

# *The* Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

## THE 50<sup>TH</sup> SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP IS OFF!

### ***IN THIS ISSUE***

**Building a Dory in 18 short years**

**Gardner Grant documents Japanese  
Wooden Boatbuilding**

**Building the Haven 12½ Rolling Over**



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## Volume 41, Number 2

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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: Sprit rigged Beach Pea sailed by Bill Rutherford, in St. Michaels, Maryland. Photo by Andy Wolfe.*



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Suzan R. Wallace*

## WEATHER WINDOWS

Summer has arrived and many of us are still looking out our own weather window to see if the coast is clear! It has been an odd season opener with little fanfare or the usual boat prep camaraderie, but we still persisted! It has been difficult at best to get excited about the upcoming season with the many restrictions placed for our safety, but we planned anyway. Even though social distancing has limited our gatherings, we prepared our boats for the water with alternate intentions. I for one have been encouraged by our social media posts for they have provided a common thread to our shared anticipation.

I am reminded that much of what many members do is spend time alone sanding and varnishing, clamping and bending, designing and cutting, taping and varnishing their hours away. The bright side in all this is it seems as though our creative juices continue to flow and projects are getting completed in due course. I have heard many say this time has been well spent re-tuning and re-focusing on many of the fine craftsmanship skills and seamanship values we share. If anything, this time has felt like a weather window that has opened up a sense of light, allowing us to see the horizon in a new perspective. My hope is this unusual season brings you moments of reflection and deepens your resolve as to why the scent of saw dust, varnish, and sea air freshens your step.

As we watch all our favorite maritime events get dashed or postponed, let this be a time that allows you to get out on the water with more familial company or even single-handed. There is nothing quite so good as “just messing about” and developing your boat handling skills or exploring new directions or solutions. Time spent developing that relationship with your craft pays off in a multitude of ways. I've never shied away from time single handed and escaping to destinations of my own choosing. I see this as the silver lining in all this.

We can continue to be hopeful when we hear of others who've ferried their craft to the water for a row or sail, yeah! I am excited

*continued on page 27*





# AQUARELLE, A SIXTEEN-FOOT SWAMPSCOTT DORY

by Dana E. Cooley

The boat I really wanted was a 21-foot Alden Indian class sloop. As a college kid, I crewed on two Indians on Narragansett Bay. Of course, I also wished for an estate overlooking Brenton's Cove, where my lapstrake beauty could rock gently at her mooring.

Career, family, and reality intervened. We had a plywood Blue Jay, a roomy Rhodes 18, and finally a Sabre 34 on Chesapeake Bay.

Each boat provided adventures and deepened our family's love for boats, but something was missing. I needed to *build* one, a real lapstrake boat.

**1997**

In Portland, Maine, I acquired John Gardner's *Wooden Boats to Build and Use*. Soon *The Dory Book* joined my collection. I learned that I want a dory, but not just any dory. If I was going to make the effort, I wanted a buxom Swamscott with delightful sheer, shapely midsection, and eye-catching transom. Like the Indian.

Good kit boats were few, and there was still not much internet. YouTube was a decade away. But that box of my grandfather's and his father's planes, drawknives, and chisels seemed to ask, "Why not build a classic with real wood?"

I dithered, assessing motives, abilities, and, most of all, that pair of Bilco doors through which my vessel must one day transit.

**1998**

I chose Gardner's Hammond dory, latched two sheets of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood together with hooks and eyes, and lofted it. I got out a thick cleated pine bottom, which my daughter, home from college, inspected, and approved.

I bought lumberyard oak for the cleats, transom, frames, and stem. Plywood gussets and mysterious two-part products in cans enabled me to replicate the Hammond's graceful stem and knuckled frames. Much later, I learned that oak comes in colors; I had bought red.

---

Top: Ready for sea trials (2017)



1999

We paused for “big boat” sailing on the Chesapeake, cruising the graceful Maine-built Sabre out of Rock Hall. The dory pieces languished at least five years due to my consulting business expanding.

2004

A Connecticut radiologist bought the Sabre, I recovered from a stroke, and I assembled the dory pieces. From Sam Manning’s illustrations, my son-in-law and I built a six-legged strongback with just the right amount of rocker. Then we inverted the assembled bottom, stem, transom, and rib assembly, braced it onto the strongback from the overhead, and anchored the frail skeleton for planking.

If a Swampscott dory ever looks vulnerable, it is at this spindly stage.

2006

Our daughter got married and my consulting business thrived. My wife joined me in travels to Arizona, the Pacific Northwest, Cape Town, London, and Paris. We saw classic vessels but rarely ventured aboard one. The inverted frames and bottom became an extra shelf and sometimes a drying rack.

2014

My clients became self-sufficient and the consulting business winds down. I resolved to finish the dory before it ends up as kindling—or I became too feeble to row. I found cypress plank and mahogany trim in Annapolis and bronze screws and copper rivets in Rhode Island. Gardner’s books stood watch patiently over the workbench.

