

John Wayne's First Yacht Sinking in the San Juan Islands

*GoFundMe Launched to Rescue Beloved Piece of Hollywood History
Beloved Wooden Yacht was Just Restored to Raise Funds for Cancer Research*

SEATTLE, WA, USA, April 24, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Seattle, WA - The Norwester, a historic wooden boat with a rich history, has met a tragic fate, hitting unmarked rocks near the San Juan Islands during the final test voyage before launching charters for the summer. Now the 89 year old vessel that once hosted the likes of John Wayne, Orson Wells, and Betty Davis is in a race against time to be saved from the threatening tides of the Puget Sound.

Three years ago, Rick and Jackie Rutherford took a leap of faith and purchased the boat once owned and enjoyed by Hollywood's most famous stars. They soon learned that owning an old wood yacht is more costly every

year than the initial purchase. The couple decided that chartering the yacht was a creative and unique way to raise funds to both care for the ship and for cancer research to honor the memory of Jackie's mother, who had passed away after a battle with ovarian cancer. "It's heartbreaking," shares Jackie, Vice President of the Norwester Foundation. "We were excited to give back and help so many who are hurting, who have experienced cancer firsthand. The concept was to be a part of something much bigger than ourselves. We've never felt like the boat is ours, we've always felt that we are her caretakers. We will do whatever we can to bring her back."



Norwester Sinking and Needing Immediate Rescue



Norwester before she landed on a rock that day

See video sharing the story here:
<https://vimeo.com/539775214>

The Norwester was recently restored, ready to offer visitors to San Juan Islands a luxury charter experience. 100% of the net proceeds were earmarked to support the John Wayne Foundation, funding treatment, education, and support of families affected by cancer.

Built in 1932 in Winthrop Massachusetts, The Norwester was built and purchased by Charles Gilbert, printer of Stock Certificates for Wall Street. Then, it served as a patrol boat during World War II before later being acquired by Boo Roos, a manager to many of the top Hollywood stars in the 40's including John Wayne. The story goes that John Wayne would use the boat all the time and that he himself had run the Norwester on rocks. Wayne agreed to purchase the Norwester where he continued to use it with family and friends through the 60's when he then acquired the more familiar Wild Goose. The Norwester then went back to the Roos family where they enjoyed her for many decades to come.



John Wayne & Children enjoying The Norwester

Log books show a virtual who's who of actors from Hollywood's Golden Age, all who experienced the splendor of the seas from the decks of the Norwester. They also discovered a 1957 entry of Rick's father's cousin, who herself died several years later of cancer.

In the first year, the Norwester had a goal of raising \$100,000 to donate, and increasing the amount of charters and contributions in the years to follow.

On April 17, the team embarked on a final test voyage, to sail the region and to film the final pieces of a promotional video. The night before, their chart plotter was updated and read that their path was clear. Unfortunately, the fateful ship hit and is trapped on the culprit rocks with extensive damage to the hull. It is estimated that it will cost \$50,000 - \$250,000 to free it, and \$1,500,000 to fully repair the historic vessel back to her original glory.

The boat's insurance company is also refusing to pay for the removal, despite Norwester holding a \$1,000,000 pollution policy that covers removal.

Each day, the situation gets more dire. "We have been entrusted with his incredible piece of history that can help those battling cancers have a hope for a future," Rick continues. "Each day, the Norwester sees more damage so it's a race against time to save this precious ship. Donations of all sizes are appreciated."

To donate and watch the video on the efforts to [save The Norwester](#), please see:
https://www.gofundme.com/f/john-wayne-norwester-rescue?utm_campaign=p_cp_url&utm_medium=os&utm_source=customer

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