

The Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

GRAND BANKS DORY

IN THIS ISSUE

Optimist Pram

Camp-Cruising Odyssey

NH/VT Chapter Sailing

MASCF XXXX



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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.

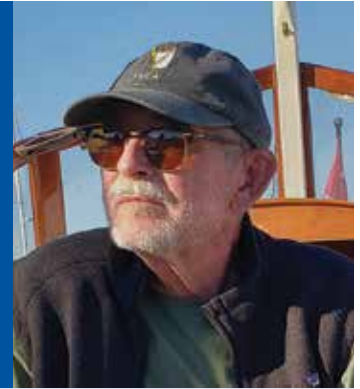
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TAB Layout Design: Karen Bowen

Cover: New Hampshire and Vermont Chapter at Grand Isle State Park Beach for lunch. Image courtesy of Bill and Lori Real.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael Jones



It is the end of July as I write these notes for the Fall edition of *The Ash Breeze*. It gives me hope that cooler weather is on the horizon. Living between the Gulf of Mexico and Tampa Bay we avoid extreme temperatures, but summer does last a long time, hot and humid from May through September. Fall will bring prime boating weather in the south as it signals the end of the season for those in the north.

We want to thank Walter Baron, Todd Bloch, and Douglas Oeller for their years of service on the board and welcome the new council members, Scott Anderson, John Kohnen, and Bill Stirling.

The Traditional Small Craft Association members have voted to approve an adjustment of membership rate structure to ensure that we will be financially sound to continue supporting educational programs as well as the publication of *The Ash Breeze*. The council continues to expand the ways the TSCA supports the small boat community through grants and increased presence at events. There will soon be available a free one-year introductory membership available to customers of builders, designers, and suppliers of boat building kits.

The Ash Breeze is one of the few publications about small boats that is still being printed. The strength of any organization is in its members, and we are fortunate to have a membership base with a great range of skills and knowledge. Sharing and teaching those skills and experiences is how we show that traditional small boats and seamanship are more than something just seen in a museum. Teaching skills can be life changing not only for the students, but also the teachers. We want to hear those stories. Please share your experiences in *The Ash Breeze*. A post on Facebook is very temporary, but the same story printed in *The Ash Breeze* can be an inspiration to others for years to come.

We have made our plans and are looking forward to the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival in early October. I'll be there with *Freddie* the Cat, built in 1980 by Bob Treat. The Florida Gulf Coast Small Boat Meet will be November 10–12 with no registration or fees—just come and join in the fun!





A GRAND BANKS DORY

FROM JOHN GARDNER'S *THE DORY BOOK*

By Laura DeFelice

The San Francisco Maritime National Park Association, a recent recipient of a John Gardner Grant, was able to purchase tools and materials to facilitate the construction of a 14-foot Grand Banks Dory. This project, carried out in partnership with the Get Out and Learn program, involved students from Downtown High School who are at risk of truancy.

The project aimed to engage students by providing them with an opportunity to learn through practical activities and real-life situations. In the shop, students learn traditional wooden boat building techniques by building a small craft from start to finish. They learn measuring, cutting, assembly, shaping, and finishing of the boat, gaining confidence and knowledge of hand and power tools. Inherent in the boat building activity are lessons in using written and drawn plans, reading comprehension, mathematics, group cooperation, and negotiation skills.



Top: Students built a 14-foot Grand Banks Dory. **Right:** Boatbuilder Alana McGillis and local students reading plans from John Gardner's *The Dory Book*.



The project selected was a Grand Banks Dory, utilizing the construction methods, lines, and offsets from John Gardner's *The Dory Book*.

"I fairly enjoyed my experience building a boat and learning to row. I would love to hear of others doing the same. The instructors are passionate, and it spreads among the students, which allows them to absorb the knowledge given. This program has improved my ability to work with others and how to handle new things. I believe that these skills are applicable anywhere in the real world."

—Natasha, GOAL Student

Students were more engaged than ever this semester, enthusiastically showing up each day and on extra credit days to finish the boat. By providing them with an avenue to apply

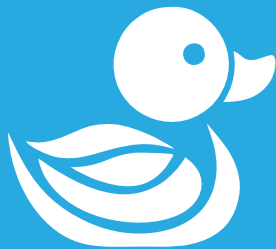


Below: Students applying exterior finish coats to their dory.

Right: Students applying interior finish coats to their dory.

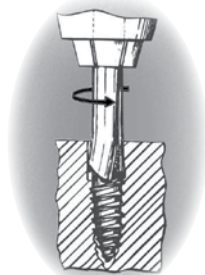


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“I feel like it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and not a lot of people get to build a boat or learn how to row, especially with such amazing instructors. It is very valuable because you get to learn the do’s and don’ts in the boat shop as well with rowing. You get to learn what to do in case your boat flips, and you also learn the four important commands that are used when on the water. Building a boat has truly improved on my communication and my confidence. I would love to see others my age or older who’ve never had the chance to experience this try it out and become amazing rowers/boat builders.”

–Fortune, GOAL Student

“By providing our students with hands-on educational experiences, it re-engages truant students by giving them a reason to come to school and holds them accountable to high standards in a way comprehensive schools just cannot. It makes learning math and history applicable to their daily tasks of learning to row and build boats. Small class sizes make every student feel like their experience and voice matter.”

–Abi Ruksznis, Downtown High School teacher

mathematical principles in a practical setting, they grasp concepts that may have seemed abstract in the classroom. While on the water students learn to row on dories from the previous year; this takes them out of their comfort zone and introduces them to the marine environment. For most students this is the first time they are in a boat by themselves or the first time ever in a boat. These water safety and rowing skills come in handy when it is launching time.

The John Gardner Grant has had a significant and positive impact on the students involved in the boat-building project. Through practical applications and hands-on activities, they acquired valuable skills and confidence. We are immensely grateful for your support, which made this all possible and helped to inspire and empower these students.

Laura DeFelice is the Education Director at the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association, a Partner of the National Park Service, “Bringing our maritime heritage to life through education, preservation, and philanthropy.”

Left: Students rowing their Dory in the Sand Francisco Maritime National Park.

Right: Celebrating their accomplishment!



THE UBIQUITOUS OPTIMIST PRAM

By Michael Jones

I was once asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. “I want to be an interesting old man” was my reply. The “old man” part came quicker than I expected. I also realized it was not me that was interesting, but rather the journey—stories about the past and the people that influenced my life. Life as a teenager in Tarpon Springs in the 1960s was basically a saltwater version of “Huck Finn”—life revolved around the water. Located on the west coast of Florida, Tarpon Springs is built around the Anclote River and the connecting bayous; we could and did go everywhere by boat. We repaired, built, worked on, and used every kind of boat, from commercial to tin canoes built out of scrap material. One of the smaller boats that was ever-present was the Optimist Pram. While I never actually sailed one, it did become an important part of my life.

