

# *The* Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

## 30 YEARS WITH A BOAT

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**Overnight in Your Small Craft**

**50th Small Craft  
Workshop Recap**



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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 Todd Bloch. FRANCA, a San Francisco Felucca, sailing on the San Pablo Bay, CA.



Photo by Rosemary Wyman

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

David Wyman

As my three-year term on council and this past year as president is coming to an end, this will be my last president's column. It has been an honor and a pleasure to have been your president for the past year. The council has met monthly on Zoom, and in addition to some good discussions about increasing the relevance of the council, we have also developed new brochures, decals, patches, and burgees, which will be available soon.

My project for the past winter of COVID has been making oars with varying blade shapes while keeping the length and blade area the same. My goal has been to understand which blade shape is most efficient. I did some preliminary tests with a single oar while sitting at the edge of my wife's exercise pool; with snow still on the ground, it was fun but not conclusive. Now, with the warming weather, I have been conducting experiments with the oars using my peapod. I have also gotten a variety of TSCA friends to give their evaluation. Because my peapod is a little crowded with five sets of oars aboard, my TSCA friends have experimented with three of the pairs of oars: flat-bladed, slightly spoon-bladed, and spoon-bladed. My initial results are worth sharing. For rowers of moderate strength like myself, all three sets of oars work well, with no significant difference between them. For strong rowers, however, the spoon-bladed oars were found to be superior. If you have been up to something that might be of interest to others, please share it by writing an article for *The Ash Breeze*.



Now that boating weather has returned to Downeast, Maine, it is time to get out on the water with my TSCA friends. Best wishes for an enjoyable and more normal summer.





# A SURF BOAT RESTORATION ON CAPE COD



by Tony Davis, CCMM Trustee and Volunteer, Owner of Areys Pond Boatyard

Many of us who live on Cape Cod are here because we love the beach. In particular, the beaches facing the Atlantic Ocean in the towns of Chatham, Orleans, Eastham, Wellfleet, Truro, and Provincetown. We walk the beaches to reflect on our day or the past year. A meditation unfolds with each stride in the silky sand. We listen to the wind or the still air. We listen to the many different species of birds and the breaking waves. There is always a symphony of sounds making the time alone special. You leave longing for your next beach walk.

Imagine, while on your next walk, it's February 9th, 1934. You are enlisted with the US Coast Guard and stationed at the Nauset Station in Eastham. Around midday, the Coast Guardsman on watch calls for all hands on deck to head out to rescue the crew aboard the two-masted Schooner *Anna Sophia*. The surfmen work fast to haul their Race Point surfboat to the water's edge and, as practiced weekly, push her into the heavy surf and the freezing cold February wind. The two bowmen climb aboard, holding the bow steady, followed by the remaining three midship rowers. When they are confident the wave break is timed perfectly, the last push comes from the skipper who is also the coxswain; he jumps aboard. The coxswain steers the boat with his 20' oar, in the

24'6", 1,200-lb, cypress-on-oak, clinker-built, Race Point surfboat toward the Schooner. Each man pulls the 12' oars in unison toward the stranded crew. As her 6'2" beam and 2' draft slices through the water, up and over the waves, cold water sprays all over the men protected by their oil skin gear.

In this particular rescue, they saved all five aboard the *Anna Sophia*, including the Schooner's dog, but sometimes, that was not always the case. The extreme weather off the shores of Cape Cod often created difficult conditions for the surfmen to approach vessels that had run aground while working their way north or south to deliver supplies to the East Coast cities.

Coast Guard historian, Richard Boonisar compares the coastal shipping lanes of the 19th and 20th century to the well-traveled Interstate 95 today. "It was the best way to move large amounts of goods up and down the coast." And sadly, over the years between 1877 and 1914, 27 Cape Cod keepers and Surfmen died in the line of duty; 11 by drowning. There are over 400 wrecks off Cape Cod, and 220 surfboat men were lost while on duty from the Jersey shores to Cape Cod. Some surfmen died from rescue attempts, some from sickness as a result of a rescue.

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*Top: Exterior station templates installed.*



The first Race Point surfboat was designed by George Bickers of the Race Point Life-Saving Station and built by Charles Gardner of Provincetown, hence the name, dating back to 1894, by which the boats were called. This simple design, the choice of construction scantlings made her light and strong. Her full bow and high freeboard are all features that evolved over the years and led this to be the best design for five rowers and a coxswain to move her efficiently into the surf and leave enough room for the rescued. So began the long history of the surfboat.

A total of 143 wooden Race Point surfboats were built by private yards on and off Cape Cod; all were built without a set of proper builder plans. In 1922, a set of plans were finally drawn up by Ralph Winslow of Quincy, Massachusetts. Now, with proper plans in place, 57 more surfboats could be built at the Curtis Bay Coast Guard Yard in Maryland. At the end of World War II, 59 were still in service along the East Coast. Some of the Cape Cod stations like the Cahoon Hollow station, had two boats ready to go. The end of World War II ended the use of pulling surfboats—they were replaced by motorized vessels, like the CG 36500 Lifeboat made famous in the movie *The Finest Hours*.

One of the 57 Curtis Bay surfboats, boat #24467 constructed in 1944, retired from duty and became property of the National Seashore on the outer Cape sometime after World War II. She was on display at the Eastham headquarters until she was moved to a storage location. She did not have a long history on duty, but she represented the boats that did.

In the early 2000s, the Seashore management team realized that boat #24467 was going to rot away if someone did not take an interest in her. So, calls were made, and she was transported to the Cape Cod Maritime Museum on South Street in Hyannis. She was in poor condition and was stored outside, due to a lack of space at the museum. Around this same time in 2005, Richard Boonisar exhibited his restored Race Point surfboat at the museum for their Life-Saving Exhibit. After the success of this exhibit, Trustees of the Cape Cod Maritime Museum began to consider restoring the Curtis Bay surfboat, which was deteriorating further with each passing winter. She was getting beyond the point of considering restoration. The museum had an opening in the shop for a project, and weighing the fact that the cost in materials for a complete rebuild was reasonable and the work would be done by volunteers, it was voted, after some debate,



*Bringing the surf boat ashore, Coast Guard Station Nauset's (Eastham, MA) Race Point Surfboat with the rescued crew and ship's dog of the Anna Sophia, February 9, 1934.*



to give it a shot. A restoration is historically a more profound way to preserve the work of past shipwrights and a vessel with a notable history.

In 2018, plans were put in motion to acquire ownership of surfboat #24467, from the US government and restore her to her full glory at the Museum's Cook Boat Shop. She would join the fleet of three currently restored Surf boats on Cape Cod.

Working as a volunteer group, Bill Stirling, Alan Reed, Bob Lister, Ray Ward, Richard Boonisar, and I are working once a week to bring her back to life. As the project progresses, many of the other museum boat shop volunteers will help prepare her for the water.





