

# Spanish relic discovered near Guemes Island!

by Bill Ritchie, Fiction writer

Was there a secret mission in 1780 sent from Spain to what is now called the Pacific Northwest? George Vancouver, the renown British captain, was not the only explorer who was charting these waters and islands about that time. The truth may never be known. And what calamity could sink a Spanish Galleon in the calm channels in the San Juan area?



A brass medallion, believed to have come from Spain in the late 18th Century, is shown here. It shows a ship's wheel and various symbols, with the words *Emeralda Cadiz 1780*

Photo: Bill Ritchie

**Anacortes, WA:** An intern at the Anacortes Museum of History and Industry found a brass medallion she suggests might have come from a Spanish galleon which she thinks may sunk not far from here.

Rosetta Ortez, a student at Western Washington State University, was cleaning a yet unidentified rusted object when she uncovered the medallion, which was adhered to a piece of iron-wood.

The wood was part of an oddly-shaped item about the size of a small microwave oven, that was thought at first to be a navigational device until she uncovered the image on the medallion. A museum conservator removed layers of corrosion to find the words *Emeralda Cadiz 1780 Espana* engraved on the medallion, which is brass.

The find, about the size of a silver dollar, was attached to the wood portion of the object. The museum was given it by the county appointed estate administrator, settling the affairs of an anonymous Guemes Island resident who died recently.

"At first we thought the thing was some kind of navigator's instrument," said a museum spokesperson, "but now we're not so sure."

The image on the brass includes what appears to be a ship's wheel, surrounded by various symbols--perhaps of a religious or trade emblems. One image is thought to be that of a dolphin. Prominent is the name *Emeralda*--perhaps the name of the vessel that carried it.

Among the other items in the gift were bronze and iron objects that are believed to be ship's parts. They are typical of Spanish galle-

ons of the late 18th Century.

It is known that British vessels explored the area of the Northern Puget Sound and Canadian San Juans at that time. Of note is Captain George Vancouver, who named many of the region's features during his expedition in 1790.

Spanish exploration also was underway at that time, but it is not known whether a Spanish ship named *Emeralda* (which means *emerald* in Spanish) existed. Secret expeditions were known to have been commissioned, but historians have found no evidence of a ship by that name, nor of a secret mission, until this find raised the possibility.

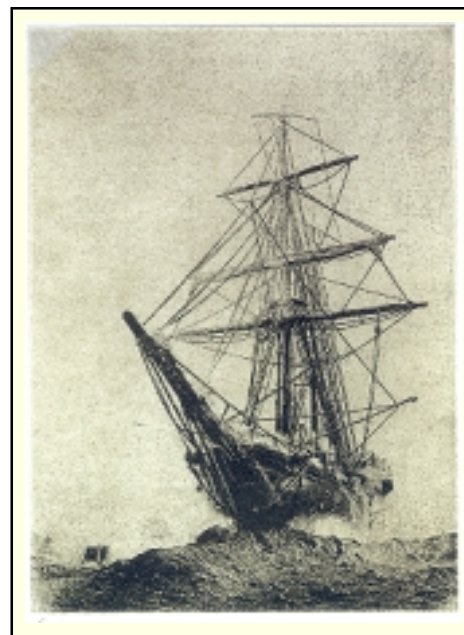
The Guemes Island resident, who died last August when diving, had apparently been retrieving items from the wreck of the *Emeralda* and secreting them in a shed behind his home. Investigators found the items while assessing his property. He left no will, nor have any survivors been located.

The county offered the shed's contents to the museum officials, who sent Ms. Ortez to investigate. She returned from her initial investigation with the one item of greatest interest, thinking it was a navigational instrument.

Asked about the whereabouts of the diver's discovery, neither the county nor the museum officials have any idea.

"The guy was a recluse. He was very secretive. He never mixed with folks," said the owner of the General Store on Guemes.

The man's body was found washed ashore and his boat was anchored off shore. He drowned, possibly after a heart attack at the time he was diving.



Above: *Endurance*, an intaglio print from a SolarPlate using a photo by Frank Hurley about 1914, part of a composition by Kathryn Kim.

