

The Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

50TH ANNIVERSARY
JOHN GARDNER
SMALL CRAFT
WORKSHOP

IN THIS ISSUE

Building *Solar Breeze*

Building the Haven 12½ Part 6

Council Nominations and
Election



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The Traditional Small Craft Association, Inc. is a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational organization that works to preserve and continue the living traditions, skills, lore, and legends surrounding working and pleasure watercraft with origins that predate the marine gasoline engine. We encourage the design, construction, and use of these boats, and we embrace contemporary variants and adaptations of traditional designs.

TSCA is an enjoyable yet practical link among users, designers, builders, restorers, historians, government, and maritime institutions.

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TAB Layout Design: Karen Bowen

Cover: 2016 John Gardner Small Craft Workshop



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Suzan R. Wallace

Preparations for the 2020 season are upon us, even if only in our dreams! It is always great to see a mixture of projects on and off the water in the days leading up to spring; a cacophony of sounds always surrounds a boat.

As a national organization, it is motivating to see how the various latitudes plan out their year. I've been hearing from chapters as they begin putting together their mess-a-bouts, flotillas, workshops, and other traditional small craft related events. Be assured that the TSCA is an organization that not only encourages chapter events but backs up that support with our US SAILING burgee program of insurance coverages. Membership counts when organizing building and boating events. Our journal, *The Ash Breeze* has been here through the years to document all those TSCA activities and events we sponsor as well. Join me in tipping our hats to Andy Wolfe and his team at Mariner Media for publishing the evidence of all that FUN!

It is once again that time to take a moment to send your support of our organization by voting in new council members. We all serve for a limited number of years and then move off to allow others a trick at the helm. Please consider the opportunity! John Weiss, Pete Redston, and I will be leaving our positions and new council members will be filling in the vacancies. Election and voting details will be posted in both *The Ash Breeze* and on our website. Make sure to activate your membership voting rights!

I recently read a comment by a fellow member about how the cold months may not motivate him to get any work done on his boat, but he at least goes out to see her and give her a pat. I can relate to that as mine sits idle out in the yard all covered up, waiting for warmer days. But it is exactly this idle time that allows for considering their needs:

- re-finishing surfaces
- sail check for chafe and wear
- deck hardware
- running rigging
- paddle & oar wear
- hull bumps, nicks, and rot
- taxes, tags, numbers, and trailer maintenance

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THE VERY 1ST AND NOW THE 50TH SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP

by Bill Rutherford and Andy Wolfe

We know a lot about the original Small Craft Workshop because John Gardner wrote a very detailed recap of the event in Fall 1970, *The Log of Mystic Seaport*. It was billed as a small craft laboratory, but in the 8-page article, John called it the First Rowing Workshop. Here's how it came to be: The Marine Historical Association of Mystic, Connecticut, sent out invitations, completely uncertain about the response they might receive. They were elated when they reached 100 registrations since it was more than they had expected to receive. When they received 200 registrations, they began to worry that they would not be able to handle such a large crowd. The registrations continued to climb, and in the end, nearly 300 people registered.

Neptune wasn't smiling and the weekend of June 6–7, 1970, arrived cold and wet. But 200 people still showed up, many of them amateur builders as well as rowing buffs. It seems out of place today, but the event photos show men in suits standing on the docks alongside boat builders in rubber boots. The Coast Guard was there (in uniform) too, checking out the traditional boats for safety. Gardner recounts, "Forty-five boats all told were launched. Not often have so many diverse types been brought together at the same float." John's comment is still very true of the small craft workshop today.

So how do we celebrate all this? We are 50 Small Craft Workshops wiser. Back in 1970, Professor Steve Jones rowed to the first Rowing Workshop up the Mystic River from Noank. He recounts the adventure in the second chapter of Part 2 of his book, *Backwaters* (Norton & Co., 1979), wherein he and his two-man crew, the Ship Carver and the Unarmed Harbormaster, ply four oars in a 12' Whitehall, become involved in a race with a "big pulling boat" manned

"Rowing, like walking, is an ancient practice which has lately come under eclipse. Along this coast at one time rowing was nearly as common and as universal as walking. People took rowing and rowboats for granted, and nearly everyone rowed."

—John Gardner

by a crew of Boy Scouts. We won't spoil what happened when they got to the bridge, which was not up, but suffice it to say the result, in Bob Hicks' words, "was a Hoot." We welcome such expeditions and plan to replicate Prof. Jones' famous row on Sunday morning, the 28th—hopefully the bridge will be up.

