

Western Wood



The Northern California/Lake Tahoe Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society, Inc.

Volume 28, Issue 4

Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2011

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Somewhere Along the West Shore



The Presidents Message

Jared Klein

It seems like it was only yesterday that Jim Robello handed me the tiller at the Golden Gate Yacht Club and on the 5th of November I passed the tiller to John Lahti. The boats have been put away for the year and this is my final column as president. Where did my year as president go?

Since my last article, I attended the International Boat show at Lake Geneva with about 25 of our Chapter members. I think that I can speak for all of us when I say we had an outstanding time. My hat is off to the Blackhawk and Glacier Lakes Chapters for producing a truly outstanding event. The tour of the lake and homes will be long remembered as will the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century yachts that provided transportation for the lake tours. It was interesting to see the boats in the show as many of them were brands that are not prevalent on the west coast.

This years Delta Cruise was one of the best Delta Cruises ever. The weather couldn't have been better. I think that the only time the boats weren't underway was when we stopped to eat or refuel. This is what it's all about, boating and friendship.

Thinking back on the year, from my prospective the job of president has been an easy one due to the great support from the event chairs and their assistants. Not only were the events themselves outstanding but they will be long remembered and talked about. In review, we had a great Spring Fling, snow and rain at Bass Lake, record rain at Wood and Glory, perfect weather for the South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic, rain for the Great Gatsby Party at the Pope Estate, a great Delta Cruise, and to cap the year, light rain at the annual meeting.

I started the year with a plea for more members to get involved in chairing and working on events. As I think you all realize, the Chapters events are what brings us all together to share our love for the wooden boats. Without the events, the chapter would be little more than a mailing list. As I write this column, we are in need of a chair or co chairs for Wood and Glory. Additionally, there are several other chairs that need a candidate to step up and relieve them. If you are interested or know someone that might be interested, contact John Lahti or me.

I have really enjoyed the year as president. I couldn't have a better group of people to work and socialize with. The Chapter has done well in maintaining membership and attendance at events has been strong. The South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic had record attendance and promises to be even bigger in 2012.

Before John takes over this column, I once again want to thank all of the event chairs and their assistants that helped make my year as president of the Chapter a memorial experience.

This year has been a great one both for events that, despite the challenges of fickle weather, turned out to be some of the best ever, and for Western Wood. We were awarded the ACBS International "Best Magazine Award" this year. This is really a chapter award since it is a group effort from the editors and members who contributed extraordinary stories. The information and reports on events are important, but the stories from members add another interesting flavor for our readers.



It's nice to reflect on our laurels, but we must look to the future. We need your stories to continue the good work. There's a story behind every boat, what's yours? Send it in we can use it. You don't need to be a good writer, we just need the story. We can work it into shape.

We wish all of you the very best happiness as you enjoy your family and friends during the holiday season.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Lee and Sandy



WESTERN WOOD is the Quarterly newsletter of the Northern California/Lake Tahoe Chapter, of The Antique and Classic Boat Society, Inc. and is published for the benefit of Chapter members. Publication dates are...

May-Spring	Deadline: April 15
August-Summer	Deadline: July 15
November-Fall	Deadline: October 15
February-Winter	Deadline: January 15

The newsletter is available on our website: www.acbs-tahoe.org
Questions, articles for publication, advertisements and letters to the editor, etc. should be sent to...

WESTERN WOOD,
Lee and Sandy Chase

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lee.chase@sbcglobal.net
sandy-chase@sbcglobal.net



**DID YOU SEE WHAT WE HAD
AT THE SHIPS STORE THIS YEAR?**



Not only did we have some great merchandise we had wonderful volunteers and along with quite a bit of work we had a lot of fun at the two Tahoe shows. Many thanks to those that volunteered to help out with the numerous tasks that are involved. Many hands make lighter work for all. ACBS members have always had a wonderful volunteer ethic and we need everyone to share in this philosophy. Your thoughts as to what you feel we should sell and how we should do it are always welcome.

There was wonderful acceptance of the redesigned shirts and caps that essentially "sold out" at the South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic. Since Gar Wood was the marque class at the Concours we had nice Gar Wood caps and shirts along with soft sided coolers, some bird houses with vintage boat styling (thank you Steve Thomas), the Real Runabouts series of books and other clothing items.

We are exploring methods of selling year around through Internet and/or direct sales. The major difficulty stems from the fact that the merchandise is placed in storage and we do not have the facilities to retrieve, package and ship individual items. If anyone has experience with "fulfillment companies" or other service providers that could warehouse and sell some of our items at a reasonable cost please contact Rich Fisher at rich.fisher34@yahoo.com or 925 945 8036.

Thanks to our great customers our revenues were 15 to 20% higher than last year.



