Imagine pulling in to the Japonski Island boathouse and finding yourself in a place buzzing with maritime activities and history. A place where the visitors are greeted with an outdoor display of historic small watercraft – from skin-covered boats of Arctic Alaska and dugout canoes of Southeast to twentieth-century wooden dories and skiffs. Right next to it a group of boat builders is working on one such boat. Stories of adventure at sea are mixing with discussion on particular aspects of boatbuilding and the smell of fresh wood shavings meets the scent of the ocean. Inside the woodshop wing, a dozen children are making boat models, and sound of their voices and laughter carries over the water. The marine ways are open and you can walk on catwalks to see a hauled-out wooden troller going through re-planking. On the east side of the marine ways, a small interpretive center invites visitors to learn about shipbuilder’s tools, regional seafaring history, and contemporary commercial fishing. A research room overlooking the channel offers an opportunity to find information on a particular boat or individual, share a personal memory, or information about a historic vessel at risk. Comfortable chairs and charts on the walls make it a great place to sit down and get lost in stories and memories. Maritime books, prints, cards and souvenirs are sold in the visitor center next-door and friendly and knowledgeable staff are at hand to answer questions. The old building is alive again, serving the community. This is the vision which for over a decade has been powering the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society’s efforts to rehabilitate the Japonski Island Boathouse. This is what you help us to achieve. We are getting closer with every grant, membership and donation, but there is still a long way to go. How will we get there? One paddle stroke at a time. In this season of giving thanks, we want to sincerely thank you for helping us moving forward. We hope to paddle, row, sail, and power with you for many years to come.

GOING AFTER OUR VISION WITH YOUR HELP:

NEWS:

New grant
In September of 2017 the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society received a City and Borough of Sitka General Fund grant for non-profit organizations to record the oral legacy of Sitka’s fishing families. Video and audio recordings generated during this project will be used in the interpretive center in the east wing of the Japonski Island Boathouse.

Call for Board of Directors nominations
The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society seeks to expand its board of directors. We are looking for energetic individuals committed to preservation of the maritime heritage.

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heritage of Sitka and North Pacific and willing to work on building stronger ties with the community, engage in fundraising, explore new educational opportunities and have a lot of maritime fun. Board members serve for three years and receive free admission to the society’s programs and events including cruises and fundraising parties, and one week a year of rent-free boathouse workshop use. To apply, email your contact information and brief statement of interest to sitkamaritime@gmail.com. Applications should be received by February 1. New board members’ confirmation will take place during the Society’s annual meeting.

19. Call for volunteers: Are you interested in helping the SMHS with public events, boat restoration, maritime collections, video and audio recording, youth sailing program, underwater exploration, maritime history or boathouse rehabilitation? We have a lot of fun projects for you! Contact sitkamaritime@gmail.com or come for our volunteer open house on November 11, 10-2 pm at the Japonski Island Boathouse. Volunteers receive a 20% discount on the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society’s merchandise and admission fees.

**Rent the Japonski Island boathouse workshop**

Do you need a workshop for a carpentry or boat project you have in mind? We may be able to help you. The Japonski Island boathouse workshop features workbench space, table saws and other tools and equipment. Weekly rent is $75. Members receive 20% discount.

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**FALL AT A GLANCE:**

- **November 1** — Sea chanteys pub event
- **November 3-5** — Whalefest
- **November 9** — The Cummins pub talk
- **November 11** — Volunteer open boathouse

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**FALL PROGRAMS**

- **November 1, 2017 6 pm, BEAK restaurant, 2 Lincoln Street.** *Sea chanteys and stories of the days of Moby Dick*
  Folksinger and songwriter Don Sineti shares sea chanteys, stories of Yankee whaling, and the history behind Herman Melville’s famous novel. This event is a collaboration with the Sitka Sound Science Center. Free admission.

- **November 3, 4 and 5 10-4:30 pm, Harrigan Centennial Hall, Harbor Drive.** Visit our booth at the Whalefest market.

- **November 9th 6-9 pm, Baranof Island Brewing Co, 1209 Sawmill Creek Rd.** *Happy birthday the Cummins!*
  The historic troller is turning 99 this year. Join the Sitka Historical Society and boat owner Christina Righter for a presentation about the boat’s history, birthday cake, and music. Free admission. All ages welcome.

- **November 11, 10-2 pm. Japonski Island Boathouse**
  *Volunteer open boathouse*
  Come to tour the historic boathouse, learn about volunteer opportunities, try your hand at a restoration project, and enjoy light refreshments.

