

The Ash Breeze

Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

**20 YEARS AT THE
TOLEDO WOODEN
BOAT SHOW**

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San Francisco Feluccas

TSCA Chapter—Old Bay Club

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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: Obadiah overtakes the Lynx.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Todd Bloch

In the last edition of *The Ash Breeze*, I wrote about efforts to increase awareness of TSCA from an outward-looking, broadening-our-connections perspective. In this edition, I'm also thinking about increasing awareness of the TSCA but from the perspective of looking inward and broadening our understanding of how TSCA can support our members.

Membership in the TSCA has a number of benefits: access to event information, connections to boaters and builders, a source of advice, finding boats for sail, and simply a place to find good stories. However, perhaps there are subtleties that could be teased out. What type of events are people looking for? How do people want to connect with other boaters? What type of stories do people want to read? With more information, we may be able to fine-tune our focus and offerings.

To that end, we are planning to conduct a short survey of members and users of our social media sites. The goal of the survey is to better understand what makes TSCA valuable and how we can serve our community more effectively. We hope to use the information gathered to inform the content of our website, social media locations, and *The Ash Breeze*.

As we move into the spring and summer months and prepare for another season on the water, I hope you will consider what you would like to see from the TSCA and how we can make your membership more rewarding. Please take the time to share your thoughts through the survey or by reaching out directly to me, a council member, or your chapter representative.

See you on the water,
Todd





TSCA CHAPTER—OLD BAY CLUB

By Matt Jensen Young

Flicking through the latest edition of the TSCA journal, *The Ash Breeze*, one will find the page assigned to “Active TSCA Chapters.” By last count, there were thirty-seven organized chapters and two more in the process of organizing. There is no doubt that each chapter has its own unique personality and is enjoyed by the members. This article aims to shed light on the unique identity of the Old Bay Club chapter.

At the annual Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival (MASCF) hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, four years ago, the author was fortunate to come into the orbit of dozens of incredible sailors who also enjoyed camp-cruising small boats. Still somewhat new to the country, the author’s awareness of TSCA was minimal, and joining TSCA was initially not a priority. Members of Old Bay Club were the first to extend a welcoming invitation, and somewhere in their email banter that lasted days, I realized I had discovered something warm, genuine...and genuinely entertaining.

The Old Bay Club (OBC) is nominally located on the lower Chesapeake Bay, and approximately half the members are based in Virginia. Members also hail from Maryland

and Delaware, with some others as far afield as New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina.

Many other sailors consider OBC to be an extremely active club with the sole focus on sailing as often as possible. OBC’s members proudly state there are no official meetings, no officers, no additional fees, and the club exists to sail for pleasure. The hands-on sailing gatherings create organic opportunities for knowledge sharing and supporting one another—both on and off the water.

In 2025, OBC coordinated several multi-day club sails. In April, a group sailed in the Breton Bay region on the Maryland side of the Potomac River. In August, six boats cruised the Maine waters of Penobscot Bay. In September, the club gathered for a camp-sail on Mobjack Bay, Virginia. OBC was also well represented at the MASCF in October, with five boats participating in Saturday’s jolly race and new members introducing themselves. November is a traditional gathering hosted by one of our more illustrious members on the James & Chickahominy Rivers in Virginia.

It was during our Maine cruise that we met our newest

Top: OBC group day sail with picnic lunch ashore on Mobjack Bay. Image Credit: Eddie Breedan.



member—let’s call him John. He could not help but admire one vessel amongst our small flotilla in Bucks Harbor. *UNA* is Iain Oughtred’s Sooty Tern design, and the craftsmanship of her build tends to draw attention wherever she goes. John’s own boat, *Betty Anne*, is an Iain Oughtred Tirrik, a sister design to *UNA*, and another remarkable build. Meeting John in August, the following month, he joined the OBC crew at the Mobjack messabout.

The Mobjack affair was generously hosted by our OBC’s chief herder of cats, Eddie Breeden. The participants camped in Eddie’s backyard, beside the bay where the boats could be anchored in depths that could be easily waded to, or alongside at a small marina close by. The event was planned as a four-day affair, Thursday to Sunday. Ultimately, we had ten small boats actively sailing and occasionally crewed by additional OBC members who dropped in for a day or two without boats. At one point, with the campfire ablaze and tents scattered throughout the lawn, the backyard resembled a miniature Woodstock event. It was discovered that one longstanding member attended Woodstock and idolized Joe Cocker’s iconic performance. OBC’s September event on the Mobjack is now

referred to as the “Hippie-Fest,” and a short, upbeat video (with the aptly chosen Joe Cocker accompanying soundtrack) has been made to commemorate this event. (The video can be seen here: <https://lingeringlunacy.com/2025/09/22/>.) Many felt we enjoyed our own small craft festival in miniature!


Last year, one of our long-term members crossed the bar at an all-too-early age. The OBC lads meant enough to Kirk that his beautiful wife thought it fitting to spread his ashes at the OBC gathering on the James and Chickahominy Rivers. A small Viking burial was arranged where Kirk’s ashes were placed in a model boat, which was subsequently set alight and cast adrift. Kirk’s boat was then collectively rigged by the OBC crew and then sailed by his wife and her friends in attendance. It was a moving experience that certainly made OBC newcomers aware of the wonderful bond among its members and, by extension, their families.

That said, new arrivals within the group, and strangers within our orbit may, upon hearing the banter between sailors, assume that OBC stands *not* for “Old Bay Club,” but “Old B*st*rds Club.” Perhaps this is a case of “where there is smoke, there is fire”?!

Boats anchored on the doorstep of the 2025 Hippie-Fest. Image Credit: Matt Jensen Young.



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TSCA AT SULTANA DOWNRIGGING

By Dana and Susan Cooley

We live in Chestertown, Maryland, a little city that knows how to party. Each Fall, the Sultana Education Foundation (SEF) hosts a weekend of tall (and not so tall) classic vessels from the Northeastern seaboard. They come to celebrate (or at least delay thinking about) “downrigging,” the process of putting a weatherworn ship and its rigging away for the winter.

The Foundation, now in its thirtieth year, adds bluegrass music, educational and cultural events, environmental and historical activities, and delicious Food.

TSCA was invited to contribute an in-water display of classic and classy craft, to wit:

Spartina

John Welsford designer, Steve Earley builder/owner

Obadiah

Joel White designer, Pete Peters owner

Seven Stars

Ron Gibbs designer/builder/owner

Bella

B. Crowninshield designer, Harold Bernard builder/owner

Molly Malone

N. Herreschoff designer, Jim Drake owner

Phineas

Marc Barton designer, Paul Skalka owner

Aquarelle

Jesse Hammond designer, Dana Cooley builder/owner

Top: Author launching.