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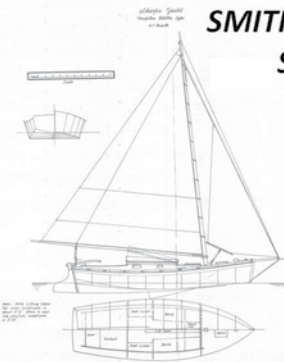
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The Smithsonian has hundreds of boat and small craft plans from the publications of Howard I. Chapelle; the 1937 Historic American Merchant Marine Survey; Harry V. Sucher's *Simplified Boatbuilding* volumes, and many others.

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

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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.*



While planning the restoration, we brainstormed how we could secure the very fragile hull. We needed her to be shored up in a fashion that would allow us to fit a new keel, stem, and stern post without losing any more shape. We needed to engineer a plan to remove the hog in the bow and keel and get the hull tweaked and gently pushed back to her original lines.

In February of 2019, at an after party (hosted by the Maritime Museum) for boatbuilders and exhibitors attending the Cape Cod Boat Builder's Show, Don Chapin, of Chapin Custom Boats, had the idea to build mold stations that represented the outside of the hull. We had plans and offsets thanks to Richard Boonisar, so Don entered the offsets into his CNC machine and cut out the molds for us. This allowed us to twist and push the boat into her original shape and secure her to the shop floor on a ladder frame that Don loaned us. She was now set up similar to a new boat construction, right side up. The big difference was the molds represented the outside planking. Now we had an open area in the boat to work. In 2021, we will install a new keel, stem, stern, and frames—and eventually planking, inwales, gunwales, and thwarts.

As we learn more about the history and lives saved by the Race Point surfboats, this restoration project has become a great attraction to share with museum visitors. So, the next time you are walking on the ocean-facing beaches of Cape Cod, be reminded of what Richard Boonisar said in the closing of a recent interview/podcast at CapeCodMaritimeMuseum.org: "Put on some 1900s oil skin gear and walk straight into a Nor'easter in February. Look at the sea state, feel the snow and sand in your face, and then imagine pushing a 24' lifeboat into the waves, to save lives, knowing you may not return."

This project will take a couple of years to complete based on the schedule we have set up. Please keep an eye on the Cape Cod Maritime Museum website [CapeCodMaritimeMuseum.org/surfboat-restoration](http://CapeCodMaritimeMuseum.org/surfboat-restoration) for updates on our progress. If you would like to donate to help this effort, there is a link to

donate on the site. If you have any experience with Race Point surfboats or would like to share any history, please feel free to get in touch via email. We would love to hear from you. [Tony@areyspondboatyard.com](mailto:Tony@areyspondboatyard.com)

We will share more articles and photos with TSCA as progress is made in the rebuild, along with more stories about these vessel's historic rescues off our coastal waters.

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*Top: Placing the strong back under the Surfboat.  
Bottom: Surfboat arrives behind the museum December 2018.*



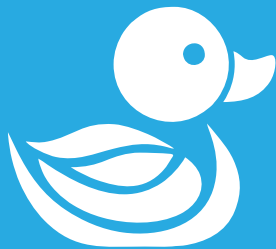
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*Tony Davis and Bill Stirling working on the keel rabbet.*



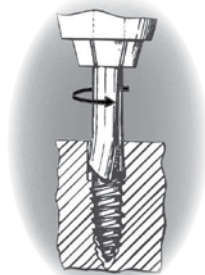


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# JOHN GARDNER SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP: THE 50TH

by Bill Rutherford, JGCTSCA Hosting Chapter

All good sea stories begin with the same line: “It was a dark and stormy night ... and there we were, green water coming over the bow ...” Well, the 50<sup>th</sup> small craft workshop was not quite like that, but close! Friday was one of those beautiful late spring days you wait all winter for: sunny and warm with a light breeze. Those of us who live in the Northeast get a little wary during days like this; much too nice to last. Well, we were right. A real Northeaster blew in Friday night. It was cold and windy with rain pouring down—for three days. Did that dampen the spirits of the assembled Traditional Small Crafters? Not a whit. We not only persevered but we thrived. The worse the weather got, the more we raised our voices in defense of traditional oar and sail.

Mystic Seaport provided safe haven for registered attendees, museum walk-ins, and our boats tied alongside docks floated in for the occasion, providing protected water along Australia Beach. And more to the point, we were allowed to warm our toes in the old Toy Boat Shop, which is really an extension of the John Gardner Boat Shop. We wisely left the portable tents

outside, folded in amongst the Beetle Cats not yet launched for the summer season. We forgot the usual “White Box” to communicate our schedule. Instead, we posted upcoming activities with notes taped to the door window.

Having discarded our carefully made plans, we asked instead, “What would you like to talk about? What would you like to know more about? How to make your own sails? Convert frame patterns to a set of plans and build a boat? Read a chapter from your upcoming sea novel?” We did all of that, plus managed to squeeze in a few group rows up and down the Mystic River and some afternoon sails.

We had folks and boats from up and down the Coast, some who attended the original Small Craft Workshop in 1970. Attendees included the Cockeys, David and Katherine, from Rockland, Maine, (“Know where to buy a good, clear flexible batten? Home Depot in the Trim Section.”); Thad Danielson from the Massachusetts’ Berkshires with his new book *Wooden Boatbuilding: Always More To Learn* (excellent book!); Peter MacLearn and his wife, Gwenn, (thanks for the

*Top: Mohawk River Bateaux Crew Sharing the History of their Craft.*



# John Gardner Grant

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

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

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

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

Program details, applications, and additional information:

[tsca.net/john-gardner-fund/](http://tsca.net/john-gardner-fund/)



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

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homemade banana bread, Gwenn) from Boston's North Shore with a WoodenBoat Peapod in tow; Dick Sleeper and his wife, Jeannie Steigler, from Troy, New York, brought Dick's father's Chamberlain Skiff and the drawings to go with it, made from some builder's patterns he found (and they sailed it with an ancient Dynamite Payson *Tortoise* lateen sail)—you should have seen that boat go when they rowed together, facing each other (Dick said, “I like to see where I’m going.”); plus a real small craft designer, Tony Dias, with his *Sparhawk* sailing canoe design straight out of the 1880s, with his friend and the boat's owner, Irving Sheldon (the best of all worlds: design a beautiful boat—build it, sell it, be friends with the owner who maintains it, and invites you to join him at small craft meets). Tony also regaled us with a dramatic reading of a chapter from his upcoming book, *In the Forecastle*, read as we huddled in the basement of the Seaport's Chandlery. A chill wind blew in the open door with spits of rain as he took us into the forecandle of a 1910 fishing Schooner (like the Seaport's *Dunton*) clawing its way off the coast, returning from the Grand Banks in a fierce winter storm. We were glad to return to the Toy Boat Shop and its hot coffee and donuts.



