



The Heritage

Heritage Chapter Bluebills
Boeing Retiree Volunteer Newsletter

September 2023

WWW.BLUEBILLS.ORG

VOLUME 29 ISSUE 09

Chairman's Comments



By Richard Vaughn

The August monthly meeting was one of our best annual picnics (Inside Picnic) that we have had. Some Bluebills that we haven't seen in a long time came and everyone enjoyed chatting about their activities and bringing their friends up to date on how they are doing. The food would have caused you to think that we have a lot of personal chefs, which to me they were. Our speaker was very informative and interesting. He spoke about one of Tacoma's long-time businesses that was located in Nalley Valley. The two Willet Brothers built wooden canoes for many years that were highly desired by many people.

We hope all of you have a wonderful rest of the summer and enjoy the Labor Day holiday that is coming very soon. I would like to see you at the September meeting.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Senior Tech of Puget Sound

Volunteers needed to assist seniors cope with technical challenges

SeniorTech of Puget Sound, or STPS, is a Washington State non-profit corporation and a 501 (c)(3) organization. Experienced volunteers provide technical support in the use of computers, tablets, smartphones, and similar devices. Support focuses on, but is not limited to, seniors. STPS has been providing these services in the North Bellevue Community Center since 2014. The organization's Web Site may be found at: www.seniortechps.org

STPS's goal is to provide computer and related device literacy to anyone willing to learn. One-on-one technical support is offered at the North Bellevue Community Center on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, and the 5th Tuesday when there is one. The technical support labs are from 9:30 to noon. The Community Center is located at 4063 148th Ave NE, Bellevue, WA.

STPS has a shortage of volunteers and needs to increase their cadre of knowledgeable support people by one or two. If any tech savvy Bluebill would like to join them in this very satisfying activity, please contact Dick Thompson at seattlerust@outlook.com. Thank you



August Meeting Summary

By: Mary Ulibarri

Don Hilt opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance. There were no August birthday attendees, but here are a few on my list: Bill Baker, Howard Syder, Milton Piatok and Keith Johnson.

Folks are reminded to turn in volunteer hours to marybarri20@gmail.com or Dick Beham at bbbeditor@live.com.

Don then introduced our guest speaker, Brent Mason, Executive Director, Foss Waterway Seaport in Tacoma.



Brent joined Foss Waterway Seaport as Executive Director in December 2019, but prior to that he worked as the director of philanthropy for Washington DECA. He graduated with a BA in Natural Resource Management from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

He has also served as the manager of individual giving at KBTC Public Television; development director at KING FM 98.1; and major gifts officer for KNKX 88.5.

He entered the non-profit sector nearly 20-years ago when he served as the corporate relations manager for The Zoo Society (Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium). While there he experienced success providing big-picture vision which aligned with strategic fundraising goals that helped raise over \$3.5 million in corporate support during his tenure.

Brent progressed to leadership roles that have centered on development and fundraising, bringing a fresh vision and perspective, crafting well-thought-out strategic/tactical plans, and establishing, enhancing, leading, and maintaining sound operations, which he plans to use in making the Seaport not only a local treasure, but a regional one as well.

A proud resident of Tacoma, Mason lives downtown with his wife, Cat, and Australian Shepard, Kiya.

Using a visual presentation, Brent jumped right into his featured topic--the Willits Brothers, manufacturers of Canoes in Day Island, Tacoma, WA, and how their story/legacy became the responsibility of the Foss Waterway Seaport.



The Willits brothers, Floyd and Earl, built their first canoe in 1905, while still school boys in Des Moines, WA. With the exception of brief periods, including service to the United States during WWI, they spent a lifetime producing these incredible “double-planked canoes.”

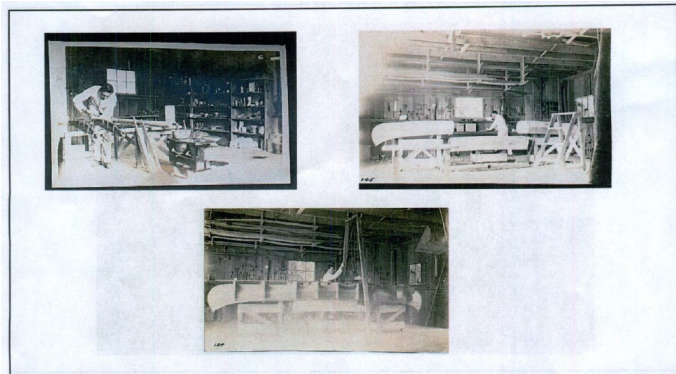
Over a +/-50-year period, the brothers built 918 of these canoes, and took unbelievable pride in their craftsmanship and in their ability to meet the needs of their customers.

