

The Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

**SMALL CRAFT
AT THE
SULTANA
DOWNRIGGING**



IN THIS ISSUE

Messabouts, Festivals, and Regattas Coast to Coast

New Series: Small Craft in the Library of Congress

Dragon Boats



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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.

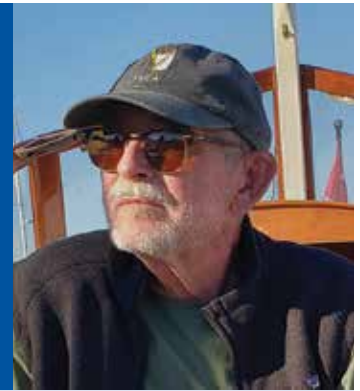
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TAB Layout Design: Karen Bowen

Cover: Freddie The Cat a Catboat, left, designed and built by Bob Treat; TwoBow a Sea Pearl 21, center; and Ross G. Leonard a Crotch Island Pinky, right. They are rafted up in a cove of Snake Key, Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge in Florida. Photo by Simon Lewandowski.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Michael Jones



We were fortunate to be able to attend the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum again this year. We drove up from St. Petersburg and rendezvoused with friends that came from White Salmon, Washington; northern Maine; and Tarpon Springs for a crew of eight. We arrived with two boats (*Ross G. Leonard*—the Crotch Island Pinky; and *Freddie the Cat*—the little catboat) and acquired two more boats and good memories before leaving for home. We got a chance to try them both out at the Florida Gulf Coast Small Boat Meet in Cedar Key. Two very different vessels, a Walt Simmons built 15' traditional built double paddle canoe, and a tiny Thomas Jones “Low-Resistance Boat” of stitch and glue construction. Both performed well and made for happy new owners.

It is always rewarding and inspirational to gather with like-minded people in a setting where the nautical history of the area is so fully embraced by the community. Participation in the festival reinforces the importance of the TSCA and its role in sharing information and resources as well as the power of volunteers. The TSCA and every small craft event across the country is dependent on volunteers.

This Spring we will be looking for nominations for members to serve on the National TSCA council. The TSCA shares the same needs as any small organization: membership management, communication, and marketing. If you have a desire to help promote the goals of the Traditional Small Craft Association, please consider volunteering. Contact any of the council members with questions, and know that everyone is always welcome to attend the monthly council meeting. Council members are elected for and limited to a three-year term. The TSCA continues to remain on an even keel by the commitment and work of long-time volunteers who have done more than we have a right to ask, and we owe them our gratitude and assistance.

Thanks to Chris Freeman for an informative and entertaining presentation about Mystic Seaport’s plans for making their small craft collection more accessible in a renovated Rossie Hall.

Remember to post announcements of your events at tsca.net and on our Facebook page.

Thank You for your support,

Michael Jones
President TSCA





TSCA SACRAMENTO

25TH ANNUAL GUNKHOLE

By Mike Higgins and Bob Hall

May 28 to June 2

For the past twenty-five years the Sacramento TSCA chapter has enjoyed week-long gunkhole adventures on the Sacramento/San Joaquin river delta system. This year, on the night before departure, a kickoff BBQ was held at Korth's Pirate's Lair on Brannan Island. The following folks participated in the meal: Don Bybee; Tom Kremer; Naama and Ofer Raz; Glenice Dunbar (Treasurer); Rich Pekelney and his wife, Rony; Jake Roulstone; Len Berkowitz; Craig Gilmore; Larry Clement; Dan Ouellet; Bob Hall; and Mike Higgins.

The planned route this year started with a first night's stay at the Antioch Marina, followed by an anchor-out night spent somewhere on Nurse Slough. Plans for the rest of the trip were fairly loose, with the suggestion that the return trip to Korth's would include a night on Sugar Barge on Bethel Island.

Four boats started the trip this year:

- *Sally*, an Albert Strange canoe yawl, with Jake Roulstone and Len Berkowitz



Top: Broadway and Sally on Three-mile Slough. **Right:** Map—global view.



- *Daisy*, a Drascombe Lugger yawl, with Craig Gilmore and Larry Clements
- *Broadway*, a Menger 19' catboat, with Bob Hall and Dan Ouellet
- *Jean Alden*, a 14' catboat, with Mike Higgins and Ofer Raz

MONDAY

The trip to Antioch is a long haul, and this year a favorable current would flow until early afternoon. Therefore, an early departure seemed prudent. A brisk wind was blowing, so all boats shortened sail before leaving the dock.

Once out on the San Joaquin the fleet found a strong ebb current driven by the deep snowfall in the Sierra last Winter. The usual westerly meant a beat to windward as the group headed downstream towards Antioch. For the smaller boats it was wet sailing but still lots of fun.

The wind strengthened considerably as the fleet passed the entrance to Three Mile Slough, with gusts measured at over 20 knots. By the time the Antioch bridge was in sight, conditions had crossed the threshold between exciting and unpleasant. *Broadway* actually reached the bridge where they found gusting winds and chaotic currents. Judging the conditions to

be too risky to pass comfortably under the bridge the decision was made to turn around.

The winds the fleet had been beating against all day now provided a strong push. Hull speeds reached by all of the boats, as they headed downwind towards the False River entrance. Once on the False River conditions became more manageable. The revised plan was to spend the night at Sugar Barge, but the Memorial Day crowds cancelled that possibility. Instead, the group tied up at the Rusty Porthole, which is where the meal would have been eaten in any case. The Rusty Porthole has plenty of dock space and is one of those places that includes free overnight moorage along with their meals.

The crowd at the Rusty Porthole was split between folks arriving by motorcycle and folks arriving by power boats. However, the crowd was friendly enough, and the food did its job. The rowdy bar crowd left at closing time leaving the tired fleet to enjoy a quiet night's sleep.

TUESDAY

The forecast predicted similar conditions for the second day. The decision was made to leave Bethel Island early to avoid the strong winds expected that afternoon. The group returned to the San Joaquin by way of the False River with the goal

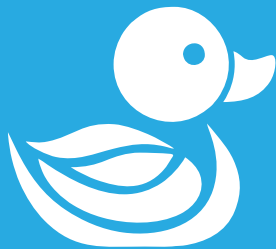
Broadway at Pirate's Lair.



Daisy on the San Joaquin.

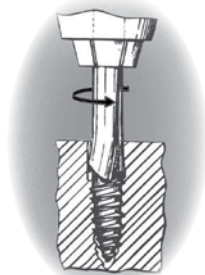


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of reaching Rio Vista before conditions became unpleasant again.

There was some excitement while crossing over to the Sacramento River by way of Three Mile Slough. After passing the defunct Outrigger Bar and Marina the fleet decided to switch to their auxiliaries because of the chaotic winds. The trusty Seagull outboard on the *Jean Alden* decided this would be a good time to not be so trusty. *Broadway* provided a much welcomed tow so that the fleet would arrive together at the Three Mile Slough drawbridge. While under tow the crew on the *Jean Alden* swapped the carburetor, which fixed the problem.

A nice run up the Sacramento brought the group to the Delta Marina in Rio Vista. That evening a pleasant dinner was enjoyed at The Point restaurant. Watching the arrival of the forecasted winds through the restaurant windows made everyone happy to be ashore and not still on the river.

WEDNESDAY

Opening the Rio Vista drawbridge currently requires a reservation made at least four hours in advance. Captain Bob arranged for a 9:30 opening on Wednesday morning. A blustery wind had blown all night and was still evident on the river that morning, so the fleet left the Delta Marina under power and with one or two reefs tucked into their sails.

