



## Docent Guide to the *Western Flyer* Tour

### Thank You for Being a Docent!

Your time, knowledge, and enthusiasm make this tour an unforgettable experience. As a docent, you are not just sharing history—you are helping inspire curiosity, connection, and discovery. We truly appreciate your role in bringing the *Western Flyer's* story to life!

### How to Use This Guide

Each page in this guide is designed to help you confidently lead your station:

- One side provides detailed background information to deepen your knowledge.
- The other side highlights concise talking points for easy reference while speaking with guests.

This guide supports you, but you don't need to memorize or deliver everything word-for-word! Use it as a reference and let natural conversation flow with visitors.

### Tour Structure

Guests may experience the tour in one of two ways:

- **Guided Walk-Through:** Guests move through the boat in groups of 10-15 max, stopping at designated docent-led stations; or one to two docents lead the full tour.
- **Self-Guided Tour:** Guests move freely through the boat, with docents positioned in key areas such as the deck, galley, and lab to answer questions.

## Before the Tour Begins:

- All guests must sign a **waiver** before boarding (we will have ipads available with electronic waivers for guests to sign).
- Guests must receive a **brief safety talk** before reaching Station #1.

## Key Safety Rules Onboard:

- **Boarding & Disembarking:** Use handrails, follow crew instructions, and step carefully when crossing from dock to boat.
- **"One Hand for the Boat" Rule:** Always keep one hand on a rail when moving across the deck or using stairs.
- **Tripping Hazards:** Watch for uneven surfaces, raised thresholds, and equipment.
- **No Running or Jumping:** The boat is a working vessel—maintain slow, careful movement at all times.
- **Accessibility Considerations:** Some areas (like below deck) require climbing steep stairs—check with guests before they proceed.
- **No access to the Flying Bridge unless authorized by the crew.**

## Emergency Procedures:

- In case of a fall or injury, notify a crew member immediately.
- Life jackets are located in the cabinet in the hallway past the galley and must be worn in an emergency.
- If an emergency evacuation is necessary, follow crew instructions.

**Asking Questions:** Docents are here to help, but boat staff can answer safety-related or technical questions.

# Docent FAQs

## Q: How is the tour structured?

Docents can organize tours in two ways:

- **Guided Walk-Through:** Guests move through the boat in groups of 10-15 max, stopping at designated docent-led stations; or one to two docents lead the full tour.
- **Self-Guided Tour:** Guests move freely through the boat, with docents positioned in key areas such as the deck, galley, and lab to answer questions.

### *Tour Flow*

1. **Station One – On Shore:** Collect waivers, explain safety rules, and introduce the *Western Flyer* and its history before boarding.
2. **Station Two – Back Deck:** Highlight the *Western Flyer*'s history as a fishing vessel, explaining how purse seining worked, and how the boat transitioned from commercial fishing to scientific exploration.
3. **Station Three – Galley:** Discuss life aboard the *Western Flyer*, introduce the 1940 expedition crew, and share how the vessel's restoration preserved original features while incorporating modern updates. Walk through wheelhouse.
4. **Station Four – Bow:** Point out key historical artifacts like the crow's nest antlers and fog bell.
5. **Station Five – Below Deck (Crew Quarters & Engine):** Show where the 1940 crew slept, explain the transition from the original Atlas-Imperial diesel engine to today's hybrid-electric system, and highlight its role in marine research.
6. **Station Six – Below Deck (The Lab):** Introduce the *Chuck Baxter Laboratory*, highlight scientific instruments, and talk about the Western Flyer Foundation's mission, programs, and the future of the *Western Flyer*.

**Note:** There are two access points below deck:

- **Starboard side staircase:** Behind a door located between the upper berths and the wheelhouse. This route is steep.
- **Deck access hatch:** A better option for those with mobility concerns, but still quite steep, and using this entry may change the order of the tour.

**Tip:** One-page docent guides can be left at each station for reference.

## Q: How long should each station presentation last?

- Keep each station presentation & Q&A to about 5-8 minutes.

- Allow 1-2 minutes for travel between stations.

A complete tour should last 45-60 minutes, depending on the number of stations. A walk-through tour can be much shorter.

## Q: What if I don't know the answer to a guest's question?

That's okay! If asked something you're unsure of:

- Direct them to boat staff for clarification.
- Encourage them to visit the Western Flyer Foundation website at [www.westernflyer.org](http://www.westernflyer.org).

## Q: What is the Western Flyer Foundation?

The Western Flyer Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to stirring curiosity through education, scientific research, and the integration of art and science. Inspired by the legacy of Steinbeck, Ricketts, and the *Sea of Cortez*, the foundation uses the *Western Flyer* as a platform for hands-on learning, marine science research, and creative exploration.

The foundation's programs include:

- Hands-on educational programs for K-12 and college students.
- Collaborations with scientists to conduct meaningful ocean science research.
- Public engagement that connects communities to the vessel's history and mission.

At the end of the tour, please take a moment to:

