

this week

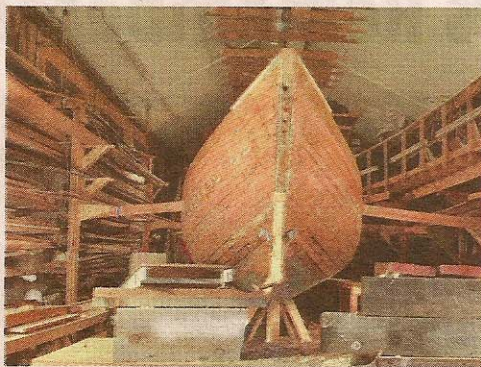
Newport

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THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 2012

BORN FREE



An original film, directed by Pierre Marcel, recounts the history, dramatic sinking and resurrection of a classic 107-year-old Herreshoff yacht in Newport. (Photos by Sally Ann Santos)

For Love of Amorita

Launched in April of 1905, *Amorita* was one of just eighteen identical NY-30 class racing yachts turned out by the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company in Bristol, RI. By 2007, she'd already celebrated her 100th birthday and was still sailing strong. While nearly all boats of her era eventually succumbed to neglect, rot, and destruction, *Amorita* was lucky that sailors, having been touched by her magic, went to extraordinary lengths to care for and protect this beloved little yacht. Described by Olin Stephens as one of the "most perfect yacht designs," she became an iconic fixture of Newport harbor, one of the most admired and photographed yachts in the world.

July 7, 2007, was a beautiful Newport day and *Amorita* was ready to race in the Robert H. Tiedemann Classic Yacht Regatta. That day the sun bounced off of her crisp white sails, glistened on her bright work and made her deck hardware sparkle. Then...while racing among her classic peers she was run down and sunk by a yacht nearly twice her size. The collision, which could easily have taken the lives of ten sail-

ors, sent shockwaves through the local, national and international sailing community. After a sickening crash, her deck submerged and vanished beneath the feet of her crew in mere seconds.

As news of the tragedy spread, it came to the attention of acclaimed French film director/producer, Pierre Marcel. Marcel, an accomplished yachtsman. While screening his award-winning film "Taberly" at the Newport Film Festival in 2009, he met and discussed the details of *Amorita's* saga with owners Jed Pearsall and Bill Doyle.

After spending just one morning examining the wreckage and interviewing those closest to the accident, he was convinced that there was a deep emotional story that had to be told. The film would not just document the boat yard details of a restoration, but would tell the story of a truly unique vessel that had captured the hearts and imagination of sailors and non-sailors for more than a century. It would be a love story of commitment and determination to save a sentimental and historic treasure.

Now, five years later, the film is



complete. Fittingly, it will be shown on the eve of the America's Cup World Series in Newport, RI. *Amorita's* designer, the legendary Captain Nathanael Herreshoff, also designed five America's Cup winning yachts from 1893-1920.

To complete the circle, proceeds from the event will benefit Sail Newport, whose mission is to promote and operate affordable public sailing, and the Jane Pickens Theater restoration fund, another historic Newport icon.

The film will premiere in Newport on Tuesday, June 26, at the Jane Pickens Theater. The event will kickoff with a pre-show reception at 6:30 p.m., followed by screening at 7 p.m. (60 mins.), and post-show Q&A with director, Pierre Marcel.

TO GO:

WHAT: *Amorita's* Unlucky Day

WHERE: Jane Pickens Theater

WHEN: June 26, 7 p.m.

INFO: janepickens.com/films