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**RECENT EVENTS**

Summer was a busy time at the SMHS. In August, the board and staff joined Sitka Seafood Festival. Mike Litman and Jenya Anichenko led a dock tour, while board and volunteers manned our booth in Crescent Harbor.

Our August Maritime Family Day invited kids and their families on a treasure hunt around the boat house. Young visitors learned about navigational instruments, fishing, boats, and shipwrecks while searching for a code to a treasures chest. They all left with pirate booty! Adults had a chance to look at SMHS artifacts and the Deuce Audette historic photos collection. This program was made possible in part by the Museums Alaska and Jay Skordahl. Thank you!

The SMHS is gearing up for making the first step towards building an office extension along the southern wall of the building. Two work parties were held in August to prepare the site for utilities and foundation construction. The winch shed was removed, ground was cleared of overgrowth, and the wall was repaired and spot painted. There are more exciting projects ahead. Please join our next work party on November 11.
This year the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society celebrated 4th of July with a sea otter cruise. SMHS board member Rebecca Poulson and retired Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) biologist Jerold (Jerry) Deppa spoke on the history of sea otter hunting and rehabilitation in the area. After population depletion resulting from the popularity of sea otter pelts in the nineteenth century fur trade, many attempts were made to reestablish sea otters in their former ranges in Alaska. The most successful of these programs was brought forth—somewhat paradoxically—by nuclear tests in Amchitka Island in the Aleutians. The Atomic Energy Commission planned a series of underground nuclear bomb tests there in 1965, 1969 and 1970. ADF&G staff with Deppa in the lead became involved, and managed to convince the Atomic Energy Commission to fund removal of sea otters from the proposed blast area and transplanting them to other parts of Alaska. Although not formally stated as such, this transplant was a de facto mitigation measure for the nuclear tests.

The first otters arrived in Southeast Alaska in 1966: 10 to Yakutat Bay and 20 to Khaz Bay near Sitka. Mr. Deppa coordinated release of the sea otters in Southeast Alaska in 1968 and 1969 and described the operation. Sea otters were captured with gill nets deployed among kelp beds in Amchitka and held in large plywood tanks with sea water circulated by pumps. For transport, individual bathtub-like kennels were fashioned from galvanized steel. The kennels were designed to hold several inches of sea water and to fit through the rear door of a Grumman Goose amphibious aircraft. Sixty otters at a time were flown from Amchitka to Annette Island, Sitka or Gustavus in a C-130 Hercules transport. Upon arrival, kennels were loaded into 3 waiting Grumman Goose aircraft and flown to the release sites. Once the planes landed on the water, the otters were set free one-at-a-time through the plane door by opening the hinged kennel top and letting the animals slide out. The water seemed to reassure and calm distressed animals. Despite the considerable cleanup that planes required after otter flights, Alaska Airlines, Webber Air in Ketchikan, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all made their Grumman Goose aircraft available at short notice throughout the summer for the transplants.

During the summer of 1968, a planeload of otters left Amchitka for Southeast Alaska about once every 2 weeks, introducing approximately 300 sea otters to Southeast Alaska. Khaz Bay on the west coast of Chichagof Island received the most transplanted sea otters. With the transplant of 403 sea otters between 1965 and 1969 to 7 sites in Southeast Alaska, otters became reestablished here. The population grew at an estimated rate of 20% a year, reaching 7,500 by 2003.

Sea otter reintroductions have been controversial with some fishermen because shellfish numbers—crabs, clams, and abalone—have declined following the return of sea otters. On the other hand, sea otters have also reduced sea urchin populations, allowing kelp beds to become reestablished in North Pacific coast waters, fostering greater biological diversity and a more resilient ecosystem. Thanks to the informative presentations, as well as the hospitality of Allen Marine’s boat crew, the 4th of July cruise participants gained new appreciation of Sitka’s sea life and maritime history.

- based on Tom Paul’s ADF&G report
HISTORY UNDER WAVES

Redoubt Lake underwater exploration

The SMHS “History under waves” initiative was off to a great start this summer with the exploration of Redoubt Bay and Redoubt Lake submerged cultural sites. In the mid-1980s, Alaska Department of Fish and Game divers David Barto and Dave Gordon noted large anchors and remains of a wooden boat in the lake. Later, Sitka resident Mike Martello located a grinding mill stone in the Bay near the outlet into the lake. David MacMahan, the former Alaska State Archaeologist advocated for investigation of these finds, but exploration of submerged cultural sites requires special equipment, boats, accomplished divers, and knowledge of the principles of underwater archaeology. All these elements came together when the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society approached the captain of the Sitka VFD dive team Captain Troy Tydingco and Lieutenant Bob Reid with a proposal to explore the reported finds in the Redoubt Lake. With the blessing of the Fire Chief Dave Miller, and required permits, the team embarked on a search for the sunken history of Redoubt Lake.

