

# *The* Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

## SARAH—THE TOWN BOAT

### *IN THIS ISSUE*

Teaching with Small Boats

How Heritage Boatworks  
Works

Biggest Cedar Key Event



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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: A Shellback, one of a series of lapstrake Okoume plywood dinghies built at the Boatworks. Photo by Bobby Dye of the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum.*



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, Friends, far and wide!

Boating season is upon us again, especially in the Pacific Northwest, as the cold grey drizzle gives way to sunnier skies, calmer water, and great days to get on the water. Time to sweep out the cobwebs, dust off the oars, unfurl the sails, and get the boat wet.

As my tenure as President of the Traditional Small Craft Association draws to a close, I stand back and reflect on what has been accomplished in the last few years of the TSCA. New tools and new opportunities have enabled a greater level of cooperation and communication between chapters and facilitated projects, ideas, and sponsorships that would have been difficult, if not impossible, just a few years ago.

We have an exciting partnership with a popular boating video creator in the works. More on that in a future issue of *The Ash Breeze*.

Activities in all corners of the continent are bringing the world of Traditional Small Craft—and generally getting out on the water—to people and families of all ages. The recent Cedar Key event in Florida (see Page 16) was well attended, and the upcoming Toledo Boat Show in Oregon looks very promising.

As always, please bring your ideas, comments, thoughts, and concerns to the TSCA Council. We are eager to hear your ideas and are always looking for a good story to put in *The Ash Breeze*.

Fair Winds, Friends,  
Ben Sebens  
President TSCA







*By Harvey Branch with Jim Millette and John Clarke  
Photos by Bobby Dye of the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum*

Can 3,000 years of wooden boatbuilding history be summarized in a brief 10-minute discussion? This is a challenge for the volunteer boatbuilders of the Heritage Boatworks at the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum. As part of the Museum's active maritime archaeology and educational programs, we volunteers, many of whom are members of St. Augustine Lighthouse Chapter, TSCA, have been building wooden boats for over 15 years. The objectives are to keep historic skills alive and share the rich lore of wooden boats with the Museum's visitors.

Traditional wooden boats have always been a part of St. Augustine. As the Nation's Oldest Port, it was a small but important outpost dependent on the ocean and local waters for its very existence for hundreds of years. As in many small coastal communities, there was the local building of small boats of many types. Native Americans and Spanish, British,

Minorcan, Italian, Greek, and other settlers all brought their own small boatbuilding techniques to St. Augustine, though now relatively little is known of these early boatbuilding traditions.

Over the years, the port never had the commercial fishing or trade business to support the building of larger craft. This started to change in the 1920s when a nascent shrimp trawling business began to develop with locally built wooden trawlers. The real change came after World War II when the demand for shrimp skyrocketed and St. Augustine became the world center of the shrimp trawler construction industry. Wooden trawlers of 40 to 70 feet and 100 tons gross were being built once every four days—thousands of them by the 1970s. Then, by the 1980s, it all went downhill. The Florida fishery was depleted, and wood was replaced by steel and fiberglass. Wooden boatbuilding eventually disappeared, and

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**Top:** *This authentic replica of a typical Florida skipjack circa 1880 is the pride of the Heritage Boatworks' volunteer boatbuilders.*



we now are the only organized traditional boatbuilding group in the region.

Heritage Boatworks arose from the Museum's maritime archaeology program in 2007 when it was determined that a wooden boatbuilding exhibit could help visitors better understand and appreciate the maritime history of Northeast Florida. However, by that time, traditional boatbuilding skills were no longer available in the area. Shrimp trawlers had mostly been standardized products built with assembly line parts and methods without the need for skilled shipwrights. Smaller wooden boatbuilding operations, which might have supported some skilled workers, did not survive the competition from fiberglass.

With no professional shipwrights to turn to, Heritage Boatworks was launched with three volunteers who had limited experience building small skiffs. Volunteers have been the heart of our activity ever since, without the benefit of a staff shipwright. Currently, there are more than 18 volunteers. Most are retired from various careers, some with woodworking experience and others without, but all with a shared passion for wooden boats. We have learned by doing, by researching, and by making mistakes. Boatbuilding has always been an art with skills passed down from one generation to the next, and that is how it works here at Heritage Boatworks.

The activities of the Museum are centered on public education, preservation, and storytelling. We, the volunteers, enthusiastically support these objectives, so Heritage

Boatworks is organized to bring visitors as close to the work areas as is safely possible. The goal is to be readily available to answer their questions and proactively encourage their closer interest. Being seniors, we are more than willing to take a break from strenuous sanding with a longboard to chat with them about the work we love.

