

News

Restored Shoals boats delivered by gundalow

A partnership of The Boatshop at Strawberry Banke and the Portsmouth (N.H.) High School Construction Program saw four of the six rowboats they restored delivered back to Star Island, in the Isles of Shoals, by the *Piscataqua*, a gundalow owned by the Portsmouth-based Gundalow Company. Students who worked on the boats accompanied them to Star Island, where Jack Farrell, island manager and director of facilities there, gave them a private tour of the place.

The restored rowboats are part of a fleet of six vessels owned by Star Island, a nonprofit organization that owns and manages the island and the historic Oceanic Hotel there, and also operates a model environmental sustainability program at the Isles of Shoals.

The fleet of rowboats was in need of a variety of repairs as well as re-finishing work, all of which was com-

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Photo by Caroline Piper

Nate Piper of Strawberry Banke Boatshop (at right, below Star Island sign) and members of the Portsmouth High School Construction Program wait to load the Star Island row boats they refurbished.

Sailing skills, self-confidence abound aboard vessel *Fritha*

Learn navigation, marine ecology and the art of square-rigged sailing, all while exploring the coast of New England. This summer, Sailing Ships Portland is offering a unique and affordable co-ed program to students ages 13 to 18 to learn the fundamentals of sailing aboard *Fritha*, a 74-foot brigantine. No sailing experience is necessary to participate.

June 19 through Aug. 28, *Fritha* will make weekly sailing voyages with six sail trainees on each trip. Trainees will work as a team to sail *Fritha* – jibing, tacking, hoisting and dousing sail, charting a course, steering the ship and standing watch at night. Learning these skills will help provide participants with a sense of self-reliance and confidence – all while having fun.

Fritha is a 74-foot brigantine schooner designed by Maine naval architect Murray Peterson and owned by the Northeast Maritime Institute, a maritime educa-



Photo courtesy Mike Gerstner

The 74-foot *Fritha*, which this summer will be a classroom, was designed in New England and built in New Zealand.

tional institution. Launched in 1986 in New Zealand, *Fritha* is named for the heroine in Paul Gallico's book, "The Snow Goose." FMI: www.sailingshipsportland.org.

Coast Guard receives false R.I. EPIRB alarm

The Coast Guard and partner agencies searched Mt. Hope Bay in Rhode Island in late May, after receiving a distress signal from an improperly disposed of Electronic Position-Indicating Radio Beacon. At approximately 12:40 p.m., the First Coast Guard District command center received a transmission from an EPIRB indicating a boat was in distress.

An MH-60 Jayhawk crew from Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod and a 45-foot response boat crew from Coast Guard Station Castle Hill launched to locate the vessel. The Rhode Island State Task Force also launched to search the area. At approximately 2:50 p.m., it was de-

termined that the signal was coming from an improperly disposed of EPIRB, accidentally dropped while being handled.

“EPIRBs are vital life-saving equipment, but when they are not properly maintained, false distress is signaled and unnecessary searches are conducted,” said Lt. John Mansolillo, command duty officer. He said EPIRB registrations need to be updated every two years, and when transferred to a new owner or taken out of service. EPIRBs can be registered for free at NOAA’s Beacon Registration website:

www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov/RGDB/index.

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pleted by the Portsmouth High School students in the program between January and May. Jackson’s Hardware and Marine was the materials sponsor for the project.

On Farrell’s tour of the island, he discussed the energy efficiencies and innovations they’ve adopted. Students had the chance to see firsthand the island’s solar array, which has the capacity to provide up to 50 percent of the island’s energy needs; the reverse osmosis water purification system (that runs off the solar panels during day light hours); the transfer system they engineered to heat

water for the island while simultaneously cooling the diesel generators; and the new rainwater collection system that will help to offset the amount of water the island needs to create or transport from the mainland.

Along with the restored rowboats, the *Piscataqua* transported two 2,500-gallon storage tanks and a load of lumber. Of the trip, Molly Bolster, executive director of the Gundalow Company, said, “For more than 200 years, gundalows plied the coastal waters hauling lumber, bricks, hay and other cargo. The *Piscataqua*’s ancestors would have been proud to see her heading out the river, all loaded up.”



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