

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023 SCHOOL YEAR

*October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023*



# STAFF & BOARD

## Board of Directors

- Sonja Mathews**, President; Management Consultant and Retired Senior Executive
- Kathleen Brooker**, Vice President; Historic Preservation Consultant
- Bob Hartman**, Secretary, Alum 2020; Retired attorney with the United States Environmental Protection Agency
- Richard Schwarz**, Treasurer; CEO of SAFE Boats International
- Jane Guiltinan**, Board Member; retired Dean of Naturopathic Medicine at Bastyr University
- Angela Hewitson**, Board Member, Alum 2017; Maritime Community Development Specialist at the Northwest Maritime Center
- Linda Newland**, Board Member; Maritime Attorney and former School District Administrator
- Lynn Schwarz**, Board Member; retired Executive Coordinator in the biotech industry
- Stephen Gale**, Board Member; former owner Haven Boatworks
- David Blessing**, Board Member Emeritus as of December 2021, Alum 2003; Nuclear Power Engineering Consultant
- Michael Delagarza**, Board Member Emeritus as of March 2023, Alum 2004; Business Manager at Champion Video Productions

## Instructional Staff \*

- Ace Spragg**, Education Director & Title IX Coordinator
- Sean Koomen**, Boatbuilding Lead Instructor
- Bruce Blatchley**, Boatbuilding Instructor
- Leland Gibson**, Boatbuilding Instructor
- Tucker Piontek**, Boatbuilding Instructor
- Korey Ruben**, Boatbuilding Instructor
- Kevin Ritz**, Marine Systems Program Director
- Tyler Johnson**, Marine Systems Instructor

## Additional Staff \*

- Betsy Davis**, Executive Director
- Jim Argites**, Operations Manager
- Heidi Blehm**, Admissions and Student Services Manager
- Mo Gibson**, Facilities Crew Member
- Beverly Moore**, Librarian
- Kristin Potter**, Administrative Assistant and Development Coordinator
- Scott Clifton**, VetCorps Member
- Christina Ruben**, Deputy Director and Student Affairs Manager
- Katie Whalen**, Financial Aid Officer
- Pearl Farley**, Prothero Intern
- Jeff Matthews**, Prothero Intern

\* as of September 30, 2023

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Ace grew up on the Chesapeake Bay, messing about in boats. Her first boat was a raft, which went through many upgrades over five summers of glorious adventures. Her love of the water led to 20 years as a Waterfront Director and Program Director at a camp back east. Relocating to the Puget Sound in 2000, she moved aboard a sailboat and found her way back to teaching — adults this time — who were afraid to dock their boat. This led to 11 years with the Northwest Maritime Center as an instructor, Sailing Director, and Program Director.



Photo © Elizabeth Becker

**Ace Spragg**  
Education Director &  
Title IX Coordinator  
ace.spragg@nwswb.edu

*"Our mission is to teach and preserve boatbuilding and marine system skills, while developing the individual as a craftsman. I have to tell you as Education Director, during my first year here, I attended class every day, either boatbuilding or systems. We lived that mission every single day. It's great to be a part of this educational team where everybody is so focused on the students and what they need to learn these skills. The students come first. It's a wonderful, supportive learning community and I'm so proud to be a part of it."*

Jim brings 23 years of experience overseeing facilities, inventory, and financial tasks for organizations in the non-profit and for-profit sectors. He spent 20 years sourcing materials and equipment, researching suppliers, managing the shipping and receiving team in the warehouse, and overseeing daily financial entries and reconciliations for Pygmy Boats, a small marine manufacturing business. Prior to that, he ran his own cabinet-making business. At NWSWB, Jim oversees an eight-acre campus with more than a dozen buildings, and is responsible for bookkeeping, purchasing, and inventory management.



Photo © Elizabeth Becker

**Jim Argites**  
Shop and Facilities Manager  
jim.argites@nwswb.edu

*"I appreciate that craftsmanship is valued in every role and in everything we do here."*

Korey graduated from the Boat School in 2014 and dove head first into the world of carbon fiber composites at a start-up called Spindrift Rowing. There, he built custom, state-of-the-art ocean-rowing vessels designed by America's Cup structural engineers. Later, as a shipwright at Haven Boatworks, he worked on several notable northwest yachts, including the 65-foot 1917 *MV Carlisle II*, the last of the Puget Sound's working mosquito fleet; the 97-foot 1941 *MV Sea Wolf*, an expedition charter vessel; and two Ted Geary-designed fantails, the 96-foot 1928 *MV Blue Peter* and the 120-foot 1930 *MV Thea Foss*.