These days there are usually three boats under construction for our visitors to see. One is always a traditional boat representing vessels historically seen in the port or surrounding rivers. An example is the Florida skipjack, first built and used by commercial shad fishermen on the St. Johns River beginning in the 1850s. These centerboard sailing boats were characterized by a V-bottom sawn-frame hull with a sharp bow and hard chines rising very high on the stern. Our 23-foot version is a replica of an actual 1875 boat that was documented in detail by a 1936 WPA project. It features the traditional sail rig, including a birdsmouth hollow mast, rope standing rigging, and carved wooden blocks, cleats, and guides.

Our current traditional boat represents the British period in St. Augustine. It is a carvel-plank 14-foot yawl (or yoal) boat of a British naval design from the 1760s as lofted from historic drawings recreated by Howard Chappelle, a noted boat historian. With its ample bow, large midships, and sharp wine glass stern, it is a very difficult boat to plank, requiring precise spiling of plank shapes and careful steaming. For these boats, we try to use local material. Proper planking lumber is



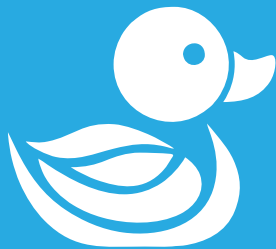
*Left: 1760s British yawl boat of cypress built over molds with steamed ribs. Pictured on display at Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum in Georgia.*

*Below: Another yawl boat being built from the same authentic lines using carvel frame-first construction with sawn ribs.*



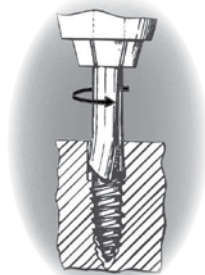


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generally in short supply, and we have struggled with a much-diminished stock of random sawed cypress. The stem, keel, and stern timbers are of Florida live oak, which is a strong material but very hard to work. Precise hand cutting of the planking rabbets was a strenuous task. While we may use modern tools such as a planer rather than an adze, we still have put a lot of traditional handwork into this boat. It is being built for a historic reenactors group in St. Augustine. The first boat we built with this design is displayed in Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum in Georgia.

Heritage Boatworks endeavors to be financially self-sufficient. To help meet our expenses and provide some contribution back to the Museum, we build one or two small boats annually, won by lucky ticket holders in a drawing each December. They are made from standard dinghy plans such as a Shellback or Penobscot. Typically, they are lapstrake Okoume marine plywood with epoxy seams. We try to build these boats as “works of art” with the highest level of craftsmanship and finishing we can summon up.

We have added a kayak or canoe in recent years, usually of our own design. These are built as glued shells with cypress and red cedar strip planking which we mill as bead and cove. Epoxy and fiberglass inside and out provide structural strength

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*St. Augustine Lighthouse in Morse code on this fiberglassed cypress/cedar kayak.*



and a clear finish. These unique boats feature the Morse code message “St. Augustine Lighthouse” in dot and dash patterns embedded into the hull along the topsides.

As our visitors look at these boats, we are often asked about the appropriateness of our “Heritage” name. After all, they can see plywood, epoxy, and fiberglass. Perhaps there is the horrible screeching of the big planer in the background. We can’t resist responding with a joke about an ancient shipwright who got a similar question about using a bronze age chisel instead of chipped flint. But, the question also provides the perfect opening for a brief history of wooden boat construction as illustrated by our boats.

Typically we might start with a half walnut shell as an example of how nature provides a perfect model of a strong boat hull without using a lot of internal structure, much like our lapstrake dinghy. We then point out that this lapstrake dinghy may be a current design, but it is a modern adaptation of how Viking boats were made over 1,000 years ago using iron nails and tar with animal hair for caulking.

A quick segue back 3,000 years to the Minoans of ancient Crete allows us to introduce edge planking used in the Mediterranean area as contrasted with the lapstrakes of Northern Europe. We discuss how planks were fastened edge to edge with mortise and tenon and covered by woven linen and tough pitch, much as our kayaks use glue, fiberglass, cloth, and epoxy. Over thousands of years, variations of these boats evolved on the Mediterranean, but, like the Viking boats, most continued to be designed to ride on the surface of the water with a shallow draft, relatively light hulls, and modest internal structures.

Another segue to the Middle Ages allows us to discuss some important limitations of such a design. Even though they were appropriate to conditions on the Mediterranean, they couldn’t carry heavy cannons or support the multiple decks and cabins needed for warships and merchantmen capable of long-distance voyages on the open oceans. There had to be a way for these large ships to grow deeper underwater and be strong enough to push through the water, not just bob on the surface. Our young visitors laugh when we suggest that nature had a solution once again—a skeleton. Using the example of our yawl boat, a brief introduction to the traditional carvel “skeleton” structure illustrates this later development that opened up the world’s oceans in the Age of Discovery.