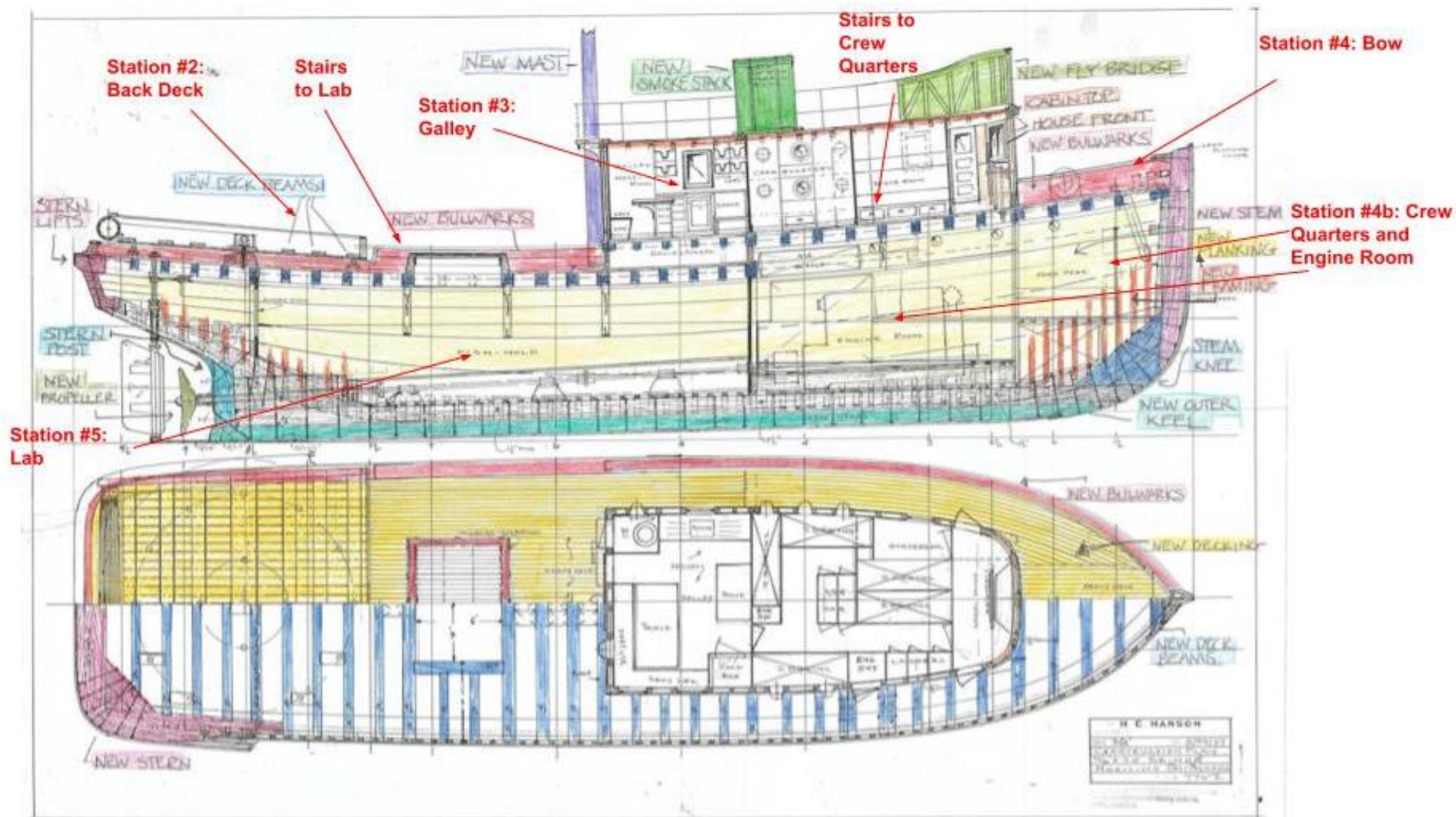
- Hand out postcards or flyers with information about the foundation.
- Explain that the Western Flyer Foundation is a nonprofit and relies on support to continue its programs.
- Encourage donations through the QR code or website: [www.westernflyer.org](http://www.westernflyer.org).





The *Western Flyer* moving through the harbor after returning from the Gulf of California expedition.

🇺🇸 Photo courtesy of the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies, SJSU.





# Station #1 (On Shore) - Intro to the *Western Flyer*

Stand on shore with the attached photos of the original **Western Flyer**, the derelict **Flyer**, the restoration, and the restored vessel in front of you.

We have a book to write about the Gulf of California. We could do one of several things about its design. But we have decided to let it form itself: its boundaries a boat and a sea; its duration a six weeks' charter time; its subject everything we could see and think and even imagine; its limits – our own without reservation. *Sea of Cortez* - Page 1

So begins John Steinbeck and Ed Rickett's book *Sea of Cortez - A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research*. Published in 1941, it has become a classic in environmental literature. The boat before you is the very vessel that carried them on that journey—but its story spans decades beyond that six-week expedition.

The *Western Flyer* was built in **Tacoma, Washington, in 1937** expressly for the **sardine fishery** in Monterey, California. These were boom times for the fishing of sardines and the sardine business was good business. A Croatian captain, Tony Berry, shared ownership of the boat with the Western Boat Building Company, and it plied the waters of Monterey Bay.

At the end of the 1940 sardine season, author **John Steinbeck** and his best friend, marine biologist **Ed Ricketts**, chartered the *Western Flyer* for a **six-week cruise to explore the biology of the Gulf of California** and to get away from it all. And that is what makes this boat famous. Their trip lasted only six weeks, but the boat's story continued.

The *Flyer* **returned to fishing** after the adventure. When the sardine fishery dried up in Monterey, the *Flyer* headed north to the waters of the US Pacific Northwest. It served as a longliner and a trawler and eventually moved up to Alaska, where it was part of the Alaskan King Crab fishery. Have you seen the show *Deadliest Catch*? The *Flyer* fished those waters long before the industrial-sized ships of today.

In Alaska, the *Flyer* ran aground and almost sank - the crew abandoned ship and towed her to port for repairs. She then returned to Washington and worked as a Salmon Tender - carrying salmon in her hold from the fishing fleet to the cannery. She was still a working fishing boat into the early 2000s, well into her 70s. The boat's name had changed to *Gemini*, but not her callsign, and she was rediscovered in disrepair in Anacortes, Washington.

Around 2010, a California developer planned to turn the *Western Flyer's* wheelhouse into a Steinbeck-themed restaurant, but the boat was too deteriorated. In 2015, a plank ruptured, and the *Flyer* sank—twice—remaining underwater for six months (show derelict photo). Headed for the scrapyard, its fate changed when marine geologist **John Gregg**, inspired by *Sea of Cortez* as a child, purchased the vessel. He founded the **Western Flyer Foundation** to restore it—not just as a historical artifact but as a working platform for marine science and education.

Today, as you prepare to step aboard, you'll hear about the past, present, and future of a boat that has **been to the brink and back**—now returning to the **Gulf of California 85 years later**, carrying both its legacy and its new mission.

## Station #1 (On Shore) - Intro to the *Western Flyer*

### *Quick Summary*

*Stand on shore and share the attached photos of the original **Western Flyer**, the derelict **Flyer**, the restoration, and the restored vessel in front of you.*

### Main Theme: A Boat with Many Lives

The *Western Flyer* isn't just a boat—it's been everything from a research vessel to a sardine seiner to a crab boat to a nearly scrapped wreck. Now, after an incredible restoration, it's back at sea as a research vessel.

### Key Talking Points:

- **Built in 1937 in Tacoma, WA**, for Monterey's booming sardine fishery.
- 77 feet long, 20 feet wide.
- **Made famous in 1940 when John Steinbeck & Ed Ricketts chartered it** for a six-week expedition to the Gulf of California, which became the basis for their book *Sea of Cortez*.
- **After the trip, it fished for decades**, from Monterey, California, to Alaska, working in multiple fisheries. It even had a stint as a research vessel in the 70s.
- In the 1960s, one of the owners renamed it *Gemini*.
- Nearly broken apart to become a Steinbeck-themed restaurant.
- **Sank twice in 2015 and was headed for the scrapyard** before being saved by John Gregg, who founded the Western Flyer Foundation to restore it.

