

**PSMHS**  
NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2009

PUGET SOUND MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 9731

SEATTLE WA 98109-0731

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Make a \$3.00 per month donation to PSMHS and send to PSMHS Newsletter Editor, Classified Ads, P.O. Box 9731, Seattle WA 98109-0731.

**Letter to The Editor of *Maritime Seattle*:**

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the Museum of History & Industry, requested that I respond to your letter of October 11th. We appreciated the information that you provided as to the identity of the caulker featured on page 99 of our book *Maritime Seattle*. I was one of the group of volunteers who prepared captions and selected the images contained therein. Unfortunately at the time of publication, we did not have the opportunity of properly identifying Percy Langmaid and the depth of his skills.

Having you point out in detail how Percy personally instructed you about the "art" of caulking a vessel adds an element to this image that I believe needs to be shared with the general PSMHS membership.

We appreciate your taking the time to describe the caulking process and the impression that Percy had on you.

**DECEMBER****Membership News**

We thank the following members who have renewed their membership or joined the Society recently:

★ **WELCOME ABOARD** ★

NEW SUSTAINING MEMBER

**J. Alten Kearl**

NEW REGULAR MEMBER

**John & Cynthia Howe**★ **RENEWALS** ★

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Peter F. Campbell, Frank A.  
Clapp, Duane F. Davis, Walter  
R. Day, David & Heather Ellis,  
James G. Frisken, James  
Gerhardt, Don J. Harder, John  
Jacobi, Tad & Joyce Lhamon,  
Robert & Mary McCune, Paul C.  
Newell, Nick Olson, James G.  
Rice, Paula M. Roberts, Patrick  
Smith, Jack R. Storrs, Fred C.  
Thompson, Lawrence & Marlene  
Vickers, John Waterhouse, Ber-  
nard C. Willder, Joe Winkler****PSMHS**  
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**NO DECEMBER PROGRAM. NOTE  
THESE PROGRAMS COMING UP IN  
JANUARY AND FEBRUARY:**

With no PSMHS meeting scheduled in the busy month of December, we blast full-steam-ahead in early 2010 with some great programs.

■ On Wednesday, January 4, we resume our "first Wednesday" dinner meetings at the Rock Salt Restaurant on South Lake Union. Our speaker will be **Steve Lloyd**, the owner of Wave Bookstores and a diving company in Alaska. Steve will take us back to 1868 when the federal government began sending military security to the newly purchased Alaska territory. USS TORRENT was transporting troops through Cook Inlet when it struck a rock near Port Graham. All personnel aboard made it safely ashore but the exact location of TORRENT remained a mystery until the summer of 2007 when our speaker discovered the wreck.

Steve produced a dramatic underwater television documentary showing the recovery of artifacts from the 140-year-old ship. He will show us sections of the film and walk us through the discovery.

■ In February, we switch to a "First Sunday" meeting, on the 7th. We will be meeting at The Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) to enjoy chowder and salad and to hear from MOHAI Historian **Dr. Lorraine McConaghy**. She has a newly published book titled *Warship Under Sail, The USS DECATUR in the Pacific West* which focuses on four episodes in the DECATUR's Pacific Squadron mission. One of those is the Seattle war story that contested American treaties and settlements. Dr. McConaghy will autograph copies of her book at the end of the meeting.

Mark your calendars with these two dates and we'll see you next year!

**2010 Society Officers and Board Members Named**

New PSMHS officers and board members were elected at the November monthly meeting to lead the organization during 2010. **Roger Ottenbach**, who has served as Society first vice president during 2008 and

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**PSMHS online: [www.pugetmaritime.org](http://www.pugetmaritime.org)**



Membership in the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society is open to anyone interested in maritime history. Membership is solicited and inquires should be addressed to: PSMHS, P.O. Box 9731, Seattle WA 98109-0731. Monthly meetings are held September through June on the first Wednesday of each month. Meeting place and programs are announced to members by mail. The PSMHS Newsletter is published monthly, September through June, and is free to members.

**PUGET SOUND  
MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
206-624-3028**

**PRESIDENT: CHUCK FOWLER**

**360-705-3060**

**1ST VICE PRESIDENT:**

**ROGER OTTENBACH**

**2ND VICE PRESIDENT:**

**LEON GESSULA**

**TREASURER:**

**JOHNNIE RIDGWAY**

**RECORDING/MEMBERSHIP**

**SECRETARY:**

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**JAN. NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

**DECEMBER 3, 2009**

**FAX: 206-324-2638**

**E-MAIL: MARINEART@AOL.COM**

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## 2010 Society Officers and Board Members Named

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2009, was named new Society president. Roger is a retired television company executive, former general manager of KCPQ Channel 13 in Seattle, and former board president of the Maritime Heritage Foundation. He currently owns and operates Cuttysark Nautical Antiques in Seattle's Pioneer Square.