Redoubt Lake, or Kunaa Shax Áayí as it was known to the Tlingit people long before it was placed on Russian and US charts, has always had a special meaning for people living in the region. In the pre-contact period, the lake was an important Tlingit subsistence and cultural site historically owned by the Kiks.ádi Clan. Russians established the Ozerskoi (Russian for “lake”) settlement around 1805, shortly after the founding of New Archangel (Sitka). Colonial Russian workers at Ozerskoi harvested salmon and conducted a wide range of industrial and agricultural activities that supported the larger settlement at Sitka. Initially, a saltery was operated at the site to prepare fish for consumption in Sitka. Around 75,000 reds, pinks and silvers were caught here annually. Fresh fish was sent to Sitka in kayaks and wooden boats. Salted salmon was stored for the winter and shipped as far as California and Hawaii. By the 1820s, the settlement consisted of a house for the manager and barracks for the workers surrounded by a palisade. Outside the fort were barracks for hunters, a wind-powered flour mill, a water-powered mill, a tannery, a fish processing building, a weir, and a fish pond. Grain and cow hides were shipped from the Fort Ross settlement in northern California to supply the flour mill and tannery. A sawmill was constructed during 1832-33 to meet the demands of ship and house building and renovation in Sitka. After the sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867, a cannery was operated here until the early 20th century.

This rich history of occupation and use posed questions about the dates of the reported underwater finds. Did the anchor and boat belong to the Russian era of Alaskan history, or did they end up in the lake later? Why and how did they come to their resting place?

Two days of exploration allowed for some insights. On the first day, the team located the remains of the wooden boat and the grinding stone. The stone’s location in the bay near the rapids at the lake outlet provides a clue to where the mill was located. In 1840 the water in the lake rose 5 feet above the usual high water level, smashing the water locks and destroying a portion of the mill. The current placement of the grinding stone in Redoubt Bay may have been a result of this event.
The wooden boat remains are more enigmatic. The surviving section is 23 feet long, indicating a 28-30 foot-long round-bottomed wooden watercraft of light construction, likely propelled by oars. Boats such as this were in use for most of nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which makes it difficult to date. The fact that this boat is at an advanced state of decomposition, however, may indicate that it is not a recent watercraft. Typically, fresh water environments allow for good wood preservation. It may be speculated that the wreck is well over fifty years old, but further research and analysis are required for conclusive dating and identification.

Perhaps the most exciting discovery was made at the end of the second field day, when Greg George located the anchor. Inspection revealed that it represents the type known as the wooden stock Admiralty Old Pattern long shanked anchor. Anchors of this design had an angular crown and nearly straight arms and were in common use throughout the eighteenth century. The British Royal navy used this type up until 1840s, when they were gradually replaced by the New Style Admiralty Pattern anchors. The Redoubt Lake anchor can thus be dated as an eighteenth or early nineteenth century artifact, but what was it doing in the lake? Too big for a lake watercraft, it must have been deliberately positioned here as an anchor for a floating structure, or weight to hold down logs piled across a shallow portion of the lake to create the fish pond mentioned in Russian sources. In either case, the anchor most likely ended in the lake as a result of Russian activities, and represents the time when a little settlement on Redoubt Lake played an important role in the supply and trade network that connected Alaska with California, Hawaii and Russia.

The underwater exploration that took place this July is just the beginning of the research on Redoubt lake submerged sites. The team plans to return to the site for more thorough documentation and sampling. No plans have been made at this point for artifact removal. Waterlogged artifacts, particularly of composite nature, such as the Redoubt Lake anchor, need immediate conservation treatment, without which they can fall apart in a matter of months, and in some cases even hours. Left in situ, on the other hand, these objects can maintain their structural integrity for centuries, serving as fascinating dive sites and allowing for continuous exploration of Alaska’s past.

