

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - MIKE FORRESTER & BARBARA PURRINGTON



Mike Forrester and Barbara Purrington came to boating from opposite sides of the country, she from Georgia, he from Oregon. Her background included runabouts, her dad's skiff (he loved to fish) and sailing with friends on their Cal 29. His parents owned small cruisers and fished the Oregon Coast.

The first boat Mike and Barbara owned was a 27 foot Chris Craft Sea Skiff. From their home in Seattle they explored Puget Sound and British Columbia's Gulf Islands for 10 summers. Mike explained, "We got to where we wanted more amenities and a boat where guests had more comfort. The 27 footer was fun but it was like camping and honestly it slept 2 people".



Over ten years of attending the Chris Craft Rendezvous in Washington state they had befriended several Commander Owners. In the 38's, they liked what they saw. Mike said, "We liked the styling of the early Commanders, the stout hull and we wanted to stay with Chris Craft."

On Seattle's Lake Union they found the sedan that would later become Alyeska (alley-ESS-kuh). One challenge had to be overcome; they still owned the Sea Skiff. "While waiting for a buyer for our boat the sedan sold and I was resigned to the fact that it was gone. We ended up boatless in Seattle for a little while." After about two years the sedan came back on the market. The price was high so they waited and looked at other boats; the price dropped, they waited, the price dropped again. "David Nelson of Wolfe Marine Sales was



patient and very helpful. We didn't want to insult the owner with a low ball offer but we had to come up with a price we could live with. Barbara and I talked, she gave Dave the number we settled on, he called the owner and our offer was accepted."

The survey produced no surprises, papers and checks changed hands and Mike and Barbara took possession of the boat on Easter weekend 2007. Several things needed immediate attention; the electronics, the electrical system, the holding tank (there was none) and a vessel name. "The boat sat in the slip for about 3 months while the systems got replaced or repaired and we tossed around boat names." The criteria for naming were; it would be unique, a personal expression about them, it could be said and understood over the VHF radio. "Since the boat was a Commander and 38 feet long

one name we thought was amusing but never seriously considered was 38 C. We're pretty sure anyone hearing the name 38 C wouldn't be thinking about a boat." Mike and Barb finally settled on Alyeska, as they had met while both were living in Anchorage, Alaska. Alyeska is an archaic Aleut word meaning "great country", or "great land". The state of Alaska derives its name from this word.

Mike said, "I wouldn't characterize the boat as having been abused but there were many signs of neglect...and the Bubba Factor." The original electrical panel had become a hairball. A new AC & DC panel went in along with an inverter/charger. A holding tank was plumbed in. The electronics were replaced.

Dirty Carpet? Gone.

Dunbar Marine Service installed a teak and holly sole in the galley and forward cabin. As Mike described it, "We'd spent a lot of money on things no one sees; we needed a little WOW factor".

Mike and Barbara have now enjoyed 5 years with Alyeska on their favorite cruising grounds; Puget Sound and southern B.C.

"My biggest concern was the electrical system. Who knew which wire went where? We've traced and kept a lot of the original wiring for individual circuits, replacing sections as we go. But the panel feeds and starter wiring were replaced with the right stuff and fused. We put in new house batteries and battery switches."

"We regularly get some ribbing from our wood boat friends about going 'plastic'. I tell 'em our Commander is made from sustainably harvested fiberglass trees and I'm never going to have to refasten the hull with 10 or 15 thousand silicone bronzed screws."

Mike and Barbara are on the committee for the annual Chris Craft Rendezvous of the Northwest. The Rendezvous is held annually on the second weekend in July at the Port Orchard Marina in Port Orchard, Washington. The next Rendezvous will be held July 12th-15th, 2012. Up to 80 boats typically attend.

Though these are largely wooden boat affairs there are always a few who show up wearing gelcoat and they are warmly welcomed.

/ Char Pike, CCCC Archivist

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