



The Pelican Flyer

Online Newsletter of the Pelican Yacht Club

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63rd ANNIVERSARY



Commodore's Corner

Hello, everyone! We have several PYC events coming up where we need volunteers for. The New Road Convention folks asked us to offer sails on the New Roads waterfront as part of two upcoming festivals – Boo & Brew (Halloween trick or treating on main street - new one) and their popular Harvest Festival.

Date	Event	Time	Location	Comments
Sat, Oct. 7th	Regatta with Lake Charles YC	11 to 4 PM	New Roads Waterfront	Lunch/ Dock Assistance
Sat, Oct.14 & Sun, Oct.15	Wooden Boat Festival	10 to 6 both days	Madisonville Waterfront	Suggested 4-hour shifts – booth duty. Very popular! One shift is fine.
Sun, Oct.29	Boo & Brew Festival	3 – 6 PM	New Roads Waterfront	Open House with sailing
Sat, Nov.4	Harvest Festival	11 – 4 PM	New Roads Waterfront	Open House with sailing – this is a big event with music, food, and crafts. One day only.

Contact me at Adboatner@gmail.com for questions, interests, commitments. Partial time commitments are fine. I can be reached by phone – 225-726-4553 but I suggest you text me first with a heads up. I do not monitor nor answer cell phone calls (too many car warranty calls).

Please consider helping the Club out with these appearances!

Drew Boatner



Storage Shed Acquisition and Installation- False River

With the help of Bob Kennedy, the Club was able to purchase and install a 10' x 16' storage shed at its storage pavilion site at Jarreau. While used, the shed is in excellent condition and is furnished with two lofts, a workbench and ladder.



The shed was acquired for the excellent cost of \$2000 and an additional cost of \$750 for moving and installation. The shed is located on a newly



leased parcel of land about 12' x 38' that can also accommodate the dry storage of possibly two sailboats if

needed. The leased parcel will allow us to increase the useable area in front of the storage pavilion.





This photo indicates the additional useable area located in front of the storage pavilion that is now available to the Club.

Now, the bad news! We will need to move out of the MDR storage garage before the end of the month! Volunteers to help in this effort will be solicited.



Update- New Website Development

It appears that we are on schedule for launching the new Club website in early October. Only a couple of sections need to be completed before the launch. The website URL is....
www.pycl.org



SoLou Sunfish Regatta and Teekell Sunfish Race Series Event- A Race within a Race- October 7th- New Roads Waterfront Pavilion

This event will pit Sunfish sailors from the Lake Charles Yacht Club and the Pelican Yacht Club against one another. Andrew Russell, James LaTour and possibly Ariana Bryant will be competing for our Club. The Club whose sailors (likely to be two or three representing each Club) have the lowest total of finish places will be awarded the regatta trophy. The plan is to perpetuate the Regatta on an alternate basis at each of the competing Clubs. Thankfully, next year, a drawdown year for False River, the Lake Charles Yacht Club will host the Regatta.

As part of the Regatta, the Teekell Sunfish Race Series will be conducted. With exception of the Lake Charles YC sailors, this Series is a competition between all comers including Pelican Yacht Club members. Thus, parallel scoring of both the Regatta and the Series competitions will be conducted. Trophies will be awarded to the first 3 finishers competing in the Series.

Plans are to conduct the one-day Regatta/Series using the New Roads waterfront pavilion and floating pier system as "race headquarters". All members are invited to come out and support our team. A free light lunch will be served at the pavilion starting at about 11 am. Please come out and enjoy this event!!



Club Event Calendar

Presented below is the Club Event Calendar for the remainder of the year. While there is the intention to adhere to the calendar, inevitably revisions may be required. My advice- go ahead and list these events on your calendar but remain vigilant for changes.

Planning and Event Calendar

October 7- SoLou Sunfish Regatta/Teekell Sunfish Race Series/New Roads Waterfront Pavilion

October 14/15- Wooden Boat Festival/Madisonville

October 29- New Roads Boo and Brew, 3-6 pm: The Club will provide brief sailboat rides.

November 4- Club Open House in conjunction with the New Roads Harvest Festival (Purpose: to promote the Club and attract new members- sailboat rides to be provided)

November 11/18- Possible Lake Pontchartrain Cruises/MDR

December 17- Annual Meeting and Christmas Party/Seals Residence

Note: Event dates may need to be revised. Be alert for notifications.



