



Notes from the Bilge



www.lcacbs.com

June 2022

Newsletter of the Lake Champlain Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society, Inc.

Susan Haigh, President

President's Message



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The last few months have been truly tumultuous with the loss of Bill Truex, one of our two 2022 Int'l Show Chairs and a stalwart stanchion of our chapter. Yet still, as sure as the sun rises, our Chapter's members, directors, and leaders have pulled together in support of making the upcoming show a success. Even though Bill passed before he could experience the show he worked on for so many years, we plan on making it something he would be proud of.


Registration numbers are building for the events. As of the last report of May 17th there were 50 boats registered, 33 people for the Shelburne Museum event, 50 for the Chapter reception, 42 for the Essex event, and 78 for the Basin Harbor/LCMM event, and 87 folks for the dinner cruise. The cruise from Montreal had 14 boats and the cruise from Albany possibly 4. The ACBS Welcome Reception at Echo had 123 registrations. Mind you these are early numbers, and we expect them to rise substantially, especially if the price of fuel decreases a bit.

Our publicity team has chosen WCAX as a media sponsor. Catherine Hughes will be working on a script for this, and will also be issuing a press release, which will bring in news publishers. These efforts will focus on bringing the general public to the show.

Holly Weber has been doing a fine job with the Waterfront Park management and has also been attracting lots of attention with Facebook and Instagram. We hope to have a food truck, El Gato, at the event and Ben Jerry's for a day as well.

Fritz Horton is pulling together the one-design sailboat display which will be near the "Moran Frame" in the City's new park addition. The regatta will be on Friday weather permitting. Ken Bassett will be assisting with judging the sailboats.

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Follow us on 

On the afternoon of April 10, 2022, our friend and fellow member of LCACBS, Bill Truex, left us. There have been many well deserved tributes to Bill.

"We lost a true Burlington giant this weekend. Bill Truex had a vision for the Church Street Marketplace, inspired by the pedestrian plazas throughout Europe, which fundamentally changed our City for the better, Bill had a great love and appreciation for this City and I am very grateful for the friendship and support of City initiatives that Bill generously offered throughout the last decade."
- Mayor Miro Weinberger

"I can only imagine what downtown Burlington would be like without Bill Truex," (Sen. Patrick Leahy said. *"The simplicity of the things he designed was wonderful. ... The practical was what mattered."*

"The way downtown looks and the way the waterfront looks has an awful lot to do with Bill Truex."
Pat Robins, longtime friend.

"He was a champion of his passions, including ACBS." Tom Leavitt, CEO Northfield Savings Bank
The architect's fascination with boats led to his involvement with the Antique and Classic Boat Society, of which he served on the international board. planning the organization's International Boat Show, which is set to be held in Burlington the week after Labor Day.

continued page 2



Truex—continued from page one

According to (Jill) Williams Bill's wife, Truex took a lead role in planning the organization's International Boat Show, which is set to be held in Burlington the week after Labor Day. - Vermont Digger

Bill served as a national director of the 8,000 member, fifty-seven chapter, international Antique and Classic Boat Society (ACBS). He was instrumental in creating the France Chapter, the first chapter located outside of North America.

As Tom Leavitt observed above, Bill was indeed a champion of his many passions. Those of us who worked and conspired with Bill can identify with Tom Leavitt's observation. One of his passions was to bring the ACBS Annual Meeting and Boat Show to the Champlain Valley. As many of you know, the event was scheduled for September 2021. COVID-19 managed to delay the event for a year.

This coming September the Burlington waterfront will be awash in antique and classic boats due, in large part, to Bill's passion and focus.

Rest in peace Bill. We have the helm.



It is gratifying to experience the people of the Champlain Valley joining us in support of September's 2022 Antique & Classic Boat Society's Annual Boat Show. In this issue, we would be amiss if we did not acknowledge the support of Casella Waste Systems in their commitment to provide waste and re-cycling service to the 2022 Antique & Classic Boat Society's Annual Boat Show. Thank you Mike Casella!



What Lies Beneath?

(original article in NCPR Daily)

A \$4 billion deal to deliver hydropower from northern Quebec to New York City was approved earlier this month (April) by the NYS Public Service Commission. A big portion of the powerline will be laid along the bottom of Lake Champlain and the Hudson River.