### Wow Fact:

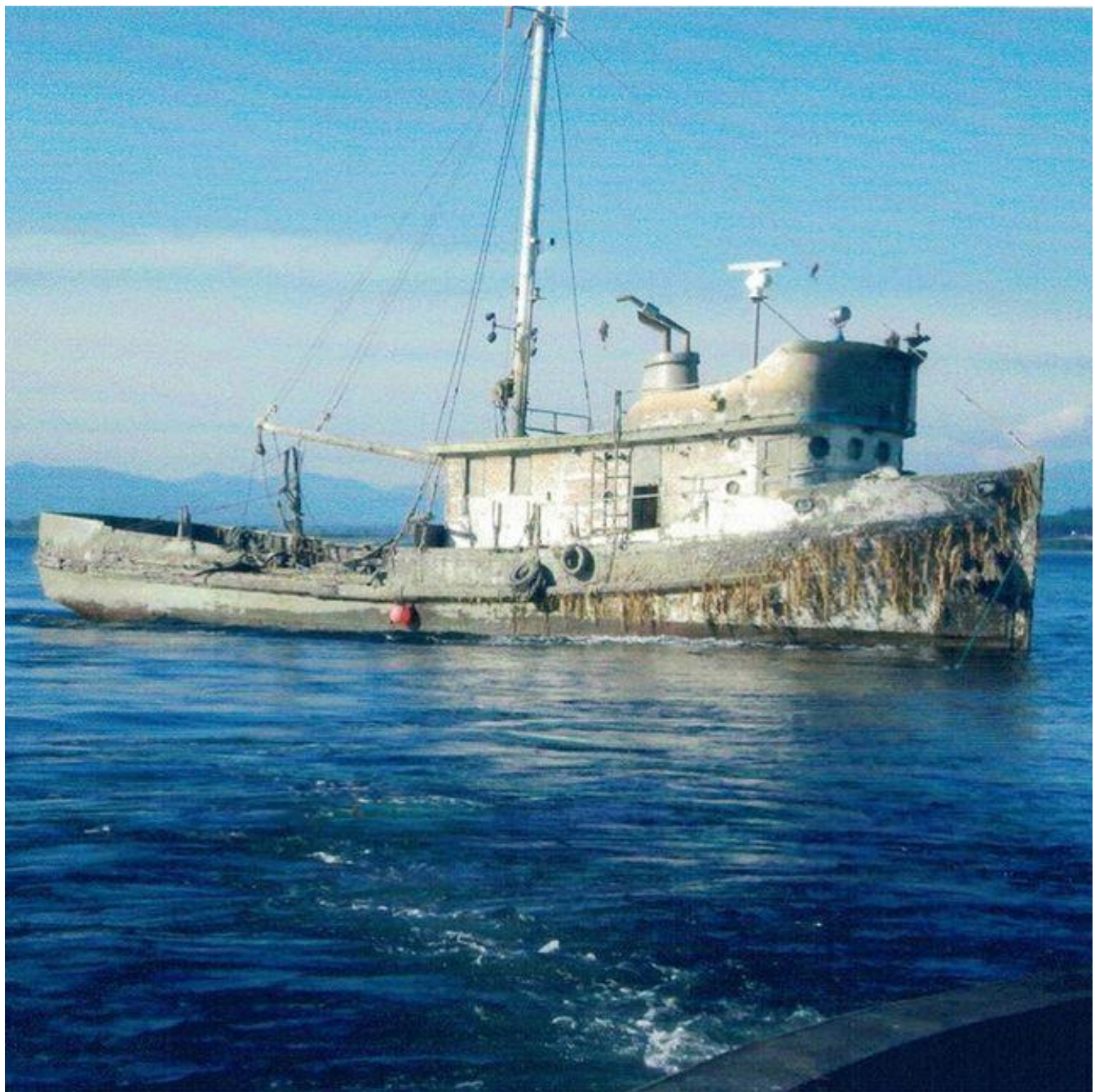
More than 90% of the *Flyer's* **deckhouse is original**—below the waterline, around 90% had to be rebuilt after decades of wear and tear.

### Fun Things to Point Out:

- The Color Green is the color of the Western Boat Building Company - the side stripe is known as a Mortgage Stripe.
- When you came into a harbor you could identify all of the Western boats from a distance.



- When a Captain had paid off their boat, they could repaint the Mortgage Stripe in their own color.
- The color was matched during faint scraping and restoration on the boat - the 1937 layer of paint was still there!



The *Western Flyer* after its second sinking (it was under water for six months!).





*Western Flyer* ready to be hauled out in Port Townsend in 2015.





**Before and after:** *Western Flyer* being hauled out in Port Townsend, 2015. *Western Flyer* returning to the water in the same location in June 2022.

🇺🇸 Photos courtesy of the Port Townsend Shipwrights Coop





*Western Flyer's* homecoming in Monterey after 75 years away, November 4, 2023.

📷 Photo credit: Jess Soriano.

Our first problem was to charter a boat. It had to be sturdy and big enough to go to sea, comfortable enough to live on for six weeks, roomy enough to work on, and shallow enough so that little bays could be entered. The purse-seiners of Monterey were ideal for this purpose. They are dependable work boats with comfortable quarters and ample storage room. Furthermore, in March and April the sardine season is over and they are tied up. It would be easy, we thought, to charter such a boat; there must have been nearly a hundred of them anchored in back of the breakwater. *Sea of Cortez* p. 6

## Station #2 (Back Deck) - Life as a Fishing Vessel

In 1940, there were more than 300 seiners fishing for Sardines in California waters, and about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of them were in Monterey, California, the home of 20 sardine canneries. The *Western Flyer* is 77 feet long and 20 feet wide. It displaces 92 Gross Tons. This back deck, in its sardine fishing days, carried a large net on a big spool and a skiff on a turntable.

When a shoal of sardines was found, the skiff would be dropped over the side, and it would hold one end of the top line of the net, which was lined with corks so that it would float. The bottom of the net was weighted with lead and hung like a curtain 200 feet down. It contained a line that was run through rings at the bottom. The *Flyer* would leave her skiff stationary and use its 165 horsepower 6-cylinder Diesel engine to pay out a quarter of a mile of net around the school and back to the skiff in a circle. Both lines, as well as bottom lines, would then be attached to the *Flyer* and hauled in to cinch up the bottom of the net like a purse - that is where the term purse seining comes from. If you have seen the Disney Film *Finding Nemo*, a purse seine net is what is used to capture all of the fish that Dory inspires to swim down in unison.

Once the net is closed, there is no escape for the fish. The lines of the net can be hauled in, and tons of sardines can be loaded into the boat through the hatch, first by hand but eventually by powered winch.