Once upstream from the drawbridge, the wind slackened considerably, and before long the group was ghosting up Steamboat Slough in more typical Delta weather. This was the most pleasant sailing of the trip. Ofer Raz had sailed on the small *Jean Alden* for the first two days of the trip. On Wednesday he joined Bob and Danny on *Broadway* to see how a bigger catboat sails.

Once on, Steamboat Mike in the *Jean Alden* shook out the reefs put in the sail back at the dock in Rio Vista. The full sail, with a lightly loaded hull, pushed the catboat along nicely on the lower sections of that beautiful waterway.

As the fleet approached the north end of Steamboat Slough there was concern about reaching Walnut Grove in time for the traditional Chinese meal at Locke. In order to speed things up *Broadway* provided a tow.

As shown in the photo, *Jean Alden* tends to track poorly under tow when her centerboard is down. Therefore, the centerboard was retracted just before reaching the drawbridge and the opening onto the Sacramento. This led to the only serious mishap of the trip.

A nice cross-channel breeze on the Sacramento promised a fast reach down the river to Walnut Grove. So the tow was cast off and the sail quickly hoisted. Unfortunately, this was done before lowering the centerboard, leaving the boat with a strong lee helm that would keep her from turning upwind. In

Delta Marina.



what seemed like less than a heartbeat that nice cross-channel breeze blew the catboat onto the rocky levee on the leeward side of the river. The grounding on those rocks left a large hole below the waterline.

Fortunately, the ever-vigilant crew on *Broadway* was paying attention and returned to offer a tow. Despite the swamped hull the *Jean Alden* stayed afloat and was surprisingly stable. The accident ended the trip for Mike but demonstrated that enough floatation had been installed when the hull was built 23 years earlier. An hour or so later the swamped hull was tied up at the Locke Boat House. The original Jean Alden drove through rush hour traffic from Palo Alto and provided transportation so that the trailer could be retrieved from Korth's.

THURSDAY

The next morning the helpful folks at the Locke Boat House used their lift to put the swamped *Jean Alden* back onto her trailer. That old boat house is a remarkable structure, built in 1910, when boating in the area was more than just a pastime.

Once the damaged catboat was secure, *Broadway* rejoined the other two boats for a trip down the Georgiana Slough to Oxbow Marina. Ofer's wife, Naama, joined the group in Walnut Grove for the trip down the Georgiana. By now the strong winds of the first two days were mostly gone so Thursday's journey was under power. Still the Georgiana is a beautiful waterway and a reminder of how the Delta must have looked many years ago. Reaching the Oxbow Marina required passing through three bridges. Ofer's sleeping bag and change of clothes was submerged during the previous

day's mishap, so he returned home that evening with Naama and missed the final day's trip.

FRIDAY

The final day opened with the usual bright sun and light winds. The remaining group set out for the short journey back to Korth's. One last bridge had to be passed on the Mokelumne River. Eventually there was enough wind for some sailing but most of the morning was spent under power. They arrived back at Korth's with plenty of time to unrig, load the boats on their trailers, and return home.

Once again it had been a memorable week on the unique waters of the Sacramento/San Joaquin river delta system.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Boats with reliable auxiliaries are an important asset in a fleet.
- Reef when you first think it might be a good idea.
- Reefing at the dock is easier than reefing underway.
- Boats should float upright even when swamped.
- Adapt to the conditions.
- These trips are about enjoying the journey rather than reaching destinations.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Competent, experienced, and flexible sailors make the best companions.
- The comradeship developed over the years is the best part of these trips.

ABOUT THE COVER PHOTO

By Mike Jones

Cedar Key Small Boat Meet was a weekend with no drama, which gave us a chance to see the results of the hurricane which had flooded the town one month before. We enjoyed three days of sailing in light breezes with clear skies. It does not make a very engaging story, but it does make for a very enjoyable weekend.

On Friday there was enough breeze to sail out to Sea Horse Key for the rare open house when visitors are allowed on the island to tour the lighthouse and the University of Florida

research facilities. An ash breeze (oars) or motors were needed on the return trip under a clear blue sky. Saturday brought a light breeze that held throughout the day. This allowed the fleet to spend the day based on the beach of Atsena Otie Key talking about sailing the various boats. Sunday brought a bit more of a breeze. We sailed out to Snake Key and rafted up in the lee of the island for a leisurely lunch.

Next May marks the 39th anniversary of this messabout.







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SMALL CRAFT IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By Todd Bloch

A perhaps little-known resource for researching small craft—with enough information to inform building them—is the nation's primary information repository, the Library of Congress (LOC). Administered by the National Park Service, the Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP) documents culturally and historically important resources throughout the United States, making them available free of charge through a LOC online collection.

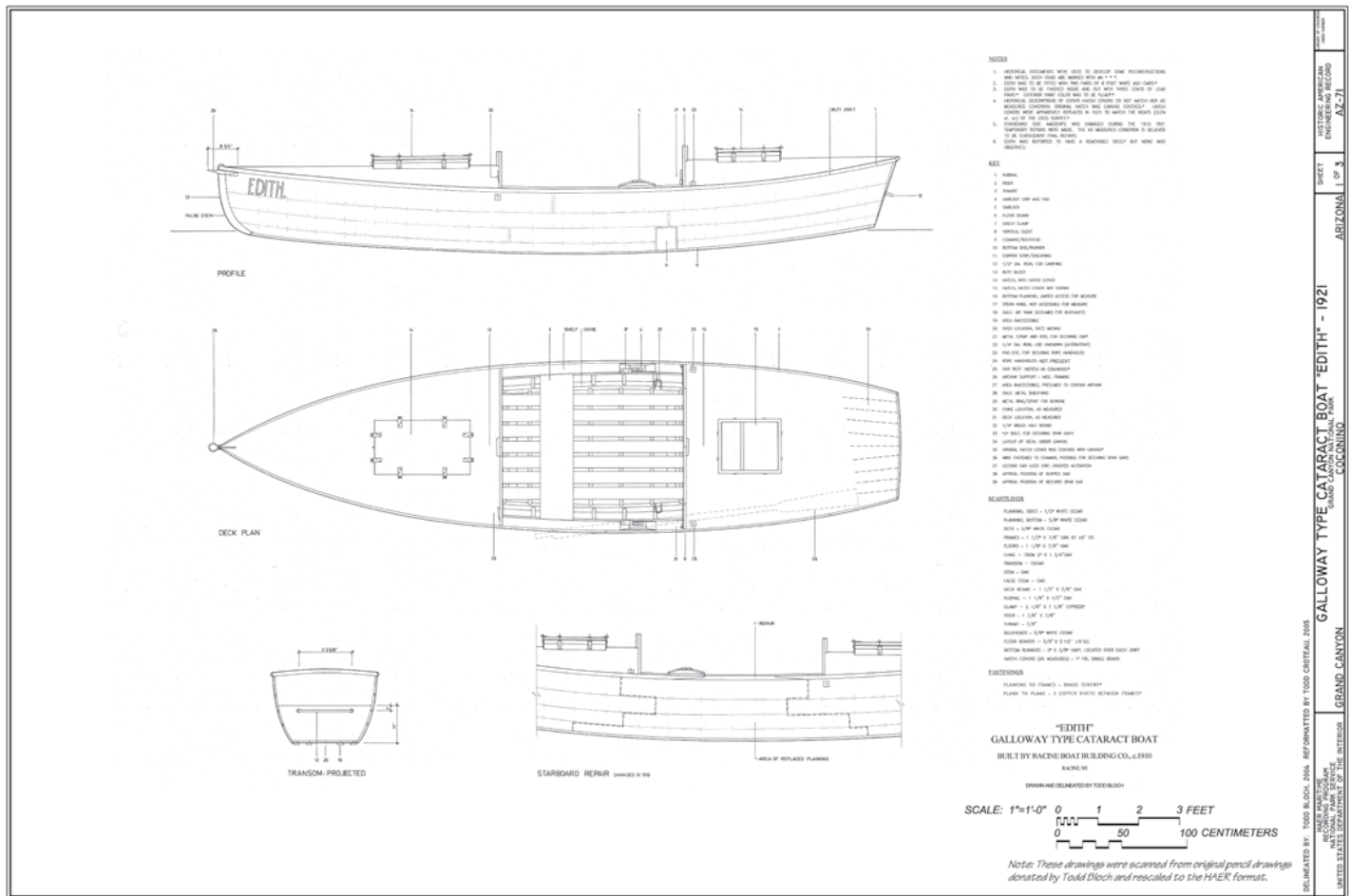
The HDP operates three related sub-programs: the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), and the Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS). Although most well-known for recording buildings, engineered structures, and landscapes, a

