We are a nonprofit dedicated to preserving maritime heritage and to sharing that rich legacy with the public, especially children and youth.

Sitka Maritime Heritage Society

2020 Annual Meeting
Close Calls & Lessons Learned

Thursday, March 5 at the ANB Founders Hall.
Doors open at 6pm, program from 7-9pm.

We are looking forward to gathering together with our members and community for our 2020 Annual Meeting. This year we continue the tradition of featuring a panel moderated by Eric Jordan. The theme will be “Close Calls & Lessons Learned” with panelists sharing their real-life experiences with near misses on the water and the valuable lessons that can be learned from those experiences.

We expect it to be an enjoyable and informative program and hope for the audience to get involved by sharing their own lessons learned. One panelist’s story will even feature a musical tie-in and potentially a sing-along! There will also be some excitement with a survival suit demonstration and challenge.

Refreshments will be served, and there will opportunities to join SMHS or renew your membership (2019 memberships expire on 03/01) and purchase SMHS gear.

Please join us for another lively night of stories, discussion, and camaraderie!

Join the SMHS Board of Directors!

SMHS has openings for new Board Members. This is a great opportunity to meet new people and get involved with a worthy cause. We are seeking individuals with diverse professional and personal backgrounds and a variety of skillsets who are looking to make a difference in the community. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact us at: (907) 623-8054 or sitkamaritime@gmail.com.
This past December SMHS held our 3rd annual Toy Boat Making event for local kids and families. It was a great way to end the year on a high note with the Boathouse buzzing with activity, creativity, and excitement!

The 2019 event was supported by a grant from the Sitka Woman’s Club, which helped cover the cost of the necessary supplies such as lumber, dowels, and paint.

Thank you, Sitka Woman’s Club!

Making Toy Boats has become a favorite SMHS tradition and we are happy to announce that the 2020 Toy Boats event will be supported by a grant from the White Elephant!

Thank you to the White E Board and Volunteers!

Photos: James Poulson, Daily Sitka Sentinel, 2019

Silent Auction at LFS
Bids accepted throughout Spring 2020

Terry Perensovich has generously donated a Tyee deck pump to auction to benefit our Boathouse 2020 Capital Campaign to complete the building phase of the Japonski Island Boathouse!

You can check out the pump and make a bid at LFS Marine Supply throughout the Spring.

Thank you, Terry and LFS!

2020 Annual Business Sponsors

Thank you for your support!

CAPTAIN LEVEL($250+)
- Prewitt Enterprises
- Foreign Automotive
- Sitka Vision Clinic

Our Annual Business Sponsors help us to cover the core costs of operating SMHS and allows us to continue our important work, preserving and sharing Sitka’s maritime heritage.

For more about becoming an Annual Business Sponsor, see the Join/Donate page of our website, or call (907) 623-8054.

Boathouse Capital Campaign

2020 is the year to make a difference!

The Boathouse2020 Campaign will be in full swing throughout this year to complete the fundraising needed to move forward with applying for larger foundation grants. The ultimate goal of this campaign is to complete the work needed to open the Japonski Island Boathouse to the community as a public maritime heritage center.

You can make an individual donation when you renew your membership or online at any time of the year at www.sitkamaritime.org
Another Busy Summer Ahead at the Boathouse

SMHS has been awarded a prestigious Certified Local Government Grant from the Historic Preservation Fund to continue rehabilitation work on the Japonski Island Boathouse.

This summer’s work will address:

The Addition’s Doors and Windows: Last year, the new entry addition shell was built on the West side of the Boathouse, but currently only has rough openings for the doors and windows. This part of the project develops the new addition by framing and installing four windows and doors for the utilities room and entrance.

The Addition’s Exterior: Right now, the new addition shell only has tar paper on the exterior. We will work to complete the exterior by installing siding and ventilation strips over the existing tar paper and plywood. The new siding will be fabricated from Number One Douglas fir or western red cedar which will look like the original WWII-era siding.