In the West Coast fishing industry, the boat was not known as "Steinbeck's Boat" but as a top fishing boat. It is estimated that a BILLION fish were caught, transported, and processed from the *Western Flyer*.

When Steinbeck and Ricketts chartered the *Flyer*, they saw the hold as a place to store scientific equipment, specimen trays, formaldehyde, and collecting tools - and they wished they had had the time to outfit it as a real lab. And the top of the hold, these flat tables, were a place where they could work on specimens they collected, sort them into groups, and put labels on bottles to prepare their catalog of an area that had been visited but not broadly classified before.

Ricketts was known for explaining the roles of organisms in their ocean communities - in a new branch of science called Ecology - and he had described the way these communities existed on the US Pacific Coast in his book *Between Pacific Tides*, but now he had the opportunity to apply his theories to the tropical waters of the Gulf, and he had his best friend along for the adventure.



# Station #2 (Back Deck) - Life as a Fishing Vessel;

## *Quick Summary*

### Main Theme: A Workhorse of the Sea

Before it became famous for science and adventure, the *Western Flyer* spent decades as a hardworking fishing boat, hauling in thousands of tons of sardines, crab, and salmon.

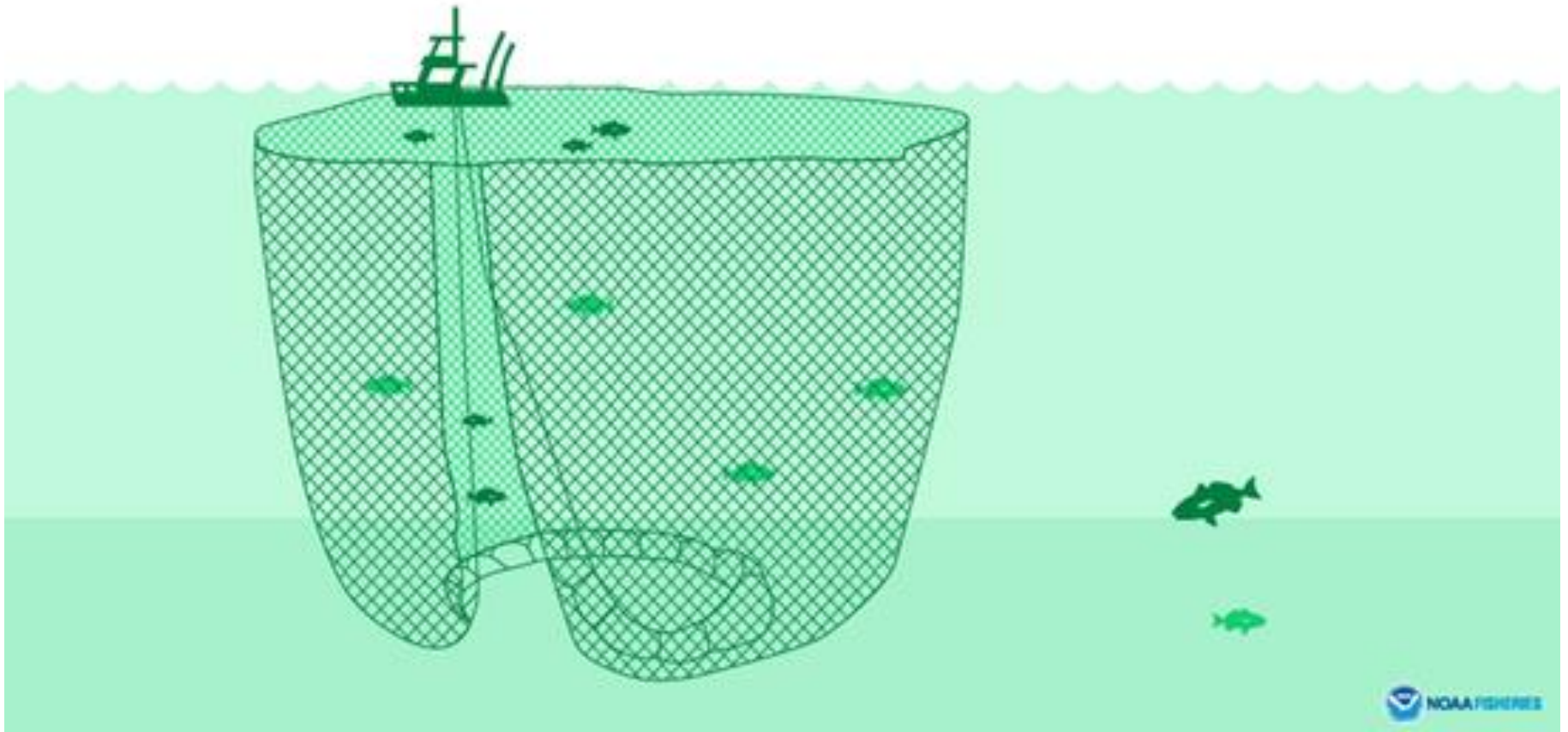
### Key Talking Points:

- **The *Flyer* was built for purse seining**, a technique that surrounded sardines with a giant net, then cinched the bottom shut—like a purse—to trap the fish.
- The back deck once held a large net on a spool and a skiff (small boat) that helped set the net around the school of fish.
- It could carry up to 100 tons of sardines in its hold (point out the hold hatches).
- **Steinbeck and Ricketts used the same hold for science**, storing specimens instead of fish! And used the hold lids as a place for specimen trays.

### Fun things to point out on the deck of the *Flyer*:

- **Tiny's Turtle** - During the 1940 trip, crew member Tiny Colletto harpooned a turtle but was so disturbed by its suffering that he pledged never to hunt one again—a moment now memorialized by a wooden turtle inlay on the ship's aft deck, crafted by Ventana Surfboards.
- **The Head** - 100% original! (sit where Steinbeck sat - point out the barnacles on the window and on the base of the toilet)
- The beautiful craftsmanship of the **skylight** was created by young shipwright Lachlan Carlson.





A purse seiner encircles a school of fish with a large net, then pulls the bottom closed like a drawstring purse to trap the fish before hauling them aboard.



*Western Flyer* as a sardine seiner in Monterey, likely taken in the mid-1940s. This photo was only recently discovered!  
🇺🇸 Photo from the Myron Oliver Collection, courtesy of the City of Monterey.



*Western Flyer* in trouble as a crab boat in Alaska in 1964. Photo credit: Levings Collection.





The *Western Flyer* tied up in Bellingham, rigged as a trawler.