By far the hit of the show, however, was the crew from the Mohawk River with their historical 20+ foot replica of an 18th century River Bateau. Handmade, with carved oars and a square-sail straight out of one of Ben Fuller's Afjors faerings (“Cut the halyard and she comes down real quick”). You should have seen them scoot right along in front of that Northeast wind coming downriver Sunday morning exploring of the source of the mighty Mystic River. But they really came into their own in the warmth of the Old Toy Boat Shop as they shared the adventures of their annual week-long unsupported trips along the Mohawk River and its tributaries. As they got to know us, the stories became more hilarious. Encounters with the “natives” (townspeople) along the way say nothing of rigging and carrying cannon to reenactments at

*Top: Sunday's Plan of the Day.*

*Bottom: Dick Sleeper and Jeannie Steigler ready for a sail.*

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the ends of their trips. All in handmade outfits ca. 1770. They were really having fun, as were we.

With gale warnings, Prof. Steve Jones exercised his US Coast Guard experience to wisely call off the planned Saturday morning Reenactment Row of the first “Small Craft Conference and Rowing Workshop” in 1970. Steve has, in publication for release this summer, a fresh book *Oar, Sail & Saw: (pronounced “Soar”) Celebrating 50 Years of the Traditional Small Craft Workshop*. A fun compilation of remembrances, old photos, and essays by folks who were present at the inaugural workshop and active since.

The planned indoor activity (we actually had one) was a hit. We toured the Seaport’s Small Craft Hall (in the former Rossi Mill) jam packed full of traditional small craft in their as-donated condition. (Want to match colors of paint? See how they half-dovetailed ribs in at the centerboard case? How thick, really, were “Pete” Culler’s chine logs?) We had 23 folks in our tour group plus Sarah Clement, the Seaport’s new Co-Waterfront Programs Administrator as well as our own Peter Vermilya, Seaport Small Craft Curator, Emeritus. We ignored them, of course, and dashed off to view our favorites: Rushton Rowing Boats, Canoes, Catboats, Dorries as well as later pretenders like the original Laser Version 0.

Many thanks go to Brian Cooper who led the Workshop, managed the waterfront, and led the morning rows; to Phil Behney who delivered the JGTSCA Dorries and to John Hacunda who joined us Sunday and helped Brian row them back to Mystic Shipyard East; to Mystic Seaport Museum’s Co-Waterfront Programs Administrators Sarah Clement who helped us organize this whole thing; to Nicolas Alley who joined us Sunday for a gam and rowed with us Monday; to each of the presenters in the Workshop; and a special thanks to all the attendees who braved the elements to join us and have fun with our Traditional Small Craft. See you next year!

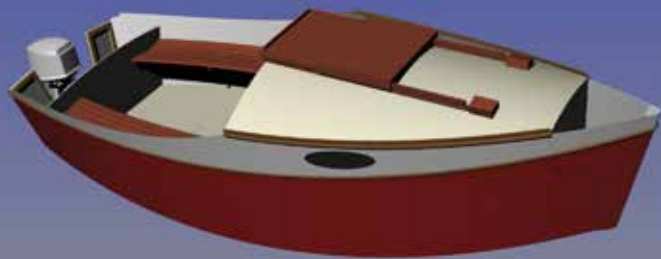


**Top:** Tony Dias Reading from his book *In the Forecastle in the Old Ship’s Chandlery*. **Above:** Captain Alley and his Chester Yawl Ready for the Morning Row. **Below:** A Visit to the Small Craft Hall Originals.





# A SHIFT IN THINKING



by Mack McKinney

This writer was fortunate to grow up in revolutionary times. Not as pan-dramatic as a radical shift in government philosophy, but a revolution where wooden boats slowly—and then not so slowly—yielded their slips to vessels made of the then-shiny, ever-moldable substance whose name can't be mentioned. You know what I'm talking about—L. Francis Herreshoff lovingly referred to it as “frozen snot.” Maybe not so lovingly. Under our watchful eyes, our small Lake Ontario harbor transformed from berthing noble yachts with gobs of varnished mahogany and polished brass to plastic boats boasting teak trim here and there and stainless hardware accents. For some reason, the newer generation of sailors wanted to actually use their boats instead of spending their short summers sanding and varnishing.

Years pass, just something they do. Mere mortals can no longer pay as much as a very nice house to assuage their boating habits. No longer children, we pastored churches in the Hill Country of Texas. Which for the geographically challenged is an *entire country* away from Lake Ontario, and has a lot more to do with beef than boats. Yet even living in Texas, it was obvious there is no vaccine for the boating bug. Nor is there a 12-step program. We still suffer from this bug as much as we suffer for a still unrequited love of the boats we call

*traditional*. Which is where this design comes in.

Although it seemed at first like a visit to the Island of Misfit Toys, we fell in with a group of like-minded individuals who—would you believe—built boats, while living in inland Texas. Boats made of—would you believe—wood. Some of the wood was really good and of species we have come to love and accept as wood for boats. Some was sourced from the local big box store. These industrious boatbuilders often covered that sort of wood with fiberglass set in epoxy. Wood *and* fiberglass. What a country! These folks, certainly all hardscrabble descendants of those who fought at San Jacinto, formed a loose confederation, which eventually registered as a chapter of the TSCA. We had a great time with each other and each other's boats at messabouts (another new concept for this writer), sailing everything from beautifully finished Mellonseeds to Oz racers to funky Phil Bolger designs covered in porch paint. The “messers” (those participating in the messabouts) spent their time sailing or paddling or grilling steaks and hot dogs or telling stories—inevitably telling stories, many of their past boats or their current builds or the Texas 200 or the Everglades 500.

Wait! What is the Texas 200? We've been in Texas over 20 years and never heard of the Texas 200. Do they race in Formula One cars? Not cars at all?

But 200 miles in a Puddle Duck racer? You've got to be kidding!

No, these hardy souls were not kidding. They must just like sand and mud because these rallies and others just like them (“raids”) are obviously multi-day events running up and down the coast lines of our fair country, after the vessels cross the fruited plains on trailers, cartops, and in the back of pickup trucks. Upon further inquiry, many of said hardy souls also cruise their small boats, often alone, the less introverted with a companion. And some of the companions are even human, as opposed to the canine or feline varieties. This cruising necessarily calls for floating along by day, watching the world go by, and by night “pulling over” and pitching a tent against the elements. Or simply sleeping under the stars. Galleys and provisions consisted of nothing that couldn't be jammed into a large backpack. Simplicity. I reacted to this account characteristically.