There's a significant amount of road work that will be done in Washington County. There'll be some pre-construction activity that happens on the lake as they continue to fine-point the details. They expect, in 2024, to actually do the cable installation at the bottom of Lake Champlain, which is going to take five months or so as they have massive barges and down the lake at about two miles per day, laying this cable under the water. They'll be carrying about 12 miles of cable on a big spool sitting on this massive barge as they head down the lake and place it at this very exact, precise route at the bottom of the lake that looks to avoid shipwrecks and all sorts of things that are down there. So, 2024 is when you'll probably see these big boats out on the lake for quite some time.

The Torch Has Been Passed

After twelve years as the steward of *Growler*, the torch has been passed to Torsten & Rose Rhod. They have a second home in the vicinity of Cape Vincent, NY (St. Lawrence River) where *Growler's* future will be spent.

For you pikers out there, *Growler* was Torsten's mother's day gift to Rose. The Rhod's appropriately presented a growler from Wood Boat Brewery as a parting gift. They are enthusiastic new stewards of *Growler* and I have no concerns about the future welfare of *Growler*.

Bon voyage!



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Lulu Belle ~ 1930, 60', built by Consolidated



For the undecided. *Lulu Belle* is just one piece of eye candy that will be participating in the 2022 ACBS Annual Meeting & Boat Show—this coming September 5 thru 10 in Burlington, VT

Dimensions

LWL: 57.8'

Beam: 12'

Draft: 6.2'

Gross Tons: 34

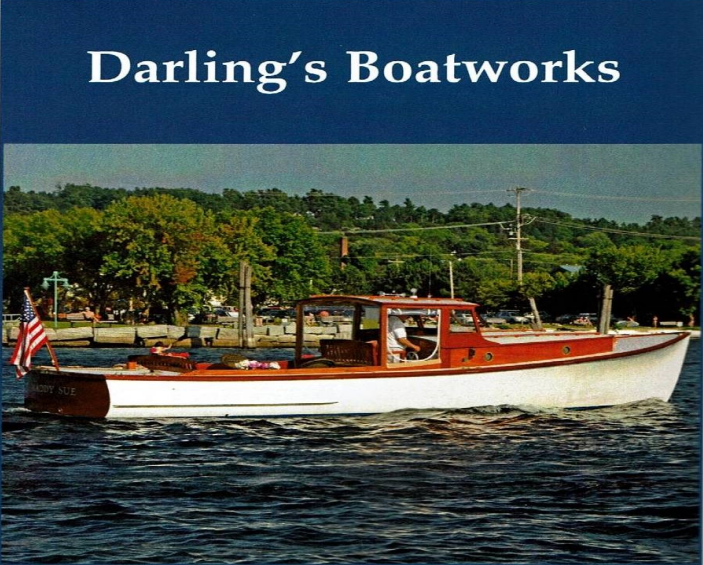
Net Tons: 23

President's Message continued

It's going to be a big weekend for Burlington, as it coincides with the South End Art Hop.

This year we had our Spring Dinner at the Valcour Brewing Company for the first time. Our speaker, Chris Shaw, a novelist and professor at Middlebury College, gave an interesting speech about Samuel de Champlain's dream the night before his interaction with the Mohawk. He was intrigued by the integral connection and lasting effect between events and the place where they happen. The 1830 stone barracks of the Valcour Brewing company made for a fun venue, and on a normal spring day would have been nice and cool, but the 80 degree temps made it a little stuffy. The accoustics were not quite as good as advertised so next time we'll ask for their sound system.

With all the effort over the next summer for the Int'l Show we also plan on having frequent rendezvous which don't require too much planning and serve as great place to unwind. So keep an eye on the schedule and cross your fingers for good weather! I'll be keeping you up to date on email through the ACBS portal.



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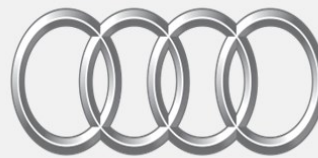
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Ferry Boat Wars on Lake Champlain

By [Mark Bushnell](#)

reprinted from *VT Digger*, May 8, 2022

The *Francis Saltus* was controversial from the moment it was conceived. Blame the times. The steamboat cruised Lake Champlain during the 1840s and '50s, a period of intense, often bitter competition between transportation companies for control of passenger transportation in the region.

During this era of corporate duplicity and double-dealing, the *Saltus* was hardly the only ferry on the lake, but it was at the center of more than its share of disputes. The steamboat incited passions, even fist-fights, and, on two occasions, acts of piracy.