The boat problem was growing serious when Anthony Berry sailed into Monterey Bay on the Western Flyer. This idea was no shock to Tony Berry; he had chartered to the government...and was used to nonsense. ... As crew we signed Tex Travis as engineer, and Sparky Enea and Tiny Colletto as seamen. All three were a little reluctant to go... We took the Flyer on Charter... Her Deckhouse had a wheel forward, then a combination master's room and radio room, then a bunkroom, very comfortable, and behind that the galley... the charter was signed and we began to move into the Western Flyer. It is amazing how much food seven people need to exist for six weeks. *Sea of Cortez pp8-9*

## Station #3 (Galley) - The Characters

If you read Steinbeck and Ricketts's *Sea of Cortez*, you'll discover that there were **eight** key characters in this story- several of whom are captured in the photograph on the wall. One of them wasn't a person at all—it was the boat itself.

The other seven characters on the trip were, of course, our Author - **John Steinbeck**, and our Biologist, his best friend **Ed Ricketts** (point out in the picture of the crew in the *Baby Flyer*). Also on the trip was **Captain Tony Berry** from Croatia, who had grown up in Tacoma where the *Flyer* was built; Engineer **Tex Travis**, who had a love-hate relationship with engines; and two Sicilian deckhands from the Monterey fishing fleet - **Sparky Enea** and **Tiny Colletto**. But that makes six men and the boat. Who was the eight character? Steinbeck writes that SEVEN people can eat a lot of food. The seventh person was John Steinbeck's wife, **Carol**. She shared in the adventure, shared in the science, shared in the philosophizing under the stars on the deck each night, but other than the mention of "seven people," she is not part of the book. You can speculate why, but on the trip, she slept in the master's cabin up front (where her photo now hangs), and John bunked below deck near the engine room with Tex.

Now, speaking of the boat—people often ask, "How much of the new *Flyer* is the Original *Flyer*?" The Restoration Director, Chris Chase, likes to say that **95% of what is below your feet is new** - we are thankful for that because it was planking below the water line that failed in 2015, causing the *Flyer* to sink. But, the **center beam remains original**— we like to call it the *Flyer's* heart or backbone, still supporting us all. Above deck, it's the opposite: **95% is original**, including most of this very galley wood. If you open the cabinet on the wall, you can see what the unfinished version of that original wood looked like - barnacle scars and all.

What is not original is, for the most part, a period replacement. This **Diesel Marine Stove** is a 1937 model, though not the *Flyer's* original. It was found still in its packaging in a warehouse in Portland a few years ago. As you get a chance to walk through the house, you will see new modern navigation equipment, and below deck is a new modern hybrid diesel-electric engine, but much of what you see—the wood, the hardware, the layout—is true to how it looked in 1940.

It is nice to imagine six weeks of adventure on a boat with your best friend - getting away from the world, being truly "off the grid," and doing some important science and some important thinking. Steinbeck writes later in the book that it is important to "Look from the tidepool to the stars and back to the tidepool again."

## Station #3 (Galley) - The Characters

### *Quick Summary*

### Main Theme: The Crew That Made History

The *Western Flyer* wasn't just a boat—it had a **crew of fascinating characters** who made the 1940 expedition to the Gulf of California unforgettable.

### Key Talking Points:

- **John Steinbeck & Ed Ricketts** chartered the *Flyer* for six weeks to study marine life—and escape daily life.
- The crew was made up of Monterey fishermen:
  - **Captain Tony Berry** – A Croatian-born fisherman from Tacoma, WA.
  - **Engineer Tex Travis** – A tough, opinionated mechanic who loved (and cursed at) engines.
  - **Deckhands Sparky Enea & Tiny Colletto** – Sicilian fishermen from Monterey's fleet.
- John Steinbeck's wife, **Carol**, was also aboard!
  - She wasn't mentioned much in *Sea of Cortez*, but she was a big part of the trip and the research.
  - She **slept in the captain's cabin** while Steinbeck bunked below deck near the engine room (you'll see her photo in the captain's cabin).

### Wow Fact:

- The **boat itself was the 8th "character"** of the journey. Boats take on personalities, and Steinbeck described the *Western Flyer* as a living part of the crew. Today, part of its original **keel (or "backbone") is still intact!**

### Fun Things to Point Out in the Galley and Wheelhouse:

- The crew would have sat around the **galley table**, eating Sparky's famous spaghetti, drinking beer, and telling stories about Monterey
- The **Diesel Stove** is not the original, but is the exact model built in 1937 found through eBay in an old warehouse in its original packaging.
- Open the cabinet by the table to see the **unfinished wood**

- Point out the **old and the new wood** (the old is yellower with stains)
- Walk through the cabin and point out the **bunks**, which look small but are 6 feet.
- Walk to the wheelhouse and point out the **Captain's Cabin** and **desk**, which is original. Also, note Carol's photo. The wheel is not original but is historic.



*Western Flyer* crew and passengers before departing for the Gulf of California expedition, March 11, 1940. Left to right: Horace "Sparky" Enea, Travis "Tex" Hall, Rose "Tootsie" Berry (not on the trip), Anthony "Tony" Berry, Carol Steinbeck, John Steinbeck, and Ratzi "Tiny" Colletto. **Only person missing in this photo is Ed Ricketts. See photo in the galley for a photo of Ed with John, Carol, and Tiny – only one of two known photos of Ed and John together!**

📷 Photo courtesy of the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies, SJSU.