Prior to 1914, canoe building was difficult for the brothers because they had no shop in which to work. It would have been a challenge to provide the space needed to accommodate all of the tools and equipment in a garage or basement.

As the business grew, in 1913, Floyd bought a waterfront lot on Wollochet Bay. However, by 1921 this location no longer met their requirements. Thus, they built a two-story shop along with a modest house.



Nearly every aspect of building canoes and producing accessories and literature was accomplished by the two of them. Despite a rumor that Earl and Floyd didn't get along, i.e., the two of them worked on separate floors, they still did much of everything together, vacation, socializing, trips and so on.



In every sense, the brothers were entrepreneurs long before the word was ever associated with companies like Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Amazon, etc.

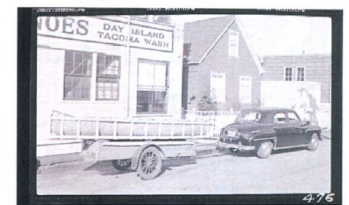
There were no Home Depot or Lowe's back then, so in addition to canoes, they produced almost all of the accessories and hardware that accompanied their products. And if they couldn't make it, they would build the prototype and send it out to be

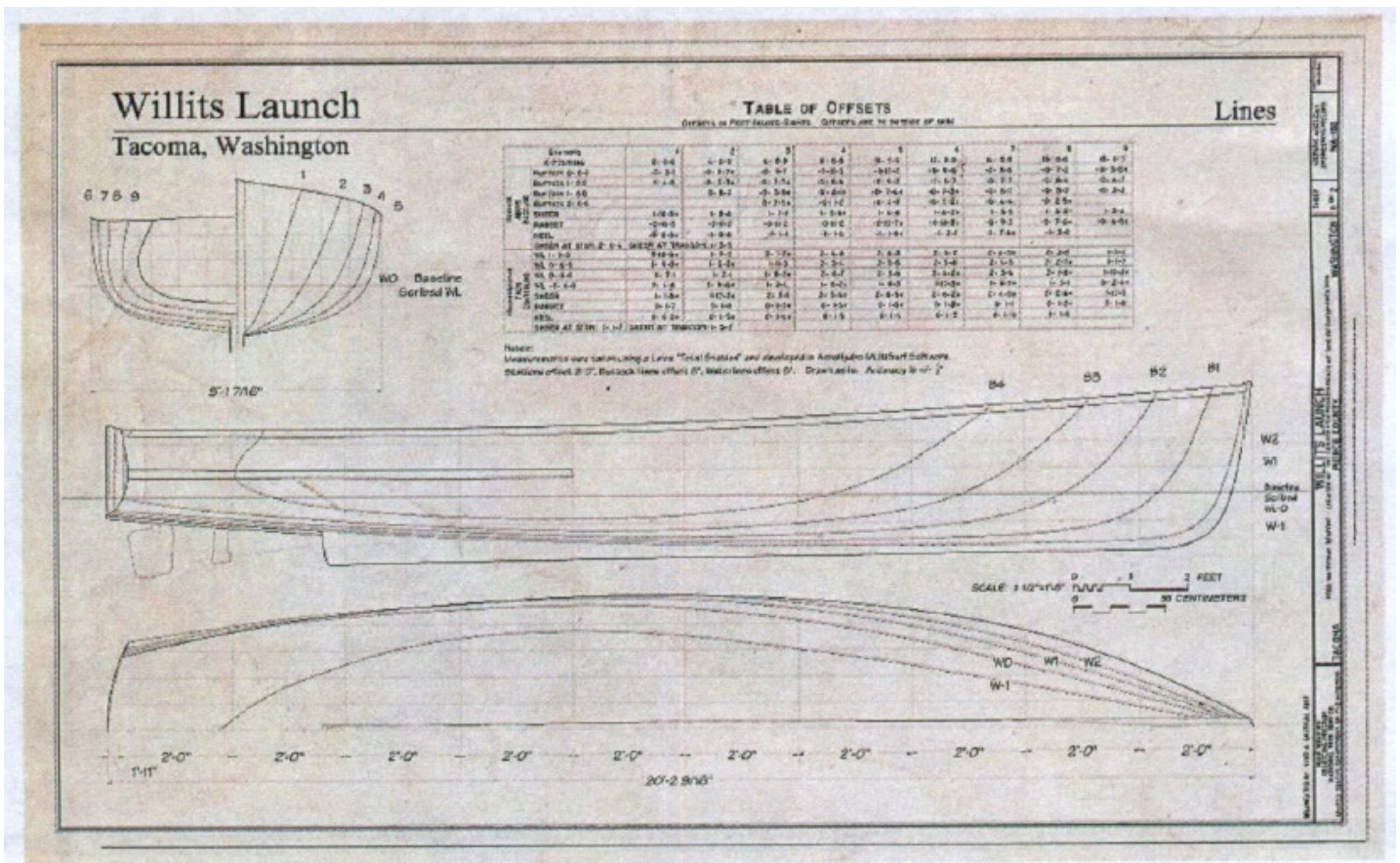
manufactured.