Invites you to attend

The Board of Directors Winter Quarterly Meeting
January 26/29, 2012 - San Francisco



- **THURSDAY** your extended weekend begins upon arrival at the Argonaut Hotel and a Hotel Welcome from 5:00PM - 6:00PM for Wine and Cheese, then dinner on your own - Scoma's is just a short walk away!
- **FRIDAY** begins with Continental Breakfast at the Golden Gate Yacht Club before the Board of Directors Meeting, followed by lunch. • 6:00PM - 7:30PM **The Northern California/Lake Tahoe Chapter** is sponsoring a Welcome Aboard at the Argonaut Hotel.
- **SATURDAY** is open for you to explore. 4:00PM at the Golden Gate Yacht Club for a lobster Fest. Ending the evening with the suggestion to visit THE BUENA VISTA CAFE.
- **SUNDAY** from 10:00 AM - Noon the Classic Yacht Association will offer a "Morning on the Bay" (weather permitting.)

Mark your calendars - come, be a part of the fun!

For more information contact: Cynthia McMillen - cynorinda@aol.com



ACBS International Annual Meeting

Many Northern California/Lake Tahoe chapter members attended the ACBS International Annual Meeting. Paul Anderson even trailered his boat "Klondike" to the show which won "Best Restored Classic Cruiser".

The activities started in Chicago where local member hosted a welcoming cocktail party. The next morning we were gathered in the sunshine on the shore of Lake Michigan where we were treated to a cruise along the shoreline to the locks at the entrance to the Chicago River. Then we went down the river which provided a splendid view of the skyline.

The activities then moved to Geneva Lake. The lake is known for the many spectacular estates along the shore. Also many of the steam yachts that plied the shores during the 19th century have been restored and can be seen cruising around the lake once again. The yachts were used to chauffeur us to several estates where the owners gave us private tours. One had an extensive classic car collection. The highlight was a cocktail party at one of the most spectacular mansions on the lake.

The ACBS show at the Abby Resort attracted an impressive 150 boats. On top of that Mecum brought in some boats for auction after the show. I don't think I've seen so many interesting boats in one place before, some from builders that are not seen often on the west coast.

Help Welcome the ACBS Intn'l Directors at the Quarterly Meeting in San Francisco

This is a great opportunity to meet our board of directors and enjoy the events. Our chapter is sponsoring the Friday evening welcoming party at the Argonaut Hotel in SF. We need a good representation from our chapter to show support. See info on facing page.

Our chapter's member of the Board is Cynthia McMillan who is organizing the events. It's easy to do your part by signing up!

Sign up at the ACBS International website:
<http://acbs.org/quarterlymeetings.html>





The Dan Arena Story

Part 4 of 4 - Back to California by Dan Arena

Gene made frequent trips to Miami to help Dan in Miami get the plant up and running. The brothers decided that Gene would return to California in August of 1956 to help their father with the grape harvest. It also became Gene's focus to assist Dan Senior (his father) to build and manage a large, west coast distributorship for Arena Craft Boats. Dan would work in Miami overseeing production as well as developing new models. Soon, Gene negotiated and acquired the west coast distributorship for the Dearborn

Interceptor Marine engines. Hence, Gene, wife, and two children packed the red and white Pontiac convertible with belongings, and towed a custom trailer with a red and white Barracuda on it and headed home to California. Sitting on top of the Barracuda was Gene's 7 liter race boat.



1957 SHOW ROOM, OAKLAND

Arena Boat and Marine was completed in 1957 and opened its doors for business. It did well representing both the Arena Craft Boats and the Interceptor Marine engines. Gene did some traveling up and down the coast setting up new dealers for both the watercraft and the engines.

My parents moved to Lafayette, California where my mother enjoyed her first real home since she had married my father during the War. I completed my very first full year of school in only one location - eighth grade. However, the adjustment for Dan and his family was not as smooth. He moved his family from Florida to California after getting the manufacturing plant producing. He came home to design and build a new model 18 foot Arena Craft.

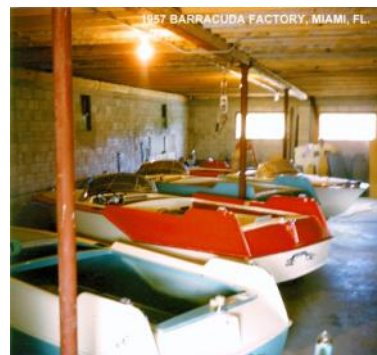
Dan teamed up with a man named Dumont who owned one of Gene's Interceptor Engine accounts. The new Dumont Boat Company on Canal Street in San Rafael, California, was struggling with its production of a 19 foot fiberglass utility boat. Enter, Dan Arena to a well - equipped shop with an excellent labor force. This arrangement benefited both Arena and Dumont. By midyear, two 18 foot models were finished and a new 20 foot boat was under construction.

The Champion Boat Company in Florida did well for the first part of the year after Dan relocated to California. Orders were met for Gene and around the country as well. As Dan focused more and more on his new boats in California, he gave less time to production and promotion in Miami. Orders declined. The luster of the boat building business faded, and the owners closed the plant in Florida.