I left Tarpon to go to college and then had a short career in building houses. By the early '80s I found myself living on a wooden yawl and working at Clearwater Bay Marine Ways, the home of Clark Mills. It was my good fortune to have Clark as a friend and mentor. The story of the Optimist Pram has been told many times, but it is a story that is worth repeating.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.”

—Margaret Mead

The ubiquitous Optimist Pram is the largest youth racing class in the world, with over 150,000 registered boats in 110 countries. Those numbers are just the ones that are registered with the International Optimist Dinghy Association; countless other prams are built by individuals and clubs and are not registered. “The Origins of the Optimist Pram” is a story of altruistic community service at its best.

The year was 1947 in Clearwater, Florida, and the newly formed Optimist Club was looking to have a Florida sailing version of the Soap Box Derby. Major Clifford McKay took the concept to Clark Mills, a well-known local boat builder, with the specifications that it would cost under fifty dollars and be funded by local businesses following the guidelines of the Soap Box Derby.

This is Clark Mills telling of the story from his personal writings:

Colonel Cliff McKay called me on the phone and asked to come to his office that evening. He had been a guest speaker at the

Optimist Club meeting the night before and said he really had them all fired up ready to pursue a junior sailing program, and he wanted me to draw him a plan for a simple little sailboat that a boy and his dad could build in their garage with simple tools. The boat was not to cost over fifty dollars, and his idea was to have some merchants and business companies sponsor a kid in return for having a sign on the boat.

Well, I was glad to do anything for the kids, especially to promote sailing. It was the next couple nights getting it done. I drew lots of sail boats every night, the problem with this was the price. Every time I had a nice little sailing skiff drawn, it figured out too much cost. So I finally cut the bow off, making it a butt headed pram.

Mr. Ernie Green and the Optimist committee, also Colonel McKay, thought it would do, so I finished a sample the following week.

I hauled it down to Haven Street Dock in Clearwater, and Cliff McKay Jr. got in and took off in about a 20 mph breeze.

Mills, McKay, and Green.







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He scooted out into the bay on the wind, off the wind, across, and then reached back to the dock. He landed, saying, "It was really great!"

Then Dewey Thomas got in; he's another long-legged boy that loves sailing. "Perfect!" he yells.

Little did any of us, that day, realize how successful that little boat and Colonel McKay and Ernie Green's plans were to be!

The evening of the next Optimist Club meeting, which was held in the Grey Moss Inn, I brought the number one pram down and put it right in the entrance foyer all rigged with sail, etc... It caused a flurry of comments by the members as they came in, and they were most all in favor of proceeding with the promotion of the program.

In just a few weeks the Optimist Club of Clearwater had a fleet of 20 or so prams. They stored them in the old fish processing factory in back of the Yacht Club.

To say the program was a success is a gross understatement. Pram fleets spread up and down the Gulf Coast and then jumped across the Atlantic and around the world. It is easy to point to and find the statistics about the racing class and its successes in training sailors: 80% of Olympic sailors began their racing careers in "Opti's." What is less documented and impossible to quantify is the impact on the individuals building and sailing the Optimist Pram, whether they be a Polish man telling how he and his father built a pram in Poland, fifty years ago, or women telling of being able to compete and win in competition with the boys, seventy years ago. (The Optimist broke with the "boy's only" rule of the Soap Box Derby and allowed everyone to compete.) The process of building and sailing a boat can build a confidence that lasts a lifetime.

One of those memories was shared by Meade Gougeon after his brother, Jan, had passed away. "The Optimist Pram

saved Jan's life." Jan was the youngest of the Gougeon brothers and was the only one living at home when their father died. Meade said, "Jan wasn't good at ball games. It wasn't until he was given an Optimist Pram kit that he found himself. In a very real sense, Jan found his life's calling while building and racing that plywood Optimist Pram."

Meade and Jan Gougeon (founders of West Systems Epoxy) were inducted into the National Sailing Hall of Fame in 2015, and Clark Mills followed in 2017.

While Clark Mills is most recognized for the Optimist Pram, that story overshadows the range of his knowledge and skills. However, the stories of his other boats will have to wait for another issue.

RESOURCES

Plans for the Optimist Pram have been reprinted in various publications, but most would not meet the requirements for racing of the United States Optimist Dinghy Association. Plans for homebuilding are available from The Cleveland Amateur Boatbuilding and Boating Society (<http://cabbs.org/cabbs-optimist-pram/>).

The Optimist Dinghy 1947–2007: A provisional history of the first sixty years of the International Optimist Dinghy by Robert Wilkes and Clifford McKay Jr.

"The Origin of the Optimist Pram" <https://optistuff.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Origin-of-Optimist-Dinghy.pdf>

WoodenBoat #36, "Boatbuilder Clark Mills," p. 73

National Sailing Hall of Fame, <https://nshof.org/inductees/mills-clark-wilbur/>

Prams in St Petersburg, Florida, with Dali Museum in the background.

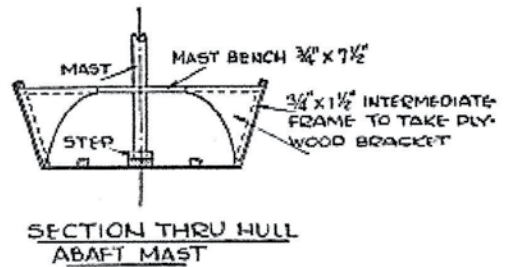


Prams in the McKay Creek Boat Shop in Heritage Village, February 2017.



