Fall 2011

KODIAK MARITIME MUSEUM

Waterlines

Inside this issue:

Thelma C Update	1
From the Wheelhouse	2
Bristol Bay Double-ender	3
KMM Building Project	5
Joshua Slocum in Kodiak	4
Maritime History Class	5

Upcoming Events

Late November
Thelma C
Interpretive Planning
Location and date to be announced

Mid- December
KMM Museum Site
Public Forum
Location and date to be announced

January 20, 2012
KMM Annual Meeting
7 p.m.
Kodiak College

Thelma C. Gets Legislative Funding

In July, the Alaska State Legislature approved a grant to KMM for $298,000 to construct the wooden *Thelma C* Interpretive Exhibit near the Kodiak Small Boat Harbor. The grant follows a 2010 Kodiak Island Borough grant of $10,000 for the exhibit. American Seafoods Co. Alaska Leader Foundation, and Alaska State Museums have also contributed to the project. The grants will fund the boat reconstruction, interpretive materials and permanent site construction.

To complete the vessel reconstruction, KMM has partnered with Kodiak College and shipwright Brian Johnson, himself a previous owner of the Thelma C. The boat was recently moved to Kodiak College, where the three month vessel reconstruction work will begin in February. Johnson plans to instruct volunteers and students in techniques of wooden boat repair, using the vessel as a hands-on teaching tool.

The three month reconstruction effort at Kodiak College will be open to the public, allowing visitors to observe Johnson and his team spiling planks, fitting bulkheads, and fabricating scarfing. Plans call for the rebuilding effort to be completed by June 2012.

Reconstruction of the vessel as an exhibit has been a museum goal since owners Mark and Myla Thomas donated the boat 2005. The completed exhibit will include interpretive media describing the history of the boat, Kodiak's salmon fishery, and effects of the 1964 tsunami on Kodiak's harbor and fishing fleet.

The Thelma C in the Kodiak Small Boat Harbor, circa late 1990s

The Thelma C was built in 1965 by Ken Christoffersen with help from a Federal disaster relief program following the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake and tsunami. The boat fished salmon from Valdez to Chignik under several owners until 2004.

Thelma C Funding continued on pg. 3

KMM 2011 Harbor Tour Program a Success

KMM began offering 90 minute tours of the harbor in April. The tours introduce visitors to the commercial fishing and the maritime history of Kodiak.

The tours take visitors through cannery row, along the floats in the Small Boat Harbor, and end at the Fishermen's Memorial at the Harbormaster Building. The tour includes a visit to a processing plant, and dockside visits to various fishing boats.

Tour guide Ani Thomas, the wife of a commercial fisherman and a former ADF&G fish technician herself, imparted her own experiences on the waterfront to enhance the tours.

"People are very interested in commercial fishermen," she says. "They really enjoy hearing about real Kodiak people."

By season's end in late September, 211 people had taken the tour. The museum contracted with Holland America in March to offer harbor tours to its cruise ship passengers. Several school groups also took advantage of the tour offerings.

KMM tour guide Ani Thomas presents a harbor tour to cruise ship visitors in June.

From the Wheelhouse —

Stories- the telling of them and the listening to them, are as old as language, and the oldest form of art on earth. When my kids were little, they would beg me to tell them a story every night. I would sit on the edge of the bed and say, "well, did I ever tell you about the time that…" and proceed with a story about the old days, when whales talked and treasure was stashed in underwater caves beneath Uganik Bay, and pirates lived on Noisy Island. If the story worked they would lie still, caught up in a story they knew intellectually could not be literally true, but which still carried them into that enchanted state of suspended disbelief where the story made them feel genuinely scared, or sad, or happy.

Even as adults, it's still all about telling or hearing stories that make us feel something. We tell stories at the top of the boat harbor ramp to our friends, or to our spouses at the end of the day. We constantly absorb stories in movies, books, People Magazine articles, and the dramas of three minute country songs. Stories help us communicate what it feels like to be alive now, or what it what it was like to have lived long ago, or in some far off place, or even in some close by place we thought we knew, but come to find out, was not the way we thought it was.

Telling stories is what museums are all about at their most basic level. Artifacts, documents, photographs; these are the things museums collect and store and exhibit. But an object with no story, no context to the time from which it came, has no emotional narrative. It is as meaningless as an anonymous rock on a beach. The job of museums is to put stories to objects and by doing that, transform them into lenses though which people other than ourselves can speak to us. When you add a story to an object, the object is no longer an anonymous rock among numberless similar rocks. It becomes a vehicle for the experiences of the people who once wore it, or wielded it, or sailed it.

