

# Dallas woman hard at work restoring Gypsy Queen

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**HARVEYS LAKE** - Dallas resident Alda Maturi is in charge of bringing a piece of history back to the lake.

She's restoring the *Gypsy Queen*, an antique 40-foot wooden launch, which is resting on the lakefront opposite The Grotto. The old lady resembles the two boats that once plied the lake.

The resemblance is more than coincidence. The *Gypsy Queen* was built in 1921 by Richardson's Boat Works of Buffalo, NY. Richardson's also built the lake's two launches and well-known steamers *Kingston*, *Acoma*, *Wilkes-Barre* and the double-decked *Natoma*.

Steamer service between the hotel district at the Inlet and the lake's north corner began during the lake's heyday as a resort in 1891 and continued until 1938.

Maturi describes the *Gypsy Queen*, which is receiving a healthy dose of TLC, as "a comfortable old boat." She was purchased in September, 1994, by Armand Mascioli, Nick Arnone and Dr. Halloran, who brought her to the lake from Lake Seneca, one of New York's Finger Lakes, where she had been in service for many years.

The anticipated minor engine work, caulking, sanding, painting and rudder replacement on the boat soon mushroomed into a major project, however.

"People were amazed at how bad she was," Maturi said. "Boats are built like people, with a backbone supporting ribs, which support the rest of the boat. The backbone and ribs were rotted,

*"I know this boat inside and out - her strengths and her weaknesses. It's almost like being married to her."*

Alda Maturi  
Dallas boatbuilder

with ribs in some places not even touching the backbone any more. Most of the keelson, which lays on top of the backbone, was also rotten - an unpleasant surprise which we couldn't see until we began to dismantle her."

She compared replacing the bad wood with solid white oak to removing pieces of a huge jigsaw puzzle one at a time, cutting a replacement and returning it to its original spot - all without disturbing adjoining pieces.

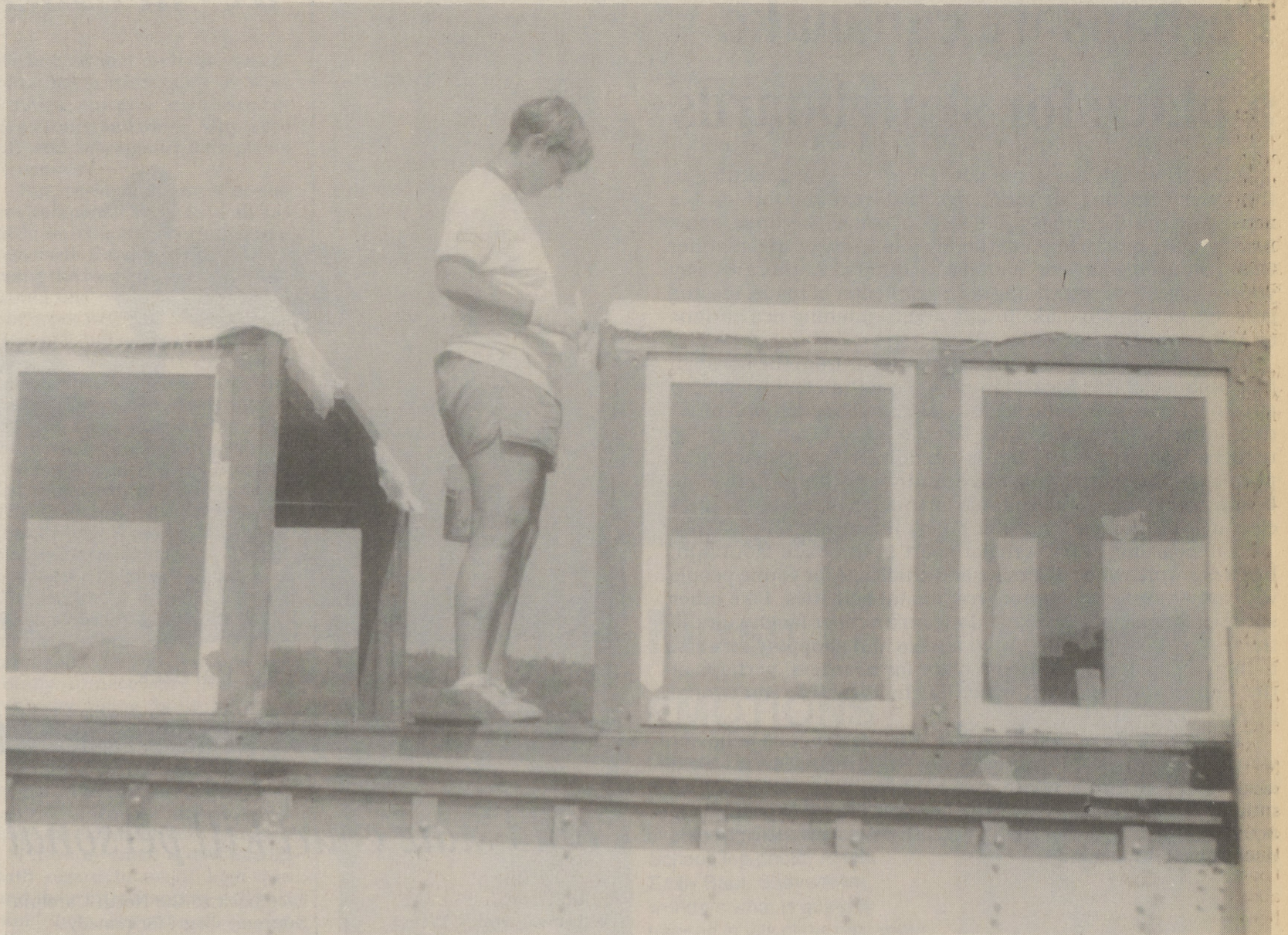
Replacing the stem, a large curved piece in the front of the bow, required several days of very painstaking work, Maturi said.

