

# Readin' Both Pages

*A membership publication of the Sail, Power & Steam Museum*

Vol. 1, No. 1

Winter 2008

## Rekord ~ A Fascinating Freighter

From the Memoirs of Capt. Jim Sharp

*Life is too short to own an ugly boat!* That was my motto and I adhered to it with almost religious devotion. The next boat I was destined to drag into Camden Harbor was one interesting and handsome vessel. Although sailing was still very much my forte, this little ship conveyed the closest thing to worship of a power vessel that this old codger can conjure up.

She was called the Record, spelled Rekord in old Norwegian, and was more than attractive in a thousand different ways. Rekord had history, intrigue, humor, challenge, personality and humility, all trunnelled together into one magnificent hull.

Her ad was buried deep among the many listings in the "Yellow Pages" (that's the scandal sheet of boats for sale in the commercial world). I should never have taken my copy into Fitzpatrick's Deli to peruse the Boats For Sale listings over my coffee. It was just a small picture and really fuzzy, but it snapped the hair-trigger on my snooping addiction. The caption read: "1914 Norwegian inter-fjord freight and passenger boat." That in itself was enough to grab one's attention. It went on, "Re-powered 1934, two-cylinder Brunvoll semi-diesel, variable-pitch prop, come from Norway on its own bottom, now fishing USVI." I ran to the telephone to call for more details.

Not long after, I was looking down at her from the window of a plane as I arrived in St. Thomas, and that same day I was aboard her for inspection. The owner welcomed me and let me roam through every nook and cranny. Made of heavy Scandinavian pine and built in the old-fashioned way with double-sawn frames closely spaced, thick planking and thicker ceiling (inner planking)—all of it appearing in good condition, strong and able. Although there were but Spartan accommodations below and a minimal galley, I fancied I could fix all that when (not if) I got her to Maine. The important thing was the condition of her bottom, as the worms in the tropics are voracious and love to chew labyrinths of tunnels in old wooden boats. I inspected every inch of the underwater planking, deadwood, rudder and her



Museum volunteers and staff were busy throughout the summer season working on many projects aboard Rekord. In this picture, Ben Breda applies fresh white paint to the starboard foredeck rail.

shoe ... it was not bad. There was some worming, but nothing that would be a structural problem. And those worms would soon die in our cold Maine water. I think I knew I would buy this boat before even stepping aboard. Then I asked the owner about the engine.

"It was installed in 1934," he drawled in a Chesapeake waterman's accent. "That was the year she was lengthened out the first time ..." Seeing the quizzical look on my face, he started in on the history of the Rekord. "You see, when first built in 1914 she was forty-two feet long. she ran from Ålesund to the islands in the fjords of the west coast of Norway, and brought back milk from the farms. When the business grew and passengers started traveling, they cut her in half at the middle and gave her another three meters of length, installed this engine, and ran her until she was once more deemed too small. That was in the 1950s. So they cut her again, and with another three meters of rebuilding she is now just over sixty feet."

I gasped at all this news. He then went on to explain that he went to Norway and bought her from the ferry service in 1972, and, "Knowing she had a zillion hours on the engine, I went to old Otto Brunvoll, the manufacturer, and asked him to do a total rebuild. Scratching his head, he asked me in a thick Norwegian accent, 'Vy do you vish to do diss?'"

# Sail, Power & Steam Museum



*Readin' Both Pages* is published four times a year by The Sail, Power & Steam Museum, a non-profit organization based in South Rockland, Maine on the shores of Owl's Head Bay. The Sail, Power & Steam Museum was founded in 2007 with a mission to enrich the lives of visitors, volunteers, and the general public through hands-on, interactive, and educational experiences with historically significant sailing, power, and steam driven vessels, ships, and small boats while providing instruction as to their origins, construction, and original commercial and recreational purposes.

A subscription to *Readin' Both Pages* is a benefit of Museum membership. Membership categories include: Individual (\$25), Family (\$50), Contributor (\$100), Sponsor (\$250) and Benefactor (\$500). For further information on these and other membership categories, as well as the Museum's current schedule of events, please see our website or contact the Museum.

**The Sail, Power & Steam Museum**  
**The Old Snow Shipyard**  
**75 Mechanic Street**  
**Rockland, Maine 04841**  
**Phone/Fax: 207-594-2230**  
**Website: [www.sailpowersteam.org](http://www.sailpowersteam.org)**

Back issues of *Readin' Both Pages* are available as PDF files, or in printed format for a small processing fee. Please contact the Museum for further details.