Bottom: Paul Skalka and Pete Peters aboard Obadiah.

Top: Harold Bernard—Bella.

Bottom: Tall Ships illumination.

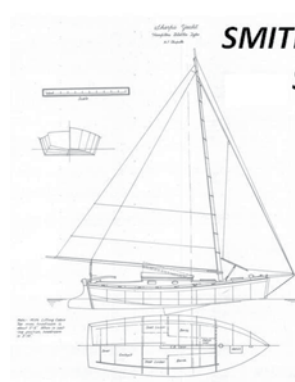





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The 2014 edition of our 253-page catalog of boat & ship plans, the *Ship Plans List*, is available for \$20.00. For information, search "boat plans" on the Smithsonian web site <americanhistory.si.edu>.

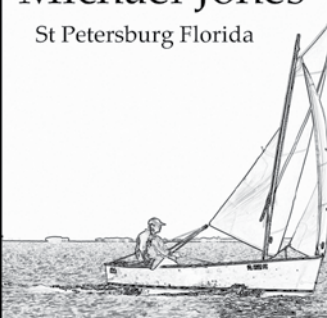


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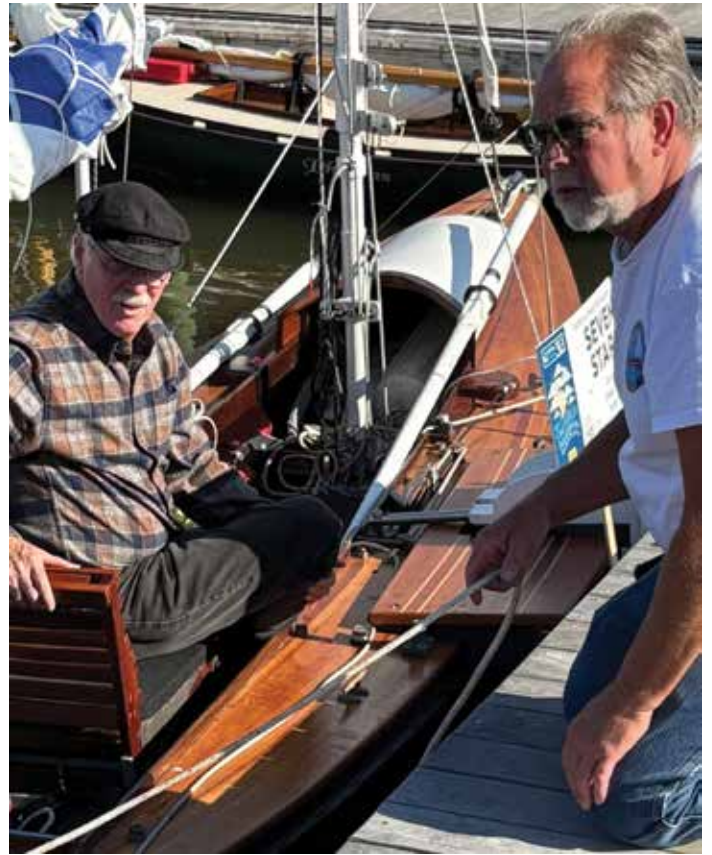




*Top: Father and Son Row.
Middle Plein air artist captures Steve Earley.
Bottom: Our Bosun—Mr. Skelly.*

TSCA boats enjoyed excellent exposure at floating docks, where crowds had to pass twice when strolling out to view and board larger exhibitors. SEF treated our participants as full “captains,” with all-access passes to the music venue, spotless marina heads, professional signage for each boat, and (did we say?) great FOOD! The Eastern Shore crab soup and fried oysters alone were worth the trip.

The weather started out dicey. Thursday’s rain challenged



Ron Gibbs with Seven Stars.

early arrivers, as did an exceptionally high tide that almost reached the music village. Skies cleared for the balance of the festival weekend, with just one public sail scratched and the Friday fireworks postponed due to strong winds.

Susan and I were delighted with the visitor interest in *Aquarelle*, our Swampscott dory and the smallest TSCA offering. Visitors trudging up the dock, bedazzled by all the halyards, braces, sheets, and buntlines farther out, seemed relieved to gaze at an old-fashioned wooden rowboat with seats and oars. More than a few mentioned their own dusty craft, in barns or on new-build projects, on extended pause, and we encouraged them to renew their vows and do something. During those chats, our bosun, Mr. Skelly, was happy to entertain the kids.

On Sunday, when things calmed down, our son Rob joined his dad for a row reminiscent of father-son adventures in decades past. The years melted away, and the pair reconnected still more. At fifty-two, our boy still thinks it is cool to row under a drawbridge thundering with traffic. It meant a lot to have him with us.

So we will rate the Sultana Downrigging Tallships and Bluegrass event a perfect “ten.” Chestertown, Maryland, the Chester River, and its shoreline should be high on TSCA members’ launch-and-explore lists. And did we mention the fabulous FOOD?





Text and Photos by John Kohnen (with some help from Dan Mulholland)

The Toledo Wooden Boat Show is an annual festival sponsored and managed by the Port of Toledo, Oregon, now in its 20th year. The “Coots” have been part of the Show since we were recruited for the first event by then-new Toledo Port Manager Bud Shoemake while attending the Depoe Bay Wooden Boat Show. The Oregon Coots TSCA chapter recruits exhibitors and their boats, holds raffles that benefit the Port’s Community Boathouse programs, and helps promote the event. This year, our raffle for a small boat and two models brought in over \$1,200 for the Toledo Community Boathouse programs.

Toledo, Oregon, is a town of 3,500 residents located twelve miles up the tidal Yaquina River from Newport, near the mouth. Once home to many lumber mills, the only major employer now is an elderly pulp mill that manufactures paper for cardboard from wood chips and recycled boxes. Under the leadership of Bud and the current Port Manager, Debbie Sacco, over the last quarter century, the Port has worked hard to attract the community and visitors to the waterfront on Depot Slough, with the hope that the attention will help Toledo thrive without lumber. The site of a defunct lumber mill near the docks was turned into a park, with a pavilion



Top: Cardboard Boat Races. **Right:** The Coots raffled off an Atkin Tiny Ripple and two models.



to give shelter for events, and the Port built a pair of floating shops to support boatbuilding projects and other programs, including a popular free boat livery to get community members out on the water. Unlike too many ports, the Port of Toledo likes boats and boaters. The launch ramp is free, and rent for transient slips is a “suggested donation” to the Community Boathouse program. They’ve always treated the Coots very well.