## Kim uses SolarPlate and ImageOn

Reproduced above is a trial proof from a SolarPlate created by Kathryn Kim and printed on her Mini Halfwood Press. The negative for the plate was made from the photograph of the *Endurance*, by Frank Hurley--photographer on the Shackleton Expedition. Kim's series includes maps in the background areas, not shown in this proof. Besides fine art prints, Kim also makes customized greeting cards, announcements and books using rubber stamps, collage and intaglio prints. She purchased a unique model of the Mini Halfwood Press in May this year after testing how it printed her SolarPlate and ImageOn plates.

## Want Hard Copy?

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# HALFWOOD PRESS NEWS \$4.95



Photo: Lynda Ritchie



Above: Bill's granddaughter's drypoint portrait. Left: Bill Ritchie shows his grand daughter how he prints on a Mini Halfwood Press. The snapshot was made at a beach resort on Washington's coast.

## Got a story? Got a print?

Anyone with a story to tell about making prints is welcome to send it as an e-mail or attachment. I'm especially interested in stories from owners of Halfwood Presses. If you have pictures to go with it, that's even better if you give me permission to reproduce the picture in this online version of the news. If you don't have a story, but you have a print that you'd like to share here, just send it. Questions, too, are helpful. I can put them in a Q&A column. Send to [ritchie@emeralda.com](mailto:ritchie@emeralda.com)

## Life is a beach . . .with a Mini Halfwood Press

by Bill Ritchie

One of the things I like about the Mini Halfwood Press is the fact that I can take it with me when my family wants to get away from the city. The first time I tried this was when, on the spur of the moment, we decided to go on a picnic. But it was right when I was itching to try the first Mini. No problem. I simply stuffed a few essentials in my art box, put the press in the car trunk next to the cooler, and we headed for the lake.

When we arrived, the family packed the picnic and cooler, and I toted my art box in one hand and the Mini in the other. Under the shade of a tree, I set up my outdoor printmaking studio on an extra picnic table. Using one of the copper plates I that brought along I made a drypoint of the tree that was shading our little party.



My first time printing an intaglio print outdoors was a Lake Samamish. I made a drypoint of the nearest shade tree and printed at the picnic table. People stopped and stared; a few asked questions.

I think the press was an odd thing to see at a park; passers-by stared, and once a little kid -- being less shy than the grownups -- came over and asked me what I was doing. When I answered,

"I'm making a print," he looked at me, big-eyed, as though I was speaking a foreign language, and then he ran to catch up with the others.

A few weeks later I was invited by a friend to join in an afternoon Celebration of the Arts at his place on an island an hour's drive north of my home. This time I put together a kind of workbench -- one which also served as a box for carrying the press and my supplies. At his place (actually a farm) I set up my bench under a plum tree and, in my way, made a drypoint of the tree.



The first time I took the Mini to an outdoor art festival was at a friend's farm on Guemes Island, north of Seattle. Here I am under a plum tree, printing a drypoint of the plum tree with my press.

The next time I went outdoors was to realize a long-held notion of printing "live" at a street fair. Seattle has many fairs in the summer. Our local version is called the *Uptown Stroll*. I got a location in front of a creative paper shop called *PaperSpace*. There, for four hours, I printed engravings, drypoints and etchings in the open air.

I had a little display box, too, that people liked to riffle through. They were especially low-priced



At our neighborhood Uptown Stroll, an art festival in August, Bill Ritchie (in the silly hat) set up in front of PaperSpace--a creative paper shop in Seattle.

to encourage people to buy and enjoy small prints.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind when you go outdoors to print: Put your damp paper in sandwich bags, the kind with a zipper. If it's windy, you'll need something to keep your materials from blowing away and a place to stack your finished prints as you make them. I use a small sheet of glass or acrylic, and people can see what I've done.

This is important if you take your Mini Press to a street fair or art festival. Our neighborhood fair, held each August, is a simple arrangement of artists on the sidewalk located by sponsoring merchants. My space was in front of a shop specializing in handmade greeting cards and other works on paper. At an event like this, you should have a little print bin of inexpensive work, matted and wrapped in plastic. People love to buy them.

