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Hall's Boat Corp Hosting Builders of Boats Based on Century Old Designs

By Mirror Staff

A replica of a 1910 boat built for one-design racing on the St. Lawrence and a new sailboat based on a design by Henry Rushton will be exhibited at Hall's Boat Corporation this summer, boatworks manager Reuben Smith has announced.

The exhibitions, and presentations by their builders, are part of Hall's Regional Boatbuilders

Exhibit and Lecture Series, which began last year with an invitation to Mark Mason to bring his reproduction of a 1920s race boat, the "Curtiss Wilgold III", to Lake George.

"Last year's event featured a two-week display of Mark Mason's boat, which was capped off by a lively discussion and slide presentation," said Cynde Smith, Hall's assistant general manager. "With two exhibits and presentations, as well as a program by Adirondack



Above: Everett Smith's Number boat. Left: Douglas Brooks' Rushton catboat



Museum boat curator Hallie Bond on July 13, this summer's series will be even more compelling."

Canton-based builder Everett Smith will bring his St. Lawrence 'Number Boat' to Hall's on June 17, where it will be on view through July 2. Smith will discuss the history of the original boat and his efforts to reproduce it on June 29 from 7 to 9 pm.

According to Cynde Smith, the boat "is an elegant gentleman's launch."

Designed in 1909 by Charles D. Mower and built by Leyare Boat Works, the boat was commissioned by members of the Thousand

Islands Yacht Club for one-design racing.

Twenty boats were completed (each one identified by its number – thus the name, Number Boat), allowing the club to sponsor races that hinged on the skills of the drivers rather than on the relative merits of the competitors' boats.

Races were held in 1910, 1911 and 1912. Of the original 20 boats, only a few survive.

"The Number Boat project began with engineer Bob Cox, owner of Ft. Lauderdale Marine and co-founder of the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton, NY," said Everett Smith. "Bob thought some

of his customers might like a quiet and elegant way to travel back and forth to their yacht club on the intercoastal canals. We both shared an interest in the early smooth running motor boat hulls. Bob engaged Northend Composites to build a mould and to make the first hull. He then engaged the Everett Boat Works to install the engine and put in the traditional deck and interior. At present we have completed two in the Number Boat series."

The 100th anniversary of those first Thousand Island One-Design races will fall this August, and Smith hopes to recreate a race on the old courses with as many of the original Leyare built one-design boats as can be found.

Smith has been building and restoring wooden boats for nearly forty years.

"Inspired by Atwood Manley's book on J. H. Rushton, we started building Rushton canoes. We have worked on Adirondack guide-boats, St. Lawrence skiffs, early motor boats, Alden sail boats and vintage race boats, any thing wood that we could fit in the barn," said Smith. Among the wooden boat builders he helped train was Reuben Smith, his nephew, and Hall's Boatworks manager.

Douglas Brooks, a Vergennes, Vermont boatbuilder, will display a Rushton catboat at Hall's from July 9 through July 28, when he will present his program.

"I learned of this boat from a reprint of Henry Rushton's 1903 catalog, published by the Adirondack Museum and the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association in 1983," said Brooks. "Frankly, I was surprised to see a sailboat in Rushton's catalog, and I have no idea if his company ever built this particular design. What attracted me immediately was her whitehall-like hull. Rushton's catboat seemed to strike a balance between the beaminess of a traditional cat and the hull design of a whitehall. I was convinced that this would be a forgiving sailboat that could also be comfortably rowed when the wind died: a perfect compromise."

The Regional Boatbuilders Exhibit and Lecture Series was created to feature boatbuilders working in New York state and New England doing work critical to Lake George's maritime history, said Reuben Smith



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