In 2025, the show featured the Pettis family, a group of fishermen and boatbuilders. *Challenge*, the last commercial fishing vessel built in Bill Pettis’s Boat Shop near Yaquina Bay, was the guest of honor. Bill came out of retirement, and he and his son, Mike, built and launched her in 1980; she’s still actively fishing. In the slip next to *Challenge* was *Little J*, launched in 1972 at Bill Pettis’s shop and still working. During a career that spanned over twenty-five years, it is estimated that Bill, while working almost entirely by himself, produced over 200 boats at “Bill’s Boat Shop.” Word got out on the Newport

waterfront about the Pettis boats coming to the Toledo show, and a couple of iconic West Coast fishing boats came up the river to share the fun. *Ginevra A* is a classic Northwest salmon troller, built by H. E. Ahlquist at Marshfield (now Coos Bay, Oregon) and launched in 1942. Twenty years ago, she was almost ready for the burn pile, but an old fisherman restored her to working condition, and she’s fishing today.

The young owner of a beautiful Monterey Clipper, *Sangria*, from Humboldt Bay was fishing out of Newport when he heard about the show. Monterey Clippers descended from the lateen-rigged fishing boats built by Italian immigrants in the San Francisco Bay area, and there’s very little difference in hull shape below the waterline between Monterey Clippers and the old sailing boats. *Sangria* was built by an unknown builder at Capitola, on Monterey Bay, and launched in 1928.

It was nice to see such an interesting variety of commercial fishing boats at the show. Newport is the largest fishing port in Oregon, and boatyards and other businesses supporting

Top: 1928 Monterey Clipper Sangria.

Bottom: Mike Colyar aboard his steamboat Spiffy.



Top: 1942 troller Ginevra A next to Challenge.

Bottom: Cardboard Boat Races.



fishing have long existed along Yaquina Bay and up the River to Toledo. In the past, we've had one or two fishing boats at the show, but never four at once. I hope we get that many again.

The festival is more than a boat show. The largest crowds turn out for the Cardboard Boat Race. The Georgia Pacific paper mill provides cardboard for teams to construct their craft, and then crews are "volunteered" to paddle the resulting boats on a course down Depot Slough and back—for the boats that are still floating when the starting steamboat whistle sounds. While the front-runners get their share of encouragement, the loudest cheers go to the racers whose crafts sink along the way.

Other locals turn out for the musical performances held on Saturday and Sunday, or for the food, and, for many, a chance to see the forty or so boats displayed "on the hard" or in the water. There are rides available on exhibitor boats or the Port's launch, *Yaquina Queen*. Most of the boats exhibited are "TSCA-sized" craft that arrive on trailers. The Port's boat ramp is a couple of miles downriver from town, and there is a lot of shuttling back and forth.

The Port keeps the festival free for attendees through booth fees, exhibitor donations, and sponsorships from local businesses. This is a truly great event that the Oregon Coots are proud to be part of.

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SAN FRANCISCO FELUCCAS

By Todd Bloch

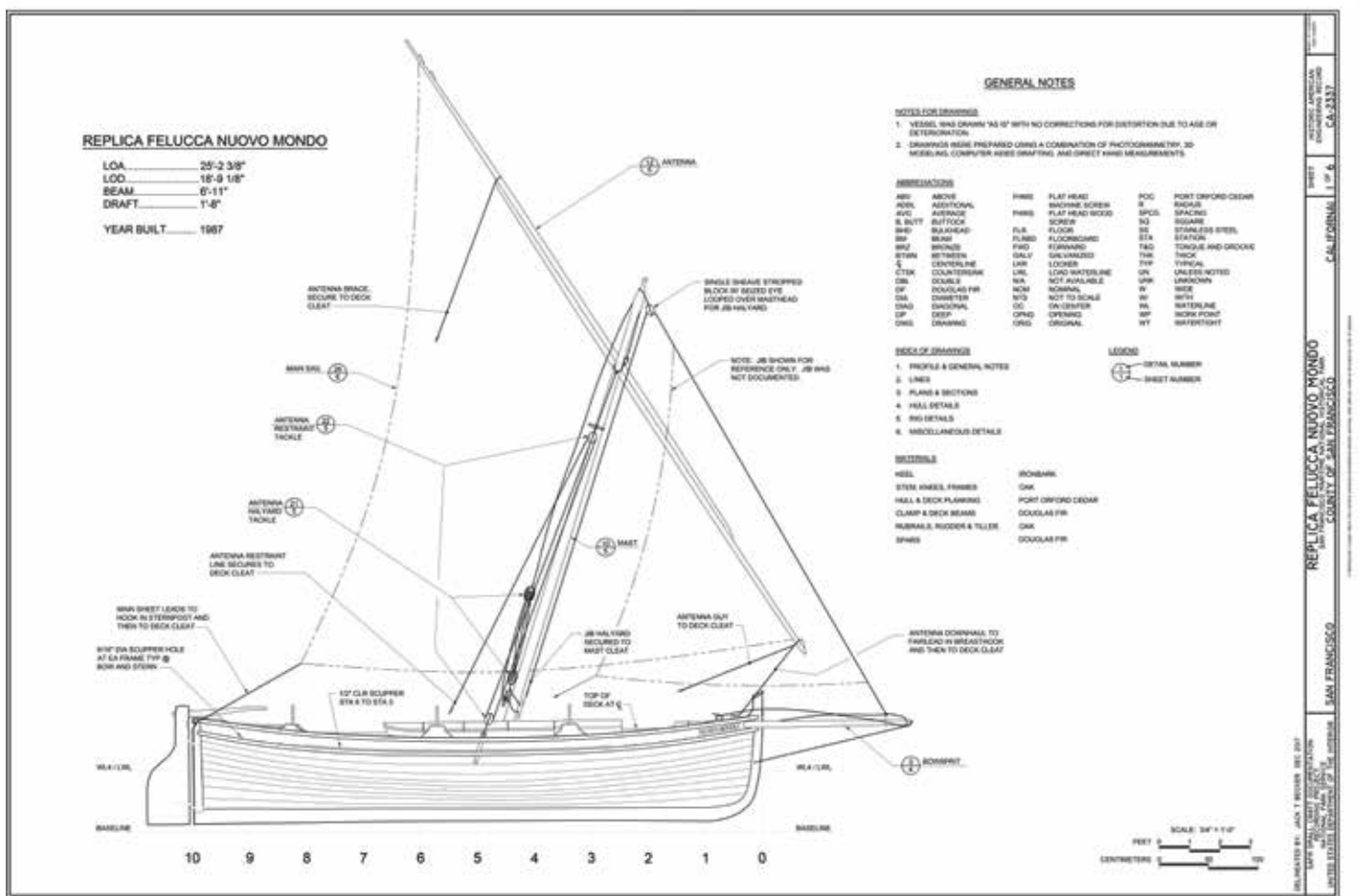
We are technically featuring two boats in this issue, but we are discussing them more or less as one. We have an original historic artifact and a replica of it. Both are thus examples of a type presently known as the San Francisco Felucca, which was brought to the San Francisco Bay Area in the latter half of the 1800s by immigrating Italian fishermen. Feluccas were once the dominant fishing vessel at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, seen by the dozens in historic photos of the era.