The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society wishes to thank members of the Search and Rescue dive team Troy Tydingco, Bob Reid, Lynn Wilbur, Joel Markis, Denise Turley, Teka Lamade, Jeffrey Reinhardt, Greg George, Dave Johnson, John Midgett, Herb McLenahan, Jenny Klejka, and Pat Bean for their important contribution in this project. We are looking

**BOAT FILES: THE MV PRINCETON HALL**

Boats are practical things built to accomplish certain tasks: some are made for fishing and cargo transportation, some for research and pleasure cruising. The MV Princeton Hall began its long career in southeast Alaska with a markedly different mission “to serve the mankind of Alaska through mercy, comfort and love.” Kathy Ruddy, the current owner of the Princeton Hall, who has been researching the remarkable history of this vessel for several decades, shared her knowledge at the SMHS October pub talk.

The 65-foot Princeton Hall was a Presbyterian mission boat. Funded by Alaska Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Church’s Board of Home Missions, these boats began traveling around the region in the early 1900s, when the villages were accessible only by boat. One of the first — the Tornado — was won in a poker game by the Rev. Eugene Bromley, pastor of Haines Presbyterian Church from 1925-1935 and later a pastor in Sitka and Juneau. The last of them, the Anna Jackman, ceased service in 1982 and was old to private owners. “I don’t know why, but the Presbyterians were the only denomination that organized their evangelistic work in Alaska by a system of boats,” says Kathy Ruddy. “That’s one of the reasons the Presbyterian Church is so prominent in many Native communities.”

The wooden hulled Princeton Hall was built by Sheldon Jackson School students under the supervision of legendary Alaska boat-builder Andrew Hope to replace the MV Princeton, which wrecked in October of 1939 near Vanderbilt Reef in Lynn Canal. The boat was taking three Tlingit orphan

Andrew Hope, builder of the MV Princeton Hall, photo courtesy Kathy Ruddy
After the Princeton was wrecked in 1939, a call went out for the construction of a new boat. The Alaska Native Brotherhood adopted a special resolution in Sitka the month after the boat was lost, urging that a new boat be built. The Brotherhood donated $200 from the "alleged misdemeanors" of delegates toward building a new boat.

The Princeton Hall was launched in late September of 1941. In accordance with the Presbyterian sobriety mission, a bottle of "flower water" – a perfumed liquid – was used for the boat's blessing in place of more traditional champagne. The initial plans for the boat's peaceful use, however, were soon to change. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the US Navy began conscripting private watercraft for war purposes. Only small monetary compensation for materials used in construction was given to the owners, but many considered it their honorable duty to contribute to the war effort. The story goes that when a naval official called on Sheldon Jackson College Superintendent Les Yaw announcing that they were there to requisition the boat, Mr. Yaw replied "No, you are here to receive it as our contribution" and handed over the keys. He later wrote: "We worked like beavers to get our sturdy little ship. Now our pride and joy lie in the fact that the work was good enough to pass Navy inspection and to help in time of emergency."

Under the new ownership, the Princeton Hall was renamed P1 and taken to Juneau where it was re-fitted as a submarine patrol boat. Its wooden hull was ideal because it did not trigger mines, but the bow of the boat had to be altered to house a gun. While still in US Navy service, the boat became one of the first vessels to respond to the devastating Hoonah fire on June 14, 1944.

After the war, the Presbyterian mission bought the boat back and for the next twenty years it worked in missionary service, delivering the message of the Presbyterian Church along with food and other supplies to villages in southeast Alaska. In 1948 the Princeton Hall and the Sheldon Jackson II traveled together from Sitka to Seattle, carrying the 100-voice Sheldon Jackson School choir to the 160th assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Fifty boys rode on the Sheldon Jackson and 50 girls on the Princeton Hall. In the evenings the boats would tie up together and the choir members would serenade each other. "The story is told that fishing boats from all around would gather to listen to the impromptu shipboard concerts," Ruddy says.

The Princeton Hall was "retired" in 1965 and sold to a Juneau resident. After falling into disrepair, the boat was purchased by Bill Ruddy in 1978. Two years later he and Kathy married and began slowly restoring the Princeton Hall. The task was daunting. The WWII gun installation weakened the planks at the bow, and rot spread along the vessel’s sides. Some frames and internal wood work also needed to be replaced, but the mast with a cross carved into it remained intact and is still in its original position.

Once restored, the Princeton Hall embarked on new adventures, serving as an expedition and research vessel. In 1989 Kathy and Bill took it on a search of the location where the Princeton wrecked in 1939. The interest in locating the wreck came about when a survivor, Annie Roberts of Craig, called Kathy to share her memories of the long cold night she, her two sisters and church workers spent on Little Island. Although the group was not able to locate the ship, the trip brought up many stories and reestablished a connection between the Princeton Hall and this dramatic event.

