

Missing travel? Take a journey with maritime museum's miniboats

Columbia River Maritime Museum and Pacific Power invite the public on an adventure that can be taken from one's easy chair.

The adventure begins today, May 29, via livestream. It's the first in a series of three on-line distance-learning events involving the 5-foot boats, which are equipped with global-positioning satellite system.

The "Mighty Miniboat Float" program provides an unusual educational opportunity that introduces students to ocean science, international exchange, and all STEAM fields (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).

Hosts for the online sessions are Nate Sandel, the museum's education director, and Alisa Dunlap, Pacific Power's North Coast community manager.

Student shipbuilders, representatives from the Columbia River Bar Pilots, Shaver Transportation, and other guests will participate. "Miniboats have the power to create a substantial and lasting impact, and we are delighted to bring their might into local homes to help inspire even more students and families," Sandel said. "We've seen these boats capture the imagination of our students, but also many people from around the world who en-



Photos courtesy CRMM

Above: A crowd gathers at Columbia River Maritime Museum at the beginning of the launch ceremony in January. **Below, left:** A Columbia River Bar Pilot takes one of the miniboats for launching off the coast. **Below, right:** Nate Sandel, CRMM education director, addresses the crowd, which included Sen. Betsy Johnson.



counter the boats, help with a rescue, or simply follow the boats' progress online."

The museum's Miniboat Program is in its third year, with more than 59,000 nautical miles traveled to date. Pacific Power began providing

support for the program this year, including company engineers who helped students install solar panels on miniboat decks.

"These students will become our future engineers, problem solvers, and leaders, and it's

How to 'ride along'

The livestreamed series can be viewed on the museum's Miniboat Facebook page and YouTube channel. More details are on the museum's website.

- **A Miniboat's Big Adventure**, noon to 1 p.m. today, May 29. The first livestream covers the Wy'East relaunch near the Port of Vancouver from a Shaver tugboat.

- **Thar She Blows!**, noon to 1 p.m. June 5. The second

livestream introduces the role of wind and currents, as participants check in on the fleet and discuss the vessels' progress.

- **The Mighty Columbia**, noon to 1 p.m. June 12. The third livestream explores how a busy river works, in a look at the industry and communities that depend on the region's biggest river. It includes interviews with bar pilots, ship captains, and tugboat operators.

why programs like this matter to Pacific Power and businesses across Oregon," Pacific Power President Stefan Bird said.

Through the program, students take on roles as quartermasters, sail designers, keel engineers, cargo trackers, and documentarians. Along the way, they learn real-world skills and make friends overseas while they track the boats, which are packed with mementos curated by the students.

This year's boat were made by seventh graders at Warrenton Grade School, fifth graders at Columbia City Elementary School and seventh graders from Wy'East Middle School in Vancouver, Wash.

The three schools are partnered with schools in Japan.

The boat launched by Wy'East washed ashore after its ocean launch earlier this

year. They'll relaunch the boat on the Columbia River today, before making a second launch attempt at sea.

The Miniboat Program was developed by the Columbia River Maritime Museum in partnership with the Japanese Consulate in Portland, Educational Passages, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, debris from the country washed up on Oregon and Washington shores. One of the items, a fishing vessel, is on display at the Columbia River Maritime Museum. The boat and its journey across the Pacific Ocean became the inspiration for the Miniboat Program.

Since the program's 2017 start, 1,213 students on both sides of the Pacific have launched 24 miniboats.

Cyclist: Wyoming man begins four-state journey from Clatsop County

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Orlando and thought I should turn it into a fundraiser."

Money raised from his ride will go to the Alzheimer's Association Wyoming chapter to increase awareness of the disease and fund research.

Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United

Patrick Graham takes a selfie while riding with his friend, Mark Wells, across Montana last summer.

States, taking more lives each year than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined, said Janet Lewis, executive director of the Alzheimer's Association's Wyoming chapter. In one of his first blog posts, Graham writes, "Coming out of a quarantined lifestyle, courtesy of COVID-19, I fear that it may be easy for all of us to slip back into a life of complacency. A life where we continue to live in a culture of indulgence and

How to help

To donate or learn more, go online to cycleforlife.club/2020-ride.

Checks also can be sent to Cycle For Life, 1607 Capitol Ave., 2nd Floor, Cheyenne WY 82001.

consumerism. ... Like a thief, stealing our ability to appreciate the world around us."

Graham will post updates, photos and videos from the

ride documenting his progress throughout the journey. Pedal power keeps his electronics (phone, computer, camera) charged during the ride.

"Diet and exercise play a key part in preventing yourself from getting Alzheimer's," Graham said. "I can't change how everybody lives, but this is on the rise because of modern-day conveniences. We grab food on every street corner."

