



Toy boat collection on display at ABM

Clayton – Pleasure boats come in all shapes and sizes, but what unites them is the essential ingredient of enjoyment. With the right toy boat, even a bathtub can become the scene of a thrilling yacht race, or a pond can play host to an epic naval battle. From May 2007 to October 2008, the Antique Boat Museum is hosting Small Wonders: Toy Boats from the Natenshon Family Collection.

The more than 80 toys on exhibit are but a few of the many collected over the years by the Natenshon family of Highland Park, Ill. They range in age from the late 19th century to the middle years of the 20th. Though now the pride and joy of a collector, most have been well-loved by their previous owners, and they bear the marks of years of energetic play. Made of wood or metal or plastic, powered by steam, clockwork, electricity or the wind, all, of course, are also powered by imagination.

Highlights of the exhibit include a steam-powered battleship; a raceboat powered by a

two-cylinder steam outboard; a pond yacht sailing model, and a number of electric outboard motors, complete in every detail down to the shipping cartons they came in, which, though only a few inches high, still say “This End Up” on the outside.

According to Antique Boat Museum chief curator John Summers, the toys “connect us all to our younger days, and remind us that there are many, many ways to take to the water for pleasure.” Asked if he had a favorite among the toys on display, Summers diplomatically said, “They’re all wonderful, but I am kind of fond of the pond yacht.”

The public is invited to the official exhibit opening on Friday, June 8, at 5 p.m. in the museum lobby.

“Small Wonders: Toys from the Natenshon Family Collection” is included with museum admission. The Antique Boat Museum is open seven days a week from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. More information is available by calling 686-4104 or visiting www.abm.org.