**Life is a beach - continued on P. 2**

**Life is a beach** - continued from Page 1

It's also a good idea to have plenty of take-aways, such as business cards, handy informational cards and other prizes so that people can get in touch with you after the event. Be sure your material has your email address on it, too.

The most recent jaunt I made was with my family as we went to the beach on our State's west coast. We rented a cabin. Late one afternoon, when we'd had our day of swimming and beach-combing, I got my Mini out of its box, gathered a few things from my art box and started to make a dry-point of my granddaughter. She didn't sit still for very long, but I got an impression in a few lines. Then I picked up my digital camera and got a snapshot. From her real presence and then of the snapshot (I transferred it to my laptop, which was nearby) on screen, I was able to continue the dry-point with ease. (See the photo, top of Page 1).

What I want to do next is take the Mini on a sail boat. My friend, who also is my partner in the making of Halfwood Presses, expressed his willingness to take a day trip sometime and then I'll try out my idea that you can do printmaking anywhere if you have a Mini Halfwood Press. - BR



The Mariner, an intaglio press with a 12 inch wide bed and 8:1 gearing is the third in the series of Halfwood Presses designed by Bill Ritchie.

## Mariner, also known as Model 12, released in May of 2005.

About one year after the release of the Mini Halfwood Press (also known as Model 6), the Mariner--a Halfwood Press with a 12-inch wide bed, was launched. If you're familiar with the Mini Halfwood Press, think twice-the-size. Each dimension of the Mini--from the 6-inch wide bed to the 8-inch stainless steel driving wheel--is twice that size in the Mariner.

However, there are some necessary changes. One is the fact that while the Mini is easy enough to use without gears to give the user a mechanical advantage, the 12-inch bed and wider, larger diameter rollers necessitates gears. The Mariner has gears that give the user an 8:1 mechanical advantage. The driving wheel is 16 inches in diameter, but gears prove to make the press a pleasure to use.

Like the Mini, the press is "half wood". The steel gears are housed in a nicely crafted box made of mahogany and ironwood. Brass is used to accent the colors of dark wood, steel and black enamel paint.

If you read the fictional story on page 4, you will find an interesting appointment on the wood "hood" that covers the upper structure across the top rollers. A brass medallion simulates the illustration in the fictional story; this may give you an idea why the press was dubbed Mariner.

Pricing at release time is \$2,850, fob Seattle, plus \$150 crating and packing charge. Of course

press blankets, a user's manual and a 16-gauge copper test plate, 8 X 10 inches, is included to help you to get started.



The Mariner has a gearbox that gives the user an 8:1 mechanical advantage so the wheel turns with ease.



A brass medallion that relates to the fictional story behind the Mariner's design and naming is mounted on the wood "hood".



My next outing might be on the water--taking my Minipress on a sailboat and make prints of the sights around Puget Sound.

## New Halfwood Press Model 9 in the Works

The first Halfwood Press has a 24-inch bed. Then the 6-inch wide bed followed and is called the Mini. Next came the Mariner, with a bed double the width of the Mini at 12 inches. Next on the drawing board is a nine-inch bed. Whether it will be direct drive or geared remains to be decided, and no date has been set regarding actual production and testing. Readers who are interested in this design are invited to inquire via email to [ritchie@emeralda.com](mailto:ritchie@emeralda.com).



Above, some examples of Bill Ritchie's Artist Trading Cards printed on the Mini Halfwood Press. Second from left shows the text that's on the back of one. Most were made using laser print etching and drypoint.

## Making Artist Trading Cards

The Mini Halfwood Press is ideal for creating Artist Trading Cards of a special kind. Most of the Artist Trading Cards (ATC) are paintings, collage, rubber stamps, digital prints and combinations. If you know printmaking, you can join an ATC circle with drypoints, etchings, engravings, aquatints--plus the kinds of relief prints you like such as linoleum cut and collage.