We also plan on gatherings of folks and boats, both past and present, to reminisce about events over the decades. Sid Whelan still has his original notes from the first TSCA organizational meeting. Rob Pittaway made it to 23 consecutive Workshops under oar power from Stonington. Remember when the Seaport workboat *Maynard Bray* delivered hot coffee and donuts to the boats and people assembled on the sand spit off Mason's Island on Sunday morning, and then the staff racing back upriver in a Seaport whaleboat to make the 9 a.m. museum opening?

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BUILDING SOLAR BREEZE



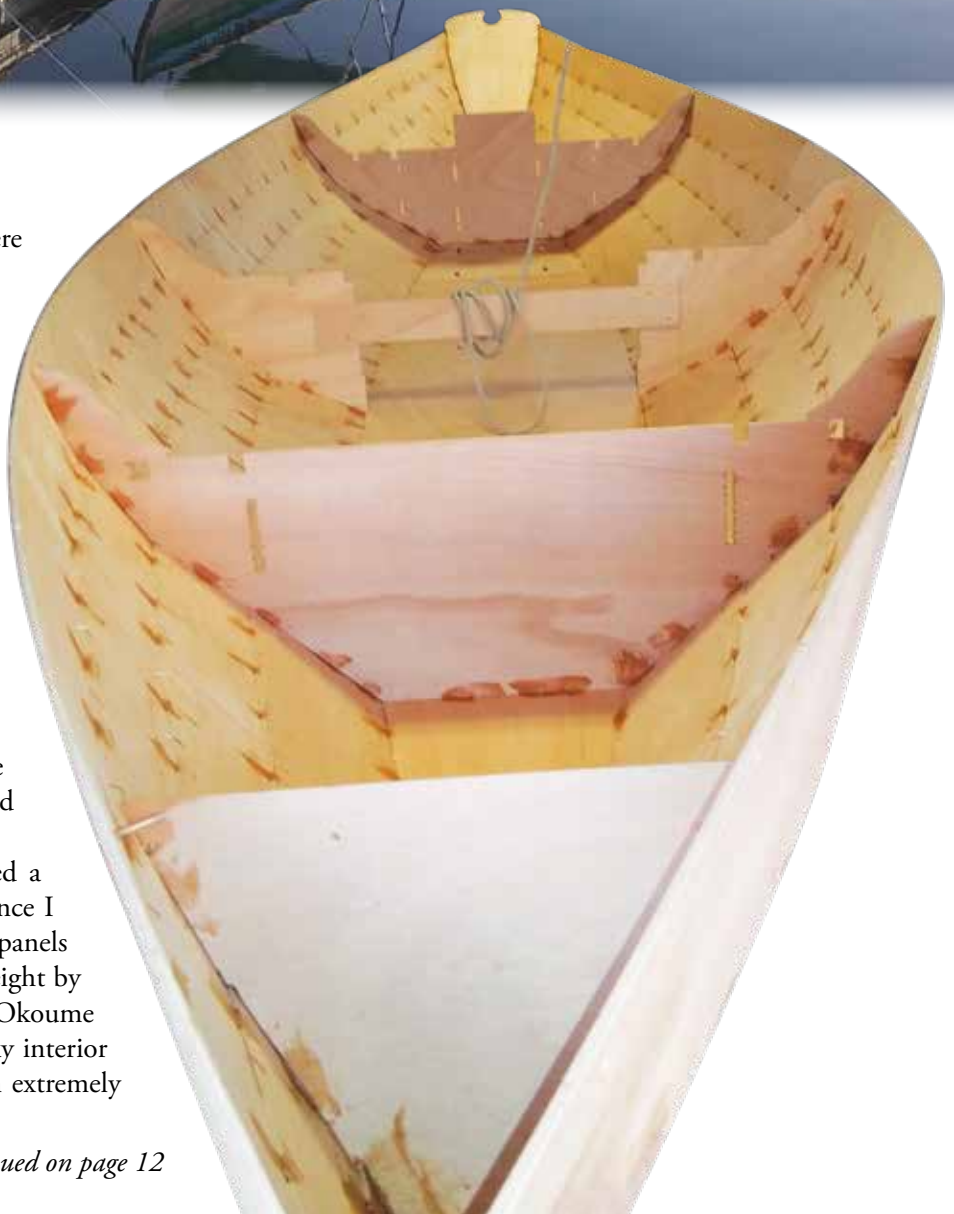
by Tom Clark

The solar-powered dory project began somewhere in the first few steps I took after seeing a demo of an electric motor at the Wooden Boat Show at Mystic Seaport in June 2017.