The transition of early Arena Craft to four new models in 1958 was a smooth one. The lengths of the new boats ranged from 17 feet to 20 feet. They included a twenty foot "Marlin" family day or sport fishing boat, two 18 foot models - the "Manta" with a

V-drive and the "Barracuda" direct drive utility. There was also a 17 foot "Bonito" utility inboard. This new Arena Craft line debuted at the San Francisco Sports and Boat Show at the Cow Palace on February 28, 1958. That same day a two page article written by George Baker and titled "The Rooster Tails of Danny Arena", appeared in the Argonaut Magazine. This story chronicled Dan's life from Oakland to Detroit and his return home to California.

Preparation was underway to move to Florida. But California was booming. Recreational boating was thriving and the wives were eager to return home.



1957 BARRACUDA FACTORY, MIAMI, FL



1958 MAKING THE ARENA V-DRIVE MOLD PLUG, SAN RAFAEL, CA



1958 DAN ARENA SR, OAKLAND BOAT SHOW



An excerpt from the article reads, "There are times when Danny longs for the roar of a great motor, the buck of a three-point beat, and the white cascades of high flying rooster tails. Then this compact and genial man who has done more for racing boatdom than any other man in the business settles down again to a drafting board and the supervision of construction of the Arena pleasure boats and he says, 'Guess I must be getting old'".

Many of the original Barracuda dealers who were set up in business earlier by Gene and/or his father continued with selling the new models. This was true of other dealers in other parts of the country as well. Arena Craft was building its boats in the old Pullman Railcar Factory in Richmond, California, by 1961. Newer boats included a 22 foot cabin cruiser complete with head, galley, and a sleeping berth. Dan still sported his "automotive flair" with his bright colors and fins. He constantly pioneered new and innovative ideas such as the installation of the new jet drives that were popular. He was the first to use the Buddy Mar push-pull steering cables, Hanley hydro-jets, and Munsey stern drives.



The two brothers worked in separate areas of the marine industry with Dan designing and building boats, and Gene selling the crafts and engines. Yet, they still found time to attend some of the hydroplane races around the country, and I joined them for the west coast races. It was a thrill to be in the race boat pits with the new up and coming heroes of the sport such as Bernie Little, Bill Muncey, Fred Alter, and the icon himself, Mr. Danny Foster. The last Arena designed hydro was still in competition in 1962 when it shattered the One Mile World's Record for over 200 M.P.H. The craft was George Simon's, "Miss U.S."

The best part of being a teenager at this time was the experience I received while working for the two men I admired most. Dad (Gene) taught me the retail side of the marine industry, and Dan taught me how to build a fiberglass boat from the drawing board plans to the finished craft. These skills became the basis of my professional life upon completion of college.



The country was booming in the mid 60's, and so was the recreational boating industry. Dan made the decision to redesign his boat line and refocus the company for the changing marketplace. The inboard/outboard stern drive was becoming the power train of choice. Soft riding deep-V hulls and back-to-back lay down seats were some of the requirements. For the first time PRICE became a major concern. Dan's reputation for quality and design had been a huge selling factor, but that market was changing. Volume

pricing became the answer for growth in the marine industry as it was also doing in the auto market. Sea Ray, Reinell, and Bayliner were to become the "big hitters".

1964 saw the first of Dan's new models finished. It was the high performance, 20 foot "Barracuda" with its smaller fins and sparkling silver metal flake on the hull and deck. It was powered by a 427 C.I. engine and would travel at speeds of 60 M.P.H. I actually helped build this particular boat.

As Dan continued to expand his new line the struggle for money and financing was becoming a factor. He took on a business partner, Larry Higbie, who brought in much needed cash and oversaw the accounting department. Higbie's background was real estate, and he adapted to the marine industry easily. He was an enormous help to Dan and the growth of Arena Craft for some years. By 1969 the glamour of the boating industry was fading for Higbie; both Dan and Larry were working long hours for very little return. Dan was showing the stress.

That year Reinell bought one of Dan's 24 foot cruisers from an Oregon dealer and copied it. Dan went ballistic and sued the large corporation. I do not believe that the two young owners of Reinell realized the notoriety Dan Arena had as a designer and builder in the marine world. A deal was eventually struck whereby Reinell purchased Arena Craft, and took over the Pacheco Plant. This made it easy for Larry Higbie to exit the marine industry, and for Dan to slow down. He was 53 years old.



Reinell set Dan up with a small shop and a contract to design and build two new hulls for them. His new company was named Dan Arena Custom. He was back doing what he loved – building boats, but at a slower pace. Reinell also hired Gene as a factory representative to encourage the opening of new dealerships. He sold the Arena Boat and Marine Store in Oakland to Dearborn Interceptor Engine Company to use as a west coast warehouse. He also opened a Reinell/Arena Craft dealership in Marin County where I would join my Dad upon graduating from college.



Two and a half years later Dan moved his business back to a part of his original building in Pacheco when Reinell settled all its manufacturing back in Seattle, Washington. It was in Seattle that Reinell began using the Reinell name on Arena Craft boats.

