



# SOUTHWESTER

The Southwest Chapter—Antique & Classic Boat Society newsletter serving Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Spring 2008

## *The President's Message*

*Our first boat show of the year-- Keels and Wheels, is weeks away. May 3-4th should already be marked on your calendar. If you want to enter a boat, there isn't much time remaining. Plan on visiting with chapter members in the ACBS Cabana located behind the marina. Also, come by the ship store where there will be a kid's boat building demonstration courtesy of John Plato. His granddaughter Emma is a previous trophy winner. This year the show will feature the Tora Tora Tora demonstration on Sunday. A promo for the Keels and Wheels is already running on PBS, KUHT Channel 8.*

*You should have received your new ACBS directory by now. Go to the photo section in the back and check out the picture of Bob and Mildred Van Guilder in their 1931 Dart "Fine Wine." Bob is an officer of both the Southwest Chapter and the North Texas WBA.*

*I guess an admitted "car guy", can have a cool boat too.*



*That's me and Ellery looking at a beautiful Hacker he was contemplating. My wife and I love riding on the other man's boat!!!*

*We want to welcome back a couple of chapter members who left North Texas for a while (we're not sure why). Bill Baldwin and Bill Reardon couldn't stay away. When you see them at the Keels and Wheels, let them know you are happy to have them back.*

*Happy Boating....Robert*



# SAVE THE DATE

## ACBS - Southwest Chapter Boat Show Schedule

May 3 - 4 - Keels and Wheels  
Houston / Seabrook, Texas

June 7 - Eagle Mountain  
Ft. Worth, Texas

August 22 - 24 North Texas WBA  
Dallas, Texas

October 3 - 5 Hill Country/Austin  
Horseshoe Bay - Lake LBJ, Texas  
More on shows: [www.southwest-acbs.org](http://www.southwest-acbs.org)

ADD: [southwestacbs@gmail.com](mailto:southwestacbs@gmail.com)  
to your computer address book, to  
receive SW Chapter email notices.

Pat representing the club as  
always at the Reliant show  
in January. She is terrific!!!



A Chris Craft XK-19 with a Century  
boarding ladder? 'Guess the rest of the  
Century rotted away! LOL!!!!



Gas powered pogo stick. Who is your  
liability carrier?

## Tales from Lake Dora

The Merrymans and friend riding  
Lake Dora with Dr. Elliott



These guys know how to have fun!!!!





2 pics of a gorgeous boat!!!



Even Chris Crafts need help from time to time. Elliott's boat, but who's ugly foot?



Wayne Elliott in blue earning his "work shirt" loading the boats up.



Dr. Elliott talking Warranty repairs with the builder of Doll Baby - Mr. Hugh Saint. That's the editor in the background nursing another free beverage.

Beautiful Shepherd.



Absolutely awesome homebuilt cruiser of 20'.





# Extreme Garage

Clay Thompson

It all starts out innocently enough. The thought of having a boat for the family to use is, in fact, quite a noble thing. Boats are a part of American life. Some people, I know, have very fond memories of their childhood spent with or on the family runabout. Most of us contemplate getting our own boat at one time or another and what could be better than an old woodie!

Once the idea is born, Dad goes on the hunt for the perfect boat to buy and sometimes this perfect boat is not all that hard to find. After all, he has driven by this wood boat with its “For Sale” sign displayed, each day as he travels to and from work. He finally makes the big decision. He brings his prize home immediately to show the family. You’d think he had just bagged a trophy deer or won some kind of award. Indeed, this is a happy day. He anxiously awaits the families’ reaction. His better half has a strange look on her face. He imagines that she will ask about the interior color or the size of the vessel or the gleaming varnish or even the engine and horsepower, well; maybe asking about the engine is pushing it a little! But she comes up with a new bombshell question: Where are you going to put it??? Hmmmm, that is an issue, but at least she didn’t say we couldn’t keep it. Thinking quickly, I answer, making out like I had already thought of this problem, and blurt out, “It has a good cover and it can just stay in the driveway.” I know this isn’t really feasible, but it’s all I can think of at the moment. She doesn’t have much of a response, except, “I’m not giving up my garage space for it!” oh yeah, and that other thing comes up too, I thought all wood boats leak! We were happy anyway. We were proud new owners of our own boat.