I pondered.

Follow the thought process here: Dreams evoking memories of youthful summer days slipping a Blue Jay in and out of calm, still back channels bounded by endless reeds and cattails, carefully avoiding the few overhanging branches and shallow water, sneaking up on sunning turtles and bumping them back into the creek. The water was fresh, but the coast of Texas is not fresh water. Texas coastline brags of subtropical sandy beaches and palm trees. Sand. Don't care much for sand. Or, more specifically, don't much like sand in the sleeping bag. Something must be done!

Still, growing up across the tracks from the “yaating” crowd (you know who you are), the traditional CCA-inspired aesthetic stuck like a bad habit. The resulting design brief included points such as the boat coming off the drawing board needed to be able to float on a heavy dew, be readied to cast off with a minimum of fuss, be easy to build and result in a relatively light model, be specifically designed as a displacement hull (read slow speed and



no huge, expensive, smelly outboard, for *traditional* cruising), be bomb-proof, and especially, be able to sleep two people in basic comfort and dignity. A friend and builder/messer bandied the concept about with me, which went something like this after hearing my self-imposed criteria:

“Sounds great. I want to build it when you finally get the plans ready!”

“I was hoping you’d say that. Here are the plans.”

“It’s less than six foot in beam, right? Or I can’t get it out my shop door.”

“May I have those plans back?”

After revisions, the same friend tactfully pointed out it would be “high cotton” to have stowage space for a portable toilet and a cooler, so we proceeded further down the design spiral. And when we were finished proceeding, we called it the Centex-16. The sharper-eyed among you will have already spotted the genesis of her name.

It seems there is a “sweet spot” that resonates with many when boats are in the neighborhood of sixteen feet overall. Sixteen feet is not a size traditionally associated with an enclosed cabin. At the same time, the maximum useable volume on a vessel is most easily achieved through dispensing with a trunk cabin and side decks and simply employing a raised deck. Since one can only cram so much into sixteen feet, a raised deck seemed sensible and would permit sitting up and reading or pulling one’s britches on in a cozy, dry place when the weather turns. There are several raised deck models

extant of larger sizes, both successful and livable, from which to draw inspiration.

Starting with a hull sporting significant rocker for directional stability, adding a vee-shape to minimizing pounding in a seaway or at anchor, allowing a sweet shearline to develop, and finally incorporating the raised deck using traditional aesthetics resulted in a healthy meld of attractiveness and functionality. Including a modified Dorade-box ventilation system to keep the cabin watertight adds a feeling of airiness and prevents the cozy atmosphere from becoming stuffy. A monocoque hull structure with a reinforcing grid below the cockpit will help her stand up to beaching, and a small wet anchor locker forward will help when the beach is rocky and anchoring out is preferred. Keeping a muddy anchor away from the living quarters should please the spouse. She has a large cockpit because cockpits are where boaters spend most of their time, and she has the simplest provision for a 6–10 hp outboard motor, which should push her along at a comfortable hull speed just shy of 5 knots. At 5 knots, we can actually *see* what’s around us. When the design spiral finally spiraled out, we had a design for an eminently useable vessel easily built in a garage or backyard with a minimum of hand tools and, especially, investment.

Which brings us full circle; here we have a vessel that is economical to build, economical to maintain, and economical to use. Yes, we still long for the smell of pitch and tar and fresh varnish, to hear the creaking of a fine yacht working her way to weather. It is a sweet dream. Cobbling together an affordable boat to be stored on a trailer in the garage, while much like the turtles, we used to aggravate carrying her own accommodations to ride out a sudden downpour keeping dry and comfortable, well, that doesn’t seem to be such a bad dream either. Perhaps it is only slightly less appealing than the dream of spending the night gently tugging at an anchor rode, listening to water lapping against the hull, tucked in a sleeping bag mercifully free of sand.

The plans show the slightly more complicated and traditional framing (really a “hybrid” of traditional and modern techniques), and in a nod to the traditional even include a table of offsets, but the Centex-16 should lend well to simple stitch-and-glue construction and has comprehensive point-to-point measurements to avoid lofting for those of us that just want to get on with cutting wood.

Plans including a 44-page building manual, as well as most of the required materials and supplies to build the Centex-16 are available from Duckworks Boat Builders Supply at:

<https://duckworks.com/centex-16-instant-download/>

Contact the designer at:

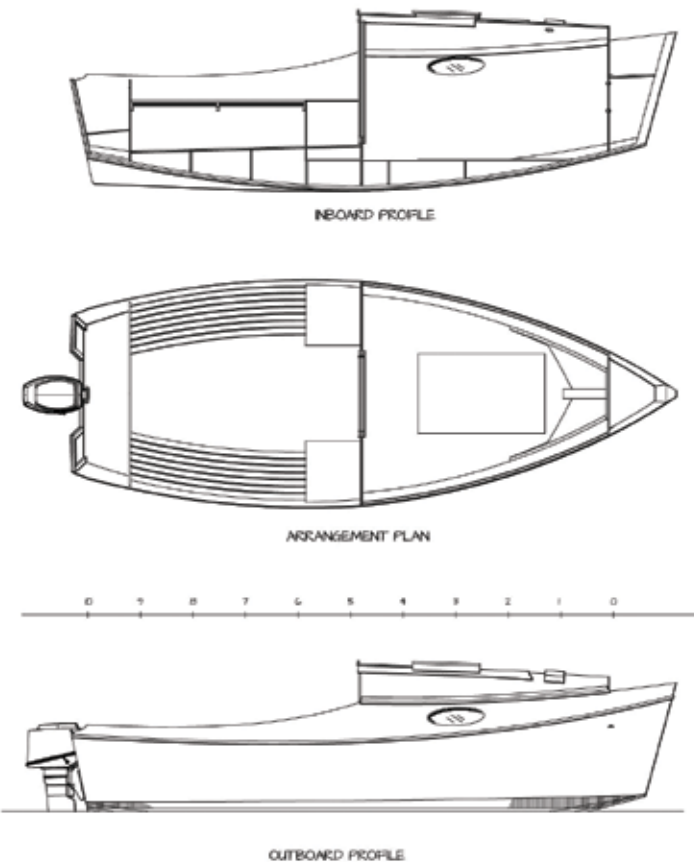
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# BUILDING A 16-FOOT MELONSEED SKIFF IN A VERY TRADITIONAL WAY...

## PART 2



by Nienke Adamse

*Note: Part 1 was in the spring issue.*

I then had to scarf joint them together, and I made a jig for that on my sanding machine. I figured that if I joined all my pieces first, I would not have any space to store them without being in my way, so I decided to join a few at a time while making the hull.

Another major project that I needed to do before I would set up the stations was making the 14-foot-long bottom, the stem, and the transom.