You'll notice in this newsletter two very bare-bones stories about two objects- two boats. One of them, the Thelma C, is now being transformed by the museum into an exhibit, a portal though which the 21st century visitor will be able to understand and feel at least some of what it was like to be an Alaskan fisherman in the 1960's. The other boat in this newsletter is a Bristol Bay double-ender. For now, we have no plan for this boat. But eventually, it may become a way to tell stories about the Bristol Bay fishery, or about the old, old, days of salmon gillnetting in Cook Inlet, or even about how Joshua Slocum once visited Kodiak. We'll see how that all turns out.

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Executive Director Toby Sullivan

Meet KMM Treasurer Wallace Fields

Growing up in a commercial fishing family I have always felt connected to Kodiak's maritime culture. Since the time I could accompany my older brothers and father out to pick our salmon nets and help longline for halibut, I have spent my life making a living from the sea and being a part of Kodiak's maritime community. Over the years, I have witnessed dramatic changes in the maritime industries that make up our communities around the Island: the 1964 tsunami and the rebuilding of Kodiak's waterfront, the rise and fall of the King crab and shrimping fisheries, the development of the groundfish industry and resurgence of halibut and cod fish stocks, along with changes in the salmon and herring industry, and so much more. Each of these changes has a unique history and story to tell.

When I was growing up in the 60's and 70's, several of our neighbors and their families in Uyak Bay had been fishing since the 20's and 30's in the area. They had known people associated with the beginning of the salmon industry in the late 1800's and early 1900's, when Karluk had a number of operating salmon canneries and workers came from San Francisco on sailing ships. I was too young to appreciate this history then or understand how important it would be to have their stories.

Now, forty years later, my generation's stories, and the stories of the generation before me, are important to capture. My vision of the Kodiak Maritime Museum is a place where these stories and pieces of this past can be preserved. To understand who we are today, it is important to remember the people who have been part of this maritime culture – from native peoples, Russian Americans, fishermen, whalers, business men, mining and transportation companies, military personnel, subsistence and recreational users. My hope is the Kodiak Maritime Museum will be a place where this history is preserved and celebrated for future generations.

I've enjoyed the recent KMM project, "When Crab was King." The Thelma C restoration project and the Pre- Development work being done for a museum building are also exciting to see. I appreciate the community joining with us to bring these projects, and others like them, to fruition.

KMM Treasurer Wallace Fields, 51, has served on the Board since 2005, and Treasurer since January 2010. He grew up fishing with his parents Dewitt and Wanda , and older brothers Weston and Duncan at their setnet site camp at Bear Island in Uyak Bay,. He continues to fish there each summer with his wife Beth and their children. He also fishes herring, halibut, cod, and crab around Kodiak Island, and salmon in Bristol Bay. Wallace's mother Wanda Fields was one of the early board members of Kodiak Maritime Museum .

Thelma C Funding, continued from pg.1

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Shipwright Brian Johnson inspects the stern of the Thelma C.

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Thelma C Funding continued on pg. 3

Once rebuilt, the boat will be sited on the harbor spit near Oscar's Dock (see photo on this page). Plans call for the boat to be located on a grid constructed into the grassy slope to the north of Oscar's Dock, between the sidewalk and the high water mark. A roof will also be constructed over the vessel to protect it from the weather.

Historic Bristol Bay Boat Looking For a Home

A historic Bristol Bay fishing boat with a long history in Kodiak's setnet salmon fishery is looking for a home. Owner Kip Thomet no longer uses the boat at his setnet site near Uyak Bay, and he wants to see it preserved as a piece of Alaskan maritime history. Thomet is working with KMM to find a storage site for the boat until a preservation plan can be designed and funded.

"It's fine for now," says Thomet, "but we're selling the lot the boat is sitting on, so we need to find a place for it by next spring. I'd like to see it find a permanent home in Kodiak. If its not cared for, it's eventually going to die."

The 32 foot wooden boat is one of thousands of sail powered "double-enders" built for the Bristol Bay fishery between the late 19th century and the legalization of powerboats in 1951.

The boats originated on the Columbia River in the late 1860's. Their unique design of pointed bow and stern inspired the name "double-ender." The boats were used to fish gillnets, which were hauled over the side or stern.

By the early 20th century in Bristol Bay, the boats were often hauled out to the grounds by powered "monkey boats," when winds or river currents were unfavorable.