maritime initiative within HAER has documented lighthouses, boat yards, ships, and—of note to readers—small craft.

Documentation can be prepared by HDP directly or by any organization, business, or individual that has the skills to adequately prepare drawings, histories, and photographs. Drawing documentation is prepared using either traditional hand measuring or digital survey techniques but must meet the HAER format requirements to be included in the collection. The final documents are archivally produced with a life expectancy of 500 years. Once complete, the package will find its way to the HABS/HAER/HALS Collection at the Library of Congress, which can be found at this link: <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/hh/>. Digital copies of the

Historic American Engineering Record, Creator: Galloway Type Cataract Boat EDITH, Grand Canyon, Coconino County, AZ. Coconino County Grand Canyon Arizona, 1968. Documentation Compiled After. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/az0579/>.





documentation can be searched and downloaded from the website. Although the content of a documentation package varies depending on budget, time, and information available, a full package generally includes a written history, photographs, and drawings. For ships and boats, drawings ideally contain plans, profiles, lines (with table of offsets), and details.

The collection contains more than 200 small craft from a number of maritime institutions and geographic regions—including the Penobscot Marine Museum, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Michigan Maritime Museum, Florida Maritime Museum, and Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. The collection thus represents a diverse range of vessel types, construction methods, and historic uses from around the country.

Beginning with this article, *The Ash Breeze* is establishing a standing column that will feature one boat from the LOC collection. The intent is to not only provide a reference to boats some of us may want to build, but also increase awareness of our broad and unique small craft heritage.

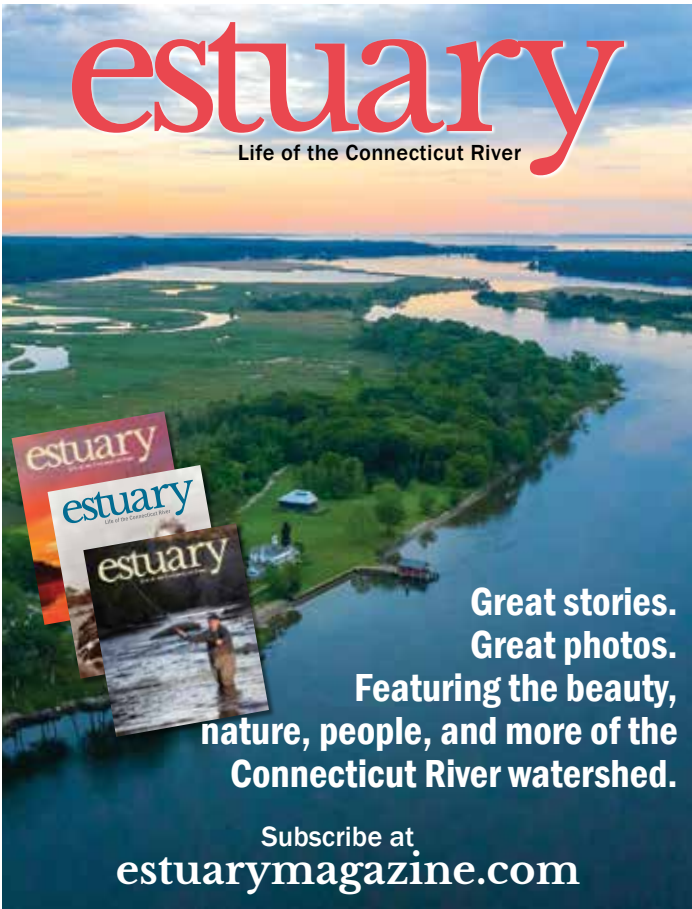
The first boat featured here was documented and hand drawn by the author in 2003. She is the *Edith*, a Galloway type cataract boat built by the Racine Boat Building Company of Racine, Wisconsin, in approximately 1910. Cataract boats are a type used in river rapids and cataracts—where the drop is

steep and boulders frequent. Nathaniel Galloway is generally credited with developing both a technique and boat design for navigating cataracts.¹ The technique is simply rowing the boat backwards—with the bow into the current and the rower facing down river—thus, visibility is increased and the boat is in position to row upstream and away from danger. To support this technique, Galloway designed his boats flat bottomed, with slender profile and no keel, making them efficient rowers and capable of turning quickly.

Edith was one of two boats (the other being the *Defiance*) used by Emery and Ellsworth Kolb in 1911–12 to run the Grand, Green, and Colorado Rivers, including through the Grand Canyon. The Kolb brothers were photographers who used the boats in filming the first known motion pictures in the canyons. The *Edith* currently resides at Grand Canyon National Park.

For more information about the HDP program you can visit their website at <https://www.nps.gov/hdp/index.htm>

1. “Nathaniel Galloway,” Northern Arizona University, accessed October 28, 2023, <https://library.nau.edu/speccoll/exhibits/grand-canyon-100/index.php/galloway/>.



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DRAGON BOATS

VERY TRADITIONAL, BUT A BIT LESS SMALL...

By John Weiss

Contrary to popular belief, you CAN teach an old dog new tricks! I've been sailing for over fifty years, kayaking for twenty-five, rowing for twenty, but Dragon Boating for only three years. Just before the Covid quarantine hit, a friend introduced me to the Seattle Flying Dragon Boat Club (SFDBC), and I was immediately hooked.

You're probably asking yourself, "What the heck is Dragon Boating?!" According to the IDBF (International Dragon Boat Federation), the Dragon Boat (Long Zhou) is a long displacement boat of open design, based on a ribless carvel hull with the following characteristics: no stem, hard chine bilge, W in cross section, minimum freeboard, punt-like entry and exit, rocker keel, and curved sheer line with upswept extremities. Traditionally made out of teak, the boat's main distinguishing features are a mythical Asian-style dragon head attached to the prow, a stylized dragon tail attached to the stern, and dragon scales painted along the sides of the boat. The length may vary from 8 meters to over 18 meters. The

Long Zhou is propelled by its crew sitting in a forward-facing position using small, single bladed paddles. The boat is steered through the use of a long steering oar that is rigged using Thole pins located at the stern. A Chinese style drum, together with a Drummer's seat, is situated in the bow, by which the stroke cadence of the crew is usually maintained.

