

Valaamo monastery gets its own vessel

Thanks to a California doctor, two Alaska steamship companies and their personnel, the Valaamo monastery on Spruce Island, part of the Kodiak archipelago in Southcentral Alaska, has its own boat.

The vessel was donated by Dr. Howard Friesen of Antioch, Calif., who made the contribution shortly after being elected to the Board of Trustees of St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak. The 26-foot cabin cruiser will also be accessible to the seminary.

Under the direction of Phil Herndon of American President Lines, the boat was moved from Oakland, Calif., to Seattle by train, free of charge. American President Intermodal, a subsidiary of APL, took care of the receipt and storage of the boat and reimbursed an independent trucker to move the vessel to Sealand's terminal in Tacoma.

Marion Davis, Sealand's Aleutian Chain manager, took care of the paperwork in Seattle and arranged for the boat to be shipped to Kodiak at no cost. Monitoring the boat's long

journey was Father Tim Perry of Unalaska.

Archimandrite Father Innocent, spokesman for the Valaamo monastery, says he is grateful to Dr. Friesen and the people of APL, API and Sealand and others involved in bringing the vessel to Kodiak.

The boat will be used to transport pilgrims and workers to Monk's Lagoon on Spruce Island, home of Father Herman of Alaska, who was canonized in 1970.

Father Herman was one of the missionaries Russia sent to Alaska in 1794. The quaint, Sitka spruce-covered island where he lived and died reminded the monk so much of his beloved Valaamo monastery in Russia, that he named it New Valaamo.

Every August, pilgrims from all over the world travel to Monk's Lagoon to pray in the chapel which stands on the ground where the saint is buried. His relics are in a reliquary in Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Kodiak.



Taking a look at the monastery's cabin cruiser are Archimandrite Father Innocent of Valaamo monastery, Archpriest Peter Kreta, Marion Davis and Joseph P. Kreta, dean of St. Herman's Seminary in Kodiak.