

# *The* Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

## MAKING BOAT ART

### *IN THIS ISSUE*

**Building a Melonseed**

**Dip in the Pool**

**Decorative Lashings**

**50th Small Craft  
Workshop**



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The  
Ash  
Breeze

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## Volume 42, Number 1

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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: Photo by Rosemary Wyman.*



Photo by Rosemary Wyman

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*David Wyman*

Spring is approaching, another boating season is in sight, and in addition to starting to plan new boating adventures, I also have been thinking about what TSCA has meant to me. I have been involved with TSCA almost from its beginning. Over the years, TSCA has introduced me to other likeminded folks, many of whom have become friends and boating companions. I am nearing the end of my second three-year term on the national council and my year as its president. I have been grateful for the opportunity to help further our association. As we approach June, it is again time for those TSCA council members completing their three-year term to step aside and let new council members be elected. I encourage each of you to think about running for election to the council and help guide us into the future.

During this past year, the TSCA council and officers have been actively engaged in monthly discussion meetings via Zoom. Most recently, we have been looking at ways to make TSCA more visible with a new brochure, patches, decals, and burgees in the works. We have also been exploring how to get more young people involved. If you have ideas and would like to help our association grow and better serve our members, please consider joining the council. All you need to do is nominate yourself prior to May first and run for election, which will take place on our website throughout the month of May.

This past year, despite its challenges, has offered me opportunities for activities that might otherwise not have happened. During the past few months, I have been experimenting with the shape of oars blades from flat to spoon and from hollow to broad. I have made five sets of oars so far, all the same length and blade area but with different shaped blades. Once the weather warms up, I plan to do some experimenting to see which shape seems to work best. Assuming my experiments work out, I plan to share my results in a future article. If you have been up to a fun project, please share it with the rest of us by writing an article for *The Ash Breeze*.

The days are getting longer, and the weather is starting to warm up, so I am looking forward to soon being out on the water again. Hoping to see you out there!

Regards,

David Wyman, TSCA President





# HOLLY BIRD: THE ART OF THE SEA



*Edited by Andy Wolfe from an interview by Nick Fox*

Interviewing Holly Bird was a little like trying to take a sip of water from a fire hose. In addition to being a TSCA member, Holly is also an artist, printmaker, teacher, art director, animator, graphic designer, illustrator, and captain of an ever-popular Melonseed.

Holly grew up surrounded by boats. Her father was a sales representative for Boston Whaler, and later became a sales rep for Cape Dory, and a marketing executive for Shamrock, CSY Yachts, and Blackfin Marine. Not a bad list of brands. In 1970, her family settled on the southern tip of Merritt Island, FL, between the Banana River lagoon and Indian River. It's no wonder Holly became a sailor. Her father had been a traditional, old school racer on Long Island Sound. He taught her at the age of nine in a Boston Whaler Squall demo boat, and later on, Holly commandeered the resident 14' Cape Dory Handy Cat demo boat by painting the name *Grimalkin* on the transom without permission. It was the only demo boat her father ever bought from a manufacturer.

In 1977, the family moved to Fort Lauderdale, FL, where Holly sailed her fourteen-foot catboat around the turning basin in Port Everglades with the submarines and cruise ships all around because it was the only inland water where she could

get up a tack for more than five minutes. As a self-proclaimed “nerd-girl” in a tiny, traditional boat in a busy port, Holly got lots of support, like being offered tows under the 17th Street Causeway bridge against the tide. As an expertly trained sailor, she never took risks and maintained the highest quality of seamanship and harbor safety.

When she wasn't sailing, Holly devoted much of her time to drawing. At an early age, Holly's father had given her his engineering Rapidograph pens, and she received her grandfather's precision drafting tools as a gift, which allowed her to copy not just *Prince Valiant* from the Sunday paper, but also the illustrations in her fairy tale and adventure books. In high school in Fort Lauderdale, Holly continued with art, doing illustrations for the school and local papers and taking airbrush classes at the Fort Lauderdale Art Institute. The family moved aboard a converted 72' Chesapeake Bay oyster barge “Buy Boat” when Holly graduated from high school in 1978.

“All through high school, I was a giant nerd drawer. I drew dragons and the Millennium Falcon and was doing mostly pen and ink. My first job was drawing ink caricatures for *Broward Life Magazine* for the election year. I was already doing spot

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*Top: Holly Bird at work in her hurricane shelter/art studio.*



illustration jobs. I wanted to be a commercial illustrator in advertising and editorial, and then I ran into the giant brick wall of UF's art department, where they hated illustration. It was anathema."

Holly entered the University of Florida Fine Arts program in September of 1978. "At the time, in fine arts departments around the country, it was all about Concept. Representational art was out. You would go ahead and get your requisite figure drawing in, but after that, if you did realism, forget it." She evinced such an interest in pursuing classical subjects, her freshman year drawing professor told her, "You're just going to end up being a K-Mart artist." Later, in a design class, another teacher told her, "It's like you just want to be a comic book illustrator." In the back of her mind, she said, "Yeah, you know? I do!"

Holly entered UF's Graphic Design program, which is now one of the best in the country, but in 1978 the University of Florida was the country's number one party school. Despite the atmosphere, Holly couldn't be held back. And then at the end of her freshman year, something interesting happened. A friend, for whose family Holly had babysat in Fort Lauderdale, brought her skills to her father's attention—he needed an artist. Ted Swanson was a feature film production manager, famous for heading up *Rocky*, with Sylvester Stallone. Swanson was working on a new picture and called Holly, "So, you're still doing that art thing, right?" Holly said she was, and he said, "Do you want to come work on a movie for me?" It turned out Swanson needed a storyboard artist to work with first time director Harold Ramis. The film was *Caddyshack*. A couple of days later, she was driving out to the Rolling Hills Golf Course in Davie to interview with Ramis and Doug Kenney. "They looked at my portfolio and said I was hired."

Learning as much about the science of storyboarding while contributing to the production, Holly would go on to storyboard another five feature films, including *Cocoon: The Return* (1988).