It should be noted that the name "felucca" may be an after-the-fact designation. Howard Chapelle notes in "American Small Sailing Craft" that there is apparently no record of the Italians referring to their boats as feluccas; the name suddenly appears in government boat catalogues in the early 1900s.

Easily recognizable by its raked mast, lateen rig, and double-ended hull, this type of vessel has been a presence in the Mediterranean for centuries and was a logical choice for immigrants from that region seeking to work on familiar

boats. The San Francisco versions varied little from their Italian cousins, but, of course, were built from local materials—cedar hull planking on oak frames, with Douglas Fir deck beams and deck planking.

A key activity for the sailor on a felucca is setting and adjusting the main sail, which is done via a downhaul at the tack, main sheet at the clew, and a brace near the head of the antenna (a.k.a., the spar). When sailing downwind, the antenna can be set across the mast like a square sail, as seen in an accompanying photo. Since the antenna extends fore and aft of the mast, the sail can end up backed against the mast when on a reach—a less than efficient configuration. For optimal sailing, the antenna is "walked" around the mast so the sail can completely fill; this requires manually pushing the antenna restraint (serving as a shroud) to the other side of the boat. Speaking from experience, this can be a tricky maneuver





while underway. Typically, it is best to determine the most likely tack and configure the sail accordingly before leaving the dock. In addition to the lateen main sail, a jib can also be raised from the bowsprit for reaches and upwind runs.

The artifact boat, seen in the black-and-white photograph, is unnamed but is thought to have been built around 1890. It was collected from the family of the original owners on Tomales Bay, California, just north of San Francisco, where it had remained in use until the early 1970s. The stern post was modified to accommodate an inboard engine, a modification visible in the photo, indicating a change from sail to motorized propulsion.

The replica boat *Nuovo Mondo* was built in 1987 by Larry Hitchcock in San Francisco. Its design was determined by studying the original boat, its traditional colors from historic photographs and paintings. *Nuovo Mondo* was shipped to the Brest and Dournanez festivals in France in both 2000 and 2004, where she joined other lateen rigged boats and crews from the Mediterranean. As there are no felucca sailors left around San Francisco's docks, these trips provided valuable information on the handling of these boats and the rigging of the lateen sails.

Both vessels are in the collection of San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. The artifact boat is in storage; *Nuovo Mondo* is one of two feluccas currently active on San Francisco Bay, the other being *Franca*, which was featured on the Summer 2021 cover of *The Ash Breeze* (Volume 42, Number 2).

Drawing and history information provided courtesy of the Historic American Engineering Record and John Muir, Curator of Small Craft, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.



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:

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CAPE COD'S 10TH (ALMOST ANNUAL) ROWING RENDEZVOUS

By Bill Stirling

Walter Baron, member of the Cape Cod Chapter and past member of the TSCA's National Council, has been building small boats in his one-man shop, Old Wharf Dory Co., in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, on the outer cape for over twenty years. Walt organized the first rendezvous so residents could row well-designed, well-built traditional boats and see firsthand how much pleasure it is! He selects late September to hold the "Row-Around," since early fall is usually the best season on the cape. Unfortunately, for the past two years, weather conditions have not cooperated, and the gathering has had to be canceled. There is a large tidal "swing" in Wellfleet, as well as the need for the town's permit, making the scheduling window pretty narrow.

This year, the weather returned to the "normal" September conditions, i.e., sunny, warm, and very light winds. These parameters make it a perfect venue for novice rowers to try many traditional New England boats. As our Cape Cod chapter has grown, so too has the number and variety of rowboats increased for our guests to try out! In past years, we

had fifteen to eighteen boats—this year, twenty-four! We even had a few boats from off-cape make the trip this year.

Some of our local TSCA members also volunteer at the Cape Cod Maritime Museum, in the boat shop, and run the rowing program. We use a twenty-seven-foot, four-oared, coxed gig, built by the "Floating the Apple" group in Manhattan, New York, to take our rowers out on local waters and to off-cape races. We bring the gig to the Wellfleet rendezvous, as well, to allow the public a chance to row a multi-oared boat.

I brought my newly completed 16' Duck Trap Wherry for its only second time in the water. I am still experimenting with different oars before I make up the two new pairs for the boat.

With the perfect weather, the large assortment of boats, and a crowd of 80–100 people, it was a great Grand Finale of the summer for some! Many of us will keep rowing until it is too cold or the water gets too hard to continue! We plan to hold our annual New Year's Day Row at Arey's Pond Boat Yard on Pleasant Bay, hosted by Tony Davis. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate again this year.



AN ATKIN & CO. OUTBOARD SKIFF

By Dave Satter

After restoring and building boats for twenty-five-plus years now, mainly restoring other people's boats and canoes, you get the urge to work with some new, clean wood instead of old, dirty, rotten wood. Don't get me wrong—I love what I do. So, it was time to start a new build. Something simple and fun to build. I got looking at traditional designs, and William and John Atkin have some of the best. Also, it would have to be something I could sell. I still have bills to pay.

I live in an area surrounded by many lakes, with many fishermen, summer homes, and lake cabins. So, I decided to go with a skiff, Atkin's C. G. junior design #686. Fourteen feet, ten inches and a fifty-two-inch beam. Flat-bottomed and a good, stable skiff for two or three people to spend an afternoon in. With a nice topside flare, she should be a dry ride. The original 1950s design called for a cedar-planked hull and bottom built over oak frames. I modified the plans to use ¼-inch Meranti marine plywood for the hull and ½-inch plywood for the bottom. So, I could make it a truly dry boat, and she could also be trailered. A five-hp motor or less should

be plenty to push her along nicely, given her hull weighs 250 pounds.