Every now and then, a visitor is interested enough to learn more about plank on frame carvel construction. Sanding can wait as we introduce the esoteric arts of steam bending and seam caulking. For those visitors that show the symptoms of wooden boatbuilding fever, we may even pull out the spiling demonstration and talk more about the challenges and beauty of building a wooden boat.

The next time you are in St. Augustine, look for Heritage Boatworks right at the base of the tall black and white spiral-painted tower. You can’t miss it!





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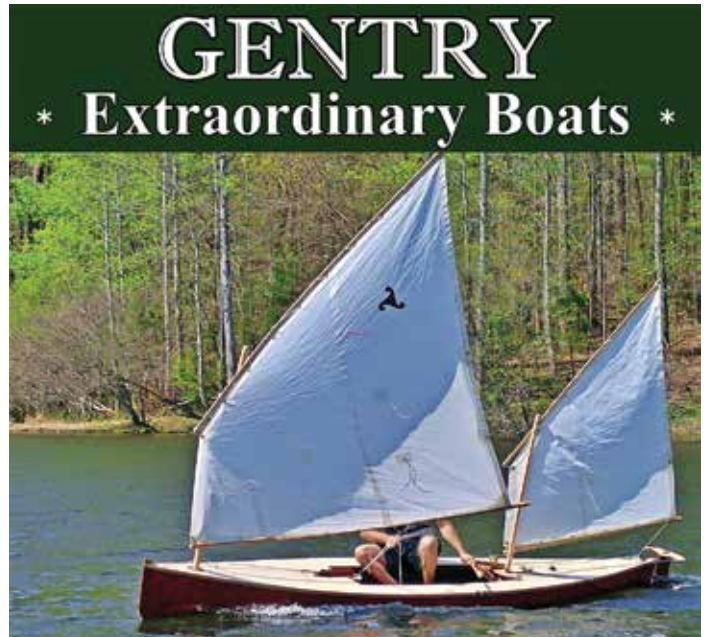
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# THE TOWN BOAT OF BARNSTABLE—SARAH!

*By Mark Wilkins*

One afternoon in 2003, I was doing something at my small house on Cape Cod—I don't remember what—and I got a call from the then director of the Centerville Historical Museum about a fellow who was wanting his boat to be named the town boat of Barnstable. The director asked me to come before the Town Council to protest the fact that this boat had little to do with the history of Cape Cod's watercraft. I believe at this meeting the notion was put forth that there was no more iconic and fitting boat than a catboat to represent the rich maritime heritage of Barnstable, and Cape Cape.

Not too long after this, I got a call from a representative of the fledgling Cape Cod Maritime Museum—although it didn't exist as such at the moment. The board of this non-profit had secured a lease from the Town to use the old Anchor Outboard building which is located at the base of the Hyannis inner harbor. They asked me if I could build them a replica of an 1886 Herbert F. Crosby catboat—*Sarah*. The story got better as the original was still in existence in Osterville. There was some debate about whether to restore the original boat versus building a new one. The stem to keel joint was in pretty rough shape, requiring renewal of those timbers—at the very least. The more we looked at it, the more we became convinced a new boat would be the way to go as everything would have a consistent baseline. I agreed to take on the project, and so it began—the beginning of a 3-year project to recreate the

late 19<sup>th</sup> century techniques of the Crosbys of Osterville—a method that had yielded hundreds of fine catboats. We started out to build a boat—in the end we built an entire museum.

The beginnings of the project were humble—at the west end of the building we built a shop and an office space in which to begin the project. The funding was secured from an Institute of Museum and Library Services grant obtained through the late Senator Ted Kennedy's office. Kennedy was a staunch supporter of the idea of a "Cape Cod Maritime Museum." I can remember ordering tools, securing lumber from various parts of New England, and priming plywood to serve as the lofting floor. As the lofting began, I remember it also being an attraction of our first Maritime Festival—with





folks strolling in the shop, walking over the lofting toting screaming kids with dripping ice cream, and soon other treats littered the floor. The plans we used needing some correction which was facilitated by simply going outside and checking the hull of the original boat—which had been brought to the museum and placed outside. The original boat also yielded a wealth of information concerning scantlings of timbers and construction methodology.

The arrival of the keel for *Sarah* was felt before it was seen—it was slid off the flatbed and hit the grass with a *whumpf!* which was felt inside the museum—8" thick by about 16–20" wide by 20 feet long! I borrowed a huge Skilsaw from Tony Davis at Arey's pond. My go-to guy for all manner of stuff—and also my board liaison for the project—Tony would prove to be invaluable during the entire building process. Somehow we got this beast chocked up, and I remember clouds of white oak dust ascending skyward as the shape of the keel was cut out of this slab. The stem and mast step were fashioned from a live oak crook generously donated by Mystic Seaport. We used adzes and slicks to do most of the work (at least when the public was watching)—the power planers came out when nobody was around! I say "we" because by this time, I had an assistant—Jack Pitney—and volunteers were slowly drawn to this project like moths to a flame. My core group of volunteers were Gerry Ross, Charlie Bellone, and George Scheppler—to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude for their dedication and willingness to do whatever needed doing! Others that helped were Catherine Macort, Bill Cook, the late Dave Scudder, Dick Boonisar, and many others.