## Board of Directors

Capt. Jim Sharp, Chairman & Founder  
Meg Sharp, Founder  
F. Thomas Crowley, Jr., Secretary & Treasurer

## Board of Advisors

Gordon Bok	Charles Chiarchiaro
Capt. Steven Cobb	Elizabeth Fisher
Lewis Grant	Sam Manning
Rep. Edward Mazurek	Thomas Molloy
Peter Spectre	Capt. Orvil Young

## Readin' Both Pages Staff

Patrick Rowling, Managing Editor & Design

## A Fascinating Freighter (continued from page 1)

I tried to explain the trip to America and dependability, and with all the hours she had run ... but he waved me silent, saying, 'Ze ole boot *Rekord* has run fifty year here in Norway. She vill take you to Amerika and back if you vish, and she vill still be running for your szon und his szon. You yust keep ze oil to it, und she vill run.' Well, I said, OK, but I want to purchase from you enough spares to repair anything that may go wrong. Otto's answer was 'Keep ze oil to 'er und nozing vill go 'rong.'

"I was finally convinced," the owner stated, "but I bought the spare parts, packed them in oil and started out. My wife and I, only the two of us, ran twenty-six days across the pond, day and night, and old *Rekord* never missed a beat. When we arrived here in the Virgin Islands, that engine turning at 260 rpm sounded and acted just as it did when we left Europe. And after seven years of running these islands, the spares are still in their crates, packed in oil."

Now in 1979, with the "old boot," as Brunvoll says, running like a Swiss watch, I sat in the engine room contemplating that huge two-cylinder semi-diesel, all painted white and flashing its brass fittings in my eyes. Those two huge fifteen-inch pistons rolling up and emitting a dull thump with each hit, swapping with the other jug, rolling slowly over to the first, then back again to the other. Now back to the first, and back and forth, boom-boom-boom ... keeping that big, heavy flywheel centrifugally spinning in everlastingly slow and seemingly determined perpetual motion. What a rhythm! A symphony in two cylinders! Most of the noise and all of the smoke and fire seemed to go up the stack, where it was sculpted into ten-inch smoke rings, puffing out with each belch fifteen feet into the calm air. That old engine would run forward or backward with equal efficiency, and it seemed totally oblivious to the engineering diagrams.

The problem was in learning to run the old thing! Being a foreign ship, all of the labels were in a language strange to me and there were many mysteries of Norwegian marine protocol waiting to be solved. The variable pitch prop had two blades, which were controlled from the tiny pilothouse two decks up. The throttle was on the port side of the helm and was turned left with the right hand. The wheel controlling the variable-pitch prop was on the starboard side and was turned to the right, with the left hand!

Running and maneuvering the *Rekord*, while trying to remember that cross-handed technique, was a real challenge. And it almost got me into trouble more than once!

Make sure to read the conclusion to this article in the Spring issue of *Readin' Both Pages*.





## MISSION STATEMENT

To enrich the lives of visitors, volunteers and the general public of the state of Maine through hands-on, interactive, and educational experiences with historically significant sailing, power and steam driven vessels, ships and small boats while providing instruction as to their origins, construction, and original commercial and recreational purposes.

### BASIC BENEFITS (All levels)

- One membership card (free admission to Museum and special events)
- Subscription to the Museum newsletter, *Readin' Both Pages*
- 10% discount at Museum Store
- Invitations to special events
- Museum decal

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

#### STUDENT \$15

- Basic Benefits

#### INDIVIDUAL \$25

(for one adult)

- Basic Benefits
- Two free admission passes for guests

#### FAMILY/SUPPORTER \$50

(for two adults and children under 18)

- Basic Benefits
- Four admission passes for guests

#### CONTRIBUTOR \$100

(for two adults and children under 18)

- Basic Benefits
- Six admission passes for guests
- 25% discount on admission for accompanying guests

#### SPONSOR \$250

(for two adults and children under 18)

- Basic Benefits
- Personally autographed copy of "With Reckless Abandon" by Capt. Jim Sharp
- Invitation to special sales and promotions at the Museum Store
- 50% discount on admission for accompanying guests

#### BENEFACTOR \$500

(for two adults and children under 18)

- Basic Benefits
- Personally autographed copy of "With Reckless Abandon" by Capt. Jim Sharp
- Invitation to special sales and promotions at the Museum Store
- 50% discount on admission for accompanying guests
- Recognition on Plaque in Museum Library