Back in school, Holly studied with Ken Kerslake, the well-known printmaker. "He was wonderful—I was an undergrad. It was an elective. He really didn't spend a lot of time with us. But what he did teach me was fantastic. I'd done a little

woodcut in high school, but it was etching in college that really got me, even though I never thought I would be able to do this at home.

Holly graduated in what was one of the last groups of the traditionally trained graphic designers—and was early in the desktop publishing game. "I'm a technology hound, and I embraced it fully," she said. "I was there at the start of the desktop revolution, which got me into my jobs later as a 3D animator for television."

In 1999, she left her top of the market corporate television world and took her design and prepress skills to a teaching positions at the University of South Florida (USF), and at the International Academy of Design and Technology (IADT) in Tampa.

"By the time I lifted my head up out of the digital thing to look around, I realized I was really tired of staring at a computer screen and I had not been doing enough art using real tools, and that was one of the things that drove me away from being a designer."

Holly met her husband, Robert, and they moved to Clearwater, FL, in 1983, and eventually moved to Palm Harbor where they live now. Robert built a hurricane shelter that doubles as Holly's print

studio and houses her 27" Richeson etching press.

Holly was a year-round sailor of a Drascombe Lugger for almost ten years, later downsizing to an even smaller 13' 8" Crawford Melonseed skiff. She was also a BSA Sea Scout Leader, "sailing every Monday night, training for summer long cruises, and doing weekend activities with Scouts and then racing every other Sunday as foredeck crew with the local Ensign fleet." As part of the BSA Sea Scouting program, she would sail a chartered 50' Beneteau with other adult leaders, packed with teenagers to the Bahamas or the Dry Tortugas. "I look back at that and wonder what the hell I was thinking taking other people's teenagers in a sailboat to another country...but loved those years with the kids. Unfortunately, I was also sailing so much I wasn't getting a lot of my own art done."

Rocketing the story ahead, Holly is currently the lead printmaking instructor at the Dunedin Fine Art Center, teaching traditional methods of etching and relief printmaking. "Block printing really appealed to me, not just because of the



*Holly experiments with several different ink and wipe techniques for her etchings.*





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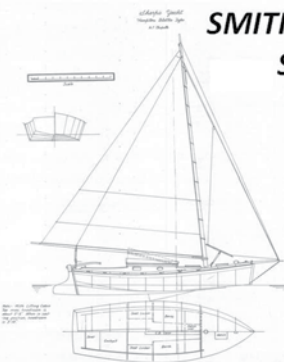
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evocation of the Arts & Crafts Movement style that I'd always loved. At the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th, a lot of women realized that instead of the traditional four-man Japanese woodcut team: the artist, the block carver, the printmaker and the publisher, a lot of women said, 'I can do that on my own, at my kitchen table when the kids are asleep.' Printmakers took advantage of using linoleum because it was a cheap flooring material, flat, readily available, and easy to work with. It opened up a whole new world of printmaking, especially for women artists needing extra income, and it gave any artist a ready, secondary market by creating prints of their paintings to sell.

"A lot of this coalesced for me in 2006 at a show at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art in Tarpon Springs. It was a phenomenal show of the Two Red Roses Foundation's collection of early 20th century block prints. I went back six times. I finally knew what direction to take my printmaking.

"Block printing was pushing all my graphic design, layout, and process buttons. It was closer to my personal design style. I had been trying to be more contemporary at the time, but I had this epiphany where it was all coming together—my love of illustration, printmaking, the Pre-Raphaelites, Golden Age book illustration—and boats.

"I decided to concentrate on the thing that I love, which is sailing and boats, and the nerdy technical process of making them look right. I'll bet that many people have this; that feeling you have when you look at a marine painting and find something horrifically wrong with the boat. I feel like I'm on a mission to get sailing right in block printing."

She says, "In making prints, I have a tremendous advantage, having been a print pre-press art director for so many years. Separating color, working from lightest to darkest, everything is mirrored, and backwards—my brain had already been

trained for decades working in pre-press to wrap my head around the process and the design aspect of that. Each separate block equals one color. You need to have as many blocks as there are colors. If you have eleven colors, you need to carve eleven blocks. But I would try to economize by seeing how many colors I could fit on one block without touching. I can even mix and add colors on the print by using transparent ink layers and overlaying the blocks. Even so, that's a minimum of 6 to 8 blocks I would carve for an 11- or 12-color print.

"For a multiple block color print, I first carve what is known as a 'key block,' which will position and register all the blocks at once. Once I finish carving and proofing the key block, I then print that key block onto a sheet of mylar, then offsetting that mylar print onto each of the rest of the blocks I'll use.

"As long as my prints are printed in the same wooden or mat board registration jig that key block was offset from, all of the blocks will now be in-register to each other—and so will the final prints.

"Once I start, it takes me about an hour to an hour and a quarter to brayer on the ink and to print each block, per final print. With multiple color blocks, there's no overlaying of inks unless I'm mixing thin, transparent layers, so I don't need to wait until the prints are dry between colors. With the emphasis on printing by hand, I can usually only manage 5–10 successful, multiple color block prints in one day that I would judge to be good enough to put in the edition. Then again, that's 5–10 complete art works done in one, single day."

"Sometimes it takes all those decades, until you discover that thing you enjoy while building on the skills of past careers and deciding, this is how I'm going to be a working and exhibiting artist," Holly says. "It had to be something I loved, but I'm where I should be now. It's very gratifying."