The canoes themselves were made out of woods such as cedar, mahogany, teak and spruce. And, the brothers were meticulous about everything, including all detailed paperwork involved in keeping a viable business running. Plus, they built the packaging and all the crating to deliver their canoes.



So confident were they in their product, that they prominently featured a guarantee in all their catalogs – a money back guarantee.





Although the brothers built only one model of canoe, it changed over the years. The final design was “developed to a high state of perfection.” It was 17 feet long with a beam of 34 inches, depth of 12 inches and significant inward slope of the upper part of the sides of the canoe. The bow was 23 inches high, and the canoe always had a teak or mahogany keel, and the inside and outside stems were of white oak. A layer of waterproofed cotton muslin was sandwiched between two layers of 5/32 inch vertical grain red cedar planking which was finished inside and out with clear spar varnish. There were no inwales or ribs. Trim, seats and 2 ft. long decks were usually mahogany. Spruce slat seats were installed unless left out by special order. Planking was attached with more than seven thousand copper tacks. All other fasteners were brass. Brent passed around a small jar of the tacks they manufactured themselves.

A tiny brass plate identifying the canoe as a Willits Brothers product was attached to the bow deck trim. Brent passed around a paper cup with samples for each audience member. The brothers would also number their canoes, which back then was used to ID canoes in case of theft.

Floyd worked up to the time of his death in 1962. By then, the brothers had slowed to working only five days per week, but still had a significant waiting list for their canoes. With his passing came the functional end of the Willits Brothers Canoe Company. Earl was 72 and unable or unwilling to continue building the canoes alone. Since the company had never had employees, there was nobody to carry on the business with Earl. The last canoe started by both brothers was finished on March 2, 1963, and then the shop was shut down.

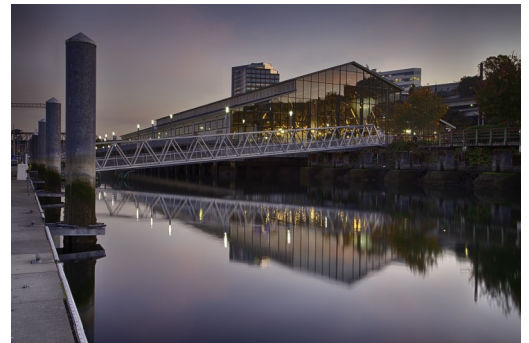
(Continued on page 5)

Earl was physically active until he passed away on April 21, 1967. Over the intervening years, the Willits brothers' survivors tried to sell the business at various prices. It was always deemed too expensive; thus, the family eventually turned it over to the Foss Waterway Seaport.

The Seaport is Puget Sound's maritime heritage, education and event center where families, groups and communities come to discover, explore, work and play.

The mission of the Foss Waterway Seaport is to celebrate Tacoma's rich maritime heritage—past, present and future. Its vision is to create the region's most compelling maritime heritage education and recreation resource.