The annual Tuen Ng (Dragon Boat Festival) commemorates Qu Yuan and his story that took place over 2,000 years ago in China. Qu Yuan was falsely accused of treason by his political rivals and was banished from the country. In despair, he threw himself into the Mi Lo River and drowned. The local fishermen raced their boats to recover his body before it could be devoured by fish, beating drums, and throwing rice dumplings into the river to distract them. They founded a tradition that continues to this day, and Dragon Boat racing is believed to be the oldest continuously competitive sport in the world. Each year, on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, Dragon Boaters reenact that frantic rush to save Qu Yuan, by

Top: Festival boats on Love River, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, on practice day.



propelling long narrow boats with dragon heads through the water, to the rhythmic beating of drums.

Dragon Boating is popular throughout the world as both a recreational and competitive sport. While you may never have heard of it (like me, three years ago), there are about 50 million participants in China; 300,000 in Europe; and 90,000 in the USA and Canada. SFDBC, for example, has 115 active members aged 14–87, and eight boats moored at two sites on Lake Union in Seattle and Lake Washington in Kenmore. About forty of the members are active racers (including the 87-year-old!), with the remainder joining for fitness, recreation, and camaraderie.

Modern international competition started in Hong Kong in 1976, and modern fiberglass racing boats have been standardized into 10-paddler (9 meters, 175 kg) and 20-paddler (12.4 m, 250 kg) boats. The drum and dragon head and tail are still fitted in competition but removed for daily practice. Standard racecourses are straight-line sprints of 200 and 500 meters, and oval-track long races of 1,000 and 2,000 meters. To enable maximum participation, standard classes include women's, mixed, open, and disability categories in age groups from "14 and under" to "Senior C" (60+). In alternate years, IDBF organizes World Club Crew World Championships and World Dragon Boat Racing Championships, along with regional and continental qualification events. The Club Crew races are made up of teams from individual clubs, while the World Dragon Boat Racing events are made up of the "best of the best" national teams drawn from several clubs around each country.

Local races may include a community class of pick-up crews who have no experience and a maximum of three practices with an experienced Coach/Drummer and Tiller before their first race. They may also include long-distance races such as

the annual 14-mile Sausage Pull race around Mercer Island in Seattle. Traditional teak boats are still raced in some areas during festivals (mainly Asia, although Portland, Oregon, has a small fleet), where a Flag Puller, who sits on the dragon's head and pulls a flag from the top of a buoy at the finish line, is added to the crew.

Over the past three years I have progressed from a know-nothing rookie to a seasoned international competitor. A year ago, I qualified as a Tiller, responsible for steering, navigation, and crew safety. In March 2023, I competed on both the Premier (open, mixed) and Senior B Mixed (age 50+) teams for SFDBC in the Pan American Club Crew Championships in Panama City, Panama. Our Senior B team placed 4th in three of the four distances. In June I traveled to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, with SFDBC for the Love River Dragon Boat Festival. We placed 2nd in the International Division in traditional Dragon Boats, behind Hong Kong. We also placed 3rd in the Men's Open Tug o' War (see Facebook link for description and videos).

I encourage all TSCA members to try out Dragon Boating and add it to your boating repertoire. Most clubs welcome newcomers and supply any needed gear at no cost for introductory practices. Follow the links below for more information:

- John Weiss's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/jrweiss98020>
- Seattle Flying Dragon Boat Club: <https://www.seattleflyingdragons.org/>
- Champion Dragon Boats: <http://www.dragonboat.cn/en/products-12-22.asp>
- US Dragon Boat Federation: <https://www.usdbf.org/home/>
- International Dragon Boat Federation: <https://www.dragonboat.sport/>

Teams martial for starting positions at Pan American Club Crew Championships.



Seattle Flying Dragon team and cheerleaders at Kaohsiung Love River Dragon Boat Festival.



XXXX OR XL

THE 40TH MID-ATLANTIC SMALL CRAFT FESTIVAL

By Andy Wolfe

With a bit of a giggle, I learned that what I thought was clever branding was actually an oversight (oops) in the initial event promotion. Oh well, either way, the TSCA co-sponsored event was a festival that felt like the old days. The setting, however, was quite different with the new CBMM welcome center occupying our former camping area. The campers still fit comfortably into the woods flanking the enter road.

Small craft enthusiasts, young and old, brought boats from Maine to Florida. The star of the festival was *Joy* (see “Building Joy” on page 27), a Joel White designed Shellback Dinghy built by Meg Oeller that captured the John Ford People’s Choice Award. The MASCF continues to be a longer-than-the-weekend event for dozens of TSCA members, some launching as early as Tuesday.

Friday evening’s bring-your-own-everything dinner was a

lively party with the Shipyard Bluegrass Band entertaining us from the “stage” on the new Welcome Center. Oysters were expertly shucked by Pete Leshner and Rich Schofield (pictured below left), beer flowed from the keg, and steamed crabs were shared among the greater small craft family.

The mornings were calm, quiet, and peaceful, providing time for Waylon Gorman to paddle around the cove with Mom. (The photo below shamelessly portrays the Gormans in an UpperDeck 106 Canoe, built by the author in 2000 and recently restored by owner Ron Gibbs.) The building wind made for Saturday’s spritely, free-for-all sailing race with many reefed sails. A couple boats capsized, but everyone seemed very happy. The evening dinner and awards banquet was followed by a program by Doug Brooks on the building of traditional boats...one of which was built and launched at the festival.



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BOATS, BLUEGRASS, AND THE SULTANA DOWNRIGGING

By Anna Baybakova

The first sunrises of the last weekend of October had just begun to fill the mouth of the Chester River as we cast off our lines and pushed away from the dock, thrilled to make a 26-mile sail to Chestertown. I love sunrise sailing for its serenity and empty horizons, when it is only us, the water, and a cup of freshly brewed coffee in my hand. Not a word, not a sound...just us. "It's a race!" shouted Harold, jumping off his seat at the helm, pointing toward Kent Narrows. *So much for my peace and coffee*, I thought to myself. The main sheet went flying, the boat heeled over, and we pointed our bow toward the tall ship at the bend of the river. I squinted my eyes—it is *Kalmar Nyckel*, she is pulling her anchor and setting sails. Of course, it is a race, all hands on deck!

A few years ago, I crewed one of the tall ships, and I have been coming to Chestertown for the Sultana Downrigging Festival ever since. This year is different: one hand is firmly on a small tiller, and one hand is on a three-strand sheet, cutting through chop in our wooden sloop, *Bella*. This year we are part of the traditional small craft fleet, representing the TSCA at the Downrigging. I cannot wait to see everyone and share

the joy of building and sailing small wooden boats with the world.

The last foot of *Kalmar Nyckel's* anchor chain is pulled in, her sailcloth is flying, and she takes off faster than I thought she could sail. Hmm, okay, we can catch her. *Bella* is 22 feet on deck and only 14 feet on the waterline; all we need is to heel her over to increase the waterline, and—"We are closing the distance!" Harold, with heart pounding, proudly announced. But wait... There is another tall ship at anchor by the Corsica River, and her crew is taking pictures of our boat. Sure, we can sail closer, circle around to showcase *Bella's* ten coats of varnish on the mahogany coaming and her hand stitched traditional gaff sail on gleaming Sitka spruce spars. "Let the main out," said Harold, overtaken by glory, as we come in for the photo op. Please do not forget to take pictures of *Bella's* transom—she was designed in 1901, and they sure had an eye for design back then. The pride of a boat builder was still glowing on Harold's face as he noticed our rival *Kalmar Nyckel* was steadily pulling away toward the horizon. The heart of a sailor took over, and his eyes zoomed on a blue hull in the



distance. “Pull the main in! We can still catch her!” With a 12-foot draft, this ship must stay in the winding channel of the river. “Pull centerboard up,” said Harold, and off we went, sailing through shallows, cutting corners to declare victory at the next channel marker. But the sun is over another bank of the river now, Chestertown is in sight, and the decorated stern of *Kalmar Nyckel* is still in front of us. “Running out of a playground, Captain,” I said quietly.