A friend of ours gave me a nice piece of curved ash a few years ago because he heard that I wanted to make a dogsled. That piece (and the dogsled) was never used until I thought it would be the perfect piece for a boat stem. I had first roamed the woods in order to find the perfect bent tree, but I eventually got the bright idea to go and find that old piece of bent ash. I traced the drawing of the stem on the wood, and I could find the right curve twice, which was good because then I would get the right thickness. I cut the old hard piece on my feeble band saw with a lot of smoke developing, but it





worked. I then glued the pieces together and finished it with a nice groove on both sides that would hold the ends of the strips of the hull.

Next up was making the bottom. I dowel-jointed and glued (for all the gluing I used Titebond III, which will give you a bit more time to get it all right) eight 2x4s together and planed them on my 13-inch planer in two groups until about 1/2 inch thick. I then fit it all together until I had a bottom piece of about 24 inches wide and 15 feet long. It was not easy to determine the right shape of the bottom, but with the help of the mold shapes, I pieced it all together. I waited with beveling the sides until I would fit it on the molds.

I worked in a similar fashion for the transom, also made with 2x4s. This time I beveled the sides before I would attach it later to the molds. The transom curved slightly when drying, but that actually looked nice, so I left it that way.

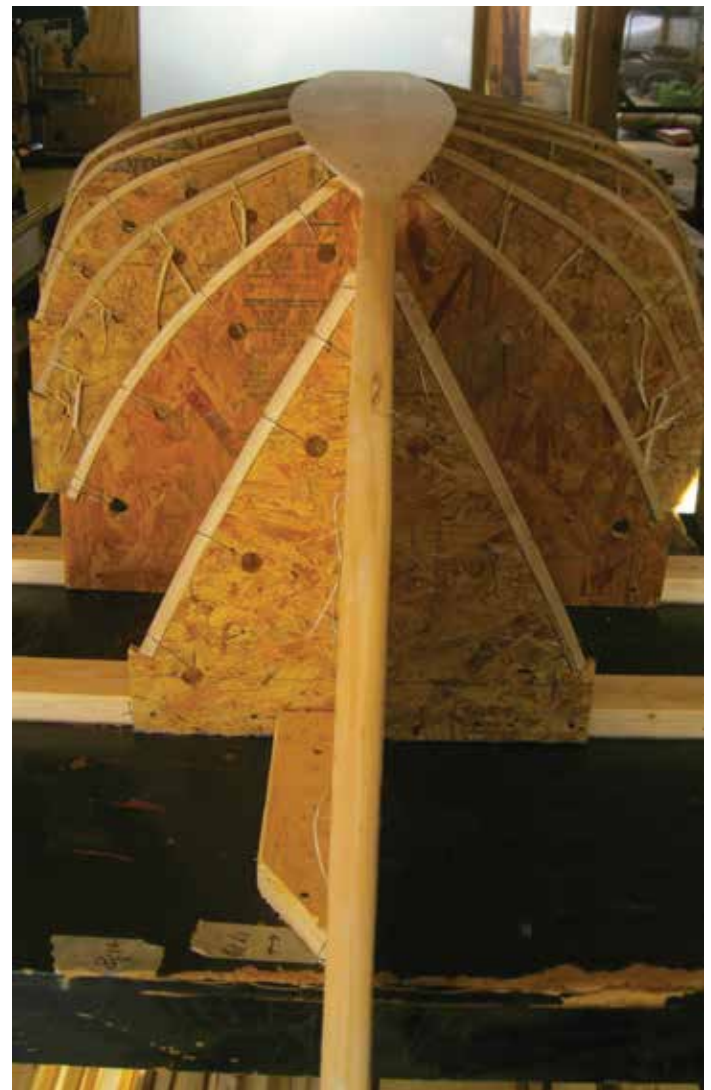
Now I could finally set up the molds on the two attached tables! I set up the stations with 2x4 pieces screwed into the tables. I had to be careful to make sure that the fore molds would be attached before the measured stations and the aft molds behind the line. I want to apologize beforehand to

experienced boat builders about my lack of knowledge of the accurate terms for boat building. I do have a dictionary here to translate the terms from Dutch, but since I never built a boat in the Netherlands, I don't always know their terms either... For me what really counts is if the boat floats and rows well, and that it does!

After I attached the molds to the 2x4s, I used some leftover particleboard pieces to keep the molds up square and solid. With the molds all upright, I started to become really excited because now I could see the shapes of the boat in front of my eyes!

I then placed the bottom on the molds and screwed it into the frames with small 1/2-inch screws. After I beveled the sides a bit (I would do the rest of the beveling after the strips were in place) to match the rounding of the strips, I attached the stem to it with a half lap joint. I then beveled the stern side of the bottom to fit the transom. The transom was held in place by an extra 2x4 screwed into the end of the table.

The next phase of building took a few months. I paced myself to glue at least two strips (one on each side) per weekend, I have a fulltime teaching position, and the weekends were the







only days (plus several snow days and vacations) that I could work on the boat. I also had to warm up the shop with a woodstove, which takes a few hours before I could safely use the glue and let it dry.

It took a few strips before I started to get into a rhythm: first scarf joint four (or more) strips until a length of about two 17-foot strips, the day before. Then gluing them in place with the cove side up (this prevents glue from dripping down). I put in a few pieces of 1/4-inch dowel in the open cove sides so that the metal wire (and later the bungee cords) would not damage the thin cove sides. I put a generous amount of glue in the receiving cove and held the strips together with a wire. Later when the distance between the strip to glue and the bottom strip became too large for the wire, I used bungee cords instead. I used C-clamps to glue the strips onto the frames. I put in a small brass screw into the transom and stem end for each strip.

Yes, sometimes things snapped and cracked, but it actually did not happen too often. I beveled the frames as I went up with each strip to make sure that the strips were glued flush on the frames. I did the fairing before I starting gluing the strips with a thicker 1/2 inch long strip of lumber of 1 inch wide. I cut the wires (or rawhide) that attached the frames to the molds as I worked my way up to the bottom. When I still had enough open space to work with large clamps, I attached the skeg to the bottom with screws (from the outside) and glue. Once the hull would come off the molds, I'd put a few screws in from the inside. The skeg was not easy to shape to fit the rounding of the bottom, but with the help of a lot of cardboard templates, it worked well in the end.

Then finally, after a few months, I put in the last strips that closed the hull, the shape of the hull looked nice enough, and I started the job of sanding everything smooth and even. I connected my orbit sander to the shop vacuum cleaner and that limited the amount of sawdust in the shop.