The Foss Waterway Seaport is a heritage museum that features hands-on displays, a wooden boat shop, as well as a functional dock. It is a faithfully restored 100-year-old building that has served the shores of Tacoma since it was built and now houses the greatest collection of marine history in the South Sound. The museum today is equal parts education facility boat shop,, maritime museum, dock, moorage and iconic events venue.



Currently, the Seaport operates out of a portion of the historic Balfour Dock Building on the Thea Foss Waterway. The building houses exhibits and the "Discovery Wharf" exhibit with hands-on activities for children that teach about the Puget Sound, sea life, the Port of Tacoma and boating safety; an operating Heritage Wooden Boat Shop; and space for highlighting marine and environmental science inquiry and exploration. In addition, there are docks and floats for educational and recreational use. The Foss Waterway Seaport is currently working with a number of school districts, private independent schools and higher education institutions to provide programs to enrich students' understanding of marine ecology and maritime history of the Tacoma region and the importance of Puget Sound to the region. Most recently, 600 students have taken part in the sponsored programs and tours, in addition to the 16,000 visitors on average per year.

The Balfour Dock Building is located at the original home of Tacoma's port and is the oldest remaining intact building linked to Tacoma's commercial and industrial maritime beginnings. From the time the last commercial occupant left the grand old building in the mid-1970s, the building sat fallow, used as a city storage facility, but slowly rotting away into the Foss Waterway until 1996, when it was "rediscovered" by boating and history buffs who recognized what profound value the building could add to Tacoma's rebirth and to the region's understanding of its history.

Brent wrapped up his presentation with a number of questions from the audience, followed by a big round of applause.

Melinda held the drawing for three quilts donated by the Busy Bees. The winners were Micki Brown, Jim Jollimore and Lonnie Stevenson. Congratulations!

It was followed by the regular door prize drawing and folks proceeded to line up for the summer potluck. A good variety of yummy dishes were provided. Well done, everyone.

Busy B's

By: Melinda Stubbs

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! to all our fellow Bluebills for purchasing raffle tickets June, July & August for our quilt drawing.

Our largest expense is the batting to put between 2 layers of fabric. You've helped us collect money towards purchasing another roll.



For the 3 lucky winners..... ENJOY!!! Hug & wrap them around you. Wash when you need to. They are meant to be used & loved.

BITS & PIECES

Submitter by: Micki Brown

Do You Remember?

Heavens to Murgatroyd!

The other day a not-so-elderly (I say 75) lady said something to her son about driving a Jalopy; and he looked at her and said, "What the heck is a Jalopy?" He had never heard of the word jalopy! She knew she was old ...But not that old.

Well, I hope you are Hunky Dory when you read this and chuckle.

About a month ago, I illuminated some old expressions that have become obsolete because of the inexorable march of technology.

These phrases included: Don't touch that dial; Carbon copy; You sound like a broken record; and Hung out to dry.

Back in the olden days we had a lot of moxie. We'd put on our best bib and tucker, to straighten up and fly right.

Heavens to Betsy!
 Gee Whillikers!
 Jumping Jehoshaphat!
 Holy Moley!

We were in like Flynn and living the life of Riley; and even a regular guy couldn't accuse us of being a knucklehead, a nincompoop, or a pill. Not for all the tea in China!

Back in the olden days, life used to be swell, but when was the last time anything was swell? Swell has gone the way of beehives, pageboys, and the D.A.; of spats, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts, saddle shoes, and pedal pushers.

Oh, my aching back! Kilroy was here, but he isn't anymore.

We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap, and before we can say, "Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!" Or, "This is a fine kettle of fish!"

We discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent, as oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards.

Poof, go the words of our youth. Where have all those great phrases gone?

