April 2009
Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society
P.O. Box 9731
Seattle WA 98109-0731

April Dinner Program:
Lighthouses & Life Saving on Washington’s Outer Coast

Annual Maritime Career Day To Be Held On May 7

The Maritime Event Center, formerly the Odyssey Maritime Discovery Center, is proud to present the 11th Annual Maritime Career Day in conjunction with the Maritime Festival on Thursday, May 7, 2009, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This event provides a unique opportunity to take a glimpse into the working world of trade, transportation, fisheries, government and career training. Step aboard and explore working vessels, speak with industry representatives, and sit in on our Maritime Speaker Series. This opportunity is offered FREE of charge. The Maritime Event Center is located at Pier 66, 2205 Alaskan Way. For more information visit www.MaritimeEventCenter.com.

YMTA Receives Nine Applications for Scholarships

YMTA received nine applications from Washington State seniors for the 2009 Norm Manly YMTA Maritime Educational and Pacific Maritime Magazine Scholarships. All nine have been invited to present an oral presentation on “Charting a Maritime Career” to a panel of judges on Saturday April 18, 2009, in Seattle at the Maritime Event Center.

April Dinner Program:
Lighthouses & Life Saving on Washington’s Outer Coast

Our outer coastal area has long been called “The Graveyard of the Pacific” and “The Unforgiving Coast” for very good reason. Between the treacherous entrance of the Columbia River at the south to the lack of frequent easy-to-enter safe harbors along the coast up to the often wild waters at the opening of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, ships have encountered trouble and lives have been in jeopardy.

To provide warnings and protect the vessels, their crews, passengers and cargo, the federal government established the US Lighthouse Service in 1790 and gave that organization life saving responsibilities.

The Cape Disappointment Lighthouse was first lit in 1856, followed by North Head and Gray’s Harbor in 1898. The first Pacific Coast Life Saving Station was opened at Willapa Bay in 1877.

Our April speaker, Dr. William Hanable first became interested in lighthouses while working as a historian in Alaska. He moved to Washington in 1994 to become director of the Westport Maritime Museum, which is located in the former Coast Guard Life Boat Station. While there, he developed interpretive tours at Gray’s Harbor Lighthouse and curated a new exhibit on Lighthouse Service and Life Saving Service history in the Westport area.

Bill Hanable is currently managing director of Northwest Heritage Consultants, which provides historic preservation, museum planning and grant writing services. His most recent achievement is a new Arcadia book, Lighthouses & Life Saving on Washington’s Outer Coast. He will bring the book, its many historical images and some amazing feats of heroism to life as he presents our April dinner program. We will be meeting at the Swedish Cultural Center on Wednesday, April 1. Please make sure to make your reservations by using the coupon printed on Page 3. As a added plus, we will present each person attending with our special Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society lapel pin.

PSMHS Online: www.pugetmaritime.org

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PSMHS Curator is a Key Part of WAWONA Documentation and Deconstruction

After a 45-year-long effort to save Seattle’s last tall ship, the 112-year-old Pacific schooner WAWONA took her final voyage on March 4—a quarter of a mile from Lake Union Park to Lake Union Drydock (LUDD) where she is now being deconstructed. As this last vestige of an era slips away, PSMHS Administrator and Curator Nathaniel Howe has been helping preserve this vital part of Pacific Northwest maritime history.

For more than a year Howe has been splitting his time with Northwest Seaport to work as their Vessel Documentation and Preservation Specialist. The young Seattle native, sailor and maritime preservationist has directed the documentation of the ship, the artifact preservation plan, and has been involved in virtually all the project’s complex planning negotiations.

Captivated by WAWONA as a child, Howe built a model of the ship at age eleven when he joined the Society and was a member of the Discovery Ship Modelers program. By the time he was in high school Howe was determined to enter the maritime museum field and help restore WAWONA to her former glory.

However, after studying and working at Beloit College, Mystic Seaport, and the Vasa Museum in Sweden while on a Fulbright Scholarship, and the Fregattenjylland Museum in Denmark, all his training only showed him that WAWONA was beyond hope. Rot was rapidly consuming the entire ship and to restore her would require more than $20 million and replacement of almost every timber and plank.

Yet Northwest Seaport and Howe recognized that the ship still had a lot to offer. Refocusing on WAWONA’s deconstruction as an unparalleled research opportunity, Howe was hired in 2007 to direct the archaeological documentation of the ship and record how it was built. Even though the ship could not be preserved intact, it would at least be saved on paper, through photographs and in a computer database.

In early 2008 Howe used his contacts at the Vasa Museum and East Carolina University to help bring out a team of six graduate students and one professor from the university’s Nautical Archaeology program to carefully measure and record WAWONA’s structural framing. The two-week project uncovered countless details never before observed; a row of hidden compartments along the top of the keelsons, crew signatures carved into the deck beams, and the use of English-dimension lumber to build a ship laid out on a metric plan. Since then Howe has completed a record of the ship’s structural details.

As the ship is deconstructed at LUDD, Howe will be on site supervising the removal of important structural timbers selected for preservation as well as the rudder, wheel, and cabin interiors. More than 300 other fittings and artifacts have already been extracted from the ship.>

PSMHS Newsletter
206-624-3028

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MAY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: APRIL 1, 2009

CALL AND MAIL FOR MEETING RESERVATION

CLIP AND MAIL FOR MEETING RESERVATION

RESERVATION DEADLINE: NOON ON MONDAY, MARCH 30, 2009

Name:

Total Number (at $30 per person):

Total Amount of Check:

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: PSMHS
MAIL TO: PSMHS MEETING,
P.O. BOX 9731, SEATTLE, WA, 98109-0731

Call 206-938-2397 for changes, cancellations or questions.
Guests are always welcome. Please include payment.

Reserve Early and Notify of Cancellation. A member who makes a reservation and then does not attend a dinner or give notification of their cancellation in a timely manner (48 hours) will not be refunded their money for the dinner. The Society must pay for the number of meals we have reserved in advance, regardless of the number of meals actually served since the caterer orders several days in advance. Refunds cannot be given for a meal.

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Some of these items will go on exhibit in MOHAI’s new armory museum at Lake Union Park and its Maritime Gallery, as will other artifacts and materials from both the PSMHS and MOHAI maritime collections. The new museum is scheduled to open in 2012, and showcasing WAWONA’s saved artifacts will be a fitting tribute to the proud schooner’s colorful past.

Medal of Merit Nominations Sought
At our May 6th dinner meeting the Society will honor an individual who has made major contributions to the preservation and promotion of the maritime history of Puget Sound, or has rendered distinguished service to PSMHS.

The award, known as the “PSMHS Maritime Heritage Medal of Merit,” was first presented in 2008 and recognized the Society’s five founders. It replaces the Society’s earlier “Honorary Life Member” award program which honored 51 members between 1949 and 1999.

A single winner for 2009 will be selected by an anonymous selection committee. Nominations should state why the nominee should receive this prestigious award. All nominations will be kept confidential, known only to the judges and the Award Committee. Past recipients of the Honorary Life Member and Medal of Merit awards are not eligible.

Nominations can be e-mailed to the Award Committee Co-Chairmen: George Osborn at georgeosborn@comcast.net, or Jerry Mattox at jerry.mattos@msn.com or mailed to George Osborn, 3823 N. Frazee Avenue, Tacoma, Washington 98407. Nominations must be received by 8:00 a.m. on April 6, 2009, if e-mailed. If mailed postmarked no later than April 4, 2009.

CORRECTION: New members from last issue should read “Lisa Haug and Amado Shuck.” We apologize.