



## Model boats built to honor Blaine’s past

BY KIRA ERICKSON

If you’ve ever been to the Drayton Harbor Days maritime festival or the Blaine Visitor Information Center, chances are you’ve seen model boats built by former Blaine school board member Mike Dodd.

Many people, locals and visitors alike, will be surprised to learn that the models are representations of actual boats that called Blaine Harbor home.

“I’ve done most of the boats that have a connection to the Blaine harbor,” Dodd said. “There’s still a few I need to do.”

Dodd specializes in building models of gillnetters and purse seiners, two types of fishing boats. He’s done the occasional pleasure boat model but focuses on boats, past and present, that moored in Blaine during the fishing seasons.

Growing up in Blaine, Dodd has seen vast changes to the marina over time. He said today’s boat population is “one percent” of what it was when he was younger. He estimates there were 40 to 50 more of both gillnetter and purse seiner boats.

Seeing this decline in fishing

and the boats being retired inspired him to build models of them. Although he follows no official plans, he usually begins by looking at a photograph.

“It’s just a hobby that turned into an obsession,” Dodd said. “It’s something I enjoy doing, and it keeps me busy in retirement.”

Surprisingly lightweight, Dodd’s models are composed of paper and cardboard. He makes the hull first, the most challenging part because getting the proper shape requires the right curvature of the paper. The cabin, also made of paper, is created separately. For the deck and the bottom of the boat, Dodd uses cereal cardboard boxes.

“They’re not meant to be perfect; I call them folk art,” Dodd said. “Once they get painted, they look pretty close.”

He paints as he builds, adding other fixtures throughout the process. The nets are made of beads and mesh vegetable sacks. He buys wood doweling for the masts and booms of the ships.

Dodd can usually complete a boat in seven to 10 days, spending an average of 50 to 60 hours per model.

He displayed around 70 boats



▲ Mike Dodd with one of his favorite model boats.

Photo by Kira Erickson

at the recent Drayton Harbor Days festival, but he estimates he has another 40 to 50 in his collection.

Dodd’s boats were previously kept at his family business, Blaine Marina. When the business closed four years ago, he

worried about where to keep them. Fortunately, Drayton (Continued on next page)

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