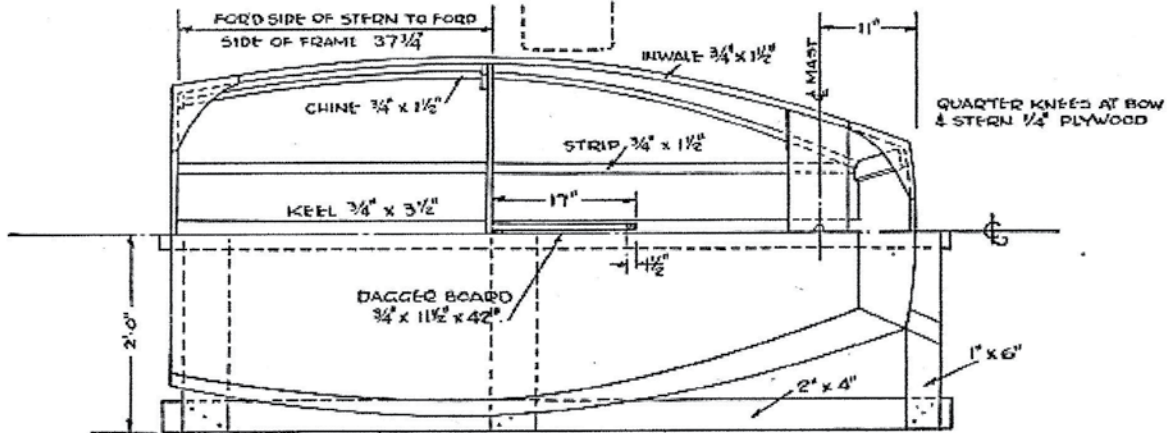
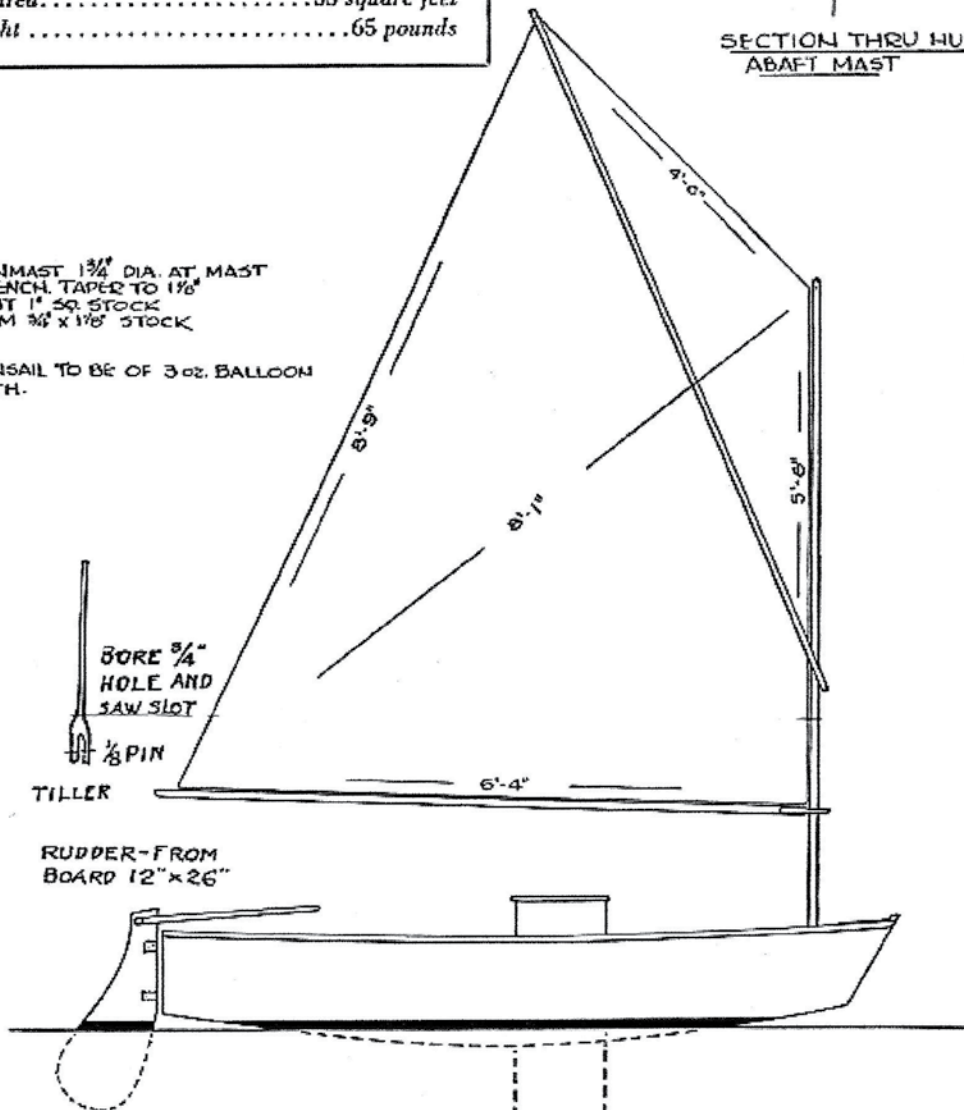
★ THE OPTIMIST-PRAM ★

Length over all 7 feet 8 inches
 Breadth 3 feet 8 inches
 Draft (board down) 2 feet 6 inches
 Sail area 35 square feet
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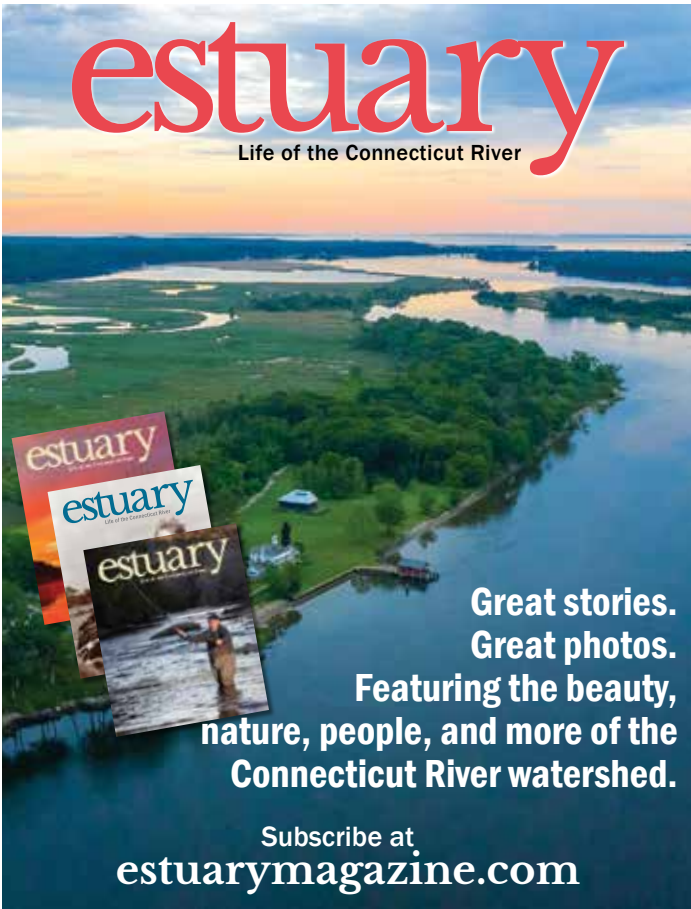
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THE NEW HAMPSHIRE AND VERMONT CHAPTER

SAILS THE INLAND SEA OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN

By Bill and Lori Real

The New Hampshire and Vermont Chapter gathered at Vermont's Grand Isle State Park campground for several days of sailing on the Inland Sea during the week of July 24th. This eastern portion of Lake Champlain is separated from the larger open water of the main lake by Grand Isle and North Hero Islands on the west and by Sandbar State Park on the south. The Inland Sea stretches 25 miles north to south. Our game plan was to arrive at the campground on Monday in hopes that weather would favor sailing on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Given the stormy weather that has been the norm this summer, we had our fingers crossed.

The Tuesday morning weather forecast promised winds of 5 to 10 mph out of the south and mostly sunny skies. Perfect!

Twenty-four chapter members and guests launched from the John Guilmette Access Area in South Hero, Vermont. The fleet of twelve boats was made up of Calendar Island Yawls, Caledonia Yawls, a D-18 Myst, a Coquina, a Ness Yawl, a Dory Skiff, a Northeaster Dory, a Thistle, and a Glass Cabin Launch. A Point Comfort 18 skiff served as a chase boat for the fleet.