The original plans call for two rowing stations. I adjusted things for just one center rowing station. The construction drawings call for building over five station molds nailed to the floor. I put them on a strongback and raised them up on sawhorses. Building at floor level isn't as easy as it was twenty-five years ago. I decided to use Philippine mahogany for the transom and trim. Mainly because it just looks nice varnished. This would be a fine skiff just painted, but I decided to dress it up a bit with some varnish. The transom was three pieces splined together, with ¼-inch plywood for strength.

The stem and keelson would be white oak, as they would be painted. Chines of white oak were fitted between the transom and the stem, locking everything together so I could make patterns for the hull. I was able to make the hull-side patterns from inexpensive ¼-inch Luan. I wanted to make sure it could make the curve—it did. So, scarfing together two sheets of Meranti ply was just enough to get out both sides for the

Fitting the stem to molds.



Bending on quarter inch plywood.





Above: Fibreglassed chines and bottom.

Below: Breasthook installed.



Above: Transom Knee fitted.

Below: Interior painted with finished seats installed.



hull. With some careful planning and a jig, I was able to make a nice three-inch-long scarf on the plywood and glue it with G-flex. Bending a sixteen-foot-long piece of plywood around the molds and fastening it to the transom, chines, and stem was a challenge—a lot of clamps. I did a dry fit of everything first. All was set in thickened epoxy and screwed with bronze fasteners to the chines, transom, and stem.

The bottom was two sheets of ½-inch Meranti, again scarfed together, then laid across the bottom and marked out, removed, cut to the outside of the lines, put back on, and drilled for fasteners—a bead of thickened epoxy applied to the chine bottom and fastened. After everything was dry, I sanded the bottom of the hull joint to give it a smooth edge. The last of the epoxy work on the boat (thankfully) was to wet out two layers of six-ounce cloth on the bottom up to the waterline. This was definitely a two-person job—between measuring, mixing, using the squeegee, and keeping the epoxy warm (not too warm).

Once the epoxy was dry and cured well—a good week or so—then came another fun part, sanding with the mask on. I put a skeg on and a couple of coats of bottom paint. Then it was time to flip—a few temporary braces inside to keep her shape and a few helpers worked fine. Now she looks like a

boat. Well, an empty boat. Well, at least no more epoxy work.

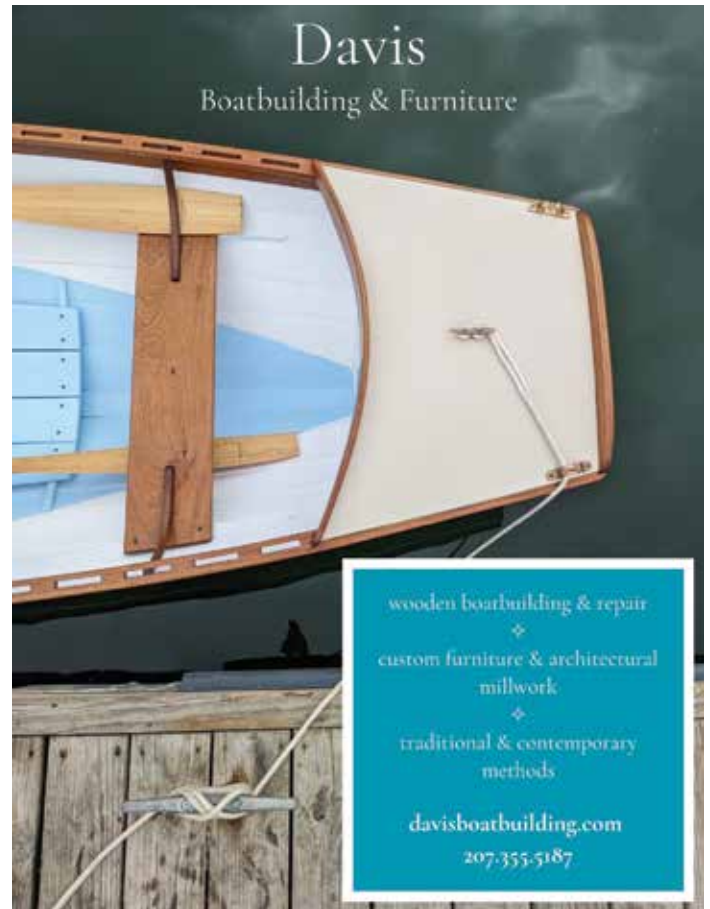
I think I had the most fun fitting out the interior. White oak frames, notched out for the chine on the bottom and the inwales on top, fastened from the outside with 1¼ bronze screws. Inwales and outwales were Philippine mahogany. Before fitting the inwales, the entire interior received three coats of Kirby's #6 Ivory semigloss. Again, a lot of clamps bending that inwale and outwale on, and it took a lot of adjusting. Everything was held together with bronze screws. Seats were planked with mahogany and varnished.

At this point, a regular customer arrived and took a look at the boat. He and his wife decided they would take the boat. And could I paint it black, gloss black? This was my first try with the new Interlux Top Lac. After a coat of primer and more sanding, I rolled and tipped it on. Though Interlux says you don't have to tip it. I tipped it anyway, hard to break an old habit. This stuff is glossy. You can hurt your eyes just looking at it.

Even though I may have gone with a more traditional paint color (I heard once that the customer is always right), it came out better than expected.

I had so much fun building this that I'm setting up the molds to start the second one.

Finally out in the daylight.



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Lee graduated from Polytechnic High School in 1956. He began working for Pacific Bell in 1961 and retired after fifty-three years of service.

Making friends with everyone he met, Lee lived a rich life and will be sorely missed.

Lee is survived by his son, Ian Lee Caldwell (Darryn), and his daughter, Yvonne Alcyon Turco (Tim), granddaughters, Isabella and Sadie, and his sisters, Sandra Loving and Linda Spencer. He has numerous nieces and nephews. He was a long-term resident of Rio Nido, California.

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A DAY AT THE BOATSHOP

Bill Rutherford, John Gardner Chapter. Photos by the Author

It was a special day volunteering at the Mystic Seaport Museum Boathouse. We had a field trip! A talk and tour of the in-progress Wells Small Boat Hall in the old Rossi Mill. Since photos speak more than words, here are a few highlights of the day.

Outside, it was freezing—yes, that is ice all the way across the River. Bank Dorries surf the snow alongside whaleboats. Note their sheer strake colors. They represent different museums and groups that built them to celebrate the 38th Voyage of the *Charles W. Morgan* in 2014.