Dan continued to build custom high performance boats that ranged in length from 18 to 23 feet during the next ten years. The industry had been moving toward high volume, cookie cutter type production offering only standard power, colors, and interiors. A portion of the boating market was looking for something special or more personalized.

A group of early Arena Craft dealers wanted to continue selling Dan's boats. They recognized his eye for design and his reputation for quality and performance, reliability, and safety. This kept him busy with his passion – designing and building boats. It was also at this time that Dan's son, Christopher (Kit), also worked for the Company.

Dan always looked for that special project which led him to the "C" flex system of making fiberglass boats without costly molds. This process allowed him to build larger, one-of-a-kind, designs in a more affordable manner. One of these projects was the 40 foot "Sea Sweep" off-shore race boat for Howard Arneson who first contacted Dan to convert his 36 foot "Boss-a-Nova" to a deluxe high speed cruiser able to travel with 6-7 passengers in comfort. This beautiful, customized, and slightly tamed racing machine was renamed "Nauti-Eve II". It went on to become the prototype for copies that were and still are being made by other sport – boat manufacturers.



Dan completed Arneson's "Sea Sweep" with his surface – driving propeller out the transom just one year after his conversion of the "Nauti Eve". The first time "Sea Sweep" tested in the water it ran four M.P.H. faster than the existing world's record for its class. Dan went on to develop and patent his Arena Surf Drive and he used it for some of his small pleasure boats.

Unfortunately, Dan suffered a stroke while testing one of his boats on Lake Tahoe in 1984 which limited the use of the left side of his body. His physical condition did not diminish his efforts or optimism to continue designing and building boats.

A very memorable event for me took place when I escorted both my father (Gene) and my uncle (Dan) to Detroit, MI, for their induction into the Unlimited Racing Hall of Fame. This took place during the Gold Cup Race Week in June of 1994. Other inductees included: Danny Foster, third member of the Boys from Oakland, George Simon, owner of the "Miss U.S.", and the driver that set the 200 M.P.H. record, Roy Ruby.

The banquet and ceremony was also a tribute to the "Miss U.S." which still held the world's speed record, and was on display for all to enjoy. The record was hers for 32 years until it was broken in 2000 by "Miss Free", with its turbine jet engine that claimed the record from Dan's 1953 design by less than five M.P.H. One week later in Redwood City, California, Dan's treasured colleagues gathered for the "1940 Notre Dame Reunion" hosted by Gerard Raney and Alec Giamo who were building a replica of the famous race boat using the original Dusenbergs engines. This memorable event was filmed as an important documentary for race boat history.



1994 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION: DAN FOSTER, GEORGE SIMON, ROY RUBY, DAN AND GENE ARENA - DETROIT, MICH.



Dan passed away on January 23, 1995 at the age of 78 in a Hayward hospital due to repertory complications. My father's eulogy for his "big" brother was a captivating tribute expressing love and respect for Dan. Gene also shared his thanks for being his brother's co-pilot in life. In a sport where ego and testosterone are a prerequisite, this soft-spoken, unimposing man, stood tall. Perhaps, no other man has given more to boating than Dan Arena.

Today there are just two of these early racing legends left - Dad, who is 90, and Danny Foster who is 93. They are both hard of hearing from the roar of screaming engines in their past, but when we get together the stories continue and I just sit back and . . . Smile.



Dan Arena did a great job on this series about his remarkable and famous uncle Dan and his father Gene. We are fortunate that he spent the time collecting the stories from his dad and then writing them down for us to enjoy. What an interesting part of boating history!

Dan has also restored some of the Arena Crafts, one of which he is sitting on in the photo, taken at the South Tahoe Wooden Boat Classic 2009.

Thanks Dan!

Some of Dan's important honors, awards, and accomplishments include the following:

- Three Arena designs won the coveted Gold Cup.
- Dan, himself, achieved an impressive list of wins with victories in every major American Unlimited Gold Cup Regatta, and set 20 worlds' records in the process.
- Charter member of The 100 M.P.H. Club.
- Gulf Hall of Fame Award.
- Received the highest award - The American Power Boat Association can give - membership in the Honor Squadron for "outstanding individuals who have made distinguished contributions to the world of power boat racing".
- He was the driving force behind the transition from wood to fiberglass for the recreational boater.

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Delta Cruise





Delta Cruise 2011

Life on the Delta goes at a leisurely pace.

The delta cruise is the last ACBS boating event of the season and it was a beautiful way to finish. After a season of some bad weather at all our events, it was a relief that this one was fair sailing all the way. We started with the traditional pot luck barbeque on a balmy Friday evening sitting on top of the berm in front of the B&W resort. From this perch we could watch the boats arrive into the harbor as we popped a few wine corks and stoked up the fires. No worries just sit back, relax and enjoy food, friends and drink. Life on the Delta goes at a leisurely pace.