We headed north, sailing downwind. The wind remained steady out of the south, and most were comfortable sailing with full canvas. The beach at Grand Isle State Park, a sail of approximately four miles, provided an excellent place to pull up for lunch.

Having eaten our fill, we headed out with the intent of

Top: Group at Grand Isle State Park Beach.



sailing around Fish Bladder and Cedar Islands on our way back to the boat ramp. The wind was still steady out of the south, and we took off on a beam reach, headed east. All seemed great until the wind died. Looking to the north we saw an ominous black line of clouds. The sound of thunder confirmed that a storm was headed our way. Oars deployed, we all pulled for home. Given the distance to safety, we were happy to accept a motorized tow from our friends, Ted and Ruth, in their Myst. The skies opened up as the last of our fleet pulled out of the water.

Wednesday morning brought partly cloudy skies and predicted winds of 10 to 20 mph out of the south. This Guilmette launch ramp is located at the south end of the Inland Sea, adjacent to the sandbar separating it from the main lake. The sandbar serves as a breakwater, interrupting the chop that builds up on the main lake. While there were white caps to the south of the sandbar, there was only a light chop to the north. A reef or two in our sails and we all enjoyed a great day of sailing in the protected waters north of the sandbar.

Thursday morning brought heavy rain. Part of the group visited a local brewery for lunch. The day may have been a washout, but we did have two great days of sailing.

The success of any organization depends on active participation from its members. We want to thank Hank and Jamie Ellis for hosting and organizing this event. Also, thanks to Lynn and Allen Head for hosting "Margarita Night" during our stay at Grand Isle State Park. Other events this summer included a Connecticut River row/paddle hosted by Ted Cody and Wayne Blanchard and a Merrimack River row/paddle hosted by Allen and Lynn Head.

The New Hampshire and Vermont Chapter was formed in October 2021. Our members are widely spread across the two states. If you are Interested in joining this chapter, please contact Bill Real at BandLReal1@comcast.net.

Ted Cody's Myst.



SADLY, WE RECEIVED A RETURNED MAGAZINE INDICATING THAT OUR MEMBER #1, MS. JEAN GARDNER, DAUGHTER OF JOHN GARDNER, HAS CROSSED THE BAR.

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MID-ATLANTIC SMALL CRAFT FESTIVAL XXXX

The TSCA is pleased to co-sponsor The Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival XXXX, one of the nation's largest gatherings of small boat enthusiasts and unique watercraft is back to its waterfront campus at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum on Friday–Sunday, Oct. 6–8, 2023.

Hundreds of amateur and professional boatbuilders and owners will come from all over the east coast to display their one-of-a-kind kayaks, canoes, and traditional small craft at the 40th edition of the annual festival, which runs 10 a.m.–5 p.m. all three days.

On Saturday, there will be a lively small craft Miles River sailing race, which can be viewed from CBMM's waterfront and docks. There will be rowing and paddling races for children and adults throughout the day. Also on Saturday, a special presentation in CBMM's Shipyard following a weeklong workshop on traditional Japanese boatbuilding, led by author, boatbuilder, and educator Douglas Brooks, concludes with a traditional Shinto launching ceremony to celebrate the completion of a 21-foot Japanese river boat. Brooks will also be the keynote speaker at the Saturday night dinner. Shanty singing and a music jam traditionally follow the dinner in the Steamboat building.

Judges will be roaming the docks and grounds evaluating those small craft entered to be judged. Everyone on campus can vote for their favorite boat, with the People's Choice award and other boat building awards announced on Saturday evening. Sunday features more children's activities and the swap meet before the wrap-up meeting at 1:30 p.m.

MASCF XXXX participants receive a full schedule of activities, including demos/workshops, sailing and rowing races, boat judging competitions, kid's cardboard

boatbuilding, model making craft workshops, and much more in the registration packets. Children under 12 are free this year. See cbmm.org/event/mid-atlantic-small-craft-festival/ for all registration details. The registration fee also includes continental breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, bring-your-own-everything Friday evening oyster and beer fest, dinner on Saturday, and complimentary space to camp overnight. Additional t-shirts and tickets to the Saturday night dinner can be purchased at the registration booth throughout the weekend.

The campus will look different to festival participants this year. CBMM is nearing completion of its new Welcome Center, which is slated to open later this fall. While the functionality and layout of campus has changed, CBMM still has more space to offer for camping than last fall. There is no additional fee for camping, and there is ample primitive camping space available in and around the wooded areas along CBMM's driving path—remember, there are no campfires allowed in the camping area. As always, bathroom/shower facilities are always available.

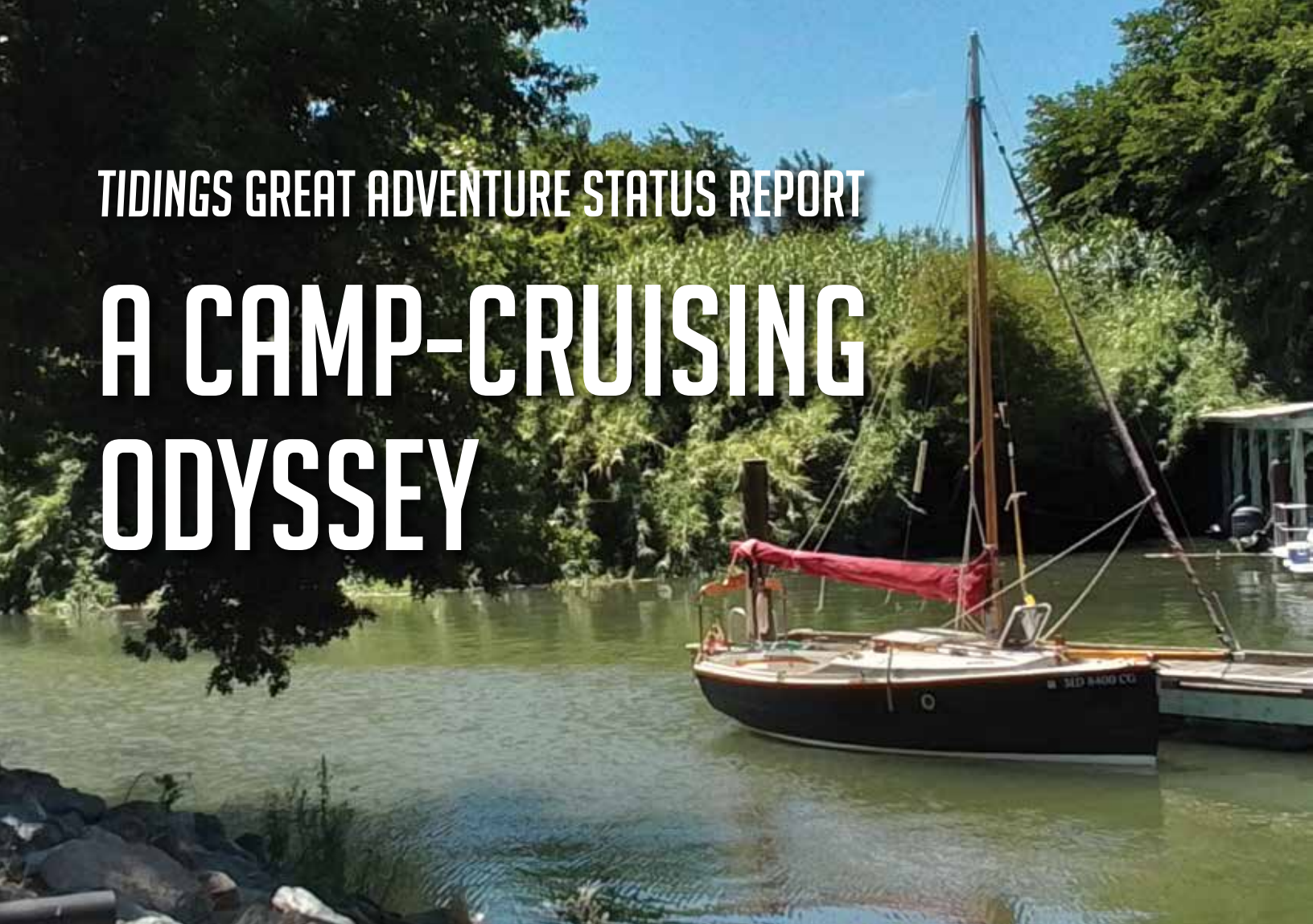
Trailer parking is restricted in the camping area, but ample space is available inside the museum gravel area off Mill Street and in the alley behind the B&G building. Participants will have easier access to unload and launch their vessels in Fogg's Cove. Boats that can be carried by hand or transported via a hand dolly may be launched along CBMM's shoreline. There will be multiple boat ramps and floating docks for smaller vessels. Larger boats should launch from the public boat ramp in St. Michaels.