“We almost got her.” Harold’s smile was noticeably sad as the tall ship started her engines and dropped the sails. “They sure knew how to build them boats, huh?” said the salty skipper of a small wooden catboat sailing by us. I smiled. This is why we come here, to keep this tradition.

Our dock lines are on the cleats; sails are ready for a new day on the water as the sun cleared the tallest mast on the waterfront. The waterways of Chestertown marina are busy with boats and ships arriving by water and small craft launching at the ramp. I see Jim rowing *Molly Malone*, his beautiful Herreshoff Coquina, to her slip next to the other boats that fly TSCA burgee in their rigging. I hurried down the ramp to say hello to my old friends. Steve and his Pathfinder *Spartina* are not there; he is already sailing alongside a tall ship. I am not surprised. I swear he sets sail before everyone even wakes up.

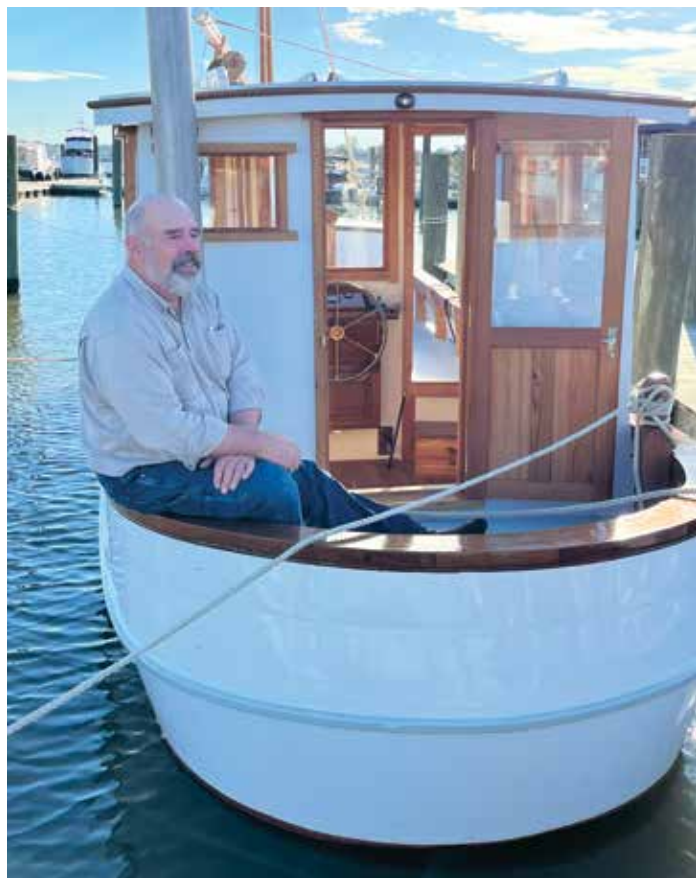
Here is *Baggette*, a sandbagger catboat, peacefully resting against the fender. But wait... Is her skipper, Tom, chatting away in the cockpit of a beautiful Herreshoff 28 ketch? And there is a “For Sale” sign on it? Already dreaming of a bigger boat, are you, Tom? Aren’t we all guilty of that at times?

“Are you going out for a sail?” I asked. “Of course, we are,” answered Pete, setting up his Marsh Cat *Obadiah*. I am glad he organized the TSCA co-sponsorship and participation for this festival. And just like that, the fleet of gaff rigged sloops, catboats, and yawls peeled off the docks to try and steal the wind from the tall ships. Did I say “try”? For the next two hours the river turned into a parade of countless boats, big and small, zigzagging up and down the river around tall ships. The Privateer *Lynx* fired her signal cannon; I hope they are not mad at us for tacking right in front of them—for the third time.

With the sun starting to set, we returned to the docks and headed to the music village for some oysters and bluegrass tunes. Is that Jim sailing his Herreshoff Coquina *Ginger* through the tiny opening between *Pride of Baltimore II*’s bowsprit and *Lynx*’s mizzen boom? Please, let it be a slack tide. I was truly admiring his sailing skills, when *Lynx* applied full throttle to adjust herself at the dock and sent *Ginger* sliding to starboard toward the fully restored *Black Watch*, an 85-year-

Grigg Mullen on his newly built Buy-Boat, Mr. Dickie, made its maiden voyage to the festival.

Bella and Virginia.





Downrigging bluegrass band.

A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH BLACK WATCH

By Jim Arthur

Despite admiring her all weekend, pleading with, and even goading Captain Kyle to show us her paces, *Black Watch* never left the dock.

Sunday afternoon I wrapped up a long sail with college friends Andy and Allison and decided to skip returning to her slip and just take *Ginger* right to the ramp, as pulling her was the next thing on my agenda. There was a decent N/NE breeze blowing, and we did a lot of tacking while the ships docked. I decided to slip into the marina under sail so to avoid furling sails in the channel with a strong current, all kinds of boat traffic, and non-sailor crew. I lined the boat up, led against the current for the gap between *Pride of Baltimore's* bowsprit and *Lynx's* mizzen boom, and then committed, with main eased a bit to keep my speed down, watching above the whole time to see that *Ginger's* masts missed the ship's spars as we shot into the marina.

Safely cleared, I was thinking to hail Kyle in triumph as we glided past *Black Watch* when *Lynx* applied full throttle (adjusting her mooring), and her prop wash shoved *Ginger* 4–5 feet to starboard in a flash and headed us directly toward that beautiful 85-year-old, Nevins-built overhanging stern... I almost had a heart attack—imagine running smack into the transom of the boat I was drooling over like a Swiftie at the Eras Tour. Luckily, I had a reserve to sheet in, *Ginger* responded instantly, and we zipped out of danger and the rest of the way to an uneventful landing at the staging dock.

Whew! My passengers—both lawyers—were trying to tell me it was not my fault, while I explained to them that it was always the captain's fault—that is why he must go down with his ship. Thank goodness their skills were not required.

old yacht. *Oh no*, I thought—she just had more than 15 coats of varnish applied to her stern. I held my breath watching Jim pulling his sails in and sailing away from danger. Small boats do make a skillful sailor.

As Chestertown was winding down for the night, we quietly brought our camping mattresses, pillows, and blankets out on *Bella's* open cockpit and set her up to sleep under a boom tent for the first time. Trying to squeeze between the seats and centerboard trunk, Harold mumbled under his breath: “Our next boat will not have a centerboard.” Did he just say next boat? We are building another boat, everyone! And maybe if I am lucky, she will have a small cabin. Because every sailor knows that a cabin on the boat is every woman's dream.

The last day of the festival came too fast, and our boats lined up at the ramp. “How long does it take you to downrig your *Slipjig*, Kevin?” “Twenty minutes,” he said. “One hand for the mizzen, and two hands for the main mast.” I must admit, I was envious. It takes two hours and four people to settle *Bella* on her trailer.