The Northeast Wall: The Northeast wall of the Northeast wing will be repaired as it is presently uninsulated and much of the siding is showing signs of deterioration- it is checked and very weathered. This wall will be repaired in a very similar method as the Southwest wall was repaired in 2019. We will work from the outside, first removing the original exterior siding and trim, and carefully documenting it. We will then add insulation, an infiltration barrier, and plywood sheathing on the exterior. The original siding and trim will then be replaced over ventilation strips, and deteriorated parts will be repaired or replaced if too far deteriorated. This will be done in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Jamb extensions will be installed for the extra depth of the wall and we also aim to widen the two existing door frames and fit them with new doors with panic bar exit hardware.

The Public: We will be reaching out to our community members to help carry out and learn about this work during volunteer work parties. At least one of these is planned to include a presentation and learning about the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. There will also be an open house in the Fall to celebrate the completed work and share information about it with our community.

Learn about the Secretary’s Standards at: https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm

New Volunteers Welcome

Be on the lookout for volunteer training and work party announcements coming this Spring. New volunteers of any experience level are welcome! Volunteers can learn new skills and get the unique opportunity to contribute to an important historic preservation project in our community.
Built in Germany, the Kad’yak was a 130-foot long, three-masted barque. While being one of the most common type of vessels of that time, she would still be the finest of the Russian American Company’s fleet after making the journey across the world to arrive at Sitka in 1852. After this vast initial voyage, the Kad’yak, with a crew of 25-30 deckhands, would go on to make the trip to Unalaska, St. Michaels and back to Sitka, during the mid to late summers of 1853 and 1854. She was likely carrying priests, workers, supplies and furs, like most colonial vessels in Alaska at the time.

With ice as Alaska’s most important export, the Kad’yak’s occupation eventually turned exclusively to the ice trade. From 1857-1859, she made regular trips between Sitka and San Francisco, delivering ice harvested from Swan Lake and Leisnoi or Woody Island in Kodiak. She would depart from Sitka and spend around 20 days sailing up to Kodiak to retrieve her additional cargo, then five weeks down to San Francisco. Along with ice, other goods such as furs, timber, dried and salted fish, and tallow candles would also be transported to California. The Kad’yak would then return directly back up to Sitka carrying goods from California that were not readily available in Alaska, like flour and corned beef.

In 1859, on the seventh of these routine journeys, the Kad’yak would never reach California.

The Fourth Captain
The story of the Kad’yak and that of Captain Arkhimandritov are almost inextricably linked, as a story about one can hardly be told without mention of the other. The Kad’yak’s fourth and final Captain, Ilarion Arkhimandritov was born on St. George Island in Alaska in probably 1820. His mother was Aleut and his father was a Russian employee of the RAC. Ilarion gained experience from a young age on sailing ships and at 13 began his education in navigation at the School of Merchant Seafaring in St. Petersburg, funded by the RAC. In return, he put his education to work for the Company to earn back their ‘investment’ in him, but it is clear that Arkhimandritov’s occupation with the RAC was more than an obligation to him as evidenced by his dedication to his craft. He quickly became well-regarded by RAC management while working to chart the Alaskan coast, even being awarded a gold medal by Emperor Nicholas I for his heroic actions to save the ship and crew of the Naslednik Aleksander. A storm had heavily damaged the ship and resulted in the death of the first mate, captain, and at least two crew members, but a young Arkhimandritov assumed command and was able to save what remained of the ship and crew. However, just a decade after this career highlight, the tides would apparently turn for Arkhimandritov’s public image.

In Sitka in 1852, a purported affair resulted in Arkhimandritov being banished from the Church. He was required to do seven years’ penance for his indiscretions, which included a requirement to attend all holy services. Since leaving Sitka would have risked him missing a service, he stopped his work as a navigator and his occupation during that time is unknown. But, it seems safe to assume that his nautical skills would have been less than sharp after such a long hiatus. Nonetheless, he
eventually returned to seafaring after his penance, and the final voyage of the Kad’yak in 1860 may have been one of his first since coming back.