TSCA members should register as early as possible.



TIDINGS GREAT ADVENTURE STATUS REPORT

A CAMP-CRUIISING ODYSSEY



By Captain Doug Oeller

Late July of 2023 finds *Tidings* at Delta Marina, in Rio Vista, California, on the Sacramento River. We've come a long way since leaving Kent Island, Maryland, in 2018. If our luck holds, we (*Tidings* and I) will be in Corpus Christi, Texas, by the end of August.

The Great Adventure is my circumnavigation of the lower 48 states in a modified 1998 Cornish Shrimper 19 named *Tidings*. With help from a rotating roster of friends and family, *Tidings* and I traveled by water up the east coast to Maine. The following year (2019), I towed *Tidings* to Lake Champlain and each of the Great Lakes, launching for short cruises in safe areas. The COVID pandemic put the adventure on hold for two years while *Tidings* remained in indoor storage in Green Bay, Wisconsin. In the spring of 2022, I bought a new trailer for *Tidings* (this one has brakes) and towed her to Anacortes, Washington, where we spent the summer cruising in the San

Juan Islands, again with volunteer crew. I found indoor storage available in Port Townsend and left her there in September of 2022 while I drove home for the winter.

The 2023 season began with a week of cruising in the Canadian Gulf Islands with my wife, Meg, and a week in the San Juan Islands with Cousin Ed. Then I towed *Tidings* to Cathlamet, California, where I launched in the Columbia River for a 5-day solo trip upstream. I found the Columbia to be uncomfortable waters for my small boat. Between the river current, the tidal current, and the strong afternoon winds, I was always fighting something. So, it was back on the trailer and south to California.

Based on advice from fellow TSCA members, I launched *Tidings* at Napa Valley Marina for my visit to the San Francisco Bay region. Still alone, I sailed down the Napa River and out to Sausalito, where I got a glimpse of the Golden Gate Bridge

Top: *Tidings* at dock in the Pacific Northwest. **Page 17 Top Left:** The Golden Gate bridge is quite a view. **Page 17 Top Right:** Small Craft camp cruising essentials. **Page 17 Bottom:** *Tidings* in Anacortes, WA, camp site.



and affirmation that those waters are too rough and the winds too strong to safely enjoy sailing alone in a small boat. The locals told me that it would be so. But you can't take a boat all the way to California and not go to see that bridge. We turned tail and ran downwind to "the Delta" where the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers empty into San Pablo Bay. It is still very windy here. But the narrow waterways keep the waves from building quite so high.

Tomorrow, *Tidings* will be back on the trailer and heading south to Monterey Bay followed by launches at Long Beach and San Diego before driving to Texas. It truly is a great adventure.

Fair Winds, Cap'n Doug



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 \$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:

tscanet.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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JOHN GARDNER SMALL CRAFT WORKSHOP 2023

AT MYSTIC SEAPORT DURING THE WOODENBOAT SHOW, JUNE 23-25

By Bill & Karen Rutherford

Isn't it great when old friends come back to mix and mingle with new folks and new boats to have fresh experiences? We last saw the Mohawk River Batteau people two years ago when just coming out of Covid. They joined us then to kick off a "normal" summer on a cold and stormy Memorial Day weekend. This time around we had much warmer temperatures, some real sun, and a whole WoodenBoat Show to share. Much more "normal." What remained constant was their cheerful good spirits and period costumes.

Plus, Ben Fuller and David Cockey returned to reprise their deep dive into Peapods, those versatile double-enders that sneak into shallow, rocky areas to dip their gunnels to land tasty crustaceans. This year they teamed with two Apprenticeshop apprentices to show and tell how the originals were built "by eye," wrapping sheer battens around a single center frame tied to a pair of stems and a flat plank keel. Standing room only, both in the Seaport's Masin Room at the North Entrance Building and again on the lawn outside where folks gathered

around to poke, prod, and question how such a beautiful boat could be built by such simple means. The proof was when the apprentices and friends picked up the boat, carried it to water and launched it for a celebratory row.

The new folks this year who quickly became friends included three generations of a family who proudly sailed and rowed all over the river in their 21-foot Beachcomber/Alpha circa 1910 racing dory. The senior member and his two sons were in the process of transferring ownership to their son/grandson, who was proud as punch as they dexterously sailed the tippy, touchy craft as if it were as solid as one of the Boat Livery's big flat-bottomed skiffs. All of which was not lost on us Boat Livery volunteers who have been puzzling how to rig the myriad halyards, sheets, and steering lines on our newly acquired Alpha Dory. No race resulted; but next year—maybe.

Reminiscent of Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey, we had at least three rings in action. Multiple presentations in the

Beachcomber-Alpha Dory Share Alike built back in '83-'84 for two friends to share during the season, now being sailed by three generations of the same family led by Mark Hopper.

Ben Fuller and David Cockey on the lawn after their presentation review the details of constructing the Maine Peapod By Eye.