There is after all an urgent need for all kinds of sustainable solutions to combat climate change. A half-formed notion took some time to settle on a practical boat design and then come to terms with details such as specifications, materials, and cost. And, of course, there was some months of hesitation as I considered whether to commit to a project that likely had technical issues I knew nothing about. But, something pushed me over the edge. Some hard-to-fathom moment swept by, and I had ordered plans for the Chesapeake Light Craft version of a traditional dory, called the Southwester Dory.

The light weight of the CLC version seemed a good match for the solar-electric propulsion since I needed to maximize the efficiency of the solar panels attached to the bimini top. The design saves weight by using a glued-lapstrake construction with thin Okoume plywood. The system reduces the need for bulky interior frames and, with a fiberglass overlay, creates an extremely strong and durable boat.

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Top: Solar Breeze at East Grand Lake. Above Right: Okoume marine plywood sections being assembled and stitched together for glued-lapstrake construction in the shop in New London, CT.



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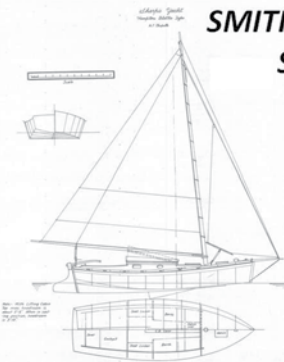
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The Smithsonian has hundreds of boat and small craft plans from the publications of Howard I. Chapelle; the 1937 Historic American Merchant Marine Survey; Harry V. Sucher's *Simplified Boatbuilding* volumes, and many others.

The 2014 edition of our 253-page catalog of boat & ship plans, the *Ship Plans List*, is available for \$20.00. For information, search "boat plans" on the Smithsonian web site <americanhistory.si.edu>.

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Gerard Crowley has a team rowing around Ireland for charity (www.rowaroundireland.com). He writes about the Gaco oarlocks: *Hi John. We've hit some pretty rough seas and wind over tide situations along the NE corner and northern coasts of Ireland and the rowlocks are absolutely brilliant and great comfort from the fact that they always stay in position. I'll write you a great endorsement on them when finished.*



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BUILDING THE HAVEN 12½ PART 6



SANDING AND SANDING AND SANDING

by David A. Fitch

This begins the part of the boat build that will define the quality of the finished build. Everything up until now has had some degree of flexibility in being able to make corrections or adjustments. Remember, no two boats are exactly alike. A tiny blemish in the exterior surface will telegraph through the paint 10 times over. Planing and sanding the hull to a perfect finish will tolerate no shortcuts. Also, be ever mindful that the finished thickness of the hull should be ½ inch. Taking too much off by planing or sanding will weaken the skin of the boat. Because of the hollowing out of the back of the planks at the bilge turn, I started with ⅝-inch-thick planks rather than the ½ inch for the other planks. This requires some extra care when planing the edges between those planks. These particular edges stand proud, and the planing, if done correctly, will fair them up but will also aid in creating the outside curvature of the hull.

Cedar is a soft wood, so the sanding actually goes fairly quickly. Quickly is, of course, a relative term. Plan to spend overall about two weeks for planing and sanding. Extra caution is advisable at the side edges of the planks. It would

be easy to sand too much away and create troughs at the edges. A number 5 Jack plane works well to start. A longer Jointer plane is too long to work well within the curves of the hull of this size. I actually did most of my work with a number 4 Smoothing plane. I then started with 80 grit sandpaper and used an electric orbital sander. Some will say that is a dangerous choice because it can take too much off or create low spots. In my case, this is the sander of choice. I use it all the time on every project, so I am comfortable with achieving the desired results. My mentor uses an angle grinder for finish work. Now, that is scary but he has become expert with it and his results are fine. Use whatever you are comfortable with but be careful. Cedar is soft. If you take too much off, you cannot put it back on. Continuously running your fingers over the sanded area should help with detecting high or low areas. Another helpful tool is a trouble light held in such a way as to direct the light longitudinally along the planks. Shadows will appear and indicate high and low areas.

continued on page 17

Top: Planing in Process



NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL

by David A. Fitch, Secretary

This is the time of year when we address the election of three new National Council members. Please refer to Article V of the Bylaws of the TSCA (which you'll find on TSCA.net in the About menu) for more detailed information on the makeup of the Council.

The Council member terms begin and end on June 30th. Three members retire from the Council every year, and three more are elected to replace them. Any member of the Association, in good standing, is eligible to be a Council member.