While little is known of its early history, Thomet's boat was previously owned by setnet fishermen Andy and Kay Povelite. The boat was one of ten double-enders salvaged by Kodiak fisherman Tony Jones in 1975, from a boat yard in Bristol Bay. Jones floated two of the boats up the Kvichak River, through Lake Iliamna, across a portage to Cook Inlet, and eventually to Kodiak.

Povelite traded construction labor on Jones' house for the boat, and with his wife Kay, used the boat as a holding skiff at their setnet site near Uyak Bay. They stored the day's catch in the boat until a daily tender picked up the fish for delivery to canneries in Larsen Bay or Kodiak.

Fishermen Andy and Kay Povelite sailing their 32-foot Bristol Bay double-endeer at Uyak Bay in the early 1980s. Photo courtesy of Lacey Berns

Kip and Leigh Thomet bought the setnet site a few years after Povelite's death in 1993, and continued to use the boat as a holding skiff until 2009, when they replaced it with a newly constructed aluminum boat. Thomet's boat is believed to be the last Bristol Bay double-ender in Kodiak.

Read "Joshua Slocum Brings the Double-ender to Alaska," on Pg. 4

Joshua Slocum, and the Origin of the Double-ender Boat in Alaska

The classic wooden double-ender, once ubiquitous in Bristol Bay, was introduced to Alaska in 1869 by Joshua Slocum, who thirty years later became the first man to sail alone around the world. Slocum, who left his Nova Scotia home at 16, first saw the boats as a fisherman on the Columbia River in the late 1860s.

In 1869, as captain of the barque *Washington*, Slocum sailed from San Francisco to Sydney, Australia with general cargo and instructions to purchase lumber and materials necessary to catch salmon in Alaska, and return with the catch to San Francisco.

Bristol Bay sailboats. Photo: Alaska State Museum.

A month after arriving in Sydney, Slocum sailed for Alaska. On the 59 day passage to Cook Inlet, the ship's crew, under Slocum's direction, wove gillnets and used the newly bought timber on board to construct several Columbia River inspired double-enders.

Along with the lumber was Slocum's new a bride, a 21 year old Australian woman named Virginia. The 27 year old Slocum had met, courted, and married her on his one month Australian sojourn, much to the consternation of Virginia's father. For the next fourteen years the two were inseparable, and Virginia sailed with her husband as he captained ships on every ocean and to every continent.

The *Washington* arrived in Cook Inlet in June 1869, and Slocum and his crew began fishing immediately, using the double-ender boats they had built on the passage from Australia. On June 20th however, the *Washington* was grounded and wrecked when her anchor lines parted in a gale off Kasilof. All hands were ashore at the time however, and no one was hurt. Once the storm subsided, Slocum and his crew built a 35 foot boat from the wreckage and continued fishing and smoking their catch on the beach.

After the run of salmon was over, Slocum left a ship's mate behind to guard their cache of processed fish and with his crew, sailed the recently constructed boat and the double-enders to Kodiak. His wife had preceded them there on a U.S. Revenue Cutter which had appeared in Cook Inlet earlier that summer.

In Kodiak, Slocum chartered several sealing vessels to fetch the smoked salmon from Kasilof to San Francisco, where it was sold at a profit- the first load of Cook Inlet salmon caught and sold by Americans. Slocum, his wife, and crew then found passage to San Francisco aboard the *Czarevitch*, whose usual cargo to California was Woody Island ice.

Following their Alaska adventure, Slocum and his wife sailed together in various ships under his command until she died of illness in Buenos Aires in 1884. They had seven children together, all of them born aboard ship or in various ports around the world.

In 1886 Slocum married his 24 year old cousin, Henrietta, who set sail with him and several of his children. Various disasters, including a hurricane, a shipboard outbreak of cholera, an attack by pirates, (one of whom was shot dead by Slocum), and shipwreck on the coast of Brazil, persuaded Henrietta to abandon the maritime life. She never sailed with Slocum again.

In July 1895, Slocum now retired as a commercial sailing captain, set sail alone from Nova Scotia in the *Spray,* a 36 foot boat he had designed and built himself. Three years later he sailed into Newport, Rhode Island, the first person to sail alone around the world.

While at first his feat went unnoticed, buried in news of the Spanish American War, the book he wrote about the voyage, "Sailing Alone Around the World," eventually made him famous and for awhile, rich. He dined with President Teddy Roosevelt and Mark Twain, and then retired to a farm on Martha's Vineyard.

The farming life did not agree however, and after a year or so he went back aboard *Spray*, sailing New England waters in summer and the Caribbean in winter, a migration he kept for years.