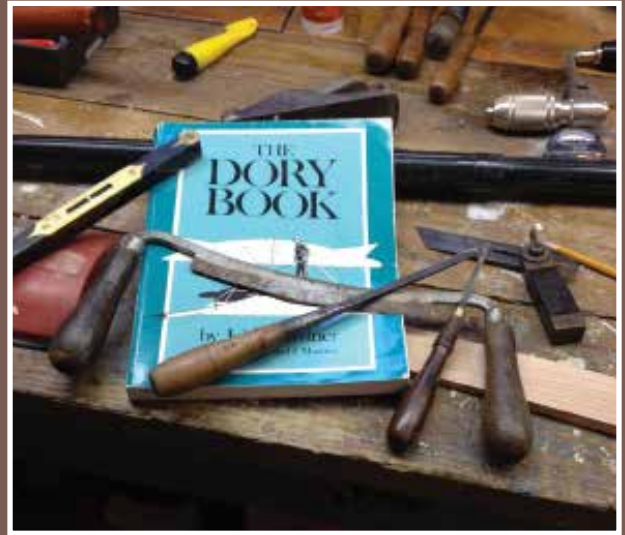
I measured, I spiled, I scarphed, and I beveled. My son’s twins chipped in, literally. Plank by plank, the dory emerged as a boat, though still upside down and rigidly fastened to the floor. My faithful wife bucked nearly every one of the 400 rivets while I roved and peened on my backsides, squinting up from the cold concrete. Five strakes perhaps, but there were ten planks, each one deviously curved and twisted.

2016

It is time to right the boat and finish her interior. We flipped the hull.

My boat looked very big and the Bilco doors looked very small...

To hold myself accountable, I invited a crew of good friends to a coming out party, fortified with rations of Admiralty strength rum. The twins tooted and beat the drum. The big lift was a success, and from then on, the dory was THE boat, no longer THAT boat.



*Top: Inherited tools and The Dory Book. (1998)*

*Middle: Daughter Sarah tries dory bottom for size. (1999)*

*Bottom: Author as a “young” man. (2000)*





*Left Top: Twin grandson apprentices sweep shavings. (2013)*

*Left Bottom: Additional strakes, showing homemade clamps. (2015)*

*Right Top: It helps to have a friend like artist Jim. (2017)*

*Right Bottom: Finally, a real boat. (2016)*





**2016-2017**


The garage boatshop sheltered fitting out with a glossy gunwale cap, pretty thwarts, English oarlocks, and rugged floorboards I fashioned from salvaged pallets. Paint arrived from New Bedford, our son rescued a trailer from a Pennsylvania roadside, 8½-foot spruce oars made their way from Nova Scotia, and we were ready for sea trials. Almost. We named the dory *Aquarelle*, French for watercolor. Talented friend Jim scribed it boldly on each stern quarter.

By now, all four grandsons were in ship's company, and all were eager to row Poppy's boat.

Sea trials confirmed a handy boat that slips through the water and tracks nicely.

*Left: Grandson Chris trumpets; friends and neighbors march Aquarelle to the garage. (2016) Below: "Coming out" party. Son-in-law Matthew at the bow (left). Son Rob and author bring up the rear (right). (2016)*






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## 2020

Another season is at hand, and *Aquarelle* is ready for adventure. I think old Jesse Hammond of Danversport, Massachusetts, would be tickled to see an example of his shop's style and methods out on the water.

Should you consider building a 16-foot lapstrake boat yourself, at home, with only basic woodworking experience? Absolutely YES! But keep these lessons (some painful) in mind:

1. Loft your boat full size. Pay attention to small details, like dimensions to inside or outside of plank. Believe the battens and your eye. I found two mistakes in the published offsets; it happens. Refer to your layout often. There's always something you'll need to mull over as you go.
2. Learn to sharpen your edge tools. Invest in a couple of diamond whetstones and a sturdy honing jig. I failed on this until almost the end, and I wasted hours struggling with chisels and planes I *thought* were sharp and true. My vintage tools deserved better from me.
3. Drill the right size holes for screws. I am morbidly afraid of a loose fit, so I struggle with soap or beeswax instead of relying on the threads, which will grip just fine in a hole correct for the shank.
4. Build a boat, not a coffee table. Intricate joinery is eye-catching, but you are striving for sturdy, bedded joints that allow water to drain and will not harbor rot.
5. There's no rush. Take your time, though maybe not 18 years! And be sure to invite John Gardner along.



*Top: Anyone for a row? Lums Pond, DE  
Above: Author rowing Aquarelle, Salem Canal, Deepwater, NJ (2019)*



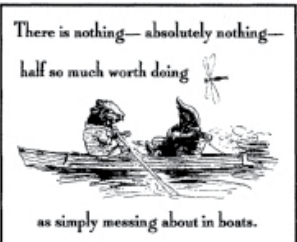
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# 50<sup>TH</sup> SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP IS OFF!

## JUNE 26-28, 2020

The John Gardner Small Craft Workshop jointly sponsored by Mystic Seaport Museum and the Traditional Small Craft Association and hosted by the TSCA John Gardner Chapter has been canceled. This year celebrates 50 years since the first event in 1970 that led to the organization of the TSCA.

In a June first email, Bill Rutherford explained the Board's position regarding the decision not to hold the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop this year: "It was a difficult decision, but we think it is best to be cautious with this late spring event. The consensus was to respect the many decisions individuals make on whether to, or not to, travel, mingle, and get active in boating group activities."

Rutherford wrote, "I think one of our Board Members puts it best, 'As things stand, I expect holding the event at the end of June would be disappointing...too soon for me, and possibly for most other small craft fans.' Another member's positive


response that he is 'interested in helping out in any way I can' is much appreciated but combined with the tight timing of Phase III here in CT (June 20 is only 5 days before our planned event), limits on out-of-state travel (with 14 day self-quarantines recommended) and the declining, but still high hospitalization rate (481 people on May 31st compared to the Governors' goal of less than 100 before opening Phase III), it is most wise to not hold the Workshop this year."