Saturday we woke up to sunny skies and coffee with a continental breakfast, as maps was passed out to each boat. The route from the B&W Resort to Grindstone Joe's is very short and simple, unless you incorporate the genius of Jim Stapleton to find a new and more complex route every year. His criterion is simple, "cover as much of the Delta as possible while avoiding 5 mph zones". Other than a few incidents of excess vegetation in the channels wrapping around our props, we all arrived at Grindstone's in good shape. The folks at Grindstones seem very happy to have our event there each year and give us a warm welcome and free run of the island. The docks are very nice; there is a vast expanse of lawn and a large deck that is typical Delta rustic. After picnicking, playing lawn games or just hanging out, we returned to B&W Resort at our own leisurely pace.



We had just enough time to rest up for the catered diner on the lawn of the B&W. The meal was certainly one of the best ever, catered by the Point restaurant in Rio Vista. There was an enormous variety of dishes all well prepared and I tried them all, delicious! I just can't think of the words to describe how enjoyable this event was.

As if we didn't have enough to eat, Sunday morning we went to brunch at the Point restaurant, some by boat some by land. You could have a custom omelet, eggs Benedict, crêpes, fruit, and much more. If I wasn't driving I would have had some of the champagne too. After brunch those that came by boat continued on to the boat races going on nearby. Gene Dangle has coordinated with the race officials so that our boats have become part of the event. A list of boats and their description is given to the race announcer and he describes our boats to the spectators as we cruise by.

Preston Smith and his crew have organized this event for several years and this year it was dialed in to perfection, thanks!

Welcome New Members

Nick Fabian of Atlanta, GA
John and Patricia Abbey of Incline Village, NV
Barbara Groff of Incline Village, NV
Henry and Kathie Bunsow of Napa, CA
Wm Mark Meiggs of Oakdale, CA
Darrel Laws of Marysville, CA
Fred and Kim Minasian of Cameron Park, CA
Paul and Suzanne Ross of Newcastle, CA
Marilyn Spenset of San Ramon, CA
Ron and Jerri Smith of Ripon, CA
Stephan and Diane Zell of San Carlos, CA
Aaron and Geni Robinson of Paradise, CA
Steven and Katharine Elek of Devon, PA
Amy MacAulay Hale of Chico, CA
Bob Tuttle of Aptos, CA
Geoffrey and Katherine Smith of San Rafael, CA

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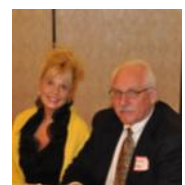
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Geoffrey & Katherine Smith



John & Patricia Abbey



The 2011 Annual Meeting

Our new Officers and Board of Directors

The Annual Meeting punctuates the end of a very successful year for our chapter. A new slate of officers and board members were officially approved and awards were presented to some well deserving members for doing much more than their fair share of work for our chapter, thanks and congratulations!



Outgoing president Jared Hein receives an appreciation gift from our new president John Lahti



Ralph & Bonnie Wallen received the President's Cup from Jared Hein

Lew & Debra Dobbins received the Chapter Appreciation Award

Officers

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 Preston Smith
 Sandy Chase
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 Jared J. Hein
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 Lee & Sandy Chase
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Barbara Foster
 Debra Dobbins
 Jack Greenhalgh
 Doug Reed



Orange Crate

by Iren Jenny



Orange Crate has won First Place in every Concours she has entered.

It was the summer of 1996. Ted and I had been members of the Tahoe Yacht Club and The Antique and Classic Boat Society for a few years. We loved summers in Lake Tahoe, hanging out with friends, going to restaurants, boating on the Lake, and we both especially loved fast boats. We had started our boating avocation on The Lake, with a speedy blue and white Donzi named Blue Blazer, had advanced to a Offshore Cigarette Racer named Bad Habit and to stay in good graces with our ACBS friends, had bought a small outboard wooden boat, named Cheap Thrills. We enjoyed every one of our boats and had no desire to buy any other.

It was the last day of the Lake Tahoe Concours D' Elegance. We were all hanging around the docks waiting for the roar out. A beautiful Besotes named Orange Crate had won the coveted Jody Carlton Memorial Trophy for Overall Best of Show. Earlier, many had gathered around the boat, congratulating Marshall Kraus the owner, commenting about the races it had won, the trophies it had garnered, etc. etc. All of a sudden, we heard an awesome sound. There was Orange Crate roaring out of the Marina with its' owner Marshall wearing a bright orange helmet. I can honestly say, I had never seen a sleeker sight in my life. Out of nowhere, I started the mental process of imagining myself in that sleek and powerful boat. I have no idea where the mental image came from and I have no idea why it stayed, but the image was there. I mentioned it to Ted and he gave me a look that said, "ok, now you have lost your mind. That boat is not for sale and you know it."

It was the summer of 2000. Orange Crate had once again won first place in its class. This year, we were the ones that were standing around and receiving compliments. We now owned Orange Crate and we were the lucky ones that roared out of the marina with those Orange Helmets.