Before the boat could be set up, several items needed to be done to the keel. First, we had to hack out the centerboard slot to accept the two head ledges. This was done with Skilsaw and slick. Next, a groove had to be cut in the keel to accept the first tongue of the centerboard box. This was then built-up using tongue and groove cypress planks. Next, the rabbet had to be cut into the keel—the bevels were taken off the lofting and then transferred to the keel. Finally, one of the unique Crosby features—mortises—were cut for the frames in the keel that included a half-dovetail; the frame heels would have the mating dovetail. The frames would be inserted into the mortise and slid forward about 3/8" to engage the mating dovetail. This was kept in place by small cypress wedges that were fastened with a small brass brad. Thus, the frames could be removed if they needed replacement over the years. By Christmas we had the boat set up with the molds in place. Ribbands went on next which served the dual purpose of fairing the molds and lining off for the planking.

We had a good source for green white oak for frames, and this stock was kept damp and stored in a dark part of the shop. We used a classic Crosby tool for determining the shape of the frames—a "frame snake"—that was made by joining short segments of oak together using bolts and wing nuts. This "wooden chain" was thus made to conform to the





inside of the ribbands at a given frame station. The nuts were tightened up and the snake was then used to inform the shape of the bending cleats on the bending platform. We used a steel bending strap to keep the fibers in compression during the bending of the frames, and it worked very well. Another interesting production aspect of the Crosby method was that all the frames forward of midships were canted aft, and all the frames aft of the midship section canted forward. This allowed the frames to conform to the shape of the hull more easily and without the labor of beveling the frames. This allowed the Crosbys to build their boats more quickly, efficiently, and in the end stronger due to almost no wasted stock (resulting from beveling). The half-dovetail was cut in the frame heel just before steaming.

Oak for the project was easy to find, but we had a difficult time finding old growth clear cypress that was at least a foot wide. Our travels took us all over New England but all we could find was 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation stuff. Of the material we collected we were able to get out the first three strakes port and starboard from the sheer down. However, it was prone to splitting along the annular rings while being bent on (cold or hot). So, the search continued. Finally, salvation came in the shape of Barber lumber sales in Florida. They told us they were so sure we'd love what they were sending us that they'd pay shipping to have it sent back if we were displeased! Sold! When it arrived, it looked nothing like the newer stuff—it was chocolate brown. I had never seen wood like this, so I sent

it to the forestry lab in Madison, Wisconsin; they confirmed it as bald cypress! Not only was its color deceptive, but it worked beautifully and nothing like the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation stuff. It steamed, planed, and fastened exceedingly well—no wonder cats were planked in this material—plus it had the two most important things for a catboat: rot resistance and strength—much stronger than white cedar, which is crucial in the eyes as that mast way up forward wants to twist the bow right off under a blow!

We invited the community and museum patrons to the hanging of the whiskey plank—it was a great time for all! I should also mention that this project was visited by many school groups—most notably the history students of Sturgis Charter School which was just down the street. Educational interpretation of the boat became an integral part of the construction process and one that we were sad to see end.

With the boat planked up, work on the deck proceeded. It was one tough deck with a white oak covering board (steamed on edge), then strips of cypress that were edge and face fastened. The deck was caulked with cotton and that was it! Setting up for the coaming was straightforward but care needed to be taken to ensure that our white oak forward piece would bend on smoothly and not break, so proper positioning of the bending stanchions was key—we had only one shot at this as we had only one wide, good piece of white oak left. Turns out with Gerry, Charlie, and me working quickly and deftly—and with a lot of swearing and grunting—we got it





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on just fine and let it cool for several days before unclamping. The aft portion of the coaming/washboards were made from cypress and posed no difficulty when steamed.

Construction of the rest of the boat was easy, enjoyable work. The bulkhead was made from tongue and groove beaded cypress, as was the staving in the cockpit. The ceiling was also beaded and boat nailed into place. The cabin top was covered with canvas set in white lead. The cockpit sole beams were laid on the frames then sprung up amidships with a short stanchion—thereby inducing a camber quickly and efficiently. The Yanmar 10GM was lowered via a chain-hoist on the engine beds, then adjusted, and bolted down.