This is 9-year-old Oliver Blackwell rowing the Natoma Skiff during the Sunday morning row downriver to 6 Penny Island.



Dick Sleeper sailing his Double Lanteen Cat Ketch Rigged Dory.

Masin Room including our own former Boat Livery junior volunteer, now curator at the Herreshoff Museum, Evelyn Ansel, who waxed eloquent on a now timely topic, how at the end of the Age of Steam, the Herreshoffs successfully experimented with electric motive power.

In another ring at the shipyard end of the campus, hands-on demonstrations occurred almost hourly ranging from building Birds Mouth Spars to bronze casting, to sharpening tools, oar making, steam bending, half-hull modeling, strip planking, glued lap boat building, and caulking traditional plank on frame.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, as they used to say, our TSCA Booth at Australia Beach welcomed visitors, explained TSCA, held demonstrations on the Mohawk River Batteau, which traversed the Mohawk River to and from Albany and Buffalo before the Erie Canal, rigged sail on the Good Little Skiff, and visited the Seaport's Small Craft Hall to view progress on its major conversion from storage to public presentation.

In between times, we inserted morning rows up the river to search for the source of the Mighty Mystic as well as downriver through the two movable bridges to Six-Penny Island, once a source of colonial salt hay, now a hot spot for birding. Afternoons we launched and enjoyed leisurely sails on the river. Saturday evening, we hosted an off-site potluck dinner anchored by hamburgers, hot dogs, and Peggy Vermilya's famous potato and pasta salads. As we mixed and mingled, new friends became old friends, and neighbors were entertained by Pete Peter's latest Sea Chanty.

Big Thank You's to Mystic Seaport Staff including Sarah Clement, Waterfront Programs Administrator, and staff who helped us set all this up including Friday and Saturday night accommodations on the "Conrad"; and to Nick Parker, Boathouse Livery Supervisor, for his gracious sharing of Boat Livery boats (and life vests). Bigger Thanks to John Gardner

TSCA Chapter Members who made this all happen, including Dan Nelson who anchored our Australia Beach Booth; Carl Kaufman who assisted; the Blackwell family, all four of them, Liz, Adam, Charlotte, and Oliver; to Brian Cooper who staffed our table out front and brought our Club Dories upriver; and Phil Behney who brought them back down. To Ned Lloyd who easily brought the oldest boat, a 100+ year-old box keel Seabright Skiff that not only floated but took people for rides. Most importantly, to the participants, like Dick Sleeper and friends who let it all hang out in an 18-foot Cat-Ketch, lateen-rigged dory with a combination of Sunfish sail and a Tortoise sail which zipped up and down the river. Who says we are not supposed to have fun?

Come join us next year. Smallcrafter@gmail.com

Adam Blackwell and daughter Charlotte in a Lawley Tender borrowed from the Seaport Boat Livery, just after passing beneath the Mystic Bascule Bridge.





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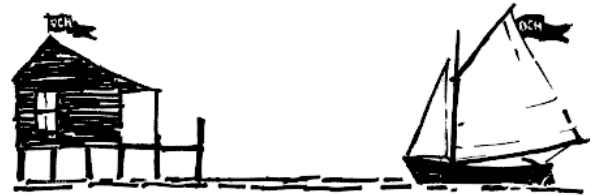
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THERE IS NO ELEVATOR AT THE WOODEN BOAT SHOW

By Pete Peters

Mystic Seaport, Saturday, June 23

Assignment: Talk to people about the Traditional Small Craft Association

What do you say? How does it begin? There is no elevator on Australia Beach, just folks messing about in boats and having what seems like a good time.

Instead, the John Gardner Chapter has set up a canopy and displays a large blue banner with the letters T-S-C-A in bold white.

Now if there was an elevator—which there is not—then the following recommendations would be: “an ideal elevator pitch would be interesting and memorable and last about 30 to 60 seconds, the average elevator ride, hence the name.” However, on Australia Beach there is no time limit because we as a group are a lot of talkers, and talking about rowing or sailing small boats never ends at 60 seconds.

It so happens that the “interesting and memorable” part of the recommendation is easier.

Here is the typical scenario of the day: A middle- or post-middle-aged man with or without significant other makes eye contact briefly as he slowly approaches the TSCA banner. He asks, “What do the letters T-S-C-A stand for?” I respond as I point to each letter: “They stand for ‘Awesome Fun in Small Boats.’” He’s puzzled for a moment, and then I confess the letters are really in Gaelic, and the translation is Traditional Small Craft Association. The encounter, like the elevator pitch, has become interesting, memorable, comical, and nonthreatening.

He goes on to muse how he always wanted to build a small boat, and now that the kids are out of the house and he has some free time he wants to know more.

The props for the next step are essential. There is a pile of old

Ash Breeze’s that are handed to him. A 6-inch-square printed QR code is on the table. He’s a tech savvy guy, so he scans the code with his phone and is immediately taken to the TSCA web page. I inquire where he lives, and we scroll to the chapter locator page.

This scene as described happened countless times throughout the day.

I don’t know how many went home and looked up the Gaelic words for “awesome fun in small boats,” but as we said goodbye he quipped, “I’m going to look into this and probably join.”

It was indeed a great day to be without an elevator.

Fair winds,
Pete Peters

TSCA Booth.



MEMBERSHIPS IN MOTION

By Pete Peters

Growing up, our Model A Ford would frequently use a gently sloping hill leading from our barn to jump-start the engine. This phenomenon is a long-lost art in today's computerized, automatic-everything cars. After gaining a little speed, the car was put into gear, and the clutch was released. There was a little bucking, the motor would turn over a few times, and then it would run smoothly.



The TSCA membership continues to grow with mostly older folks. The TSCA Council has sought ways to “jump-start” a new membership program to reach out to younger prospects ready to enthusiastically embrace the joy of rowing and sailing traditional small boats. Funds to support boating festivals and encouraging new memberships, as well as participating in events, are all part of the jump start.

Making membership and the TSCA experience more available is our goal. How to jump-start the process is the

challenge. There once was a famous twentieth-century bank robber named Willie Sutton. When asked why he robbed banks, he responded with a smile, “Because that’s where the money is!” The Council is sending letters with a special offer to people interested in small boats, who have ordered plans and kits or taken classes, because that’s “where the interest is.” The letters are going to *Ash Breeze* advertisers, boat

building programs, and seamanship course educators, as well as small boat designers and kit makers for new boat builders purchasing plans and boat building kits. In addition, those educators and participants in the Build to Teach programs (TWSBA) will receive our letter offering a free, one-year trial membership with a digital copy of *The Ash Breeze*.

TSCA Council members want to “jump-start” new membership, build our chapters, expand our events, and invite and encourage new friends to share our fun.

Florida Gulf Coast Small Boat Meet November 10-12, 2023



Cedar Key, Florida



Image Credit: Getty Images/Archive Holdings, Inc. (Model A).



