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## Antique and Classic Boat Show returns to BLC

Sept. 8 show to feature woodies, runabouts and more

**BY TERRY DUFFY**  
 Editor-in-Chief

It seems to be taking forever for the area's boating season to come around this year, with early March-type winter weather now extending well into April.

But once warm weather hits – well, it's only a matter of time before the waterways again become a focal point for boating enthusiasts near and far, with activities, events and more to suit just about every taste found throughout Buffalo-Niagara.

For boaters with an eye for the glamorous craft of yesteryear, listen up. Plans are shaping up for a return in 2018 of the popular Antique and Classic Boat Show to the Buffalo Launch Club on Grand Island. Come Saturday Sept. 8, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., "the tradition returns to the oldest powerboat club in North America."

Sponsored by the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society and the Buffalo Launch Club, the 40th anniversary of this unique boating expo is coming back home to the BLC following a brief stint on the Buffalo waterfront. For Society Chapter organizers, the BLC and its distinction of being the "finest boating club on the Niagara Frontier" since the club's founding in 1903 was a logical choice for hosting a show of this caliber.

"In 2015, the NFACB decided that a change of venue would be beneficial, and wanted to ride the wave of the downtown excite-



The Dart Boat Co. of Toledo will be among the exhibitors at this year's show.

ment," said 2018 Boat Show Chairman Jim Barrick.

"(But) Canalside just didn't have the intimacy of the antique classic boat enthusiast, and the atmosphere of the oldest motorboat club in North America – the BLC."

Barrick said the plan to return to the Launch Club was born early last year as he and a few committee members of the Classic Boat Society teamed up to do some pre-season work on a classic runabout. "The idea to bring this event back to life was born by four NFACB club members painting the bottom of a 1956 Shepherd last spring. (I) and committee members Ed Bobowicz, Rob Mikulec, and Roger Metz were up to the task of seeing this return to the great event it once was," said Barrick.

"The two organizations met last fall and agreed that the Buffalo Launch Club is the most fitting venue and the tradition returns to Grand Island where it belongs. We



are very excited about this upcoming boat show."

Barrick said this year's show will highlight a time of transition in boating design – honoring the classic woodies of yesteryear while also acknowledging the influences of some unique fiberglass models. "The future of the antique and classic boat industry now includes some of the great fiberglass boats that were introduced at the end of the wooden boat era," said Barrick.

Visitors can look forward to viewing some of the true classic woodies that were the mark of

boating from the turn of the 1900s to the 1960s when they began to be replaced by fiberglass. Show organizers report a wide variety of manufacturers will be represented including Chris Craft, Century, Richardson, Penn Yan, and Garwood. "These mahogany boats with their glistening finishes will dazzle spectators with their beauty and grace," said Barrick.

Speaking of mahogany classics, another visitor this year will be the Dart Boat Company of Toledo, Ohio, with some neat 1920s-era runabouts on display.

"We are looking at five, six Dart

Boats from Toledo. Boats from the roaring '20s and Prohibition times that were instrumental in the bootlegging industry, known for their speed in outrunning police boats," said Barrick.

"The Dart Boat Company will be giving a presentation on the history and significance and the impact on the state-of-the-art nautical engineering of the era."

He adds that other woodies will be coming from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Canada and the Finger Lakes, based on current reservations. These will join a wide variety of Classic Boat Society woodies by Chris Craft, Century, Hackercraft, and the Shepherd boats that were built in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Adding to this display will be a variety of "Glassics" – vintage fiberglass boats from the '60s, '70s and '80s, featuring exotic fins and sculptured shapes that were dominant in car and boat designs of that era. The website [www.classicsonline.com](http://www.classicsonline.com) boasts the unique models celebrate "the pioneering spirit of those classic runabout manufacturers of the '50s, '60s and '70s. Classic Glass, Alumaclassics, Woodies ... these are the boats that brought power boating to the masses."

Classics Online along with Antique Boat Show organizers invite you "to explore the history of these fine examples of art in motion" come September at the Buffalo Launch Club.

Still more attractions expected include a showing of high-performance fly-bys on the river. Organizers are planning for "a flashy display" of up to 10 noisy, fast race boats that day, put on by the WNY Offshore Powerboat Association.

"The Offshore Club will be doing their captivating fly-bys with the noise level generated from some of the biggest power plants on the Niagara River. We are hoping to see the hydroplanes in a land display capacity, or run a lap or two," Barrick said.

Yes, visitors can look forward to boats, boats and more at this event. Spectators will be able view classic boats both dockside and on land; check out model boats on display plus a variety of older outboards by visiting outboard motor clubs, visit an antique car show of more than 100 vehicles, watch boat-building in action by students of the Buffalo Maritime Center, even take a bid on a chance to ride in a classic that day.

There will also be a Field of Dreams – a specially designated "for sale" area of registered boats.

"It will be managed by the NFACB for people registering their boats for sale," said Barrick. He added boats for sale will be models 25-plus years in age.

Circle Saturday, Sept. 8, on your calendars. This promises to be one not to miss.

For more information on the 40th annual Antique and Classic Boat Show, visit [www.OldBoats-Buffalo.org](http://www.OldBoats-Buffalo.org) or call Barrick at 909-9463.

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