Photo © Elizabeth Becker

**Korey Ruben**  
Boatbuilding Instructor  
Class of 2014  
korey.ruben@nwswb.edu

*"Everything I do, still, is enhanced by things I learned at Boat School. Having that bag of tricks has a place no matter what you're building."*



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I recently had an experience that gave me a fresh appreciation for the power of hands-on learning. I was on my way to Desolation Point when the alternator failed in my traditional wooden cabin cruiser, a boat that came into my life 26 years ago and has propelled me into more than one adventure on and off the water. It would have been an inconvenient time and place for a breakdown, had it not been for a kindly stranger — with marine systems experience! — who took time out from his vacation to coach me through the repair.

You don't have to own a 110-year-old boat to appreciate the people in our midst who have the ability to build and repair things in the physical world. They are treasured by all boat- and home-owners. It's a special kind of intelligence.

That's what we teach at NWSWB, and we get to see the self-confidence and career success that comes with increasing mastery of a skill set so valued in the trades. We get to see the journey that follows and the joy that comes with it. It's exciting to see recent graduates take their place and continue their hands-on education alongside old hands at Port Townsend's Haven Boatworks and Shipwrights Co-op, as well as other yards across the country.

We also recognize that students can't learn or even attend Boat School if they're struggling to find housing, pay tuition, or put food on the table. The seven cottages across from the Westrem Shop are now part of the campus and available for student housing. Volunteers are growing and harvesting food for the local foodbank in a garden on the upper campus — a resource that assists about a quarter of our



students. With the gap between federal student aid and costs escalating with inflation, scholarship dollars are even more critical and, gratefully, on the rise. In 2023, we inaugurated a new event in Seattle to raise money to re-fill the scholarship coffers each year. We are grateful to the Boat School community for all the ways you support our students.

**Betsy Davis**

# LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



In 2023, Betsy Davis received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Northwest Maritime Center for significant contributions to the wooden boat community over multiple decades. In typical Betsy fashion, she redirected the spotlight from herself to all who have inspired her — from mentors to colleagues to her wooden boat *Glory Be*.

Betsy models lifelong learning and makes the journey of transformation rewarding for all of us. Not just the transformation we see in our students, but in the organization itself. Roger Coulter, a volunteer and member of our finance committee, donated many consulting hours to help develop and refine a sophisticated budgeting and reporting tool (work that our auditor valued at \$30,000) and he described it as “the single most gratifying work I've ever done.”

We've also been transforming the path to enrollment at NWSWB. Yes, we impart physical literacy skills in a hands-on environment, but we

have to be conversant in the digital world to connect with people who may not know this type of learning environment exists. We've spent a lot of time — especially in the past year — learning how to do that proficiently.

Each member of our board, each instructor and staff member, each volunteer and contributor, is committed to this journey. We want the school to continue serving as a pathway to employment and a force for good in the lives of each student — whether the student is a recent high school graduate, a military veteran, or a career-changer like 2023 Prothero Intern Pearl Farley. Pearl found the Boat School so transformational that she has made it her mission to visit as many high school shop classes as possible to raise awareness that there are exciting alternatives to 4-year college, especially for action learners like herself. She is living the adage, “Transform and be transformed!”

**Sonja Mathews**

## MISSION

*To teach and preserve boatbuilding and marine systems skills while developing the individual as a craftsperson.*

# PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION & JOB PREPAREDNESS

NWSWB programs are accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Career Schools and Colleges ([www.accsc.org](http://www.accsc.org)) and are licensed by the State of Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board ([www.wtb.wa.gov](http://www.wtb.wa.gov)).

## CLASS OF 2023

A selection of businesses where students found employment:

- Haven Boatworks — Port Townsend, WA
- S/V *Hawaiian Chieftain* — Port Townsend, WA
- Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding — Port Hadlock, WA
- Ocean Performance Technologies — Saanich, British Columbia
- Schell Custom Boatworks — Denville, NJ
- Monkey First Marine — Seattle, WA

Several students went on to start their own businesses, seven students are continuing their education at NWSWB in the Boatbuilding or Marine Systems program, and several other students went on to continuing education in other institutions of higher education.

