

PROFILE

# Phil Andrews

By Bill Baldwin



ARCHITECT JON PHILIP (“PHIL”) ANDREWS IS THE KIND OF GUY EVERY BOAT SHOW CHAIRMAN DREAMS ABOUT WHEN TROLLING FOR EXHIBITORS. NOT ONLY DOES PHIL BRING A BOAT THAT PEOPLE FALL INTO THE WATER ADMIRING, BUT HE STAYS WITH HIS BOAT THROUGHOUT THE SHOW, TAKING TIME TO PATIENTLY ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM ANY, AND ALL WHO APPROACH. OWNERS OF TOP-FLIGHT, ÜBER-BOATS RARELY HAVE THAT KIND PATIENCE, BUT THEN, WHEN YOU GET RIGHT DOWN TO BASICS, EVERYBODY KNOWS PHIL ANDREWS IS SIMPLY A NICE GUY.

Claiming Olean, New York as his “home town,” Phil is, at one time or another during the year, a resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Chautauqua, New York; and—twice bitten by the Florida bug—both Longboat Key as well as Mt. Dora. His son Jack and daughter-in-law Sandra live in New York City, New York, with Phil’s Grandson, Jon Philip Andrews III, age 3.

Phil has quite a sense of history about him, tracing ancestry back to the Samuel Howard family that made the voyage from Southampton England to form the Plymouth Colony (eventually, Plymouth, Massachusetts) in 1620 aboard a famous wooden ship, the *Mayflower*—not your average Chris-Craft. He graduated from Olean (New York) High School, attended St. Francis Prep School in Spring Grove, Pennsylvania for post-graduate work, then earned a Bachelor of Architecture from Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Phil’s first boat ride was in 1949 on Cuba Lake in Western New York, where his future stepfather, John Welch, drove a 1947 Chris-Craft. Later, during high school, Phil rode and water skied behind a 1950 Chris-Craft owned by a friend on the same lake. It was a good start in our avocation, but wooden boats didn’t reach out and grab Phil right away. A very special automobile got him first.

In 1973 he purchased a 1936 Cord Westchester Sedan—in Phil’s words, “...one of the best-designed cars of all time and a true art-deco creation”—by noted automobile designer Gordon Buehrig. Phil immediately arranged for a bottom-up restoration, which was completed in 1984. After that, he campaigned the car clear goals in mind: He wanted the car to be judged by the most knowledgeable people in the milieu, and he wanted to win. The knowledgeable people were (and still are) in Auburn, Indiana each year during the Labor Day weekend at the Auburn, Cord, and Dusenbergs Festival<sup>1</sup>, so that’s where he went. It took him six years, but fierce determination paid off, and the car won “Senior First Place” in 1989. Then, after owning the car 25 years, Phil simply sold it, bringing to a (perhaps temporary) close his involvement with classic cars.

Soon afterward, however, he and Lana wound up at the tiny Public Library in Bemus Point, New York, where, quite by accident, they set off on a new adventure—this time with wooden boats.

Traditionally, the Library holds an annual book sale in July, during which patrons purchase brown grocery bags filled with books for a spectacularly low price. Back in the Nineties this was only a dollar a bag; however, shortly after the 21st Century began, that all changed—with serious consequences for the Andrews. Here, in Phil’s own words, is how it went down.

“In 2000, Lana and I went to Bemus for our usual book ‘fix,’ and she was incensed to see that the Library had jacked the price one hundred percent to two dollars a bag. She considered the price hike an outrage, but, while we were there, we did look at the announcements posted on the Library bulletin board—and that’s when it all began: The Chautauqua boat show was scheduled for that weekend. We attended and straight-away fell in love with antique and classic boats. When I asked her which was her favorite, she replied, ‘That wonderful, sleek Hackercraft with the dark forest green leather interior: *Triple Choice*. Later, I went into Holiday Harbor Marina office and noticed that *Triple Choice* was a 1930 Hackercraft

26-foot triple-cockpit with a big 225-hp Kermath straight-6. Impressive! It was also listed on the ‘For Sale’ bulletin board. Hmm. Lana’s birthday was coming at the end of July. I handed her an envelope for her birthday, which she thought, might be a check or a gift certificate. Actually, it was a photo of *Triple Choice*. Needless to say, she was thrilled and overwhelmed. She loved it—so did I!”

Not to be outdone by his gift to spouse Lana, Phil started looking around for a boat of his own, and found one in less than a year: the famous 1932 Chris-Craft 27-foot Custom Runabout, *Sugar Lady*, powered by a Chris-Craft A120, 275-hp engine. Phil considers her the “most exciting” boat he has ever owned.



About *Sugar Lady*, Phil relates that, "...the boat's first owners were a family in Philadelphia who were in the sugar-importing business; that's where the name came from. Somehow this magnificent Chris-Craft triple ended up under tarps for approximately 40 years. She was discovered in 1984 by Bill Munro, who—after he had the boat restored—took her to Clayton in 1991, where she was awarded, 'Queen of the River.' I purchased the boat in 2001, and she consistently won awards at shows while I owned her. The most interesting comment I ever heard about the boat was from a gentleman attending the Chautauqua show who declared the boat's beauty, 'frightening.' In 2006, *Sugar Lady* was named the "best Chris-Craft" at

the Mount Dora Boat Show and appeared on the cover of the newly redesigned *Brass Bell*."

*Sugar Lady* went the way of Phil's prize-winning Cord sedan in 2007 when he sold the boat to Mahogany Bay's Todd Warner. Readers are warned to stand by for the next Andrews adventure...

Over the years, Phil has involved himself with an impressive number of important professional and civic activities, among them:

- » Member of the American Institute of Architects, local, state, and national—President of the Pittsburgh Chapter





- » Fellow in the American Institute of Architects (professionally, Phil uses “FAIA” after his name)
- » Chairman of the National Architects in Industry Committee— Board Member of the Pennsylvania State Chapter
- » Registered Architect in Seven States
- » Member of the Antique Classic Car Club
- » Member of the Western PA chapter of the Antique Classic Car Club
- » Member of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Club
- » Member of the Chris-Craft Antique Boat Club
- » Member of the Antique and Classic Boat Society
- » Charter member of the Chautauqua Twin Tier Chapter of the ACBS
- » Member of the Sunnyland Chapter of the ACBS
- » Member of the Depression Era Glass Club
- » Chairman of the Board of the Pittsburgh Center of the Arts
- » Member of the Antique Toy Collectors of America



Phil and Lana have collected antiques for many years. They concentrate on the Victorian era and like to mix those pieces with classic mid-20th Century modern items. Among their favorites are antique toys, which they have collected for nearly 30 years Their total collection of dolls and toys is approximately 500 items—“enough for a good auction,” Phil says with a smile. He also has a small collection of rare wood boats made by Reed and Bliss. Again, not your average Chris-Crafts, but then again, Phil Andrews is not your average collector, either. 🇺🇸

*Check out the Auburn, Cord, and Duesenberg Festival at <http://www.acdfestival.org>*