Historical Seaport to Turn Longest Mast for Ship This Week

Local News

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Aberdeen, Wash. - The Spar Shop at the Historical Seaport, a unit of the Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority, will turn the longest mast it has ever attempted this week at its facility in Aberdeen. The 117-foot mast, made from a single, 114-year-old Douglass-fir tree harvested near Porter in Grays Harbor County, will replace the main mast on the historic schooner Zodiac, which is based at Seattle's Lake Union. The mast will be turned on the Spar Shop's tracer lathe, the largest in North America. The lathe can handle logs up to 120 feet in length.The mast is believed to be the longest ever turned in Grays Harbor County. The Spar Shop has also turned masts for the modern Nina, a replica of Christopher Columbus' ship, and the Fair Jeanne, a brigantine based in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

The process of turning the log into the Zodiac's mast is expected to take up to two weeks by a team working eight hours a day. Turning the mast involves rotating the log on the lathe and removing wood along its length with a spinning blade. Media is invited to take photos of the work on the mast as it is being turned. Please contact (media only) Joe Follansbee, 360-589-0766, jfollansbee@historicalseaport.org.Built for the heirs to Johnson & Johnson Band-Aid fortune, the two-masted gaff schooner Zodiac was designed by William H. Hand, Jr., to epitomize the best features of the American fishing schooner. She worked the rugged waters outside the Golden Gate for forty years. The ship retired in 1972 as the last working pilot schooner in the United States. In the late 1970s, the Vessel Zodiac Corporation was formed to operate and maintain the schooner, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. More information is available at www.schoonerzodiac.com.The Spar Shop is open every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for public tours. No reservations are necessary. Tours are free, though donations are accepted. Donations support Spar Shop educational programs. The Spar Shop address is 712 Hagara Street, Aberdeen, Wash. For directions, call 800-200-5239.