Even before its launch, the *Francis Saltus* sparked tension. Boats weren't supposed to be built to compete with the Champlain Transportation Co. At least, that was how the ferry company's directors viewed things. They wanted to earn money the old-fashioned way, through monopoly. And if that didn't work, they weren't above a bit of skullduggery. Their most effective technique, however, proved to be buying up the competition.

For the first decade after its founding in 1826, the Champlain Transportation Co. pretty much had the ferry business on Lake Champlain to itself. Then in 1836, Peter Comstock, a successful businessman, got in on the action. Comstock had nurtured a thriving enterprise, running passenger ferries on the Champlain Canal, which connected the lake with the Hudson River. Expanding operations onto the lake made obvious sense, so Comstock arranged to have a new steamboat built at the shipyard in Whitehall, New York.

His boat was intended to compete with the Champlain Transportation's new luxury ferry, *The Burlington*. (The *Burlington* was a formidable rival, drawing lavish praise from a tough critic of things American, British novelist Charles Dickens. Dickens wrote at length of his voyage on the *Burlington*, extolling it as a "perfectly exquisite achievement of neatness, elegance, and order." As a Brit, Dickens had a natural appreciation of its captain, Richard Sherman, who had used *The Burlington* to transport British troops to quell a Canadian rebellion.)

To head off competition, Champlain Transportation Co. officials paid Comstock \$20,000 for his unfinished steamboat, elected him to their board, and paid him \$1,000 a year to represent the company in Whitehall.

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As part of the contract, Comstock agreed not to build a competing vessel for at least eight years.

When company officials learned in 1843 that entrepreneurs were seeking permission from the New York Legislature to create a rival steamboat corporation, they took a similar tack, paying off the investors and electing three of them to the company board.

Perhaps predictably, when his eight-year non-compete deal expired, Comstock immediately announced plans to build a steamboat. He might have hoped that this time he could sell off his right to compete before even starting construction. Rumors circulated that Comstock had enlisted some Champlain Transportation Co. shareholders and directors in his latest scheme. Surely they would use their sway to ensure that the ferry company would buy him out again.

But the company decided to take another approach with Comstock. It would wait to see if he

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was serious. And if Comstock did build a boat, the company would find a different way to beat him.

So it was that Comstock launched his *Francis Salties* at Whitehall in 1844. The Champlain Transportation Co., which operated three steamboats at the time, responded by putting the incomparable *Burlington* on the same route. The *Burlington* could steam as quickly as the *Salties* and do so while offering passengers considerably more elegance. As a further enticement, the ferry company cut its fares drastically.

The *Salties* seemed doomed. But to the ferry company's surprise, the *Salties* attracted a loyal following. Some were drawn to the *Salties*' underdog status. Others were repelled by the presence on the *Burlington* of Capt. Sherman, who they viewed as a traitor for carrying British troops to crush the Canadian uprising. Anti-British sentiment was still common in Vermont; the War of 1812, which featured open warfare on Lake Champlain, was well within living memory.

Another strike against the *Burlington* was that many prospective passengers were plain folk who simply needed transportation, not fineries. These passengers hated Sherman not only for supporting the British, but apparently for also being a snob.

Some wag even wrote a cutting ditty about Sherman, which went in part:

*"Oh! Dicky is a gallant lad,
He makes the ladies very glad;
ts decks are scrubbed with so much care
That cowhide boots can't come in there;
If you can't make your money rattle
You must go forward with the cattle.
Ha, ha, ha. That's the fun
For Dandy Dick of the Burlington."*

Ferry company directors eventually decided to put the *Burlington* onto a lucrative night route, where it had no competition, and put another boat, the *Saranac*, up against the *Salties*.

The *Saranac* offered service between Burlington, Whitehall, Port Kent, Port Jackson and Plattsburgh. Company directors charged a fare of only 25 cents, running the boat at a loss made up for by their other routes. Comstock struggled financially, but kept his business afloat.

The competition created absurd scenes. The two boats ran the same schedule. They would tie up at opposite ends of the same dock, then race to get passengers disembarked and new ones embarked before racing to the next stop. The *Salties* proved slightly faster than the *Saranac*, but the *Saranac* made up time by sometimes departing ahead of schedule. The *Saranac's* crew even occasionally skipped some of



The poster features a map of Lake Champlain with 'NEW YORK' and 'VERMONT' labels. A red star is on the map. Below the map is a red boat with an American flag. Text includes 'ACBS INTERNATIONAL SHOW', 'Lake Champlain', '2022', 'BURLINGTON, VERMONT', 'SEPTEMBER 5th - 10th', and logos for 'ACBS OF THE CHAMPLAIN CIRCLE' and 'THE ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC BOAT SOCIETY INC.'.



