



WHITMAN-HANSON EXPRESS



"I always prefer to believe the best of everybody, it saves so much trouble." ~ Rudyard Kipling

VOLUME 12. NO. 29 • THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2014

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Repair panel gets to work

By TRACY F. SEELYE, EXPRESS EDITOR
EDITOR@WHITMANHANSONEXPRESS.COM

HANSON — The Schools Priority Repair Committee got down to business Wednesday, July 9 — and one of its immediate tasks included scheduling a tour of the Maquan and Indian Head schools on Wednesday, July 16.

The committee was to convene that session at 6:30 p.m. at Maquan for the tours with W-H Facilities Director Ernest Sandland and Assistant Superintendent of District Operations Craig Finley.

In planning the tour, members were especially interested in the state of the slate roof on Indian Head School.

But the first order of business for the new panel was organization. They voted to name Selectman Bruce Young chairman; Michael Jones, who is employed as an HVAC project manager, as vice chairman and Brian Campbell, who works with a construction management firm, as secretary.

The panel then reviewed its mission statement and open meeting regulations and scheduled a 7 p.m. Wednesdays meeting time at least until Aug. 20 — when member Bob Hayes must attend the School Committee meetings he chairs

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Crafted like a Swiss watch



SWISS SAILING: In a test voyage the yacht MV Twist, a former lobster boat, flies its new colors. Boat builder Bob Fuller of Halifax, below, who also makes handcrafted ship's wheels, finished renovating the Twist in Hanson this spring.

Top photo, courtesy Bob Fuller/Bottom, Tracy Seelye photo

Local boat builder launches into new waters

By TRACY F. SEELYE, EXPRESS EDITOR
EDITOR@WHITMANHANSONEXPRESS.COM

HANSON — Call it a yacht project with a "Twist" that piqued his interest.

For Halifax resident Bob Fuller, a three-year project to convert a 45-foot commercial lobsterboat into a European "lobsteryacht" not only inspired the craft's new name — Twist, for the twist of fate that brought the vessel a new life — it brought with it a trip to Genoa, Italy last week to



help launch the restored craft from Corsica, a French island off the Italian coast.

"It's the middle of our summer and I'd like to stay here and enjoy our summer

with my family — but we're going for four days and it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he said.

Fuller and a diesel me-

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Scout dives into Eagle task

By DAVE PALANA
EXPRESS CONTRIBUTOR

Patrons of the Whitman Town Pool will notice some changes when they go to change their clothes courtesy of Eagle Scout candidate Matt O'Brien.

Tuesday night, O'Brien and his helpers put the finish-

ing touches on a much-needed facelift to the pool house in Town Park O'Brien completed for his Eagle Scout project. The scout from Whitman's Troop 59 power-washed and painted the inside and outside of the pool house, added shelves to the locker rooms and helped organize the mate-

rials over the past week and a half.

O'Brien said he decided to pursue the project after his mother's Girl Scout troop wasn't able to fit it in, but was under the gun to complete the project and submit the paper-

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OPTIONS FOUND: Teacher Stephanie (Crisp) Diaz and her husband David flank student Edwin on graduation day.

Courtesy photo, Stephanie (Crisp) Diaz

Striking a chord

Towns help one of our own inspire

By STEPHANIE (CRISP) DIAZ
SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS

MIAMI — "Miss Crisp, you gotta listen to this song," a former student of mine named Dave told me recently. Most songs that my students share with me speak to their experiences in some way, and the opening lyrics of

this one grabbed my attention.

"Am I wrong for thinking out the box from where I stay? Am I wrong for saying that I choose another way? I ain't trying to do what everybody else is doing," the duo Nico and Vinz croon. Although this wasn't the typical hip-hop

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From lobster boat to yacht with precision, pride

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chanic went to calibrate the boat's computer-powered engines.

"It was actually a rebuilt of a 40-year-old boat from Rhode Island," he said. "It was a working lobsterboat until three years ago."

The former owner, Donald Wilcox, and his family had fished for about as long as they had the boat, formerly named the "Hazel W. III," had been in the business.

"It was hard for them to sell their dad's boat, but after 40 years, the two brothers who were still fishing it were getting older and didn't have the time to properly keep up with the maintenance," he said. Permit regulation changes also prompted the Wilcox family to sell.