Volunteers Needed- Wooden Boat Festival

Volunteers are needed to “man” the Club’s booth at the Wooden Boat Festival, October 13-15. Normally, members are asked to commit to a 4-hour shift on one of the days of the Festival. The first and last shifts also entail dealing with either setting up or dismantling the Club’s booth. You are asked to consider volunteering for one of the following shifts:

October 14 10 am- 2 pm (includes setting up booth)
 2 pm- 6 pm

October 15 10 am- 2 pm
 2 pm- 6 pm (includes dismantling booth)



ARTISTIC WORKMANSHIP.

We were shown yesterday two beautiful working models of steamboats, made in gold and silver, which as specimens of American ingenuity and workmanship cannot be excelled. One of these is a perfect *fac simile* of the steamboat *Mary*, now running on Lake Pontchartrain, and the other a *fac simile* of the steamship *Morgan*, running in the line from New Orleans to Galveston. Each model is as perfect in its construction as is the original, and was made from the drafts by which the ships were built, on a scale of 3-32 of an inch to the foot. The *Mary* is 22½ inches long, and the *Morgan* 21½ inches. Everything about them is complete, from the working walking beam and revolving paddle wheels to the rudder gear and the nails in the deck planking. Every rope, mast and spar is there complete, in gold and silver, while pendant from the davits hang the four life-boats with their miniature oars. Each is inclosed in a handsome glass case set upon a rosewood base, which is also a music box. Each box plays ten popular airs, and as the musical machinery is set in motion, the walking beam of the model works up and down, and the wheels revolve with such naturalness as to make one imagine that he is about to start on a sea voyage. These beautiful specimens of artistic workmanship were exhibited yesterday at the jewelry establishment of Messrs. Manchester & Co., No. 195 Broadway. They were manufactured by Mr. J. Dean Benton, of Wilmington, Delaware, who has long borne the reputation of being one of the most skillful jewelers in the business. The two models on exhibition were built for Mr. Charles Morgan, a well known wealthy ship owner of this city, the *Mary* being intended for a present to his wife, after which the ship and the model are named. The *Morgan* is to be presented to Captain James Lawless, who is an agent for Mr. Morgan. This is the third model built in gold and silver by Mr. Benton for Mr. Morgan, the other being a *fac simile* of the steamship *Harlan*, and was presented to Mr. Samuel Harlan, of Wilmington, Delaware. The cost of each was \$3000.

Mr. Benton is the only man who has ever attempted work of this elegant and artistic description, there never having been anything of the kind attempted either in this country or in Europe. He has already built seventeen ships in gold and silver for different persons, one *Monitor*, which was presented to Mr. Ericsson, the inventor of that war vessel, and one working locomotive. Several wealthy gentlemen in Boston have engaged him to make another steamship, which is to be sent to the World's Exhibition. Mr. Benton was born in Boston, and learned his trade as a jeweler, in Providence, R. I. It is not unlikely

Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime History Briefs

Benton Models of Mid-Nineteen Century Steam-Powered Vessels

A number of months ago I was referred to local newspaper coverage dating back to 1866 (New Orleans Times, 07-11-1866) that mentioned two of John Dean Benton's models - the steamboat *Mary* and the steamship *Morgan*, both of which operated in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin and the northern Gulf Coast. An internet search identified a link showing photographs of the 1866 model of *Mary* in its original case.



Noted in the newspaper article is the fact that the models were “built for *Mr. Charles Morgan, a well-known wealthy ship owner of this city.*” The *Mary* was to be a gift to his wife- his second wife Mary Jane Sexton after which the ship was named whereas the *Morgan* was to be presented to Captain James Lawless, an agent for Mr. Morgan. While the characterization of Charles Morgan as “a well-known wealthy ship owner” is accurate, it falls far short of his contributions to ships and shipping. Further, Morgan was not “of the city” as the article suggested, rather being a resident of New York City. His personal and professional story needs to be told and will be the subject of subsequent Briefs.



The newspaper article indicated that the *Mary* was reported to be “now running on Lake Pontchartrain.” Another source indicated that the *Mary* operated between Lake Pontchartrain and Mobile. The *Mary* was completed in 1866 by the Harlan and Hollingsworth Company of Wilmington, Delaware. One of the somewhat unique features of the *Mary* was her vertical walking beam engine. She operated along the Gulf Coast from 1866 until 1876 at which time she ran aground at Aransas Pass. Her passengers and crew survived but the *Mary* was a total loss. She was valued at \$100,000-\$125,000 at the time. According to Pearson and Simmons (1995), the *Mary* was a “ship that played a central and critical role in the economic history of the Gulf Coast region and serves as a model for understanding the workings of a critical elements of the nineteenth century Gulf Coast trade and as a point of departure for studies of that trade.” In 1989, the remains of the iron-hulled steamship *Mary* were identified by marine archaeologists along the channel entrance near the town of Port Aransas, Texas. The results of underwater archaeological studies of the wreck are summarized in the Pearson and Simmons reference.