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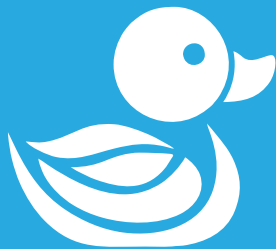
*The fourth and final keyblock pulled from Solla Sollew, a Drascombe Dabber, using a glass baren and wooden spoon by hand. It takes about 30–40 minutes to ink and print.*

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*A finished print of Ghosting Along, the Egret reproduction with the linen yellow sails, printed by hand using a baren and wooden spoon on Japanese Hosho paper and oil-based inks.*

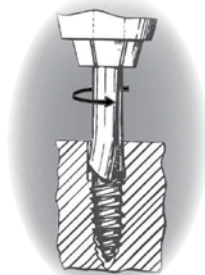


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VESPER-ARGONAUT

Designed and Built by J. Henry Rushton Canoe Co. • circa 1910 • 16'-0" x 2'-7"

Model 2019 • Irwin Schuster • Tampa, FL

*by Irwin Schuster*

Most of us are aware of J. Henry Rushton (1843–1906), New York State canoe designer and builder, who operated around the turn of the century (the one before Y2K); simply elegant and eminently functional craft; production with customization. In 2014, I visited the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton, New York, and the Adirondack Museum on Blue Mountain Lake, and saw live samples of Rushton's work. That was likely the inspiration for this project, which was started in 2018. Prior to that, I had created an illustration that showed up on the *Ash Breeze* cover of the Summer 2010 issue. With the presentation technique I currently prefer, a good bit of the work was done.

I call the style a rigged half model. The justification is that boats are (almost) universally symmetrical and my high school

drafting teacher, Mr. Cunningham, advised that there is no reason to draw both sides of such a subject. He saved me a lot of work over the intervening ~70 years.

Illustrations created on the computer are easily scaled and manipulated, and in this case, I lifted the sails apart from the spars and superimposed them onto a color photo that I had modified to sepia. Then the titles and various graphics were added, and all printed out to a comfortable size. I am not a slave to any particular scale. There are reasons for that but not in this instance. This model is about 1/20 scale.

I produced a series of cherry lifts, then soaked, bent them to the sheer curve, and laminated them to simulate planking runs. The lifts allowed me to cut out the cockpit shape more easily but were otherwise a waste of effort as they are barely

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*Top: Rushton Vesper-Argonaut, finished and rigged.*



# 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:

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*"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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**Top:** Encased in rough cedar, glazed shadow box.  
**Bottom:** Period canoes at the Adirondack Museum.

noticeable. So, carving shaped the hull, and veneer was employed for hiking board, king plank, coaming, hatch covers, and simulated keel and stems. Thin sheet aluminum was used for the Radix CB and rudder parts. The maroon sheer plank with gold decoration at the bow is laser-printed paper. All of this work was complete in April 2019, including the case, when other projects took precedence. I had a lot to think about. I was unsure as to how to deal with the attachment of half spars to the sails. On the model they were glued and pinned to the print on the “Masonite” backboard, but I had planned to lace them. Most photos show them as pocketed, like battens.

There is this thing we call “Artistic License” that real boat builders cannot use. I love it! Remember I said that these boats were customized? All kinds of options were available and eventually research revealed a sample of what I wanted to do. I loose-footed and sprit-boomed my way around the lacing issue, but it took a year and a half of mulling. You can interpret the spars as battens on both sides, riveted through. Truly, few canoes, even of the same model, were exactly alike, and were modified over time as well, such that vigorous rationalization, with imaginative artistic license, allowed me to rest.

What else? The figure is of Seneca Ray Stoddard, naturalist, outdoorsman, and photographer, rendered in polymer clay, posed to give a sense of scale. The rest of the story: I was motivated to finish up because I had printed a build date of 2019 and thought that finishing in 2021 would shred what few remaining vestiges of my cred.

### IN SUMMATION

1. “Live and learn” is a goal. In actuality, “Live, learn, forget, and/or make brand new mistakes,” is my experience.
2. In art and modeling, if you choose a beautiful subject and do a reasonable job, you get undue credit. Just accept it.



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# BUILDING A 16-FOOT MELONSEED SKIFF IN A VERY TRADITIONAL WAY...

## PART 1



*by Nienke Adamse*

Years ago, I built a boat with one of my students in shop class. We had made a model boat inspired by a photo and then we enlarged all the measurements ten times and started building. A parent donated some short cedar planks, not in the best shape, but that was all we had to work with.

The boat floated and that was it—it was so unstable that only one person could row it doing a circus worthy balancing act. To make it more stable, we needed to add some side floaters to it! The boat ended up in our backyard and stayed there until last summer when I used the cedar planks for the floorboards in the new boat, the Melonseed Skiff.

From my writing and my name, you probably already sensed that I am not a native born American, I am Frisian (Dutch), and my ancestors have a long history of building boats. I grew up in Friesland (Fryslan) and learned to sail and row from age eight. When I was older, I made weeklong trips sailing or kayaking, camping in a small tent on the shores of the many lakes and canals in Friesland.

Twenty some years ago, I emigrated to America with my husband and five kids and fortunately, after a few years of looking for the perfect place to live, we ended up in Maine, ten minutes' drive from a lake where I continued my passion for sailing and where I built my Greenland skin-on-frame kayak. What was still missing was a rowing boat, and I did not want to buy one!

My husband and I then left for China and worked there for two years as teachers. We lived in a 32-floor apartment building on the 24th floor. As far as the eye could see, from the 24th floor windows were other sky-high buildings. The city, though, was rather small from Chinese perspectives, only eight million people! We lived not too far from a huge lake, but when I asked my students if they ever swam in it or sailed on it, they laughed at me—that was dangerous! One could get poisoned by the water! Nobody dared to come close to it. The lake was so polluted by all the surrounding industries that their parents forbid them to come near the water.

So, I just made plans to build a boat for when we returned home to Maine. I liked the Melonseed skiff in a picture I saw and decided that that would be the perfect boat for me: it could row and sail at the same time.

When we finally made it back home, I could not wait to start building. I ordered the drawings for the molds and did some research online for how to build it. My main source was Tim Crawford's blog that I must have learned by heart by then. There was only one slight problem before I could start building my boat: I did not have a workshop large enough to build it in!