Anniversaries come around each year. Thanks to the research team at the Seaport's Collections Research Center we have fine examples of original documents from 1970 that we can share. Rutherford said, "With travel and accommodation restrictions relieved, traveling for our far-flung fans will be easier. We look forward to start planning ideas and activities for our next Workshop."





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# 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:

[tscanet.org/john-gardner-fund/](http://tscanet.org/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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# 24<sup>TH</sup> WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY REGATTA

by Michael Rosenbaum and John Palenchar. Photo by Kathy Gunst.

The 24<sup>th</sup> Washington's Birthday Regatta commemorates the first-ever Regatta held on Biscayne Bay and was organized by Commodore Munroe and his neighbor, Kirk Munroe. The race is held at The Barnacle Historic State Park in Miami, FL. The Park was the 19<sup>th</sup> century home of Ralph Middleton Munroe, a renowned yacht designer and influential pioneer.

The race did not, as they say, "Go off without a hitch." First of all, the Saturday races had to be postponed until Sunday, due to predicted strong winds. However, the "Awards Banquet and Chowder Party" was held, as scheduled, Saturday evening—minus the Awards (no races, no Awards)! Then, on Sunday, with winds still high, a number of mishaps occurred, including one "capsize" (Skipper and craft unharmed, thanks to a great effort by the Race Committee and friends).

In spite of all this, this year's Regatta was a big success! We had 26 boats registered, with 22 actually making it to the starting line. (Some Skippers had to drop out due to the race day change). The Race winners were as follows:

- Egret Class: *Sabrosura*, Pascal Gademer, Skipper
- Sandpiper Class: *Peacock*, Peter McClennan, Skipper
- Plover Class: *Largo*, Joe Logan, Skipper
- Open Class: *Elizabeth Belle*, Jay Flynn, Skipper
- Special Exhibition Class: *Capt. Winky*, Justin Hayes Long, Skipper

The Barnacle Society, a non-profit organization supporting the Park and its TSCA Chapter, fielded three of the entries in this year's Regatta. The Barnacle's flagship, *Egret*, is a reproduction of an 1886 sharpie-ketch that was designed by Ralph Munroe. The 28' *Egret* appeared in Bristol fashion after having received extensive maintenance during a recent haul-out and survey. The *Egret* was built in 1987 by the Miami-Dade College. The *Sparrow* is a 14' Cape Cod Oystering Skiff. *Sparrow* was built in the Barnacle's boathouse (*Ash Breeze*, Vol. 40) and was launched in 2018. The 14' Melonseed Skiff, *Scoter*, was built by Si Bloom in 1995 and was graciously donated to the Barnacle. Needless to say, the strong winds during Sunday's race proved challenging for these small skiffs but they performed admirably.

Participating for the first time in the Regatta were the *Elizabeth Ring* and the *Peacock*. The *Elizabeth Ring* is a historic reproduction of *Nixie*, skippered by her owner, Mel Meinhardt. She is a gaff-rigged sharpie that was built by the Maritime Museum in Cortez, near Bradenton, FL. The stunning, E-Boat, *Peacock* was skippered by her owner, Peter McClennen. The E-Boat class was designed by N.G. Herrshoff in 1899 and represents one of the first one-design sailboats raced in New England. *Peacock* was restored in 2017 by students at the IYRS in Newport, RI.



As usual, the Chowder Party was well-attended and great fun! We did hand out two Special Recognition Awards—one to Chef Andre', chowder master "par excellence" and one to Park Ranger Jessica Cabral, for the incredible Office Support she has provided for the Regatta. The Best Costume Award (yes, some of us don "period" outfits for the event) went this year to Richard Crisler, long-time and much-respected CGSC Sailing Instructor.

A highlight of every Chowder Party is a reading from *The Commodore's Story* by Park Manager, Katrina Boler. Katrina shared this excerpt: "This Spring of 1887 it was apparent that the Bay could provide all the boats necessary for a yacht-race, and it was decided to celebrate Washington's Birthday with an open regatta. It was a success in every way. Thus began organized aquatic sports on the Bay, the Washington's Birthday regatta afterward being a fixture of the BBYC, until the displacement of sails by gasoline in general interest caused it to degenerate into a chowder-party."

As in years past, the Coconut Grove Sailing Club Race Committee, led by Principal Race Officer, Nancy Rogachenko, provided excellent Course set-up and Race oversight—including shifting their commitment from Saturday to Sunday. Thanks go to the Coconut Grove Sailing Club and Biscayne Yacht Club.

In 2021, the Washington's Birthday Regatta will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> year. Please join us for the upcoming Regatta or visit the Barnacle Historic Park anytime you are in South Florida to appreciate its beauty and history.



# JAPANESE WOODEN BOATBUILDING DOCUMENTING A DISAPPEARING CRAFT



by Douglas Brooks

In the fall of 2019, I traveled to Japan with two others to build boats with a pair of elderly craftspeople. First and foremost, our goal was to completely document the building of a river boat and sea boat, including the design and construction techniques for each. This was the continuation of research I have undertaken since 1996 when I did my first apprenticeship with a Japanese boatbuilder. In the years since, I have studied with more craftspeople, documenting different types of boats from throughout Japan. All of my teachers, including the two we worked with on this project, were in their seventies and eighties. Of my seven previous teachers, I have been the sole apprentice for five of them.