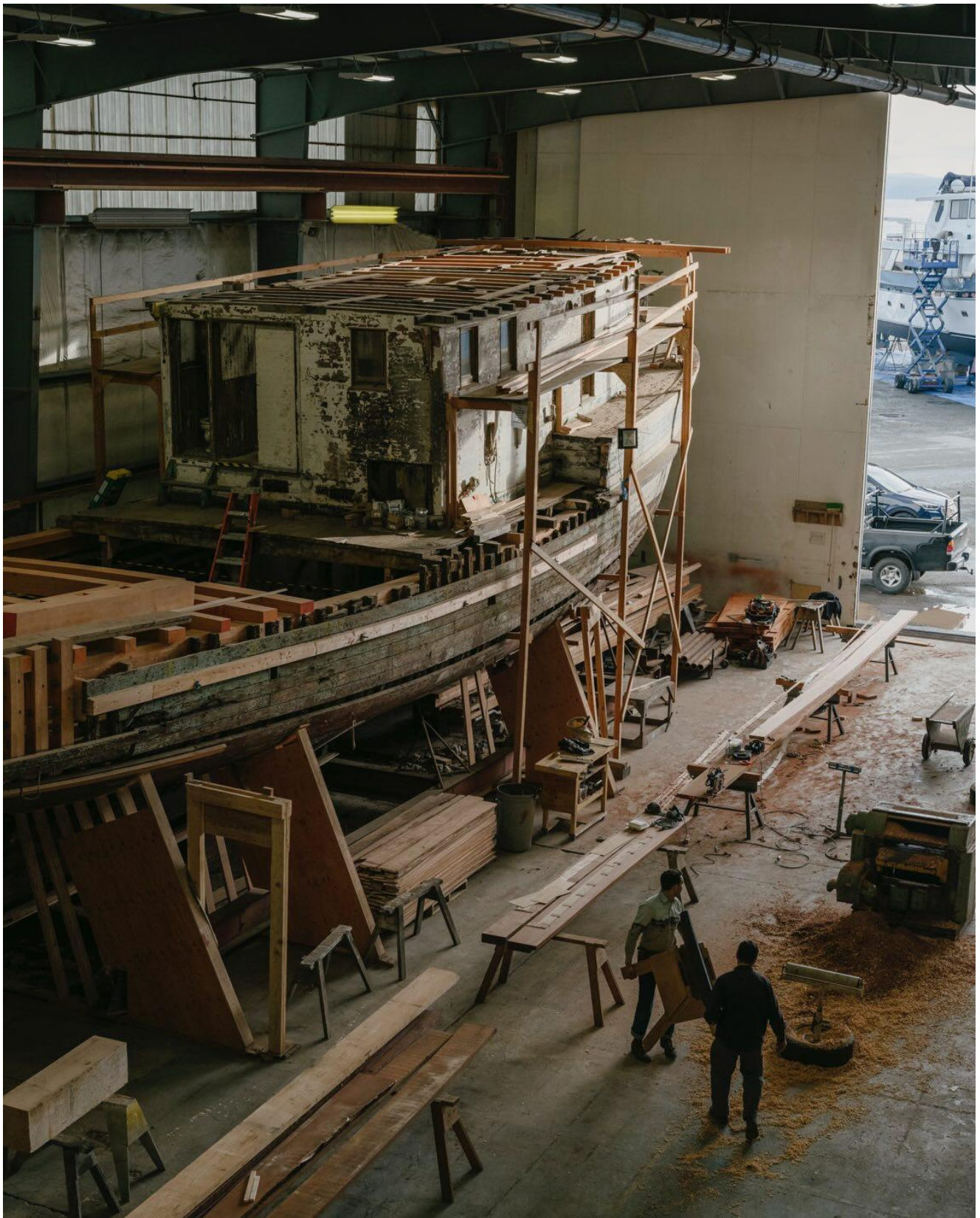


Captain Tony Berry (left) and John Steinbeck (right) looking down from the bridge of the *Western Flyer* during the 1940 Gulf of California expedition. 📷 Photo courtesy of the Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies, SJSU.



Wheelhouse pre-restoration, 2015.





Restoration at the Port Townsend Shipwrights Coop, 2015-2022

## Station #4 (Bow of the Boat) - Past vs. Present

*A final reflection on the historic Western Flyer and an introduction to the modern vessel.*

What little time we were not on lists and equipment or in grudging sleep we went to the pier and looked at boats, watched them tied to their buoys behind the breakwater – the dirty boats, the clean painted boats, each one stamped with the personality of its owner. ... If the stays were rusting and the deck unwashed, paint scraped off and lines piled carelessly, there was no need to see the master; we knew him. And if the lines were coiled and the cables greased and the little luxury of deer horns nailed to the crow's-nest, there was no need to see that owner either. *Sea of Cortez p. 13*

Here, on the front of the boat, we want to look at two artifacts that are part of the historic *Flyer* as we talk about the modern *Western Flyer*. If you look up at the crow's nest, you will see a set of **deer antlers** mounted there. This is an old Sicilian sailing tradition, possibly originating with the ships of Carthage and Tyre. The antlers brought good luck, not good luck in fishing, but good luck in making it home safely. Superstition had it that the stag horns could always find land, and a good set of horns meant a careful crew.

Behind you is a **bell** - Ring it.... Now, let's wait one minute... then ring it again. In 1940, out in the sardine fishery, when the fog rolled in - which is pretty common in Monterey - a crew member needed to be stationed at the bell and to ring it every minute. This kept a boat hauling in a net from being hit by another boat.

### **The Modern *Western Flyer***

As you walked through the **cabin and wheelhouse**, you passed our **GPS, modern radio system, and advanced navigation tools**. Today's *Flyer* doesn't need **antlers for luck** or a **crew member at the bell**—we have the technology to ensure we get home safely. Steinbeck and Ricketts wrote, "We have concluded that all collecting trips to fairly unknown regions should be made twice; once to make mistakes and once to correct them." These were not mistakes of the original *Western Flyer* trip; they were the technology of the time. But now, in 2025, we have not only restored the *Flyer* but corrected the things we can with modern technology.

### **To be used if the tour does not visit the below-deck engine room.**

One major change is the **engine**. The original *Flyer* had a **160 horsepower, 20,000 pound Atlas-Imperial Diesel Engine**, the size of a VW Van. It has been replaced with a **425 horsepower John Deere Electric-Diesel hybrid engine**, about the size of a dishwasher. Today's *Flyer* can operate at 4-6 knots for 4-6 hours silently on the electric engine. It can follow whales without disturbing their behavior and listen to their calls. It can quietly slide into a cove. And it can do that without producing CO<sub>2</sub>. When the batteries are run down, the diesel engine kicks in, operates the boat, and recharges the batteries. The modern engine is three times the power and one-seventh in size. The engine on the modern *Flyer* fits the foundation's ethos in regard to ecological observations and environmental stewardship. If you want to understand the stewardship mission of the foundation and the restoration of the boat, I encourage you to learn about the wood that



was used to rebuild the boat and the wood planted for the future of the boat. You can learn about both stories on the Western Flyer Foundation website.

## Station #4 (Bow of the Boat) - Past vs. Present

### *Quick Summary*

### Main Theme: A Boat That Bridges Past and Future

Throughout history, sailors have relied on tradition and technology to keep them safe at sea. The *Western Flyer* was no exception. In 1940, its crew relied on superstition, skill, and simple tools—like the antlers in the crow’s nest for luck and the fog bell for navigation. Today, in 2025, the restored *Flyer* has modern technology that makes those traditions unnecessary, but the spirit of adventure remains.

### Key Talking Points:

- **The Crow’s Nest Antlers** – A Sicilian sailing tradition meant to guide sailors home safely.
- **The Fog Bell** – In thick Monterey fog, a crew member had to ring the bell every minute to avoid collisions. Today, GPS and radar do that job.
- **New Navigation & Safety Equipment** – The modern *Flyer* has GPS, advanced radios, and navigation tools that make sailing safer and more efficient.