When we returned home from China, I took a year off from teaching and started digging about 400 cubed feet of dirt next to our existing garage by hand. I already made the plans and



the drawings for it in China. I built the construction out of fir trees from our backyard and put a metal roof (part solar for the greenhouse part) over it. I built the rest over the next two years on a wooden picnic table with my simple power tools. Once the shop was finished, a colleague donated two science tables, and that is how I started building my boat on these two tables with a connecting part made of 2 by 4's in between for a total length of 17 feet.

After watching a few people built a Melonseed skiff on YouTube and reading several blogs on how to build it, I made my own plan. I wanted to make a strip hull covered with fiberglass, inside and outside. Most builders use plywood molds to bend and hold the strips in place, but what I did not understand was that the strips were only glued together and not somehow attached to the molds. I wondered about that for quite a while, and I thought that there might be a good reason why they put in the ribs or frames for strength after the hull was glued and turned over. I just could not figure out what that reason might be. A few years before the boat, I made an Oud (a 12-stringed Arabic guitar) with birch bark and ribs made of branches. I attached the bent branches to the molds first (temporarily) and then glued the strips of birch bark onto the ribs. So, when the body came off the molds, it already had the strength of the ribs in it. The only reason I could think of why this system is not used on strip plank boat building is that the boat might look like a sausage afterwards. Even though the prospective of having to row in a sausage boat did not really appeal to me, I still decided to do it my way: temporarily attach the frames to the molds, glue the strips to each other and onto the frames, and then turn the hull over once finished by detaching the frames from the molds. So far, I have not seen any other builder doing it this way. (Editor's note: RibStrip boat construction was developed by naval architect Bill Platt and Upperdeck Boatshop in 2001.)

Because my shop is not that large, I had to execute the entire major cutting, bending, and routing before I would use the tables for setting up the stations.

Our house stands about 60 feet above a river, and on my daily walks to the river, I discovered two perfectly straight ash trees in the water, still hinged to the shore. A beaver's half-finished job. The trees were there for at least four years,



waterlogged and still with bark, before I decided that these trees would be perfect for my bent frames.

I cut through the hinged part and managed to get the first tree to the other shore where I cut it in half (with a pocket chainsaw). With the help of some strong family members, we brought the two halves to our backyard. I then split the tree with an ax and a few wedges into about twenty long strips of ash. With the hand planer and eventually a machine planer, I shaped them into strips of ash of about 1/2 by 1/2 inch by 8 feet. You will notice in my building story that I am not exactly accurate with sizes, not only did I not record the exact sizes, I also did not use exact sizes. I guess that is the artist me....



I bought the Barto designed Melonseed Skiff drawings online for about \$90 and copied the real size drawings onto 3/4-inch particleboard. Once the molds were cut (minus 1/2 inch to fit the frames), I drilled several holes about 2 inches from the rim for the clamps to hold the bent frames (or ribs) in place. I then fabricated a steamer from a 4-inch diameter PVC pipe about 10 foot long and attached a wallpaper steamer to it.





I steamed two frames at a time because of a lack of clamps. I used about twelve small C-clamps on each frame. Once the wood dried, I used wet rawhide for the first couple frames to attach them to the mold (I made a little ridge in the ash first so that the frame's outside would still be flush for the receiving strips). Later I changed my method (because I ran out of rawhide) and used metal wire instead.



After having attached the twelve frames to the molds, I started looking for wood for the strips. I originally planned to use some hand-cut boards from a huge pine tree in our backyard that was cut down a year before, but snow came early that year and the tree was completely covered with several feet of snow. My next idea was to purchase the cheapest rough fir



boards from a major hardware store and cut these boards into strips. I bought enough for at least 250 strips of 1/4 by 1 inch by 8 foot. Because of the knotty quality of this wood, I was sure that I would have plenty leftovers of cracked and broken strips. It costs me about \$100 to buy the boards.

After having cut and planed 250 strips of wood, I routed a bead and cove in them on a router table. This wasn't an easy task; you need to set the height just right and avoid dipping in the middle of the table because of the weight of the router, this will get the bead or cove off center. But somehow with all sorts of jigs and clamping systems, it worked!



Part 2 of the Melonseed story will be in the summer issue.

An advertisement for Nautical Outfitters RJ Sebastian. The image shows a white tote bag with a sailboat design, an orange cap, and a wooden chest. The text reads: "Nautical Outfitters RJ Sebastian", "Jackets, Caps, T-shirts, Belts, Totes and more.", "Order online, Year-Round", and "Rjsebastian.net".

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# DECORATIVE LASHINGS

*by Barry Long*

Sprits and oars need some form of protection on bearing surfaces. You can do without, but friction will wear through the varnish pretty quickly. Oiled leathers are traditionally used for this. I didn't have any leather on hand, or the skills to apply them in all the places needed. Also, by that point in the build, I was ready to just get on the water sailing. I tried something a little different that worked out well.

What you see in the photos is not a plastic sleeve. It's just nylon twine lashed on in a decorative whipping pattern. Super easy to do, fast, and cheap. I used it on the sprits and oars and oarlocks. Even around the mast at the partners. I thought I would have to replace it after a year or two, but it has held up well. Still the original whipping after 10 years.

Best I can tell, this is called a "French Whipping," which seems a bit racy but has a nice ring to it. It's just a simple overhand hitch tied over and over. The end is finished with a knot melted slightly with a flame.

When you tie the hitch, the wrap will be double thickness at the overlap. If you tie the hitch in the same direction each time, it will create a spiral pattern around the spar. For the circular oarlocks, I alternated directions. This makes a straight-line ridge along the outer circumference, and is a little wider along that ridge than the inner radius. Works out well for wrapping the rings of the oarlocks. A tight wrap of bulkier line keeps the

oarlocks captive on the oars so they can't slip out and away.

Rope work and lashings were more common in the old days, so other than being bright white at first, it seems to go reasonably well with the style of the boats.





