

William Grunwald, boat builder, dies at 77

By ANNA MARIA BASQUEZ

Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — A man who will be remembered as one of the area's most established boat builders died Sunday.

William H. Grunwald, 77, whose love of traditional boat designs extended the life of the Grand Banks dory into this century, passed away Sunday. A memorial service will be Saturday at AEolus Boats in Davenport, where his small boat shop carved its place in boat history with its many preserved vessels with designs dating back to the Victorian age and before.

In a previous Sentinel article, Grunwald was featured as a veteran of building who resisted sacrificing his own individuality as a craftsman to the modern ways of crafting marine vessels.

"In a way he was a renegade by insisting on building wooden boats when the trend now is plastic," said his wife Ursula, who he was married to for 49 years. "It's a matter of naval architecture, in a way, while there is much of that lacking out there."

He also inspired many novice boat builders to become some of the best around, she said.

"He was very quiet in a way, but has had much influence," she said.

Family members described him as

'People will miss his dry humor, his talent and his ability to talk boats.'

"always an independent soul with a love for boats and a gift for wood."

Mr. Grunwald became a permanent resident of Santa Cruz in 1960. Born in Seattle, he was raised in Alameda, where, as a child he started building boats.

He served in World War II as a 1st Lt. in the 8th Army Airforce.

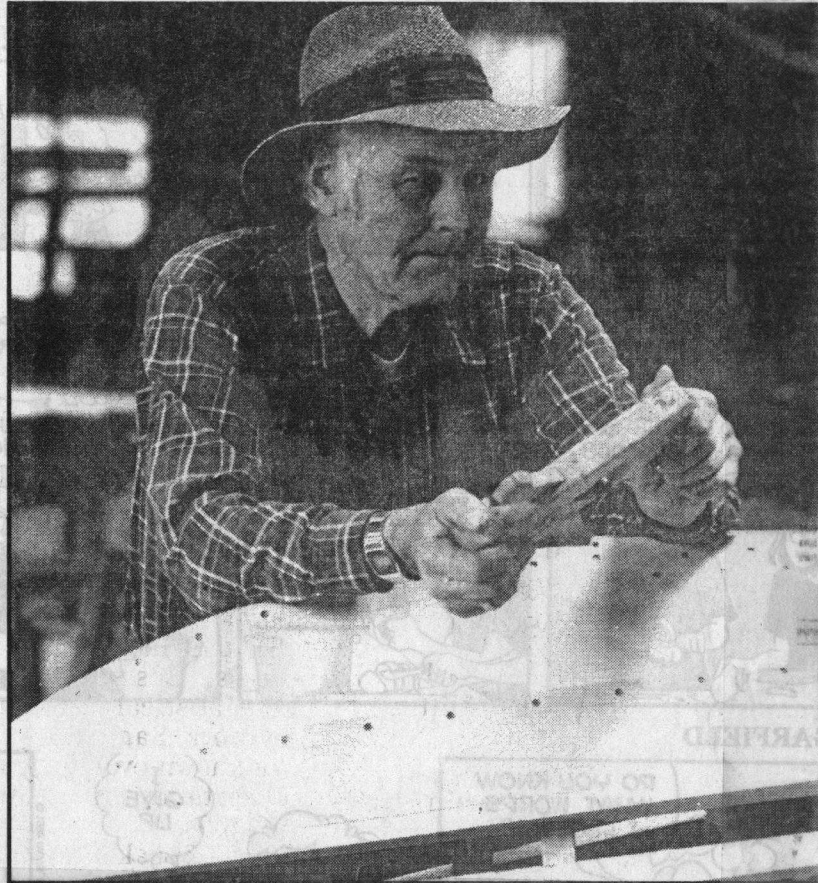
He attended U.C. Berkeley, where he received his degree in journalism.

Not long after that, he started his custom boat business in Davenport.

"It was his personality most that attracted people to Davenport" his wife said. "People will miss his dry humor, his talent and his ability to talk boats."

He is survived by his wife; his brother, Tom Grunwald, of Felton; one niece; and three nephews. His brother, Gerry Grunwald, died in 1994.

The memorial service at AEolus will be at 2 p.m. Donations may be made to the Pacific Elementary School in Davenport or to the Grey Bears in Santa Cruz.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel file

Boat builder William H. Grunwald loved traditional designs.

SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
August 24, 1998