

Norwegian Commercial Club of Seattle

March 24th, 2016



Busy On The Water & Howe Northwest Seaport

Nathaniel Howe from Northwest Seaport, guest speaker

Northwest Seaport is a non-profit maritime heritage organization that has been in Seattle for 52 years. We preserve and interpret our region's larger museum vessels, including the schooner Wawona (1897-2009), Lightship No. 83 Swiftsure (1904-), and the tugboat Arthur Foss (1889-). On board these vessels, we welcome over 16,000 visitors each year and run dozens of programs ranging from Tugboat Story Time to volunteer work parties, Duck Dodge Happy Hour events, 4th of July, and also a number of vocational training programs including Diesel Engine Theory, Engineer For A Day, and Boatwright In Residence. Our program graduates go on to find careers in the maritime industry.

Northwest Seaport is excited to announce that we have decided to raise funds to acquire one more vessel--one of the iconic halibut schooners, the Ballard-built 1911 halibut schooner Tordenskjold. After 100 years of commercial fishing the boat is still in great shape and ready to fish, but its third owner, Marvin Gjerde, has decided to retire. Finding a buyer who will care for the vessel as he has does not appear possible and so Marvin began to look for alternatives to fishing and found Northwest Seaport, a place where his boat could be cared for and showcased to the public and receive the care it needs and deserves.

We at Northwest Seaport considered his offer and decided that Tordenskjold would be a perfect match for our fleet. The halibut schooners are one of the most distinguished vessel types in the Northwest, being entirely homegrown here and without ancestors. They were developed here in this city specifically for the halibut fishery and for the new emerging technology of internal combustion engines. Although only a handful remain, these vessels have distinguished themselves by staying competitive in the fishery for more than 100 years. Nowhere else in the world do you find 100 year-old vessels still fishing safely and competitively. The quality of design, construction, and maintenance in these vessels is unparalleled.

It is a wonderful story to tell. The Northwest's most classic fishing vessel type, manned mostly by Scandinavian immigrants, and fished first with dories and later long lines directly off the schooner. Tordenskjold in particular went through a number of changes in the fishery and worked in several other fisheries as well, including crab, shrimp, black cod, and even sharks. From 1937 to 1979 she worked as a trawler and dragger catching these species or working for the WA and OR Departments of Fish and Game as a sampling vessel.

Marvin Gjerde and Per Odegaard bought the boat in 1979 and made her a long liner again and returned to the halibut fishery. As the third owner, Gjerde has fished her for the last 38 years.

For Northwest Seaport, this vessel is a superb opportunity. The chance to acquire such a historically significant vessel that represents our region and our fishing industry so well cannot be passed up. Moreover, it is a vessel that does not need to be restored; it's ready to head for Bering Sea and fish. Lastly, it is a vessel that can get underway and be a platform for our youth education and public waterfront tour programs that will get people out on the water and show them our working waterfront that makes Seattle one of the most unique cities in the world. At 75ft long, Tordenskjold is large enough to carry a number of people, but small enough to maneuverable and practical to operate in this capacity, unlike Northwest Seaport's other vessels.

Northwest Seaport is currently trying to raise \$140,000 to acquire Tordenskjold and make the necessary modifications to get it certified for carrying passengers and will then add it to our fleet at the Historic Ships Wharf on Lake Union. From there, Tordenskjold can make excursions on Lake Union, down the Lake Washington Ship Canal to Fishermen's Terminal and the Locks, showcasing our maritime industry and all the smaller

manufacturing businesses that support it (and are currently under pressure from rapidly rising rents in Ballard). Tordenskjold can then become an ambassador for the fishing industry and the non-fishing public to come together and understand the legacy of our city.

We encourage anyone interested in seeing this happen to join us in this effort and support the acquisition and conversion of Tordenskjold with a donation today.

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT MEETING

Thursday, April 14, 2016

*Our Speaker: **J.A. Jance**, [Famous](#) Mystery Writer*

DINNER: Parmesan encrusted Cod, roasted potatoes, carrots, salad and desert

Remember, members pay just \$25 for dinner if you make reservations, \$30 if you don't. Call the Lodge Office no later than the Wednesday before the meeting to make your reservations & get the discounted price. (206) 783-1274