The mast, boom, and gaff were got out of a red spruce tree that was donated by the town of Falmouth. I was on site to pick the tree, and all went well and was great fun. The bark was stripped from the tree with a drawknife and adze, and then the mast and boom were laid off by means of templates, making the tapered spar square, then octagonal, then a 16-sided polygon until finally smooth. The same process was repeated for the other spars. The sail was made by Gambrel and Hunter in Maine, and was cotton with manila bolt ropes and cringles—all done per 19<sup>th</sup> century practices.

Finally, launching day rolled around. There were literally hundreds of folks that turned out to see *Sarah* launched—such

was the affection for the boat and project that had developed over the last 3 years. Senator Kennedy even showed up to deliver a very eloquent speech about the allure of wooden boats and those who built and sailed them. After various speechifying and appropriate applause, the boat was picked up by crane and splashed in Hyannis inner harbor—every boat with a horn in the harbor let it rip as *Sarah* was launched! Her mast was duly stepped and rig set up. It was a great day and so gratifying to so many people to see her gently rocking in her slip at long last.







# PLAN TO ATTEND THE 2022 TWSBA CONFERENCE

*By David Helgerson*

The Teaching With Small Boats Alliance (TWSBA) conducts conferences for educational boatbuilding organizations on alternate years, and regional gatherings whenever called for to meet emergent needs. Understandably, our in-person meetings were impacted by the Pandemic and our 2021 Conference delayed. We responded with multiple virtual meetings focused on programming, projects planning, and fundraising, to name just a few subjects. But, 2022 is a new year! Plans are now underway for a TWSBA Conference this fall. It will be held on November 3–5, 2022, at the amazing Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend, Washington. If you like traditional small craft, you are likely familiar with Port Townsend. If you attend, you will be glad you did.

TSCA supports TWSBA; our interests strongly overlap. Lovers of traditional small craft recognize and appreciate how activities on and about the waterfront can benefit people of all ages. Many TSCA members are aligned with and volunteer in support of their local community's TWSBA organization. Why not consider attending the TWSBA Conference? Attendance will broaden your exposure to educational boatbuilding programs around the nation (and the world). You will participate in activities, perhaps get on the water,



**Top:** On-the-water activities at the Northwest Maritime Center. Photo courtesy of the Northwest Maritime Center.

**Right:** The Antique Boat Museum's Welcome Desk at the most recently completed conference in Clayton, New York, 2019. Photo by David A. Helgerson, TWSBA.



meet some interesting people, and contribute your own insights and experience to the group.

Six TWSBA Conferences have been conducted beginning with the 2010 Conference at Alexandria Seaport Foundation, Alexandria, Virginia. (See listing of Conferences in Table 1.)

These events have been huge successes. Each has ended with demand for another. The “main event” at each conference is simply getting together with peers to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate—to recharge, reconnect, and reinvigorate to better serve individual communities. Presentations, panel discussions, and of course, hands-on activities are included in each Conference. As you can see by the past locations, the host organizations are selected because they offer great facilities in beautiful locations and the chance to get on the water and use the boats we all love. Our host organizations have traditionally offered tours of local sites of interest to attendees, such as wooden boat schools, boatyards, and maritime museums.

A dozen years ago there was a perceived need for educational boatbuilding organizations to get together and compare notes. Successful conferences have continued, and TWSBA has incorporated to better respond to the need and ensure sustainability. Attendance at TWSBA Conferences has steadily increased, and this year’s Conference will be a worthwhile experience for those that participate. TWSBA intends to incorporate some online events that will permit virtual participation for those unable to travel to Port Townsend. Whether in-person or virtual, your participation will help make the event more effective. You can support TWSBA or its member organizations in many ways. Check out the TWSBA website: [www.teachingwithsmallboats.org](http://www.teachingwithsmallboats.org).

Finally, joining TWSBA is a great deal: **membership is free**. While you explore the website, please join. All it takes is a moment to provide your contact information so that we can keep you informed.

**TABLE 1: THE TEACHING WITH SMALL BOATS ALLIANCE CONFERENCES**

YEAR	HOST ORGANIZATION	LOCATION
2010	Alexandria Seaport Foundation (ASF)	Alexandria, Virginia
2012	The Center for Wooden Boats (CWB)	Seattle, Washington (and Cama Beach)
2013	Mystic Seaport	Mystic, Connecticut
2015	The Northwest Maritime Center	Port Townsend, Washington
2017	The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum	St. Michaels, Maryland
2019	The Antique Boat Museum	Clayton, New York
2022	The Northwest Maritime Center	Port Townsend, Washington

*“Three lovely Saint Lawrence Skiffs made available to participants at the Antique Boat Museum during the most recent conference, 2019. Conference Host Organizations demonstrate boats that are important to their region.*

*Photo by David A. Helgerson, TWSBA.*

*TWSBA organizations emphasize getting on the water; whenever possible TWSBA conferences provide such opportunities, as in this picture at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in 2017.*