Orange Crate was the realization of a dream for Marshall Kraus. He ordered the boat to his specifications and took incredible care of this rare and sleek boat. In Ted Jenny he saw a kindred spirit. One that would take care of his boat just as he had for all those years. As Ted's wife, I can honestly say that Ted has fulfilled that prophesy.

Now we get to the specifics of this very special boat. Most of you know the following information, but here it is: Orange Crate was delivered new to Lake Tahoe in 1964 and earned 19 trophies from 1964 through 1975 in the annual Tahoe Yacht Club Regatta. She was retired in 1976 and returned to Lake Tahoe in 1993. She has spent every summer of her active life in Lake Tahoe and has never raced in any other waters.

Orange Crate is a 1964 Besotes single cockpit 21- foot custom built race boat. It is powered by the original 425 HP 8 cylinder Ford engine, a rare Hi Riser Nascar edition. Specially built for racing in Lake Tahoe, it is one of only three single cockpit 21's built by Besotes in Stockton, California. It is uniquely different with its lower profile, 9½ foot front deck and V-drive configuration.





Her awards include:

1993- 1st Place in Post War Runabout Class; "Best of show under 23'" the Dick Clarke Perpetual for "Elegance and Style" at the Lake Tahoe Concours D'Elegance. Also won "Skippers Choice" and "Best Engine Compartment" at the Sacramento Boats on the Boardwalk.

1994- 1st Place in the Besotes Class at the Lake Tahoe Concours

1995- 1st Place in the Besotes Class at the Lake Tahoe Concours

1996- 1st Place in the Besotes Class and won the "Jody Carlton Memorial Trophy for Overall Best of Show" at the Lake Tahoe Concours

2000- 1st Place in the Besotes Class at the Lake Tahoe Concours

2003- 1st Place in the Besotes Class at the Lake Tahoe Concours

2004- 1st Place in the Besotes Class and won the perpetual trophy for the "Best Original Tahoe Boat" at the Lake Tahoe Concours. Quite an honor.

2006- Orange Crate again won perpetual trophy "Best Original Tahoe Boat" at the Lake Tahoe Concours, and in September 2006, Orange Crate won best race boat at the ACBS International Boat Show in Lake Tahoe.

2007- Again won "Best Original Tahoe Boat" at the Lake Tahoe Concours.

Orange Crate has won First Place in every Concours she has entered.



One of many articles found about Orange Crate online,

Hot Mahogany, March 9, 2005 written under Big Block Ford Engines!

"Ford produced its 100-millionth, V-8 engine in 2003 and throughout the years, there have been some fabulous performance engines, not the least of which is the "FE" series shown here in Orange Crate, a 21 foot Besotes built in 1964, that successfully raced for many years in Lake Tahoe.

The "FE" series Ford V-8's started out innocuously enough with a 352 cubic inch passenger car engine that later grew into the 390, 406, 410 and 427/428 models that epitomize "Ford Big Blocks" to traditionalists. With much interchangeability, the factory had a large catalog of specialized performance parts you could order as optional equipment or buy over the counter. A great example of this can be found in Orange Crate's penultimate "FE", a high-riser NASCAR 427 rated at 425 hp. Whether it was used in NASCAR, drag racing or lake racing, this legendary engine annihilated its competition, winning Ford prestigious titles at LeMans in the swoopy GT-40 race cars. This was also the engine that powered many of Carroll Shelby's brutal Cobras to win in Sports Car competitions worldwide. It was just as effective a predator when blistering down the lake in Hot Mahogany."

Orange Crate has been missing from Lake Tahoe for the past few years. Many reasons for that, family matters, health issues, other interests, change of vacation venues, laziness, and life in general. But none of it changes the fact that Orange Crate is one beautiful boat. The realization of one man's dream, and the embodiment of one man's care taking.

It is resting in beautiful Napa Valley, in it's new house in Yountville and is admired by all those who come to visit.

Come on by and say hi to the Mighty OC. We'll even show you those Orange Helmets.



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Better Idea

by Gene Dangle

1968 Rayson Craft Marathon Racer

This story is as much about the man, Rudy Ramos, as it is about this wonderful boat that he designed and raced. Rudy started out racing cars. His track roadster was featured on the July 1948 cover of Hot Rod Magazine. The Ford V8 60 from that roadster was used to power Rudy's first boat built by Joe Mandella in the early 1950's. That first boat fueled Rudy's life long passion for designing and building fast boats.

Rudy's early boats were essentially Mandella's. In 1955 he founded Rayson Craft Boats in Gardena, California. Southern California being the birth place of "Hot Boats" made it an easy transition for the hot rodders of the day to go from land to the water. Drag racing on the water, sometimes referred to as the "liquid quarter mile", became all the rage. Rudy was one of the first to eclipse the 100 MPH mark in the late 50's. Some early drag racers employed the front engine designs such as Cracker Boxes and E-Racing Runabouts. Rudy, and other builders, soon figured out that by placing the engine in the rear of the boat and delivering the power through a v-drive gear box that higher speeds could be attained.