For the election process to begin, nominations are received by the Secretary of the Association. Self-nominations (volunteers) are accepted, as are nominations from other members. The Secretary will receive nominations via email: dfitchtx@gmail.com, and compile a list of nominations, and these will be published on TSCA.net and the

TSCA Facebook page. Each nominee must submit a one paragraph biography to the Secretary detailing the nominee's background and interest in serving on the Council.

Nominations will close April 30th. After the nominations are closed, the slate of the nominees with their biographies will be presented to Association members as an online ballot. Voting will take place (online) during the month of May. To vote, just click the VOTE tab on TSCA.net, and on the form, enter your name and member number as it appears on the label of your *Ash Breeze*. Your ballot will appear on screen. Select three candidates and press the VOTE button.

On May 30th the Secretary will validate the votes received. The three candidates with the greatest number of votes each will be elected. New Council members will be notified in June.

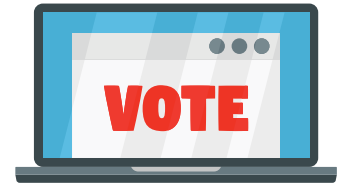
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NOW

- **SUBMIT COUNCIL NOMINATIONS TO DAVID FITCH, SECRETARY, AT DFITCHTX@GMAIL.COM**

IN MAY

- **REVIEW CANDIDATE BIOS**
- **VOTE ONLINE AT TSCA.NET**



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



CHART NAVIGATION AT CBMM

March 21, 2020 – March 22, 2020
10:00 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
213 N. Talbot Street
St. Michaels, MD 21663
\$40

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING – PROPOSED VERMONT/NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER

March 28, 2020
9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
Upper Valley – White River Junction, VT/Lebanon, NH
Exact location to be determined at a later date

OPEN BOATSHOP AT CBMM

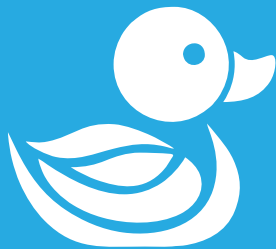
April 11, 2020
10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum
213 N. Talbot Street
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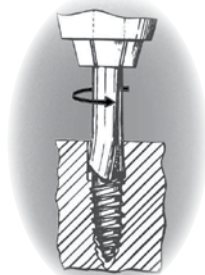


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Saturday & Sunday, April 4 & 5
- MAY** **Maritime Model Expo**
Saturday & Sunday, May 16 & 17
- Maritime Day & Blessing of the Fleet**
Sunday, May 17
- JUN** **Antique & Classic Boat Festival and Arts at Navy Point**
Friday & Saturday, June 19 & 20
- JUL** **Big Band Night**
Saturday, July 4 (Rain Date: Sunday, July 5)
- AUG** **Watermen's Appreciation Day**
Sunday, August 9
- SEP** **Charity Boat Auction**
Saturday, September 5 (Rain or Shine)
Preview Day: Friday, September 4
- OCT** **Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival**
Friday & Saturday, October 2 & 3
- OysterFest 2020**
Saturday, October 31

For event details, visit cbmm.org/festivals.



John Gardner Grant

In 1999, TSCA created the John Gardner Grant program to support projects for which sufficient funding would otherwise be unavailable. Eligible projects are those which research, document, preserve, and replicate traditional small craft, associated skills (including their construction and uses) and the skills of those who built and used them. Youth involvement is encouraged.

Proposals for projects ranging from \$200 to \$2000 are invited for consideration. Grants are awarded competitively and reviewed annually by the John Gardner Memorial Fund Committee of TSCA, typically in May.

The source of funding is the John Gardner Memorial Endowment Fund. Funding availability is determined annually.

Eligible applicants include anyone who can demonstrate serious interest in, and knowledge of, traditional small craft. Affiliation with a museum or academic organization is not required. Projects must have tangible, enduring results that are published, exhibited, or otherwise made available to the interested public. **Projects must be reported in *The Ash Breeze*.**

Program details, applications, and additional information:
tsca.net/john-gardner-fund/



"To preserve, continue, and expand the achievements, vision and goals of John Gardner by enriching and disseminating our traditional small craft heritage."

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FORWARD ROWING: SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING

by Andy Wolfe

While wandering around the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival last October, I came across a couple of boats with rowing systems that were as sleek as a racing bicycle. It's not that I'm easily impressed or overly drawn to shiny, new objects, though I am. It's that I had designed a boat, many moons ago, for a forward rowing system, and I remain fascinated by the mechanics.