## FAST FACTS: CLASS 2023

- Students came from 16 states and 2 countries (Australia and Canada).
- Almost 60% of students came from within Washington State.
- The average age of all students was 35 years old.

## CLASS OF 2023 DEMOGRAPHICS

Total enrolled: 62                      Ages: 18-64  
 Boatbuilding students: 39              Military veterans: 11  
 Marine Systems students: 23

### Gender breakdown over all programs:

Men: 56 (84%)  
 Women: 6 (10%)  
 Non-binary/third gender: 4 (6%)

### Gender breakdown per program:

<b>Boatbuilding</b>	<b>Marine Systems</b>
Men: 34 (87%)	Men: 18 (78%)
Women: 1 (3%)	Women: 5 (22%)
Non-binary/ third gender: 4 (10%)	Non-binary/third gender: 0

*From the get-go, Boat School was a really good fit for me. All day, every day, you're learning how to do things, problem solving, and using your hands to figure things out.*

—Pearl Farley



**Cole Gindhart**  
 S/V *Hawaiian Chieftain*  
 Port Townsend, WA



**Pearl Farley**  
 Northwest School of  
 Wooden Boatbuilding  
 Port Hadlock, WA



**Liam Rolfe**  
 Ocean Performance  
 Technologies  
 Sannich, British Columbia



**Zoe Hewitt**  
 Haven Boatworks  
 Port Townsend, WA



**Laura Chapman**  
 Monkey Fist Marine  
 Seattle, WA



**Andrew Schell**  
 Schell Custom Boatworks  
 Denville, NJ

## WHERE DID THE CLASS OF 2023 COME FROM?

Alaska	3
Arizona	1
California	2
Colorado	3
District of Columbia	1
Georgia	1

Michigan	1
North Carolina	1
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	1
Oregon	3
Pennsylvania	1

Tennessee	2
Texas	1
Wisconsin	1
Washington	37
Australia	1
Canada	1

# PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING CRAFTSMANSHIP

A signature characteristic of the Boat School is the range of boat projects that students work on as boatbuilders and marine systems technicians. This year's line-up included a 24' carvel-planked troller, a 25' Nordic Folkboat, a lobster boat, a 15' Marsh Cat, a 13' traditionally built Susie Cat, and a 20' traditional Scandinavian sailing snekke. New builds included a fiber dinghy, a Maine Peapod, a Gartside sloop, two Grandys, a Swampscott Dory, and four flat-bottomed skiffs.

## ZERO-EMISSIONS, SELF-CONTAINED PUMPOUT UNIT FOR THE PORT OF PORT TOWNSEND WORKBOAT

The Port of Port Townsend commissioned NWSWB to build a zero-emissions, self-contained pump-out unit for the deck of their Munson Utility Workboat, enabling the Port to provide seasonal pump-out service to area mariners. The unit contains a 250-gallon waste tank, high-capacity pump, hoses, batteries, and charging equipment. The battery-powered pump is capable of handling up to roughly 3,600 gallons of waste between charges and pumps at around 40 gallons per minute. The battery banks can be recharged overnight and augmented by a solar charging system during the day.

This innovative project is significant because it lets the Port place a stand-alone unit onto one of their existing workboats to offer pump-out services. The unit is self-contained — you don't have to plug anything into the boat systems — just set it on the boat, clamp it down, and it's ready to go. The project encompassed many of the topics taught in the 9-month Marine Systems program. On the electrical side, students practiced working with wifi, Bluetooth, solar, relays, AC, DC, wire sizing,



overcurrent protection, wire management and routing, ELCI (equivalent safety function similar to GFCI on land), and a battery management system (BMS). They also installed a new 140 hp outboard engine, a 9.9 kicker engine, fenders to protect serviced vessels, new hydraulic steering and control systems, a cathodic protection plan, and anti-fouling coatings.

## TWIN GRANDYS: IDENTICAL DESIGN, CONTRASTING CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Employers are seeking boatbuilders with a broad range of skills: traditional wood joinery for interiors and restorations; experience with wood composites — because this is 2023, and solid timber, planking stock in particular, is getting harder to find — and accurate pattern makers for spiling planking. Today's boatbuilding curriculum reflects those requirements. Students in Bruce Blatchley's class built side-by-side Grandys using the identical design but with contrasting construction techniques. The lofting was the same, the hull shapes are identical, but one is cold-molded veneers over strip planking and the other is traditional, lapstrake construction. According to Eric Blake, Vice President of Brooklin Boat Yard: "Learning the traditional skills next to modern wood composite boatbuilding and modern craft is all that you need to run with."