Three little girls run on the docks toward us, whispering something to each other. “How much would you say your boat is worth—as if one were to buy it?” asked one girl. Harold threw out the number, struggling to keep a serious face. “It is more than a Boston Whaler!” said the girl, her eyes wide open. “It's because it is so old,” said the other girl. I smiled. Someday one of them will build a little boat and find out that when you glue and rivet every plank, stitch every part of her sail, and sand her spars, for you, this boat is priceless.

I went to the waterfront one more time before heading home. It was quiet, and the tall ships melted away in the fog. *I am going home*, ran through my head. *Now what?* Then Guy Clark's and Verlon Thompson's song came to mind: “I'm going to build me a boat with these two hands. It will be a fair curve from a noble plan.” A big smile landed on my face—I am going home “cause I've got boats to build.”

Ginger on wing.



THE MAN WHO CRACKED THE CODE

By Jim Arthur

Saturday morning, I sailed *Ginger* solo to chase the large vessels while my wife, Ginger, and friends, Doug and Jennie, visiting from St. Louis, experienced sailing on *Pride of Baltimore II*.

Without passengers I was able stand up and paddle out of the marina using the extra-long sassafras paddle I made for such occasions, which made the whole process of getting underway much easier than rowing out between the ship overhangs while fighting the current.

Once in the mooring field across from the marina I noticed an odd houseboat near the opposite shore while I was getting the boat under sail. With *Ginger* squared away I decided to investigate the anomaly. It turned out to be a modernist interpretation of a houseboat that would make any cable TV house flipper proud, right down to the dark lapstrake cladding.

But what really interested me was the plume of fragrant mesquite smoke coming from the after deck. There, bobbing away in the sunshine, was a massive ceramic BBQ pit and a nautical pit boss to go with it. As a Texas exile and barbecue snob I was intrigued, dubious, and a little jealous. Had someone successfully managed to combine two of my favorite boondoggles, being on the water and smoking brisket? I hove-to for a few minutes to speak to the very accommodating pit boss/houseboat captain. Indeed, he was smoking a brisket, which would be done around three. I told him that he had cracked the code, and I was in awe; he said I was to come back for a sample. Satisfied by this I set off downriver to catch the fleet.

A few hours later, after some challenging light air sailing and a brisk row in the dead air of the Devils Reach, I had a delightful beat back up the Chestertown River looking forward to some oyster alfresco with Ginger, Jennie, and Doug. I did feel compelled to stop by the floating BBQ shack on my way in, just to make sure all was on schedule. There I was greeted with a handoff of a perfectly smoked link of what I imagine was an andouille sausage, hot off the smoker, with a crisp casing that snapped when bitten and a mouthful of succulent mesquite, pork, and Cajun flavors. Thus fortified, I docked *Ginger* in her designated slip ahead of *Molly Malone* and was just finishing furling her sails and thinking about the oysters and maybe even a cold beer, when Karen and Lev, friends from Philadelphia, arrived hoping for a sail.

I was a little grumpy to miss the oysters, but buoyed by their enthusiasm and the departure of the ships on their afternoon



Cracked the Code—houseboat.

cruise, we set off again, this time me rowing us out of the marina. We had a lovely sail admiring the sailing vessels, large and small. We made another pass by the floating smokehouse where we were rewarded with a heaping plate of sliced brisket with delicious crunchy bark, a telltale smoke-ring, and juicy melt-in-your-mouth gobbets. Luckily, I just happened to have some cold beers in my cooler to wash it down.

A beautiful day, magnificent scenery, the company of good friends, and some tasty 'que and a cold beer—it dawned on me that I might just have cracked the code, at least last Saturday.

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JOHN GARDNER GRANT

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

Proposals for projects ranging from \$200 to \$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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NEWS FROM THE JOHN GARDNER CHAPTER

By Bill Rutherford

SID WHELAN DONATION

Charter TSCA Member Sid Whelan donated \$10,000 to our Chapter to “support young builders of Traditional Small Craft.” It is Sid’s hope that his gift will “help several young people to become lifelong enthusiasts of the small craft heritage that John Gardner so effectively promoted.”

Treasurer Ellie Czarnowski thanked Sid by saying, “We are honored to execute your wishes that this be used to support the training of young builders of traditional small craft.”

Shop Leader and UCONN Professor Matt McKenzie added, “Sid, thank you for your generous support. With this gift, the shop will continue to support the community and Avery Point students in continuing local boatbuilding traditions.”

A recent photo of Sid Whelan holding a copy of the resolution he and John Gardner got approved by the Adirondack guideboat builders’ conference in January 1975 favoring the amendment of “arbitrary and unjustified coast guard regulations to exempt traditional small craft.” With John Gardner, Sid was one of the founders of our national Traditional Small Craft Association.



Treasurer Czarnowski established a special account which, hopefully, will attract further donations. Our Chapter’s elected Board will administer the funds. Thank you, Sid!

For those of you who are contemplating a gift to your Chapter, the procedure is simple and straightforward: A check can be made out to the National Traditional Small Craft Association with a description on the “memo” line or in an accompanying note directing the gift to your particular Chapter for your intended purpose. National is registered as a 501(c)(3) so your gift is tax deductible. The funds will be forwarded by our National TSCA Treasurer to your local Treasurer by check to be managed and monitored by your local Chapter’s officers. Legacy donations are also welcome, but it is very rewarding to be present when the gift is received and observe its intended results. Support and additional details are available from our National Chapter Coordinator, John Weiss.

NEW PRESIDENT

The John Gardner Chapter of the TSCA elected a new president, Ian Bradley, on Sunday. A member since 2020 who has worked on most of the shop projects since then, Bradley is also a UCONN Avery Point alumnus and has considerable canoeing and small boat experience.

He succeeds Brian Cooper, who carried the organization through and out of the pandemic, keeping the community going during one of the most challenging periods in recent memory.

Bradley’s focus will be to continue to get people back on the water in chapter messabouts, sailing raids, or get-togethers that discuss small craft, their use, development, construction, and enjoyment. He wants to liaise with other regional chapters to organize exchange trips where visiting chapter members can benefit from hosts’ local knowledge. He also seeks (along with getting shop manager McKenzie’s keister into gear) to continue the shop’s activities, be they student restoration projects, chapter dory maintenance, new builds, or instructional seminars.

“The pandemic threw us all for a loop,” Bradley stated. “We have a chance to rebuild a new normal from what worked in the past and what works for the present. People want to be on the water.”





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WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY REGATTA

AT THE BARNACLE HISTORIC STATE PARK, COCONUT GROVE (MIAMI), FLORIDA

By John Palenchar

Anyone who has participated in the Barnacle Historic State Park's Washington's Birthday Regatta will tell you that a good time is had by all. Last year's regatta, the 27th reenactment of the first regatta held on Biscayne Bay in the Spring of 1887, was no exception. The Regatta, open to "shallow-draft boats of traditional rig," drew sixteen entrants which competed in four separate "classes"—each boat assigned to its class dependent on characteristics determined by the Race Committee.

The Regatta is followed in the evening by a Chowder Party and awards ceremony for Captains and their crew—all of which is included in the registration fee. The setting is the grounds of the historic home of Commodore Ralph Middleton Munroe, renowned designer of late 18th and early

19th century yachts, especially his "Presto" designs. It was here, in his later years, that he entertained Nat Herreshoff, of Bristol, Rhode Island, as they discussed and debated the merits of centerboard versus fixed-keel yachts.

This year's Regatta will take place on Saturday, February 24, 2024. Registration and details are available on the website of The Barnacle Society, www.thebarnacle.org. Local knowledge concerning boat ramps, anchorage, etc., will be provided as availability is determined.