Forward rowing, or rowing while facing the bow, has been an inventor's dream for well over a century—new versions seem to come around every five to seven years. But they are still a novelty, and few are ever seen on the water. Perhaps it's because some are mechanically limited, or have an ungainly appearance, or only fit one particular kind of boat, or they just don't "feel like rowing."

My fascination with this rowing system was in the rowers physical motion—pulling the boat in a forward direction, while facing forward. It sounds counterintuitive. The older I get, the harder it is for me to glance over my shoulder, so facing forward is appealing. That being said, I also like to feel like I'm rowing. To me it's a graceful, full body experience, and this Gryffyn system seemed to offer a full rowing experience.

The response of the oar to your hand is identical to what you experience in conventional rowing. If you close your eyes and row, everything's the same. When you open them, you're going to see something you've never seen before: your "catch." And you'll also see some other interesting sights like the dock, moored boats, approaching waterskiers, bridge piers, rocks, waterfowl, and best of all...where you're going!

John Ycas, from Boulder, Colorado, was standing by his boat, with a Gryffyn Rowing system, and I asked him how they came up with this approach to rowing. He said, "We started out with a clean sheet of paper and tried to design a forward-rowing oarlock that's sleek and compact and can fit any small boat. Its stroke had to be strong, and the blade had to feather delicately and precisely. Most of all, it had to have the same feel and body motions you're used to in conventional rowing."

Ycas said, "We engineered a gear-based mechanism using modern high-strength aluminums and hardened stainless

steels. We started with a simple two-gear box and after many iterations have arrived at the Gryffyn GR-79/100. Externally, all you see is a small rounded cylinder with two swinging arms but no other moving parts are visible. Inside the sealed unit, there is an epicyclic transmission of tightly meshed gears that gives the Gryffyn its uncanny and unexpected action."

"Of course," he continued, "there's more to rowing than just swinging an oar back and forth—you need to feather, too. Setting the thinnest cross-section of the blade to the wind

can be a real plus on a gusty day. And because setting the blade flat on the water steadies the boat, it's a must-have in narrow, tippy craft like sculling shells."

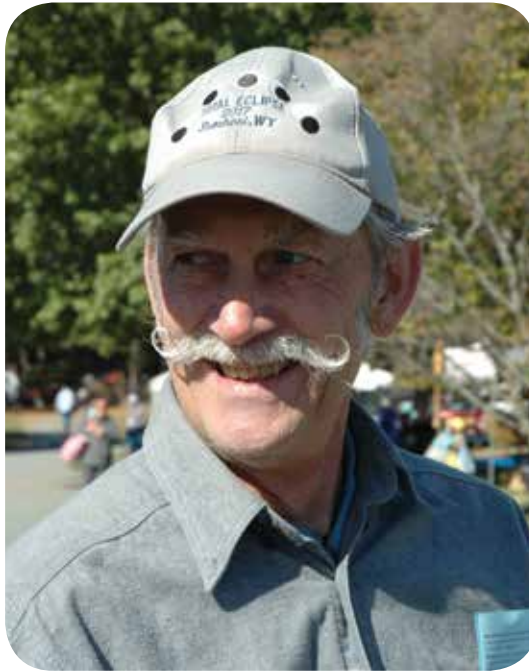
"As you move the oar back and forth, you can twist the grip and turn the blade over an 84° range and the built-in 'stops' mean there's no over-feathering, and smooth gearing eliminates the 'thunking' of square oarlocks," he said.

All this is neat, but it begs the question, "What boats can use one of these rowing systems?" The answer is just about any boat that can mount conventional oars. John said, "We've put them on sculling shells, wherries, canoes, and even kayaks. Both units work well with fixed seats, sliding seats, and sliding riggers. GR-79s can be mated to the GRS1 sliding-rigger

drop-in and set into any open-cockpit hull." In hulls with set frames, seats, and bulkheads, turning the rower around while finding foot room and maintaining proper center-of-gravity can be a little trickier. Getting the very best from the GR79/100 forward rower can be an interesting challenge for the thoughtful boat designer.

So who should use the Gryffyn forward rower? Ycas commented, "We think that it offers particular advantages to the mature rower; better visibility means greater security, better biomechanics reduces stress to the back and wrists, and of course, no more twisting the neck around every few strokes. Any rower who wants to row more safely and enjoyably in a boat that looks good should give the Gryffyn a look."

That sounds pretty good to me. Check out their website for photos and more information: Gryffynrowing.com



John Ycas a long way from his Colorado home.



SOLAR BREEZE

continued from page 4

The basic lines of the dory also seemed appropriate for solar-electric since they had evolved over hundreds of years to make boats that are easy to row in all kinds of conditions. The efficiency of human-powered craft may have developed over myriad iterations of a trial-and error process, but the low power consumption needed for a capable rowing craft dovetails with the solar-electric requirement for maximum efficiency.