# BRINGING VITALITY TO OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Boat School brings vitality to the local community by preparing the next generation of boatbuilders and systems technicians for living wage employment in the marine trades and by contributing to initiatives that support the common good.

## Investing in Clean Energy

The Boat School has received an award of \$207,000 from the Washington State Department of Commerce, and a matching grant from the Institute for Law and Systems Research, led by Alice Anda and James Ward. The award will be used to install solar with battery backup on the Boat School's two waterfront buildings. According to Hans Frederickson, President of Cascadia Solar, "NWSWB has one of the largest solar power systems in Jefferson County. We appreciate the leadership of local organizations like NWSWB, showing the way towards a sustainable future."

## Serving Those Who Served

The Boat School is committed to providing a supportive environment for military veterans. We are grateful to the Port Townsend Elks Lodge #317, VFW Sequim Post 4760, and VFW Port Hadlock for their generous donations to the Boat School's Veteran Supportive Campus program, as well as Scott Clifton, this year's VetCorps liaison. Scott is a graduate of the 2023 Marine Systems program, and a student in the 2024 Boatbuilding program. "The Boat School provides the critical skills for students to directly transition into an exciting and rewarding career in the marine trades," says Scott. "This is a fantastic place for veterans who are seeking or transitioning to a new career. The school understands, embraces, and supports our veteran-connected population and their unique needs. As the Boat School's VetCorps Member, I am grateful to be a part of this exceptional staff, and for the opportunity to support our veteran-connected students, staff, and surrounding community members."



## Supporting the Maritime Trades

The Boat School has begun offering free technical seminars at our Nomura classroom at the Port of Port Townsend. This year's presenters included technical experts from Wakespeed and Victron. The proximity to port businesses makes it possible for people in the trades to attend the technical sessions without losing a day of work. These sessions also give Boat School students the opportunity to interact with working boatbuilders and technicians.

## Feeding a Need

The Boat School's Food Bank Growers Garden is going strong in its second year. We are so grateful to the Food Bank Farm and Gardens of Jefferson County volunteers who have raised and donated more than 300 pounds of food to the food bank — all from the Boat School's Curtis Street garden — and to super volunteer Noreen Andrews who leads our work parties.



## PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Preserving Craftsmanship and Ensuring Relevance

NWSWB has established an independent Program Advisory Committee as a means to provide the school with an external review of its programs. The Committee meets at least twice a year and is composed of appropriately qualified representatives external to the institution (i.e., non-school employees) who can provide a meaningful review of the school's programs and supporting resources and materials. We are proud to have broad representation resulting in energetic discussions and practical suggestions for improvement.