Joining me was Nina Noah, Director of Student Affairs and Outreach for The Apprenticeship in Rockland, Maine. Nina came to assist me and experience learning in the Japanese apprentice tradition. I had been in discussion with The Apprenticeship on creating an exchange program in Japan, and I felt it was important for a member of their senior staff to

see firsthand how a satellite program could potentially work. A graduate of their boatbuilding program, Nina was also able to offer her boatbuilding skills and experience in assisting with the physical labor as well as interpreting and recording the builders' techniques.

Benjamin Meader, a former student of mine at Middlebury College, offered to pay his own expenses to join us to digitally document our work. He runs his own cartography business, Rhumb Line Maps, in South Bristol, Maine, ([www.rhumblinemap.com](http://www.rhumblinemap.com)) and supported the project by taking photographs and video. He also experimented with photogrammetry when we traveled on weekends to measure traditional boats.

The genesis for this project began two years ago when the board of the United States-Japan Foundation of New York invited me to propose working with a boatbuilder and documenting their work. The foundation had supported my earlier research, most importantly through a very generous

---

**Top:** Launch day for the honryousen. From left to right: Boatbuilders Douglas Brooks, Nakaichi Nakagawa, and Nina Noah paddle the completed 21-foot river boat after a short launching ceremony at Nakagawa's Shipyard. This type was used primarily for net fishing; however, boats like this were also used for a wide variety of tasks in the broad deltas of Niigata, Japan, including sand dredging, hauling rice, and transportation. The filling of canals and building of roads after World War II saw them rapidly disappear. Photograph by Benjamin Meader.



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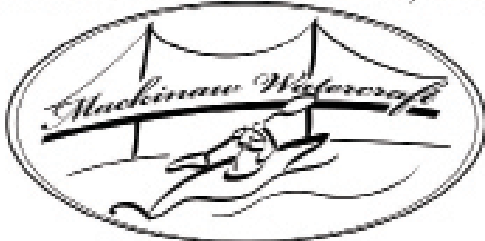
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Gerard Crowley has a team rowing around Ireland for charity ([www.rowaroundireland.com](http://www.rowaroundireland.com)). He writes about the Gaco oarlocks: *Hi John. We've hit some pretty rough seas and wind over tide situations along the NE corner 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.*



publishing grant that allowed me to publish *Japanese Wooden Boatbuilding*, my fourth book, which chronicles my first five apprenticeships, along with a chapter on Japan's last traditional shipwright.

At the time, I knew a boatbuilder in Himi, Toyama, on the Sea of Japan. Mr. Mitsuaki Bansho, now in his seventies, had apprenticed with his father building wooden boats but later switched to fiberglass as markets changed. The small boats of this region feature an unusual style of construction at the bow, essentially a box-like structure forming a cutwater. It can also be found in a few other select regions of Japan, but I had never built a boat with this feature. Its purpose serves to eliminate the severe twist required in the garboard strake. This is a challenge in Japan where boats are built of extremely wide, thick strakes. Bansho said we could build one of these boats, using his father's drawings, in about a month.

I put together a budget for a project working with Bansho and the United States-Japan Foundation replied, granting us half the funding we needed. Then, working with Nina and Ben, we put together a crowdfunding campaign. We also

secured a generous grant from the Traditional Small Craft Association. With funding in place, we started to make arrangements to head to Japan at the end of October 2019. At this point, a friend of mine in Japan, Ms. Yoko Arakawa, informed me she had received a small grant from the Niigata Arts Council. She had been urging me to document the work of the last river boat builder of Niigata City. He said we could build a 21-foot river boat in just a week, so we decided to add this to our schedule.

We rendezvoused in Tokyo November 1<sup>st</sup> and headed by bullet train to Niigata City. There Yoko housed us in the old family home that stands behind her late father's patternmaker's shop. We commuted daily out to Mr. Nakaichi Nakagawa's shop on the outskirts of the city. Like Bansho, Nakagawa, age eighty-two, built wooden boats only at the outset of his career. Some were large sand dredges he built with his father, before switching to steel construction. He and his father also built a variety of smaller boats used by rice farmers in the era when roads were rare and crops were transported through canals by boat.

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*Japanese boatbuilders use props in lieu of clamps to bend and hold planking in place. Boats are almost always built upright, the keel plank propped firmly to low blocks until the hull is complete. Bansho had enlarged his shop to build big fiberglass fishing boats, so we resorted to long props to reach the walls and ceiling. Photograph by author.*



The type of boat we built is called a *honryousen*, best translated as “real fishing boat,” a type used primarily for fishing. The bottom had a very slight rocker and the bow and stern planks were joined to it with a tongue and groove joint. The only framing was a single beam set between the side planks near the stern. Two other timbers were set between the hood ends of the planks fore and aft and bolted to the bottom. We fitted a series of planks aft of the beam to form a thwart.

Nakagawa’s father built his suite of boats with no drawings, relying instead on memorized dimensions and patterns for plank angles. For this boat, Nakagawa followed a researcher’s drawing based on a historic boat. The researcher had recorded just the minimum number of dimensions needed; there was nothing like a table of offsets. Most Japanese boatbuilders use dimensions at no more than three stations, and station locations are not standardized.