Still, when I started I had no idea that the marriage of solar-electric and traditional design would work so well. Underway, the two 100-watt solar panels on the bimini put out essentially the same energy/effort as it takes to row the boat. Since the motor has built-in GPS and power monitoring, it's very simple to compare the usage and output. When motoring, *Solar Breeze* draws 185 watts at 3.5 knots at slack tide and flat water on the Thames River in Connecticut. Since that is a moderate rowing speed as well, the panels essentially replace—one for one—the rowing effort.

Solar Breeze has unlimited motoring range as long as the sun is shining. Of course, the sail does that too as long as the wind is blowing. Each mode has advantages. Power is the better option for charging into a stiff wind. Also, in a general sense, solar/electric clearly provides a sustainable option that's part of the solution in an era of man-made climate change.

The actual building is no different from any other glued-lapstrake boat, so I'll dispense with most of that information, which is covered in many other places. I will say that the construction manual and plans supplied by CLC were very helpful. I did modify the size of the motor well to fit the Torqeedo "short shaft" motor. It turns out the Torqeedo short shaft is much longer than the usual 15".

For materials, I used plantation-grown Okoume marine plywood for the bottom, planks, decking, and bulkheads. For interior framing, I used salvaged spruce from a 19th century factory floor. The use of sustainably

grown and salvaged wood goes along with the environmental ethic of a solar powered dory.

I've had the boat in use for about a year. It rows easily but can be blown about in windy conditions. I've added a bit of rock ballast to the forward compartment and that helps. I did not put in a centerboard, and so I use the sprit rig downwind only. I like to row on the river, so my daily use combines some rowing with motoring or sailing. And it makes a good fishing platform, so I have added rod holders.

I've been very encouraged by the curiosity and positive comments I've received. I keep it on a trailer in my garage/boathouse, and so I'm often launching in a public setting where I run across a lot of power boaters—with some kayakers mixed in. Folks seem very pleased to see something a bit different and, of course, happy to see examples of progress in our reach for a sustainable future for humanity.



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Executive Director
died Nov. 3, 2008

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ABOUT THE BOAT

Solar Breeze (18' 10" with a 62" beam) is based on a traditional Nahant dory and modified for glued-lapstrake construction by Chesapeake Light Craft. The bench seating along the sides incorporates water-tight partitions. They are filled with Styrofoam for 844 lbs. of positive floatation. The design calls for a Norwegian tiller that operates fore and aft. This handy feature makes the boat easy to steer from the cockpit without interfering with the fishing poles of other gear. There are also hatches over watertight compartments for storage under the fore and aft decks.

The boat is powered by a 3-hp-equivalent Torqeedo Travel 1003 electric motor with two lithium-ion batteries, (a 915 Wh and a 530 Wh). This provides about 30 miles of range without charging.

I've wired the aft compartment so there are waterproof connections through the deck and bulkhead. The wires from the solar panels follow the bimini frame down to the deck and connect to the waterproof deck fitting. The charging wire from the motor fits into a 12-24 volt power outlet in the bulkhead. The arrangement allows for a protected area for controllers and connections in the aft compartment.

The motor kicks up into the well for beaching and hauling. I swap out two filler plates for the well opening in the bottom. One solid filler completely fills the opening for rowing. Another has a cutout for the motor shaft to reduce turbulence while underway. A pair of toggles hold the filler plates down.

The Shaw and Tenney Oars are 9' long. A mast step and partner for the sprit rig sail are fitted in the front of the cockpit. *Solar Breeze* is painted white and with sea green and then sky blue on the two top strakes.



Photo by Judy Benson



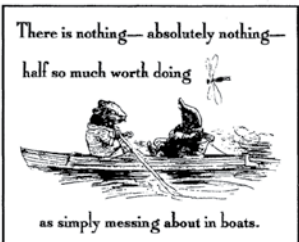
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SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP

continued from page 3

We plan a big gam Friday evening with a panel of photos from 1970—like Maynard Bray gingerly entering a skin on frame kayak. Bring your own photos to post from past Workshops. We'll watch our kids grow up and see their kids now rowing and paddling around.