*Photo by David A. Helgerson, TWSBA.*







***Above:** Students at Northwest Maritime Center during the 2015 Conference. Hands-on Boatbuilding is a familiar activity at TWSBA organizations, and conferences often include a student-built boat.*

*Photo by David A. Helgerson, TWSBA.*

***Below:** On-the-water activities at the Northwest Maritime Center. Photo courtesy of the Northwest Maritime Center.*



# ANNUAL CEDAR KEY SMALL BOAT MEET



*By Michael Jones*

The Annual Cedar Key Small Boat Meet, started by Hugh Horton and a small group of small craft enthusiasts thirty-seven years ago, has created a diverse community of sailors that continues to attract new members. The event is, as advertised, controlled by the wind and tides; this year it was the wind that dominated the decision-making of the captains. You cannot schedule good weather, but hopefully over a long weekend there will be a day of good sailing weather. Arriving and launching on Thursday, with the expectation of good sailing on Friday, did not work out as planned. Friday morning it was already blowing ten knots and looking to build all day, reaching twenty knots and gusting higher for most of the day. Those that had boats suited for strong winds reefed down and set sail, those like me with boats rigged for lighter conditions decided to watch from the beach. High winds continued through Saturday, but dawn Sunday was flat calm with a rising tide, by early afternoon there was a fair wind coupled with blue skies making for ideal sailing.

The good part about sailing in an archipelago of islands is there is always a protective cove in which you can find a safe refuge, and on the West Coast of Florida, it often includes a sandy beach. On Atsena Otie Key there is such a spot with a point that always has a safe side to beach, the boats protected from the strong breezes. Sailing in the company of so many accomplished sailors that are ready and willing to step in and

give a hand allows everyone to enjoy the day on the water. There are few pleasures in life that equal a safe anchorage in windy conditions, sharing those times with old friends and making new ones.

After a full day on and off the water we had close to ninety attending the BBQ dinner Saturday night at the Community Center. University of Florida archaeologist, Dr. Ken Sassaman, gave an enlightening view into the coastal community that built the Shell Mounds and had festivals on these same islands 1,500 years ago, and the interrelationship of culture and environment that exists now as it did then.

There are those that are not satisfied with only gathering in Cedar Key once a year, so for the past nine years we gather again informally on the weekend before Thanksgiving. Join us this year, November 18–20, 2022, for the end-of-hurricane-season sail in Cedar Key.

The Annual Cedar Key Small Boat Meet is always the first full weekend in May. This will be the 38th Annual on May 6–8, 2023, so mark your calendars now and start making plans.

The Florida Gulf Coast TSCA, Crystal River Boat Builders TSCA, and the West Coast Trailer Sailing Squadron invite you to join us in Cedar Key.

Email [fgctsca@gmail.com](mailto:fgctsca@gmail.com) for information.







# ON THE OCCASION OF BOB HICK'S RETIREMENT

## —FAREWELL MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS—

Bill Rutherford's response to Bob upon hearing the News:

Bob: You have been an inspiration to all of us both personally and professionally for years. Personally, as you encouraged us to go ahead and build our backyard boats to John Gardner (and in my case, Phil Bolger) plans, and, when they were complete, to go use them with friends and family. And professionally, as you encouraged us to jot down (in our own words!) our adventures, which you would then go ahead and publish, giving us new friends and acquaintances, in some cases, countrywide.

And all the while proceeding with your no-nonsense, low-key approach to small craft, whether it be purely traditional clear cedar plank on steam-bent oak frame, canvas on wood canoe, or the latest tack-and-tape plywood designs. Your welcome of evolving materials and techniques while preserving the traditional shape of our boats saved us Traditional Small Craft folks from becoming stodgy, sit-around-in-lawn-chair, display-our-boat type people. Instead, while we respect the shapes that evolved over the centuries prior to the introduction of the gasoline engine, we are open to innovative construction methods. Witness the fabric on frame boats, the carved foam boats, and even our glued lap plywood Peapod.

And then you encouraged us to not only go out and use them, but to write about them, which you would then publish, completing the cycle, which you kept spinning around. For 40 years! Amazing. We all thank you for that. If the media changes, the message does not. We hope you continue to write for our various news sharings, regardless of whether ink is spilled or electrons energized. Your reporter's eye is keen and your observations spot on. Please continue to share your thoughts and opinions.

Thank you for printing what minor stuff we sent you. We can see our kids and grandkids grow up in your pages. That cover photo from 1986 is one of my prized possessions. The words are—well, re-reading my old stuff is—as Steve Jones once said about re-reading his old books, “like putting on a wet bathing suit; a little uncomfortable at first, but after a while, you get used to it.” Thank you for the opportunity.