## Calling All Volunteers!

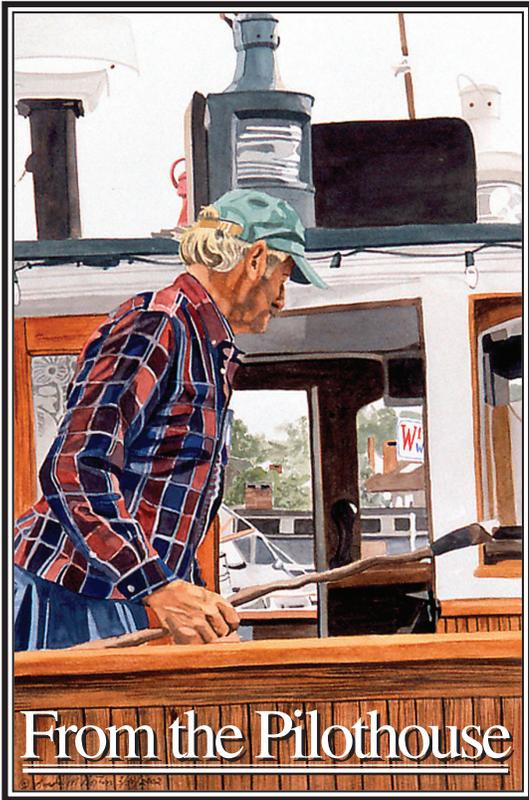
Volunteers of the Sail, Power & Steam Museum are a dynamic and exciting group who share many diverse interests such as nautical history, boat building and steam engines. There are many opportunities for Volunteers—something of interest for *every* interest.

The Sail, Power & Steam Museum salutes, recognizes and celebrates our volunteers as well as volunteers at the local, state and national levels. We encourage anyone interested in learning about volunteering to contact the Museum.

America has a proud tradition of neighbor helping neighbor, and today this volunteer spirit is needed more than ever before. Studies show that people who volunteer their time live longer, healthier and happier lives, and the satisfaction of a job well done is always an enjoyable feeling. Many thousands of retired individuals have found that they are not only welcomed, but needed in the carrying out of the day to day workings of organizations worldwide.

Please contact the Museum to find out how you can help us successfully meet our mission and bring history to life on the shores of Penobscot Bay.

**The Sail, Power & Steam Museum**  
75 Mechanic Street ~ The Old Snow Shipyard  
Rockland, Maine 04841  
207-594-2230 • www.sailpowersteam.org



Painting by Linda M. Norton, USCoGap, ASMA

“What?—You’re going to create a museum?!? Capt. Jim, what have you been smoking?”

It was the voice of reason ... It was the echo of sensibility ... A qualified, respected friend was expounding—the insanity of it all—reasons why it won’t work came like buck-shot—the whole thing should be long forgotten. Alas, all that shot, all these reasons, I promptly ignored. These prospects were too attractive. “Mullin’ it over” became my most enjoyed pastime. Every thought thrilled my heart. I would create a museum!

“Come on in—come in and slam the door! Welcome to my crowded pilot house on the historic little *Rekord*.” This was a grand event for the old boat. This was the first of the promotional cruises of the harbor of Rockland, sponsored by the Sail, Power & Steam Museum of Sharp’s Point South. The old semi-diesel was thump, thump thumping like the rhythm of a metronome and blowing the occasional smoke ring in her inimitable fashion. It was a two-cylinder symphony orchestra sonorously rehearsing down in the engine room. “This damned old boat should be in a Museum,” exclaimed a voice from my right shoulder. “She should be preserved—forever!”

That settled it. Remaining doubts were washed away. At least I wasn’t alone in realizing the worth of the 1914 flagship. And our museum seemed to be taking a giant step toward realization of that old dream. Perhaps this wasn’t the abandon of all apparent reason after all. “Why, indeed,” I thought to myself, “it seemed so logical.” My home was filled with ship models, dusty history books by sea captains, and all manner of pieces of maritime paraphernalia. My career had been on an old, engine-less schooner, all hemp and canvas, tradition to the nines, and essentially a living, sailing museum of its own; a vessel propelled by six thousand feet of cotton duck; 19-inch fir masts; oak hull; and the only bow to the twentieth century was a 1902 “make-and-brake” for the anchor windlass. Here was history in preservation, and it was in my blood.

A morsel of the old Snow Shipyard—where more vessels were built than anywhere in the state of Maine—was for sale. It seemed almost piously providential. Flunking retirement and with typical “reckless abandon,” I went bulling right on in. But now who would know, who could forecast, who could tell me—we were on the cusp of the largest recession experienced since the crash of ’29. What timing! No matter. Turn to! It had to be done.

I was warmly welcomed by the folks on Mechanic Street, kindly greeted by the South-Enders of Rockland, and received many nods of approval from city fathers. I was blessed with a contented feeling imparted by a grand city of old, hard-working heritage, one that has only recently been enriched with new found culture. Blessed with a working, developing waterfront, Rockland has not only a vibrancy, but a fantastic history as long as your arm.

Great people have soundly said, “WELCOME!”