Then came the part that I dreaded: the fiber glassing! I needed to wait till the shop was warm enough to do this work but ended up doing it in the evenings because the shop became too warm to do it! Connected to the workshop is a greenhouse and the clear plastic roof generates a lot of heat in the summer. But in the end, I managed to get a nice fiberglass layer onto the hull with three clear epoxy layers and the fourth layer mixed with black pigment. When everything was nice and dry, I was able to lift off the hull (with a few heavy-handed encouragements here and there) with the help of the same strong family members. Luckily, it fit through the double doors of the shop, and we took it outside where it laid beautifully on the green lawn in the sun!

After removing all the molds from the table, I cushioned the 2x4s with some foam and made supports to hold the boat upright.

More sanding and fiber glassing of the inside was waiting for me. To my pride, the boat did not look like a sausage and the frames (already glued in) made the hull sturdy and strong. They were of course the perfect fit, and I was glad I did not have to go through the task of fitting frames in the hull afterwards. The frames were also very useful to hold the deck in place, so I am glad I did it this way.

*Part 3 of the Melonseed story will be in the fall issue.*





# OVERNIGHTING ON SMALL BOATS, A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

by Pete Peters

We traditional small craft boaters here in the mid-Atlantic Region are mesmerized by Off Center Harbor's video on Sail and Oar Camp Cruising. The cruising grounds of Maine sure seem like paradise and worthy of a trip. For now, I watch it again and again and dream.

I was dreaming, as I weeded the vegetable garden. I thought God made a different weed to fit every circumstance and possible place. Man makes special boats for different tasks and places: Tuckups, Duckers, Melonseeds, Garveys, Sneakboxes, railbird skiffs, and Catboats are some familiar to me, here in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Our cruising grounds are Barnegat and Chesapeake Bays, and consequently our style of camp cruising is different and complementary to the Camp Cruising Maine videos.

Article in *Ash Breeze* by Doug Oeller and videos by Barry Long (eyehand), Eddie Breeden, and Englishman Roger

Barnes also offer different perspectives on camp cruising grounds and styles.

Well for starters, there is, unfortunately, no Maine Island Trail here. In fact, all of the gunkholing grounds here are surrounded by marsh or privately owned waterfront suburban properties. So, camping on land is not feasible. Consequently, our boats are all self-contained: gathering, sleeping, cooking, toileting are all onboard.

Tides are really not a factor in planning since the tidal range is 1.5–2 feet and is often wind driven. These bays in summer have ever changing weather: afternoon sea breezes, thunderstorms, and too often, windless periods of calm.

The saying, "If you don't like the weather, wait several hours and it will change," is quite true.

Many of us sail Joel White designed 15' wooden Marsh Cats. Wide, stable, seaworthy, and of shallow draft. Also, they

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*Top: Rafting by Bruce Robbins. Right: Boats in a row by Phil Maynard.*





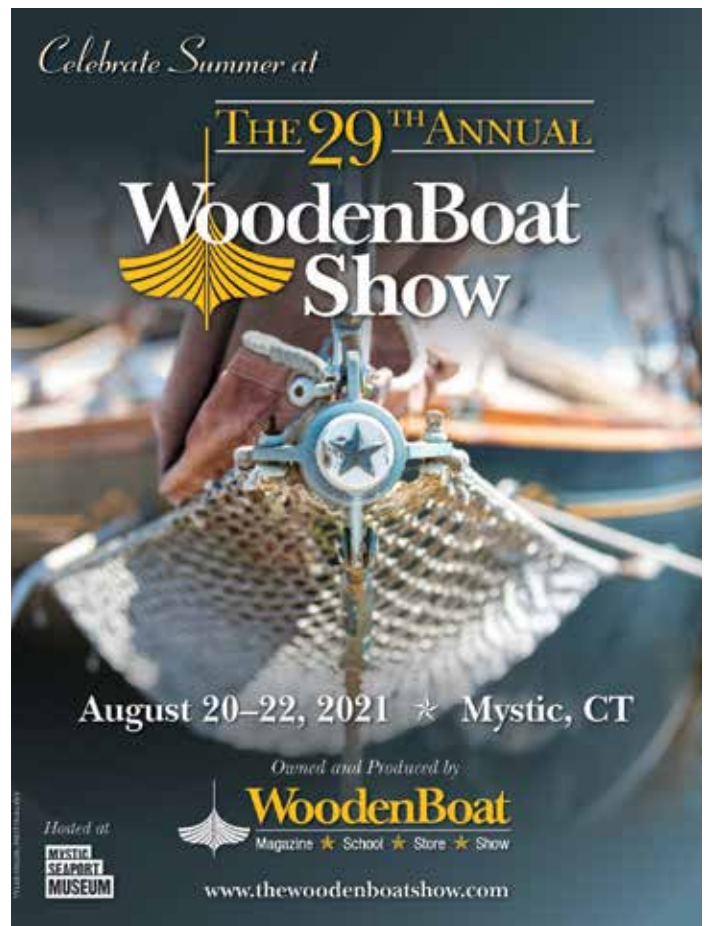
are a good place to gather and sing at the end of the day. As expected, these catboats do not row very well, so the Honda 2.5 Four stroke motor is the propulsion of choice.

We choose a weather window of two or three out of four days and have alternate plans to take advantage of wind and weather. We usually end up at our starting launch point.

The choice we have living near Philadelphia is special: in summer, Barnegat Bay, New Jersey, has a predictable afternoon 12–15 knot sea breeze. In spring and fall, the Chesapeake is the place to sail, with innumerable coves and creeks to explore.

I think of the different social aspects of camp sailing and realize how different not only the boats we sail are but also how different we are. The introvert amongst us would prefer to sail solo. The compulsive will have an organized float plan and organized galley as well as organized on board storage. The disorganized will have meals of crackers, soups, and peanut butter and invariably forget something. I for one appreciate the evening raftups, with hyperbolic stories, jokes, sharing (and drinking). Daytime sailors become amateur musicians at dusk. Each brings a song, instrument, or poem to be performed into the night. We do make a strange sight. These nights are for the extroverts.

Some sail solo trips. Some sail with companions. There is safety in numbers, but the real fun is to raft up at night, to sing, and to relive the day's fun. The beauty of it all is there is a place for every boat and everyone.