We well remember you standing with elbow on the lectern, holding us all spellbound on a Saturday evening at the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival, recounting creating and then maintaining your *Messing About in Boats*. That was a great evening. Please continue and stay in touch.

Best Regards,  
Bill & Karen Rutherford

And Bob's kind response:

Hi Bill,  
Thank you for this.

Yes, I got rather into it that evening at the MASCF and was surprised at the response my talk elicited. It touched a chord we all shared which kept me going ever so long, still enjoying doing it, each issue a refreshing experience. It's kinda sad to have to stop but our world today is fast moving away from plain old black and white print media, and as my future at 92 now numbers only a few short years, there is no place in it for the hours it takes and now the need to subsidize it from our limited retirement income.

I continue to be interested in small craft and will be on the water in my own small boats and keeping in touch with what you all are doing.


Bob



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# CHESAPEAKE BAY MESSABOUT

The first Chesapeake Bay spring messabout was held at Janes Island State Park with a motley crew of Delaware River TSCA members. Seven small boats sailed across Tangier Sound from Crisfield to Smith Island, Maryland. The fleet was greeted

with enthusiasm by local inhabitants and flying, biting insects. Rafting together, the fleet spent the night at anchor, to the delight of the insects. All enjoyed an exhilarating reach back to Janes the following day.

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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 \$2,000 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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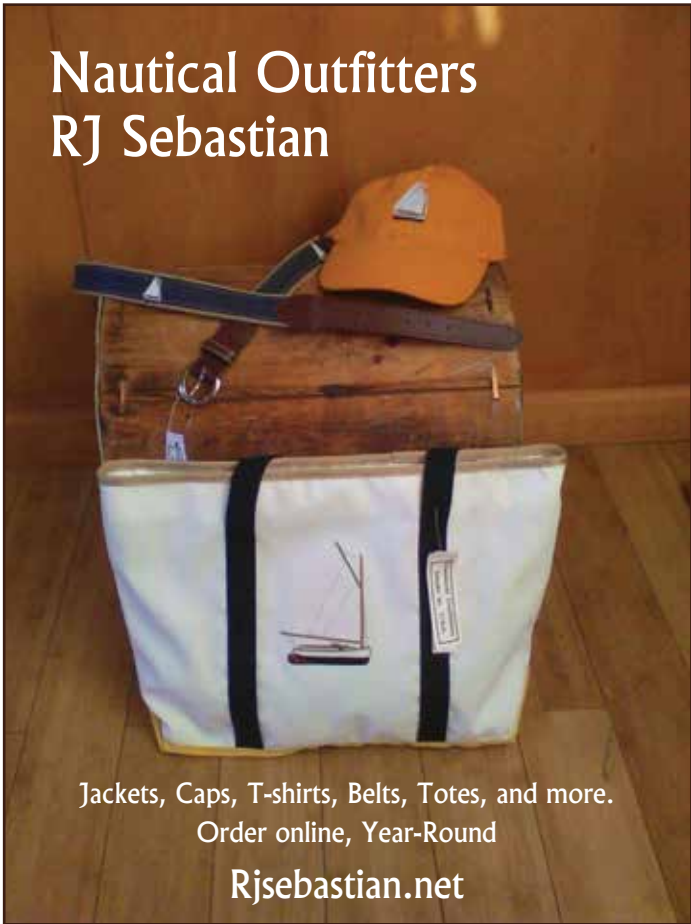
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# COLD STREAM BY WAY OF THE COBBOSSEECONTEE

*By Paul LaBrie*

For the past four years, on or about the third weekend in May, the Downeast TSCA has held a gathering on Cobbosseecontee Stream in central Maine. This year's event, the largest yet with 21 attendees, was held at Paul and Sharon LaBrie's home which fronts the stream.

The name "Cobbosseecontee" is derived from the Abenaki word for sturgeon, which is "Cabassa." Sturgeon were once a popular catch on the Kennebec River, where the stream joins up in Gardiner, Maine. It is sourced by Cobbossee Lake, a large lake located just south of Augusta, Maine, and the stream has been dam-controlled since before the Revolutionary War. The early dams were first created for lumber and flour mills in the town of Gardiner, Maine, but one of the modern dams now supplies hydro power to the town of Gardiner. Cobbosseecontee is a shallow, slow-moving body of water, which makes it very suitable for early to mid-Spring paddles if only because the water here warms up much faster than many other Maine waters. It is a safe place to row and paddle.

From the LaBries' house, Cobbosseecontee Stream provides access to two lakes: Horseshoe Pond and the larger Pleasant Pond. It also gives us access to a meandering tributary called Cold Stream, which has turned out to be our most popular destination over the years. It is a quiet, beautiful place,

essentially unchanged from years ago, with just a few fishing camps located about half-way up the stream. Distance from our launch site to the end of Cold Stream is about 3.8 statute miles, making for a perfect seven-mile-or-so round-trip. It is a paddlers' heaven and although we have many different types of boats showing up here, we're finding that more and more canoes are becoming the norm.