# BUILDING THE POOR MAN'S HOLLOW MAST

by Richard Honan

## DAY 1

I had a new helper with my Peapod boat building project. My grandson Ben joined me in my workshop to help me build a poor man's hollow mast. Actually, the process began a couple of weeks earlier at Home Depot. I was walking by the twelve foot 2" x 4" rack and spied three or four almost knot free 2" x 4" boards. I checked for straightness and bought four of the spruce 2 x 4's for about \$10 each.

These boards would be perfect for my unstayed 11' 8" mast for my Peapod. I let the 2 x 4's sit on my lumber rack for a couple of weeks to see if they would develop any warping or

twisting. My grandson, Ben joined me to help assemble the mast. I set up a guide on one of my 2.25hp, 25,000 rpm Bosch routers and put a 1.25" core box router bit in the collet. After some instruction, I had Ben make three passes with the router. He had no trouble handling the router.

We then did some housekeeping, put down some drop cloths and prepared the bench for applying the TotalBoat 2:1 epoxy. Ben then helped me apply a coat of epoxy to both surfaces and then clamp the two 12' lengths together with a hundred clamps. It was a good experience for Ben, working with Popi and learning how to use some power tools.

Why make a hollow mast? Weight—there is no reason to have all that weight aloft. Total cost to make this poor man's hollow mast? Lumber and epoxy...\$25. If I had used sitka spruce, the cost of the mast could have been \$175 or more.

## DAY 2

After routing a 1.25" wide channel down the length of the two 2" x 4" boards with a core box router bit and epoxying the two pieces together with TotalBoat 2:1 epoxy, we let them sit over night to let the epoxy cure or harden.

The next morning, my grandson Ben and I removed about a thousand clamps that we had used to hold the two, twelve-foot pieces together. We now had a 3" x 3" blank, which started outweighing 26 pounds, and now with the center routed out, weighed in at 22 pounds. We set ourselves to the task of accurately marking out the mast tapers, 2" at the mast step, 2½" where the mast goes through the forward support or thwart, and 1¾" at the very top of the mast.

I set up the 7¼" circular saw to cut the tapers and proceeded to trim our blank to a more manageable size. By the time we had cut the tapers and removed the waste, our new 11' 8" mast blank was down to 10¾ pounds. I wish I could lose weight that fast!

Next, we'll get out our spar gauge and mark out our four-sided blank, for eight sides and finally sixteen sides. It's a very rewarding feeling to observe two twelve-foot 2" x 4"s turn into





a mast for our Peapod. It even more rewarding to share your knowledge and the experience with your grandson.


### DAY 3

Ben and I are eager to start the third phase of building our 11' 9" mast for what will be a lug rig for our Peapod sailboat. This is where we take our four-sided, tapered spruce blank and turn it into an eight sided blank...eventually, a sixteen-sided blank and finally, a hollow, completely round, 11' 9" mast.

To go from a four-sided blank to an eight-sided blank required us to make a new measuring tool, called a spar gauge. A spar gauge is a simple device that will mark two lines on the face of each side of a square plank (either straight or tapering), enabling the four corners of the plank to be planed down to these lines to produce the required octagonal shape (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZyKdswxGQw>).

Once we fabricated our shiny new spar gauge, grandson Ben put it to work and started marking out the four sides of our mast blank. It worked like a charm. Previously when making an eight-sided mast, I used a small 3½" battery powered circular saw to cut the bevels with mixed results. The bevels were roughly cut not a consistent bevel. Using a hand plane at this stage was very labor intensive. Instead, I opted for my new Dewalt, battery-powered planer. It was perfect for the job, easy to control, and reasonably fast.


With minimal instruction, I explained to Ben what was the final goal—eight equal sides. Ben made a few practice runs on a scrap piece of 2" x 4". I said to myself, "Enough hovering over Ben." It was time to let him get to work. I went about another task and left Ben alone. A little over an hour later and Ben had turned our four-sided blank into an eight-sided hexagon. The



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weight of the blank had dropped from 10¾pounds to just a hair over 9 pounds. Next up, sixteen sides!

Even “Lucky” the wonder dog looked on approvingly!

#### DAY 4

My grandson Benjamin and I did some final shaping or rounding of our 11' 8" hollow mast for the Peapod. What started out as a couple of off the shelf, Home Depot spruce/ fir 2 x 4's, initially weighing 26 pounds, is now pared down to a finished weight of 6¾ pounds. We did the final shaping with a small, orange-handled wood plane that belonged to my grandfather (Ben's great-great grandfather). Nonno gave it to me over fifty years ago. Ben and I also finished shaping the yard and the boom of what will be a standing lug rig.

Ben got to use the semi-OSHA approved Rube Goldberg spar sanding machine for the finish sanding. It worked like a charm! I also cut a foot in the base of the mast using a Japanese pull saw with a thin piece of plywood clamped to it as a depth stop. A little chisel work by me, followed by my grandson Ben shaping it with a rasp.

We also tapered, shaped, and sanded the yard and boom for our standing lug rig. The yard and boom started out as 1½" diameter hard pine closet rod from Home Depot. Educating my grandson about problem solving, sharing some of my woodworking skills, and teaching tool safety is priceless. I'm seventy-three years old, and there are few things that might interest a sixteen-year-old or that we can do together. Both of my sixteen-year-old granddaughters can handle a router, use a battery drill to drive screws, run a drill press, and make complicated cuts on a band saw. If I won that \$900 million lottery prize tonight, it wouldn't make me any wealthier.



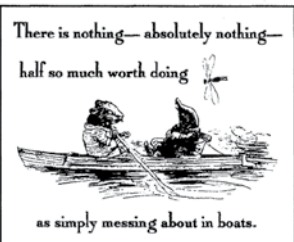
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# THE 50<sup>TH</sup> SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP AT MYSTIC SEAPORT

*edited by Andy Wolfe*

This year's John Gardner Small Craft Workshop will be the seaport's kick-off to summer over Memorial Day Weekend, May 29–31, 2021. The Workshop is listed on the Seaport's website and the Welcome to Participants, Registration forms, and Workshop Logistics are under final review and are expected to be posted at <https://www.mysticseaport.org/events/small-craft-workshop>.