Owning the boat was a success, but before long, the boat takes the garage space where Dad usually parks. Its OK at first, but now, through the winter, I'm scraping ice and snow to get to work, and while driving one morning, the thought hits me: We need another garage! Yes, that's it. We need a proper place for the antique family boat. Yes, I use the word "antique" now. I use it because it sounds much, much better than just plain "old boat". Besides, the boat has become one of the family. (Of course, it's also the one that demands the most attention.) A new garage will have room for the boat and all the stuff that goes with it. You know, necessary stuff, like the Chris Craft signs and the old water skis and other priceless boating artifacts. Yes, Ebay has been good to us! While we are at it, maybe two stalls would be better, or even three! One just never knows when a once in a lifetime bargain antique boat will pop up for sale.

After a few years, we now have, of course, more boats. Each purchase made perfect sense. We gotta have something to use while the others are in various stages of restoration. Now aren't we glad we built that six-stall garage? Pretty smart thinking, eh? Also we now have memberships in every conceivable classic boat organization and five or six wood runabouts (by now, who's counting?) And we have a big collection of doodads, spare parts and memorabilia. Yes, it started out innocently enough, but we now have a truly extreme garage! But that's not all that's extreme, while attending boat shows and events for the last fifteen years or so, we have met a lot of good friends, had a good time, and enjoyed the boating world immensely. That's pretty extreme, too. Our kids grew up adoring the beautiful wood boats and their history. They too understand the difference between a beautiful wooden runabout and a new common Tupperware boat. I highly recommend boating, collecting and ACBS membership to anyone. It has been and will continue to be a great hobby and good family fun. If you happen to find yourself with too many boats, or not enough room, an extreme garage may be just the ticket.

Our garage has 6 stalls, with 4 boat stalls at 32' in depth, for long boats. Yes, each time you buy another boat, it gets longer, I think it is the law or something. Our garage interior is designed to also have space to relax and do some "armchair" boating during the off-season. We added some features to give it an "antique" feel to go along with the old boats we have in it. We have a pressed tin ceiling that was harvested from a 1920's building, a wooden antique filing cabinet, for those all important brochures, and a roll top desk, complete with a 1930 working "candlestick" telephone. If you call me, chances are I'll answer on that old phone. We have a nice seating area with a cozy fireplace, a television and of course, that all-important refrigerator for our favorite refreshment. The floor is concrete, but stained and then scored with lines to mimic floor tile. The walls are adorned with signage and shelving to hold all the loot. Don't forget the most important thing, you'll need a complete set of tools in your new garage. These antiques could occasionally need some light maintenance!

# The Next Boat! Chris Dorflinger

I consider myself to be among the luckiest on earth. Not just for the standard reasons like health, success, etc. You know you are truly blessed when your loving wife looks up at you, smiles, and says “honey we need a bigger boat”..... Being that I started my love of restoring wooden boats on a 26’ cruiser some seventeen years ago I always find the most rewards when I tackle a cruiser project. However, since my family and I had just completed our 1938 35’ Chris Craft “Born Again” I was not in a hurry to fulfill my wife’s request. Besides, all of the boats that I have restored actually found me. I have never been “looking” for the next project rather I stumble onto them by accident, always at the right price and in manageable condition. I am a big fan of Pre-War styling, particularly the art-deco design of the thirty’s, so I do not get very excited about just any old boat.

When I stumbled across the newest in our fleet, it fit all of my standard criteria and filled my wife’s specific requests (private stateroom, show er, and bigger). While perusing the Chris-Craft Antique Boat Club’s website just for fun, I happened upon an ad that I thought must surely be a mistake. Mixed in with all of the Chris-Craft runabouts was a posting for a 1939 44’ Elco Cruisette looking very much like a version of our current cruiser on steroids. The boat appeared to be well maintained and although she sports modern Mercruiser 350s, as the ad claimed, she for all accounts totally original in all other respects.

