





Anne – here is picture for the shirts, and a couple of people working, use whichever is better, or maybe you have a good one

Volunteer work at Boathouse

Since March 12th, volunteer crews have been cleaning and documenting the contents of the workshop wing of the boathouse, the part of the building closest to the bridge.

Last summer volunteers went through the storage wing (the side near the Coast Guard) and completely cleaned it and documented the contents. That side started out so full of materials, dating back to World War II and augmented by wildlife, you could not even see the floor. Last summer volunteers also cleared brush and scraped and painted the building, and contractors repaired the roof and some walls and doors, using a federal Historic Preservation Fund grant. The same type of grant is being used this summer, for the cleaning and foundation repair.

Work has now begun on replacing the foundation posts under both wings. This work, led by volunteer (and professional contractor) Greg Reynolds, does require experience. It is going on on Saturday mornings, and if you have done foundation work before and are interested in helping out, you are free to participate in as many or as few sessions as you like. Call Greg at 747-5518 or Rebecca Poulson at 747-3448.

There will continue to be work for general volunteers, to complete the inventory, build shelves in the storage van outside, move the building's contents into storage, thoroughly clean the interior of the building, and possibly paint the storage van. This work will also continue on Saturday mornings 9 am - noon. If you are interested in helping with this part, just show up and someone will hand you an inventory form, a broom or a paint brush. Dust masks, rubber gloves, and snacks are provided, although volunteers may need to watch out for corny jokes.

Annual Meeting on Shore Boats

Mt. Edgecumbe, Alaska had a large and lasting impact on Sitka, much of it taken for granted at the time, and now in danger of fading from our awareness. Mt. Edgecumbe was the name of the federal Native school and hospital, other federal agencies, housing, and employee services, on Japonski, Alice and Charcoal Islands after World War II. This year for the annual meeting the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society chose the topic "Remembering the Shore Boats," which were the ferries that ran between Mt. Edgecumbe and Sitka before the bridge was built in 1972. On February 21st attendees at the annual meeting were privileged to share the memories, stories and history of Mt. Edgecumbe and the shore boats from people who were members of that now vanished community.

The panel included: Gil Truitt, who also gave an overview of the history of Mt. Edgecumbe, Walt Dangel, Karen Coleman, and Brownie Thomsen. Eric Jordan did a superb job with his congenial hosting of the event. Archie Neilsen, Emma Kohler, Herb Didrickson, Rus Braun, and Marti Braun made wonderful contributions from the floor, and Roy Bailey could not attend but wrote down his recollections as one of the earliest shore boat skippers, right after World War II.

Karen Meizner and the Sitka Historical Society Isabel Miller Museum researched and allowed the SMHS to use historic photos of the shore boats from their collection. Rus Braun brought in photos from his collection, the Mt. Edgecumbe High School maintenance crew loaned historical photos and plans, and Herb Didrickson brought photos and an annotated map. Emma Kohler brought her recollections, some great photos of the shore boats – one taken from the bridge, under construction – and the Public Health Service medallion her late husband Carroll wore as a shore boat captain and bus driver.

The Sitka High School audio visual program taped the event, ensuring this material is preserved. The treats were first rate – of course – thanks to Sabra Jenkins, Cathy Poulson, Rebecca Himschoot, and Terry Perensovich, who also took care of the all important coffee detail.

Mt. Edgecumbe – the Bureau of Indian Affairs School, tuberculosis sanitarium, FAA, Coast Guard – had a large impact on Alaska's history and should be documented more thoroughly, while people who were part of it can still tell the story. Only three of the dozens of shore boat skippers, for example, survive. A documentation project, that might result in a book or exhibit, could be an opportunity for collaboration among various organizations with an interest in this history, such as the SMHS, the Sitka Historical Society, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Mt. Edgecumbe High School, and SEARHC. The 60th anniversary of the founding of Mt. Edgecumbe School will be February 22nd, 2007.

The board of the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society was honored to have been part of this fascinating evening of insights and memories, making this another event where everyone leaves wanting more!

Cannery label t-shirts

The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society shirt for 2006 features a canned salmon label found in the old Pyramid Packing Company cannery, built in 1918 and now home to Fishermen's Quay and Murray Pacific, on Sitka's waterfront. Shirts come in medium-dark Blue, Aqua, chocolate Brown, Tan, and Black. The sizes are generous and won't shrink. They are pigment-dyed (except the black), heavy-weight premium cotton shirts. Sizes are S, M, L, XL and XXL. Short sleeve shirts are \$20 and long sleeve shirts are \$25. Add \$3 per shirt for mailing in the U.S. They can also be purchased by appointment, by calling 747-3448, or by coming to the kayak and rowboat races on the Fourth of July. **Members get a 20% discount!** That's \$16 short, \$20 long.

Fundraising

The board of the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society has been meeting twice a month since receiving word last October about being awarded the \$325,000 matching grant from Save America's Treasures. Board members have taken fund raising and non profit board development workshops from the Foraker Group, and the SMHS has sent out letters of inquiry or applications to nine potential funders as well as our legislators. There is lots to do with all the actual mechanics of raising money, carrying out the foundation repair project, and preparing for actual construction.

As many already know, raising money is not as simple as writing a good grant application. Foundations will help pay for a building, but they want to see a financial commitment first, from the organization and the community. In addition, grants rarely pay for the day-to-day things that are necessary to accomplish a construction project or even the actual work of an organization. Money for things like

insurance, postage and photocopying, utilities, and even staff, comes from individuals who believe in the mission of the organization.

Membership renewal

If this newsletter was mailed to you, the expiration date of your most recent membership is above your name. If there is no date, your membership expired more than a year ago.

Your membership is important. The SMHS now has the expense of liability insurance on the building, and there are also the ongoing expenses for copying, printing, and mailing. Operating expenses – an administrator and office space – are in the near future. The SMHS has and will continue to run a tight ship, with everything possible done with donated labor and materials. Every dollar is used to its maximum value.

A healthy membership provides essential matching for grants, it shows the SMHS has strong local support, and proves to potential funders that the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society will be around a while.

The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation. All memberships and other donations are tax-deductible.

Website

The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society has a website, with loads of historical information, complete schematic design for the rehabilitation of the boathouse, events updates, and pictures of the t-shirts. The address is www.sitkamaritime.org. It is full of information and pictures. Check it out!

Fourth of July kayak races and open house

Look for announcements about the annual kayak and rowboat races on the Fourth of July. This year the SMHS hopes to be able to host them at the boathouse, with tours or an open house in the building.