In this COVID world, plans are always tentative, but Mystic Seaport Museum has been and is open following strict public health protocols. As such, we are planning to hold the Workshop in partnership with Mystic Seaport Museum. The John Gardner Chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association (JGTSCA) will be our host. By the calendar, the 50th anniversary of the first Small Craft Conference and

Rowing workshop was last year. We were unable to hold the event in 2020, so instead we will celebrate this year with sessions appreciating the past as well as looking to the future.

This year's Small Craft Workshop will be based on Australia Beach just behind the John Gardner Boat Shop. Workshop participants are encouraged to volunteer and assist with activities. Brian Cooper will be leading the Workshop with TSCA Secretary Bill Rutherford, with other JGTSCA chapter members in support. If you have questions, ask Brian at [cooperbd@aol.com](mailto:cooperbd@aol.com) or Bill Rutherford at [smallcrafter@gmail.com](mailto:smallcrafter@gmail.com). They may adjust some activities to fit circumstances, but we anticipate all the usual events plus some new ones we have not tried before. In general, our activities will include:



## WORKSHOP BOATS

The JGTSCA will have rowboats available for use. We encourage participants to bring their own boats for display and hopefully to allow others to use their boats. Participants will need to oversee the use of their boats. To be consistent with the rules of the adjacent Livery Boat House, the wearing of PFDs when boating is required as well as waivers. We encourage participants to bring their own PFDs. The JGTSCA will have some PFDs available.

## MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM BOAT HOUSE LIVERY

Boat House Livery will be available for you to try out a variety of rowing and sailing craft. The Boat House sailing and rowing rental boats will be in operation during the Workshop but at no charge to our membership during the weekend so feel free to experience any or all of their beautiful collection of boats. The Boat House will operate independently from the Workshop with their own rules and will require waivers for use of the vessels.

## DEMONSTRATIONS

The JGTSCA will have demonstrations over the course of the workshop. We encourage participants to host a presentation. Suggested topics include rowing and feathering, sculling, rigging, reefing, anchoring, sail setting, knot tying, making hardware, or on water demonstrations such as recovering from a capsized.

## TSCA ON THE WATER

Join JGTSCA host members for a morning row departing from the Australia Beach at 8 AM each day. We encourage participants to use their own boats if available.

Additionally, at 4 PM on Saturday, we will set out for an afternoon sail together.

## MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM WATERCRAFT COLLECTION OPEN HOUSE

The Museum's Watercraft Hall (generally not open to the public) will be open on Saturday from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM for TSCA members. It is accessed through the loading dock doors in the rear of the Collections Building across from the Latitude 41 restaurant. JGTSCA will offer a guided tour of the Collection leaving from the TSCA Booth at Australia Beach. A few other small boats on display may be observed on the way across the Museum campus as opportunity presents.

PLEASE WATCH [TSCA.NET/EVENTS](http://TSCA.NET/EVENTS) AND OUR TSCA FACEBOOK PAGE FOR ANY CHANGES TO THE WORKSHOP. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE.




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# 2021 SMALL REACH REGATTA

—BROOKLIN, MAINE, 2021—

SPONSORED BY TSCA DOWNEAST CHAPTER

*By Tom Jackson and David Wyman. Photo by Andy Wolfe.*

We are proceeding with the Fifteenth Small Reach Regatta on the assumption that the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions may allow us to proceed July 7–11, 2021, in one form or another. It is possible that some adjustments may need to be made, and we can't predict all nuances of the plan, but we hope we can move ahead anticipating adjustments.

This is a rendezvous, not a race, for traditional small rowing and sailing craft on the scenic coast of Brooklin, Maine. We plan arrival at the Atlantic Boat facilities on Flye Point on Wednesday, July 7. Boats will launch at the yard, and there is ample space for storing trailers. Hand-carry boats will also be dropped off at Atlantic Boat.

Lodging will be at Ocean Camping at Reach Knolls, just six miles from Atlantic Boat. Those wishing to stay elsewhere are welcome to make their own arrangements.

We have established several alternative daysailing courses of between 7 and 15 nautical miles for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Of course, a day's outing may be canceled if

the weather conditions are poor. As in the previous year, we may plan a one-way sail from Herrick Bay to the waters off the campground and return the next day. We'll anchor off the campground or in Benjamin River, so secure anchoring ability is especially important. Final haulouts, trailering, and departure will take place on Sunday, July 11, vacating the campground before noon and the boatyard as soon as possible.

If you have been an SRR skipper in the past and are bringing the same boat again, we'll consider you accepted, and a simple email to [tom@woodenboat.com](mailto:tom@woodenboat.com) can serve as your application. For new participants, we reserve the right to judge whether a boat is suitable for this event and these waters and whether the skipper has sufficient expertise to navigate in the expected range of conditions, so you must file the attached form, and we'll notify you as soon as the boat is accepted into the fleet.

**FIND SRR INFORMATION AND FORMS AT  
[WWW.SMALLREACHREGATTA.ORG](http://WWW.SMALLREACHREGATTA.ORG)**





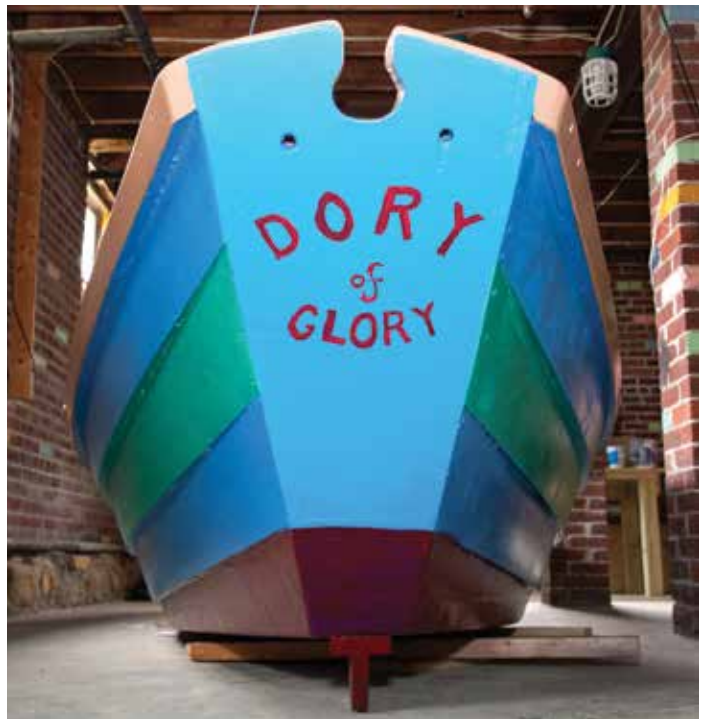
# THE BOAT, THE BUILD, THE BOOK: DORY OF GLORY