Come bring your gaff-rigged Catboat, Sea Pearl, or Mud/Beach/Bay Hen and join the Ralph Middleton Munroe Chapter of the TSCA at this fun event!

Participants approaching the starting line.



Captains with their awards at the Chowder Party.



Traditional Sailboat Regatta and Chowder Party in Coconut Grove, Florida
Save the Date! Saturday, February 24, 2024

The 28th Annual Washington's Birthday Regatta at The Barnacle Historic State Park.

For more information visit TheBarnacle.org/Regatta
or scan the QR code to take you to the regatta event page.



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Chapter Reorganizing

Puget Sound TSCA

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



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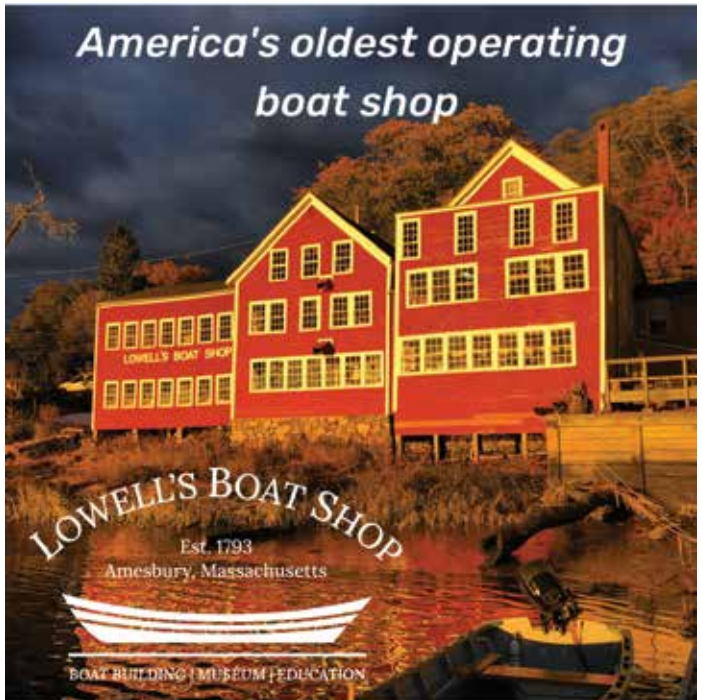
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BUILDING JOY

By Meg Oeller, DVM

BACKGROUND

“It’s a long story, and even longer when I tell it.” (Pooh)

I have not built anything before. Assembled, yes; built from scratch, no. I have not used power tools. My father would not let anyone touch his tools, and girls could not take shop when I was in school back in ancient times. Despite this lack of exposure, my wonderful husband, Douglass, was sure that someone who could perform surgery and who could sew would be perfectly suited to boatbuilding. He ran the idea by me of building a boat from a kit, and it sounded possible, so I agreed. I was still working full time as well as tending our house and garden, but it seemed like something I could work on evenings and weekends. It would be interesting and maybe even fun.

Douglass made the selection. He bought me a shellback dinghy kit from Wooden Boat (actually cut out by Chesapeake Light Craft) for Mother’s Day 2017. Douglass wants this boat for sailing and rowing. It did not take long for me to realize that the “kit” was nothing like furniture from IKEA. I opened the box, expecting that a mast, etc., would be included. Nope. There were long blocks of wood to be planed round to make the spars. That was only the first thing I noticed.

I spent an evening reading the book about how to build the shellback dinghy, and I inventoried all the wood and hardware. I sorted and labelled the screws, etc., and then I had no idea what to do.

Thank goodness we know Jim Drake. Thank goodness he is a former teacher and an amazing carpenter and does not live too far away. Thank goodness he was willing to serve as a boatbuilding guru.

Jim started me off with a list of tools to acquire. That first \$400 was only the beginning, but I did not know that at the time. Block plane, fuller bit set, chisels... Fortunately, Douglass already had many tools, and he was willing to share.

I developed a strategy. I knew it was going to take a long time to build this boat because I did not have much free time. I did not want my car exiled from the garage indefinitely, because I still had to commute in all weathers, and I was used to the luxury of easy access to my vehicle without snow on it.

I decided to work on the small parts first so they could be set out of the way and keep my side of the garage open for my car.

I thought I would assemble the daggerboard trunk first. That’s when I first learned that the cut pieces do not just fit together. There is much to do to make them the shape that is part of the boat, and many of the parts depend on the final size and location of other parts. The trunk would be dealt with later.

I began with the spars. Jim showed me how to use the plans to measure and mark the taper and dimensions of the mast. After a long, long time (most of 2018) and a lot of getting to know my block plane, I had all the spars shaped and varnished.

The CLC Shellback kit arrives.



Cheers for Joy launching into the Miles River.



That was encouraging. I did make a significant mistake that would surface later when I proved that you should not try to put a square peg in a round hole. Fortunately, it was not a fatal error.

Next, we worked on the tiller, the rudder, and the daggerboard—purchased a belt sander. Those were interesting and not too hard to do. But then it was time to move on to the big pieces.

Jim and I assembled the strong back to hold the hull as we built it. Even though all the pieces were there, some had to be joined together with drywall screws and the whole thing needed to be anchored to a sheet of plywood on the garage floor. At this point, Douglass's boat, *Comfort*, went to live at a storage facility so my car could still get in the garage.

The bottom and planks all come in two pieces and need to be joined with scarf joints. These were not cut so that the pieces were flush, so Jim introduced me to the rabbet plane. They do not make the model he has anymore, so I resorted to eBay to get my own. Jim polished and sharpened the blade, so it was like new.

Douglass got me a Japanese saw to cut boards to fit. That tool got used a lot, and I was extremely glad to have it. Many

other tools showed up, thanks to him—a band saw that I learned to really like and a multi-tool for tight spots.

I did mess up the transom because of inept use of the cordless drill. Jim assured me for the first time that “anything can be fixed.” I would hear that phrase a lot. I think I managed to mess up everything that had to do with the transom—started to refer to it as my nemesis. Epoxy and paint can cover a lot of sins. Jim's motto is that epoxy can be substituted for craftsmanship. Seems true to me.

Over time, we joined the pieces and installed the bottom and three planks on each side. I got to use my block plane again to create feather edges on each of the planks in order to receive the next one and produce a precise fit. I learned about epoxy, temporary fasteners, and countersinking the holes for the bronze screws. I learned that there is a lot of tricky work getting the planks to fit with the stem. Once the hull was complete, we took the boat off the jig and flipped her over onto a frame/cradle that Jim was willing to lend to me.

Building the hull went on for a long time, and there were delays due to the pandemic and my very full schedule. Everything changed with my retirement at the end of December 2022. Huzzah! Boatbuilding became a daily exercise, and progress sped up exponentially.

I learned about filleting the joints between planks and around the midrib and the inside of the transom and the stem. This was one time that I taught Jim something. Pastry bags are better than Ziplocs for this procedure.

I learned that sanding would be a large part of my life for quite a while.

We used my router to put a groove in the outside rails so that we can put a rope in that groove to protect her from boats bumping into her. I think it also protects the boats she bumps into.

Everything must be in accord with the plans. Got an architect ruler to convert the scale from the plan to the boat. There are more bevels, angles, and placements than I would ever have believed.

We completely reshaped the pieces for the breasthook and quarter knees—they were only roughly cut for the kit. I got a band saw. This is very fiddly work with multiple bevels to cut to make a good fit with the stem and the plank. We attached the rails, cut and shaped the spacers for the inwales, and attached and installed them. We installed and shaped the oarlock pads.