Nakagawa did something extremely interesting—I had never seen it done before—when laying out the sheer. We stretched a string from the hood end at the bow to the hood end at the stern. Nakagawa marked a single height amidships, a point where the string stood several inches away from the curved plank and above his mark. He then stood across the boat and positioned himself until his eye

---

*Nina Noah hand planes the interior of the honryousen. The boat is planked entirely of cedar, the side planks being single pieces about 1¼" thick. The notches at either end of the boat receive hardwood blocks, and the only other framing is a beam spanning the inside place aft where is also supports the thwart. The seams are caulked from the inside with cypress bark and the black seam compound is a mixture of urushi, natural raw lacquer, and flour. Photograph by author.*



was in line with the string and his mark. He then gave me his bamboo pen and carefully shifting his gaze fore and aft, guided me until I had the pen against the side planking in line with the string in his line of sight. He didn't move and kept glancing back to his midships mark to make sure his eye remained at the same level. We continued this until I had made a series of marks forming a fair sheer line.

As predicted, we finished the boat in a week. We had time to stay and participate in a small symposium where the boat was displayed and then we traveled up the Shinano River to measure boats before heading to Himi, Toyama, 180 miles south along the coast, to build our next boat. Mr. Mitsuaki Bansho had chosen a design his father and grandfather had built. The *tenmasen* was a small, all-purpose boat used in the fishing industry in Himi, famous for its annual run of yellowtail tuna. Bansho used his father's drawing, a one-tenth scale plan drawn on a plank of wood. In another first, Bansho

---

***Below:** The finished boat. Some charring on the port side planking is just visible in this photo, from where we played a propane torch on the planking to bend it. The beam and bits forward are for mooring lines and the unusual construction of the cutwater is visible. This type of construction is found scattered throughout Japan. Photograph by author.*







used the metric system, the only traditional boatbuilder I've met in Japan to do so. Normally, craftspeople measure in an ancient Chinese decimal system known as shaku. I was even more surprised when Bansho told me his father also used the metric system.

In overall construction, the *tenmasen* is similar to most Japanese sea-going boats: a flat, plank bottom with wide garboard and sheer strakes. Due to its rough use handling nets and acting as a tender, the design also featured heavy sawn frames, enormous to our eyes for such a small boat. As mentioned earlier, the construction forward is what interested me most. Essentially, we created a box keel at the bow so the garboard plank could remain relatively horizontal. The sheer plank, however, had a lot of curvature, and unlike in the West where boatbuilders bend planks with steam, we adopted the Asian method of using an open flame. Bansho, however, had updated this practice, and with the sheer propped securely in place at the bow, Nina played a propane torch on the planking, while Bansho slowly bent it to the transom. This took place over about fifteen minutes. Bansho used the exact same method Nakagawa did striking the sheerline, sighting across a stretched string.

Our launching ceremony in Himi was well attended, and Bansho officiated, reading a Shinto invocation from an ancient document. Various people took turns sculling the finished boat before a party in the boat shop. The *tenmasen*

**Above:** *Bansho and friends gather around the boat at the launching. Bansho is kneeling in the center and Nina Noah of The Apprenticeshop is to his left. The boat was donated to a non-profit group that gives rides in the tree-lined canal that runs through the center of Himi. Photograph by author.*

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was donated to a local non-profit that offers boat rides in a canal that runs through the city center.

I am now working with The Apprenticeshop on raising funds to support an exchange in Japan, integrated into the school's curriculum. We hope to offer opportunities to build boats in Japan, as well as document historic small craft, for both apprentices at the school and other interested parties. If readers are interested, they should contact me at [douglasbrooksboatbuilding@gmail.com](mailto:douglasbrooksboatbuilding@gmail.com). For more information, photographs, and videos about this project, see the blog posts from November and December, 2019 here: <https://www.apprenticeshop.org/latest-news>.

*Douglas Brooks is a boatbuilder, writer, and researcher. He has built boats with nine boatbuilders from throughout Japan and published six books on his research. His website is [www.douglasbrooksboatbuilding.com](http://www.douglasbrooksboatbuilding.com).*



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# BUILDING THE HAVEN 12½—PART 7



by David A. Fitch

I've said it before, I don't like working under things, so I decided to paint the bottom before turning the boat over. I knew at the time that I would still have the lead ballast to paint, but I felt I could handle that much. I selected the best copper-based antifouling paint that I could find. Even though Havens are more often trailered than moored, I still wanted the protection. I also decided that I did not want a boot stripe. The lines of the Haven are so fair and beautiful, and I think a boot stripe only serves to add clutter to the appearance. That said, I marked the LWL and masked her off for the first coat of liquid gold, often referred to as a bottom paint. I rolled and tipped four coats before I got the look I was after.

With the planking installed and faired, the seams caulked and sealed with compound, and the exterior primed, it was time to turn it over. This pending task gave great cause for

concern and consternation. How to even lift the boat and in such a way as to maintain balance fore and aft, without dropping or losing control while in the air, was a mind boggler. But, like with so many other challenges, the solution was quite simple after a few phone calls and conversations with some boatbuilding friends. Two small chain hoists attached to the ceiling rafters was the trick. A rope was run from each hoist around the boat in a loop at frames 9 and 17. A frame on each side of the ropes was left attached to its respective molds as stiffeners to support the sides at each rope location. The frames with the stiffeners were released from the strongback, and the boat was raised. The remaining molds and the strongback were disassembled and pulled out from under the boat.

The boat actually rolled over quite easily while in the rope slings. I had a helper but it could have been done with one



person. However, I suggest that a second pair of hands is a good precaution.

The lead ballast loaded on two piano dollies was wheeled under the boat and put into position. The boat was then lowered onto the lead with support from the four Brownell boat stands. I suggest that you have the lead cleaned, faired, and sanded before this step. A word of caution here when drilling the keel bolt holes through the lead. With the drill bit in the lead do not drill more than 2 inches at a time without pulling out and clearing the lead from the bit. If you don't do this, the bit will jam in the lead, and you will not be able to get it back out.