**Marc Adams**, Factory Field Representative, Derema Group

**Tammy Anstatt**, Marine Systems Manufacturer Representative, Derema Group

**Ann Avary**, Director, NW Center of Excellence for Marine Manufacturing & Technology

**Steve Bamsberger**, Marine Systems Manufacturer Representative, Jack Park Company

**John Mark Barrett**, Marine Systems Manufacturer Representative, Imtra Corporation

**Eron Berg**, Executive Director, Port of Port Townsend

**Chris Bergnoli**, Member-Owner, Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-Op

**Cort Corino**, Service Manager, Jefferson Beach Yacht Sales

**Brandon Davis**, Owner, Turn Point Design

**Sarah Fiske**, Marine Operations Specialist, Washington Sea Grant

**Jim Franken**, Owner, James J. Franken Inc.

**Stephen Gale**, Former Owner, Haven Boatworks

**David Jackson**, Marine Surveyor, Pacific Rim Marine Surveyors

**Charlie Johnson**, President, JTB Marine Corporation

**Michelle Hollingsworth Koomen**, Research Professor, Gustavus Adolphus College

**David King**, Former Port Townsend Mayor, Retired CFO Townsend Bay Marine

**Dieter Loibner**, Editor at Large, *Professional Boatbuilder Magazine*

**Scott McEniry**, Marine Systems Manufacturer Representative, Power Products LLC

**Jake McFaddin**, Lead Boatbuilder, Schooner Creek Boatworks

**Dan Newland**, Owner, Pegasus Aeromarine Inc.

**Peter Proctor**, Owner, Proctor Boat Company

**Chris Sanok**, Member-Owner, Port Townsend Shipwrights Co-op

**Gordon Sanstad**, Boatbuilder and Former Boatbuilding Instructor at Seattle Central Community College

**Heron Scott**, Executive Director, Port Townsend School of Woodworking

**Jim Tolpin**, Founder, Instructor, and Author, Port Townsend School of Woodworking

# FINANCIALS

NWSWB successfully completed another year with a net positive result and growth of assets. The school made long-term investments by acquiring student housing and building digital resources. Tuition revenue continues on an upward trend following COVID's closures. Contributions remained strong with gifts and grants from individuals, businesses, foundations, and government. 76% of the school's overall expenses went directly to programs, 18% to Administration, and 6% to Fundraising.

<b>OPERATING REVENUE</b>							
	<b>9/30/2023</b>	<b>9/30/2022</b>	<b>9/30/2021</b>	<b>9/30/2020</b>	<b>9/30/2019</b>	<b>9/30/2018</b>	<b>9/30/2017</b>
Tuition	<b>1,158,521</b>	<b>866,643</b>	<b>329,266</b>	<b>564,144</b>	<b>\$675,543</b>	<b>\$833,533</b>	<b>\$707,552</b>
Donations including COVID Relief	<b>973,085</b>	<b>1,195,422</b>	<b>1,441,372</b>	<b>1,633,597</b>	<b>1,158,249</b>	<b>594,618</b>	<b>732,761</b>
Boat Projects	<b>121,231</b>	<b>44,131</b>	<b>71,525</b>	<b>22,607</b>	<b>63,195</b>	<b>134,572</b>	<b>130,286</b>
Retail Sales and Rental Income	<b>87,357</b>	<b>56,676</b>	<b>37,286</b>	<b>45,278</b>	<b>34,598</b>	<b>29,067</b>	<b>18,569</b>
In-Kind Revenue	<b>66,463</b>	<b>9,995</b>	<b>117,616</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>8,540</b>	<b>14,759</b>	<b>17,400</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,406,657</b>	<b>2,172,867</b>	<b>1,997,065</b>	<b>2,269,626</b>	<b>1,940,125</b>	<b>1,606,549</b>	<b>1,606,568</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSE</b>							
Program Service	<b>1,372,663</b>	<b>1,288,164</b>	<b>973,076</b>	<b>783,797</b>	<b>997,368</b>	<b>1,087,662</b>	<b>1,035,060</b>
Administration	<b>360,452</b>	<b>390,962</b>	<b>247,308</b>	<b>280,137</b>	<b>310,212</b>	<b>292,506</b>	<b>248,094</b>
Fundraising	<b>133,067</b>	<b>104,941</b>	<b>93,467</b>	<b>119,038</b>	<b>82,202</b>	<b>89,090</b>	<b>116,611</b>
Other - Rental Property		<b>14,007</b>	<b>15,828</b>	<b>7,665</b>	<b>13,092</b>	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,866,182</b>	<b>1,798,074</b>	<b>1,329,679</b>	<b>1,190,637</b>	<b>1,402,874</b>	<b>1,469,258</b>	<b>1,399,765</b>
<b>Change in net assets from Operating Activities</b>	<b>540,475</b>	<b>374,793</b>	<b>667,386</b>	<b>1,078,989</b>	<b>537,251</b>	<b>137,291</b>	<b>206,803</b>
<b>OTHER REVENUE AND EXPENSE</b>							
Amortization	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(426)</b>	<b>(1,024)</b>
Depreciation	<b>(174,256)</b>	<b>(140,328)</b>	<b>(120,163)</b>	<b>(91,105)</b>	<b>(73,570)</b>	<b>(61,975)</b>	<b>(56,054)</b>
Interest Expense	<b>(118,855)</b>	<b>(60,472)</b>	<b>(120,170)</b>	<b>(56,595)</b>	<b>(83,301)</b>	<b>(72,765)</b>	<b>(49,295)</b>
<b>Total Other Revenue and Expense</b>	<b>(293,111)</b>	<b>(200,800)</b>	<b>(240,863)</b>	<b>(147,700)</b>	<b>(156,871)</b>	<b>(135,166)</b>	<b>(106,373)</b>
<b>Total Change in Net Assets</b>	<b>247,364</b>	<b>173,993</b>	<b>426,523</b>	<b>931,289</b>	<b>380,380</b>	<b>2,125</b>	<b>100,430</b>
<b>Net Assets - beginning of year</b>	<b>3,347,855</b>	<b>3,173,862</b>	<b>2,747,339</b>	<b>1,816,050</b>	<b>1,435,672</b>	<b>1,433,547</b>	<b>1,333,117</b>
<b>Net Assets - end of year</b>	<b>3,595,219</b>	<b>3,347,855</b>	<b>3,173,862</b>	<b>2,747,339</b>	<b>\$1,816,052</b>	<b>\$1,435,672</b>	<b>\$1,433,547</b>

