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Vessels and Barges for Sale or Charter Worldwide

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Tug Market Report

Photos From The Past

After earlier inviting Bid Proposals for removal of the abandoned 117.5' x 28' tug "**Enchantress**", the Port of Anacortes decided to defer the decision to the Washington State Dept. of Ecology. "**Enchantress**" (ex-*Western Sea, Polar Navigator, Enchanter, Leslie Foss, John Michael, LT 495*) has been lying in Anacortes, WA partially submerged with a broken piling through her hull since 2000. Tug was originally built of pine and oak in 1944 as the "**LT-495**", one of five "**Miki**" class tugs built by **Minneford Yacht Yard** in New York during World War II. The yard was started in 1936 in a former lumber mill and became famous for building a number of famous yachts including several America's Cup defenders. During World War II Minneford also built a series of coastal freighter, covered barges and passenger launches for the U.S. Army.



While most "**Miki**" tugs built on the West Coast were powered with Enterprise or Fairbanks diesels, "**LT-495**" being Eastern built was powered by a single 8 cylinder 1,200HP Superior. After the war she was purchased by **Baltimore Towing** of Maryland who renamed her "**John Michael**". They sold her in 1950 to the **Kotzebue Oil** of Kotzebue, Alaska who brought her around from the East Coast to tow between Puget Sound and Alaska. After losing their cargo barge that fall on a northbound run in 50-60kn winds and high seas she was arrested by owner of the cargo and sold on the Court House steps. **Foss Launch & Tug** purchased her for \$76,000, reportedly just beating out **Crowley Maritime**. After a major overhaul and outfitting, Foss renamed the tug "**Leslie Foss**" and

operated her for the next 18 years towing lumber barges, oil barges and other cargoes on the west coast from the Panama Canal to Alaska, including the Aleutian Islands. She started to suffer mechanical failures towards the end of her life with Foss. Parts for her Superior diesel were difficult to obtain on this coast. Foss laid her up in 1969 and she sold to **Gig Harbor Marine Charter Co.** for "\$10.00 and other valuable considerations". New Owners converted the tug to a charter yacht renaming her "**Enchanter**". After carrying passengers for a couple of years, she was sold back into commercial towing service as the "**Polar Navigator**" and bareboat chartered to **Northland Marine Lines** of Seattle towing container barges from Seattle to various ports throughout Southeastern and Southwestern Alaska in competition to Foss. Northland continued to operate the tug through 1976. She was again sold by the U.S. Marshal in June 1977, this time for \$57,000, to be used as a yacht with her towing gear retained.



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Details believed correct, not guaranteed. Offered subject to availability.

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Tug Boat Market Report – January 2008

"Polar Navigator" was sold in 1979 to **Western Sea Resources** of San Francisco and converted into a fish tender. A cargo hold was opened up below deck plus refrigeration and a small knuckle-boom crane installed. She was renamed "Western Sea One". I question whether her design was really suitable for a fish-tender and doubt whether she ever



worked in this trade. Instead she was managed by several operators towing up and down the coast for companies such as **General Construction**. At one time she sank in Seattle under the railroad bridge and salvaged by her owner, who seemed to be more than willing to keep pouring more and more money into her. I kept finding her tied up in various Puget Sound ports from Ballard to Everett, sometimes moored alongside the close sister-tug "Polar Sea" (ex-LT-464) built in 1944 in Quincy, Mass. In 1988 "Western Sea One" was sold by Western Sea Resources to Delaware Puget Sound Corp. On 31st December 1991 she was sold to **Treeseach Corp.**, her last recorded owner before being

tied up to pilings and abandoned at the site of an old burned-out plywood mill in Anacortes by Rick Carnes of Sedro-Woolley, WA. That same year he also abandoned the 118' wooden tuna seiner "Ronnie S" in Guemes Channel and a third smaller 50-60 year old steel tug originally out of the Columbia River was left hauled out at a local shipyard. Carnes was shot and killed the next year by his business partner in a dispute over Skagit County timberland and the partner later committed suicide.

According to Tim Colton's Shipbuilding History - of the four other tugs built by Minneford Yacht Yard "LT-492" was in a collision off Pascagoula, Mississippi in the 1960's and scrapped, "LT-493" as the "Bertha R" collided with another vessel off Panama City, Florida in 1954 and sank, "LT-494" later became the "Jean Nelson", then "San Jorge" (no further record) and "LT-496" as the "Active" was destroyed by fire in 1977. Out of the 61 "Miki" class tugs built during the war years for the U.S. Army Transport Services, 51 were built at U.S. West Coast Shipyards. The first 25 tugs were fitted with twin Fairbanks Morse diesels to a single screw and the last 36 in the series powered by single Enterprise or Superior diesels.