My sincere thanks to you all,

*Capt. Jim Sharp*

### From the Bo’sun’s Locker

“Dolphin Striker” *noun*

A spar running perpendicular to the bowsprit used for holding down the martingale and jib boom.

## Events & Activities in 2008 included:

The First Annual Sail, Power & Steam Museum Family Fun Days, was held in early July. There were demonstrations of traditional boat building skills, hands-on activities including the wildly popular Under-A-Foot Regatta, tours of historic vessels and much more at this two-day gala event.

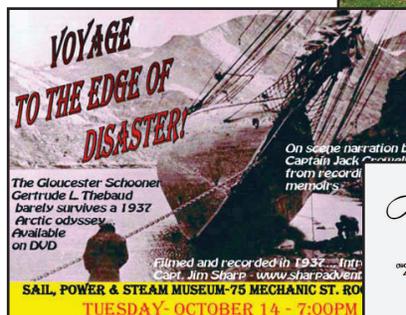
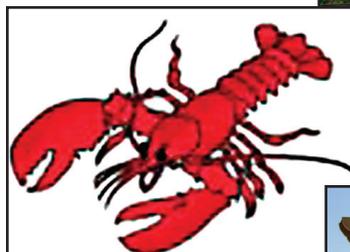
There were several Schooner-Style Lobster Bakes held as fundraisers for the Museum throughout the season. Sharpie's Shack hosted the events which included great food, live music and tours of the *Rekord*. It proved so popular that in 2009, this is planned to be a weekly event!

In July the staff and volunteers of the Museum erected a full-scale model of the center frame from the historic clipper ship Red Jacket alongside the Boat House. Currently on loan from the Penobscot Marine Museum, the frame model is now available to view seven days a week, year-round.

The Museum's Educational Event Series included a presentation and viewing of the amazing story of the Gertrude L. Thebauld by Capt. Jim Sharp. Other presenters included noted historian Gil Merriam speaking on Rockland's south-end working waterfront, and David Hoch recounting the history of the area's once-great lime industry.

The *Rekord* headed out on several harbor cruises, but circumstances and weather did keep her at the dock on a few occasions. The restoration process wasn't slowed though, and she is looking better than ever now at her homeport of Sharp's Point South. Come by soon to see for yourself!

Make sure to check the schedule on the back of this issue and the Museum website: [www.sailpowersteam.org](http://www.sailpowersteam.org) to update your 2009 calendar—there will be something of interest for everyone!



### Fall Foliage Cruise!

You're invited to a Fall Foliage Cruise of Rockland Harbor aboard the *Rekord*, Saturday, October 18th, 2008 at 1:00 pm. Please invite friends interested in becoming members of the Sail, Power & Steam Museum as well. Don't forget your camera, and make sure to bring a windbreaker as the breeze can be chilly this time of year!

RSVP Capt. Sharp via phone: 207-701-7627 ~ We'll see you on deck!  
The Sail, Power & Steam Museum - 75 Mechanic Street, Rockland, ME

# 2008/2009 Schedule of Events

## Remaining 2008 Events

**November 18th “Wanderbird in the Arctic”**  
Presentation  
7PM With Capt. Rick & Karen Miles

**November 21st “Music Night at the Museum”**  
Music  
7PM With Nick Apollonio, Bob Stuart & More

**December 4th “Circumnavigating by Sail”**  
Presentation  
7PM Jack Williams tells of his trip on Appledore

Please join us for coffee prior to  
each evening event at 6:30PM

## Museum Grand Opening!

Please make plans now to attend our Grand Opening Celebration on July 18, 2009 at the Museum. There will be activities for all ages, tours of historic watercraft, food, music and lots of fun!

The Second Annual Family Fun Days will be held in 2009, so stay tuned and plan to bring the family down for some good, nautical fun!

The Museum’s complete 2009 Schedule of Events will be posted in future editions of Readin’ Both Pages, but you can also check our website for up-to-date information by visiting [www.sailpowersteam.org](http://www.sailpowersteam.org) or by calling 207-701-7626 or 207-701-7627.

---

Coming this Winter: **“Movie Night at the Museum”**  
Featuring screenings of classic nautical themed films.  
Stay tuned for more details!



## Sail, Power & Steam Museum

75 Mechanic Street  
Rockland, Maine 04841  
[www.sailpowersteam.org](http://www.sailpowersteam.org)



First Class  
Postage  
Required



The Museum’s flagship, the sail-assisted motor vessel *Rekord*, is as unique as she is distinctive looking. She is one of the smallest vessels listed by the World Ship Trust—which places her in such esteemed company as the USS *Constitution*. Originally built in Norway in 1914, she was designed to serve as an inter-fjordal ferry, carrying both passengers and freight.