*By David Wyman. Photos by Rosemary Wyman.*

A decade before the pandemic, 7th and 8th grade students from the Adams School in Castine, Maine, designed and built a Maine Coast Fishing Dory. I oversaw the dory-building project with Don Small. We both had children and grandchildren who attended the school. We had additional help from the community, and four local organizations sponsored the project.

The dory was based on a typical dory that would have been used by fisherman from the town a hundred or more years ago, but this boat was designed to accommodate a crew of six students—four rowing, one steering, and one passenger in the bow. We made it wider than a typical Maine dory so that two students could sit side-by-side rowing on the middle seats, and to provide better stability for a cargo of kids rather than a dory with a cargo of fish in the bottom. Another critical element of the design was that the boat had to be able to fit through the ground level walkout door in the basement of the Town Hall where the building took place.



*Top: 7th and 8th grade students from the Adams School in the Dory of Glory.*







Every Friday, nine 8th grade students worked on the project for an hour and a half in the morning and the eight 7th graders worked during an afternoon session. The project was documented by photographer Rosemary Wyman, which resulted in the publication of a book, *We Build A Dory*, that each student received at the end of the school year.

We started “Dory Class” in September by first building sawhorses on which to work and then proceeded to the design and building of the dory. Our design process started with the students measuring and weighing each other—as well as the walkout door that the dory would have to leave through. The students worked out an arrangement of thwarts and stations on the basement floor by Imagineering their six positions in the boat. I drew their dory design on paper and the construction of boat began with frames made of Port Orford cedar.

The students built their dory entirely with hand tools: saws, planes, spoke shaves, mallets and chisels, hand drills, and screw drivers. Thole pins were turned, and they even carved oars out of spruce. The dory was traditionally planked with four 1-by-8 white pine planks (garboard, board, binder, sheer) per side and the bottom was made of plywood.

The woodworking was completed in late May, and students voted on a name and color scheme for their boat. The dory was painted with multicolored planks. The name they painted on the transom was *Dory of Glory*.

With the entire school, newspaper and television reporters, and many townspeople gathered, *Dory of Glory* was launched on June 1st at Castine’s Back Shore beach.



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*Students got real hands-on experience building the Dory of Glory in the basement of City Hall.*





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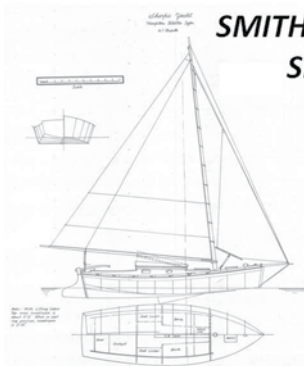
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The 2014 edition of our 253-page catalog of boat & ship plans, the *Ship Plans List*, is available for \$20.00. For information, search "boat plans" on the Smithsonian web site <[americanhistory.si.edu](http://americanhistory.si.edu)>.



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# A DIP IN THE POOL...



*by Ben Fuller*

Taking a dip in the pool is slang for capsizing in high performance small sailboats. For those of us fortunate to be brought up sailing these, a dip in the pool is routine, and something we practiced. Not so as much in larger daysailing oar and sailboats.

Capsizing and recovery is kind of a three-part exercise. First keeping from capsizing, usually the fault of the tiller nut or the nut at the end of the tiller. But it happens. Once capsized there are two parts—righting the boat for after rigging it for recovery and keeping you and your gear together, preventing an on-the-water yard sail.

Now when we sail these little boats, we don't push them the way we do when with racing boats—so we reef and otherwise shorten sail. This should be made easy with the bits of line needed to tie in tacks and clews at hand and should be practiced. Exercising any jiffy quick reefing lines helps keep things running smoothly.

There are a few techniques that help deal with unexpected events. For these boats where a big sail may be 70–100 sq feet, I never use more than a 2 x 1 sheet purchase. I am more interested in how fast the sheet runs when I let it go than fine trimming it under load, something learned as a foresheet hand in log canoes—there these massive sails never had more than a 2 x 1 led through a ratchet block. The skipper would give me a bit of a luff if I needed to trim. I can do the same on my little boat since I'm not racing. A ratchet block reduces the load I need to hold about 10 times. And I have pins in thwart around which I can take a turn. With care, I can use slippery

hitches or open topped, easy to reach cam cleats. I remember Barry Thomas, boatbuilder at Mystic, who built a melonseed for his young son David, and rigged it with no parts to the main. David wasn't strong enough to capsize.

The chief danger on these craft isn't going up wind but it's running. When the boom is out to 90 degrees to the boat and a big puff comes along, the boat can roll to windward, roll back to leeward, maybe again and then over you go. The great Paul Elvstrom figured out what was going when he started racing Finns before the 1960 Olympics. Simply, when you let the sail out that much, some of it goes ahead of the mast and wants to push you over to windward. A big puff, you get weather helm and the mast tipping to windward, then the boat rolls back under pressure of the boom and then it happens again. Simple cure: downwind, trim the main sail by its head. Don't let it ahead of the mast. It is especially important in lug and sprit rigged boats, which have lots of area high. If, in doing so, you have more weather helm than you like, pulling up your centerboard some will help, as will heeling the boat to windward. If these are not enough, stop and reef. This all can be exacerbated if there is a sea running. Bad things can happen when stuffing your bow into a wave. Like a surfer, angle your boat, steer for the troughs.