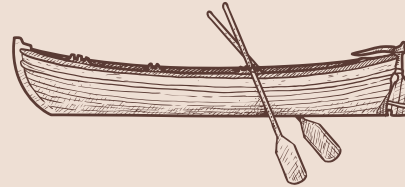
Bring those boats from the past! A free hat to the oldest boat. Dawn Miller, supervisor of the Seaport's Boathouse Livery, has gussied up Good Little Skiff *Waldo Howland* in his original bright yellow livery to greet brother and sister Good Little Skiffs. She has issued a "Call to All Good Little Skiffs" to row and sail in company. "Pete" Culler and Waldo Howland brought their hand drawn and hand written little brochure expounding the merits of their "Good Little Skiff" to the first Workshop. The first boat was built and brought to the next Workshop in 1971. Ben Fuller plans on bringing his Good Little Skiff, the one in the photo on the Boat Livery wall of Bill Sauerbrey sailing without a rudder, shifting his weight to come about.

Now for the Future. Bring your latest ideas and prognostications. Last year, Tom Clark shared his solar powered Sou'Wester Dory, complete with Li Batteries, solar collectors, and Torqueedo motor. "How far will she go?" I asked. "To Europe," he replied. How about new materials? U of Maine just 3-D printed a 20' powerboat. What is the future? Send us your ideas, or better yet, sign up to share your "thought project" with us in a small group presentation. Send to smallcrafter@gmail.com or to the Seaport Boathouse, attention Bill Rutherford.

Mark your calendars to attend the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop the last weekend of June, to be held concurrently with the WoodenBoat Show at Mystic Seaport. You can check in at the table in the courtyard at the South Gate of the Museum, or better yet, visit MysticSeaport.org under Visit, Calendar, click on June 26th and select Small Craft Workshop. A Detailed Notice, a Letter to Participants, and Registration forms will all be available on line very soon.

Once again, courtesy of WoodenBoat, the Boathouse Livery fleet will be free. Come sail and row the most diverse collection of traditional small craft on the planet. Pick one for your next build then cross the street and pick up a set of plans. Visit the Seaport's Small Craft Hall, filled to the brim with over 450 original specimen traditional small craft. We will have guided tours that are not usually open to the public.

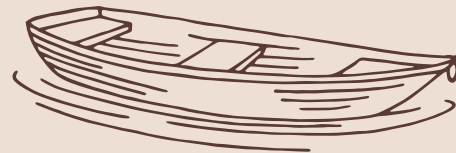
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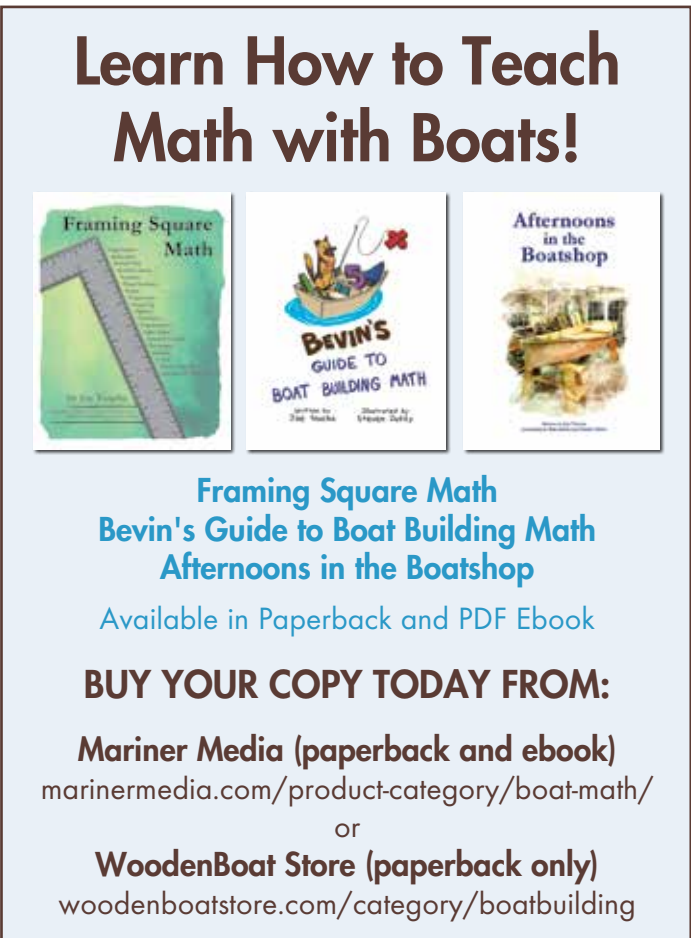
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HAVEN 12½

continued from page 7

I will progress through 150 and then 220 grit sandpaper before I am willing to call it enough. I made a couple sanding boards for the finish sanding, again, progressing through the 80 to 220 grit papers.