As “for sale” ads go so often, I figured that the boat was long gone but decided to attempt contact with the owner. I sent an email and waited. Two weeks passed and I tried again. When my second went un-answered I figured that my notes were being sent to the proverbial cyber-file thirteen, or as email addresses go, sent to an old account long ago abandoned for another ISP. At that point I tried to forget about the boat... but it kept bugging me. I looked through the Brass Bell archives and found that the boat had been offered for sale as far back as 2004 and other than a price drop, the ad remained exactly the same. I decided that any good wooden boat owner would surely be a member in good standing with the ACBS but I had no name to look up other than what appeared in one photo to be the name of the boat... “Hippo” (yes we are going to change it).

As luck would have it there was only one boat with that name (imagine that) and it happened to belong to an Elco. I called the number listed and spoke with the owner. He confided that he had received my emails but was not sure that he was ready to part with his pride and joy. I asked for the usual specs and photos which he agreed to send. A few more calls and he seemed ready to negotiate. Seems his age was becoming a factor in his effort to keep the vessel. Being that this would constitute our biggest project to date, I was not ready to fully commit to the purchase until I had opportunity to personally survey the boat. Problem was, the boat was in Kingston, Ontario and winter was fast closing on window to complete the transaction and get it out of the great white north in time.

By October 20, Judy and I are headed to Syracuse, rented a car to drive around to Kingston. On the way we had opportunity to stop by wood boat “Mecca”. Clayton, NY is one of those quaint New England villages that resembles the miniature Christmas displays we build on our fireplace hearth. Unfortunately the museum and most everything including ACBS headquarters was closed for the winter as we passed through.

We arrived in Kingston and settled in for the night. First thing the next morning we met at the marina with Dr. Robert MacMillan to give the Elco a thorough going over. I was immediately concerned in that the boat was the only one left in the water. He showed us around and left us to investigate further for a few hours. It was apparent the photos had not been recent and though the over-all finish had been deteriorating (from keeping the boat in an uncovered slip), we were impressed with the vessels structural condition. Before we departed we exchanged offers and left a deposit check. We grabbed a quick lunch and went back to the boat which we had just become the new owners of. We spent the rest of the day and evening scheming of what we intended to do with her when she arrived in Texas.

Due to the impending deep freeze of the area it was quickly decided that it would be most prudent to have the boat hauled-out and trucked to Texas. However, we had to wait until Dr. Robert returned from a two week trip to Europe. This gave me time to work through the details of transportation, finding a marina to haul the boat, and US Customs, but left the boat in peril of being iced in.





As it turned out finding a marina still in operation was a challenge, as well as finding a customs broker. After speaking with nearly every broker in New York to no avail, the game plan changed forcing me to go back to the north to clear customs personally.

Once again I found myself blazing through airports heading to Clayton. I brought along my 24 year old cousin, Capt. Brandon for his experience and left Judy behind in Pasadena to hold down the fort. The morning after we arrived we woke to a very brisk 18 degrees. Robert met us at St Lawrence Restoration in Clayton and drove us around to Kingston. We boarded the boat and prepared for our departure. As modern conveniences go now days, the marina has a webcam accessible through their website which allowed Judy et al to watch as we departed the already icy waters of the marina.

The trip was immediately challenged by four foot seas as we tacked our way through the small piece of Lake Ontario headed to the St Lawrence River. The boat handled the weather very well and I was duly impressed when she took several 6 footers as we passed between two small islands. Once in the St Lawrence River system, the seas subsided and it was smooth sailing making 14kts with plenty of throttle left on her twin 260 horse engines.

The “Thousand Islands” region is exactly that, literally a thousand islands dot the river for miles. Nearly every one of these islands, no matter how small, has summer cottages of every imaginable design dotting the landscape. The multitude of ducks and geese rafted in acre sized gatherings were seemingly making their last minute plans for the trip south. It was apparent that the boating season had long since past as we were the only boat in sight. Even the channel buoys had been retrieved in preparation for the inevitable freezing over of the river. It was a beautiful and peaceful two hour trip to Clayton which gave me more time to get familiar with the boat.