**Leon Gessula**, an executive with Holland America Line, is the new first vice president, and **Lisa Haug**, communications director for Manson Construction Company, will serve at second vice president. **Janice Ridgway**, a certified public accountant, was selected as treasurer and **Dan Withers**, a retired wireless communication industry executive, was re-elected secretary. **Chuck Fowler**, current Society president, will continue on the board as past president.

Those elected to the board of governors for the coming year are: **Tim Beaver**, chief executive officer, Global Diving and Salvage; **Pat Hartle**, American President Line retiree and Northwest Seaport board officer; **John Hough**, retired state deputy attorney general and past president of the Washington State Parks Foundation; and **Tom Kane**, Boeing retiree and past president of the Northwest Steam Society. Others elected board members are: **Jerry Mattox**, maritime consultant and publisher of the *Marine Directory*; **Lise Rose**, historian and author, retired United States state department official, and PSMHS volunteer library coordinator; and **Leonard Garfield**, director of the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), ex-officio.

## Change, Challenge, Achievement and Opportunity by Chuck Fowler

My two years at the helm of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society ship has been a time of change, challenge, achievement and opportunity.

While remaining true to our proud 60 year history and traditions, we've changed and become more visible as a leading maritime history organization in the Puget Sound area and the Pacific Northwest. We've strengthened partnerships with our valued affiliate for the past half century, the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI), other nonprofit organizations, business and government. In addition we've sought to recognize our volunteers and provide better member service and value.

However the serious economic downturn of the past two year has been a tremendous challenge. But as members of the Society, you and our other individual and business donors, have responded and made us stronger during this time of adversity.

## PSMHS Membership Application

Individual/Family Membership  \$40  
Associate (Libraries, Museum, Non-Profit)  \$40  
Sustaining Member  \$50  
Sponsor  \$75  
Patron  \$100  
Corporate Membership  \$500  
Benefactor  \$500  
Navigator  \$1000  
Work(ed) for a Matching Gift Company   
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I/we would like to receive information about how I/we can remember the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society in my/our estate planning or planned charitable giving program.

MAIL TO: Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society,  
PO Box 1165, Bothell WA 98041-1165 (Include your check)

In addition we have met both on-going and achieved new goals during this period, such as working with MOHAI to develop the spectacular new museum and maritime gallery in the former Naval Reserve armory at Lake Union Park. And we have begun the major transition to hire our first full time Society professional museum executive to direct our future operations.

Finally we have and will continue to seize new maritime heritage outreach opportunities for strategic growth and development. We have entered into a partnership to add maritime history exhibits and interpretation at the new Maritime Event Center, in the former Odyssey space at Pier 66 on the Seattle central waterfront. Also the Society has been a leader in the exciting effort to develop in Washington State a National Maritime Heritage Area, a program of the National Park Service.

It's been a great two years guiding the PSMHS and

I appreciate the wonderful support I have received. Congratulations to the new officers and board members. As past president I look forward to working with this outstanding crew to achieve even greater Society success.

Fair Winds and Tides.

## Letter to The Editor of *Maritime Seattle*:

**Betty L. Gaeng of Lynnwood, Washington writes:**

A few months ago I purchased the "Images of America" series book *Maritime Seattle*. I had ties to the sea in the Puget Sound area and Alaska for many years, and enjoyed the photos in the book.

However, I would like to add something that was omitted. On pages 99 and 110 you picture a wooden boat caulker. This is an old trade that took a lot of skill and lives depending on the ability of the one practicing this trade. One of the last artisans of this old trade was **Percy Langmaid**. He is the one shown in the two photos on these pages.

Percy spent many years at the Marco shipyards. I met him during the 1960s while he was still practicing this art—now almost unknown. I was privileged to have been given a personal lesson in caulking by Percy himself. He may have worn an old pair of coveralls and a battered hat, but Percy was a true artist. He explained to me that he made his own caulk, consisting of oakum (made from hemp and bark) which was treated with oil. After he pounded in the oakum, he sealed the seams with putty above the water line and with a mixture of cement and water below the line. He worked rapidly with dexterity and skill. He had learned this skill as a very young man, and it showed.

Seattle, as well as the entire Puget Sound area, was privileged to have had many artisans in the boat building industry. Most little known, they have now faded into oblivion. I felt that Percy Langmaid should be remembered.

**Micheal Jay Mjelde replies:**

**Jack Carver**, the retired librarian for PSMHS at

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