Inside, it was habitable, and the refreshed boats gleamed with fresh varnish. Over 100 boats are already in the renovated space. Come for a tour at the WoodenBoat Show June 26th–28th. While there for the Show, stop by Australia Beach and partake in the TSCA John Gardner Small Craft Workshop. Watch the TSCA.net Events page for three days of rows, events, and activities—<https://tscanet.org/events/>.



Back at the Boatshop, we switched out a couple of finished boats and brought in a new one. The first task was scrape off the ice and snow. This is *Pogo*, a flat-bottomed punt designed for group boatbuilding by Walt Ansel.



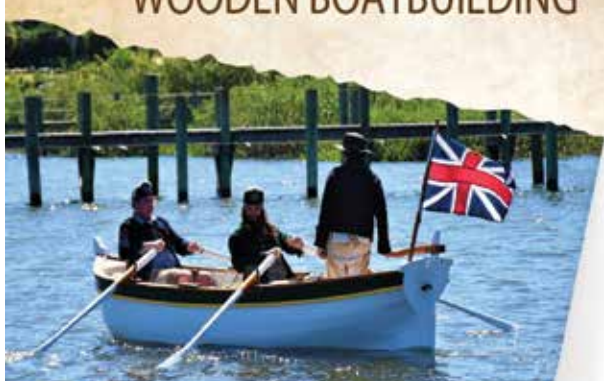
Our teenage volunteers will redecorate in their own style come Summer—part of the fun.

Last week, Susan Skiff *Mary* received a new bottom. The first task this week was to trim the bottom flush with the sides. Our tools are not all strictly traditional; here, a Japanese pull saw is perfect for the job.






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Hugh Horton photo



Bungs are next. That is Boathouse Supervisor Rosie DiMatteo on the right. She herds us cats and keeps an eye on the finished product.



We are sealing the bottom of this boat with beeswax. Something new! Radical. And yes, that is a toilet seal that we are using as a source of beeswax. We are nothing if not frugal...



Many of our boats sail as well as row. Here, our designated rigger is rewinding a Beetle Cat forestay. All parts removed from boats and spars are carefully saved, labeled, and repaired where necessary.



Next door in the John Gardner Small Boat Shop, three boats are repaired, restored, and given a fresh finish. Here, Whitehall Skiff *Captain Hook* is getting the first step, a careful scrape.



Outside, it is still freezing cold, but we leave with a warm feeling from having helped, in a small way, to improve a visitor's experience. That is our goal. Providing the means for a visitor to actually take one of our small boat replicas for a row or sail.

You are invited! Come and see for yourself: weekends start in May and continue full-time, weather permitting, through Labor Day; then weekends again until Fall. Check us out at mysticseaport.org.



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THE TASK OF GETTING UNDER COVER

Story and Photos by Rob Kunzig

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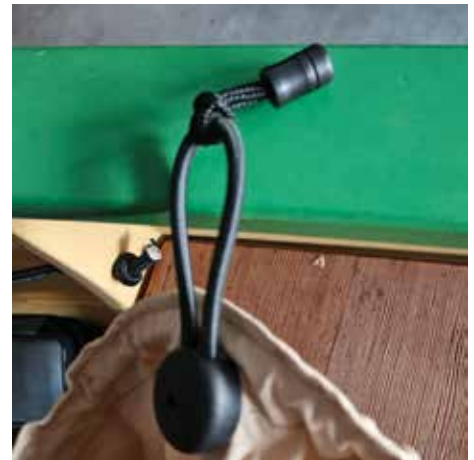
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When first developed, it may be thought of as a trick. Once it proves itself, it becomes purpose-built hardware that makes its part of the journey a success.

When I first tried to turn my Melonseed into an overnight cruiser, I worked on securing a tarp over the cockpit. Needless to say, it proved to be a bit of a challenge, one I never fulfilled. Upon acquiring my *Ilur*, Ron, the builder, used grommets installed in a manner similar to what many of you may have seen in Roger Barnes's videos.

It seems that small inverse hooks or grommets along the sides or under the gunwales make setting up and securing the tarp quite easy. Kits with tarp bungee attachments are available on Amazon by searching for "Shock Cord Tie Down Tarp Canvas Knobs," or something similar. I'd include a link, but it's four lines long. In one of the photos, Roger is setting up his old tent where the bungee line (next to his left wrist) has a long horizontal slot. This can make it slightly easier to slip the grommet over when the components are not perfectly aligned at first. Lastly, at the ramp or alongside docks, pay attention to where the grommets lie as you step into your craft; this will help ensure they stay put.



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A CAULKING KIT; PART TWO

By Roger Allen, Master Boatbuilder. Artwork by Tina Allen

This is another in a regular series we've called **Tool Tips** for readers of *The Ash Breeze*. Consider this an invitation to send me an image of a favorite tool you use for building or repairing boats. It doesn't matter how fancy or simple the tool is, as long as you value it as an aid in your craft. I would like to know, in as few words as possible, why the tool is your favorite, along with additional information about how it functions. Any history of the tool, its manufacturer, or how it came to be in your kit will also add a nice dimension. If it is a tool you have made, and you can, provide a brief "how-to" so others can follow your lead. Any thoughts on how to acquire a commercially available tool would also be helpful. Up to three or four images can illustrate what you have written to be included in *The Ash Breeze*.

In our last **Tool Tips**, I provided information and patterns for some handy finger guards and eye straps to help keep a caulking iron in your hand while you use it and protect your fingers. The leathers came to me with a wonderful caulking kit I got from my great old boss, Ted Newbold, at the Philadelphia Maritime Museum when I was setting up the original **Workshop on the Water** on the Lighter Barge *Maple*.

