Anacortes Museum News

SUMMER 2013

BMW Oracle: Building a world champion in Anacortes

The long-anticipated new exhibit, BMW Oracle: Building a world champion in Anacortes, is now open at the Anacortes Maritime Heritage Center, at 7th Street and R Avenue. USA 17, the fastest yacht in the world, was built by Core Builders in Anacortes and launched in Fidalgo Bay on Aug. 25, 2008. Its construction was highly secretive, so its unveiling and sea trials in Rosario Strait focused the attention of the world on Anacortes for six heady days.

Initially known as BOR 90 and nicknamed DoGzilla, USA 17 is a technological marvel that shows what the best yacht designers and aerospace and automotive engineers can do when they are backed by a billionaire and given few rules to follow.

From the day of its launch, USA 17 outran everything on the water. Later, when the sail was replaced with the largest wing ever built, it went on to easily win the most prestigious yacht race in the world, America’s Cup, in 2010.

Our exhibit includes a huge wind tunnel model of the trimaran and a discarded rudder. Exhibit panels discuss the history of the America’s Cup, describe the specifications of the space age yacht and how it was built in Anacortes, show it being tested in local waters and celebrate the triumphant visit of the America’s Cup trophy — the oldest international sporting trophy in play — to Anacortes.

Don Yankacy joins Advisory Board

Don Yankacy was appointed by Mayor Dean Maxwell and confirmed by the Anacortes City Council on May 20 to fill the vacant position on the Anacortes Museum Advisory Board. His application was supported by Museum Director Steve Oakley and the Museum Advisory Board.

Don brings a strong Anacortes connection to the position. A lifelong resident of Anacortes, he is a licensed real estate broker who is active in the community. He is a member of the Eagles, Elks, and Lions clubs and is Adjutant in American Legion. He also belongs to the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, Newcomers Plus and the Anacortes Sister Cities Association. He is also a member of the Hugo Helmer Accordion Band.

We look forward to working with Don and thank him for his service to the community!

To receive your newsletter via email contact elainew@cityofanacortes.org

This newsletter is produced by the staff of the Anacortes Museum and edited by Elaine Walker
W.T. Preston celebrates 30 years in its ‘new’ location

On June 22, 1983, the W.T. Preston, an Army Corps of Engineers steam-powered snagboat, was pulled from the water at Dakota Creek Industries’ shipyard, then hauled to its new home next to the Anacortes Depot.

Built in 1939 using many parts from its predecessors, the Preston removed tree snags and other navigational hazards from the waterways of Puget Sound. After it retired in 1981, communities and organizations around the state submitted proposals for its long-term care. Anacortes, which promised museum oversight, a dry berth and a great deal of volunteer support, won.

30 years later, the City still oversees its care, with the essential support of volunteers. Last year, the Anacortes Museum Foundation contributed $3,570 to paint a section of the deck house, to purchase a cover for a steering wheel on the Texas deck and to dress the ship with signal flags. It also spent another $2,650 to produce a Preston video tour. Individuals also pitch in, such as Foundation President Tom Thompson, who is restoring the ship’s whistle to working order and updated our entry sign. Mitch McCormick of College Pro Painters of Anacortes just donated a week of his time to scrape and paint the starboard side of the first deck.

We appreciate help in preserving this national treasure. One of only two surviving sternwheel snagboats in the United States, it was listed as a National Historical Landmark in 1989. It attracts about 3,000 visitors each year from all over the world.

Photos by Dick Staples, Anacortes Museum Collection

Learn about the struggles, successes of Washington’s first people


When American settlers arrived in the 19th century, tribes were pushed onto small reservations and forbidden by law to practice their ancient customs. Native culture suffered and tribal languages nearly disappeared. Today, Washington’s Native Americans struggle to protect who they are, what they believe and how they live.

The main exhibit, created by the Washington State Heritage Center, follows Washington’s original inhabitants through a war over land, a clash over culture and a revival of Native tradition today.

Additional exhibit panels are being produced with the cooperation of the Samish and Swinomish Tribes.

New Guemes Village, West Beach, Guemes Island, in 1906. Salmon drying racks are on left. Under the Indian Homestead Act, many Samish moved here from Samish Island and lived here in 1873 to 1912.

The history hiding inside your smart phone

This mini-exhibit at the Anacortes Museum invites old and young to reflect upon and discuss the history of communication technology. In the center of the display is modern smart phone containing a world of information that today’s kids naturally take for granted. Only a generation ago this type of device was science fiction, like the Star Trek communicator.

Now you can make and watch movies, take photos, play music and video games, text messages, find directions and encyclopedias of information, connect with your social network… plus talk on the phone… all in the palm of your mobile hand.

We have delved into the audio/visual collection of the Anacortes Museum to present an array of antique phones, record players, typewriters, cameras and other machines that demonstrate the march of history toward the iPhone. Take a few minutes to think about all of these “obsolete” devices and how they evolved and were used. Young viewers are invited to try out an old dial telephone or listen to a 45-rpm record or type a note to someone on a manual typewriter.

Bret Lunsford, Education Curator

‘Nameless’ Anacortes children: Do you know them?

Babies and little children grow into Mothers and Fathers, Aunts and Uncles, Grandmas and Grandpas… can you identify any of the children in these unidentified photos? Are they your parents or grandparents or even great-grandparents? Are they you?

Judy Hakins, Curator of Collections