We cut the seats to fit—more bevels and the need to make the center seat work with the daggerboard trunk. Assembled the trunk and cut a slot in the bottom of the boat—an anxious time for me. Installed the mast step (the round hole alluded to earlier). Reshaped the bottom (square peg of the mast) to fit. So much for my varnish. I cut an angled hole in the front seat to accommodate the mast and drilled a hole to hold the belaying pin (which is very cute).

Meg's finished Shellback Dinghy



We placed the rudder hardware on the transom and the rudder. The gudgeons did not fit, so they had to be redrilled and cut to size. I used Jim's drill press, so I did not have to buy *that* tool.

We flipped the boat over again, attached the keel and skeg. I glued Dynel cloth on the bottom to make it stronger and better able to withstand beaching and dragging. Another set of fillets. Then more epoxy, sanding, and glazing compound, etc., to blend it into the rest of the hull.

It got pretty exciting to see the project become a complete boat. But then the finishing began. Sanding. Sealing with thinned epoxy. Sanding. Primer (which I really hate). Sanding. Glazing compound. Sanding. More primer (more hate). Sanding. First coat of paint—the hull and the rudder are a lovely yellow, and everything seems possible. Epifanes paint takes a long time to fully cure, so progress slowed a little.

We flipped the boat again and repeated all the above steps on the inside, including the seats, daggerboard, and insert. Drilled a couple of holes in the quarter knees. Made the bottom nonskid—that was fun. Final coats of paint (after sanding) inside and out.

Meanwhile, I put many coats of varnish on the rails, the tiller, the belaying pin, the bottom of the mast, the cap on the daggerboard, and the insert. I sealed the seats with epoxy. Painted the tops and bottoms of the seats and the daggerboard, insert, and the rudder—primer and two coats of paint. Sanded in between coats.

Attached the keel strip after drilling lots of holes in it with the drill press. I also shaped the ends of the strip with the sander and made a nice, beveled joint to connect the two strips. Attached the rudder hardware to the evil transom. Attached the bow eye. Attached the oar lock sockets. Glued the rope to the groove in the rails. Reinstalled the seats. Douglass put leather on the spars. He can sew, too.

Sails purchased. Name decal applied. All the rope for the lines acquired. Oh, bought a trailer to haul her around.

Repurposed old oarlocks (instead of the shiny new ones that came with the kit—not the kind Douglass likes). Douglass polished them up nicely. He also refurbished an old set of oars. Painted and leathered.

Douglass donated an old anchor that he found years ago at a boat show. Just the right size. He stripped off the old paint and revealed a lovely patina. I sewed a bag to hold the anchor. I used an old tanbark sail that was donated by Tom Shephard.

And—*Voilà!* Done.

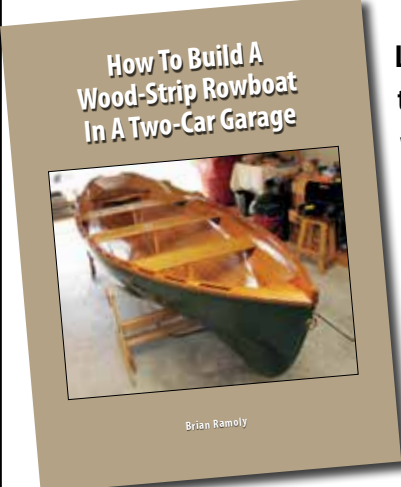
If you just want a dinghy to row and sail, buy one. I am pretty sure it is cheaper and much, *much* less work. If you want to have fun, learn new skills, deepen your friendships, build your confidence, and feel a real sense of accomplishment after several years, I recommend boatbuilding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Douglass Oeller, my own true love—Thank you for the idea, for the kit, for the tools, for moving *Comfort* out of the garage, for the help with the varnish and the rigging and the oars and...for sharing an esthetic vision. For not nagging when the going was oh-so-slow. Mostly for the support and enthusiasm as each step was accomplished. The fact that you did not doubt that I could do it, even when I had grave doubts. Your advice and assistance were most appreciated. You are the best of all husbands. I hope that you will enjoy rowing and sailing *Joy*. I hope she does not sink.

Jim Drake, my own true guru—Thank you for your incredible patience. I know that the ten minutes I spent drilling each individual hole in the early days must have driven you crazy, but you never wavered in your encouragement. You must have been the most valued teacher at Dickinson. I am in awe of all the things you know and your skill at accomplishing them. I cannot thank you enough for all your time and pleasant, patient instruction. You get cookies for life.

My family and friends—The boat is finished! I look forward to seeing you again.



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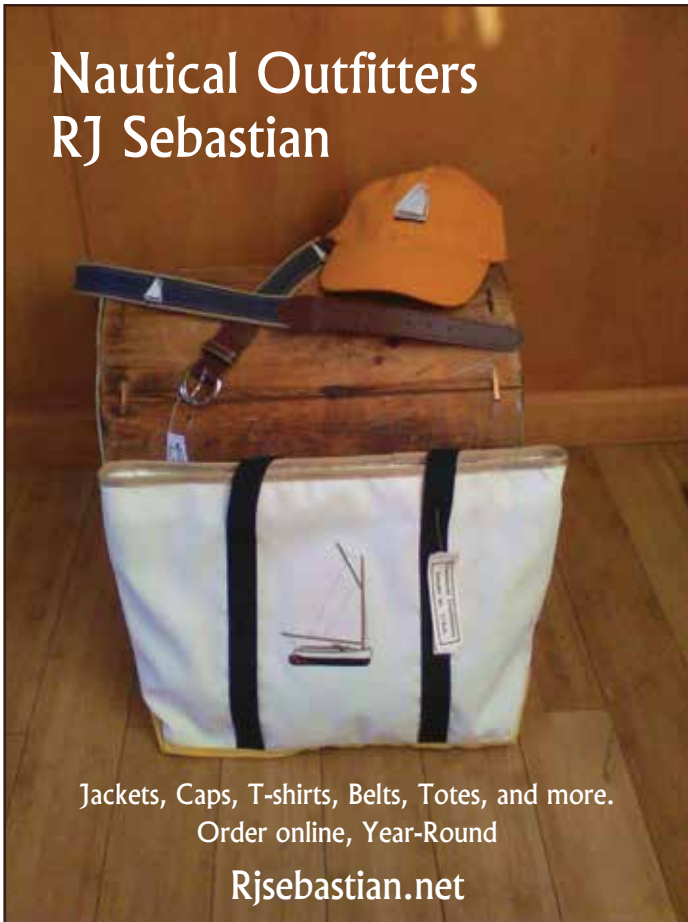


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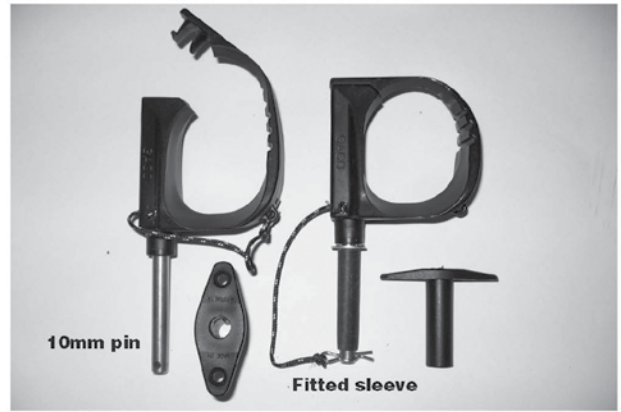
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Spring 2024 Volume 45 Number 1

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