

Wings successfully restored

By **MATT CLINTON**
The Beacon

April 3 was an extremely festive night at Koehler Kraft on Shelter Island, and for good reason. The oldest recorded Pacific Class (PC) sloop in restoration had been restored.

The two year restoration project of Wings, a 1931 #8 PC, was such a success that even the owner of Koehler Kraft, C.F. Koehler, was pleased with.

"We re-created as much as we could of the original without completely destroying it," said Koehler. "There was a lot of tweaking and construction, but we tortured it back into shape."

When the restoration project began, there was about half of the original Wings present and it was being built for show, not to be sailed again.

There was no deck or deck posts and the whole thing was almost completely destroyed. There was no planking and few patterns, but Koehler Kraft was up for the challenge.

"Somewhere along the line, we decided she could go in the water again," said Koehler. "The biggest challenge was everyone had (a different) idea of what the original boat looked like in 1931. This final product is our best guess at the 70-year life cycle of our boat."

In an effort to restore the boat, it took a tremendous amount of man hours and a lot of patience according to Koehler.

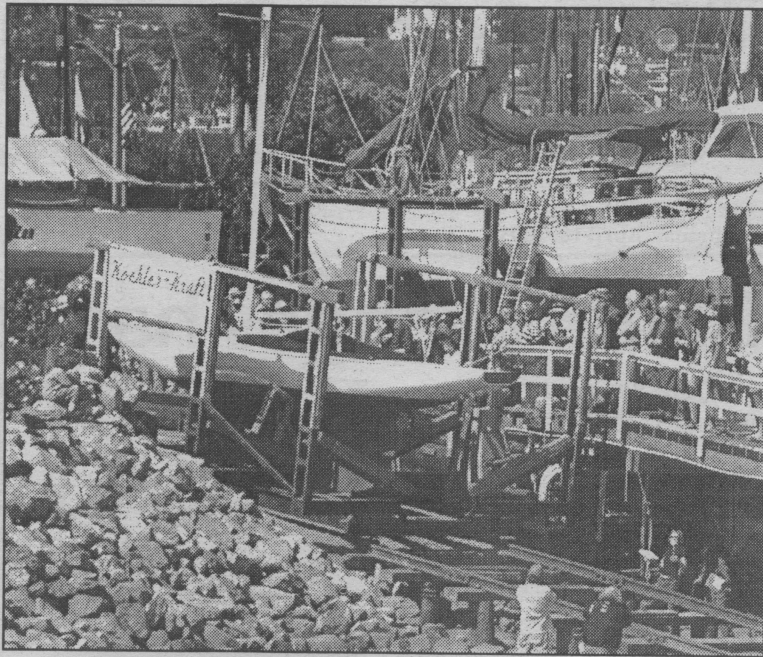
"If you try and look at the whole picture, one step at a time, it's a very overwhelming process," said Koehler.

Tom Jackson, mechanical engi-

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ABOVE: The re-launching of Wings drew a crowd Sunday, April 6, as sailors and land-lovers alike watched as the boat made its way to the water.

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RIGHT: Before Wings hit the water, the public got an up close view of the fully-restored Pacific Class wooden racing yacht Thursday, April 3. After two years of hard work by Koehler Kraft, the 70-year-old yacht looked like new.

The Beacon/Maria Epstein



neer and good friend of Koehler, really commended the work done on Wings by the crew at Koehler Kraft.

"It's really a transformation from a pile of sticks to the phenomenal beauty it is today," said Jackson. "It's pretty rare to see a boat 70 years old looking like a month old."

Kim Van Dort, manager at Koehler Kraft, has only been on staff for the past four months, but has been impressed with not only the work effort, but the immense

knowledge of Koehler himself.

"The knowledge and information that C.F. has, you couldn't buy," said Van Dort. "People are amazed by the restoration. Paul Kettenburg, (former owner of Wings) came by and even he was amazed."

With such an incredible team effort to restore the boat, it was funding from the Koehler Kraft company, donations and other significant help that kept the restoration process rolling.

One of the most impressive parts of the restoration was the fact that because of the knowledge needed to restore the boat, Koehler had to oversee 99 percent of the project himself.

"It was really a joint effort by a lot of people," said Van Dort. "It's amazing to bring back to life a boat that should have been firewood."

Koehler Kraft continues to grow and was recently awarded the go ahead to expand their current offices and shipyard. The \$2.2 million process will begin later this year and take six to eight months to complete.

According to Van Dort, it will only continue to help Koehler Kraft as a business.

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