I may have mentioned this before, but another decision I made that differed from the instructions was to wait to install the shear plank until the boat was upright. Again, this is due to my personal aversion to working upside down. Further, I did not use the traditional method of making the shear plank. I had a heavy-duty router bit made (See Picture) and routed the planks on my router table. With some painstaking set up, it worked fine. If I were to do this again, heaven forbid, I would do it the same way.

Side Note: However you decide to make your shears, pay extra attention to the grain pattern. I, for reasons I cannot explain, did not. That error resulted in a break along the grain line just before the stem. (See Picture below.) You will notice in the picture that the break line is parallel to the grain line. This is the location of the greatest twist in the shear at installation. A trip to the lumber yard and another router setup was my

penance. Steaming the shears as they approach the stem is also warranted. There is a lot of torque on a delicate piece of wood at that end. I used a plastic bag on the sheer plank on the boat for steaming.

The fit between the shears and the last planks before the shear took some time to get just right. I mostly used a rabbit plane to run along the tops of the planks below the shears. It all worked out fine, and I did it standing on my feet as opposed to on my head.

The molds remaining in the boat as stabilizers were going to be in my way while working inside the boat. I removed them but, in their place, I installed two sets of cross tied 1 x 4s to the frames at the shear line. I also placed three similar 1 x 4s in the bow area ahead of #7 frame. These cross members would help to preserve the boats shape until I could install the shear clamps. The shear clamps will be a story in itself in the next article.

I designed and made a template for the breast hook. I did not have the ideal piece of Live Oak crotch to use so I had to improvise. I cut two pieces of White Oak into half triangle shapes and clued them together with biscuits and two 1/4-inch silicon bronze dowels. The result was a triangular breast hook with the grain running parallel to the shear fore and aft. It will be here long after the boat is gone.

Next article will address installing the Shear Clamp and the Deadwood.

*Shear router bit*





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# THE FORE-VIEW MIRROR

by John Murray

I must agree with our fearless editor (Fall 2019 Edition *Ash Breeze*) when he states in relation to rowing that, “The older I get, the harder it is to glance over my shoulder.” Having studied this issue myself, as a near eighty-year-old, I have come to a slightly different conclusion. Sure, our bodies have become less flexible, but I find the greater difficulty is finding the energy to cease rowing, turn, and look at where I am headed then turning back, locate feet on the foot stretcher, launch the oars, and regain momentum. Then, it is necessary to retain a mental image of the obstacles in my path, and this can be faulty especially with my demented brain.

Among moorings, this is a painfully repetitive exercise and one solution is a forward-facing rowboat. Many is the time that I have thoughtfully planned my path to find a current has carried me onto a moored craft when suddenly the boat (77lb) stops while I (150lbs) keep going and find myself in the bilge. Fortunately, the boat is light has a rubber buffer on the bow and is not going fast, so no damage is done. I must confess to a bit of a giggle to myself as I lay in the bilge, but it is not good seamanship.

Fortunately, forward rowing is not the only answer. The problem raises an interesting conundrum. We all accept that a car must have rearview mirrors, even though most of the time it is going forward. But while we row backwards most of the time, it is rare for a rowing boat to display a rear-view (really a fore-view) mirror. Hence, we must spend far too much time contorting ourselves to avoid collision and even so, fail at that too often.

With these issues in mind, I headed off to the car accessory store (RepcO) hoping to find a suitable stainless backed rearview mirror to do the job. As I pessimistically entered the store, I could not believe it; my eyes beheld the perfect mirror for the job. It was stainless backed and had a ball joint connection to allow for adjustment and had a wide-angle mirror. It is a “Gear up” brand and its code is GUAM1. So, here’s a go, I thought to myself, let’s try this.

Back at the ranch I made up a stalk from half inch stainless tube 8” long. By squashing one end of the tube in the vice and drilling it, I was able to bolt the mirror onto the tube. Then, cutting a slot in the bottom allowed me to fix it in position, into a hole about two inches in front of the oarlock socket. Experience has shown me that the slot should be about 45 degrees to the angle of the mirror to allow the mirror to face in to the rower. A screw at right angles through the bottom of the socket allows fixing of the mirror in position so that adjustment occurs in the ball joint.

After using the device for about a year, I decided to lengthen the stalk to about two feet so that the mirror was about eye height. This was a very useful improvement, as my body blocked the view less, but more importantly, it was now high enough to avoid



*Keeping clear of the boat on the left.*



any spray. Rowing became a much more pleasant exercise. A couple of issues became evident. Being a wide angle (convex) mirror meant boats were closer than apparent, so a more immediate avoidance action was needed. Also, interpreting the image became a bit of an issue. If the obstacle in the mirror was on the near side of the bow, it was best to maintain, or in some instances, alter, course to keep it there and vice versa. As a matter of interest, I did compare the utility of a flat mirror, but it did not provide a wide enough view.

I recently had the opportunity to fit the mirror device to another dory. It started with a message like this: “Hi, John. Joel from Dangar is here. I’ve had a bit of a mishap with the dory. It got picked up by the wind and smashed into a tree. Do you think it is fixable?”

Well, I have to admit, I had advised Joel to tie it down to prevent this sort of event. But in hindsight, I realize that tying it down is a bit of a chore. I will now advise rowers to anchor the boat to a buried piece of metal or stake so that it cannot blow away. Such a simple task will be easier to adhere to. So, here it was with a busted gunwale, broken footstretcher adjuster, and fiberglass damage. My reply, “Would you like me to pick it up to fix it?” and his reply, “If that is possible.” Fixing it up was a fair bit of work scarfing gunwales, fiberglassing, finishing, painting, etc.