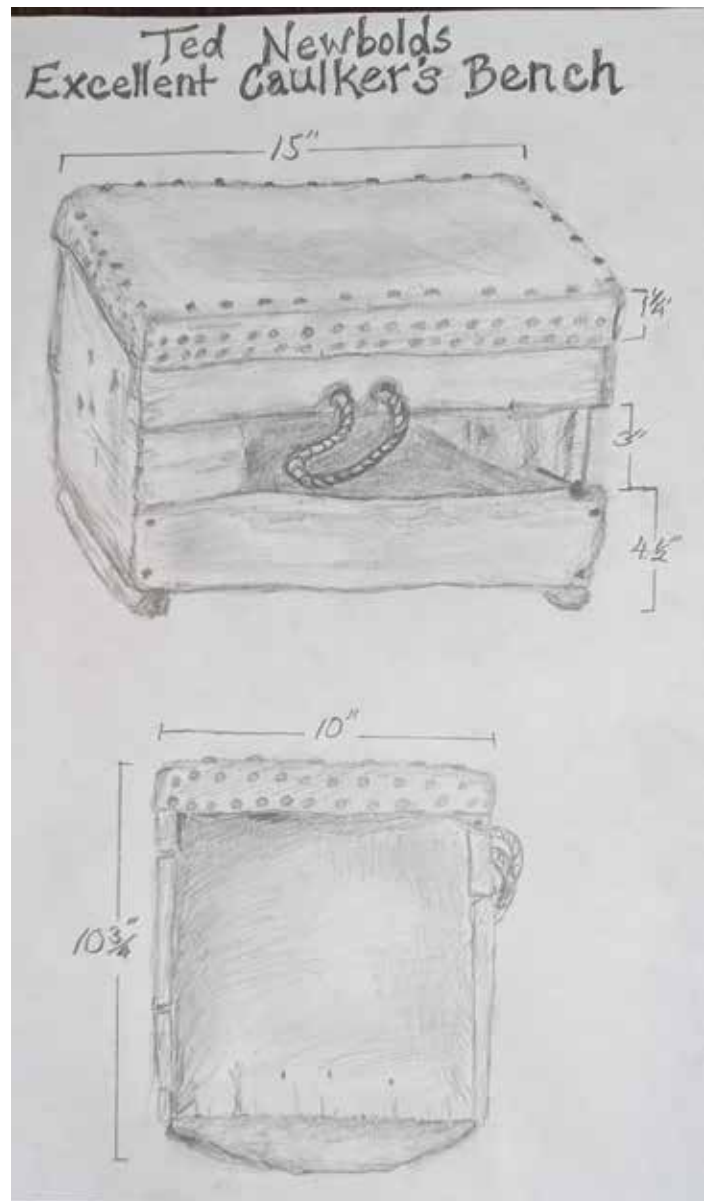
The kit included a nice variety of caulking irons, two caulking mallet heads of different sizes but that shared one handle, and a pair of small bronze wheels that were like, but unlike, washers, along with the leathers. The whole bunch came in what I, at first sight, thought was just an old, worn toolbox of unique shape. Upon closer inspection, it became apparent that the box was actually a very sophisticated Caulker's bench.

The top of the bench is actually a piece of heavily painted canvas that I'd guess might be 20 oz. or heavier duck. It was tacked all around the edges with steel round head tacks in a pleasant decorative pattern. The nails have rusted, so when you make your own, I'd use copper ring nails instead. Looks matter, so arrange them to look good. The canvas overlaps the four sides of the box by an inch and a quarter and was not stretched tight when it was tacked on, so that it could form a gentle sag to make a seat. I'd put glue, like Titebond III, under the lap.

The four sides of the box are made from $\frac{5}{8}$ " white pine, although $\frac{3}{4}$ " stock and/or $\frac{3}{4}$ " marine plywood would make for a tough box too. Inside, the top of the box has a 2" wide by $\frac{5}{8}$ " doubler all the way around for strength and as a nailer.

The opening at the box front looks like it started out smaller, but from the obvious wear of the original, I think it was just a little wider and higher to make it easier to access the tools inside during use. Steel box nails were used as fasteners, but since you got out the bronze ring nails, you might as well use them instead. Glue it up, too, since you're going to all this trouble.

The bottom appears to have been rebated into all four sides before the box was nailed together. While I can't actually tell how thick the original is, I think I'd be inclined to make it

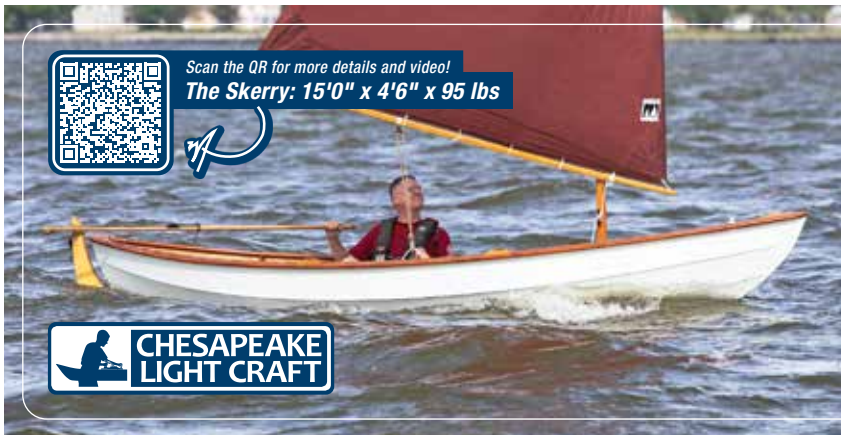


out of ½" marine ply. It has to be tough enough to take steel caulking irons plunking around on it, none too gently, to be functional and long-lasting, and ½" rebated in on all sides is tough. There was an old piece of cowhide lying on the bottom of the box when Ted gave it to me, and something like that is a good idea now, too.

At first, I thought the bottom of the box's sides looked that way because the box was obviously old and had seen heavy use. When I realized what it was, a working caulking bench, I understood that the rounded skids on the bottom of the sides were intentional because of how the bench works. When you are caulking a deck, for example, you sit on the bench as you're caulking, and you get into a rocking kind of motion as you move along the seam. Sitting with your legs spread and then kneeling in combination are a whole lot easier over the long haul of pounding cotton and oakum in multiple strands on a deck than just kneeling by itself is when you're a little older. Rocking the bench forward as you caulk is easier on your back, and the rounded bottom skids make the box less prone to snagging a corner and tripping over when it's being slid along the deck. The little rope loop on the top middle face is something to help move the box along, too.

In the next issue, I'm planning to show what the bronze wheels were used for and maybe include a caulking apron design. If you take an old file, bend the tang over, and file it a

little for a reefing hook, you'll just need to gather a good array of irons, and you'll be set for any kind of corkin' job you'll need to take on.