In the early 60's Rudy focused his attention on endurance / marathon racing. Most of the boats of that time were sixteen to eighteen foot flat bottoms. One of the most notable boats that Rudy built was the "Hot Rod Magazine Special" that he designed especially for the Salton Sea 500 mile race. It was a 20' v-bottom hull powered by an Allison aircraft engine. Rudy won the inaugural race and the next three years as well setting new records along the way. The Allison boat would run 85 MPH at 2800 RPM.....all day long. One competitor said after the race that when Rudy went thundering by him the water was sucked right out from under his boat. After the four Salton Sea wins, APBA outlawed air craft engines requiring the exclusive use of production, automotive engines. To give some insight to "the man", Rudy came back the next year with two 427 Fords, joined end to end.

The West Coast popularized races such as the Parker Nine Hour Enduro, the Clear Lake and Berryessa Seven Hour Enduros, and the Lake Elsinor 250. Rudy competed in all of these races with some success. With the construction of the Miami Marine Stadium in Florida it became the premier venue for hydroplane racing as well as endurance marathons on the East Coast. One of the feature races on the circuit became the Orange Bowl 250 Speed Classic Invitational held there in January each year. Rudy had entered the race several times with one of his eighteen foot G-Model flat bottoms but had yet to win the prestigious race.



For the 1969 race [which was actually held the last weekend in December] Rudy went back to the drawing board and designed the boat you see here. He combined the 20 ft. length of the Allison boat with the flat bottom design of the 18 ft G-boats. Stretching the flat bottom out to 20 feet and incorporating a slight V in the front becoming almost flat at the transom proved to be a winning combination. Rudy also added six inches in width and four "lifting strakes" to the otherwise, traditionally smooth bottom. This new design made for an incredibly stable ride at speed, particularly in the "sloppy" rough water conditions generated by wakes from other boats circling the course. Rudy named the boat "Better Idea" after the new bottom design.

The hull is constructed of fiber glass with a Mahogany deck fitted topside. The marathon deck is lengthened to set the driver farther back and has higher side combings. Unlike lightweight drag hulls, this hull is built very heavy to withstand the rigors of hours of endurance racing. All of the rigging is custom fabricated and built to finish the race. Every time something broke keeping Rudy, or another driver in one of his boats from finishing a race, he made it stronger. Hours of pounding took its toll on the drivers in these lengthy events. To combat this Rudy installed a "Bostrom" sprung truck seat with bolsters to secure the driver in place which gave a very secure position. He was also the innovator of the deflector placed in front of the driver virtually eliminating helmet buffeting and the resulting neck fatigue.





For testing in California Rudy installed a 427 Ford single overhead cam engine. The boat was towed to Miami sans engine. Holman/Moody, Fords racing arm, installed a fuel injected, aluminum blocked 494 c.i. version of the "Boss 429" that they were developing for the Canadian American sports car racing series. After winning the race, the H/M crew took the engine back to Charlotte for evaluation. In an interview following the race, Rudy said that the engine was on loan to him by Mario Andretti. In a recent conversation with Lee Holman it was confirmed that Mario was a contract driver for H/M destined to drive in the Cam/Am series but no drivers ever actually owned the engines.

"Better Idea" fell into APBA's K Racing Runabout [KRR] classification. KRR's were essentially flat bottom designs with unlimited cubic inch displacement and allowing for supercharging. The early 70's saw the emergence of the Super Stock [SS] class that competed in shorter circle race courses. The endurance/marathon racers, looking to distinguish themselves from the new classification, established the KM [K for unlimited and M for marathon] class. It was to be short lived due to the advent of the Grand National [GN] class in 1974. Grand National was coined after the popular NASCAR racing of the day. Modern "K Boats" are powered by supercharged, 1100 horse power, alcohol burning engines capable of thundering down the straits at speeds well in excess of 120 MPH.

After seeing a sister boat to ours in 1972, I searched for the better part of 25 years for one of these elusive designs. It was not until 1998 when attending a V-Drive club event at Lake San Antonio that this boat surfaced. Rudy had sold the boat [with a blown SOHC Ford, read broken, engine] to Gene Lanning in 1972 on the ramp after the Elsinore 250. Gene installed a fuel injected 427 Chevy that he acquired from a Can/Am team at Laguna Seca. The boat was stored for about fifteen years before being sold to Jim Anderson who we bought it from in 2000 without an engine. We re-powered it with a 1969 supercharged 427 Chevy. I learned from Jim that perhaps no more than eight of these boats were made which explained why one was so hard to find. To have this one be Rudy's Orange Bowl winning boat was a bonus!

"Better Idea" is essentially as Rudy raced it in 1969. All of the rigging is original, as well as the upholstery on the Bostrom seat, the gel coat on the hull [with race patina], and the fiber glass over the wood deck down to the Record prop. The plywood/fiber glass 120 gallon marathon fuel tanks have been replaced with 50 gallon stainless steel units, a passenger seat was added, and the yellow target paint was redone in the 90's. Our goal is to maintain the boats originality as the vintage race boat it is.