I rowed Joel back from the island from the forward rowing position and was pleasantly surprised to find the fore-view mirror still performed its function even though it was further away.



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**Right Top:** Bit of a mishap  
**Right Bottom:** Like a bought one. Joel’s wife wanted to know where the repair was.





Most of the operation of making and fitting the mirror is straight forward. There are a few things to bear in mind.

1. The mirror in the photo is angled out, which is a bit of an advantage, but it would still work quite well if vertical.
2. The socket fitting I have used is plastic and drilled out to 13mm, which is slightly larger than half inch (12.7mm).
3. If you are making a socket out of wood, drill it out to 13 mm, then harden the hole with epoxy and drill it out again to 13mm. Otherwise, the wood will swell when wet and make it difficult to remove.
4. Make sure that the slot in the bottom of the stalk is at an angle of over thirty degrees to the mirror. Check that the angle you cut turns the mirror into the boat. If you make a mistake here it is easy to cut off the end of the stalk and make a new slot with an angle grinder and abrasive disc.

I can guarantee you will have a more pleasant row with such a device and must report that it is annoying to row without it. Lazy rower that I am, a collision with some craft is almost guaranteed if I forget to take the mirror with me. And by the

way, it partially removes one of the arguments that canoers have against row boats. Today as I rowed the river, I could hear outboards buzzing about and could keep track of them in the mirror to avoid collision anxiety.

Now I can hear the old salts complain that the fore-view mirror is not “traditional.” In reply, I will insist that our harbors and waterways are no longer traditional. They are filled up with moored craft, marinas, speedboats, jet skis, thousand horsepower behemoths, and all sorts of other watercraft. Even in the last thirty years, Dangar Island where I lived and had no moored craft around it, is now surrounded by scores. Parsely Bay opposite has experienced a similar transformation. This has made it difficult to have a pleasant row without some means of avoiding all the obstacles that have sprung up over the years.

So, let us keep defiantly rowing and remember the words of Max Ehrmann in his *Desiderata*; “Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.”

*John Murray is the inventor of the Gaco oarlock. He is passionate about small boats and rowing and makes the turbo oar and the Swift dory. His website is [www.gacooarlocks.com](http://www.gacooarlocks.com)*

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*On spec, I fitted a fore-view mirror, which Joel has adapted to nicely.*



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# PRES. MESSAGE

*continued from page 2*

to hear about new builds and restorations getting done, as we have filled the pages of our journal with these in this issue! I encourage you to let Andy Wolfe know about your projects, adventures, and tips to pass on through the pages of our *Ash Breeze*. This may be just the time to pull together an article of your activities to share.

And I have every confidence that our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plans to celebrate our John Gardner workshop beginnings will come to pass, and small craft will fill the Mystic Seaport harbor once again. Keep a weather eye out and watch for those new days to come.

I have enjoyed my stint on the TSCA board and holding a steady course for my trick at the helm, and now it is time for others to step up and keep her heading strong. Please find our election ballots and cast your vote on some fresh council members for 2020!

I wish everyone a freshening breeze on the water and in your dreams.

Capt Suz  
Captain Suzan R. Wallace, MFA MM  
President of the Traditional Small Craft Association

**MANY EVENTS HAVE BEEN CHANGED OR CANCELLED, SO WE WILL NOT BE INCLUDING A CALENDAR OF EVENTS IN THIS ISSUE.**

**TO SUBMIT EVENTS FROM YOUR CHAPTER AND IN YOUR AREA GO TO**

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# SMALL REACH REGATTA 2021



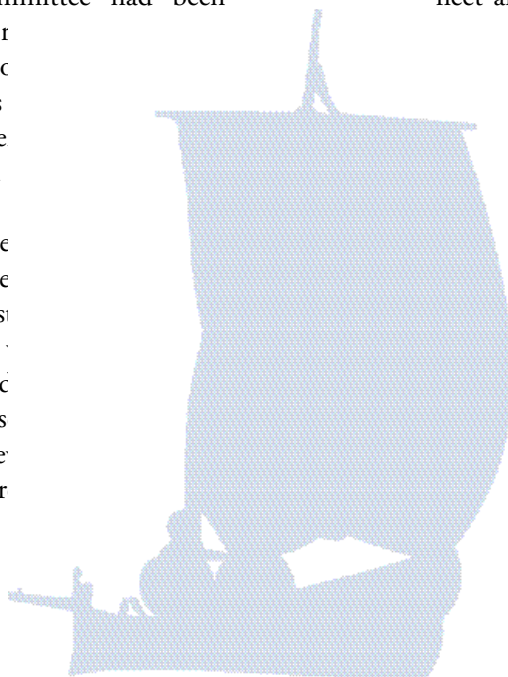
*by Tom Jackson, photo by Andy Wolfe*

The Small Reach Regatta committee had been holding on to the hope that the coronavirus would diminish enough by spring to hold the event we all love to continue on this Regrettably, we have lost confidence this will happen, and we canceled for 2020.

In Maine, the outbreak has been contained, but like everywhere communities are under social distancing stay-at-home restrictions. Last January Janet Mills announced new guidelines among them is a provision to loosen boat gatherings. However, the new limits such gatherings to no more than 10 people through August, at least. In addition, out-of-state visitors will continue to be held to 14-day quarantines, and since 65 of our 82 boats for the 2020

fleet are from out of state, that would pose serious risks for everyone. The campground and our medical providers are under restrictions as well and altering how we do things at the SRR—even if we could—would diminish the very things we all find most memorable about the experience. Moreover, we are keenly aware that quite a few of our people are in the demographic most susceptible to Covid-19.

