Chris Craft 21’Cobra, would *Sea Bum* have then been a pattern boat? What if she was a Hacker? How about a lowly Century Resorter? It made me wince. It had to be done. I had to get on. There was no one left to inherit from, and I am only a teacher. I paid my neighbor to haul her away. I knew in my head I did the *smart thing*. In my heart, though, I thought that maybe it was not the *right thing*.

Isn’t it good we sometimes listen to our hearts? Maybe I should have.

The editor

Ps: I went on a 1000 mile motor cycle experience over last Labor Day. Me, 20 friends, and the Hill Country ...and a “trailer” experience. **First**, beware of U-Haul. No matter how long you’ve had your reservation, or how “butch” your Jeep, if the top folds, you’re SOL. **Second**, Powerstrokes pull. My eyetallian Viglias (the instrument brand on my Moto-Guzzi) were bouncing around 90 mph as some boys from Houston passed me going to Lake Travis – long bed F350 crew cab, dog, triple axle trailer, 33’ Scarab and all! **Third**, when we (all 20 hyperbikes plus my Moto Guzzi) were pulled over for a butt rest in Boerne, in pulled our own Fred Adams with his gorgeous twin screw Grand Craft in tow. He was on his way to Medina Lake. Like bees to honey, we swarmed ... as I said, a trailering experience. Oh yeah, and there was the sheriff in the Cobra convertible who gave me directions, asked about the ‘Guzzi, and then smoked both tires into oblivion. Thanks, officer!!!

Port Commission No.1

A forgotten wooden harbor tug gets a second chance at life as told by guest writer Steve Toedter. His story. My name is Steven L. Toedter I am a ship and cargo surveyor for Capt Trevor O’Brien and Associates in Houston, Texas 713-453-0906. I am also Director of American Seaborne Heritage Society. The organization is currently restoring the harbor tug “Port Commission No.1”. Once completed, the plan will be to get her operational and place her on display at local marine events for educational and historical purposes. Growing up along the Texas gulf coast, I have never had much of a chance to admire the beauty of an old wooden tug boat pushing a ship, cruising along the Sabine and Neches Rivers, the Houston Ship Channel or Galveston waterway.

Being a third generation mariner I’ve always either operated, restored, repaired or surveyed vessels of all types and sizes. Of all of the vessels I’ve seen there has always been a special place in my heart for wooden boats, especially the “wooden workhorses of America’s waterways.”

Throughout my high school years I spent most of my days around the Kemah / Seabrook, Texas waterfronts. At the time the area was somewhat picturesque, littered with wooden fishing boats, boat builders, seafood shacks and baits shops. The area has now given way to amusement parks, upscale hotels, restaurants and yacht clubs. But during the era of commercial fishermen and shrimpers this quaint little community thrived and, as in all fishing communities when new boats were brought in or built, old boats were discarded. Consequently, the area had its share of derelict and project boats. Hanging around the yards and docks I looked for a project that I knew my parents might object

to, but could become proud of. I came across a small and intriguing wooden vessel that looked something like a harbor tug. The vessel was covered in old marine growth, had a broken mast, a few broken and rotted planks, dry rotted tires hanging over the gunwales, a short stubby pilot house and what remained of a rope fender over the bow. The vessel was in sad shape lying on her starboard side in a field behind a seafood processing plant. She still had a beauty about her that I admired. I had found a treasure that deserved an attempt at restoration and research.

I discovered that the vessel was well built, strong and sturdy. She had double sawn oak frames with mahogany planking, a fairly intact teak deck and a yellow pine tongue and groove pilothouse. I scraped off 10 years of dirt and marine growth from the bow and stern in hopes of finding a name or homeport. After about an hour of scraping, cussing and attending to scraped knuckles, the name "Port Commission No. 1" appeared with a homeport of the Port of Houston. I had a place to begin. Making inquiries to the Port of Houston Authority, I learned that the vessel was no longer on their inventory of equipment or on any of their records. Little was known about her. I was able to locate a couple of crewmembers that had served aboard her several years earlier. The crewmembers informed me that the vessel was sold out of service sometime in the late 60's to a local fishing company but not before having a somewhat distinctive career with the port.