Now the Twist is owned and registered in Baselia, Switzerland, by Swiss physician, Dr. Eric Megevand, to sail back and forth from Italy to Croatia where his wife's family has a vacation home.

"We kept the hull," Fuller said of the wooden lobsterboat. "Beyond that, everything else is new."

The craft was gutted and fit with accommodations to sleep six people, modern electronics and a new engine and galley as well as a 40-gallon water desalination unit to provide drinking water on board.

Next week starts a new project as Fuller works to do the custom teak work on a fiberglass-hulled sailboat. But it's all hunky dory for this third-generation master craftsman specializing in boat restoration, yacht-quality joinerwork and custom shipswheels.

He also builds dories, both real as with the 19-foot dory he is currently building for a repeat customer who fishes for striped bass, and child-size Plymouth Rock'r rocking cradle boats for kids.

Boats are a family tradition.

"I apprenticed with my father and grandfather in their shop [Industrial Patterns in Halifax]," Fuller said as his yellow Lab Jake poked around the Hanson workshop of South Shore Boatworks for scrap lumber on which to chew. "From the time I was four years old, I would draw out boats on wood and my father or grandfather would cut them out and we'd float them in a pond, or puddles — float them in the bathtub — just playing with boats. That's really where it started.

From roughed out tub toys he's worked his way to a respected reputation in boat restoration and renovation circles, the M/V Twist perhaps representing his magnum opus to this point.

"I choose [projects] based on my interest," Fuller said. "If something seems as though it has some character I'll take



A long way from its beginnings as a working lobster boat in Wickford, R.I., (lower right) the finished renovation of newly renamed MV Twist (above) is loaded onto a cargo ship in Newport for the voyage to Genoa, Italy on June 24. Upper right is an example of Bob Fuller's work on handmade ship's wheels.



Tracy Seelye photo, above/ Courtesy photos left and below



Future mariners across the country enjoy Bob Fuller's Plymouth Rock'r dories.

Photo by Tracy Seelye

the project, sometimes it's what the owner envisions and wants me to do."

All things being equal, however, Fuller gravitates to lobster-style powerboats and small dories. About half the boats on which he works are wood construction.

He had started helping his father on boat project by age 12 and constructed his own first boat — 10-foot skiff — at 15.

"I apprenticed with my family, which worked for me," he said. "My father had apprenticed in the shipyards of the Panama Canal Zone."

In fact, his parents met in Panama where both had gone to seek work during the Depression. One of Fuller's grandfathers ran the foundry in the Panamanian shipyards, while the other ran the apprentice program.

"I was born into this," he said. "Where else could I have gotten the education that I did?"

His dad still follows the doings in the Panama Canal via webcam.

The family line in the boat-building business will likely end with him, Fuller notes, as his teen-aged daughter prefers working with animals. She is a student at Norfolk Aggie — a point on which he is philosophical. He realizes every generation goes their own way — but he is passing the skill to a new generation, just the same.

Fuller has a single em-

ployee, Michael Bryan who went to boat-building school in Eastport, Maine. He had interned with Fuller between years in the two-year program.

"I knew I had this big project that was going to be happening with this big boat [the Twist] and when he graduated he came back down and it's been three years now working with me," Fuller said.

The two work together in some weather-controlled conditions.

The uninsulated corrugated metal building at the Northeast Lumber Supply yard is heated in winter by a single diesel-fired heater, but the tradeoff is the benefit of ample space afforded by the building in which they work.

They moved the workshop up from West Wareham last August when that building was sold. His home workshop,



where he crafts ships wheels and about five Plymouth Rock'rs a year is equally impressive.

"It's almost like two separate businesses, yet interwoven," he said of the wheels. "It's a specialty and I'm the only one in the country doing it."

He has taken his wheel projects on the road to craft festivals to demonstrate the art as well, focusing on the finish work as he discusses the skill and answers questions.

Fuller prefers metal hubs on his wheels for stability and

works with a Woburn engraver to etch boat names and, in some cases, home ports.

The rings on the wheel are inlaid with holly, ebony and basswood.

"I feel very fortunate in what I do," he said. "As much work as I do in the marine trades, I get more support out of the Massachusetts Cultural Council."

His wheels have been included in a book on Mass. folk artists produced by the Cultural Council.

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