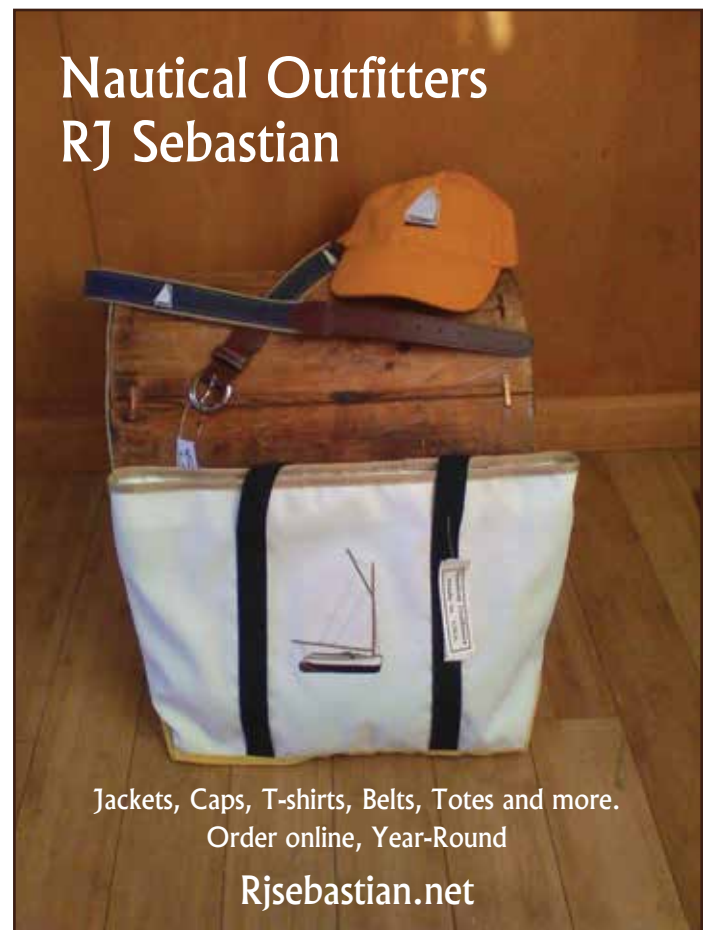
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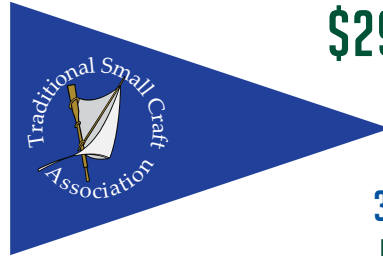
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# THIRTY YEARS WITH A BOAT

by Ben Fuller

Thirty years with a boat: that's what I have with my Delaware ducker, *Josef. W.* Like me, she's become a little leaky, there are a few wear marks, and the paint has weathered. I wrote her up in *WoodenBoat* back in 1982. The pieces, along with a companion piece by Lance Lee, who was directing the ApprenticeShop where my boat was built in 1978, anticipated that there would be more duckers built. Mine is a copy of *Greenbriar*, a ducker built by Joe Liener, who was one of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's advisers when I worked there. *WoodenBoat 48* has the history of how we got started.

It's a little puzzling why we have not seen more duckers. Perhaps not fleets but certainly scores. It didn't happen. There have been perhaps half a dozen traditional duckers built, mostly in museum and apprentice programs. Steve Clark, a highly experienced dinghy and sailing canoe sailor, saw the potential and built several cold molded and a mold for fiberglass versions. People loved them when they went to boat shows, but they did not buy. A superlight cold molded boat with a sophisticated tall modern rig was built for a highly experienced sailor, who was a designer for Ray Hunt. To my knowledge, one glued lap version was built, taking the weight from around 150 to 100; the cold molded versions got as light as 60 pounds.

The ducker is a deceptively simple boat: fifteen feet long, four-foot beam, low sided with side decks so that structurally there is no need for thwarts. Side decks are supported by metal rods, which let oars handles be stowed behind them and the oars lashed up out of the way. She has a plank keel and some metal runners at the keel's edge. Inside the boat there is a

removable v-shaped lunch platform that lives under the stern deck. There is a removable stern seat for a passenger. A movable gunning box provides the rowing seat. Floorboards are a single structure—a "floor flat" that comes out in one piece and has cleats on it to position the gunning box, where the oarlocks, compass, and other loose gear live. The daggerboard trunk is supported by a head ledge that is let into the foredeck. There is a filler block to replace the dagger board when rowing. The mast step is cut into the stem left wide and is reinforced by side plates. I added a mast stepping box to guide the mast into the step, making stepping safer when the boat is moving around.

There is a choice of rigs ranging from about 56 square feet in a reef point less gunning sail set with a sprit and a boom to a gaff racing rig with a 15-foot boom and about 115 square feet. Sometimes it's the sprit rig that people first comment on. The boom jaws are close to the deck, but the sail is cut so that the tip of the boom easily clears the head of the sailor. There is also a furling line that runs from the head down around the boom then back up and down the mast. One yank and the sail, boom, and sprit are a bundle ready to be lifted out.

Hardware is also deceptive. The rudder gudgeons were designed to fit on a curved rudder with a pintle and gudgeon at the bottom and two gudgeons at the top with a pin to connect them. There are small turning blocks on the foredeck to lead snorter and furling line back to the cockpit for the larger sprit rig. The oarlocks sit on bronze pedestals that look like inverted cones and the shank of the traditional oarlock is a little longer to accommodate them.





There are some padeyes riveted into the boat bottom; holes in the floor flat give them clearance. Traditionally these were used for hiking lines, short lines with T-handles, which support the hiker. I have rigged them with a toe strap, and I have added a hiking stick made from a bamboo ski pole to the tiller.

So, in honor of *Josefs* three decades, I got Nat Wilson to replace her gunning sail this last winter. He'd built the original sails; the gunning sail had gone gray with age, and patches were starting to go onto patches. And I have been rediscovering the boat.

The first outing with the new sail on a local lake had fog and light wind. The 10 knot puffs coming through accelerated the boat to better than 4 knots measured on the newfangled GPS. Then she's ghost for a while as the puff died. One needed to move from the side deck to the boat's center in a hurry. And ghosting it was as there was only about two boat lengths of visibility. Then I took her out to my sister's camp on a western Maine lake. I rowed my wife the half mile to the camp, then back to pick up the rig when the wind came up, then a sail for a while with a passenger who sat amidships on the bottom.

Thinking critically, the ducker is like a canoe: you need to step pretty close to the middle when you board from the side. You need to have your hands on the coaming when you push off from the beach. And, if the wind is up and down, you will be moving from sitting or kneeling in the middle of the boat to the rail, where it seems you spend a goodly amount of time sitting on the low coaming. There are no seats other than the gunning box and the stern passenger seat. It's a sensitive boat that makes you move around. If you have a passenger, the passenger can't really row effectively unless you are working down a marsh and need the passenger to push row looking ahead. Only if you are using the 65-square-foot summer rig or the large racing rig can the passenger help balance the boat. The ducker is basically a single hander capable of carrying passengers, one in which the crew needs to move around to keep her moving. This is not a prescription for a highly marketable boat.