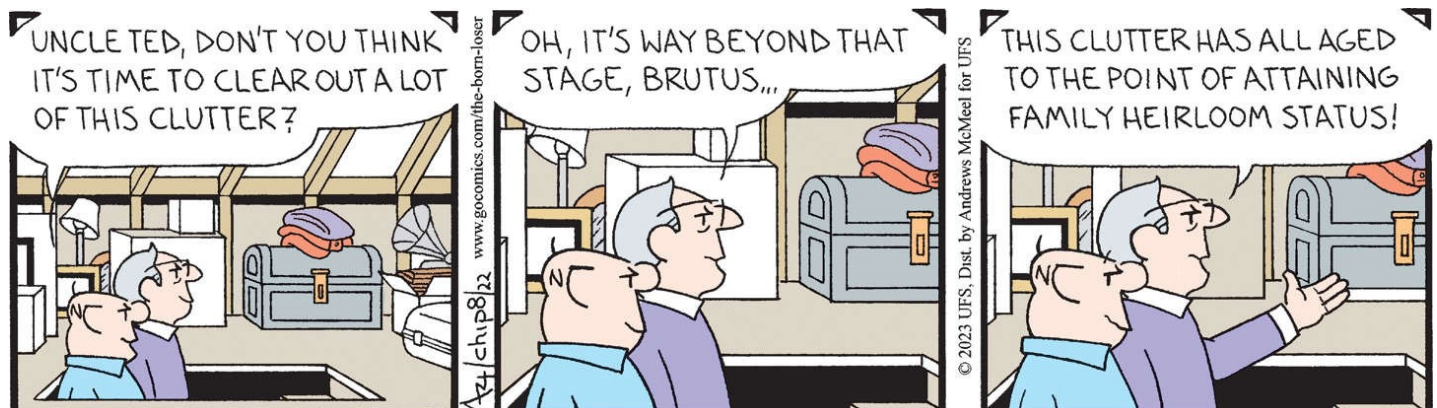
Long gone: Pshaw, the milkman did it. Hey! It's your nickel. Don't forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper.

Well, Fiddlesticks! Going like sixty. I'll see you in the funny papers. Don't take any wooden nickels. Wake up and smell the roses.

It turns out there are more of these lost words and expressions than Carter has liver pills. This can be disturbing stuff! (Carter's Little Liver Pills are gone too!)

Leaves us to wonder where Superman will find a phone booth.

See ya later, alligator! After a while crocodile. Oki-Doki artichokey!
 Thanks.



Calendar of Events 2023

In Person Meetings

<i>Jan 27</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Feb 24</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Mar 31</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Apr 28</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>May 26</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Jun 30</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Jul 28</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Aug 25</i>	<i>Chapter In-Door Potluck</i>
<i>Sept 29</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Oct 27</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Nov 17</i>	<i>Chapter Monthly Meeting</i>
<i>Dec 15</i>	<i>Chapter Holiday Potluck</i>

Food Bank Schedule For 2023

Cash donations collected at each monthly meeting to be given to a different food bank each month.

<i>January</i>	<i>Highline</i>	<i>Heinz Gehlhaar</i>
<i>February</i>	<i>Bellevue</i>	<i>Doug Hoople</i>
<i>March</i>	<i>Federal Way</i>	<i>Lonnie Stevenson</i>
<i>April</i>	<i>Maple Valley</i>	<i>Vaughn's</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>Kent</i>	<i>Melinda Stubbs</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>Auburn</i>	<i>Martha Battles</i>
<i>July</i>	<i>West Seattle</i>	<i>Heinz Gehlhaar</i>
<i>August</i>	<i>Tacoma</i>	<i>(open}</i>
<i>September</i>	<i>Renton</i>	<i>Eleanor Skinner</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>White Center</i>	<i>Heinz Gehlhaar</i>
<i>November</i>	<i>Des Moines</i>	<i>Lonnie Stevenson</i>
<i>December</i>	<i>Issaquah</i>	<i>Eleanor Skinner</i>

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**Don't Forget to
Report Your Hours!**

Bluebills Heritage Chapter Meeting

September 29, 2023

Social 10:00AM, Meeting 10:30 - 11:30AM



Speaker: No Speaker Currently Scheduled

Come to the meeting, enjoy coffee, donuts and socializing with other retirees.

(Bring a non-perishable food item to monthly meetings to be given to a different food bank each month.)

The Bluebills monthly meetings are held at the VFW Post 1263, 416 Burnett Ave South, Renton, WA. Parking is available in the lot immediately across the street from the VFW.

Bluebills Monthly Volunteer Hours

Volunteer Name _____

Phone Number _____

_____ Hours worked _____ For _____
(month/year) (agency name)

_____ Hours worked _____ For _____
(month/year) (agency name)

_____ Hours worked _____ For _____
(month/year) (agency name)

Please send completed hours form to Bluebills, PO Box 3707 1K-B02, Seattle, WA 98124
Email to bluebills@boeing.com or bring to Bluebills monthly meeting