In November, 1909, Slocum set sail from for the West Indies, with plans to continue on to an exploration of the Orinoco, Rio Negro, and Amazon Rivers. He was never seen again.

And yet, in a rather circuitous way, Slocum's legacy lives in Kodiak, through his 1869 voyage from Kasilof to Kodiak in his tiny fleet of double-enders, and through Kip Thomet's double-ender boat. With luck, Kip's boat can be preserved, and perhaps even sailed again in Kodiak.

Please contact us if you might have a place to store the boat until a restoration plan can be devised..

Source: "Capt. Joshua Slocum: the Life and Voyages of America's Best Known Sailor," Victor Slocum, Sheridan House Publishing, 1950.

Joshua Slocum aboard the Spray, 1909. Photo by Winfield Scott Cline, Walter Magnes Teller Collection, New Bedfpord Whaling Museum

KMM Building Site Selection Process Moves Forward with Engineering Report

Three possible sites for a Kodiak Maritime Museum as described in a recent engineering report.

Kodiak Maritime Museum recently received an engineering report from CRW Engineering of Anchorage examining three possible sites for a maritime museum in Kodiak. KMM does not currently have a museum building for collections, interpretive programs or permanent exhibits.

The engineering report assessed and compared the three sites for zoning, traffic, utilities, environmental,and geotechnical issues. The report is available at www.kodiakmaritimemuseum.org

At an April 2011 presentation to the Kodiak City Council, KMM staff outlined the three sites as possible locations for a museum. The Council recommended that KMM discuss the possible museum sites with harbor stakeholders such as fishermen, the Ports and Harbors Advisory Board, Kodiak Chamber of Commerce, and Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau. Public outreach meetings will be scheduled in later this winter.

The engineering report is a product of KMM's participation in the Pre-Development Program, a Foraker Foundation program to help Alaskan non-profits plan for capital building projects.

King Crab Portraits Draw Crowds to the Baranov

In May, KMM presented "When Crab Was King: Faces of the Kodiak King Crab Fishery, 1950-1982." Twenty-four photo portraits of individuals from KMM's king crab oral history program were shown from May 7 to June 1 at the Baranov Museum in Kodiak. More than 1,600 visitors saw the exhibit - the highest attendance on record for the month of May at the Baranov.

The photo format and exhibit were designed by KMM staff. The photographs were taken late last winter by Alf Pryor, of Dead Humpy Studio. Funding for the photo project came from Alaska Humanities Forum and Alaska State Museums.

A free cell phone tour augmented the exhibit. The cell phone tour, produced by KMM and carried by Guide By Cell, allowed visitors to listen to the voices of the people in the exhibit as they looked at the portraits.

The three minute audio segments were originally produced by Maggie Wall and have been broadcast on KMXT and KVOK since 2009. Funding for the cell phone tour came from the Kodiak Lions Club

While the subjects of the portraits are in black and white, the finished images show the subjects holding color photos of themselves taken during the king crab era. The idea, says KMM Director Toby Sullivan, was to show the subjects of the portraits both as they are now and they once were, when the king crab fishery was booming.

The exhibit also included gold nugget jewelry once popular among king crab fishermen. Crab measuring sticks used aboard Ole Harder's boat, the *Pacific Lady,* and a fully rigged king crab pot, courtesy of Don Norton, were also on view.

The exhibit has since been shown in Anchorage at a Alaska Marine Advisory Program Symposium. KMM has applied for funding to send the exhibit to other Alaskan museums. In the meantime, the portraits can be viewed at Fishermen's Hall in Kodiak.

KMM Board Member Robbie Hoedel trades fishing stories with former king crab fisherman Patty Mullin at KMM's "Faces of the Kodiak King Crab Fishery" exhibit in May.

Fulbright Scholar to Teach Maritime History at KOC

Professor Joefe Santarita at his Kodiak College office.

Kodiak College's newest faculty member, Joefe Santarita, arrived in August from Singapore to work as a Fulbright Scholar. Santarita, originally from Visayas, Philippines, will teach a survey course on Kodiak Maritime History beginning in January 2012.

Santarita's scholarly interest lies in the impact of technology on fisheries, and how that affects maritime communities.

His course will cover Kodiak history from the arrival of people here about 7,500 years ago to the present. He will also be looking at the effects of geology, weather and ocean currents in determining where people have lived and fished on Kodiak Island.

For more information call the College at 486-4161.

Kodiak Maritime Museum

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Recognizing, preserving, and interpreting Kodiak's maritime heritage"

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