

Bringing Alcor Back to Life

Bill Brosius, of the Budd Inlet Star Fleet in Olympia Washington, is deeply involved with his latest Star resurrection project of Star 924 named Alcor. And I do mean resurrection, because she was a mess and left for dead when Bill found her about a year ago in a garage in Spokane Washington. In fact, to my untrained eye it looked to me like what she needed was gasoline and a match. But, this boat is not just any boat to Bill; it is the first Star he ever fixed up and owned. He just couldn't let her die.

Star 924 was born in 1932 in Blanchard Boat Company on Lake Union in Seattle Washington. The earliest regatta recorded for Alcor was in the 1939 North Americans in San Francisco when she was sailed by F. Hissock from the Puget Sound Fleet finishing 12th. She has a connection to more than just Bill in our Fleet. She was shipped from the Puget Sound to Chicago in 1949 and sailed in the Star World Championships that year. She was skippered by a Puget Sound icon Sunny Vynne and crewed by our own Vicky Sheldon's father Robert Watt. They were sailing against other Star greats of the time like North and Lippincott. Lowell North was first or second in every race in 1949, but didn't win the regatta due to a disqualification in one of the races. I guess even the sailing greats break a rule now and then. Vynne and Watt finished 18th in Alcor. The following are their results for the regatta:

18, 924 Alcor, E. Vynne Jr., R. Watt, Puget Sound, 14 27 14 14 26

You can read the full regatta report and see the results at the following links to the Star class website:

<http://www.starclass.org/history/1949worlds.htm>

<http://www.starclass.org/history/1947-worlds.htm#1946>

Because of all this history, Bill couldn't take my advice and make a bonfire of 924 at our next fleet meeting. The last time Bill had his hands on Alcor it was the early 1970's when the boat was donated to the Sea Scouts in Tacoma. The boat was old then, and in need of repair. Bill being Bill offered to fix it up for the Scouts so they could learn to sail Stars (some things never change he's still at it). A few years later he purchased it from the Seas Scouts and he sailed it with the Tacoma Fleet in the 70's. Bill, wanting to upgrade to the new fangled fiberglass boats at the end of the decade, sold Alcor and she went east in about 1979 to be sailed in a fleet on Lake Coeur d'Alene. When participation declined in the Lake Coeur d'Alene fleet, 924 disappeared into a garage somewhere in Spokane Washington. She might never be sailed again if someone hadn't purchased her at a garage sale, and thought it might be fun to fix up an old wood Star. The new owner, realizing it was more work than expected to restore, put Alcor on Craig's List with an asking price equal to the value of the trailer on which she sat, \$200.

Bill, seeing the advertisement, decided to head to Spokane to see his old friend Alcor. She wasn't much to look at, but as Bill told of her history the owner realized that she was worth more to Bill than to him, so he gave her to Bill with the understanding she would be restored and raced again. This was a promise Bill could easily keep. It was not a question of if she would be restored; it was only a matter of when. Finally with all the Budd Inlet fleet put to bed for the season, Bill has had a chance to get going on the restoration. About a year after Bill was reunited with Alcor, and 77 years after she was built, she is rising from the ashes to be sailed on Puget Sound again.

With the specs from the 1971 Star Log and an old set of plans to guide each step of the restoration, what follows are the messages and pictures that Bill has sent as he has worked on this labor of love. Some of the pictures were taken by Dave Roe as he helped Bill with the restoration. Also, Jim Findley has helped on this project as his wood Star was in Bill's shop to get a face lift, and no one can resist lending a hand when asked by Bill.

August 17, 2009

I should have the boat all rough sanded this morning and some of the smooth sanding done. I have located all the planks I need for the bottom [Port Orford cedar as specified in the specs] and I will hunt down some oak to finish making the frames I need. It's possible I could have all the new frames and planks in place by Labor Day weekend. Bill



September 7, 2009

I made and installed five sets of knees and will get the wood to make the other 6 sets tomorrow. I started fairing out the dings in the wood and filled all the screw holes that I've uncovered so far. I will still have a bunch when I install the rest of the knees. In the morning I will sand the fairing compound and the hull with the DA, and fill any remaining spots. I will be down at the marina around noon and then go to Hardel's for my lumber and come home to cut out the rest of the knees, which I will install Wednesday. I hope to finish cleaning out and installing all the wedges in the seams between the bottom planks that will be left in place. All I will have left to do will be to install the new bottom planks and wedge them then I will be ready to fiberglass the bottom and sides to within 2 inches of the gunnels. I will be ready to start on the deck by the beginning of October. Bill



September 13, 2009

I just finished installing the last knee piece and am now ready to start installing the bottom planks that need replacing. I picked up the planks Friday. If I can get my camera working I will take some pictures before installing the bottom planks. I probably won't start on the planks till tomorrow or Tuesday since I need to mow my lawn yet today. I will finish filling the screw holes with fairing compound so I can sand before doing the planks. Bill



September 27, 2009

I finished sanding the bottom tonight, will feather the edge of the glass I put on the bottom. Then I'll wrap the bottom to side area and put the second layer of the bidirectional cloth at the mast step area. I will be down in the morning to bring some flowers for Hanna. See you or Dave then. Bill



October 2, 2009

I just finished flipping 924 right sides up and it is sitting on some tires on the floor. Bill



November 5, 2009

A note to update you on Jim's and my boat restoration progress. Jim's boat will be ready to put the finish varnish on his deck next Monday or Tuesday. Then he and I will start planking the deck on 924 Monday. It should be completed by next Friday and ready to finish out. I installed the new transom today and glassed the keelson. Tomorrow I will sand and fair the transom into the rest of the hull and put the two part varnish on the keelson. I will also make and install the two cockpit end pieces tomorrow or this weekend so everything will be ready for planking the deck Monday. Bill



November 11, 2009

This picture is showing the deck planked. Now it is just a matter of doing all the screws around the gunnels, plugging the screw holes, sand the edges as well as the deck and it will be ready to finish. Bill



November 18, 2009

Alcor now has a new deck and there is no doubt she will be racing with us in the spring. He has the original wood mast and boom and 1940's era sails for show, but mostly she will be raced in our fleet with all the latest hardware.



March 20, 2010

Alcor was launched and is already to sailing. Thanks to all of Bill's work on restoring these forgotten wonders, we have the largest fleet of active racing wood Stars anywhere in the world. There could be 7 boats sailing in the wood division of our fleet including: 924, 2362, 2876, 3331, 4078, 4817, and 4916. Bill tells me there could be a couple of additional wood boats out there that want to join in the fun. I have

no doubt the wood division of the Budd Inlet Star Fleet will continue to grow. How could it not, when there is an opportunity to actually race these classic beauties.