

True Story

A Rabbit Fell Out of the Sky

In early 2022, our Chase Boat Challenge fundraising effort was successful, and we were in hot pursuit of a Boston Whaler Montauk 150 (later AKA Doris D). Alarming, we discovered that only two of these boats existed west of the Mississippi River! They were both held by Trudeau's Marine, the Boston Whaler Dealer in Spokane.

Gary Trudeau explained both Whalers were similarly equipped. One was white, the other blue. The SISO Board, realizing the shortage and urgency, approved an immediate deposit on the white one. Upon our calling the dealer to confirm a SISO purchase, Gary said, "Well, you'll have to take the blue one because a guy from Montana just bought the white one." He went on, "And, he says he knows you guys and your sailing club, SISA. His name is Marc Welt."



Wow. Small world for sailors in the mountains! Indeed, Marc had been a SISO supporter and was known by several board members. We began communications on aspects of new Whaler ownership; engine break-in, trailering hardware, bimini and covers, etc. Trading info with Marc helped us dial in the Doris D with confidence in short order, and the boat performed incredibly well in its first season of service.

Flash forward to January 2023. The SISO piggy bank still had funds from the first chase boat campaign, with enough additional donations from our generous supporters that we could afford another chase boat. We were committed to the second Whaler for all the same reasons as the first; safety, access to the students and dependability. It would be tight, but the Board approved the purchase of another Montauk 150 on January 21, 2023. Again, it was through Trudeau, as part of his 2023 allotment. Supposed to arrive in April or May, just in time. Lots of coordination began; confirming a blue color to match Doris D, prop guard, propeller pitch, bimini, rails, etc. Extremely exciting and another significant step for SISO.

Like sailing on a mountain lake, the wind shifted abruptly just two weeks later. On February 4, SISO received in the mail an official notice from a Boise law firm entitled INFORMATION TO HEIRS AND DEVISEES, IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARVIN CLEMENT WELT, aka MARC WELT, PhD.

Deeply saddened to learn of Marc's unexpected passing, we waited for more information as to what the notice would lead to next. Our networking with other SISA members and Marc's siblings revealed a very interesting profile of Marc.

His PhD was in fish biology, a field in which he had been professionally published. He traveled extensively, including to Antarctica and several trips to the Galapagos Islands. Never married and having no children, Marc had time for boat projects, and there were many over many years including power boats, sailboats, and dozens of kayaks. Most of his youth was spent living at Taliesin West, Frank Lloyd Wright's home and school for architects outside Phoenix, where Marc's stepdad was curator for over 40 years.

Marc passed due to an aggressive bone cancer. His wish was to have his remains distributed 'amongst the fish in the Galapagos Islands', provisions for which were made in his will.

And, particularly noteworthy, Marc's nickname was Rabbit.

Soon, SISO was informed of the specifics of what **Marc bequeathed us through his will. Title to his new Boston Whaler Montauk 150 that we had purchased a week apart, and a 1999 Seward 25 sailboat.** The Whaler has less than one hour on the engine.

These gifts represent the largest single donation to SISO to date. While we will always be donor supported, we are beginning to be financially prepared to face equipment repairs and replacements, and even take on additional aspects of sailing instruction such as adult or adaptive sailing, both requiring different types of boats. We are hugely grateful.

Finally, the obvious name for our new boat is fittingly RABBIT, a tribute to Marc and a reminder of his life and commitment to the advancement of youth sailing. Thank you, Rabbit.