For single handing, the gunning rig is pretty versatile. It will move you in a drifter, when you think oars might be a better way to go. It's spars are short enough so they will stow

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*From left to right, Pete Lesher, Ben Fuller and Rich Schofield in front of the Greenbriar models of the Delaware Ducker at Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's Small Craft Festival, St. Michaels, MD.*



in the boat or easily be carried. I have carried it up into F6 and 4-foot seas. This is where the ducker is limited. With the low sides and the big open cockpit amidships, spray climbs aboard and from time to time you need to stop and bail. If your conditions are generally a short chop, this is not as much a problem. A canvas rough water deck would be easy to add. And in a breeze, when you turn onto a reach, you will see that planing a double ender is quite possible.

The ducker will capsize or swamp. Water on the side decks give you some warning, and turning loose sheet and tiller will let the boat ride neatly broadside to wind and sea. I have not capsized but have seen it done—jibing in a breeze she will float crew and gear but not high enough to bail. For more demanding conditions, I put canoe float bags under the stern and bow decks, and we have rigged at least one of the duckers with side floatation bags. These would give you a chance at bailing the boat.

Rowing, without gear and rig, 4 knots is achievable in most conditions, 3 knots easy cruising. I have done three Blackburn Challenges in *Josef W.* and finished with no more than 10-minute differences in varying weather. She even won the Blackburn in 1989, in the pre-Adirondack guideboat era. You do need to pull from the after rowlocks as bow down trim happens when rowing from amidships, which makes the boat hard to handle. For an experiment, I added a small rowing frame with a wheeled platform on which I can put the gunning box so that I can row as a sliding seat boat. You don't go significantly faster, but you get to use more muscles.


And snoozing. When you are sailing, the ducker demands your attention. But with the sail brailed up or just drifting under oars, that nice open cockpit is ideal for napping. She

would easily carry single handed camping gear and a tent over cockpit, something that was done often on the Delaware.

Joe Liener is no longer with us. He had retired to a spot near the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum from managing the Philadelphia Naval Yard's small boat shops, rising from a 3d class journeyman. His ducker, *Greenbriar*, is part of the CBMM collection and the museum is making the ducker the centerpiece of their small boat building program. If you don't want to build one yourself, they would be happy to build one for you, as would the ApprenticeShop in Rockland whose lead instructor, Kevin Carney, built mine and instructor Brian McClellan led the building of what may be the finest reproduction that has been built. Doing it yourself, using modern materials, the easy plank lines make glued lap or strip planking pretty painless. Glued lap can be done in 5/16 plywood, which is what Joe used to build *Greenbriar*.

You have a choice of plans. Dave Dillion drew two splendid sets. The ones to *Greenbriar* are in the collection of the Independence Seaport Museum. She has more deadrise and a flatter sheer than the other ducker Dave drew, the one given by John York to Mystic Seaport Museum. The York ducker is a bit steadier under foot; this is the model used to build the cold molded duckers. There are less complete plans available for some other duckers in museum collections if these are not enough.

*Josef W.* may not be used as much as she once was. But I have worn out one set of oars and one sail, and there was a time that I commuted in her. Now she spends more time than she should hanging in the garage waiting to have a go. Perhaps she will if we can get more built.



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# FRANCA—A SAN FRANCISCO FELUCCA

by Todd Bloch

Recently completed by boat builder John Muir, *FRANCA* is a San Francisco Felucca, a lateen rigged vessel that dominated San Francisco's Italian-American fishing fleet from the late 1800s thru the early 1900s. *FRANCA*'s hull is 22' LOD, 29' LOA including bow sprit, with a 7'-8" beam. She carries a 340-square-foot main sail and 60-square-foot jib. *FRANCA* is the second replica felucca on San Francisco Bay, joining the slightly smaller *Nuovo Mondo* owned by the National Park Service.

**Right Top:** The crew prepares *FRANCA* for her second voyage, departing from the pier at China Camp State Park, just north of San Francisco. **Right Bottom:** The hull nearing completion; the deck was underlaid with plywood to deter water leaks through seams. **Below:** *FRANCA* rounding China Camp Point.

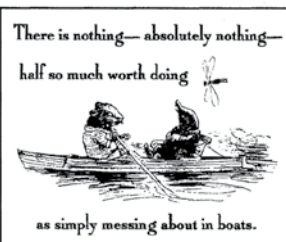


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# THE CAPE COD CHAPTER'S WOODS HOLE ROW

*by Bill Stirling*

One of our members from the Falmouth area, Damian McLaughlin, organized a row for us in late April to circumnavigate Nonamesset Island. Ten of our members launched at the Woods Hole Yacht Club and from the town ramp. From the yacht club, we headed south, through Great Harbor, to the east shore of Nonamesset Island. The wind was from the southwest at about 20 mph, which is very normal around here, so when we reached the southeast shore of the island and turned southwest, we had a challenging row to Monsod Bay. Unfortunately, I could not stop rowing to take any pictures at this point

Once inside the bay, we were in the lee of Cedar and Veckatimest Islands, which we greatly appreciated. We stopped

for lunch on a nice sandy beach on Veckatimest Island, which was just about midway around Nonamesset Island.

After lunch, we headed northwest under a bridge connecting Nonamesset and Naushon Islands. We caught the ebbing tide for the run through narrows.

We then entered Hadley Harbor and found the wind again as we continued along the west coast of Nonamesset and then turned northeast. The second challenge of the row was crossing the strait with the southwest wind and an ebbing tide. It was a bit choppy, but we all made it over to the channel between Devils Foot Island and Penzance Point.

Once we were in Great Harbor again, it was an easy row back to the yacht club where Damian had pizza and beer for us.

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**Top:** *The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in the back ground.*

**Bottom:** *Lunch on Veckatimest Island.*



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**Top:** *Using the tidal flow to advantage.*

**Bottom:** *Going under the bridge connecting Nonamesset and Veckatimest Islands.*







# QUONNY POND REGATTA

*by Bill Stirling*

One of our members of the Cape Cod Chapter, Jon Aborn, has been a rower for many years now and was a member of the Cape Cod Vikings, a rowing club that was active in the 80s and 90s. From his participation in many of the rows and races throughout southern New England, he has met many fellow rowers. In April, he received an invitation from Jeff Lenihan of Westerly, RI, to bring a crew to the Quonny Pond Regatta on May 1st—a row he was having in a salt pond protected from the Block Island Sound by sand spits.

Three of us from Cape Cod made the trek up to Westerly—Jon, Bob Lister, and me. I had forwarded the invitation to the John Gardner Chapter, but unfortunately no one could make it.

The wind predictions were for some high northwest winds, but by the noon start time, they had dropped to a manageable 15–20 mph. In addition to us three, Jeff had eight others for a total of nine boats. We had a nice row, met some new rowers, and had an uneventful drive, so all was good.

*Jeff Lenihan in his dory.*




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Fall 2021 Volume 42 Number 3

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