The view of Clayton was even more delightful as we approached by water. I took the helm from Capt Brandon as we arrived at the Customs dock and guided the craft to a smooth landing. It is a defining moment when you can maneuver a vessel that size in such a way as to make it look easy. The Customs officers arrived and our Elco became a US citizen for the first time since leaving New Jersey in 1939. The day had warmed to a balmy 29 degrees so I was glad the process was quick. We boarded again for the very short trip around the corner to St Lawrence Restoration for the big haul-out.

The haul went off without a hitch and the bottom inspection was better than expected finding only one soft spot on a butt joint. We said our goodbyes to the MacMillan's, assuring them their family friend would be well taken care of. After preparing the craft for the 1700 mile trip to Texas, Brandon and I decided that it was time for our first meal of the day (It was 5:30pm).



In Clayton there are very few businesses open during the winter and even fewer open on Monday at 6: pm. We found the only restaurant in town that was open, which was more bar than eatery (very much a local's hangout). We were greeted with the fact that the only thing that works better than the internet for getting news out is the small town "grapevine". As soon as we sat down we were approached by a nice lady who inquired if we were the guys who brought the beautiful wooden boat down the river today. Before the evening was over we had the same conversation with three other town folk.

After we winged our way back to the land of perpetual short-sleeve weather, the only thing to do was wait for the transportation company's schedule to catch up to ours. The company of choice was found after an exhaustive search of the many companies that "don't haul wooden anything" as one company so politely put it. Thomas Duncan Trucking is a father & son company that specializes in boats with particular attention and experience in wooden boat transportation. Tom is very much hands on and great at communication with his customers. If you ever find yourself in need of transportation, call me and I'll give you the details.

Exactly two months after I started the process of purchasing this fine vessel I get the call at 2:30 on a Tuesday...."Hello, Mr. Dorflinger....Tom Duncan here....looks like I'm a bit ahead of schedule and am just passing over the ship channel bridge on 610". I can't recall if I left any of my customers on hold at that moment, but I do recall suddenly being behind the wheel of my truck heading to pick-up Judy and the boys. As I am heading down the service road for hwy 225, our boat goes past me at 60 mph. I fought my way past the "rubber-neckers" and got a few photos with my cell phone. Feeling like I did on my first cognoscente Christmas I sped past and took the detour to our home. My truck barely stopped rolling when Judy slammed the door closed and we were off.

As timing goes, ours was perfect this time. When we merged onto hwy 146 here comes the boat, again surrounded by admirers. Judy shot some great footage of the arrival and I became the official escort vehicle as we made our way through Seabrook and Kemah. The weight of anticipation was lifted as the boat finally stopped in the parking lot of my chosen work place. The location is not a marina this time, but rather a warehouse located slightly less than a mile from water. I have contracted with True North Marine Service for space inside their warehouse where we can work without hindrance from weather or fear of overspray (some of you know what happened last time) in climate controlled comfort. The agreement comes complete with access to a full array of wood working equipment, a wheeled cradle and an on site travel lift, all at the same price as an open air boat yard.

The tasks at hand are primarily cosmetic in nature with little wood to be replaced. We need to do the usual removal of a poorly crafted fiberglass topping on the wheel-house and cabin trunk roof. The fiberglass is to be replaced with proper painted canvas. The hull and wheelhouse sides will be wooded and refinished. Inside there will be new linoleum and carpet, a freshening up of all of the paint, and some minor reconfiguration of the galley as per Judy's request.

It is our goal to have her ready for the water by late May 2008, in time for some summer fun. So no....it will not be ready for Keels and Wheels, but I will be giving tours to anyone that's interested. If you find yourself in the Kemah area between now and then call me....if I can hear my phone over the sander I'll give you directions and a tour....might even be a beer in the fridge.

