

# GLOUCESTER MARITIME HERITAGE CENTER

The Newsletter of the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center • Gloucester, Massachusetts • Summer 2002

## Railway Rededication a Great Success



Over 250 people gathered at the heritage center on Sunday, June 23rd, to celebrate the restoration of GMHC's historic marine railway, which was made possible through the generosity of Bill and Mary Kay Dyer. Perfect weather, heartfelt stories, delicious food, lively music, and nonstop conversation added up to a spectacular afternoon.

For photos of the event, turn to page 3.

## GMHC Selected as Americorps\* NCCC Site

In March, 2002, the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center was chosen as an AmeriCorps\* NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) site. Our team of ten 19-24 year-old corps members arrived on May 5th. They spent the next six weeks building an outdoor observation deck, renovating the space intended for our aquarium/marine exhibit, and hauling hundreds of buckets of soggy styrofoam out of the former ice house.



The AmeriCorps Team, with supervisors Paul Kirvan (lower left) and Dick Higgins (top right).

Hosting the team, whose members came from North Carolina, Minnesota, Wisconsin, California and Washington, presented GMHC with both challenges and opportunities. "We didn't know their skill level," observes board member Dick Higgins, who supervised the team along with Paul Kirvan. They soon discovered that while only two of the team members had previous construc-

tion experience, all were eager to learn. Higgins and Kirvan taught them how to measure and how to plan lumber purchases, how to use power tools safely, how to build scaffolding and staging, and how to install windows and doors. They also taught them to sand and paint dories and introduced them to the wonders of power washing.

Team members "were much more motivated than I expected," reflects Higgins. "Their interactions with each other were incredibly supportive and they were really interested in getting things accomplished. All in all, they got a tremendous amount of work done here."

Team members seemed just as pleased with the experience. "The thing I liked most about this project is that we could really see the results of what we did," observes Angel Cuthbertson. "When we tore the styrofoam out of the ice house, when we worked on the deck, we could see the changes every day."

"I can't think of anyone from the heritage center who hasn't been interested in who we are, and what we're doing," adds team leader Christine Sanders. "My team wanted to work on Saturday and work late because they really like the community and wanted to leave saying 'we've been able to do this for you.'"

"The AmeriCorps team infused this place with energy," comments GMHC executive director Harriet Webster. Higgins agrees, adding "I think I'm really going to miss them."

## A Message from the President...

Here at the heritage center there's a great deal we want to do as we work to carry out our mission. But it is what we need to do that is getting done every day. As the weather warmed this past spring and visitors starting showing up in droves, we wanted a visitor center but what we needed right away was a place where visitors could learn how to see and use our site. The viewing deck next to Geno's Dory Shop seemed a likely place to start.



What this site offers is endless possibility.

The ingredients began to fall into place. A board member made a generous donation. Our application to serve as an AmeriCorps project was approved bringing ten young men and women to work at our site. Tim Thurman and Joseph Georgi contributed professional expertise in design and engineering and Tony Carrao provided the roofing. Dick Higgins and Paul Kirvan shepherded the project along. Eight weeks later, we have our much needed deck.

Whenever we have turned our attention to a specific task, we have found the ability and resources to get it done. This is a credit to community effort.

What this site offers is endless possibility. Our job is to sort out what can be done now, with our limited resources, and what will have to wait. Our board is large and diverse (some might say loud and diverse) but that is our strength. It is the source of our ability to see the future with many eyes and to do what needs to be done with the help of many hands.

We have provided a permanent home for a group of diverse vessels and a base for organizations that are forming the foundation for what we will become. We welcome other organizations with similar missions to join us in a cooperative effort to celebrate maritime heritage. All this is happening every day, little by little. It is a miracle and everyone associated with it contributes to its success and has ownership in that miracle.

Geoffrey Richon, GMHC President

## O'Maley 7th Grade Students Visit GMHC

The heritage center welcomed 47 O'Maley Middle School students to the site on May 23rd. Accompanied by teachers Jeff Lovejoy and Mike Horn, the 7th graders participated in activities at four different teaching stations. The visit was organized by GMHC vice president Nancy Sullivan.

At the first station, students examined maps of Gloucester Harbor and the surrounding area dating from the 1600s to the present. They discovered that the State Pier is built on top of Five Pound Island and that the Walgreen's shopping center is located on filled land that was once Vincent's Cove.

At the compass station, located out on the main pier, GMHC board member Geno Mondello provided detailed descriptions of all the boats tied up at the heritage center and Lynn Hildenbrand taught students how to determine direction using a compass.

Gloria Parsons, chairman of the GMHC education committee, manned the third station, where the focus was on the fishing methods used by area fishermen from the arrival of the Dorchester Company in 1623 up to the present. Students learned about long lining, dory trawling, purse seining, otter and bottom trawling, mechanized long lining and mechanized jigging. Parsons brought along photographs of otter trawls and purse trawls as well as a real tub trawl used in dory trawling.