"It's 25 layers of 1/4 inch white oak, laminated together using epoxy," she said. "I could bend and laminate only eight pieces at a time. The original was cut from one piece of wood, but wood like that doesn't exist any more."

While she was working on the stem, she had to prop and support the rest of the bow with cinder blocks and boards.

When she finished the stem, Maturi removed the fuel tank, replaced the entire keelson in several sections, then replaced the ribs one at a time.

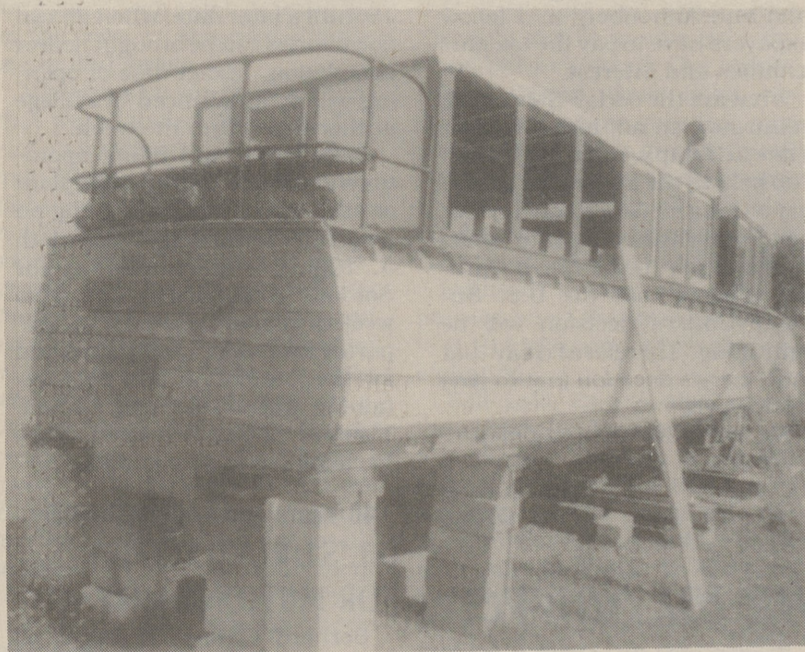
Another surprise was the



Dallas resident Alda Maturi is in charge of restoring the *Gypsy Queen*, a dead ringer for the launches which plied Harveys Lake

at the turn of the century. She is applying a protective coating to the wheelhouse's canvas roof.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE



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The *Gypsy Queen* sits on blocks at Harveys Lake, across from The Grotto. The 40-year-old boat is being restored from stem to stern, and owners hope to float her next summer.

chined (grooved) piece where the top of the boat meets the bottom, which was rotten and punched into a concave piece.