Even though you don't intend to hike your boat hard, sitting over the rail, a toe strap down the center is handy if you do sit to windward. It lets you pull yourself into the center if the boat rolls to windward. It's certainly saved me from a windward capsize in my ducker many times. And if there is



any breeze at all, try to keep your feet under you. If you are sitting in the boat bottom, you can't move around the boat. I spend lots of time kneeling on one knee.

Despite your best efforts, you find yourself taking a dip. Those of us raised in racing dinghies are used to boats that can be self-rescued, sailed dry. Sailing canoes pioneered this in the pre-WW2 years, and dinghies like International 14's require and tested floatation tanks but still needed bucket bailing. It wasn't until the late 40s, with the introduction of the self-rescuable Sailfish, that self-rescue became a concept for everyone. In racing dinghies of the 60s, air tanks, buoyancy bags, and the introduction of transom and suction bailers made self-rescue possible for larger boats.

Now if this happens where there is lots of boat traffic in warm water in protected harbors, you can right the boat, pull the sail down, and get a tow. About the only boat here that hasn't been capsized accidentally has been my skiff. In no cases did they have what it took for self-rescue. In every case there was plenty of help around. But if you are sailing in exposed conditions, you should be able to take care of yourself.

Self-rescue means that you need to be able to right your boat and bail it. Keeping it from turning turtle or rescuing it from turtling makes this easier. You need to have buoyancy. It needs to be enough to let you and your crew board the boat without submerging the slot in the top of your centerboard trunk. Something handy like a towel or shirt stuffed into the trunk can help. Buoyancy can be built in in tanks but not so much that the boat floats too high for you to be able to climb on your centerboard. If you use bags, fenders, or beach balls, these all need to stay in place. With today's glued designs, this can be a problem as there isn't much on to which to lash. I like to pull bags tightly in under side decks or side seats, which may mean strap loops of line or webbing under the seat and/or glued to the hull. I don't like sharp cornered metal pad eyes as these can hole a bag. In the end, bags under end decks need to be tied in, or if open, strapped in. You are going to need to bucket and scoop your boat dry. These tools need to be tied in with lanyard that allow quick access and are long enough to clip them onto you or the boat when bailing, so you can retrieve it when you throw it over board.

Buoyancy in your spars helps keep the boat on its side. Wooden spars help, but if you have hollow spars if wood but especially if metal or carbon, they need to be sealed. If you have spar halyard, you could use it to pull a float cushion down to a turtled boat's masthead, but this may be hard to reach.

Things need to stay attached where you can get to them. Starting with your centerboard or daggerboard, a shock cord hold down can help it from disappearing into the trunk. Rudders can come off; a simple turning bit of stainless can keep the rudder from slipping out of its pintles.

Once I've righted the boat, I like to be able to release the main halyard or otherwise douse the main. To do that, I've

rigged my halyard back to the centerboard/dagger board trunk, so I don't need to go forward. Indeed, I may be able to release the halyard before I swim around to the board. To do this means leading the halyard through a turning block and aft, a bit of a nuisance when rigging the boat.

Then there is your gear. I like to strap my oars in or have them under a thwart if I'm not rowing. I follow the Norse and stick them over my bow like a bowsprit with a webbing loop hold down. For all the small loose gear like flares, first aid kits, tool kits, lunch boxes, water bottles, GPS, and other nav tools, handy hats, and foul weather gear, I like the kind of net bags sold for scuba divers with a zipper on its side. I can lash both ends in place and still see and get to things. If your boat has good places for them, gear hammocks keep things in place. If I am camping and have drybags with me, I jam them firmly under a deck or lash them in place. A horizontal bit of netting may be able to be rigged under which they can get stowed. But it is pretty simple to use lanyards with snap hooks. I am choosy about my snap hooks, preferring ones that with torsion bails or dumb bell closures, which won't hang up.

Anchors are a challenge. If anchor and rode can fit in a bucket or bag, lash them in, stowed under a deck or seat. Lashings can be slipped so you can release them in a hurry.

I think a lot about what I'm wearing. I don't like auto inflating life vests. When you hit the water and they inflate, it's pretty impossible to do any work. For a cruise, I may take two life vests. For rowing when the risk of capsize is low I like a belt inflatable, with a bit of velcro to keep the manual inflation toggle from getting caught. I can slide the belt behind me, rowing and around in front when I need it. The odds of capsizing rowing with rig down are really low. And when I'm sailing, I use one of the Type III multi pocketed vests. In it can go my VHF, my personal EPIRB, and small flare kit. I don't like the harness type inflatables for small boats. They can catch on things, and they have no pockets. There is a new semi-inflatable vest on the market, designed for commercial use, one that floats you enough to swim and can be manually inflated if you need it. It only has a single pocket, so you may need to do as the Coast Guard does and use a gear vest if you want to carry a radio and emergency location tools. If your radio isn't on you, clipped on with a lanyard, it should be clipped to the boat where you can reach it.

Then pick a nice day and test your system. While not in challenging conditions, it will at least show you if you have done enough. Figure out how you are going to swim around your boat to the centerboard without letting go of the boat. Figure out how you are going to get back into the swamped boat. Typically, in two person dinghies, you can have one crew in the water next to the mast, and then in righting from the centerboard, they are lifted into the boat. If you can, find a nice freshwater lake so you don't have to rinse all your gear. The goal here is turning a capsize into a dip in the pool.





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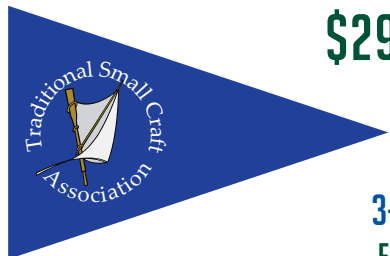
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Summer 2021 Volume 42 Number 2

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