Launch time each year is about 10 a.m. This year, the weather was drizzly and cold in the early morning, so we



**Top:** The fleet starts to assemble. **Above:** Rafting up for lunch. Photos by Paul LaBrie.



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feared that it might limit attendance. Nope. Folks just gave themselves a leisurely start, and by 11 a.m. we had thirteen boats on the water. The overall weather was overcast, but dry, with temps in the 60s, ideal for paddling and rowing. Because several low bridges limit the size of vessels coming into Cobbosseecontee Stream, the motorized traffic is fairly low. We had the waterway pretty much to ourselves. One couldn't ask for better.

This year, instead of returning to base for a community lunch, the decision was made to raft up at the navigable end of Cold Stream. Allen and Lynn Head had brought along a small mushroom anchor that was sufficient to hold us all in the mild current. Black flies, always a nuisance at this time of

year, were non-existent, probably owing to the warm water. (Black flies, also known as "The Maine State Bird," hatch in cold running streams and are the bane of fly fishermen here.)

Many boats here were crafted by their owners, and this event is the first time out on the water, for many. Because it comes on the coattails of a long Maine winter, the Cobbosseecontee Stream row/paddle often sees the launching of a new boat. The camaraderie after the excursion is always fun, with many folks lingering for desserts, a trip up to Paul's boat shop, and far-ranging discussions about boat designs, paddling techniques, and on and on.

May 20, 2023, will mark our 5th event with onsite camping available. Watch for it in next year's TSCA events.



*Left: Seldom have I seen such an expression of joy with a new boat launching which I attended Tuesday, May 10th. Marti Wolfe launched her Drake which was a great combo of a kit by Clint Chase, plus professional build by Bill Bucholz, with beautiful finishing by Marti—a great and efficient way for someone without tools and a shop to get a boat. Her smile sort of says it all. —Ben Fuller*

*Below: Loading a Saavo. Photo by Paul LaBrie.*



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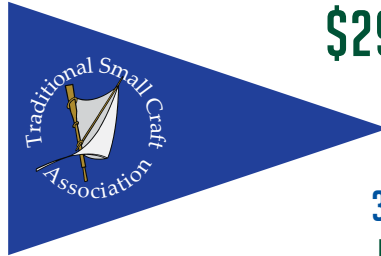
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# FAMILY AND FRIENDS ENJOY A CAPE COD ROW FROM THE BEACH

*By Bill Stirling*

The Cape Cod Chapter and the Cape's Maritime Museum held our spring Rowing Rendezvous on May 21st from Kalmus Beach on Lewis Bay, in Hyannis, Massachusetts. The museum and our members brought 10 boats for our members and the public to row and try out a number of traditional designs.

It was foggy in the morning with the warm, humid air over still, cool water, but the wind was light. We were operating in a corner of the bay that is well out of the channel, so with

the exception of their wakes there was no threat from the Nantucket ferries.

We had a surprisingly good crowd with a number of first-time rowers. Some of our guests signed up to try the museum's rowing program this summer using the 27-foot four-oared Whitehall gig.

Walt Baron, Old Wharf Dory, will be having his row in Wellfleet on September 17th this fall so you should reserve the date and plan to join the fun.





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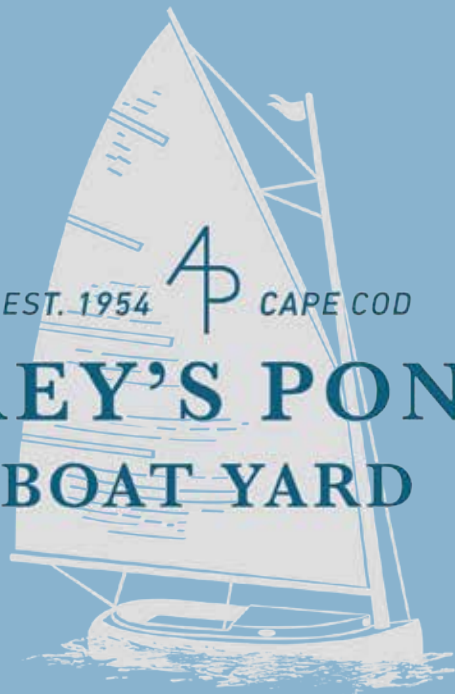


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*Note: Individual and Family Memberships qualify for one vote and one copy of each TSCA mailing.*

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

## The Ash Breeze

Fall 2022 Volume 43 Number 3

**Editorial Deadline: August 1, 2022**

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

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

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

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