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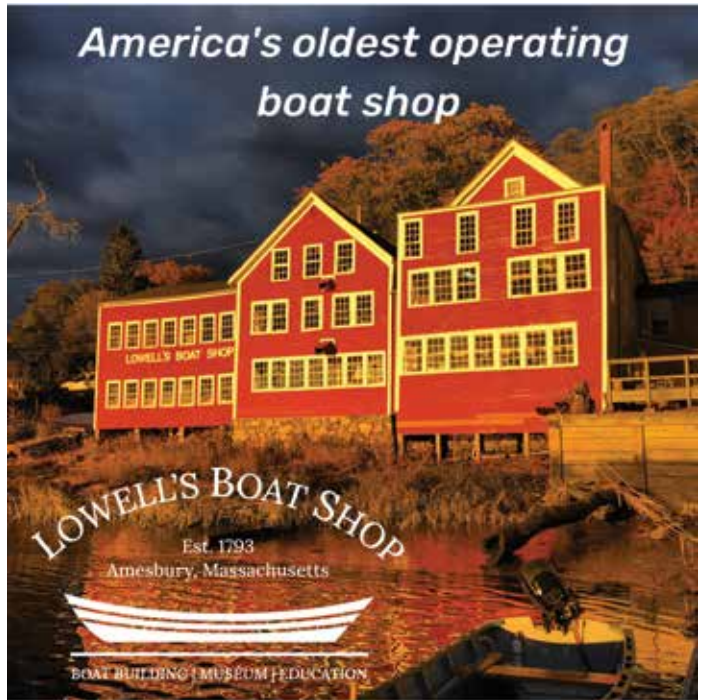
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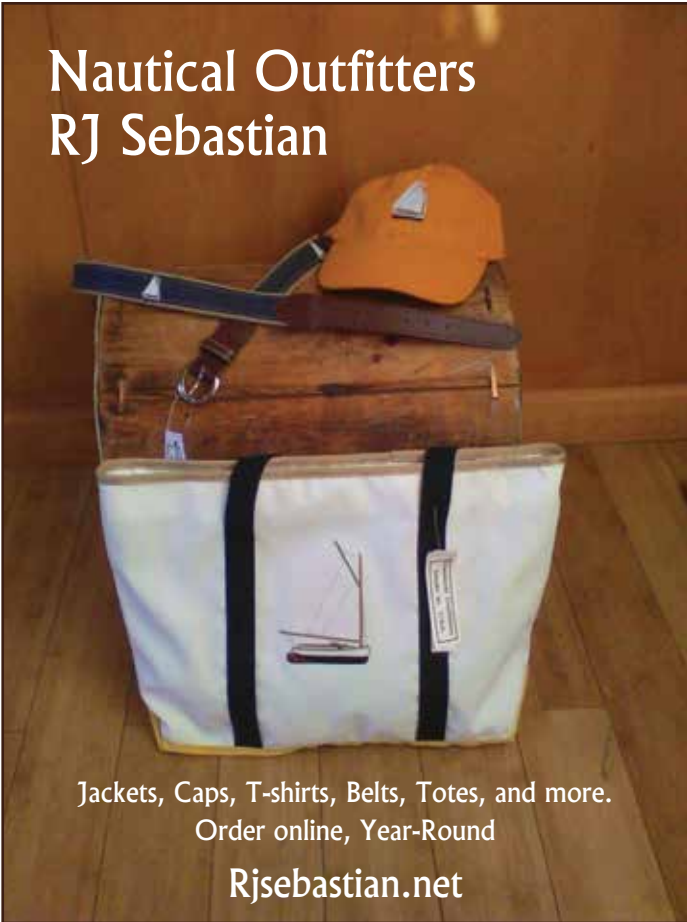
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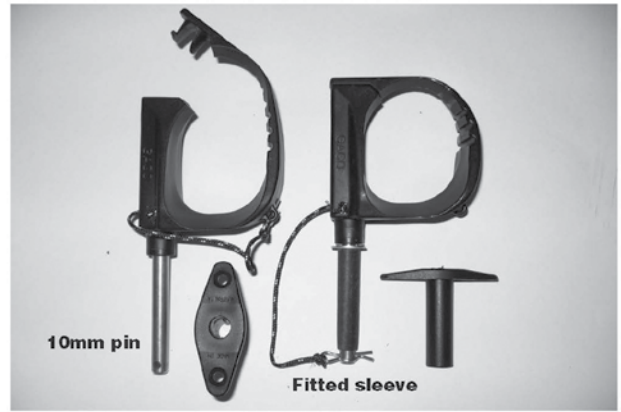
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The Ash Breeze

Summer 2026 Volume 47 Number 2

Editorial Deadline: May 1, 2026

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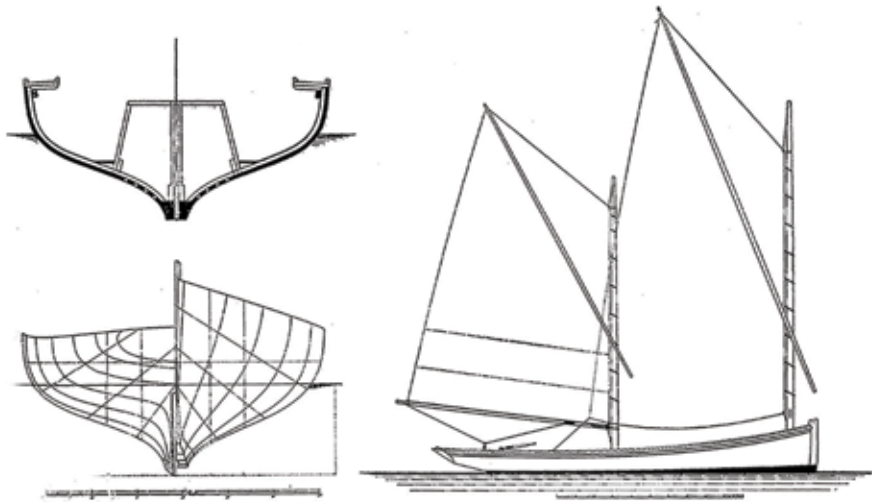
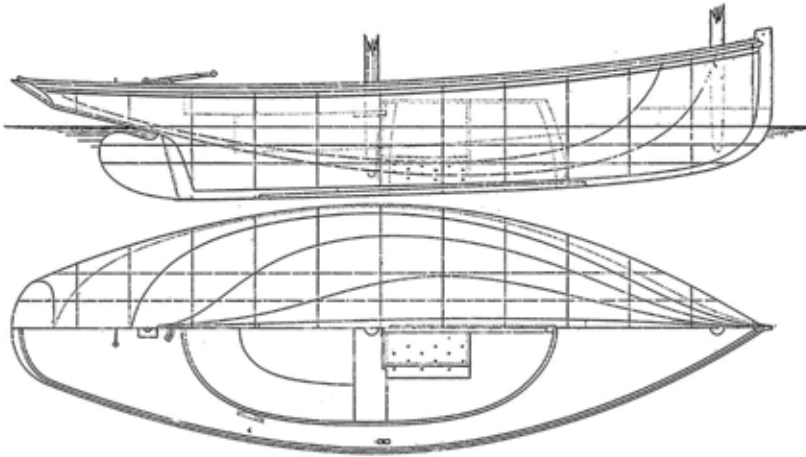
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