

Sound Experience Gains New Planking and New Director

By Elizabeth T. Becker

The start of sailing season for the schooner *Adventuress* begins April 1st. The graceful 101' vessel was relaunched on Monday, March 20th, after spending the past six months at Haven Boatworks in Boat Haven. In October 2005, the crew and volunteers of *Adventuress* began removing sections of the schooner's interior in anticipation of the major repair work that the Haven shipwrights would take on during the winter.

The vessel, which was built in 1913, has undergone several large-scale restoration projects over the past 12 years. In 1993, a number of frames on the port side were replaced, followed in 1998 by 15 new hull planks, bulwarks, and caprail (also port side). The removal of several planks on the starboard side in 2000 uncovered a number of frames that needed to be replaced. In November, the appropriately dubbed Starboard Side Project began in earnest. The original, 93-year-old covering board, bulwarks, and pitch pine planks were removed to expose a 30-foot section of oak frames. Fifteen new purpleheart frames and new top futtocks were installed and twenty new planks cut from old growth fir from the Olympic Mountains were put in place. Bronze screws replaced the original bronze spikes (which were used below the waterline) and iron nails (which were used above the waterline). The original single internal chainplate, made of iron and measuring 4 by 6 feet, was replaced with a new steel plate made by the Haven shipwrights.

Adventuress is cared for by the nonprofit organization Sound Experience, whose staff and volunteers offer youth sail-training and environmental education programs, as well as adult, family, and Elderhostel voyages, throughout Puget Sound for 8 months out of the year. The vessel, which carries more than 3,500 passengers annually, spends winters in Port Townsend. Helping with maintenance work on the boat during the off season were 11 students who take part in the Puget Sound Explorers program.

On hand to celebrate the relaunch last week was Sound Experience's new Executive Director, Catherine Collins. Collins brings 15 years of experience in non-profit fundraising and management as well as an MBA from Seattle University. Her connection to wooden boats and the sea started at a young age, sailing the waters of Cape Cod, Massachusetts and working as a volunteer educator on New York's

Hudson River. During the past several years, she has been involved in numerous community and economic ventures in the Seattle area as well as serving on the Sound Experience Board of Directors.

Returning to *Adventuress*—this time as a Captain—is Korie Mielke. With a background that includes geochemical paleoceanography and shipboard experience as bosun, mate, and scientist, she will join long-time skippers Wayne Chimenti and George Hill in piloting the vessel. Laura Sharpless has taken on the duties of Program Coordinator, and will split her time between the office and the ship during the 2006 sailing season. Veteran staff members Bob Porto, Marie Wright, Indu Soini, and Mary Beth Armstrong round out the busy Sound Experience “family.”

And last but not least, the organization’s office has moved to a new location in the heart of Boat Haven. The staff and very large black part-Newfie Retriever, Odin, can be found in the Galmukoff building at 2900 Washington Street, Suite E. A great series of photos documenting the starboard side repair work can be found at www.soundexp.org, along with the vessel’s sailing schedule for 2006.

A benefit of joining Sound Experience--besides supporting a very vital organization--is the opportunity to sail on one of *Adventuress*’ membership events offered during the summer and fall. A capital fundraising campaign is currently underway to cover the Starboard Side Project expenses and to build an endowment fund for boat upkeep and repair. A donation of \$20,000 was received last week from a small family foundation whose trustees had sailed on *Adventuress*—and a matching grant was made by another family. Additional contributions are needed to help insure that Sound Experience and *Adventuress*—named a National Historic Landmark in 1989--will be not only structurally sound but fiscally sound as the schooner’s 100-year mark approaches.

“So far we’ve met 80% of our capital fundraising goal for this project thanks to the incredibly committed community that surrounds *Adventuress* and Sound Experience,” notes Collins. “We’re now hoping to encourage businesses to support our work through a brand new corporate membership program.”

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