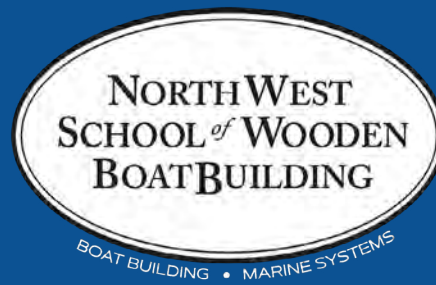
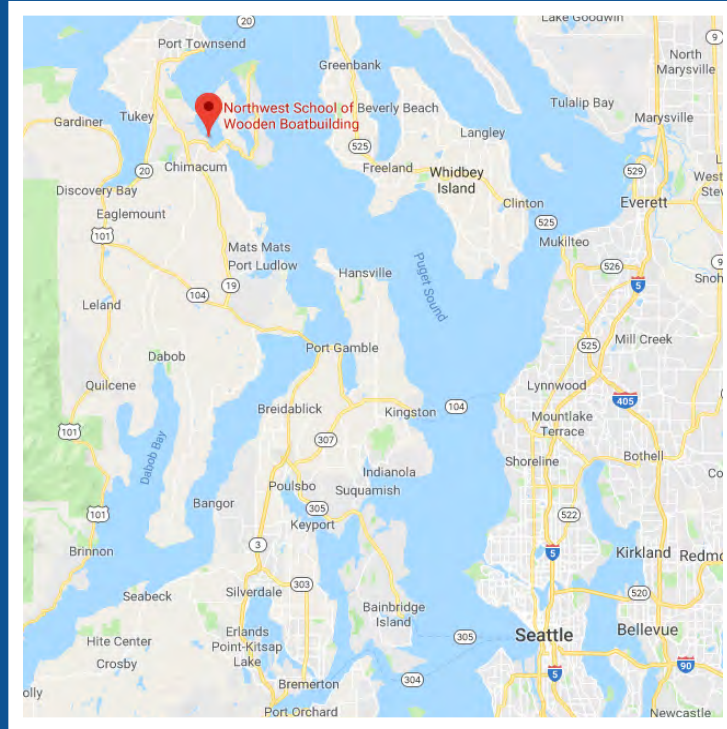
The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding engaged Wersen Nonprofit CPAs LLC to conduct an independent audit of our financial statements for the year ending September 30, 2023. They reported an unmodified opinion — i.e., the best audit opinion an organization can receive — over our financial statements. If interested, please email Betsy Davis at [betsy@nswb.edu](mailto:betsy@nswb.edu) for a copy of these independently audited financial statements.



NWSWB is deeply committed to non-profit transparency and accountability and has achieved the GuideStar Platinum Level Profile as a demonstration of that commitment. GuideStar is the world's largest source of information about non-profit organizations (the GuideStar database contains a profile for every tax-exempt nonprofit registered with the IRS) and a leader in advancing transparency in the non-profit sector. To be awarded the GuideStar logo, NWSWB provided all requested information on the non-profit profile page. You can search for information about any non-profit at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org).

# WHERE WE ARE

Learn about all that's happening at the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding by signing up to receive our free monthly electronic newsletter. You may also want to join one of our virtual Admissions Open Houses. Sign ups for both are on our website at [www.nswwb.edu](http://www.nswwb.edu).



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The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding is accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC). The Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) is a recognized accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education. Learn more at [www.accsc.org](http://www.accsc.org).



The School is also licensed under the Private Vocational Schools Act, Chapter 28C.10 RCW of Washington State. [www.wtb.wa.gov](http://www.wtb.wa.gov)

The Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution. Tax ID 91-1122839.