"I was shocked," she said. "I thought maybe the old girl would give us a break, but she didn't. I really didn't know what to expect because most of the damage wasn't apparent until we began to take her apart."

Along the way Maturi also replaced two warped deck beams, added new top decks made of 3/4-inch marine grade plywood and stretched new canvas over the roof of the wheelhouse.

Before she winds up for the season in October, she plans to replace the side decks and mahogany planks.

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Next year, unless the *Gypsy Queen* gives her another surprise, Maturi plans to replace the trim and sole (interior flooring). Then it's time for the mechanics to install a new motor and steering system before the old girl hits the water, possibly sometime during the summer.

Although boats are her first love, Alda tackles other woodworking projects for a living. She has made tournament plaques and built the beautiful "wood wall" which separates the restrooms from the dining room at the Huntsville Golf Club.

"I try to take on projects which are a little different," she said. "I like the challenge."

The daughter of Robert and Doris Maturi, Alda is a Lake-Lehman graduate. She became fascinated with boats while working at a marina in Hilton Head, SC. To learn more about their construction, she completed an intensive boatbuilding course at Eastport, ME, and worked for a year in Greenport, Long Island,

before returning to the area.

Working for more than two seasons on the *Gypsy Queen*, which she describes as "like wearing a well-broken in pair of old loafers," has been her most challenging project. Maturi credited several people with helping out during the past two seasons: Barry Ferguson, Heather Freeman, Larry Radel, Scott Townsend, Alex Frederick and Pete Johnson.

"Some days are very frustrating and others just fly right along," said the soft-spoken young woman, smiling and running her hand gently over the stem. "I know this boat inside and out - her strengths and her weaknesses. It's almost like being married to her."

## Kids' county fair contests announced

Kids ages 2-5 are invited to enter the annual Luzerne County Fair Costume Contest. A Prince and Princess will be selected and all kids receive a prize.

The event is September 8 at the Fair. Register in advance by calling 675-1761 for an entry form. There is no fee to enter. Young ladies ages 6-8 are invited to enter the Luzerne County Fair Princess event. Talented girls ages 9-11 and talented teens aged 12-15 are invited to enter the Luzerne County Fair's annual Talent Contest to select a Junior Star and County Teen. Register in advance by calling 675-1761 to have entry mailed to you.

## Fair Queen contestants sought

Last call for young single women between the ages of 16 and 20 years of age to enter the 1996 Luzerne County Fair Queen competition.

Judging is based on an essay, on-stage personality, general grooming and poise, and the ability to promote and host the 1996 and 1997 Fair events. The winner receives a \$500 U.S. Savings Bond, plus an assortment of lovely prizes, and the opportunity to represent her County and community at the PA State Fair Association's convention in January in Hershey, when the state queen will be selected.

For more information to be mailed to you, please call 675-1761, today.

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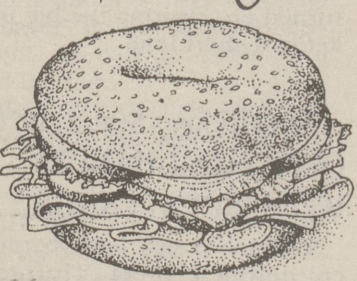
- A Board-Certified Pediatrician and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics with over 10 years experience treating children and adolescents
- A Cum Laude graduate of Temple University with a Medical Degree from The Medical College of Pennsylvania
- An intern and resident at the University of Michigan with a clinical fellowship in hematology/oncology
- Recipient of the 1992 Merylene A. Stevenson Community Service Award from Children and Youth Services and a member of the Multidisciplinary Team of Luzerne County Children and Youth



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