In speaking with those crewmembers I learned that the vessel served many roles such as harbor tug, maintenance barge, pilot boat and ferry boat for the Port of Houston staff and officials. The vessel also served as a patrol boat for the state of Texas. After interviewing the crewmembers I took what information I had plus an etching of the vessels official number to the Texas Parks and Wildlife to continue my research and track down the current or past owners. Talk about opening a can of worms!

In my inquiries made to the Texas Parks and Wildlife I learned that the vessel was a part of multiple ongoing law suites involving the Small Business Administration, a defunct seafood processing plant and multiple local fishermen. I couldn't touch the vessel until the law suits were settled. In my frustration I said my good-bye's and departed not if I had a future with this vessel. In the months that followed I kept tabs on her as well as the status of the law suits. Driving over the Seabrook bridge I would glance down to see her still lying on her side. Then about a year later she was gone. I asked the former owners and local fisherman her whereabouts. No one knew. Once again I left in frustration, but occasionally wondered what had become of her.

Twenty years went by. After serving in the Coast Guard and working as a ship's agent/barge inspector, I took up ship and cargo surveying. While conducting a survey on a vessel at the Port of Houston I had a little spare time. I noticed an old pilothouse above a stack of steel coils. As I got closer my curiosity started to peak. She was "Port Commission No.1", the 36' harbor tug I had seen 20 years earlier. She was resting on a steel cradle and blocked with wooden timbers. I thought to myself "I won't let her go this time". I once again retrieved her official number from a timber under the pilothouse and took it back to the Texas Parks and Wildlife to track down the new owners. There were none listed. I returned to the Port of Houston Authority to make further inquiries so as not to step on any toes. I learned that the Port Authority was very interested in preserving a piece of their history and gave me full support. Returning to Parks and Wildlife I was finally able to obtain ownership of her.

Continuing my research of twenty years ago I discovered the vessel was built in 1941 in Galveston, Texas by Gulf Marine Ways and certified by Master Carpenter Francis Brander. The vessel was built for the Harris County Navigation District (Port of Houston). She served the port from 1941 to 1968

and was sold out of service to the aforementioned seafood processor. The vessel failed as a fishing boat, was tied to the dock and forgotten. After a few years she was involved in a collision and sank near her dock. She remained submerged for some time and was eventually raised by the Corps of Engineers to make room for the new Seabrook bridge.

She landed in a vacant lot behind the seafood processor and was cannibalised by local fisherman. The processor went out of business and the law suits began. Once the suits were settled (a year after I had first seen her) a retired Port Commissioner saw her from the road and had her moved to the port. The plan to restore her fell through and she was once again forgotten. In the Port's warehouse she was kept out of the elements. The steel cradle kept her shape. After cleaning out 20 years of warehouse dust, dirt and marine growth I found a vessel in fair shape. There was some rot but nothing that couldn't be repaired or replaced. She was well constructed, strong and built to last.

Restoration has subsequently begun under the direction of the American Seaborne Heritage Society. The Port of Houston Authority has graciously donated the warehouse space where she has resided for the past 20 years. Local businesses, from surveying companies to steel fabricators, have provided their generous services along with a hand from the Boy Scouts.

She is not a vessel with national historical significance. She wasn't instrumental in fighting a war. No historical documents were signed aboard her and no president ever slept on her. However, she is an integral part of Houston history and a tribute to the average working man, a lasting symbol of strength of America's waterways.

Future acquisitions and restorations of antique and classic wooden work and rescue vessels are planned once "Port Commission No.1" is completed.

For Sale

1964 Century Resorter. 16 foot. 170 horsepower. Dependable. Good user boat. Trying to de-fleet.
713.446.1555. Craig Stanfield