Fairing the plank ends to the Stem was tedious. There are several compound angles at this junction, and I found it very difficult to get any accurate measurements.

FAIRING THE KEEL

The keel edge where it joins the garboard is square as built. This edge will need to be faired to the garboard. I want to do as much of this cut as I can while the boat is still upside down. The problem is that the lead ballast is not yet attached and finding that true edge is not obvious. I have the lead ballast in the shop so I will make a template of the top of the lead and transfer the lines to the keel. Rough cutting this edge now will be much easier than getting down under the boat after the lead is affixed and making the edge cut. I am not a fan of working up from the floor.

The final step in assuring a satisfactory surface is to apply the first coat of primer. I say the first coat because there can be several others unless you are really good at planing and sanding by eye. I used a grey colored primer. Darker colors are more telling than lighter colors, especially white. Each time a primer coat is applied, lesser and lesser defects will appear until a point of satisfaction is reached.

Next article will discuss painting the bottom and turning the boat over.



*Above: Primer with Boot Stripe
Below: Fairing the Keel Edge to the Garboard*



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PRES. MESSAGE

continued from page 2



Taking care of our boats and passions are part of the joy (usually) of ownership. It is also a good time to consider your wins and losses. I like to think that every boat that comes into my possession is often orphaned, and my hope is that they leave my hands better than I found them. Quite a few have gone through my hands over the past 40+ years of restoring boats. Not all of them were traditional small craft either, but I cared for them just the same.

One year as a gift, I drew all the sailing craft my parents had owned during their lifetime, matted them together in a long custom-made teak frame. I drew in the seascape and land profiles in the background that helped tell the story of where they sailed. That gift hung on their dining room wall as a conversation piece thereafter. I now have that gift in my possession, and I just thought of doing the same for my brother and my own family. You see, boats come and go throughout our lives, and they play a role in the happiness or drudgery as well as help us define the decades and memories. Whether you're an old salt or a newbie just catching the allure of traditional boats, most of our membership would be able to tell you they are so much more than just boats. They become like old friends, ever ready to head out for an adventurous day. And like old friends and new ones, we must take care to find the time to maintain those connections.

I wish you all the time to dream and wonder about the coming season, the new destinations to ponder and the friendships to maintain.

Fair winds,

Capt Suz
Captain Suzan R. Wallace, MFA MM
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JOHN FORD CROSSED THE BAR

by Andy Wolfe

One of the great joys of our association, for me and for many of us, is growing old together. We came together because we loved those old-fashioned little boats. We stayed together because of the bonds we created rowing and sailing, and helping each other build and maintain our old-fashioned little boats. We don't necessarily see each other with great frequency, but we always smile when we come together, even if it's just once a year in St. Michaels—year after year, decade after decade.

I met John Ford a couple of years after he joined Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, well over twenty-five years ago, at my first Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival. I was there with my children and a boat named *Shady Lady* that I had built with the Delaware River Chapter, happy to sail on the Miles River, and have her judged—I didn't win. John was soft-spoken with a very inviting smile, and very much in charge. He was in constant motion. He knew everyone's name after hearing it just once. He was the first to arrive, setting up coffee and donuts at 5 a.m. and the last to leave, long after the stars came out. He was tireless, or he made it appear so.

Vera England, another longtime MASCF participant, described John at his retirement last May: "While not a writer and designer, like John Gardner, nor a builder, like Dan Sutherland, nor a sailor, like Ben Fuller, John Ford, in his quiet way, supported the building of small boats more than many of greater fame. John served the museum for more than twenty-nine years and was



an amazing friend to the sustenance, perhaps even the restoration, of the small craft movement on the Atlantic Coast."

"John made us feel like we'd arrived for a family reunion. Indeed, as the decades have shown, we had," Vera said. "His patience and good-natured organization solved many a dilemma as those who love small boats have gathered and multiplied at the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival. He has helped keep small boating alive on the Chesapeake Bay by his quiet confidence, knowing that MASCF is not about the money earned, it is about value both given and received. His willingness to advocate for boats on the water, for the event that became HIS event, not fancy, just really fun, has aided and increased amateur boatbuilding everywhere. There are three and four generations of small boaters who count John as part of their family."

Tracey Johns, a longtime friend and colleague, said, "I'm grateful John heard so many kind words at his going away reception at CBMM last summer. We all are better people for having known him. He will be gravely missed." John crossed the bar February 4, 2020.



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The Ash Breeze

Summer 2020 Volume 41 Number 2

Editorial Deadline: May 1, 2020

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