"The kids were amazed by the time it took to bait and hang the tub trawl, and then to pull it back up," Parsons observes. "They got a sense of how much work was involved."

The fourth station introduced students to the essentials of dory rowing. Accompanied by GMHC board member Joanne Crawford, and Susy Mosse and Helen Kamins, all of the students had the opportunity to go rowing in Gloucester Harbor.

"Students were really psyched about rowing in the dories," comments Nancy Sullivan. "We hope to get other classes involved," she continues. "We want them to be aware of how important Gloucester Harbor was and still is to the fishing industry and we want them to understand that people went out from schooners in small dories like the ones they're rowing to catch the fish to feed America."



Volunteer Lynn Hildenbrand leads a group of O'Maley Middle School 7th-graders.

## Inside the Dory Shop

A few discarded fish boxes, some tar, a bunch of roofing nails. Put them together and what have you got? If you're Geno Mondello and you're eleven years old, you've just built your first boat.

Mondello, GMHC board member and owner of Northlight Photo, builds dories in the "Dory Shop" at the heritage center most afternoons. The most frequent question visitors ask: what's a dory?

"I show them a picture of a fishing boat and I tell them about *Adventure* being a dory trawler with fourteen dories on her," Mondello says. "I'm an historian. I can tell people just about anything they want to know about boats and Gloucester."

Mondello started building boats seriously in 1975, beginning with a 20' sailing dory. He copied parts of existing boats, took measurements, and consulted a marine engineer friend. Then he made his own set of plans.



Geno Mondello constructs a dory.

"I kept that boat for two years," he recalls, "and then I sold it. Since then, I try to build a boat a year, never two the same." One of Mondello's projects involved building three dories for Warner Brothers to use in the filming of "The Perfect Storm."

Mondello begins making a dory by going to a sawmill and picking out the lumber he wants, and then running it through his thickness planer. He lays out the bottom and fastens the planks together. "Next," he says, "I'll set it on a jig (a row of three sawhorses with a lower one in the middle). Then I'll attach the stem and stern and I'll put my moulds in place. Then I put ribbands around the moulds. And then I start planking.

"After it's all planked, I take out the moulds, and start framing. After it's framed I'll put on gun-wales, seat risers and then seats. Then I drill the holes for the thole pins or oarlocks. Putty and paint and it's done." Start to finish, Mondello estimates it takes him about 125 hours to build a dory.



**The Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center** champions the preservation of Gloucester's maritime industrial history and traditions. It serves as a resource for the study of maritime history, industry and ecology.

#### Board of Directors

Geoffrey Richon (President) • Nancy Sullivan (Vice President)  
John McGlennon (Treasurer) • Jeneth Fahey (Secretary)

Peter Anderson Ann Banks Mary John Boylan Margaret Brady  
David Brown Joanne Crawford Damon Cummings  
Peter K. Dorsey William Dyer, III Richard Higgins Martin Krugman  
Philip Lake Ellen Leaman Judith McCulloch Jay McLaughlan  
Geno Mondello Ann Nichols Joseph Orlando Douglass Parsons  
Michael Patil John Rando Butch Roth Joel Schneider  
James Schoel Mark Sheldon Timothy Thurman

Harriet Webster, Executive Director

The Newsletter is produced by the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center  
Editor: Harriet Webster Design: Michael Ronan Graphics



Bill Dyer

# The Rededication of the Burnham Brothers Railway

Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center  
Sunday, June 23, 2002

"I didn't know Bill Dyer very long or very well but I knew him enough to know that he had extraordinary vision. He realized how important it was to get the railway working. He saw the need and he funded it. I also believe he was able to envision the first haul-out on the restored rail with his grandson there to see it. And that's what happened."

--Geoffrey Richon, GMHC president, speaking at the rededication



## A Note from the Executive Director

It's not quiet here anymore.

When I came to the heritage center last January, it was a pretty muted place. The silence was so predictable that I'd jump when someone came to the door or the phone rang.

It's not that way anymore.

The center became a much noisier place on May 5th with the arrival of AmeriCorps. The decibels increased again on Memorial Day, when volunteers began staffing the center as site guides, welcoming the hundreds of visitors who show up each week.

The activity level continued to escalate even after the AmeriCorps team shipped out June 12. With just eleven days left before the rededication of the railway, the atmosphere was similar to the deadline driven chaos that heralds the opening of a stage production.

There was heavy equipment to be moved (a crane) and removed (a humungous dumpster). Heavy piles of metal and wood needed to be neaten up. Our new interpretive sign was installed on the new nearly completed observation deck. A large sail was suspended to create a canopy for the food area. There was raking, pounding, hammering, and a lot of yelling as almost everyone gave everyone else directions.