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Chapter Reorganizing

Puget Sound TSCA

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Contact if you would like to assist in reorganizing the chapter.



MOUNTAIN SAILING

Here are TSCA member vessels in Somers, Montana. The lead boat is a Caledonia Yawl, *Dragonfly*, owned by

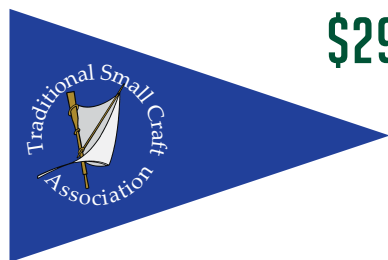
Scott Mason, and the rear boat is a Michalak Fat Cat 2, *Kat Boat*, owned by James Maxwell. The occasion is "Smugglers Run," in this case a single-entrant event that sails the better part of the 18-mile length of Flathead Lake. We arrived in Somers at 5 a.m. after starting at 11:30 a.m. the day before! It was a fine morning messing about in our boats. We hope to get a fledgling chapter, based in the Inland Mountain West, started soon. Our events can be found at www.mtsmallboats.org.



James D. Maxwell
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BUILDING THE SHELBOURNE DORY

By Brad Dimock

The classic Banks Dory evolved in and around Lowell's Boat Shop in Amesbury, Massachusetts, in the mid-1800s. The design was ideal for nesting boats five- and six-high on schooners fishing cod on the Grand Banks. Boat shops from Cape Cod to Newfoundland soon adopted the design and built boats by the tens of thousands—the Banks Dory becoming the most-built rowboat in history. Each locality evolved and adapted their style to local needs and preferences, much as did Darwin's finches on their isolated islands. Newfoundland dory historian, Otto Kelland, in his 1984 *Dories and Dorymen*, listed seven distinct forms of the Banks Dory, the Shelburne dory being one of the favored varieties.

There are surprisingly few steps of apprentice to master from the time Shelburne boatbuilder Isaac Crowell visited the northern Massachusetts in order to learn the dory style in the mid-1800s, until today—roughly four hands-on transfers, ending with Milford Buchanan. For the last two dozen years, Milford has worked on the second floor of the old J. C. Williams Dory Shop, now Shelburne's Dory Shop Museum, conscientiously carrying on the tradition as it was taught to him. Although he acknowledges there may be quicker or more efficient ways to do things, he strives to continue the way the "old fella" taught him. It's like stepping back in time to a lost time.

I first visited Milford in 2014. When I later read Douglas Brooks's accounts of apprenticing under and documenting older Japanese boatbuilders, each the last of their line, I thought of Milford—a direct link to the old ways, but with no apprentice. I returned in 2019 for a week and wrote a piece

on Milford for *WoodenBoat* magazine. In later discussions with Douglas, and with Graham McKay, Executive Director of Lowell's Boat Shop, we agreed that a full documentation of Milford Buchanan and the Shelburne Dory tradition was crucial. Together with Cricket Rust, with whom I run Fretwater Boatworks and teach whitewater river dory construction, the four of us formed the Dory Heritage Project in 2022, with Milford Buchanan as our first subject. Backed by crowdfunding and a generous grant from the Traditional Small Craft Association, we headed to Nova Scotia for two weeks this past May to build and document a Shelburne dory.

Our approach to Shelburne was rerouted and nearly blocked by wildfires—the worst in Nova Scotia's history. For the first week of the project, we were on evacuation readiness, with bombers scooping water from the harbor outside the shop, smoke billowing on all sides. A second shocker was when, on our arrival, Milford announced he was retiring at the end of this season. The boat we were about to build would be the second-to-the-last Shelburne dory built, perhaps ever. It was sobering to think that, had we simply talked about this project for another year, it would have been too late.

Mick Fearn, a retired New Englander, happened by Milford's shop fourteen years ago. When Milford mentioned he could use a helper, Mick volunteered. He soon sensed a mission for himself and has worked with Milford every summer since. Mick, too, will be retiring at the end of this summer. For a week or two prior to our arrival, Milford and Mick had been sorting and planing planks, patching knot-holes, and gluing up a floor for the dory—time-consuming work that

In 1880 J. C. Williams transformed this old fish warehouse into a dory shop. Each dory in this image was built on the second floor and sent out the open-end doors, just as they are today.



The Dory Shop Museum is the small dark building below and left of the steeple. The 2023 wildfires were causing evacuations within a few miles of the shop for the first week of our project.



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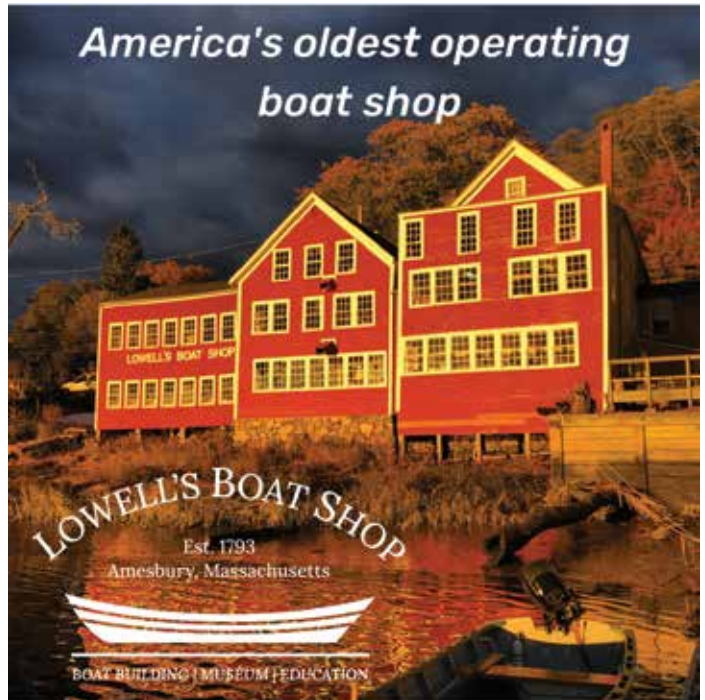
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needs little documentation. On our first day we began laying out the floor shape with an ancient curved pattern stored in the rafters. The outside of the curve creates the forward floor pattern; the inside of the curve describes the stern. “You can build any size dory with this pattern,” says Milford. “You just have to know how.”

There are literally hundreds of old pieces of wood in the rafters and on the walls. Knowing which one is what, and when and where to use it, is all stored in Milford’s memory, passed down from earlier Master Dory Builders.

I know probably about half of them. Cause they built more than just dories here, they built round-siders, they build dory skiffs, they built Swampscott dories. It’s a hard job to read the writings onto ’em. But you know for the dories and the skiffs, we still have the original molds and patterns hangin’ on the wall. So I know how to use those. And this is all passed down to me from word of mouth, and doin’. So if you go over to the museum, to the office and ask for a set of blueprints, they don’t have ’em. It’s all up in Milford’s head.