As to the *Morgan* (1865), registered in New Orleans to Morgan's Louisiana and Texas Railroad & Steamship Company, one source cited the vessel's use for offshore passenger use. Another source indicated that the *Morgan* operated between New Orleans and Galveston. The *Morgan* was built in Wilmington, Delaware, likely by the Harlan and Hollingsworth Company. Like the *Mary*, she was equipped with a vertical walking beam engine. The *Morgan* was alternately Enrolled and Registered at the US Customs House in New Orleans. Her tonnage and dimensions were

as follows: Tonnage- 994.31 tons; Length- 219.9 ft; Beam- 33.1 ft; and Draft- 16.6 ft. The characteristics of the *Mary* were listed as follows: two decks; two masts; round stern; billethead. Her draft would have limited her operation in the New Orleans area to the Mississippi River. While the newspaper article characterized the recipient of the model, Captain James Lawless, as an agent for Mr. Morgan, the US Customs House data listed him as the Master of the *Morgan*.

I wondered if either model currently resided in a museum or possibly a private collection. Given that the photo link to the model of the *Mary* included reference to the Vallejo Gallery in Costa Mesa, CA, I found an email address and sent an inquiry to the Gallery. While waiting for a response, I continued my Internet search and located a site that indicated that the model had been sold to a private collector at a Christies of New York auction in January 2004 for the astounding amount of \$89,625! The estimated value listed in advance of the auction was between \$30,000 and \$50,000. The owner of the Gallery ultimately responded to my inquiry as follows:

"I've had five of these rare Benton models in my 50 years in business. In our research we have learned that 29 such models were made, each of different vessels and 19 have been found to date. All of the ones we've had are sold including the Mary model which went to a private collection. I have one of these Benton models in my private collection, of a different vessel. I'm not looking to part with it yet, but if the time comes let me know if you would be interested in receiving notice."

Continued research determined that the *Morgan* steamship model was displayed at the Mariner's Museum- Fall River (Now the Maritime Museum at Battleship Cove) until it was stolen in 1978. It was also found that the *Mary* model has resided in private collections since it was sold from the estate of Mary Jane Morgan in 1887, Charles Morgan's second wife. Charles Morgan died in 1878.

This Brief would be incomplete without details about the life and accomplishments of John Dean Benton (1824- 1890). Without a doubt, Benton is one of the most important 19th century model builders. Details concerning Benton's life prior to the early 1860's are either scarce or non-existent. However, there is evidence that he enlisted in the Second Rhode Island Infantry Regiment in August 1861. He was reported to have developed rheumatism during his first year of service and was given a disability discharge in January 1862. Having moved to Wilmington, Delaware, to make surgical instruments, and given recognition of his skills as a craftsman, Benton was given a contract to make a miniature model of the monitor, *Patapsco*, being built by Harlan & Hollingsworth Shipbuilding. It is noted that Charles Morgan placed orders with Harlan and Hollingsworth for five large steamers between 1862 and 1864. Thus, it's likely that Morgan became acquainted with Benton and his models during that period. Benton's reputation as a skilled craftsman and modeler is documented by the fact that Tiffany & Company sent two of Benton's steamship models (*Commonwealth* and *Vanderbilt*) to the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867. Thirteen of Benton's models were also exhibited at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Previously described above were two steamship models- *Mary* and *Morgan*- made for Charles Morgan by Benton. There is evidence that at least two and, possibly, four more steamship models were built for Morgan. In addition, it is likely that at least one locomotive model was built for Morgan. While a factual account of the number of models built by Benton over his lifetime is not available, estimates range from as few as 80 to as many as 125. Only five of his models are known to be in museums at the present time: the Atwater Kent Museum in Philadelphia; the Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia; Mystic Seaport; the Mariner's Museum; and the San Francisco Maritime Museum.

In addition to the proceeds from the sales of his models, Benton lived on a Civil War disability pension of \$72/mo. and undetermined income from coin-operated models located at various sites around New England. It has been reported that he was addicted to gambling, specifically

purchasing lottery tickets. At his death, Benton was more or less penniless, but he left a legacy of excellence in model building and craftsmanship.