An Artist Trading Card (or ATC) is of a project started in Zurich by M. Vanci Sternemann in 1997. The unique features of this art form are that (1) they are not to be exchanged for money or any other form of value, only other ATC, (2) they are 2 1/2 X 3 1/2 inches, (3) they may be originals (unique) or multiples (numbered editions). In general they are to be exchanged in face-to-face meetings, but sometimes they're exchanged by mail.

To my ATC I like to add pointers for Web-based versions, add-ons, and sometimes CD-ROMs. Above are examples of my cards.

## How and Why of Laser Print Etching

It's funny how things happen sometimes. Take the example of how and why I started doing laser print etching. Actually I started in 1968 when I wanted to incorporate a photograph of a tree in a print (*The Children's Game*). That's when I began using photo etching.

I read about photogravure, a process that uses light-sensitized gelatin. It has been around for over a hundred years and it's still used in some studios; you can take classes in private workshops.

Kodak, however, had an easier system called KPR, which stands for Kodak Photo Resist. That's what I settled on, despite its noxious chemistry. It was good for my art because I use copper and zinc.

Here's the funny part. After I started making Halfwood Presses, I thought about putting brass "nametags" on them. I didn't want to use KPR or

*Continued above, right*

## Laser Print Etching, cont'd.

photogravure. *SolarPlate* and *ImageOn* wouldn't do, or so I thought. Off I went to the Internet and I found instructions on laser print etchings by a man named Thomas P. Gootee. He makes printed circuit boards, or PCB.

Very soon I came full circle and now I not only use the Gootee method for the brass medallions that go on the presses' wooden bases, I use his technique sometimes for my prints. It's especially good for Artist Trading Cards for printing the text that goes on the back of ATC. You can see my version of Gootee's technique online at [www.emeralda.com/minidemo](http://www.emeralda.com/minidemo).

The technique has its challenges and is no substitute for the non-toxic processes. I'm still learning, but I plan to show more people how to do it in the demonstrations I give.



In the foreground, the etched brass medallion that is fitted on the Mini Halfwood Press and, in the background, the black-and-white laser print that works as the acid-resist when heat-transferred on to the brass plate. My technique will be demonstrated at Seattle's and Bellevue's Daniel Smith Inc. stores this August, October and November. (Details below)

## Demonstrations Scheduled at Daniel Smith Inc.

Daniel Smith, Inc., the art supply store with branches in Seattle and Bellevue, Washington, has scheduled three of my demonstrations of printmaking in the forthcoming months. Of course at these show-and-tell events I'll be using my Mini Halfwood Press for printing from small plates.

This is the third time I will have demonstrated at Daniel Smith, Inc.. In the past I showed *Drypoint and SolarPlate Printing*. Next was *Chine Colle and Artist Trading Cards*. The theme and topic of the third demonstration is *Laser Print Etching*.

For each demonstration I create a little book,

a 12-page playing-card sized one people can take away with them. These contain the essentials of my demo. Some of the little books are digital, online at my Emeraldal Web site, [www.emeralda.com](http://www.emeralda.com).

The first of the Laser Print Etching demos is on August 6, Saturday, at 12 and 2:45. The Daniel Smith *Inkspot* announcement reads:

*"Your black and white laser prints can be etchings when you follow Bill's innovative method. He prints an image on photo paper, transfers it to a metal plate, soaks off the paper and etches the image into the metal with ferric chloride. Explore a way to use your computer skills to make tradi-*

*tional prints."*

You can use your Internet connection to get a preview at [www.emeralda.com/minidemo](http://www.emeralda.com/minidemo).

The next demonstrations are in the Daniel Smith Bellevue store on October 1st and, returning to the Seattle Store, on November 12.

Addresses of the Daniel Smith Stores are: 4150 First Avenue South, Seattle, which is two miles south of Safeco Field. In Bellevue the store is at 15112 NE 24th Street, which is northeast of the Overlake Sears store. To get on the mailing list for InkSpot call (206) 223-9599 or contact them via email at [www.danielsmith.com](mailto:www.danielsmith.com).