In June of 1993, the 50+ year old vessel was once again called on a submarine-related mission when the USS Alaska, a nuclear-powered Trident submarine, visited Juneau. The boat ferried two dozen Juneau residents for a submarine tour. Captain Dale Anderson had to construct a special gangplank for people to move between the vessel and the submarine.

Today, the Princeton Hall is homeported in Juneau. A lovingly preserved tribute to nearly 80 years of maritime history of southeast Alaska, it is still an active watercraft awaiting new adventures.
MARITIME HAPPENINGS AROUND ALASKA

Homer
The Kachemak Bay Wooden Boat Society’s Wooden Boat Festival took place on September 1-3, 2017 in Homer, Alaska. This year’s festivities and T-shirt design highlighted the society’s work on restoring the Baltic ketch Indomita and included kids’ model boat building activities, a dinner-auction-dance party at Alice’s Champagne Palace, and a wooden boat display on the Homer spit. The band Rogues and Wenches of Anchorage joined forces with the local sea chantey group to bring all-time favorite tunes to this three-day-long festival.

Sitka
On October 13, two days after Sitka celebrated its first-ever Indigenous People’s Day, a large group of dignitaries, guests and spectators gathered in front of the University of Alaska building to witness a historic launch of a newly carved Tlingit dugout canoe. The president of Sealaska Heritage Institute Dr. Rosita Worl shared the story behind the project. When Tlingit elders were asked to identify the most endangered Tlingit tradition, canoe building was at the top of the list. At first Sealaska explored an opportunity to build a canoe in every single Tlingit community of Alaska, but financial and time requirements proved to be too challenging. Luckily for Sitka, the Sitka National Park and Sitka Tribe of Alaska stepped forward and offered to help. Working at the park’s carving shed, master craftsman Steve Brown and his apprentices TJ Young, Tommy Joseph, and Jerrod and Nick Galanin carved a 27-foot long cedar canoe, which was given the name Dachxan’ee Yaagu (grandchildren’s canoe), to celebrate a new generation of tradition bearers, canoe carvers and voyagers. Childrens’ handprints gracing the canoe’s sides are a reminder of this connection.

Kodiak
After years of planning and fundraising, the Kodiak Maritime Museum is moving forward with its Thelma C Interpretive Exhibit. The outdoor exhibit features a restored historic salmon seine boat, the Thelma C, mounted in a small plaza near Kodiak’s small boat harbor. The exhibit will include a series of interpretive panels telling the story of the boat, the Kodiak commercial salmon fishery, and the effects of the 1964 Great Alaskan Earthquake and tsunami on downtown Kodiak. The concrete foundation for the plaza is now in place and the museum plans to move the boat in the next few weeks from a storage yard onto a specially built steel cradle on the exhibit site. Once the boat is in place the interpretive panels will be installed and a pavilion roof will be constructed to keep rain and snow off the boat. The museum plans to unveil the exhibit during the Kodiak Crab Festival next May.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Crew:
Rosemary Carlton
Sue Thorsen
Sean Adams

Mate:
Carnelius McDermott
Richard Curran

Navigator:
David and Marilyn Knapp
Jan Steinbright
Sitka Vision Clinic

Pilot:
Jay Skordahl
Linda Schmidt
The Earl & Bettie Fields Automotive Group Foundation

THANK YOU!
IF YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT MARITIME HERITAGE OF ALASKA…..

Please consider joining or renewing your membership with the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society! Our mission is to preserve maritime heritage with a specific focus on the legacy of Sitka and Alaska. We are the only organization dedicated to the preservation of maritime heritage in southeast Alaska, and we need you to be successful!

Members receive the newsletter and a 20% discount on SMHS merchandise.
To join or renew visit us on-line at www.sitkamaritime.org
or fill out the form below and return it with your check or credit card information to:

Sitka Maritime Heritage Society
P.O. Box 2153
Sitka, Alaska 99835

NAME_____________________________________________________________

ADDRESS________________________________________________________________________

PHONE_______________________E-MAIL____________________________________________

☐ $15 STUDENTS AND ELDERS  ☐ $100 NAVIGATOR
☐ $30 CREW MEMBER  ☐ $250 CAPTAIN
☐ $40 ENTIRE CREW  ☐ $500 PILOT
☐ $50 MATE  ☐ $1000 OLD SALT

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