In 2003 I received a call from boat builder and historian Harlan Orrin informing me that Rudy was to be honored at the Boat Racers Reunion in Pomona. I had seen him race at Clear lake and Berryessa in the 70's, talked to him on the phone many times, but had never met him personally. So, we hitched up the boat and were off to the Reunion. I spotted him right away and when he saw his old boat he came over to see it. After giving it the once over I asked him if he would not mind sitting in the familiar drivers seat for a photo. He was up and in the seat before I could finish asking. Rudy sat there for the better part of two hours reminiscing with old friends and fellow racers who came by to visit. So much knowledge and history, if only I had a video recorder. Rudy was a hero and mentor to many; I just sat back and soaked it in. With pride he signed the dash.



Rudy recalled his thoughts for the new bottom design, told the story of the H/M guys at Miami, and filled in some of the blanks I had been searching for about the history of our boat. He told me that the boat was entered in competition on the West Coast eleven or twelve times before being sold to Lanning in 1972. I recently learned from fellow ACBS member Jack McManus, who was a national champion speed skier, that Rudy pulled him behind this boat to a first place finish in the seventy five mile Lake Mead Ski Race. Jack still has the winning Maharaja ski, look for a "fly by" at next years "Wood and Glory".

I asked Rudy if he knew why the number 9 was changed to 45. Since 9 was Rudy's proprietary number he said with a sly grin that when he sold the boat the number was changed to 45 [4 + 5 = 9]. Better Idea was raced under KM45 until it was retired. With Rudy's blessing we put his number back on the side, as it should be. He seemed to be pleased knowing that "his" boat was in good hands. A few weeks after returning home a package arrived in the mail. Rudy had plasticized a photo copy he had made using the checkered flag from the 69' Orange Bowl race. Superimposed over the flag is a race picture of the boat and one of Rudy accepting the winner's cup while holding the subject flag that still hangs in his shop today. Across the bottom was a portion of the Miami Herald headline describing the race. It was a true honor to meet him, something I will remember for the rest of my days.





Knowing that Rudy was to be at the 2006 APBA inboard championships in Burly, Idaho campaigning GN9, we towed up to put our boat on display in the vintage race boat corral. Unfortunately, illness caused him to cancel. On September 1, 2006 Rudy passed away. It was a sad day for the boat racing community. Aside from his own racing accomplishments, which included four Salton Sea 500 victories, the founding and development of Rayson Craft Boats, and induction into the Gulf Hall of Fame in 1965 as Boat Racer of the Year, Rudy made notable contributions to the development of driver safety, as well as rules and policy changes that improved the sport of boat racing. He was an innovator and true pioneer.

Rudy's legacy lives on. His timeless 20 foot v-bottom GN that replaced this flat bottom design in the mid seventies has dominated the class over the years. The majority of the boats competing on the GN [Grand National] circuit today are Rayson Crafts that were built in the 70's. Although many of Rudy's crafts have set countless records and won championships, Rudy had never attained a National GN Championship. In August of 2006, just prior to his passing, Dave Rankin drove Rudy's GN9 to his first national title. A true competitor, and mentor to the end. To this day Rayson Crafts are still winning races and racking up national championships.

One cannot separate the man from his boats; they are both legends in their own time. We are honored to be the current caretakers of one of Rudy's special creations and are pleased to share it with anyone who is interested.



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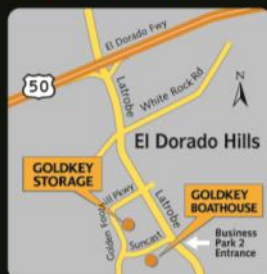
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SEASON'S END WOODIE WHOOPIE

by Jim Robello

In Lake County, we had a season's end Woodie Whoopie on Saturday, September 10, at the La Trianon Resort on the beautiful Blue Lakes. About 45 ACBS members and friends were able to join in with nine boats in the water.

Everyone brought their own picnic lunch which was enjoyed on a large deck overlooking the lake (and our boats). After lunch, we took a 5 MPH cruise up the lake, through the "narrows" and on to the Blue Lakes Lodge. The company was great and the weather was perfect for our cruise back-in-time.

Our participant boats were "Annabelle", a 1939 Chris Craft 19' Custom; "Four Ells", a 1961 Tollycraft 18' Sport-about; "Milagros", a 1958 Chris Craft 18' Holiday; "Our Yacht", a 1964 Amphicar 14'; "Rascal", a 1938 Chris Craft 16' Racing Runabout; "Risque", a 1941 Chris Craft 19' Custom; "Woody Fever", a 1936 Chris Craft 19' Custom; an unnamed 1957 Chris Craft 17' Sportsman; and the "Electric Banana", a 2009 all electric Davey.

Jack & Judy McManus
& guestsJim & Gail Robello
& guestsNancy Bartollomei
& Rich FisherRobellos's
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