**A Promise**

During the rainy winter of 1860, the Kad’yak made the first leg of its routine journey to pick up its 356-ton cargo of ice from Kodiak. As the ship departed Kodiak bound for California, it hit a rock at 4 knots, tearing through the hull. The rock was so unexpected that it was suggested in later reports that it must have just grown there. It quickly became clear that there was no other option but to abandon the ship and all aboard were able to evacuate to lifeboats unharmed, eventually reaching shore at St. Paul Harbor.

Filled with its buoyant cargo, which was kept frozen by the frigid March temperatures, the Kad’yak remained a “wooden-hulled iceberg” in the water. The wounded, but un-sunken ship became a spectacle for curious locals who paddled out into the ocean to observe the final act of the Kad’yak. The ship which had once been the crowning glory of the RAC fleet, bobbed and drifted along for four days before finally sinking on a reef in Icon Bay, Spruce Island.

Before departing for his fateful voyage to Kodiak, Arkhimandritov dined with the Chief Administrator of the RAC and his devout wife. Apparently knowing that his route would take him to Kodiak, the Chief Administrator’s wife asked a favor of him: to visit the grave of Father Herman (known as St. Herman of the Russian Orthodox Church) on Spruce Island to say a prayer and make a donation. Arkhimandritov agreed, but we will never truly know whether the promise was made in earnest or simply out of politeness to his boss. Either way, it was a promise that the Captain did not keep.

When the Kad’yak found its final resting place, it was not just in front of any island or in any bay, but directly in front of Spruce Island, facing the grave of St. Herman. To add to the happenstance, one mast remained unsubmerged, creating a single haunting cross rising from the water, as if to compensate for the promise that the Captain had broken.

Although never formally charged for the sinking of the Kad’yak, Arkhimandritov’s misfortunes would continue just a year later with the grounding of the Tsaritsa. Shaken by the recent events, the Chief Manager of the company at that time, although Lutheran, decided to donate an icon to the chapel. Later, Arkhimandritov himself would donate an icon to the same chapel on Spruce Island.

**The Discovery**

The Kad’yak wreck was located in 2003, a process which is detailed in the 2018 book *The Ship, the Saint, and the Sailor: The Long Search for the Legendary Kad’yak* by Bradley Stevens, a member of the team that located and surveyed it. Stevens’ account of its discovery relates the exhilaration, intrigue, and alleged betrayal surrounding the find, entailing almost as many twists and turns as the story of the Kad’yak’s sinking over 140 years prior. The Kad’yak is the oldest shipwreck found in Alaskan waters, and its subsequent study made it the site of Alaska’s first professional underwater archeological survey. It is also significant because of the project’s focus on outreach and the media’s wide coverage of the find, which both brought a heightened awareness of the importance of Alaska’s underwater archeological resources. Stevens states in his book, “Alaska is essentially, and historically, a maritime nation, “ and as such, much of the Alaska we know today is intertwined with its maritime past.

**Sources:**


### 2020 Membership • Sitka Maritime Heritage Society

Sitka Maritime Heritage Society - P.O. Box 2153, Sitka, AK 99835 - (907) 623-8054 - www.sitkamaritime.org

We are a nonprofit dedicated to preserving maritime heritage and to sharing that rich legacy with the public, especially children and youth. Members are added to our newsletter mailing list and receive a 20% discount on SMHS merchandise. Thank you!

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**2019 Memberships Expire Soon on 03/01/2020**

- □ $15 – Students and Elders
- □ $30 – Crew Member
- □ $40 – Entire Crew (family)
- □ $50 – Mate
- □ $100 – Navigator
- □ $250 – Captain
- □ $500 – Pilot
- □ $1000 – Old Salt

**+ □ Donation for the Boathouse 2020 Capital Campaign: $_________**

- □ I want to get my **newsletter by email** (instead of regular mail)
- □ I want to join the SMHS **events & updates email list**
- □ I am interested in **volunteering** for SMHS

Name: ___________________________________________  Date: __________________

Address: __________________________________________

Phone: ___________________  Email: ___________________

Please charge $___________ to my credit/debit card.

Card #: ____________________________  Expiration date (MM/YY): _________ / _________

CSC (3 digits on back of card): ___________  Billing Zip Code: ___________

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