### Wow Fact:

The *Western Flyer* now has a **hybrid diesel-electric engine**, allowing it to follow whales silently without disturbing them—something Steinbeck and Ricketts could only dream about

### Closing Thought:

The *Western Flyer* has always been shaped by its time. In 1940, it was a fishing boat and a platform for exploration. Today, it’s a vessel for scientific discovery and environmental stewardship, carrying Steinbeck and Ricketts’ legacy forward in a way they could never have imagined.

Tex, our engineer, was caught in the ways of the harbor. He was born in the panhandle of Texas and early he grew to love diesel engines. They are so simple and powerful blocks of pure logic in shining metal.... When he goes below he is identified with his engine. He moves about, not seeing, not looking, but knowing. No matter how tired or how deeply asleep he may be, one miss of the engine jerks him to his feet and into the engine room before he is awake, and we truly believe that a burned bearing or a cracked shaft gives him a sharp pain in his stomach. *Sea of Cortez* p17

## Station #4b (Below deck- Crew Quarters & Engine)

You have walked through the Galley and the Berths upstairs, where the crew hung out during off hours or slept when they were not on watch. The watches were organized in pairs. Captain Tony Berry sat watch with Ed Ricketts. The crew members Tiny Colletto and Sparky Enea shared a watch - and famously got lost coming across the Gulf of California as their navigation skills were not top-notch. And Engineer Tex Travis was paired with John Steinbeck.

Down here, below deck, was where Tex and John slept, and definitely how he knew and was able to characterize Tex's love of engines. Today, we have four bunks below deck and a new second head or bathroom - The *Flyer* now has **11 beds and two bathrooms**. Tex would either love or be mystified about today's engine room.

Originally, the *Flyer* was powered by a **160-horsepower, 20,000-pound Atlas-Imperial Diesel Engine**—about the size of a VW van. Shifting gears wasn't as simple as moving a lever; you had to shift into neutral, coast, and carefully realign the gears before going into reverse. Imagine trying to dock the boat under those conditions!

Today, the *Western Flyer* is powered by a **425-horsepower John Deere Electric-Diesel hybrid engine**. Today's *Flyer* can operate at 4-6 knots for 4-6 hours silently on the electric engine. It can follow whales without disturbing their behavior and listen to their calls. It can quietly slide into a cove. And it can do that without producing CO<sub>2</sub>. When the batteries are run down, the diesel engine kicks in, operates the boat, and recharges the batteries. The modern engine is three times the power and one-seventh in size (it is as big as a dishwasher); the engine on the modern *Flyer* fits the foundation's ethos in regard to ecological observations and environmental stewardship. If you want to understand the stewardship mission of the foundation and the restoration of the boat, I encourage you to learn about the wood that was used to rebuild the boat and the wood planted for the future of the boat. You can learn about both stories on the Western Flyer Foundation website at [westernflyer.org](http://westernflyer.org).

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**Depending on the setup of the boat for the day, you can open the door to the engine room and let guests look in or, if possible, walk through to the Lab. The big white engine is the**

current diesel engine, and the black, starship enterprise-looking object is the electric engine - both are connected to the driveshaft, which runs down the center of the boat to the prop in the back, but also a maneuvering prop up front.

## Station #4b (Below deck- Crew Quarters & Engine)

### *Quick Summary*

### Main Theme: Life Below Deck – Where the Crew Slept & the Engine Roared

Below deck, the *Western Flyer* has always been the heart of the ship, where the crew lived, worked, and kept the vessel running. In 1940, this was where Tex Travis and John Steinbeck slept, and where Tex developed his love-hate relationship with the *Flyer's* massive diesel engine. Today, this space has been transformed—still essential, but now upgraded with modern hybrid technology that aligns with the Western Flyer Foundation's mission of sustainability and ecological research.

### Key Talking Points:

- **Crew Life & Watch System** – The crew stood watch in pairs, including Captain Tony with Ed Ricketts, Steinbeck with Tex Travis, and Tiny Colletto with Sparky Enea, who once got lost navigating across the Gulf of California.
- **Sleeping Quarters Then & Now** – Tex and Steinbeck slept below deck near the roaring diesel engine. Today, there are four bunks, 11 total beds, and two bathrooms aboard the Flyer.
- **The Original Engine (1940)** – A 160-horsepower, 20,000-pound Atlas-Imperial Diesel Engine, which was difficult to shift and required careful maneuvering—imagine docking under those conditions!
- **The New Hybrid Engine (2025)** – A 425-horsepower John Deere Electric-Diesel hybrid, which is:
  - Three times as powerful as the original engine
  - One-seventh the size (about as big as a dishwasher)
  - Able to run silently for up to six hours

## Wow Fact:

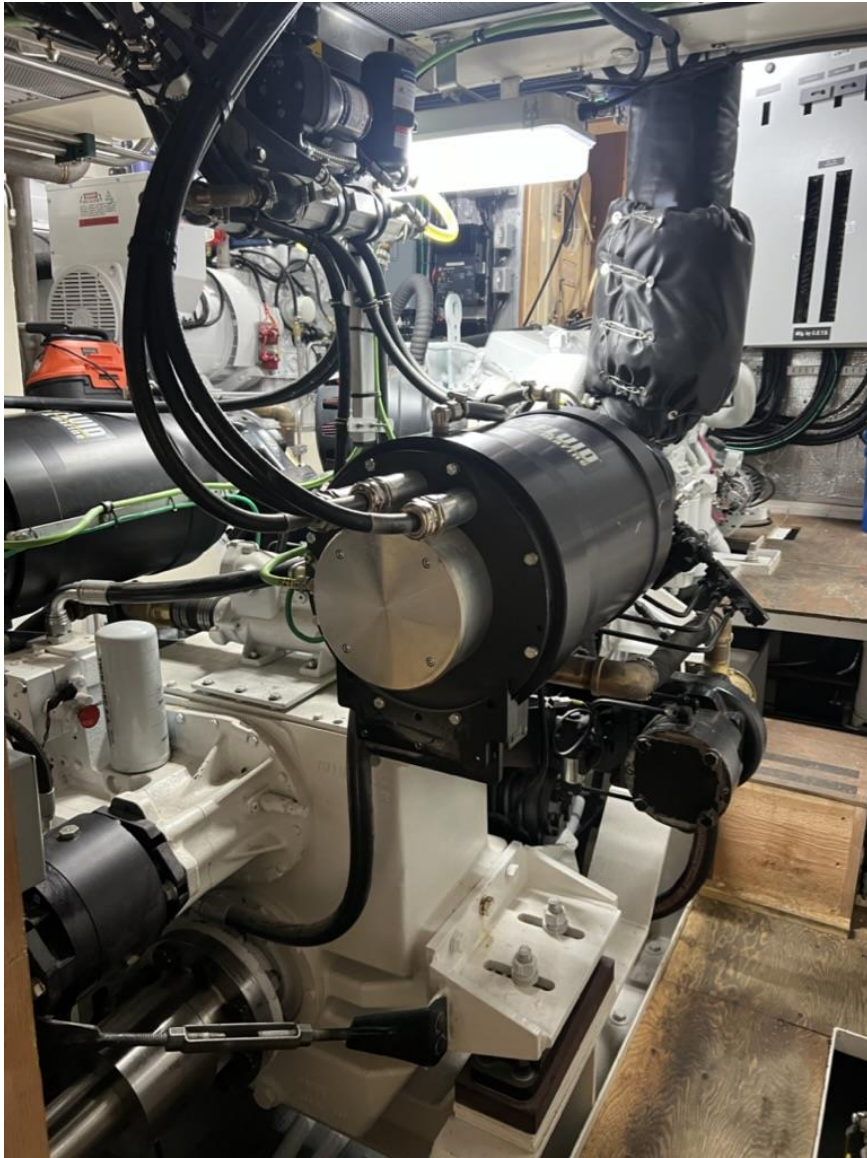
The modern *Flyer* can now run on silent electric power, allowing scientists to track whales and listen to their calls without engine noise—something Steinbeck and Ricketts could only have imagined. You feel like you're sailing when underway.