In the past that was job security, and a way to stay a step ahead of competitors. Now, that knowledge teeters on the brink of extinction, as Milford has no apprentice.

Next we sawed out frame sections, a stem, and a transom, each from ancient patterns. The frames we assembled from two pieces each, fastened together with a metal clip invented in Shelburne back in the 1800s. The clip eliminated the need of finding elbows of wood from hackmatack roots—a slow and laborious job—and greatly improved productivity. We then fastened each pair of frames to the floor, and attached the stem and transom. The structure at this point is called the skillet. We stood the skillet on its edge and carefully faired the angle of the floor’s edge to match the frames. Next we tacked cotton wicking—a five-to-seven-strand string—along the stem, floor, and transom. Once the planking went on, the string would act as preinstalled caulking between frame and planking. With the skillet fully prepared, we set it on the “horse”—an ancient, weathered beam on the floor with a gentle curve dished into its top. The horse has given birth to some 20,000 dories. Using jacks and large boards, we crushed the skillet down into the horse, giving it the customary three-and-one-half inches of rocker.

We then took the widest of our planks and test-fit them for the garboards, cut them to size, beveled the top edges, and nailed them to the skillet. Then plank by plank, broad strake,

Top: With the basic components of the dory frame attached to the floor, the “skillet” is planed fair. (L to R) Brad Dimock, Cricket Rust, Graham McKay, Mick Fearn, Milford Buchanan.
Bottom: Preparing to install the broad stroke. (L to R) Milford Buchanan, Graham McKay, Brad Dimock, Douglas Brooks.

Milford Buchanan, a fourth generation Shelburne boatbuilder, is the Master Dory Builder at Shelburne’s Museums by the Sea Dory Shop. He carries on the tradition of the Shelburne Dory as he was trained by those before him. He will retire this year with no apprentice.



binder strake, and sheer strake, we planked the boat, clench-nailing each subsequent plank to the one below it.

Toward the end of the first week the rains finally came and brought the encroaching wildfires under control. We took the weekend off and drove to Lunenburg, where we visited the Dory Shop and the Big Boat Shed, both still building dories in the traditional Lunenburg style—likely candidates for future documentation.

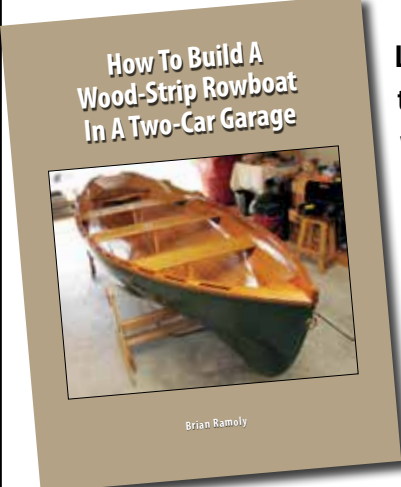
Back in Shelburne we ripped full length oak gunwales and, rather than steam bending them, tied a rope around them and chucked them into the harbor to soak. After several hours they were limber enough to bend to the boat. With those fitted and fastened we nailed on the gunwale caps and planed them smooth. A few more details—seat risers and seats; an outer gunwale (or rub rail) unique to Shelburne boats; planing the bottom of the garboards smooth; and caulking the bottom joints. And trimming the bow at a truncated bullnose—also unique to Shelburne.

As we worked, Douglas fastidiously recorded each pattern, and we made copious notes and diagrams on each step and process. By noon on day ten we were finished. As with thousands of dories before, she was lowered out the swinging doors to the street and launched into Shelburne Harbour for a test row. She didn't leak a drop.

The Dory Heritage Project is currently working on an illustrated book about Milford Buchanan and the Shelburne Dory. In September, Dimock will be in Newfoundland working with the last builders of the Grandy style and St. Pierre dories for potential future projects.




Like tens of thousands of dories before, the second-to-the-last Shelburne Dory leaves the Dory Shop. Top: Graham McKay and Cricket Rust. Below: Mick Fearn, Milford Buchanan, Brad Dimock, Douglas Brooks.



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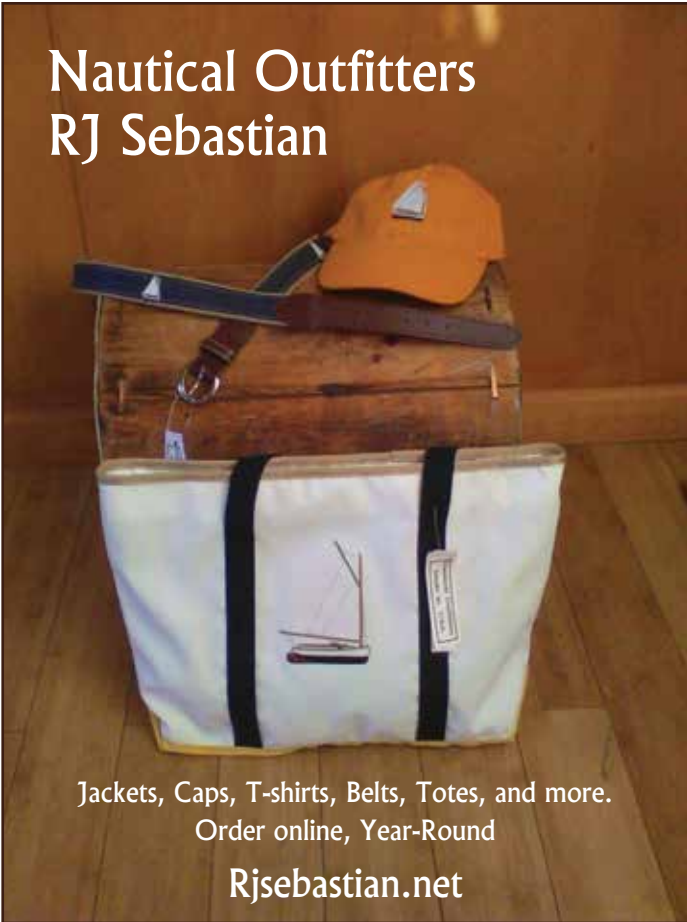


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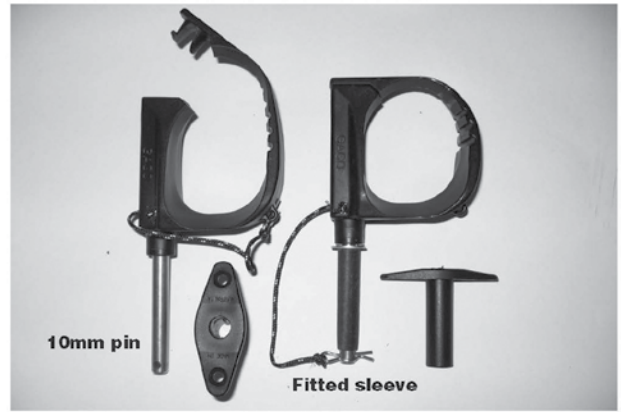


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The Ash Breeze

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