As you know, we had envisioned 2020 as the final year of our 15-year run of the SRR. We are not willing to let it end like this! So, July 7–11, 2021, will be our “grand finale.” Who knows what next summer will bring—but we sincerely hope that the SRR will be a part of life for the Downeast TSCA and for all of us in 2021.



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# Maine

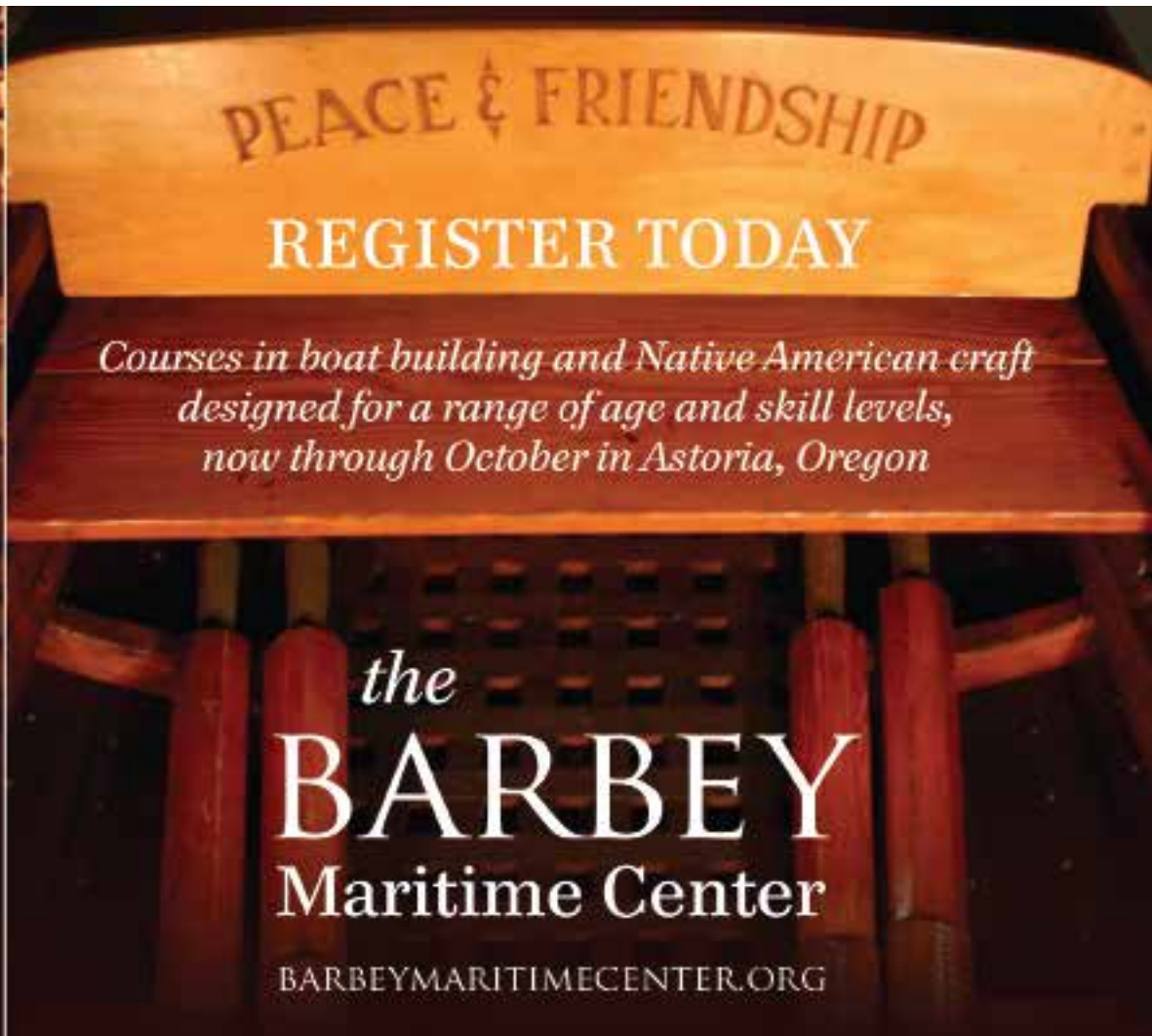


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*Note: Individual and Family Memberships qualify for one vote and one copy of each TSCA mailing.*

*Family Memberships qualify all members of the immediate family to participate in all other TSCA activities.*

## The Ash Breeze

Fall 2020 Volume 41 Number 3

### Editorial Deadline: August 1, 2020

**Articles:** *The Ash Breeze* is a member-supported publication; members are welcome to contribute. *We strongly encourage you to send material electronically.* Send text in an e-mail message, or as an MS Word attachment. Send photos as e-mail attachments, in TIFF or JPG formats, as large and/or as high-resolution as possible. Please give captions naming people, places, and to whom photo credit should be given. You may also submit photographic prints, clean line drawings or *typewritten* material by U.S. Mail. *Please contact us IN ADVANCE if you must submit handwritten text, or material in another word processing or image format.*

E-mail to: [andy@marinermedia.com](mailto:andy@marinermedia.com).

*The editors reserve the right to refuse publication of any material deemed not to be in the best interest of the TSCA.*

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