On the day of the rededication, the air was filled with sound. Daisy Nell, Capt. Stan and the Crabgrass Band, and Allen Estes made music. Descendants of the Dahlmer and Dyer families shared their memories and politicians Gus Foote, Tony Verga, and Bruce Tarr trumpeted greetings. Most importantly, about 250 people talked the afternoon away, enjoying each other's company on our industrial site overlooking Gloucester Harbor.

The heritage center is usually a pretty noisy place these days. And that's a very good sign.

*Harriet Webster*

Harriet Webster, Executive Director



## Open House on August 3rd

Please join us on August 3rd from 10-4

Take a guided site tour, watch historic footage of fishing vessels at sea, talk with sea captains and fishermen, explore a fishing vessel, visit the dive exhibit. Dory rowing for kids and adults. Children's activities too!

Check the Gloucester Daily Times for more details as the date gets closer or call (978) 281-0470.

## An Evening with Tom Mailhot, John Zeigler & Greg Barton

On Friday evening, July 19th, the Cape Ann Rowing Club and the heritage center join together to present an evening with trans-Atlantic rowers Tom Mailhot and John Zeigler, and Olympic kayaker Greg Barton. The event takes place at the Fuller School at 7:15 p.m. on the evening before the annual Blackburn Challenge race.



Mailhot and Zeigler will present slides about their rowing adventures. The audience will also view a section from "American Star," a feature length documentary now in production which includes footage taken aboard Mailhot and Zeigler's boat during the 2001 Atlantic Rowing Challenge – a double-handed race from the Azores to the Caribbean. The boat will be displayed outside of the auditorium on the evening of this presentation.

Greg Barton may be the world's best kayaker, bar none. As an Olympic competitor, he won medals in three games over eight years. In 1988 he became the first kayaker ever to win two gold medals within 90 minutes of each other. Greg was born with club feet and his handicap makes his success all the more remarkable.

The evening will include plenty of time to ask questions and talk with Tom, John and Greg about their achievements and adventures. Tickets are \$10/adults, \$5/students, at the heritage center (978-281-0470) or at the door.

## GMHC CALENDAR



### July 17

Board of Directors Meeting, 7 p.m.

### July 19

An Evening with Tom Mailhot & Greg Barton  
Fuller School, 7:15 p.m.

### July 20

Blackburn Challenge  
Registration at 5:45 a.m., Pavillion Beach

### August 3

GMHC Open House, 10-4 p.m.

### August 21

Board of Directors Meeting, 7 p.m.

### August 31-September 1

Gloucester Schooner Festival  
Events at GMHC pier

### September 18

Board of Directors Meeting, 7 p.m.

Call the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center for more information about any of the events listed above, 978-281-0470.

## GHMC Launches Membership Drive

Here's an opportunity (we hope) you can't resist! The Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center announces its first annual membership drive. By showing your support and joining this year, you become a charter member. The names of charter members will be listed on a plaque and permanently displayed at the center.

As a charter member you will also receive our "thanks" in the form of a gift certificate for a two hour sailing trip aboard the tall ship *Formidable*, a traditional looking square rigger with a 49 passenger capacity. Based at Tuna Wharf in Rockport, *Formidable* will be sailing daily throughout the summer. These trips have been donated to us by Keating Willcox, the vessel's owner, and we are most grateful to him for enabling us to offer this gift to our charter members.

As many of you know, our plan over the next three years is to develop exhibit, research and classroom space on the site, with the goal of using our facility to enhance the teaching of local maritime history, environmental studies and related vocational trades. We invite you to help us continue to work towards these goals by becoming a GMHC charter member.

As a special gift, charter members will receive:

Individual Annual Membership (\$30) ..... *Formidable* certificate for one  
Family Annual Membership (\$40) ..... *Formidable* certificate for two  
Corporate Membership (\$150)..... *Formidable* certificate for four  
Five Year Family Membership (\$200)..... *Formidable* certificate for four  
Lifetime Membership (\$750)..... *Formidable* certificate for six

Benefits of charter membership also include:

- membership card
- Free admission to the site
- A newsletter subscription
- Reduced "members' only" price on GMHC workshops and special events



### Yes!

I'd like to join the  
**Gloucester Maritime  
Heritage Center**  
as a charter member.

- Annual Membership (individual) \$30
- Annual Membership (family) \$40
- Corporate Membership \$150
- Five Year Family Membership \$200
- Lifetime Membership \$750

Please make checks payable to Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center, Inc. and mail to GMHC, 23 Harbor Loop, Gloucester, MA 01930.

Please include this form. All donations are tax deductible.

**Name**

**Address**

**City/Town**  **State**

**Telephone**  **E-mail**

- Interested in helping out? Please check here if you would like to discuss the possibility of volunteering at GMHC. We'll call to talk about the options. We'd love to have your help!