Forepeak in 2015





New *Western Flyer* hybrid diesel-electric engine.

## Station #5 (Below Deck - The Lab)

It would be ridiculous to suggest that ours was anything but a makeshift expedition. The owner of a boat on short charter does not look happily on any re-designing of his ship. In a month or two we could have changed the *Western Flyer* about and made her a collector's dream, but we had neither the time nor the money to do it. The low-tide period was approaching. We had on board no permanent laboratory. There was plenty of room for one in the fish hold, but the dampness there would have rusted the instruments overnight. *Sea of Cortez* p21

### The Chuck Baxter Lab & The Modern Mission

One of the great visions of John Gregg and the Western Flyer Foundation comes from a passage in *Sea of Cortez* in which Steinbeck and Ricketts imagined a real laboratory aboard their expedition vessel. After a seven-year restoration, the *Western Flyer* has been returned to its 1940 glory, but with one major upgrade—this state-of-the-art research lab, named in honor of marine biologist Chuck Baxter, is the fulfillment of that vision.

What was once the fish hold, capable of storing 70 to 100 tons of sardines, is now equipped with modern tools for marine research and education. Funded in part by the California Coastal Conservancy, the lab features:

- A **flow-through seawater system** that continuously supplies fresh seawater, allowing real-time monitoring of temperature, salinity, pH, and other ocean conditions.
- **Video microscopes** for plankton and specimen analysis.
- A **CTD** measures ocean conductivity (salinity), temperature, and depth, typically through a sensor package lowered into the water column.
- An **ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle)** station to pilot an underwater robot for deep-sea exploration.
- **Future Expansion:** A larger ROV is planned for deep-sea research and will be stored behind the Lab's back door.

The *Western Flyer* is now a living research and education platform operated by the **Western Flyer Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. In its first year back in Monterey, the *Flyer*:

- Engaged **3,000+ students** in dockside and at-sea programs.
- Hosted **thousands of visitors** for tours and public events.
- Provided all programs **free of charge**, ensuring accessibility for all students.

#### Looking Ahead: The *Western Flyer* Returns to the Gulf of California (April 2025)

85 years after the original Steinbeck-Ricketts expedition, the *Western Flyer* has set sail for a three-month voyage featuring:

- Education & Outreach with schools and communities in Mexico.
- Collaborative Scientific Research with Mexican and U.S. scientists.
- A Fundraising Cruise with UnCruise Adventures (April 15–22) – still a few cabins left!

This journey honors the past while embracing the future, carrying forward the *Western Flyer's* legacy of exploration, science, and discovery.

To finish our tour, you can leave them with this quote from March 31st in *Log From the Sea of Cortez*:

..it is a strange thing that most of the feeling we call religious, most of the mystical outcrying which is the most prized and used and desired reactions of our species, is really the understanding and the attempt to say that man is related to the whole thing, related inexplicably to all reality, known and unknowable. This is a simple thing to say, but the profound feeling of it made a Jesus, a St. Augustine, a St. Francis, a Roger Bacon, a Charles Darwin, and an Einstein. Each of them in his own tempo and with his own voice discovered and reaffirmed with astonishment the knowledge that all things are one thing and that one thing is all things - plankton, a shimmering phosphorescence on the sea and the spinning planets and an expanding universe, all bound together by the elastic string of time. It is advisable to look from the tidepool to the stars and then back to the tidepool again. *Sea of Cortez*.





*Western Flyer* fish hold, 2015

# Station #5 (Below Deck - The Lab)

## *Quick Summary*

### Main Theme: From Fish Hold to Floating Science Lab

What once stored tons of sardines is now a state-of-the-art research lab named in honor of marine biologist Chuck Baxter.

### Key Talking Points:

- Steinbeck & Ricketts wished for a lab in 1940—today, that dream is a reality.
- **Flow-through seawater system** – Pumps fresh seawater into the Lab for real-time study of marine life and ocean conditions.
- **CTD sensor** – Measures salinity, temperature, and depth to monitor ocean health.
- **ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle)** station – Pilots an underwater robot for deep-sea exploration.

### *The Western Flyer Foundation's Impact*

The *Western Flyer* is more than a historic vessel—it is a **living research and education platform** carefully stewarded by the **Western Flyer Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to **marine science, education, and community outreach**. The foundation:

- **Engages thousands of students** in hands-on ocean science, bringing marine exploration to the next generation. Programs are free.
- **Conducts meaningful scientific research** aboard the *Flyer*, collaborating with universities and institutions to study ocean health.
- **Builds community through tours and events** to share the story and inspire curiosity and stewardship.

### Return to the Gulf of California (Spring 2025)

85 years after Steinbeck and Ricketts' journey, the *Western Flyer* has returned to the Gulf of California for a three-month expedition featuring:

- Education & Outreach with schools and communities in Mexico.
- Collaborative Scientific Research with Mexican and U.S. scientists.
- A Fundraising Cruise with UnCruise Adventures (April 15–22) – **still three cabins!**

### Wow Fact:

At least a billion fish passed through this fish hold. Now, it's a lab for real-time ocean research—something Ricketts and Steinbeck could only dream of in 1940!





*Western Flyer* fish hold, now the Chuck Baxter Laboratory, 2024.



Education programs on the *Western Flyer*.