The logo shows a blue and white speedboat with the text 'Champlain Yacht Services' and 'Mobile Marine' below it.

Michael Sinclair

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the smaller stops, which surely didn't sit well with passengers heading to those destinations. Speed took precedence over service.

The public divided its loyalties between the boats, as if they were sports teams. The rivalry grew hot, with the boats' supporters arguing their merits, sometimes even coming to blows.

Finally, Comstock could take no more losses. He sold the *Salties* to businessmen from Troy, New York, who continued the competition. The Champlain Transportation Co. trusted technology to increase pressure on the new owners, building a new steamer, the *United States*, which at 240 feet was 55 feet longer than the *Salties*.

On a spring day in 1847, the *United States* lay at dock in Burlington while nearby the *Salties* took on passengers. William Anderson, captain of the *United States*, let the *Salties* pull away from the dock first and get a fair lead before ordering his crew to cast off and take the *United States* to full speed. Anderson's boat closed the gap. Then, to the shouts and cheers of those on board, it steamed past the *Salties*.

The superior speed of the *United States* soon wore down the *Salties*. The next winter, its owners relented and sold the *Salties* to the Champlain Transportation Co.

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Ferry Boat Wars

But the *Saltus*'s controversial career was hardly over. A pair of unscrupulous investors, St. Albans businessman Oscar Alexis Burton and New York schemer Daniel Drew, bought the Champlain Transportation Co. in 1849. Three years later, they sold their steamboats to the Rutland and Burlington Railroad, which wanted a way to connect passengers with rail lines across the lake.

It was a sucker's deal. Burton and Drew retained the company's charter. The Rutland and Burlington Railroad soon found it faced new competition on the lake, none other than Burton and Drew, who had purchased two new steamboats that were faster than the ones they had just sold.

Two years later, the railroad surrendered, reselling its steamboats to Burton and Drew for one-third what they had paid. One steamboat, however, was excluded from this deal, the *Saltus*.

This is where the piracy comes in. The Champlain Transportation Co. twice sent crews to seize the *Saltus*, on the pretext that the company was owed money for previous repairs on the vessel. One time the company sent a Captain Chamberlin and a prize crew to capture the *Saltus* from the Plattsburgh dock. The other time, Chamberlin and crew slipped into Canadian waters and stole the boat from where it lay in St. Jean, Quebec.

The railroad men from Plattsburgh needed the *Saltus* to stay competitive. A rival rail line had struck an exclusive deal with the Champlain Transportation Co. to carry passengers across the lake to their tracks to Montreal.

The Plattsburgh railroad stored the *Francis Saltus* in Shelburne Bay during the winter of 1853-54. When a crew from the company arrived to retrieve the boat in April, the men found that parts of the *Saltus*' engine had been removed and hidden.

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A court ordered the Champlain Transportation Co. not to interfere with the boat's removal, but company officials, arguing that the ruling was null because it had been issued by the court's clerk, moved the *Saltus* to a less accessible part of the bay.

This is when things got hotter. The Burlington Free Press described the scene:

"(A) small steamer and sloop with something like a hundred men on board came over to the harbor from Plattsburg. The steamer made fast to the *Saltus* and was about to tow her out, when the *Saranac* fired up, and running across and cutting the tow-line, took a position which prevented further attempts at removal."

The *Saltus*' would-be liberators retreated. The standoff landed in the courts, which sided with the Plattsburgh rail line. Eventually, the Champlain Transportation Co. found a means of taking possession of the *Saltus* that was clearly legal; it purchased the vessel.

The *Saltus* was no longer state of the art — faster, more elegant vessels had followed in its wake — so it's perhaps understandable that company officials soon found a permanent means of ridding themselves of this former nuisance. They had a crew pilot the boat into the middle of Shelburne Bay and sink her.



Save the Dates

ALL DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

6/11 NELG 23rd Annual Boat Show	Wolfboro, NH
6/18 LCACBS Rendezvous	Westport, NY
6/25 LCACBS Rendezvous	Mooney Bay
7/9 Runabout Rendezvous	Saranac Lake, NY
7/30	Whitehall to Ft. Edward Canal Trip
8/5-7 Antique Boat Museum Show & Auction, Clayton, NY	
8/13 LCACBS Rendezvous	Essex, NY
8/27 LCACBS Rendezvous	Basin Harbor





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